



**THE 2007
ROSS ELLIS MEMORIAL LECTURES
IN MILITARY AND STRATEGIC STUDIES**

***“IS THERE A GRAND STRATEGY IN
CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY?”***

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LECTURE ONE

“Strategy and Grand Strategy”

June 12, 2007

Ladies and Gentlemen, let me begin by saying how pleased I am to be with you today and to have the privilege of delivering this year's Ellis Lectures, the ninth thus far. And please allow me to offer a special thanks to David Bercuson for inviting me to be part of this important lecture series. As you know, these lectures honour the memory of Lt. Colonel Ross Ellis, the Commander of the Calgary Highlanders. They are dedicated to his leadership abilities and military spirit. One cannot read his biography without being struck that this was someone who represented the very best qualities of a citizen soldier. Whether it was his military service during the Second World War (including the hard fought and strategically critical Battle of the Scheldt Estuary), or his service as an elected representative after the war, his life seems to have been an intense, passionate and uninterrupted commitment to his country and his fellow citizens. As we reflect on our own civic responsibilities during these turbulent times, we should draw inspiration from the passion and energy Ross Ellis displayed and re-dedicate ourselves to the very high ideals of citizenship and public service which he exemplified.

The focus of this lecture series is, of course, on military and strategic issues. Last summer, when David asked me to speak at this event, I must say that I was very intrigued by the subject he asked me to address. He said "I'd like you to answer the question: 'Is there a plan to Canadian foreign policy?'" Now please don't labour under the misapprehension that I was responsible for a question that I feel is ingenious in its simplicity. I was not. I give David full credit for identifying this particular area of inquiry. In fact, the more I read about the subject, the more I became convinced of its importance. Within this "research question," I was responsible for changing the word

“plan” to “grand strategy” primarily because I think it goes directly to the matter we are seeking to address.

In order to provide some structure to these three lectures, I have divided them up into three segments; three nights, three segments – so far so good. Tonight’s portion deals generally with the subject of strategy and grand strategy. I will seek to provide some definitions, some background and some historical examples of strategy and grand strategy from antiquity to modern times. Tomorrow evening, I propose to address some of the theoretical and historical aspects of Canadian grand strategy and will focus in on one particular period which I believe is rather pivotal. In the third and final lecture, I will offer up some thoughts on whether Canada currently has a grand strategy and the nature of the strategic environment we might expect in the years ahead.

Let me offer a disclaimer as well. I want to make it very clear that the comments I make are my personal views and in no way represent the views of the Canadian Red Cross or the International Red Cross Movement. As a neutral and impartial organization, the Red Cross eschews politics for some very good reasons. For the purposes of these lectures, I have been given what might be described as a temporary dispensation from my Red Cross neutrality although I don’t believe what I have to say is terribly controversial. So without any further delay, let me begin this little journey through what has become, at least for me, a very fascinating and important field of study.

For most people, “grand strategy” conjures up images of generals and admirals in smoke filled rooms pouring over very large maps and plotting the movements of army corps, naval task forces and massed formations of aircraft. As a practical concept,

“grand strategy” seems perfectly plausible for great powers – the United States, China and Russia. A half century ago, one might also have included Great Britain and France. And a half century before that, Germany would definitely have been on the list. But today, the idea of promoting a grand strategy for Canada would, it seem, leave one open to accusations of “delusions of grandeur.” Indeed, some might even suggest that the entire concept is “un-Canadian” in many respects.

As I will try to demonstrate through the course of these lectures, while grand strategies do indeed have a military component, they entail much more than just defence and security. And, far from being the exclusive domain of great powers, I will suggest to you (and I think this is strongly supported by the literature on the subject) that countries large and small should possess a grand strategy. Yale Professor Paul Kennedy has written at least a couple of books which address the subject of grand strategy. One of them, *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers* attracted considerable attention a few years back. The other, *Grand Strategies in War and Peace*, is a collection of essays on grand strategy and contains an introduction which provides an excellent definition of the concept. As Kennedy has observed, a grand strategy is by its very nature “a complex and multi-layered thing” which, I hasten to add, may extend over generations. But at a very basic level, a grand strategy is nothing more than a state’s (and a people’s) long term plan to survive and, one would hope, thrive in what can be an often chaotic and unpredictable world.

