About CDFAI

A charitable organization, founded in 2001, CDFAI develops and disseminates materials and carries out activities to promote understanding by the Canadian public of national defence and foreign affairs issues. We are developing a body of knowledge to be used for Canadian policy development, media analysis and educational support. Our network of distinguished Canadian Fellows supports CDFAI by authoring research and policy papers.

Mission Statement
To be a catalyst for innovative Canadian global engagement.

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Operations Security and the Public’s Right to Know
Sharon Hobson investigates the validity of operations security claims. She concludes that operations security is a real concern, but when used indiscriminately, these claims can undermine the fabric of our democracy.

Libya: Canada’s First Hybrid War?
Andrew Godefroy explains that the Libyan conflict is a hybrid war: a conflict that rejects the traditional dichotomies of symmetric and asymmetric conflict. If this new type of warfare is to become the norm, Godefroy states that Canada, and the international community, must become better prepared and learn as much as possible from this conflict.

Is the Arctic Being Militarized or Securitized? And What Does it Matter?
Rob Huebert argues that the Arctic is being both militarized and securitized. Viewing it as an either/or situation, he states, is clouding the ability of policy-makers to understand the emerging nature of modern Arctic security.

Libya: A Time for Others in the Region
Derek Burney postulates that we have entered into the Libyan conflict with our eyes open, yet we do not know where the conflict will lead. Furthermore, he acknowledges that there is a need to act with prudence despite the overwhelming instinct to “do something.”

The F-35 Hullaballoo
George Macdonald clarifies some of the criticisms of the F-35 purchase and demonstrates that it is the “right choice at the right time for the right price.”

Obama’s Foreign Policy: Goodwill Without Direction
Alexander Moens argues that Obama’s cautious leadership style has brought about some good change, but it ultimately leaves American foreign policy without conviction. His policies, which are too static and reactive, may not be enough to protect American and Canadian interests.

International Weapons Sales to Latin America
Stephen Randall outlines the issues associated with an increased arms race in Latin America. The trafficking of weapons in the area could reverse efforts to focus attention on resources, as well as social and economic issues.

In Praise of Defence and Foreign Policy Reviews
David Pratt indicates that there are immediate and long term foreign policy issues looming. While there may not be a “good time” to release a foreign policy review, Canada would benefit from a focused review of foreign policy and defence issues to chart the course of the country in the post-Afghanistan era.

The Bad Guy of the Arctic
Stéphane Roussel contends that Canada is one of the leading nations perpetuating the idea that there is an arms race in the Arctic. Canada’s actions, fuelled by self-interest, make sense domestically, but what are the larger ramifications to our international reputation?
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The election of Stephen Harper’s Conservatives with a majority in the House of Commons on May 2 will settle some major defence issues while leaving others in abeyance. The most important question that was decided by the vote was whether or not the activist foreign and defence policies pursued by Canadian governments for most of the past decade will continue. The answer is: they will. Harper’s Conservatives were not the pioneers of the post 9/11 break from a decades long preoccupation with UN peacekeeping. After all, Jean Chretien’s Liberals sent land, sea and air forces to Afghanistan soon after the September 11, 2001 attacks and returned to Afghanistan to take over the ISAF mission in the late summer of 2003. His successor, Paul Martin, oversaw the deployment of Canadian combat troops to Kandahar province in 2005.

But Canadians have clearly tired of the Afghanistan mission since then, and with the emphasis on returning to “peacekeeping” style missions in the defence policy election platforms of the Liberals and the New Democrats, there was a good chance that a centre-left coalition, or even a Conservative minority, might have reverted to a very cautious and domestically-centred defence policy. This does not mean that the Conservative government will seek out expeditionary opportunities, but that it will not shrink from them either. Canadian participation in the Libyan air mission, announced with little fanfare even before the election was called, signifies that inclusion in such coalition operations will likely be the norm for Canada over the next four years at least.

Another issue that is now resolved is that of replacing Canada’s elderly CF-18 fighter jets with the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter – at some point. The Tories understandably downplayed the many difficulties that plague the F-35 project including cost over runs, technical issues, and nations threatening to leave the F-35 consortium. But now that the election is over and the basic question of the acquisition has been decided, the government will have much hard bargaining to do with Lockheed-Martin to make sure Canada is not unduly overcharged for the project.

One of the major surprises of the election was the surpassing of the Liberals by the New Democrats and the elevation of the NDP to the status of Official Opposition. In Canada’s system of government, the Official Opposition is the “government in waiting”, which means that its main job is to present viable alternative policies to Canadians. Put simply, the NDP’s defence policy is forty years behind the times. The NDP is still mired in the age of UN peacekeeping, isolationist in its outlook and suffers a barely constrained anti-US sentiment. The current government’s foreign and defence policy is not in itself the only legitimate policy for Canada, but at least it recognizes the three main pillars of Canadian defence policy – pillars that have stood the test of time since the end of the Second World War; (1) The defence of Canada and Canadians; (2) the defence of North America in cooperation with the United States; and (3) the defence of the international order of peace and freedom that nourishes liberal democracies such as ours. Now that the NDP is the official opposition, it is time for it to lay down a realistic foreign and defence policy that serves Canada’s historic needs and protects Canada’s interests.
Canadian Press reporter Murray Brewster, one of Canada’s most respected defence reporters, has been fighting with the Department of National Defence (DND) over its decision not to release information on soldiers injured in Afghanistan. The department decided in 2007 that it would only issue annual figures on casualties because of operations security concerns.

The department says that information on the battle wounded – the number and types of injuries – would provide the enemy with a battle damage assessment. The British and Americans, however, do not have the same concerns and release their casualty figures on a frequent basis.

Mr. Brewster says, the way “it was explained to me was that if we don’t report wounded, then the Taliban doesn't think that they’ve hurt anybody.” Mr. Brewster not only rejected that argument, but pointed out “you’re keeping the Canadian public in the dark. You’re leaving the impression that this is a bloodless conflict.” He has complained that the military is “reducing wounded soldiers to statistics.”

Over the course of the Canadian mission in Afghanistan, there has been a disturbing increase in the number of times Canadian officials have cited operations security in denying information to the public. But there is evidence to suggest that the secrecy is not all due to real security concerns.

