



Canadian Defence
& Foreign Affairs
Institute

Marshall Plan Needed for Middle East

A Policy Update Paper

By

Michael Bell

Paul Martin Senior Scholar on International Diplomacy, University of Windsor

March, 2011

Prepared for the Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute
1600, 530 – 8th Avenue S.W., Calgary, AB T2P 3S8
www.cdfai.org

© Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute

**Other Publications Written For Or Assisted By:
The Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute**

Operations Security and the Public's Need to Know

Sharon Hobson
March, 2011

The Panda Bear Readies to Meet the Polar Bear: China Debates and Formulates Foreign Policy Towards Arctic Affairs and Canada's Arctic Sovereignty

David Curtis Wright
March, 2011

'Now For the Hard Part': A User's Guide to Renewing the Canadian-American Partnership

Colin Robertson
February, 2011

Canada's International Policy Statement Five Years Later

Andrew Godefroy
November, 2010

The 'Dirty Oil' Card and Canadian Foreign Policy

Paul Chastko
October, 2010

China's Strategic Behaviour

Elinor Sloan
June, 2010

Reinventing CIDA

Barry Carin and Gordon Smith
May, 2010

Security in an Uncertain World: A Canadian Perspective on NATO's New Strategic Concept

Paul Chapin, et al
March, 2010

The Newly Emerging Arctic Security Environment

Rob Huebert
March, 2010

Whatever Happened to Peacekeeping? The Future of a Tradition

Jocelyn Coulon and Michel Liégeois
March, 2010

Democracies and Small Wars

Barry Cooper
December, 2009

Beneath the Radar: Change or Transformation in the Canada-US North American Defence Relationship

James Fergusson
December, 2009

The Canada First Defence Strategy – One Year Later

George Macdonald
October, 2009

Measuring Effectiveness in Complex Operations: What is Good Enough?

Sarah Meharg
October, 2009

"Connecting the Dots" and the Canadian Counter-Terrorism Effort – Steady Progress or Technical, Bureaucratic, Legal and Political Failure?

Eric Lerhe
March, 2009

Canada-U.S. Relations in the Arctic: A Neighbourly Proposal

Brian Flemming
December, 2008

President Al Gore and the 2003 Iraq War: A Counterfactual Critique of Conventional “W”isdom

Frank Harvey
November, 2008

Canada and the United States: What Does it Mean to be Good Neighbours?

David Haglund
October, 2008

Redeployment as a Rite of Passage

Anne Irwin
April, 2008

The 2007 Ross Ellis Memorial Lectures in Military and Strategic Studies: Is there a Grand Strategy in Canadian Foreign Policy?

David Pratt
March, 2008

Military Transformation: Key Aspects and Canadian Approaches

Elinor Sloan
December, 2007

CFIS: A Foreign Intelligence Service for Canada

Barry Cooper
November, 2007

Canada as the “Emerging Energy Superpower”: Testing the Case

Annette Hester
October, 2007

A Threatened Future: Canada’s Future Strategic Environment and its Security Implications

J.L. Granatstein, Gordon S. Smith, and Denis Stairs
September, 2007

Report on Canada, National Security and Outer Space

James Fergusson and Stephen James
June, 2007

The Information Gap: Why the Canadian Public Doesn’t Know More About its Military

Sharon Hobson
June, 2007

Conflict in Lebanon: On the Perpetual Threshold

Tami Amanda Jacoby
April, 2007

Canada in Afghanistan: Is it Working?