To better lay the groundwork for this discussion, let me try to provide some definitions of some commonly used terms that are typically part of this area of study. Because tactics and strategy have been important since the beginning of recorded

history, it is probably no coincidence that the words tactics and strategy are both Greek in origin. The former comes from the Greek *Taktikē*, or the art of organizing an army. The latter is derived from the Greek word *stratēgos*, which combines two words: *stratos* - army and *ago* - which is ancient Greek for leading or directing. "*Stratēgos*" was used to refer to a 'military commander' during the golden age of Athenian democracy. Suffice it to say that since their use in ancient Greece, there has been an evolution in how these terms have been defined.

In the 19th century, Carl von Clausewitz, the famous Prussian soldier/strategist and veteran of the Napoleonic Wars offered the following definitions of tactics and strategy from his book *Vom Krieg*, better known by its English title, *On War*. "Tactics," he said, "is the art of using troops in battle; strategy is the art of using battles to win wars." During the 1800's, the principal concern of battlefield commanders (as it had been for centuries before) was in how to seek advantage by maneuvering forces in open terrain. A more current view suggests that military tactics are defined as the operational use of forces in a particular combat situation. Military strategy, on the other hand, concerns itself with the overall means and plan for achieving a long-term outcome. At the risk of confusing things, there is another important term which entered the military lexicon in the first 20 to 30 years of the 20th century courtesy of Soviet military theorists during the Russian Civil War. It is the methodology that is referred to as "Operational Art" which is intended to translate strategic objectives into tactical missions.

In *Grand Strategies in War and Peace*, Kennedy notes the complexity around what appear to be relatively simple definitions. For instance, tactics can encompass the

techniques of combat that soldiers employ through to the maneuvering of entire armies or fleets - often referred to as 'grand tactics.' Also, a large single battle or campaign (the Somme or Normandy) is said to take place at the 'operational level' – midway between the tactical and the strategic. His point is that while tactics can be analyzed and understood at various levels, the same is true for strategy.

The preoccupation of rulers and military leaders with "strategy" can be traced back at least two and a half millennia. Sun Tzu's "The Art of War," another ancient Chinese work entitled "36 Strategies," Thucydides' "The History of the Peloponnesian Wars" and to a lesser extent Plato's "Republic" contain elements of tactics, strategy and even grand strategy. A soon to be published book by Yale Professor Charles Hill will in fact argue that one can find elements of grand strategy in other works from classical antiquity such as Homer's "Iliad," Aeschylus' "Oresteia Trilogy," Virgil's "Aeneid" and Livy's "The Rise of Rome."

It is probably not possible to speak of strategy and antiquity without at least a mention of some of the great strategists of the ancient era. I have already mentioned Sun Tzu, but others would include Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar and Hannibal. At the time of his death at age 33, Alexander's empire extended from Greece south to Egypt and east through Persia to India as a result of victories won in epic battles such as Granicus and Hydaspes. Let me draw to your attention a point of trivia that may be of interest. NATO and Canadian forces are currently operating out of Kandahar, a city Alexander the Great founded and named for himself in the 4th century B.C. The Pashto word for Alexander is Skandar.

Julius Caesar was of course at least partially responsible for transforming the Roman Republic into the Roman Empire with the conquest of Gaul and the initial invasions of Britain. The great conquerors Alexander and Caesar shared at least one trait: they were prone to weep at things we might consider odd. Plutarch wrote that: "Alexander cried when he heard Anaxarchus talk about the infinite number of worlds in the universe. One of Alexander's friends inquired about the cause of his distress to which he replied: "There are so many worlds, and I have not yet conquered even one." Similarly, Plutarch records that after reading some part of the history of Alexander, Caesar sat very pensively for a time and then burst into tears. His friends were taken aback and asked him why he was so upset. His reply was: "Do you think, 'I have not just cause to weep, when I consider that Alexander at my age had conquered so many nations, and I have all this time done nothing that is memorable?" All of which is to say that you don't become one of the great figures of history without setting the bar fairly high.