Interviews with Canadian war correspondents and military officials shed some interesting light on how and why information is withheld. Sometimes the secrecy is warranted, other times it is an over-reaction to events, a lack of common sense, a fear of embarrassment, or concern over political repercussions.

Many reporters feel that Canadians are not being given sufficient information on the military’s achievements and failures in Afghanistan, nor on the character of its involvement in the conflict.

Information about Canada’s Special Operations Forces, especially JTF 2, is a closely guarded secret. Matthew Fisher of Postmedia says “there is no public understanding of what the JTF2 guys have been up to, although they have done, by all accounts, an extraordinarily good job. They have been responsible for a very large number of enemy deaths. And I think Canadians should be aware of that. They might approve of it, rejoice in it, they might be appalled and furious about it. But they should at least have some general knowledge after the fact.” He has asked to talk to some of the JTF2 soldiers, 6-8 months after a mission, to discuss in general terms the planning, the ambition of the mission, what was achieved, and the resources that were called upon. “But no, absolutely not.”

In 2007, when the issue arose that detainees were being abused by Afghan security forces after being transferred by Canadian troops, the opposition and media wanted to know if the government was aware of the alleged torture.

The government fought demands to hand over documents to Parliament, the media, the public and a military police inquiry, arguing in court that it did not want to endanger Canadian troops by letting the Taliban know about its detainee transfers. Defence Minister Peter MacKay refused to answer questions, saying "I'm not going to do anything that's going to endanger the lives of the Canadian Forces personnel or Afghans involved in this operation."

Diplomat Richard Colvin testified in front of a parliamentary committee that in 2006-07 he had repeatedly warned senior military and government officials of serious allegations of torture in Afghan prisons. He was accused of violating operations security.

But Mr. Colvin said “Frankly, the operational security argument makes no sense to me. If we go into a village... (Continued on page 7)
and take away three Afghans, everyone in the village knows exactly who we have taken. In practice, the information was being concealed not from the Taliban but from the NATO ISAF, the Red Cross, and the Canadian public.

It’s not just information about Afghanistan that is being denied to the Canadian public because of operations security concerns. It affects other issues as well, which may or may not be embarrassing or inconvenient to the government or the military. For example, the DND is not releasing a Statement of Operational Requirement (SOR) for the next generation fighter aircraft. The government claims it is the only aircraft that meets Canada’s requirements, but no one can prove or disprove that claim because the SOR is kept secret.

Colonel Randy Micklejohn, Director of Air Requirements, says "we actually rarely release the actual SOR itself. That’s an internal DND document and most SORs have quite a bit of sensitivities in them so we don’t typically release those to the public." Not true. The SOR for other major projects, such as the Medium to Heavy-Lift Helicopters, the Maritime Helicopter, the Joint Support Ship, and the Arctic/Offshore Patrol Ship have all previously been made publicly available on DND web sites. While it is understandable that some specific technical aspects of an SOR may need to remain classified, the majority of the information in the documents could be released.

A claim of operations security is easy to make. Used indiscriminately, it undermines our democracy. It shuts down all discussion, making it difficult for the media and the public to know whether or not it is justifiable. This state of affairs may well suit the government, but it should worry the Canadians who put it there.

Sharon Hobson has been the Canadian correspondent for Jane’s Defence Weekly since April 1985. For the past decade she has also been a regular contributor to Jane’s Navy International and Jane’s International Defense Review. She is also the 2004 recipient of the Ross Munro Media Award.
Libya: Canada’s First Hybrid War?

Written by: Andrew Godefroy

With so much attention on the ongoing debate amongst western nations concerning what their future military institutions should focus on – conventional warfare or counter-insurgency – it leaves one wondering whether or not we have overlooked the question of what happens if you suddenly find yourself in a future conflict that really isn’t either of these?

Strategic forecasting, the activity of anticipating the likely characteristics of future conflicts, has long been saddled with paradoxes and clichés. Perhaps the best-known paradox, or perhaps irony, facing defence planners throughout all history has been Vegetius’ advice, Si vis pacem para bellum (if you wish for peace prepare for war). From this, the general cliché is that despite this sage guidance too often militaries end up preparing to fight the last war instead of the war they are actually faced with. While such barbs appear pithy and are frequently used in public debate, they ignore several important factors regarding the nature of war and the characteristics of post-Cold War era conflict.

Undoubtedly the emerging conflict in Libya has reminded us once again that not all foes are the same. At the time of this writing, it is a conflict that is neither a conventional war nor counterinsurgency. In fact, if it is to be identified as anything at this early stage, Libya may very well be Canada’s first official “hybrid war”. Loosely defined as a military strategy that combines conventional, irregular and cyber warfare, this potent and complex variation of conflict threatens to pose a serious challenge, especially for western militaries that may be perceived as lacking resilience or the ability to learn, anticipate and adapt to change. And if the Canadian Forces (CF) – currently engaged in a complex counterinsurgency in Afghanistan – was otherwise preparing to ‘fight the last war’ it might find itself in something of a predicament here. However, the Canadian military’s debates and concerns over there being too much focus purely on conventional or counterinsurgency approaches to conflict have not manifested themselves in this latest operation. Far from being trapped by any specific “way of warfare” and therefore unprepared to meet the challenges presented by a new and different adversary, the CF has instead shown its resilience as well as its rapid adaptability in this latest conflict.

Operation MOBILE, Canada’s most recent engagement in Libya, offers a poignant opportunity to examine these issues in greater depth. Beginning with the passing of United Nations Resolution (UNSCR) 1970 of 26 February 2011, which called for the enforcement of an arms embargo on Libya, Canada’s involvement began after the passing of UNSCR 1973 of 17 March 2011, which authorized the international community to take all necessary measures to protect civilian populations in Libya. Within days of this resolution, a coalition of NATO partners began air operations to enforce a no-fly zone over Libya, effectively protecting civilians on the ground from Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi’s government air forces. In addition, allied air forces struck ground-based air defence, air fields, as well as other key targets in order to ensure the safety of friendly air forces while denying Gaddafi’s generals the ability to project combat power in the air and on land. Subsequently, the North Atlantic Council accepted responsibility for the entire military operation in Libya under Resolution 1973 on 27 March, and the transfer of command authority over engaged air assets to the Commander, Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) UNIFIED PROTECTOR, Lieutenant-General Charles Bouchard of Canada, was completed on 31 March.

