Middlepowerism in the Post-Cold War Era: A Critique of Axworthy's Security Policy

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Introduction

Historically, Canadian foreign and security policy has been preoccupied with considerations of Canada's dependence on, and hence vulnerability to, the international system. The maintenance of its ties with the US and Great Britain has always been a priority; yet Canada has also sought to maximize its influence in the international arena. It has done this, in part, through the support of rules-based multilateral forums such as the United Nations (UN) and through the utilization of an innovative and flexible style of diplomacy.

The concept of middle power has been associated with Canada since World War II and has been applied in Canadian foreign policy studies in a number of different ways. However, middle power is defined in this article as a pattern of behaviour that is used to offset Canada's dependence on the international system. The decision-maker's conception of middle power and consequent application of middle power is thus variable, while the concept itself remains remarkably consistent. The focus of this article is specifically on the security dimensions of Canadian foreign policy, which is appropriate given the origins of discussions of Canada as a middle power. This article critically evaluates Canada's current foreign policy under Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. It seeks to determine whether Axworthy's policy choices have built on traditional aspects of middle power, or whether his foreign policy represents a break with middle power.

The article first evaluates the concept of middle power. This leads to a discussion of many of the main elements of Axworthy's foreign policy, specifically his focus on 'soft power' and human security. An effort is made to define these important concepts and place them within the context of current trends in Canadian security policy. Finally, the article evaluates two case studies of Canadian security policy: the 1997 treaty to ban anti-personnel land mines and Canada-North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) relations.

Middle Power and Canadian Foreign Policy

The label "middle power" originated in the World War II environment. Countries such as Canada argued that although they were not equal to the great powers, their contribution to the war earned them status in the international system above lesser powers. As Lester B. Pearson stated towards the end of W.W.II,

Canada is achieving, I think, a very considerable position as a leader, if not the leader, among a group of States which are important enough to be necessary to the Big Four but not important enough to be accepted as one of that quartet.[1]

Thus, the concept of middle power had a political foundation in the desire of countries like Canada to have a position of influence in the international system defined in terms of their capabilities. The principle of functionalism was at the core of this belief. As Tom Keating explains,

The fundamental idea [of functionalism] was that decision-making responsibility had to be shared and that it should be shared by those who were most capable of making a contribution. The government had indicated its willingness to take on greater responsibilities. In return it wanted recognition and influence.[2]

Functionalism denotes a quantitative approach to middle power. Many studies have utilized such an approach. For example, Peyton Lyon and Brian W. Tomlin's 1979 book, *Canada as an International Actor*, evaluates several power indices, including diplomatic importance and geographic location. Based on their analysis, Lyon and Tomlin conclude that Canada should be regarded as a major power.[3]

Despite such attempts at operationalization, studies such as Lyon and Tomlin's are unconvincing, for power, by its nature, is a relative concept and is consequently impossible to measure empirically. As Kim Nossal states,

any assessment of a state's power will always be subjective and, thus, variable. Part of the subjectivity stems from the fact that assessing a nation's power is a fundamentally *political* enterprise, for how one views a state's power has inexorable political implications. In political terms, this task is not quite as difficult, and is often applied.[4]

It is this political nature of power that causes studies that attempt to be scientific or objective to lose credibility.

In spite of the weaknesses of these approaches, the label of middle power has remained. Some have gone as far as arguing that middle power is an 'ideology' of foreign policy.[5] This view is based on normative visions about Canada's role as a middle power. Canada is viewed as less selfless and more 'virtuous', according to students of the concept of middle powers.[6] Canada's concern with the stability of the international system and the diplomatic influence that it has been able to exercise in many issues are perceived to be consistent with this normative vision. While this may appear to be an exaggerated claim, the normative view of middle powers has had some following. In many ways, it has been used to justify a certain type of policy in the international system; a certain activism that many would claim is beyond the capabilities of Canada. However, there are dangers of basing middle power on normative assumptions. As Alan Henrickson argues,

a country that acts too consciously as a 'helpful fixer' or 'peacemaker' may quickly run the risk of ridicule, or worse, irrelevance to the general processes of what is going on in the world. A normative view of middle powers simply will not do.[7]

Thus, normative assumptions raise questions regarding the ability of a middle power to effectively pursue its interests in the international system, particularly if it does not have the

necessary resources.[8] To be tied to such assumptions would limit Canada's ability to act effectively and weigh its policy alternatives pragmatically.