But, notwithstanding the accomplishments of Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar, the title "father of strategy" was given to Hannibal by a 19th century US military historian named Theodore Ayrault Dodge. It would appear that few have challenged that assessment. Why did the great Carthaginian general and commander rate this moniker?

First of all, Hannibal was no misty eyed warrior. The historical record provides no evidence of Hannibal moping around and blubbering about what he hadn't been able to conquer. His epic achievement came at the outbreak of the Second Punic War, when he marched his army, including war elephants, from Iberia (what is now Spain) over the

Pyrenees and the Alps and into northern Italy. He defeated the Romans in a series of battles at Trebia, Lake Trasimene and Cannae and maintained his army in Italy for over ten years without losing a major engagement and without any re-supply from Carthage in reinforcements or resources. If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, the Romans paid Hannibal the supreme compliment by adopting many aspects of his battle tactics.

Just how influential was Hannibal in the pantheon of military strategists? The 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica says this of Hannibal: "As to the transcendent military genius of Hannibal there cannot be two opinions. The man who for fifteen years could hold his ground in a hostile country against several powerful armies and a succession of able generals must have been a commander and a tactician of supreme capacity. In the use of stratagems and ambuscades (ambushes) he certainly surpassed all other generals of antiquity." Allow me to indulge in a little Hannibal trivia. It is said that both Napoleon and the Duke of Wellington regarded Hannibal as a 'gifted strategist.' The Schlieffen Plan, which was the basis of German strategy during the First World War, was said to have been inspired by Hannibal's tactics at Cannae. General George Patton thought he was the re-incarnation of Hannibal. And finally, General Norman Swartzkopf, Commander of Coalition Forces during the First Gulf War was quoted as saying, "The technology of war may change, the sophistication of weapons certainly changes. But those same principles of war that applied to the days of Hannibal apply today."

However, for as long as people have been engaged in armed conflict, strategy (and indeed grand strategy) has entailed considerably more than just a military dimension. In his introduction to Sun Tzu's "The Art of War," soldier and author Samuel B. Griffith wrote:

“Sun Tzu was well aware that combat involves a great deal more than the collision of armed men. ‘Numbers alone’, he said ‘confer no advantage.’ He considered the moral, intellectual and circumstantial elements of war to be more important than the physical, and cautioned kings and commanders not to place reliance on sheer military power. He did not conceive war in terms of slaughter and destruction; to take all intact, or as nearly intact as possible, was the proper objective of strategy.”

While the modern concept of “grand strategy” was unknown to Sun Tzu, his writings display a visceral understanding of it. He advised that, in the pursuit of national objectives, armed conflict was a very grave matter to be avoided if possible. It was, he said: “the province of life or death; the road to survival or ruin” to be undertaken only as a last resort. For Sun Tzu, wars were best concluded quickly. “There has never been a protracted war” he warned, “from which a country has benefited.” Achieving one’s aims and avoiding conflict was by far the most desirable outcome: “To subdue the enemy without fighting,” he said, “is the acme of skill.”

In the twenty-five centuries since Sun Tzu, the debates continue to rage surrounding how national objectives are best realized and what strategies are best employed in the anarchic world of international affairs. Clausewitz advanced the understanding of strategy by placing it within a broader context. A few of Clausewitz’s famous dictums illustrate the point. The comment for which he is best known was that: “War is nothing but a continuation of policy (politics) by other means.” Clausewitz defined war as “an act of violence intended to compel our opponent to fulfill our will.” The interplay between ‘ends and means’ that was central to Clausewitz’s thinking is illustrated by this comment:

“The subordination of the political point of view to the military would be contrary to common sense, for policy has declared the War; it is

the intelligent faculty, War only the instrument and not the reverse. The subordination of the military point of view to the political is, therefore, the only thing which is possible.”

Strategy, he defined as “the employment of the battle as the means toward the attainment of the object of war.”