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The rapid evolution of these events presents a stark contrast to previous crises where the UN was often criticized for vacillating and doing too little too late. While swift and decisive action is certainly an improvement for the international system, at the same time it has eliminated the traditional ‘grace period’ during which armed forces could mobilize and prepare for conflict. Fortunately, veteran military institutions are more prone to rapid learning, anticipation, and adaptation. Therefore while at one time it may have been considered far less likely that Canada might have the capability to rapidly deploy forces in the Middle East and actively participate in no-fly zones, or that a senior Canadian officer might be selected to lead such a mission, as a highly experienced institution the CF today is far more capable of doing so. Additionally, the country’s successful record of operations in Kosovo and Afghanistan has demonstrated its resolve to be a salient partner in the international community’s desire for global stability, making Lieutenant General Bouchard’s recent appointment to command CJTF UNIFIED PROTECTOR both pragmatic and sensible.

Still, Operation Mobile is likely to highlight a number of issues that both government and defence planners will need to address in more detail in the months ahead. At the highest levels are the issues of grand strategy – those concerning the ends, ways, and means – required to achieve Canada’s strategic objectives. At the CF level, strategic analysts will need to review their future security environment forecasts and candidly ask the question, did the prevailing security trends equal this likelihood? While the situation in Libya itself is far from being considered a future shock, it is part of a wider democracy movement currently underway in the Middle East whose longer-term outcomes will undoubtedly have a much wider impact on the future security environment. Therefore Libya’s destabilization presents a tangible security challenge whose risks the CF must be able to mitigate as much as possible. Finally, what impact will the lessons of this conflict ultimately have on the evolving strategies of the air force and the navy? How might this conflict affect their future conceptual and doctrinal designs?

Every new conflict presents its own challenges to both governments and military institutions. And if Libya is to become Canada’s first hybrid war of the 21st century, then the opportunity to learn as much as possible from it cannot be missed. Only such a robust analysis will help confirm if the CF was indeed In Pace Paratus (in peace prepared) not for the last war, but for the wider range of uncertain, complex and hybrid conflicts that without any doubt continue to lay ahead of us in this century.

Andrew Godefroy is a strategic analyst and historian specializing in Canadian foreign, defence, and technology affairs. He has been a member of the Canadian Army Primary Reserve since 1993 and currently holds the Canadian Visiting Research Fellowship in the Leverhulme Programme on the Changing Character of War at Oxford University.
Is the Arctic Being Militarized or Securitized? 
And What Does it Matter?

Written by: Rob Huebert

An interesting set of debates have developed over the renewed role of military forces in the Arctic. As climate change began to remove the permanent arctic ice cover, commentators began to assess whether or not a conflict over the vast resources of the region would emerge as it warmed. This debate is being resolved as the Arctic states take steps to ensure that the resources are divided, and subsequently exploited, in a peaceful and cooperative manner under the terms of international law; however, in its place, a new debate is emerging. While the Arctic states seem to have become dedicated to peaceful coexistence, they are also dedicating more and more resources to new military capabilities to operate in the region. The question is whether these new capabilities represent reasonable force levels to provide for the security of a newly emerging region, or do they signal the beginning of a new Arctic arms race and hence a return to the militarization of the Arctic?

If the buildup is only for the purposes of providing security to a region that had been previously closed to the world, or is being used to improve cooperation, then the new military capabilities can be viewed as non-threatening. On the other hand, if there is a new arms race emerging, then this build-up can be seen as threatening to the long-term stability of the region and the relationships of the Arctic states.

Those on either side of the debate are giving the same actions very different interpretations. The one side, which has been well articulated by scholars like Whitney Lackenbauer and Lawson Brigham, contends that the Arctic is developing as a region of cooperation in which traditional conflict is unthinkable. Any efforts to develop and improve military capabilities are simply the responsible actions of states ensuring that they can properly protect the security of their Arctic territories. The other side argues that the military capabilities beginning to develop go beyond the necessity of good stewardship. Instead, these efforts represent a growing determination to develop military capabilities that are war-fighting in nature and are designed to specifically function in an Arctic environment. The challenge is to determine which of these understandings better reflect the realities of the region.

The more optimistic side sees the developing Arctic military capabilities as a means of securitization. In general, the proponents of this view argue that it is only natural for responsible Arctic states to reinvest in their military capabilities for operations in the region due to the fact that the Arctic is opening in a manner that was unthinkable as recently as 10 years ago. These new capabilities are needed to allow Arctic states to police and control new activities that are expected to occur as the ice continues to recede. This includes military forces having the capability to respond to environmental crises, search and rescue requirements and other activities to ensure the protection of the region.

Supporters of this view cite the successfully negotiated settlement in 2010 between Russia and Norway over a 40 year long boundary dispute in their Arctic waters. The two former enemies have also initiated naval exercises with each other in the region. The former head of the Canadian Navy, Admiral (Ret’d) Dean McFadden, has publicly stated that there is no military threat in the Arctic now, nor does he expect one to develop in the near future. In Canada’s case, supporters of this view cite the increased Canadian military presence in the region as a potentially positive force in the social economic development of the country’s Arctic territory. Hence, the Canadian Rangers, a Reserve

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unit that includes a large number of northern indigenous people, is often counted as an important example of where the military can play a positive and reinforcing role in the communities of the North.

The contrasting and more pessimistic perspective views recent developments as the beginning stages of a new Arctic arms race. The causal factors of this arms race are not the result of competition focused on the Arctic and its resources, but rather are the result of the geopolitical location of the United States, Russia and Europe. All three border the Arctic and when tensions develop between them, the impact will inevitably spill into adjacent regions, including the Arctic.

One example of renewed competition is the reemergence of the Arctic as an area of operation for the nuclear powered submarines of the American, British, French and Russian navies. At the end of the Cold War the Russian submarine fleet disintegrated and the American fleet was reduced with American Arctic operations substantially curtailed. However, by 2008, the Russians began to deploy to the Arctic with both SSNs and SSBNs (nuclear submarines). In turn, the Americans have also become very public with the return of their SSNs to the region as witnessed by the voyage of the USS Texas to the North Pole in 2010 and the voyages of the USS Connecticut and USS New Hampshire to Arctic waters in 2011. It seems hardly coincidental that both navies have returned at the same time independent of the increased activities of the other. Rather, it is more likely that their actions are reactionary to each other. Additionally, it has been recently disclosed in the French parliament that their submarines – both SSNs and SSBNs – have become active in the Arctic. The British navy, despite massive cuts to almost all other elements of its Forces, has retained its increasingly expensive and complex SSN and SSBN fleets. As demonstrated by the accident in 2007 on board one of their submarines off the northern coast of Alaska, the British are also retaining their abilities to operate in the Arctic.