A behavioural definition of middle power has been put forward as another possible approach to conceptualizing Canadian foreign policy. This variation is based on a specific content and style of foreign policy. It is not tied to a normative project surrounding the 'virtues' of Canadian middle power, nor is it an attempt to measure Canada's power. Andrew F. Cooper, Richard A. Higgott and Kim Richard Nossal have described the style of behaviour that has characterized middle powers, in their book on Australia and Canada as middle powers. They identify middle power behaviour as,

[the] tendency "to pursue multilateral solutions to international problems, [the] tendency to embrace compromise positions in international disputes, [the] tendency to embrace notions of 'good international citizenship' to guide diplomacy'. [9]

However, while this definition claims to move away from the pitfalls of other conceptions of middle power, it does fall into the same basic trap. Cooper, Higgott and Cooper provide a critique of other approaches to middle power and a compelling case for the concept of middle power and its importance to the study of foreign policy. Yet, their behavioural approach does not offer a great deal of clarity when applied to Canadian foreign policy. Their approach becomes blurred when subjected to analysis by other concepts of middle power. As mentioned above, studies of power are inherently relative and often attached to a normative project and thus not compatible with an objective analysis. Consequently, it is difficult to utilize any of the traditional conceptions of middle power when looking at Canadian foreign policy.

Despite the analytic clutter surrounding the study of middle power, the concept remains an important part of Canadian foreign policy studies. A model based on the decision-maker's conception of middle power best captures the essence of what middle power can offer. This model is not quantitative, normative, nor is it behavioural. Rather, middle power is defined as a pattern of behaviour that is used to offset Canadian dependence on other actors in the international community and its vulnerabilities to the international system. As a consequence of this vulnerability, Canada has pursued a foreign policy that attempts to promote international stability. This effort is pursued as an acknowledgment that international stability will, in turn, affect Canadian well-being. This 'internationalism' is evident in its multilateral approach to foreign policy.[10] Canadian foreign policy is not completely multilateral in nature but it is a dominant trend. The reasoning behind this preference is rooted in the rules-based nature of multilateral organizations, such as NATO and the UN. Within such a context, disparity in power tends to matter less; at least that was the assumption that Canadian policy-makers made when participating in international organizations in the post-W.W.II environment.[11]

Many tactics have been employed by practitioners of Canadian foreign policy in their application of middle power. Charles-Philippe David and Stephane Roussel point out that focusing on areas in which Canada has particular interests or 'special expertise' is a criterion that can be used to characterize a middle power.[12] Canada's foreign policy has thus been pragmatic and flexible in view of its constraints. This can be seen in the role that Canada has played in the international community, avoiding high-profile public initiatives which are viewed to be counterproductive. In

light of this, any high-profile initiatives have been "the exception and not the rule of Canadian diplomacy."[13]

Canadian Middle Power and the Security Agenda

Canada has formed its security policy with the constraints of the international system in mind and has utilized an innovative and *ad hoc* approach that focuses on its strengths. Its security agenda has been dominated by the multilateral impulse described above. Canada has sought two broad objectives in its security agenda: strengthening its own peace and security through membership in multilateral alliances, and encouraging world order by strengthening international institutions such as the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).[14] Again, this is with the recognition that Canadian well-being depends on international stability. The tendency to form 'like-minded' coalitions in order to maximize Canadian interests has thus been a central part of Canadian policy. It has preferred safety in numbers and the rules-based nature of multilateral forums as noted above.

There has been a great degree of continuity in Canada's approach to the international system, even though the international agenda has changed as a result of the end of the Cold War.[15] These changes have not only altered perceptions but have led to an expansion of the 'security agenda' to include issues that were excluded in the Cold War context of state security and 'high politics'.[16] With the expansion of security to include issues that were traditionally conceived of as 'low' politics, such as economic and environmental issues, many middle powers perceived that they had the ability to wield greater influence. Therefore, two trends can be identified. First, the diffusion of power has increased state vulnerability to a vast variety of threats no longer obscured by the stability of a bipolar system. Second, the changing international agenda can be perceived as an opportunity for a country such as Canada to play a larger role vis-à-vis the international community. In its current policy, Canada has acknowledged the first and embraced the second. This policy stance is evaluated below.

There is widespread debate over the expansion of the security agenda. However, in theory and, to a lesser extent, in practice, Canadian policy has predominantly upheld the idea of an expanded security agenda. As Hal Klepak outlines, "[Canadian] security is much more than defence policy alone, and involves dealing with any threats to core values and institutions."[17] Canadian policy-makers have paid more attention to notions of *international* rather than *national* security, differentiating themselves from other states that were tied to *national* security in the military sense, such as the United States.[18] The reasons for this different perception of security stem from circumstances that are unique to the Canadian experience. As Franklyn Griffiths puts it,

Remoteness from the scene of warfare, comparative military inability, tension between two founding peoples, and the presence of an adjacent and friendly but potentially overwhelming superpower have all conspired to prevent Canadians from becoming resolutely attached to a military view of security.[19]

Canada has formulated its foreign and security policy from within this context.