Strategic thought – both in terms of strategy and grand strategy – evolved and developed in the 20th century. Clausewitz was certainly not without his detractors – one of whom was the great British strategist Sir Basil Liddell Hart. In his famous book, **Strategy**, Liddell Hart examined conflict from ancient Greece through to modern times. He identified what he felt were internal contradictions in Clausewitz’s work and concluded that Clausewitz’ definition of strategy as “the art of the employment of battles as a means to gain the object of war” was defective. He noted, for instance, that it “intrudes on the sphere of policy, or the higher conduct of the war, which must necessarily be the responsibility of the government and not of the military leaders it employs as its agents in the executive control of operations.” Another problem according to Liddell Hart was that it narrowed the meaning of strategy “to the pure utilization of battle, thus conveying the idea that battle is the only means to the strategical end.”

Part of the problem with Clausewitz’s theory according to Liddell Hart was that although he insisted that war was subordinate to policy, his idea of ‘absolute war’ and the unlimited application of force grievously under-mined that first principle. As Liddell Hart observed “a doctrine which began by defining war as only ‘a continuation of state policy by other means’ lead to the contradictory end of making policy the slave of strategy – and bad strategy at that.”

As Liddell Hart has pointed out, Clausewitz's work was a series of ideas which he had committed to paper over the course of twelve years. And in fairness to Clausewitz, there were indications that his thinking was progressing and maturing and that he was in the process of abandoning his original concept of 'absolute war' when his life was cut short by cholera in 1831. Before his death, he had sealed his work in packets that bore a rather significant and important caveat which read: "Should the work be interrupted by my death, then what is found can only be called a mass of conceptions not brought into form...open to endless misconceptions." Notwithstanding Clausewitz's proviso, his widow sent his manuscript off for publication in 1832.

The implications of Clausewitz's ideas – especially those concerning absolute war and the unlimited application of force – were, to say the least, rather significant. Clausewitz had many early disciples not the least of whom was Field Marshall Helmut von Moltke, Chief of the Prussian and then German General Staff for 30 years from 1857 to 1888. It was, of course, von Moltke who was the architect of the Germanic victories in the Austro-Prussian and Franco-Prussian wars and his military successes served as a springboard for the spread of Clausewitz's ideas of 'absolute war' among the general staffs of Europe. In fact, it is interesting to note that Moltke's nephew, Helmuth Johann Ludwig von Moltke, commanded the German army at the outbreak of World War I and, it would appear, was an ardent proponent of this uncles' thinking.

As Liddell Hart has concluded, the implications of Clausewitz's theories were enormous. Echoing Clausewitz's words, Liddell Hart observed, "In consequence, the way was left open to 'endless misconceptions' far in excess of his anticipation – for the universal adoption of the theory of unlimited war has gone far to wreck civilization. The

teachings of Clausewitz, taken without understanding, largely influenced both the causation and character of World War I. Thereby it led on, all too logically, to World War II." Liddell Hart, as you can see, had some rather strong opinions on rather large issues.

Inasmuch as von Moltke the elder was a follower of Clausewitz, he was not uncritical of his views. He attempted to refine Clausewitz's definition of strategy and described it as "the practical adaptation of the means placed at a general's disposal to the attainment of the object in view." In von Moltke's formulation, military strategy is clearly a means to a political end. Liddell Hart's concise definition of strategy borrows heavily from von Moltke. Strategy, he submits, is "the art of distributing and applying military means to fulfill the ends of policy."

According to Paul Kennedy, one of Liddell Hart's seminal contributions to the subject of strategy and grand strategy was refining the definition of what constitutes "victory." It was also in identifying that the primary role of political and military leaders in grand strategy was to relate "ends and means". As Liddell Hart explained:

"Victory in the true sense implies that the state of peace, and of one's people, is better after the war than before. Victory in this sense is only possible if a quick result can be gained or if a long effort can be economically proportioned to the national resources. The end must be adjusted to the means."

From such a definition, it would be hard to conclude that there were any victors of the First World War save perhaps the United States. For Liddell Hart, grand strategy involved considerably more than just the organization and prosecution of a war effort.