A second indicator of the developing arms race can be found in the prompt meeting of the Nordic and Baltic states in London following the recent announcement of the sale of two to four French amphibious assault vessels to Russia. The states expressed their concern about the impact the sale will have on their Arctic security. The Foreign Minister of Sweden even suggested that this purchase will cause Sweden to develop plans for new submarines. This hints at the opening stages of an arms race in the Baltic region.

So what is the significance of these different perspectives? Primarily, the debate around Arctic security is being framed in an either/or format: either the Arctic region is developing in a cooperative manner, or the Arctic is in the early stages of an arms race. While this alleged dichotomy is useful for academic debate and discourse, it is increasingly clouding the ability of policymakers to understand the emerging nature of modern Arctic security. The reality is that the Arctic is being both militarized and securitized. Forces are being developed to provide for the protection of this increasingly accessible region, but at the same time being prepared for the possibility of use against each other.

The challenge for both policy-makers and researchers is to disentangle the two. Instead of using narratives to create false dichotomies, it is now necessary to understand the increasing complexity of the new Arctic military capabilities. This will require a much more careful examination of the motives of the Arctic policymakers. What do they really expect for the substantial resources that they are increasingly dedicating to Arctic forces? Why, for example, are the Americans and Russians increasing their submarine activity in the Arctic? Why have the Russians resumed long-range arctic bomber patrols and why do they believe they need a new long-range stealth bomber? What will be the long-term impact of the French sale of their amphibious assault vessels to the Russians? How can steps be taken to strengthen the cooperative elements of the new military activities? These are all critical questions that still need to be addressed if the true nature of the emerging Arctic security regime is to be understood.

Rob Huebert is Associate Director of the Centre for Military and Strategic Studies and Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Calgary.
There is a groundswell of demands for a “No-Fly” zone, or some form of military intervention by the West, to contain or squelch efforts by Col. Gadhafi to massacre his own people. The emotions and humanitarian instincts urging action are understandable, but so are arguments advocating prudence.

Senator John Kerry – who seems to be auditioning, at times, for a future role as Secretary of State – and Senator John McCain, among others, are staunchly advocating intervention. They argue that this is the only way to prevent the further slaughter of innocents and to help fulfill the US’ fundamental objective of support for liberty and security. However, Richard Lugar, the venerable Republican minority leader of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is counselling caution. Lugar has stated, “I believe it is a civil war and the US should not intervene in a civil war. After the war, the US and other nations will have to make determinations as to how we treat whoever the winners may be.” Lugar added that those concerned now about civilian casualties would only be more concerned when increased military action, abetted by the US, causes greater damage to civilians.

Within the US Administration itself, opinion seems sharply divided, notably between the hawkish Secretary Clinton and a much more restrained Defence Secretary, Robert Gates, who is obviously wary about the unknown consequences of a reflex “act of war”. President Obama may be caught, as well, between images of Reagan (“strong”) and Carter (“weak”) and conflicting perceptions about the seemingly simple, albeit simplistic, choice between action and non-action. The hard reality, as echoed by those preferring caution, is that, given the US’ grim fiscal situation and its ongoing involvement in two major military engagements in Muslim countries, it has little capacity to sustain yet another costly and vaguely defined military adventure in the region.

Richard Haass, President of the Council on Foreign Relations, contends persuasively that, unlike Egypt and Saudi Arabia, the US has no overriding strategic reason to get involved in Libya. Besides, argues Haass, a “No-Fly” zone would “not be decisive given that aircraft and helicopters are not central to the regime’s military advantages. The only way to level the playing field would be to put trainers, advisers and special forces on the ground.” Even when a “No-Fly” zone was deployed in Iraq after Saddam Hussein began to attack his own people, much more was needed to evict him from power. Furthermore, argues Haass, neither the US, nor anyone else, really knows much about who the West would be supporting militarily in Libya, let alone where that support would lead.

Among the Europeans, French President Sarkozy and UK Prime Minister Cameron are leading the charge for intervention. It is not known to what extent his view may be influenced by visions of Margaret Thatcher and the Falklands or by the significant interests in Libya of British oil giant BP. But, like the US, the UK’s fiscal situation is hardly conducive to another costly military commitment. The initial foray into Benghazi by the UK Special Forces certainly did not elicit much support from the Revolutionary Council.

Despite its Responsibility to Protect mandate, the UN seems to be dithering, once again, in the face of the latest flash point of internal conflict. It is apparent that neither...
Russia nor China have any desire to endorse military intervention in Libya.

That leaves NATO purportedly in the vanguard, with the precedents of Kosovo very much in vogue. But Lewis MacKenzie has scotched the relevance of that example, saying that the “No-Fly” zone against Serbia went “well beyond closing the airspace over Serbia’s air defences but quickly escalated to an all-out bombing campaign … oil refineries, bridges, etc.”

There is every reason for the West to deplore Gadhafi’s conduct and deploy economic sanctions and arms embargoes against his regime and contemplate, as well, prosecution by the International Court of Justice. It is also highly desirable to find effective ways of deploying humanitarian assistance to those trying to overthrow Gadhafi including, if requested, military and logistic equipment.

But, if more is to be done overtly on the military front, it would seem more logical and more appropriate to look to the Arab League, the Organization of Islamic States and/or the Organization of African Unity to take the lead. Why not? Egypt, despite its current turmoil, certainly has the military muscle and is right next door. Saudi Arabia has the money. Nigeria has both. Why should the onus fall exclusively on the West to “do something”, especially when the consequences of doing something belies easy analysis. As history eloquently illustrates, getting in is just the easy part.
Political and media attention on the government’s decision last summer to purchase the F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter has been intense. If nothing else, the cost of the project, estimated to be $9 billion for acquisition and another $7 billion for twenty years of in-service support, is enough to get anyone’s attention. Criticisms have been made of the wisdom in committing these funds during a period of major federal deficit, of the lack of competition in choosing a new fighter, and of the Canadian need for such a capability. Throughout, the impression has been created that this project is lacking in substantive consideration of options appropriate to Canada’s defence needs. This is simply not the case.