Gordon Smith
March, 2007

Effective Aid and Beyond: How Canada Can Help Poor Countries

Danielle Goldfarb
December, 2006

The Homeland Security Dilemma: The Imaginations of Failure and the Escalating Costs of Perfecting Security

Frank Harvey
June, 2006

An Opaque Window: An Overview of Some Commitments Made by the Government of Canada Regarding the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces; 1 January 2000 – 31 December 2004

David J. Bercuson, Aaron P. Plamondon, and Ray Szeto
May, 2006

The Strategic Capability Investment Plan: Origins, Evolution and Future Prospects

Elinor Sloan
March, 2006

Confusing the Innocent with Numbers and Categories: The International Policy Statement and the Concentration of Development Assistance

Denis Stairs
December, 2005

In the Canadian Interest? Assessing Canada's International Policy Statement

David J. Bercuson, Derek Burney, James Fergusson, Michel Fortmann/Frédéric Mérand, J.L. Granatstein, George Haynal, Sharon Hobson, Rob Huebert, Eric Lerhe, George Macdonald, Reid Morden, Kim Richard Nossal, Jean-Sébastien Rioux, Gordon Smith, and Denis Stairs
October, 2005

The Special Commission on the Restructuring of the Reserves, 1995: Ten Years Later

J.L. Granatstein and LGen (ret'd) Charles Belzile
September, 2005

Effective Defence Policy for Responding to Failed And Failing States

David Carment
June, 2005

Two Solitudes: Quebecers' Attitudes Regarding Canadian Security and Defence Policy

Jean-Sébastien Rioux
February, 2005

In The National Interest: Canadian Foreign Policy in an Insecure World

David J. Bercuson, Denis Stairs, Mark Entwistle, J.L. Granatstein, Kim Richard Nossal, and Gordon S. Smith
October, 2003

Conference Publication: Canadian Defence and the Canada-US Strategic Partnership

September, 2002

To Secure A Nation: The Case for a New Defence White Paper

David J. Bercuson, Jim Fergusson, Frank Harvey, and Rob Huebert
November, 2001

Publications are available at www.cdfai.org or call Sarah Magee at (613) 288-2529

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael Bell is currently the Paul Martin (Sr.) Senior Scholar on International Diplomacy at the University of Windsor, where he teaches on the law and politics of the modern Middle East. He is also engaged in a major study on the future governance of Jerusalem's Old City.

As former Chair of the Donor Committee of the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq, Bell has had considerable experience in conflict management, mediation, peace-building, peace-keeping, policy analysis and formulation, governance, human rights, civil society and economic and social development.

Bell is a former Canadian Foreign Service Officer with 36 years' experience in the Department of Foreign Affairs, mostly focused on the Middle East. He was Canada's Ambassador to Jordan (1987-90), Egypt (1994-98), and Israel (1990-92 and 1999- 2003).

He was Executive Assistant for Middle East Affairs to the Honourable Robert Stanfield (1978-79), Director of the Middle East Relations Division (1983-87), Director General for Central and Eastern Europe (1992-94) and Fellow at the Weatherhead Centre for International Affairs at Harvard University (1998-99). From 2003-2005 he was Senior Scholar on Diplomacy at the Munk Centre for International Studies, at the University of Toronto.

Mr. Bell has been a contributor to the *Globe and Mail*. He has also published in the *Literary Review of Canada*, the *Behind the Headlines* series of the Canadian Institute of International Affairs, *Idea&s: the Arts and Science Review* of the University of Toronto, the *International Journal*, the *Journal of International Law and International Relations*, and *Foreign Affairs*, the bi-monthly Journal of the Council on Foreign Relations.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The peoples of the Middle East are instituting profound changes that will affect us all. We in Canada, and in the West, must be fully involved, in our own interests, and theirs, by responding generously to viable requests for aid and assistance across a gamut of challenges: justice mentoring, education, small business, civil society and unemployment.

They need to feel change in their conditions now. They need a Marshall type plan with immediate impact. If not these revolutions in the sand could turn sour fast. Everything from education in village schools, to the prospects for good governance, to peace in the region, is at stake. Well established countries with homogeneous populations such as Egypt and Tunisia stand a good chance of making it; others with little sense of national identity and little in the way of civil society, like Yemen, do not. Some, like Bahrain, are ruled by minorities with an alienated underclass. They are burdened by powerful neighbours, Saudi Arabia and Iran in this case, who see their own conflicting interests directly at stake. The Americans are not indifferent.