As he stated:

"Fighting power is but one of the instruments of grand strategy – which should take account of and apply the power of financial pressure, of diplomatic pressure, of commercial pressure, and,

not least of ethical pressure, to weaken the opponent's will...It should not only combine the various instruments, but so regulate their use as to avoid damage to the future state of peace – for its security and prosperity.”

A contemporary of Liddell Hart was Edward Mead Earle whose book ***Makers of Modern Strategy: Military Thought from Machiavelli to Hitler*** also challenged some of the existing dogma on strategic issues. Writing in the 1940's, Mead Earle expanded the definition of strategy and grand strategy and the debate around the non-military components of conflict. For Mead Earle, strategy was:

“the art of controlling and utilizing the resources of a nation – or a coalition of nations – including its armed forces, to the end that its vital interests shall be effectively promoted and secured against enemies, actual, potential, or merely presumed. The highest type of strategy – sometimes called grand strategy – is that which so integrates the policies and armaments of the nation that the resort to war is either rendered unnecessary or is undertaken with the maximum chance of victory.”

Whether one is discussing strategy or grand strategy, both concepts are rooted in the idea of ‘ends and means.’ Although almost 200 years separate their writing, it is doubtful that Clausewitz would have any difficulty with Yale Professor John Lewis Gaddis’ definition of strategy which the latter described as “the process by which ends are related to means, intentions to capabilities, objectives to resources.” For those of you interested in further reading on this subject, it should be noted that the three Yale professors I’ve referred to thus far – Kennedy, Hill and Gaddis – teach a course in grand strategy within Yale’s International Security Studies Program which specializes in grand strategy. I would also venture to say parenthetically that more attention should be paid to this subject in Canadian universities and schools of strategic studies.

In *Grand Strategies in War and Peace*, Kennedy honed the earlier definitions provided by Clausewitz, Mead Earle and Liddell Hart. In summarizing and synthesizing their views, Kennedy further expanded the scope and definition of grand strategy:

“To begin with, a true grand strategy was now concerned with peace as much as (perhaps even more than) with war. It was about the evolution and integration of policies that should operate for decades, or even for centuries. It did not cease at a war’s end, nor commence at its beginning. This was, Liddell Hart, observed, the real point of Clausewitz’s observation that war was “a continuation of policy by other means.”

The second component of Kennedy’s definition broadened the Liddell Hart discussion of “ends and means.” For Kennedy, it was not just about how to “win a war” but rather coping with the costs (in the widest sense) and the general issue of “husbanding and managing natural resources.” A third component involved the role of diplomacy in war and peace. The object was clear and simple - the need to win the support of neutrals, reduce the number of one’s enemies and increase one’s friends. The last element, but by no means the most inconsequential, was the issue of “national morale and political culture.” As important on the battlefield as off, it involved “a population’s willingness to support the purposes and burdens of the war – or the cost of large defence forces in peacetime.” Over the years, he said, grand strategy has come to include the non-military dimensions of conflict and the underlying political purposes motivating a state’s actions in the international arena. Kennedy summed up his definition as follows:

“The crux of grand strategy lies therefore in policy, that is, in the capacity of the nation’s leaders to bring together all of the elements, both military and nonmilitary, for the preservation and enhancement of the nation’s long term (that is in wartime and peacetime) best interests....it operates at various levels, political, strategic, operational, tactical, all interacting with each other to advance (or retard) the primary aim.”

Kennedy's writings make it clear that grand strategy is not the exclusive preserve of great powers. Any state, regardless of its size, has vital and fundamental long term interests it must protect. So not only is it possible for a middle or smaller power to possess a grand strategy, it is essential. The strategies states employ to protect these interests vary greatly, but those that are successful always balance 'ends and means.' As George Kennan, perhaps one of America's greatest diplomats and foreign policy strategists, once noted, "Capabilities are finite, interests must be also." Where the interests of great and smaller powers converge, opportunities exist for both to positively influence outcomes especially within alliance arrangements. For a middle or smaller power, its diplomatic efforts may result in influence with the great power well beyond that which it might otherwise be expected to wield. And for the great power, the support of middle or smaller powers has the potential to augment its own strategy so that the total can indeed be greater than the sum of its parts.