The most dominant of these criticisms centers on the issue that there has been no competition. The false assumptions here are that a viable competition could be held and that it is the only way to achieve the best value for taxpayers’ dollars. Neither of these is true. The 2008 Canada First Defence Strategy is the genesis of the fighter requirement, fleshed out by those who understand this business best – operational air force staff. Through exhaustive research and analysis, they have come to a responsible conclusion that there is only one aircraft capable of meeting Canada’s needs. Their evaluation of operational characteristics, growth potential, sustainment issues, availability and cost supports this outcome.

The F-35 may not be the least expensive new fighter, but it is certainly cost competitive. Importantly, one must consider the lifetime costs for maintenance and sustainment in addition to the funding to acquire the aircraft. This is where the F-35 is a clear winner given the economies of scale that will be possible in a worldwide fleet of more than 3,000 aircraft. Not only will Canada benefit from the efficiencies of a global sustainment system, we will be assured that it will exist for the life of the fleet. Too often we have paid a premium to maintain out-of-production aircraft beyond their projected life.

Another aspect of the project that seems to be overlooked is that Canada is one of nine nations partnered to acquire the F-35. The simple fact that eight of our allies have chosen the F-35 should give us considerable confidence that we are on the right track. In addition to the pervasive interoperability advantages that this will enable, we will participate actively in the future program of growth and improvement of the aircraft. Our acquisition of the F-35 at the beginning of its operational life will better assure the Canadian Forces of an effective, evolving fighter capability over the four decades it is likely to be in service. We can’t predict the future missions for which the aircraft might be needed (did we really anticipate North Africa countries entering into chaos and the prospect of deploying CF18s in support of the NATO operation over Libya?), but we can ensure that the air force has the most capable aircraft available to meet the challenge, and with the growth potential to remain effective over its lifetime.

The Joint Strike Fighter partnership also ensures that we get the ‘members’ price on the aircraft we buy. The US has assumed the risk and is paying for a major portion of the development of the fighter, enabling partner nations, the US included, to acquire their fleets at a common price. This is the advantage of our participation in the program since 1998, not to mention the many contracts awarded to Canadian companies to support JSF production.

Misunderstanding of this partnership arrangement pervades public commentary, where it is assumed that Canada will procure the aircraft under contract with Lockheed Martin Aeronautics. In fact, Canada will submit a procurement request to the F-35 Joint Program Office for collation with those of other partner nations. The JPO will then negotiate a contract with Lockheed Martin for all aircraft purchased during that production run and present

“The F-35 may not be the least expensive new fighter, but it is certainly cost competitive.”
it to partner nations for approval. The eventual contract will be between the US Government and Lockheed. The beauty of this model is that Canadian staff officers in the JPO remain privy to and involved in the process throughout. Canada has a vote, like the other partner nations, in decisions made on the aircraft and its procurement and is an equal participant to the governance structure for the program.

The F-35 is a well-considered and appropriate choice for Canada’s fighter capability for the longer term. It will enable Canada to protect our sovereignty, participate in continental defence with the Americans and deploy to global missions as determined by the government of the day. It is the right choice at the right time for the right price.

LGen (Ret’d) Macdonald retired from the Canadian Forces as Vice Chief of the Defence Staff in 2004. He now works in Ottawa with CFN Consultants, which has Lockheed Martin Aeronautics, the manufacturer of the F-35, as a client.
Obama’s Foreign Policy: Goodwill Without Direction

What are President Barack Obama’s foreign policy goals? Is there vision or strategy or even direction behind the new initiatives taken by this president?

We all remember George W. Bush’s strong beliefs and his determinate style. We now have a US president with complex beliefs and a very cautious style. Obama’s approach is not without merit, but is it enough to secure American and Canadian interests?

Obama had changed the tone of American public diplomacy away from its assertive and unilateral tendency. He began a new outreach plan to the Muslim world, making key speeches in Cairo, Istanbul, and Djakarta, to describe his community–building vision for American foreign policy. Obama was able to bring together Russian and Chinese support for a slightly harsher sanctions regime on Iran. The Obama administration negotiated a New START treaty with Russia on cuts in the nuclear arsenal of the two powers. A surge of US forces in Afghanistan is now in full swing alongside more emphasis on training the Afghan National Army and probing for negotiations with the Taliban. Unmanned aerial vehicle attacks on suspected Islamist militants in Pakistan and Yemen are ongoing.

We must keep in mind that Obama took office in 2009 with a focus on domestic and economic problems. Given his electoral setback in the 2010 Congressional election, the rise of the Tea Party wing among Republicans, and the continuing high stakes battle for how to reduce the deficit, Obama has not had much of a chance to concentrate on foreign policy. Congress passed a large stimulus bill in 2009 as well as a controversial health care revamp in 2010. Despite these legislative victories, Obama’s reputation and performance rating among the public continues to hover in the high 40s. My point is that Obama, who ran on ‘hope and change’ in domestic policy, has not been able to build a support base and remains politically vulnerable.

This vulnerability explains one part of Obama’s tentative foreign policy. The other parts are explained by Obama’s personal beliefs and his uncertain vision for America’s role in the world. Presidential character plays a bigger role in American foreign policy than strategists or economists would like to admit.

Obama is not rigidly ideological, nor is he simply “a softy” in foreign policy. His diplomatic initiatives are not naïve. Yet, his purpose and goals remain so lofty that many wonder about his real agenda. I am not sure there is one. Instead, policy pragmatism and tinkering seem to define Obama’s foreign policy. Why so?

His two books, Dreams from My Father (1995) and The Audacity of Hope (2006), reveal two Obama character traits: an intellectually curious person with a taste for philosophical reflection and a call for pragmatism and the art of political compromise and coalition building.