The *collective security* notions that dominated the post-W.W.II period emphasized the more traditional concern with military-security issues, particularly as they related to European multilateral, political-military institutions such as NATO.[20] Much of Canada's post-war security policy focused on collective security in this sense.[21] However, a more expanded notion of security developed alongside this more traditional vision of security. The concept of *cooperative security* has emerged in Canadian policy rhetoric, pushed both regionally and internationally.[22] David B. Dewitt outlines the focus of cooperative security as,

inclusiveness, preventative diplomacy, reassurance, confidence-building, functional cooperation, shared concerns, and the effort to build shared norms in order to strengthen both military and non-military security and to complement, co-exist with, and in some instances replace, bilateral security arrangements.[23]

This definition of security emphasizes a more *cooperative* approach to the international system that is consistent with Canada's preferred style of policy, and is thus consistent with the pragmatic tendencies of middle power. It is not surprising that Canadian security analysts moved towards this definition given Canada's circumstances in the international system.

Regardless of this conceptualization of security, Canadian policy-makers have not firmly settled upon one particular definition of security. For a variety of reasons, the rhetoric does not appear to match the practice of Canadian foreign policy. This is due primarily to Canada's vulnerability to the international system, which limits its ability to set the agenda. It is also due to Canada's limited resources and limited contribution to peacekeeping exercises and aid programs put in place by the international community.[24] Indeed, in many cases, Canada's policy is *ad hoc* and inconsistent with a specific framework of security, beyond its overarching security objective.

A third conception of security-*common security*– has entered Canadian security discourse in the 1990s. It is not completely clear whether this view challenges the more traditional cooperative security approach but it does show the desire to adapt to changing international circumstances. Common security is the view that the safety and well-being of Canadians depends on "the capacity to cooperate in resolving tightly interconnected military, economic, environmental, and other transboundary processes which serve to obliterate the distinction between domestic and foreign affairs."[25] This viewpoint fits into the increasingly complex and expanding security agenda of the 1990s, where new issues are incorporated into Canada's security agenda. Thus, common security needs to be considered seriously in discussions of Canadian security policy to provide a more substantive account of what it means in practical terms.

None of these labels have analytic relevance unless they are played out in policy substance, and as of yet there is little evidence to favour one over the other in identifying a Canadian security framework.[26] The most likely conclusion is that none of these frameworks is dominant as they lack clear definition and evaluation of how they are to be put into practice. There are also political circumstances in which these apparently competing conceptions of security must be set. A probable assessment is that the change of government from the Progressive Conservatives to the Liberals in the early 1990s caused the reevaluation of security toward common security, as the Liberals sought to individualize their foreign policy initiatives. Thus, while they have added more rhetoric to debates about what comprises security, they have added little in terms of foreign

policy practice. Indeed, Lloyd Axworthy, Canada's current Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, has complicated matters by adding the notion of *human security* to the already large discourse on Canadian security.

Soft Power and Human Security

Lloyd Axworthy has interpreted the changing nature of the international system and its increasing complexity as a reason for Canada to play a more active role in the international system. According to Axworthy, Canada has no choice in view of its qualities and history but to make a commitment to the international community for it is on this commitment that Canada's very survival depends."[27] One of his core beliefs is that Canada's vulnerability to the system is a factor that continues to require Canadian activism in international affairs. The qualities that Axworthy is referring to include Canada's image, ideas, experience forging coalitions, and ability to take advantage of the opportunities that are provided by information technology.[28] Although there are some obvious political objectives behind Axworthy's rhetoric, there are some real policy implications for Canadian security concerns.

As indicated, Canada's security agenda has embraced an expanded definition beyond the traditional military concerns of most states. The current international environment lacks the stabilizing effects of the bipolar system that characterized the Cold War. While nuclear war amongst the superpowers is no longer the preeminent threat to international stability, other threats have come to the forefront of the international community's concerns. Intra-state conflict is now added to inter-state conflict as a major part of international reality, as are transnational threats from international crime, drug trafficking and human rights violations. It is from within this context that Axworthy has sought to forge a position for Canada in the international community.

A major part of Axworthy's agenda centers on the notions of *human security.* He has defined human security as including,

security against economic privation, an acceptable quality of life, and a guarantee of fundamental human rights…At a minimum, human security requires that basic needs are met, but it also acknowledges the sustained economic development, human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, good governance, sustainable development and social equity are as important to global peace as arms control and disarmament.[29]

This appears to be a departure from the traditional conceptions of state-based security. However, Axworthy emphasizes that human security and state security are 'two sides of the same security coin'.[30] Thus, security has been expanded to include human security recognizing that increased complexity of threats in the international system is a potential cause of international stability. Threats to the individual are consequently viewed as being destabilizing to the state itself. The events of the recent crisis in Kosovo, with the plight of ethnic Albanian refugees, and the continued instability of the region are indicative of the importance of human security.