Kennedy's important contribution to the subject of grand strategy was then to substantially expand the definition taking it well beyond the realm of a strictly military and foreign policy concern and well into domestic policy. Experience also suggests that for a state's grand strategy to be successful, it must enjoy a high level of acceptance by political leaders of all persuasions and indeed the general public. It must have a clear conception of that state's interests and values and must convey a unity of purpose that includes both clarity and predictability.

Let me now provide a couple of examples of grand strategies from some well known empires. Let's start with Rome. Some have suggested that in the early years of the Roman Republic prior to Imperium Romanum that Rome did not have a grand

strategy. At that time, armies were raised on an 'as required' or reactive basis. There were, at the time, no long term political goals and no permanent military capabilities to support those goals which are typically a hallmark of grand strategy. The earliest manifestations of a Roman grand strategy appear to emerge with the Punic Wars mentioned earlier. While Hannibal was playing havoc with Roman generals up and down the Italian peninsula, the Romans decided wisely to attack the Carthaginians in their homeland (modern Tunisia). Hannibal returned to Carthage at the behest of the Carthaginian Senate where his ragtag army of local citizens and veterans of the Roman campaigns were decisively defeated by the Roman General Scipio Africanus at the Battle of Zama in 202 B.C. Fifty or so years later during the Third Punic War, Carthage, by now disarmed, was razed by the Romans.

In an essay I would recommend by Arthur Ferrill entitled the ***Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire***, he quotes from a tongue and cheek historian named Will Cuppy who wrote a book called ***The Decline and Fall of Practically Everybody***, the Roman and Carthaginian military systems were compared. Cuppy said "The Romans and Carthaginians were very different in character and temperament. The Carthaginians had no ideals. All they wanted was money and helling around and having a big time. The Romans were stern and dignified, living hard frugal lives and adhering to the traditional Latin virtues, gravitas, pietas, simplicitas, and adultery."

A more serious study of the grand strategy of the Roman Empire was conducted by Edward Luttwak in the mid 1970s in a book with the same title. Described as probably one of the best works on Roman history written in the 20th century, Luttwak suggested that Imperial Rome's grand strategy passed through three phases. The first

was what could be called the flexible phase, where borders were not clearly established and, where they did exist, were defended by a combination of Roman Legions or the armies of local kings and client states.

The second phase Luttwak described as “preclusive security” which was a rigid-frontier defence system which dated from the second century and which was best exemplified by Hadrian’s Wall. This perimeter security was no mean feat. During this period, the circumference of the empire was approximately 10,000 km. It was defended solely by Roman legions since the client states had been absorbed within the empire. The problem with this approach from Luttwak’s standpoint was that it created a “Maginot Line” mentality. It also meant that attack from without or civil war or rebellion from within meant shifting troops from one part of the perimeter (albeit along an established road system) while leaving another part of the perimeter undefended.

This system was severely tested in the third century by both civil war and external foes. Rome was rife with internal instability for a fifty year period from 235 to 284. During this time, Rome had 20 emperors only two of whom died of natural causes. The barbarians, although not quite at the gates, were definitely present on the frontiers and one province Dacia was permanently lost to the empire at this point. It took the Emperor Diocletian to restore political stability and security at the end of the third century.

The third phase of Roman grand strategy appeared in the fourth and fifth centuries and was largely the work of Constantine the Great. According to Luttwak, it can best be described as “defence in depth.” Constantine created a large army with a central mobile striking force based upon a strong cavalry component. This field army

could move quickly when required to bolster frontier defences which, by this point in the empire, were lightly defended because of the manpower needs of this central reserve. From a military standpoint, what sustained the Roman Empire was the extraordinarily effective battle tactics of its army, its well-developed logistical system and its engineering skills especially related to siege warfare.