Canada's role is circumscribed by our politics, which rules us out from anything verging on the political or strategic. But there is still plenty to do, if the will exists.

We are witnessing a Middle East revolution that will leave this region much changed. It is a seminal event reversing age old and outmoded governance traditions. Daily it spreads. To progressives, this people's struggle for justice and dignity is a triumph of universal values over autocrats who had grossly abused their power. They had ruled without reference to those they claimed to serve, enriched themselves at the expense of those they pretended to represent, used intimidation and torture to assure their positions and ignored the poverty in which their citizens have lived.

We do not yet know where this quest for freedom and material wellbeing will lead. Some countries with relatively stronger institutions, where dissidents were able to speak within limits, where the chimera of a free press existed, where societies are homogeneous, where the military sees itself as the guardian of the state rather than the regime, may transform themselves into fairly vibrant pluralist societies. Egypt and Tunisia meet these criteria. Libya and Yemen are challenged. Already influential groups are meeting. In Egypt work is already underway exploring options respecting social and educational reforms. They have been concerned that since 1974 government policy had been to divert foreign development funds to big business projects: railways, energy and airports

The region is diverse: with "soft" autocracies in Cairo and Tunis, "hard" regimes in Libya and Syria, and near failed states as in Yemen. This diversity affects prospects for success. Countries where minorities rule against alienated majorities, as in Bahrain and Syria, will not make it. In Syria in 1982, the army killed between 17 and 40 thousand Muslim Brothers in the city of Hama to preserve the dominance of the Allawite ruling class, composing some 10% of the population, but virtually the entire Syrian officer corps.

Autocracy was sweet and it seemed to the ruling class the natural order of things. Most ordinary Egyptians, for instance, accepted such arrogance as part of their ongoing reality. Quietly they were burning up. All they needed was a spark, which one single individual in Tunisia provided by immolating himself, so hopeless did he feel his life. Al Jazeera and Al Arabia reinforced popular determination.

Yet in Tunisia and Egypt, another element was critical. Both military establishments refused orders to act against the Street. Instead they carried out *coups d'état*. The officer corps in both countries enjoyed relatively privileged positions, yet they resented the corruption paraded before them daily by the new business elites and their cronies. Without the military on their side, successful change would have been moot and revolutions would have failed.

In Jordan, despite the long accepted legitimacy of Hashemite rule among its mixed East Bank and Palestinian populations, the Kingdom's future remains uncertain. Lacking the charisma and common touch of his father Hussein, the present monarch, Abdullah, has been identified with conspicuous consumption and the super rich, mainly of Palestinian origin, at the expense of the austere tribes, who dominate the army and security services. The new Prime Minister, Marouf Al Bakhit, is no agent of change. A former general and security chief, he has instituted a vigorous crackdown. Historic alliances remain sufficiently strong that, with judicious use of the iron fist, the King will very likely survive.

Israelis are concerned, particularly about Jordan and Egypt "going bad." They are concerned that whatever new governments might be formed, whether Islamist or secular, the Jewish state may lose heretofore benign neighbours. They fear Mubarak and Abdullah being replaced by governments hostile to them, which will move toward confrontation. On the Arab Street both Mubarak and Abdullah are seen as having been much too close to Israel, which occupies Arab

lands and subjects their inhabitants to humiliation. For Egyptians this denotes no love of Palestinians per se, rather the occupation symbolises their own loss of dignity as Arabs and Muslims. They do not reject the possible dominance of radical Islam, which many activists in the West dismiss.

The former Egyptian foreign minister and current Secretary General of the Arab League, Amr Mussa's presidential ambitions well illustrate Israeli concern. Amr Mussa is both charismatic and secular. But, while Mubarak spoke softly to Israelis, as his foreign minister Amr Mussa was overtly critical of Zionist practice. Israelis are fearful that if elected he will cease co-operation with them on critical matters such as the Gaza border, Israeli access to Egyptian gas and Hamas, with possibly unintended consequences.