Beyond focusing international attention on issues relating to the individual, it is not yet known what human security adds to the study of international relations. The phrase 'human security'

was first used in a 1994 United Nations Development Program Human Development Report, which extended an extremely broad definition of the concept, including economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political security.[31] For the most part, the analytical basis of human security has been poorly defined but initiatives to limit the human cost of conflict have been a priority for Canada.[32] Several scholars have been working towards outlining a specific definition of human security but research in the area is still required.[33] Such research will become increasingly relevant as international networks of trade and communication permeate state boundaries and as the state finds itself challenged in its ability to protect individuals from these external forces. Also, there are instances where the state is not the provider of security but, rather, acts as the threat to the security of the individual or group of individuals. Cases such as ethnic cleansing in Yugoslavia make this all too clear. Thus, this is an important area for study, as well as a central part of Axworthy's agenda. The implications of human security for Canadian policy are made clear below.

A crucial component of Axworthy's agenda of human security and his activist approach to foreign policy are the ideas of *soft power*. This concept was identified by Joseph S. Nye in his discussion of the decline of American hegemonic power in *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*. He has articulated his ideas in several forums and defines soft power as,

the ability to achieve desired outcomes in international affairs through attraction rather than coercion. It works by convincing others to follow or getting them to agree to, norms and institutions that produce the desired behaviour. Soft power can rest on the appeal of one's ideas or the ability to set the agenda in ways that shape the preferences of others. If a state can make its power legitimate in the perceptions of others and establish international institutions that encourage them to channel or limit their activities, it may not need to expend as many of its costly traditional economic or military resources.[34]

The difference between 'hard' power (that is, economic and military resources) and soft power is really one of degree. Hard power is the ability to get others to do what they would otherwise not do through 'threats or rewards'.[35] Soft power, on the other hand, is the ability to achieve goals through attraction, and not coercion.[36] In this case, others will want what you want as they are attracted to your ideas, culture, or your "ability to set the agenda through standards and institutions that shape the preferences of others."[37] It is the ability of the United States to mobilize the resources of soft power, along with the more traditional 'hard' power resources that makes it 'bound to lead', according to Nye.

Axworthy has taken the concept of soft power and applied it within the Canadian context. His definition of soft power applies and extends the definition offered by Nye. He argues that it "blurs or even counters the perception of traditional power assets such as military force, economic might, resources and population,"[38] or hard power resources. According to Axworthy, Canada's soft power is obtained through networking and coalition building, and its ability to exploit the benefits of information technologies. This is a "new" tool that Canada can use to provide leadership in the international community in specific issue areas. "New" tools, such as soft power, are necessary in the face of the growing uncertainty of the international system. Other tools that augment Canada's soft power capabilities include:

-forming "coalitions of the willing," sometimes to deal with a single important issue;

-involving non-state actors, such as NGOs and the private sector, on issues where they can work as or more effectively than governments;

-using new technology to achieve foreign policy goals more rapidly, more effectively, and at a lower cost;

-developing initiatives to put new foreign policy concepts, such as peacebuilding, to work to meet new needs.[39]

There have been many critiques of Axworthy's foreign policy agenda and the tools that he has identified as key to Canada's leadership capability. This has become a very politicized debate, with both academic analysts and political actors engaging in critiques of Axworthy's "soft power agenda."[40] Nossal has been extremely critical of Axworthy's use of soft power, particularly the fact that he has taken the term out of the context in which it was formed. In his words, "[soft power] encourages the view that all Canada needs is a few good ideas that will get others to want what we want. It also encourages the view that we can do foreign policy on the cheap."[41] Thus, there is a risk of creating an environment where it is perceived that tools of hard power are no longer required. In an era of budget cuts, this is a real possibility and one that should not be encouraged. The need for hard power to back up soft power has been made all too clear with the recent NATO air strikes in Yugoslavia, where even Canada was supportive of the military action as a means of preventing further humanitarian atrocities. To use Nossal's words, "unfortunately, we are often confronted by those who are simply not persuaded by our good ideas about the world."[42]

Another potential critique of the soft power agenda, which is related to the first, has to do with credibility. Indeed, this has been one of the key assets for Canada's influence in the international community. Canada's role in the international community, such as its contributions to peacekeeping, has given it an influence and prestige in the international system that does not necessarily match its capabilities. However, in 'the information age', the politics of credibility will become more important.[43] Canada runs the risk of damaging its credibility if none of the issues it highlights are approached with a sense of what is needed to provide long-term solutions and real results. The crusade to ban anti-personnel mines could well point to this danger, but this will be discussed below.