But as we know, grand strategy consists of more than simply military considerations. It also entails political, diplomatic and economic components. On an economic level, war was generally quite profitable for Rome as they conquered the richest areas of the Mediterranean. But there were exceptions to this. Britain, the Rhineland and Dacia were definitely cost centres for the empire and there was never any return on the military investment to the Imperial treasury. Records show that in the second century, military expenditures absorbed about half the Roman budget of 800 million sesterces. To give some idea as to value, the average Roman soldier was paid about 900 sesterces per annum in the first century. But Romans were not taxed heavily with average taxes amounting to about 10 percent of income. What was critical to Roman grand strategy was the peace and stability that Rome brought to conquered lands – the famous Pax Romana - and the loyalty the Romans engendered among the local populations of conquered territories. From areas that had been pacified came a ready source of recruits which could be utilized to fight in areas that were less amenable to the idea of Roman rule.

The eventual fall of the Roman Empire in 476 AD is attributable to various causes. One source indicates that at last count there were about 210 different theories for the fall of Rome. These include, but clearly not limited to, the decline of civic virtue,

the rise of Christianity, cultural dilution, moral decay, and one that I'm really fond of is the invention of the horseshoe in Germany in the second century which was reputed to have revolutionized the use of cavalry. But Arther Ferrill, whose work I mentioned earlier, believes strongly that the defence in depth grand strategy gradually fell apart. The frontiers were neglected, soldiers were placed in cities where they were not needed and where they became a burden. Importantly, the discipline and tactics of the Roman Legions declined as the Romans began to use more and more Germanic troops to supplement their strength. By the end of the fourth century, it was estimated that about half of a Roman field army was composed of barbarians. So in the end, the central striking force was unable to respond and the old frontiers of the Roman Empire ceased to have any meaning or any defence.

The fact that the Roman Empire lasted for 500 years, and that the Roman Republic existed for 500 years before that, is reason enough to try to better understand the Roman phenomena. The secret of its success seems to have been a series of grand strategies which steadily evolved and adapted on a military, political, diplomatic, economic and even cultural level to meet the changing needs and circumstances of the day. But the last word on the subject must go to Edward Gibbon author of the classic work "The Decline and fall of the Roman Empire." Gibbon said "the decline of Rome was the natural and inevitable effect of immoderate greatness (what a great phrase). Prosperity," he said, "ripened the principle of decay; the causes of destruction multiplied with the extent of conquest; and, as soon as time or accident had removed the artificial supports, the stupendous fabric yielded to the pressure of its own weight."

I would like to say at least a few words about Pax Britannica, because, like Pax Romana, it too had a profound impact on the Western World. Pax Britannica is usually associated with the period from 1805 or alternatively 1815 to 1914. The 1805 date marks the Battle of Trafalgar, where Admiral Horatio Nelson defeated a combined French and Spanish fleet off the coast of Spain to launch a period of unrivalled sea supremacy by Great Britain. And, of course, 1815 marks the Battle of Waterloo and the end of the Napoleonic Wars. The latter date 1914, of course, marks the beginning of the First World War, which began a rather precipitous decline in British power and empire which was all but completed with the conclusion of the Second World War. Nevertheless, many observers believe the success of British grand strategy during this period was based upon three inter-related factors. The first involved control of the naval trade routes and unchallenged sea power. The second was the policy of laissez-faire liberalism, the growth in British industrial power and the acquisition of colonies. And the third was in the realm of finance where the British system of banking, insurance, stock markets and foreign investment made London the financial capital of the world.

The success of Pax Britannica and the British Empire is also noteworthy for its size, if not necessarily its longevity. At its zenith in 1921, the British Empire covered about 36.6 million km² or about a quarter of Earth's total land area. Within its boundaries resided a population of about 458 million people, again about one-quarter of the world's population. In terms of historic empires, the British Empire ranks first narrowly edging out the Mongol Empire of Kubla Khan of the 13th century which at its height covered 33.2 million km². It may interest you to know that the third largest empire in human history was the Soviet empire which at its peak between 1945 and 1989 contained 26.1

million km². Since I mentioned the Roman and Macedonian empires, it is worth noting that the former under the Emperor Trajan and the latter under Alexander the Great rank 18th and 20th respectively with 5.6 and 5.4 million km².