In Bahrain the split is religious, where demands for reform have carried sectarian undertones. The country is over three quarters Shia. They form the underclass, where anti regime activists dominate. We are seeing direct confrontation between them and the ruling Sunni minority. Shia Iran has ambitions for Bahrain as a potential client state, should there be regime change. Some Gulf experts believe the Saudis would invade, were the crisis to become particularly severe, rather than acquiesce in the ruling family's demise. The Americans will be loath to risk losing Bahrain as the base for their Fifth Fleet.

Pluralist decision-making mirroring the post Ataturk model in Turkey, if not democracy as we know it, is possible in Egypt and Tunisia because societal and demographic factors, cultural traditions and civil society can be facilitators. Others lack those attributes, including Yemen, which is intensely tribal, badly split between north and south and home to Al Qaeda operatives. Yemen verges on being a failed state no matter who eventually controls the very thin apparatus of government in Sana. Whatever stability is found there is through the age old system of tribal payoffs.

Libya is similarly vulnerable with significant regional and tribal loyalties, a very new state without the ties or cultures that bind. Even if Qaddafi loses power, a still moot point, state building will be a long, arduous and problematic task despite the courage and bravery of those who are prepared to sacrifice their lives to effect such change. Only if a powerful liberation narrative binds Libyans tightly is there much probability of their country thriving as a single entity.

This Arab revolution will release many forces, the precise nature of which we cannot foresee. Even if through a glass darkly, what can the Europeans and North Americans do given their interests: ensuring reform takes hold, moderation prevails, oil flows, the Palestine problem is managed, strategic interests are protected and viable economies emerge that can feed populations.

We should do our best to ensure that change is successful through a well co-ordinated Marshall type plan among Western donors, where unprecedented resources must be poured into the region. This will be costly with no guarantee of success but there is no other choice. Invariably this effort will be led by the United States and the European Union, but there is plenty Canada can do in fields like judicial reform, civil society development, micro-enterprise, economic opportunity and social justice. Such projects must ensure immediate impact. Funds must be concentrated to ensure a critical mass. Otherwise patience will run out and communities will grow to distrust their new governments.

We cannot spread ourselves too thinly. We must focus on countries where prospects for successful change are greatest and where stability and constructive participation count. Egypt,

in particular, with its dominant position meets these requirements. We have had much experience there. We must be imaginative and must not allow donor lethargy to kill dynamism. We must avoid grand announcements that then fail to deliver. We must discourage focus on the elimination of food subsidies because this will further undermine and frustrate impoverished societies. Canada, in particular, must resist further praise of Israel at Arab expense, something which has already affected our standing, both on the Street and in the halls of government, for the worse.

Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute

CDFAI is the only think tank focused on Canada's international engagement in all its forms - diplomacy, the military, aid and trade security. Established in 2001, CDFAI's vision is for Canada to have a respected, influential voice in the international arena based on a comprehensive foreign policy, which expresses our national interests, political and social values, military capabilities, economic strength and willingness to be engaged with action that is timely and credible.

CDFAI was created to address the ongoing discrepancy between what Canadians need to know about Canadian international activities and what they do know. Historically, Canadians tend to think of foreign policy – if they think of it at all – as a matter of trade and markets. They are unaware of the importance of Canada engaging diplomatically, militarily, and with international aid in the ongoing struggle to maintain a world that is friendly to the free flow of goods, services, people and ideas across borders and the spread of human rights. They are largely unaware of the connection between a prosperous and free Canada and a world of globalization and liberal internationalism.

In all its activities CDFAI is a charitable, nonpartisan organization, supported financially by the contributions of foundations, corporations and individuals. Conclusions or opinions expressed in CDFAI publications and programs are those of the authors and speakers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Institute staff, fellows, directors, advisors, or any individuals or organizations that provide financial support to CDFAI.