Thus, Axworthy's rhetoric of soft power and the enlargement of the potential arena within which Canada can influence the international system is a product of the traditional middle power impulses that are outlined above. There is continuity in the vulnerability that Canada feels toward the international system. But, with changing international circumstances Axworthy has had to adapt methods of dealing with the international environment according to the nature of the task. In this regard, there are at least three major departures from past policy trends that can be identified. First, his public approach to issues in the international system, along with his apparent willingness to publicly differ with the United States on some issues, are not completely compatible with past policy initiatives. Second, Canadian policy is largely multilateral, but traditional multilateral organizations are not necessarily worked within. And, third, Axworthy is

willing to work closely with non-state actors to achieve his goals. However, the content and style of his policy are best evaluated by looking at specific policy initiatives of Canadian foreign policy: the recent ban on anti-personnel landmines, and Canada-NATO relations.

The Ottawa Process

One policy initiative to which Canada has contributed a large amount of time and resources is the 1997 treaty banning anti-personnel landmines. This issue is consistent with both Canada's disarmament and humanitarian objectives. However, it is quite unique both in Canadian foreign policy and in international relations. The treaty, which provides for a comprehensive ban of landmines, was completed in under a year and without the support of the major powers, including the United States, Russia and China. It has been credited by some as being representative of a 'new multilateralism', particularly by Axworthy who views the process as evidence of the role that Canada can play in the international community.[44]

The global movement to ban anti-personnel landmines was labeled the 'Ottawa Process' due to the instrumental role that Canada played in the treaty process. When Ottawa became involved in this issue, initiatives were already in place that recognized the humanitarian costs of land mines. The 1977 Protocol of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) recognized that the humanitarian costs far outweigh any security or financial concerns. However, results were not forthcoming from the CCW since it became buried in the politics of the UN Conference for Disarmament (CD), which is largely dominated by the great powers and is characterized by lowest common denominator politics.[45]

Axworthy made the land mines issue a government priority when he took over the Foreign Affairs portfolio in 1996. He recognized that it was a high-profile issue in which Canada could play a leadership role due to Canada's position in the international community, its ability to use information technologies, its diplomatic skill and other qualities that make Canada stand out as a middle power.[46] Canada was at the apex of a coalition of 'like-mined' states, labeled the Core Group, and NGOs. The Core Group included other middle power countries such as Norway and Ireland. Their participation was somewhat unusual since many of these states were traditionally "followers rather than global leaders."[47]

A factor that was key to his success on this issue was his willingness to work with the NGO community, including the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).[48] The NGOs provided the governments with expert information on the devastation of mines and methods of clearance. However, they also used the media and other methods of communication to keep the agenda on course and unambiguous, pressuring the individual governments to move forward towards a ban.[49] One of the unique characteristics of the Ottawa Process is demonstrated by the fact that NGOs were essentially given a 'seat' at the table.

The major powers and producers of landmines attempted to keep the treaty process within the confines of the CD. There, the treaty process would move slowly and there would be time to deal with the individual concerns of the major powers. The United States had five major reservations about the ban, including the need to remove mines from the North Korea border.[50] The civil

society-state anti-mine coalition maintained their commitment to a comprehensive ban with its central principle intact: either accept the treaty in its entirety, or reject it. With this position entrenched in the mentality of the campaign members, the American Government's objections only served to strengthen their resolve and the treaty was signed without the United States' approval. Dean F. Oliver outlines how American rejection was inevitable given the tactics used by the campaign:

Failure to bring in the Americans, and other states with reasonable security concerns, was largely the ban campaign's own fault. This after all, was one of only two possible outcomes to the stigmatization approach encouraged by the Ottawa Process: either states would be cajoled or otherwise convinced into signing, or they would not.[51]

There are several interesting features of the so-called Ottawa process that are important to this discussion. Many credit the process as a change in the nature of international diplomacy.[52] However, an important point to bear in mind is that while the coalition did not bend to the United States' reservations, the United States did not sign the treaty. Indeed, Washington announced that it would unilaterally eliminate landmines by 2006. This is admittedly a victory for the process; a normative climate has been created against the use of landmines. But to say that this type of process will occur again in the future ignores the fact that the United States was essentially taken off guard by the process and its momentum and, consequently, was unprepared to negotiate with the combined state-civil society coalition. It is doubtful that the Unites States will underestimate such a coalition again if it poses a threat to its national security interests.[53]

Of course, the coalition that brought the treaty process together was itself unique and, therefore, could prove to be an exception to the experience of international relations.[54] Several important conditions came together to make the treaty possible: there was an international consensus on the issue and its humanitarian costs; in practical terms, landmines represent a small cost to national security concerns of most states; and finally, the interests of the NGOs and the pro-ban states were compatible. The participation of NGOs was a crucial factor in the success of the treaty but the willingness of states to allow NGOs a place in traditionally state-dominated forums of international relations is uncertain. States would lose some of their control of the processes of diplomacy, which would be undesirable since their agendas often do not coincide with NGOs.[55] Thus, while an important normative climate has been created against the use of landmines and Canada can certainly claim this as a success, the long-lasting implications of the process for middle powers in the international system is less certain.