Like Roman grand strategy's reliance on the skills and tactics of the Roman legion, British grand strategy relied on the skills and tactics of British seamanship honed over several hundred years. The excellence of the British Navy like that of the Roman Legion meant that they were also a superb and cost effective means of projecting power. It was not just the quality of the British Navy that was a factor, but its size as well. As Stalin said of World War II Soviet tank production, "quantity has a quality all its own." During the 19th century, there were periods when the British Navy was as large as the next three or four largest navies. And by 1905, on the eve of the First World War, Britain still had a navy equal to that of the next two largest navies combined. For much of its history, Great Britain's 'blue water' grand strategy meant that it could defend itself very easily from invasion by maintaining control of the English Channel and North Sea. In terms of its merchant navy, by the mid 19th century over one third of the world's maritime trade was carried in British ships and this figure was increasing.

Notwithstanding British command of the high seas and its investment in naval assets, what is quite remarkable about the period of British supremacy in the 19th century was how little it actually spent on its military. In 1816, Britain had 255,000 military personnel and ranked second after Russia. By 1880, that figure had declined slightly to 248,000, but Britain's rank among the major powers was down to fifth. The "poor, bloody infantry" were poor indeed and the British Army was a neglected institution for a good portion of the century as the lackluster performance of British

troops in the Crimean War amply illustrated. In the fifty or so years after Waterloo, British military spending averaged about 2-3 percent of GNP which was less than 10 percent of the overall budget. So from a military standpoint, it is hard to come to any other conclusion than that the British Empire was run on a shoe string budget and that it was certainly not based upon preponderant land forces or overwhelming military hegemony.

Britain's economic power began to emerge in the 18th century, but really started to outpace competitors in the 19th. As Paul Kennedy noted in *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*:

“Between 1760 and 1830, the United Kingdom was responsible for around ‘two-thirds of Europe’s industrial growth of output’, and its share of world manufacturing production leaped from 1.9 percent to 9.5 percent; in the next thirty years, British industrial production pushed that figure to 19.9 percent, despite the spread of the new technology to other countries in the West. Around 1860, which was probably when the country reached its zenith in relative terms, the United Kingdom produced 53 per cent of the world’s iron and 50 percent of its coal and lignite, and consumed just under half the raw cotton output of the globe. With two percent of the world’s population and ten per cent of Europe’s, the United Kingdom would seem to have had a capacity in modern industries equal to 40-45 percent of the world’s potential and 55-60 percent of that in Europe.”

With the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 and the Navigation Acts in 1849, the way was clear for freer trade which opened up the British market to unfettered competition. It could manufacture products so cheaply and efficiently they could undersell comparable goods in foreign markets produced locally. In addition, with stable political conditions in overseas markets, Britain could enjoy prosperity through free trade with or without having to rely on colonization. But colonization proceeded nevertheless,

and between 1815 and 1865, it was estimated that the British Empire grew by approximately 100,000 square miles per year. The growth in British financial power during this period was equally impressive. In the decade after the Battle of Waterloo, British foreign investments averaged 6 million pounds per year. By mid-century, they had risen to 30 million pounds per year and by the 1870's to 75 million pounds per year. The return on investment by the 1870's in terms of interest and dividends was about 50 million pounds per year. This was largely re-invested in what became, as Kennedy has noted, "a virtuous upward spiral which not only made Britain ever wealthier, but gave a continual stimulus to global trade and communications."

Gibbon's observations about the fall of the Roman Empire could equally be applied to the British especially his remark that "as soon as time or accident had removed the artificial supports, the stupendous fabric yielded to the pressure of its own weight." The accident for Britain was the First World War which grievously drained it of manpower and resources. The Second World War issued the 'coup de grâce'. At its conclusion, with anti-imperial sentiment running high in the colonies and the homeland, the proverbial end was near. The great Canadian writer George Woodcock captured it well when he said "the Empire was like an ailing old women, short of money but rich in jewels, with the relatives growing impatient for the estate, and not above hastening the funeral."

Thank you for your attention this evening. Let me simply conclude this lecture by saying that I hope my comments having given you some appreciation of the concepts of strategy and grand strategy. As I will try to demonstrate in tomorrow's lecture, British and then subsequently American grand strategy had a profound impact on Canada's

strategic situation; the implications of which are very much a part of our contemporary political discourse. I hope you will join me again tomorrow.