Obama’s open-mindedness and bargaining style determine his decision-making process. Reportedly, lengthy debates on policy decisions take place in the White House. There are centrist and leftist factions and the management of the process seems weak, given that both the Chief of Staff and National Security Adviser have already been replaced. The risk of spending too much time in decision mode is fairly high. In the charged environment of popular protests against old regimes in the Middle East and North Africa in early 2011, we have watched Obama’s slow and risk-averse moves. I do not want to overstate my case: Obama has not made any obvious faux pas which is an accomplishment.

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But is America providing enough leadership? Will America’s low profile now force it to have too much profile later? Is Obama doing enough to help prevent a rise of Iran-like Sunni theocracies that will cause mass refugee flows, widespread human rights violations, and a regional war between Israel and the rest in which case the United States will not simply remain cautious and diplomatic? A nuclear arms accord with Russia is fine, but how much does that really enhance American security? When will Obama’s wish to reduce America’s role in the world become counter-productive?

By virtue of its power, interests, and (mainly) good values, the United States cannot help being involved where it matters. It has a choice between acting as a transformative force or a status quo force. Not by design but by default, Obama’s policies are too static and reactive. Obama has left American foreign policy without conviction.

I am not arguing for a militaristic or “gung-ho” policy, but for more than global community building. The 2010 National Security Strategy that calls for “national renewal and global leadership” is aimless. Beside al Qaeda, Obama has not defined long-term threats to American security interests. For example, Saudi oil money stands ready to finance the rise of fanatical Islamist parties through elections in the Sunni world, but who is going to fund the secular parties and real moderates? What will Obama’s sanctions against Iran achieve? Where will Russia probe Obama’s weakness? How serious are the (changing) dates to withdraw American troops from Afghanistan? Can nuclear non-proliferation really be achieved by going back to the regime negotiated in the 1960s and 70s?

Obama showed his competence again in the well thought-out operation that captured Osama Bin Laden. What he needs now is to translate this ability into a stronger sense of confidence among the American public and a greater sense of leadership around the world.

Alexander Moens, the author of Foreign Policy of George W. Bush, is a Professor of Political Science at SFU and a Senior Fellow at the Fraser Institute in the Centre for Canadian American relations.
International Weapons Sales to Latin America

The increased levels of narcotics related violence in Mexico and Central America in the past several years, combined with the growing influence of Russia, Iran and China in the region have raised concerns about the implications of weapons sales to the more sensitive countries in the region.

Historically the United States has been the major supplier of military grade weapons to Latin America, although there was a twenty year period from the late 1970s through the 1990s when the United States imposed a moratorium on the sale of advanced military equipment to the area. In 1997 the Democratic Administration of Bill Clinton ended that moratorium at precisely the same time that it sponsored Plan Colombia, part of a combined war against drugs as well as insurgents. President Clinton adopted that policy against the advice of his first Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, as well as a number of Latin American leaders. The Clinton decision was attributed by many analysts to a highly successful lobbying effort in Congress by defence contractors hurt by plummeting weapons orders in the early post-Cold War years. Yet, even during the moratorium years, the US was the largest supplier of military equipment. The Congressional Research Service reported that from 1993 through 1996 the US supplied 25% of all arms shipped to the region, three times more than any other nation. Chile, which faced no security threat from its neighbours was one of the most important beneficiaries of the decision to renew weapons sales, receiving more than $1 billion in advanced fighter jets from the United States.

The global situation has changed significantly in the region in the post-Clinton years. The emergence of Hugo Chavez as the quasi-authoritarian leader of Venezuela, Chavez’s extensive influence with the leaders of Ecuador, Bolivia, Nicaragua and Cuba, and his increasingly close relationship with Russia, Iran, and China, have intensified US concerns about the security situation, at least in the Andean region and Caribbean basin. Increased sales of military weapons in the region are of concern not only to the United States of course, but also to countries in the area that do not want to see the balance of power disturbed or, for that matter, see scarce resources. In the 1990s there was relative parity among the main states in Latin America, but significant purchases of high grade military weapons by countries such as Venezuela can only result in forcing countries such as Colombia to keep pace because of longstanding border tensions.

Russian weapons sales to Venezuela in recent years have been significant. Although Russian officials stress that the sales are strictly for commercial rather than political or strategic reasons, the increased military capacity of Venezuela and the closer ties with Russia has been cause for concern. Those sales have included Sukhoi fighter jet, a range of helicopters, Kalashnikov assault rifles and anti-aircraft missiles. In late 2010, Russia also approved a $4 billion (USD) loan to Chavez’s government to buy additional equipment that Venezuelan officials describe as defensive in nature. Even with the improvement of relations between Venezuela and Colombia since the 2010 inauguration of President Santos in Colombia, such military build-up is destabilizing for Venezuela’s neighbours.

Venezuela is not the only recipient of Russian weapons. Venezuelan ally Ecuador has purchased Russian helicopters, and Bolivia, which can ill afford to focus its limited resources on military build-up, has recently negotiated a $150 million (USD) credit with Russia in an effort to modernize its military. Peru, Uruguay and Brazil have also been acquiring Russian equipment.

China has also been pressing hard to gain access to the highly lucrative but competitive arms market in recent years, although with considerably less success than Russia and also with less impact on the general security situation in the region. China has had some limited success with sales of combat aircraft to Bolivia, radar systems to Venezuela and Bolivia and small arms to Mexico.

What is of greater concern for the stability of Latin America and the Caribbean is not solely the increased role of Russia and China in weapons sales to the area but the overall impact of the general post-Cold War effort on the part of all major nations exporting arms. The transition of Latin America since the 1980s from heavily military regimes to democratic ones was hoped to bring a significant peace dividend. That orientation was reinforced by the successful efforts in a number of countries to contain their guerrilla insurgencies. There has thus been a

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widely held view that there was an opportunity for Latin American nations to refocus their attention and resources on social and economic issues, alleviating poverty, improving infrastructure and addressing the challenges posed by displaced and marginalized peoples. The intensification of an arms race in the region will make it impossible to realize those goals.

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Weapons as seen on display during the Latin American Aero & Defence (LAAD) Trade Show in Rio de Janeiro on April 12, 2011
When is the right time to conduct a foreign and defence policy review? While there are no hard and fast rules, a quick scan of the political and strategic environment suggests that now might just be an opportune time.