NATO and No 'First Use'

The international treaty to ban landmines highlights the humanitarian aspects of landmines and was framed as a human security issue by Axworthy. Yet, it is also an issue that relates to Canada's disarmament agenda. Canada has been extremely active in promoting disarmament and non-proliferation. It has extended its mandate to small arms, nuclear weapons and chemical weapons. Canada's disarmament stance puts it in an interesting position given its close relationship and military ties with the Unites States. Canada is not a nuclear power, although it has been supportive of its institutional ties with the Unites States in NATO and the North American Aerospace Defence agreement (NORAD). In many ways, Canada is dependent on the

Unites States and these organizations for its security and the nuclear weapons on which it is based. The treaty banning landmines appeared to demonstrate that Axworthy was not predominantly concerned with the interests of the Unites States. Thus, even if there is no clear anti-American pattern to point to as critics such as Nossal, Hampson and Oliver might suggest, it is apparent that American concerns are not the only influence in Canadian policy making. Axworthy's public stance appears to differ from the past where Canada was concerned with balancing its dependence on the United States' military strength, while pursuing its own 'independent' security policy. An ongoing debate between Canada and the Unites States in the realm of defence relates to NATO and its policy of 'first-use' of nuclear weapons. NATO, like many international organizations, is in the process of reviewing its policies in the wake of the more complex international environment. Many elements of the organization and its mandate will undergo major changes in the next few decades, especially if recent actions in Kosovo are any indication. Axworthy has taken advantage of this environment of change and pursued an agenda that takes into account Canada's stance on disarmament. In the process he has potentially run the risk of further distancing Canada from the Unites States.

In 1997, Axworthy commissioned a report by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade on Canada's nuclear policy. He specifically asked that the opinions of abolitionists, such as Project Ploughshares, be consulted. The resulting report has caused controversy, particularly with regard to its recommendation that NATO eliminate its policy of "first-use" of nuclear weapons.[56] The Unites States and the other nuclear powers in NATO object to Canada's calls for a review of their nuclear policy on the grounds that it will eliminate NATO's deterrent capability.[57] This again places Canada and the Unites States on two different sides of the disarmament issue. However, this issue has real security implications for the United States and it will be interesting to see which direction it takes.

Circumstances in the international system have intervened in this issue, leaving its future uncertain. In November, Canada and several other non-nuclear members of NATO abstained from a vote on a United Nations' resolution that proposed the elimination of nuclear weapons.[58] The major significance of this move was that Canada and the western European states that also abstained had been pressured by the United States to vote against the resolution. At the time, this appeared to demonstrate resolve on the part of these countries to pursue a review of NATO's nuclear weapons policies. However, to overstate the importance of this UN resolution would be a mistake particularly given the fact that Canada's initiatives in NATO have been overshadowed by the requirements of NATO's involvement in Kosovo.

NATO's action in Kosovo will most likely serve to further tie Canada to American objectives of an expanded NATO mandate. Canada contributed to the NATO air strikes in the region with CF-18 jets and other military resources. As well, Canada has military personnel and equipment involved in the peacekeeping mission now in place to aid Kosovo in the aftermath of the crisis. Axworthy emphasized that Kosovo was a *humanitarian* mission, but another interpretation of the crisis is that Kosovo is a step towards an expanded NATO mandate. NATO intervened in Kosovo without a UN Chapter VII resolution to support its actions. Its ability to operate without such international constraints could be extremely important in the future given the divisions in the UN Security Council and ineffectiveness resulting from the use of the veto power.

How this will effect Axworthy's stance in reviewing NATO policy is not yet certain. But, the fact that he is supportive of NATO's role is an indication that his agenda does not discount the United States or international security interests and the continued relevance of hard power. He is coming to terms with certain truths about the nature of conflict and international politics: it is the major powers that really define the 'rules of the game'. Indeed, Canadian and American foreign policy is closely related on issues relating to Kosovo, something that has not usually been the case for much of Axworthy's tenure.

Assessment

In a number of ways, Axworthy's approach to the international system has been more visible than his predecessors' approaches. His treatment of the United States, particularly in the case of the treaty banning landmines, seems to disregard the 'special relationship' that Canada has with the United States. However, to infer too much from this would be an error. The Ottawa Process is indeed an example where multilateral diplomacy was successful even without the United States' acceptance. However, it is an issue-specific success as several conditions were necessary. It would take a combination of similar conditions for such a case to occur again. However, this seems unlikely given the uncertain nature of the international system, and the obvious displeasure of the great powers at being side stepped.

The rules of the international system cannot be redefined by Canada or by other middle power states. The international system is too complex. As Nye outlines,

The structure of power in the information age is like a three-dimensional chess game. On the top of the board, where the game is military issues, the US is the sole superpower. On the middle board, where economics are played, the US, Europe and Japan account for nearly two-thirds of world product. On the bottom board of transnational global relations that cross boundaries outside the control of governments, power is widely dispersed among actors who range from bankers to terrorists…..3-D chess is played not only from all three boards but also vertically and horizontally-all at the same time.[59]

It is necessary for Canada to negotiate its way through these three levels by evaluating what course will best maximize Canada's interest. In the long run, it is doubtful that opposing the United States will be beneficial. However, Canada's actions in Kosovo suggest that Canada is willing to work alongside the United States in a military action. Perhaps Axworthy's critics too quickly judged the effects of his human security agenda on Canada's more traditional state security needs. Or alternatively, it was simply too soon to judge the effects that his agenda would have on trends in Canada's security policy.

Canada has always pursued an agenda independent of the United States but there are limitations that need to be considered. In terms of economic and military links, the United States is more important to Canada than Canada is to the United States. If Canada is going to pursue a public agenda in the international community, it needs the capabilities to back up its position otherwise it will damage its reputation on which Canadian influence is said to be based. Capabilities and political will are thus needed to back up Canadian policy rhetoric. Canada's geopolitical positioning has in many ways allowed it to embrace an expanded agenda of security but the

changes in the international system need to be considered. Recognition that Canada is tied to the United States in terms of military support is needed and should not be taken for granted.

Axworthy does acknowledge some of the conditions of the international system and the needs for certain types of action. For instance, he may have stressed the humanitarian nature of the situation in Kosovo, but his support of the military strikes, and Canada's participation in them, was evident. Canada is able to pursue its soft power agenda under certain circumstances but it does need to pick its issues carefully. Many of the critiques of Axworthy's interpretation of soft power are valid. Soft power for a middle power like Canada means something different than it does for the United States. Canada does not have the same hard power resources to draw upon. However, this should not discount Canada from being able to draw upon the resources of soft power, which it does have the ability to do. With Canada's limitations and vulnerabilities kept in mind, incorporating soft power resources into its security agenda could be a useful tool in the current international system. Its ability to highlight issues that would otherwise not gain attention is a valuable asset. However, this leads to the question of how 'new' are the tools of soft power.

Many of the elements of soft power have traditionally been associated with middle powers like Canada. The powers of influence, persuasion and innovative diplomacy simply lacked the label of soft power. Canada has always used its influence in its mediation attempts and through its diplomacy in multilateral institutions. Canadian 'soft power' is really nothing new. What is new is its use as a recognized policy tool. This is demonstrated in Canadian political rhetoric, Axworthy's willingness to work outside of established international institutions and also with non-state actors. Although, he should not be viewed as a 'renegade' in the international system given that Canada has made a clear commitment to the UN, recently becoming one of the non-permanent members of the Security Council. Axworthy is using this position to advance his human security agenda.[60] It is important to note that the credibility and effectiveness of the UN is being called into question with NATO operating under its own jurisdiction in Kosovo. Axworthy will most likely have a difficult time coming to terms with this change. However, again, it is too early to determine the long-term consequences of this.

In conclusion, Axworthy's public approach and the nature of his agenda may first appear to run counter to the content and style of policy that middle power has traditionally embodied. However, they are Axworthy's attempt to come to terms with, and offset Canada's vulnerability to, and dependence upon, the changing nature of the international system. It remains to be seen how far this will go. Recent events in Kosovo have proven that Canada's commitments to its traditional alliances are relatively strong. Thus, Canada's continued recognition of the interconnectedness of its national security and international stability is an important continuity in Canada's security policy. Consequently, it is possible that Axworthy will be considered an 'exception' to practitioners of Canadian foreign policy. However, it is more likely that he will realize, and is indeed realizing, that it is the major powers who continue to define the 'parameters of the possible', even in a more complex and diffuse international system.

Endnotes

1. Lester B. Pearson, "Correspondence, Norman Roberston, USSEA," *L.B. Pearson Papers, Pre-1948 Series*, vol. 2, MG 26 N.

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3. Peyton V. Lyon and Brian W. Tomlin, *Canada as an International Actor* (Toronto: Macmillan Press, 1979), pp. 56-72.