There are at least a couple of reasons for this. First, the recent federal election means that the Conservatives can start afresh with a new approach on foreign and defence policy knowing they will have at least a few years to establish and implement their vision of Canada’s role in the world. Second, the winding down of the combat mission in Afghanistan provides the Canadian Forces (CF) with a respite and allows Canadians to assess the sort of military capabilities and defence structure we will need in the future.

Timing can be a critical factor in determining the durability of a foreign and defence policy review. The Mulroney Government’s 1987 Defence White Paper was a classic case of a policy being overtaken by the sweep of historic events. As the first defence policy statement since the 1971 White Paper, it sought to address the “commitment-capability gap” with beefed up defence forces. Among other things, the paper called for the acquisition of 10-12 nuclear submarines.

Donald Rumsfeld’s dictum that “you don’t know what you don’t know” comes to mind when one reads the 1987 White Paper’s general assumptions. The document noted “there is no reason to believe that in the near future it [arms control initiatives] will obviate the need for significant military forces or deterrence based ultimately on nuclear weapons.” Two years later, the Berlin Wall fell and the 90 Soviet divisions that faced NATO were no longer the enemy. The Government of Canada was also facing a debt crisis making increased defence spending a forlorn hope.

In contrast, the Chretien Government’s 1994 Foreign Policy Review and Defence White Paper probably set the gold standard for process and timing for policy reviews. The special joint committees of the Senate and House of Commons that studied defence and foreign policy, along with a National Forum on Canada’s International Relations, ensured a high degree of coordination, cooperation and harmony. Coming a half decade after the demise of the Soviet empire, it had the advantage of a few years experience under the new strategic paradigm. It also had the challenge of trying to do defence and foreign policy on the cheap while the country implemented severe austerity measures to return to a balanced budget.

The Martin Government’s International Policy Statement (IPS) of 2005 signaled a break with the Chretien years. Four years after 9-11, it also better understood the implications of the war on terror and the need to knit together the 3Ds – diplomacy, defence and development. More evolutionary than revolutionary, its commitment to a stronger military was evidence the Government recognized that to be credible on issues of international peace and security Canada had to do more.

On the cusp of major Canadian operations in Afghanistan, the IPS also provided the policy backdrop for operations in the field that saw diplomats, soldiers and development officials working together in an unprecedented manner. Nevertheless, the IPS was a disappointment in one area. It failed to significantly engage the public and Parliament in the process of foreign and defence policy making as the 1994 foreign and defence policy review had done.

After five years in office, the fact the Conservatives have not conducted a foreign policy review of their own suggests that they have a general comfort level with the Martin Government’s 2005 IPS. While it would be fair to say that the Conservatives have not displayed the same flair for foreign policy as previous Liberal governments, they have embarked on some new foreign policy initiatives. They set a different course for Canada in the Middle East and, at least initially, took an alternate view of Canada-China relations. Many have heartily welcomed the spotlight the government placed on hemispheric issues through The Americas Strategy. But many others have lamented Canada’s neglect of Africa.

Although bilateral relations with the US remain strong, the Conservatives can point to few if any significant policy successes in world affairs. Canada’s positions on Israel and Africa have come in for criticism – both domestically and abroad – and probably played a significant role in ensuring we did not get a much coveted non-permanent UN Security Council seat last year. The somewhat over-
hyped Americas Strategy also appears to be withering on the vine for lack of resources and political commitment.

There are immediate and longer term foreign policy issues that would benefit from some focused attention by federal policy makers. The popular uprisings rocking the Arab world present both danger and opportunity. Working with our allies and friends, what will Canada do to support democracy, human rights and economic development in the region?

The financial weakness of the United States threatens to undermine our closest ally and the world’s only superpower. This will have a profound impact on their foreign policy and ours. The increasing military and economic strength of China and India’s rising prominence point toward major shifts in the global balance of power in the medium term and longer term.

There are many other issues on the foreign policy agenda including trade and aid, the environment, terrorism, piracy, weapons of mass destruction and criminal cartels. Closer to home, protecting our arctic sovereignty will offer some significant challenges.

If the Conservatives have been weak on foreign policy, they have achieved more on defence issues. The “Canada First Strategy” of 2008 provided general direction for the military in identifying dedicated missions and, most importantly, it increased funding. However, the document was very thin on policy and some of its spending commitments have been somewhat eroded by recent cost-cutting measures.

But the basics of defence policy do not change that much. Since the end of the Second World War, our approach has rested on three pillars: the defence of Canada, the defence of North America alongside the United States, and contributions to international peace and security. But the devil in defence policy is in the details – and there are many.

Our Navy desperately needs new ships. Last year’s National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy appeared to be a step forward. But while optimists see a strategy, pessimists see further delay. How long is it now going to take before we get new supply ships and new warships? Should the Arctic Offshore Patrol Ship be our first priority?

The Air Force has taken delivery of new transport planes and the long awaited maritime helicopters are on the way. That is all good. But the CF-18s must be replaced in the near future and the government has so far done a remarkably poor job of explaining why the Joint Strike Fighter is the right choice for Canada.

As for the Army, much change is underway. The current transformation exercise headed by LGen Andrew Leslie aims to strengthen the field force by reducing headquarters staff. While this will have an impact on the entire CF, the Army will be most affected. As well, Afghanistan has worn out a good portion of the Army’s equipment. The CF needs new patrol and armoured vehicles better suited to today’s threat environment. A simmering issue of profound importance is the future of Canada’s Army Reserve. The institution has been neglected and needs attention in the form of a re-examination of its roles, organization and funding.

It has been 17 years since Canadians had a full national debate involving the public and parliamentarians on foreign and defence policy. That is a perplexingly long hiatus for a country that generally sees itself as an example for the rest of the world.

When our friends and allies say “the world needs more Canada,” it is both a compliment and a criticism. They would like to see more Canadian diplomats, soldiers and aid workers as part of our contribution to international peace and security. The figures on aid and defence spending as a percentage of GDP do not lie. The fact is we could and should be doing more.

But decisions on what we do in the world are properly the domain of our elected representatives in Parliament. It is time they got engaged and led a public dialogue on these important questions. As our public finances improve, there will be more room for creativity in the pursuit of what we conceive to be Canada’s fundamental national interests. And creativity and focused attention is precisely what we need as we set our course in international affairs post Afghanistan.

David Pratt is Senior Vice President of Public Affairs for GCI Canada, the former Advisor to the Secretary General and Special Ambassador for the Canadian Red Cross, and former Minister of National Defence.
The Bad Guy of the Arctic

Written by: Stéphane Roussel

The Arctic, many observers are predicting, is likely to be the next area of conflict among powers eager to seize or secure access to a vast amount of strategic resources. Who is the bad guy in the Arctic region that is fueling this gloomy prediction? Russia, with its lack of respect for the environment, record of “provocation,” and spectacular initiatives such as the 2007 planting of a titanium flag at the bottom of the Arctic ocean under the North Pole? Or the US, guilty of a lack of interest and dragging its feet on the ratification of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)? Or even China, who is investing massively in Arctic research and icebreaking capability?

For some foreign observers, the answer is... Canada! Canadians like to perceive themselves as good international citizens, enjoying a reputation as a protector or a haven for oppressed peoples, a team player and a “peaceful realm” where “peace, order and good government” is the norm. Of course, Canadians can fight and do not hesitate to resort to force when necessary to make sure that good triumphs. But Canadians are not used to being depicted as a primary troublemaker at the international level.

So it is almost shocking to read words like those of the French journalist Olivier Truc: “Among the five Arctic countries, Canada is certainly the most aggressive” (Le Monde - Bilan géostratégique 2010 : 89). This comment is not unique. Canada is more and more often described as a country that is “militarizing the Arctic shamelessly” (L. Perabo, 2011) and highlighting the idea that “it is not the kind of militaristic [initiatives] expected of the peace-loving Canadians.” (E. Pilkington, The Guardian, 11 July 2007). Obviously, the long list of military investments (in equipment, infrastructure, exercises and personnel) announced by the Martin and Harper governments has not gone unnoticed. It has fuelled international accusations that Canada is “militarizing” the Arctic. For Canadians, these acquisitions and initiatives are usually perceived as legitimate and necessary, a “catch-up” operation after more than a decade of neglect. For foreigners, however, Canada is an active participant in a quasi-arms race in this region.

There is more. While Canadians still like to believe that their country actively practices multilateralism, its circumpolar activities point in the opposite direction – despite official discourse praising the Arctic Council. The worst “faux pas” took place in March 2010, when Canada invited the four other coastal states (Denmark, Norway, Russia and the US) for a meeting in Chelsea, Quebec, following a similar meeting in Ilulissat, Greenland, in 2008. While Ilulissat was simply viewed as an ad hoc meeting that allowed the five participants to reaffirm their commitment to international law and the peaceful settlement of conflicts, the Chelsea meeting was perceived as an attempt to institutionalize a forum that excluded other members, participants and observers of the Arctic Council. Minister Lawrence Cannon had difficulty justifying this diplomatic initiative. In the same vein, Canadians vetoed the European Commission’s application for permanent observer status at the Arctic Council, and they refused to support NATO discussions about Arctic security issues. These two vetoes were certainly justified by Canadian self-interests, but they probably reinforced the image of a country inhibiting multilateral processes instead of encouraging them. When linking these actions with other disappointing episodes, such as misguided allegations that the Russians violated international law during bomber flights and Canada’s lost bid for a seat on the UN Security Council, questions can be legitimately raised about Canada’s international reputation.

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Fortunately, few of the critiques of Canadian behaviour are coming from the United States. The majority are made by Russian authors, as well as Western Europeans whose only hope to play a significant role in the Arctic is to encourage broad multilateralism, reject any attempt to create a decision-making process restricted to the Arctic states and condemn any unilateral initiatives. Canadians can rightly reply that their attitudes reflect a legitimate need to defend national interests. After all, in the public imagination, it is the first time since the Klondike Gold Rush that a significant (and potentially very rich) portion of its national territory is directly at stake.

What are the consequences of this image crisis in Canada? Is this an indication that Canada has finally stopped acting like “an idealist boy scout” and accepted the rough game of realpolitik, where countries protect their national interests by all means, as many commentators were hoping for a long time? Promised Arctic investments show the world that Canada is serious about enhancing its military resources. The good old days of the Pearsonian multilateralism and peacekeeping seem to be gone for real. The real benefits of adopting such an attitude, however, must be weighed against the price that this could cost in terms of Canada’s peaceful reputation and multilateral credibility.

Moreover, from a political point of view, it is useful for the government to show to Canadians its determination to defend Canada’s interests against the aggressive Russians, the greedy Americans and the arrogant Europeans. But are Canadians ready to accept this new definition of the country’s international identity? The image of Canada as a nation of peacekeepers and a peaceful realm is deeply entrenched in Canadian identity. A quick look at the ten dollar bill reminds us of this.

Even if Canadians are not ready to change their self-perception, what about the rest of the world? A confident, assertive, “use it or lose it” message about Arctic sovereignty plays well at home, but are Canadians prepared to be characterized as the “bad guy” internationally?

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Announcements

CDFAI and Social Media

Over the past year CDFAI has branched out into the world of New Media. Our online presence has grown substantially through the use of Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin, and our Blog. The CDFAI Blog, the 3Ds moderated by Jack Granatstein, provides important, up to the minute commentary on issues relating to defence and foreign affairs. If you would like to contribute to the blog please send your submissions to contact@cdfai.org. We want to hear from you.

You can also join the conversation by visiting our Facebook page at http://www.facebook.com/CDFAI or following us on Twitter http://twitter.com/#!/CDFAI. You can also find us on Linkedin at http://www.linkedin.com/company/canadian-defence-and-foreign-affairs-institute.

Thank you for your support. With your help we look forward to continuing to raise the level of debate around issues of diplomacy, defence and development in Canada.

CDFAI Advisory Council

The CDFAI Advisory Council held its biannual meeting on June 14th in Ottawa. The committee, chaired by Denis Stairs, and including Perrin Beatty, Jocelyn Coulon, Robert Fowler, Jack Granatstein, Peter Harder, Dan Hays, Ray Henault, Sharon Hobson, Don Macnamara, John Manley, David Pratt and Elinor Sloan discussed ways to continue raising the profile of the Institute both within Canada, as well as internationally. The Council also held a reception on June 13th with some of the country’s foremost policy makers, thinkers and industrial leaders.

CDFAI is looking forward to utilizing the ideas of the Council as we determine our 2012 programming and research agenda.

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