4. Kim Richard Nossal, *The Politics of Canadian Foreign Policy*, 3rd edition. (Scarborough: Prentice Hall Canada Inc., 1997), p. 64.

5. Paul Painchaud, "Middlepowermanship as an Ideology," in J. King Gordon, ed., *Canada's Role as a Middle Power* (Toronto: Canadian Institute of International Affairs, 1966), p. 29.

6. Geoffrey Hayes, "Middle Powers in the New World Order," *Behind the Headlines*, vol. 15 (1993-1994), p. 4.

7. Alan Henrickson, cited in Geoffrey Hayes, "Middle Powers in the New World Order," *Behind the Headlines*, vol. 51 (1993-1994), p. 5.

8. Charles-Philippe David and Stephane Roussel, "Middle Power Blues: Canadian Policy and International Security after the Cold War," *The American Review of Canadian Studies*, vol 28:1, 2 (Spring/Summer 1998), p. 134.

9. Andrew F. Cooper, Richard A Higgott and Kim Richard Nossal, *Relocating Middle Powers: Australia and Canada in a Changing World Order* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1993), p. 19.

10. Stephen Clarkson, *Canada and the Reagan Challenge* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1985), p. 280.

11. Denis Stairs, "Change in the Management of Canada-United States Relations in the Post-War Era," in Donald Barry, ed., *Toward a North American Community? Canada, the United States and Mexico* (Boulder: Westview, 1995), p. 54.

12. David and Roussel, "Middle Power Blues," p. 135.

13. Cooper, Higgot and Nossal, *Relocating Middle* Powers, p. 29.

14. Nossal, *The Politics of Canadian Foreign* Policy, p. 117.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

16. See Barry Buzan, *People, States & Fear*, 2nd ed. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1991) for a discussion of the expanded security agenda. An alternative perspective is offered by Stephen Walt, "The Renaissance of Security Studies," *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 35 (1991), pp. 211-239. From within the context of the end of the Cold War, he argues that the security agenda has not expanded.

17. Hal Klepak, "The Inter-American Dimension of Future Canadian Security Policy," *Canadian Foreign Policy*, vol. 5, no. 2 (Winter 1998), p. 107.

18. Franklyn Griffiths, "Environment and Security in Arctic Waters: A Canadian Perspective," *National Security and International Environmental Cooperation in the Arctic – the Case of the Northern Sea Route*, INSROP Working Paper No. 83-1997 (4 July 1997), p. 121.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 121.

20. *Ibid.*, p.117.

21. See David B. Dewitt and David Leyton-Brown, eds., *Canada's International Security Policy* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada, 1995).

22. Klepak, "The Inter-American Dimension of Future Canadian Security Policy," p. 107.

23. Cited in Griffiths, "Environment and Security in Arctic Waters: A Canadian Perspective,"p. 119.

24. Canada's continued cuts to its military resources and foreign aid programs have caused critics to dub Canadian policy, 'nickel diplomacy'. Fen Osler Hampson and Dean F. Oliver, "Pulpit Diplomacy: A Critical Assessment of the Axworthy Doctrine," *International Journal* (Summer 1996), p. 388.

25. Griffiths, "Environment and Security in Arctic Waters: A Canadian Perspective," p. 119.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 137.

27. Lloyd Axworthy, "Between Globalization and Multipolarity: The Case for a Global, Humane Canadian Foreign Policy," www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/english/foreignp/humane.htm (7 February 1999), p. 1. Also published in *Revue Etudes Internationales*, vol. XXVIII, no.1 (March 1997).

28. Lloyd Axworthy, "Canada and Humane Security: The Need for Leadership," www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/english/foreignp/sechume.htm (2 February 1999), pp. 1-8. Also published in *International Journal*, vol. 52 (1997), pp. 183-196.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 1.

30. Lloyd Axworthy, *Notes for an Address by the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy: Human Security and Canada's Security Council Agenda.* Quebec City (February 25, 1999).

31. Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, "Elements of Human Security: A Discussion Paper," presented at the Third Annual Peacebuilding Consultations, Ottawa (March 2 and 3, 1999). www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/peacebuilding/humansecurity-e.asp (March 27,1999), p. 1.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 1.

33. Barbara Arneil from the University of British Columbia is one such example. She has separated the discussion of human security into five areas: a general sense of insecurity humans feel around the world, new threats not covered by traditional notions of security, an interdisciplinary approach, a desire to include civil society and the intervention of the international community. These ideas were advanced at a recent workshop on "Human Security and Civil Society" in Calgary (March 17, 1999). They provide a possible starting point for future research of the concept. See also Department of Foreign Affairs Discussion Paper, "Elements of Human Security: A Discussion Paper."

34. Joseph S. Nye, Jr. and William A. Owens, "America's Information Edge," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 75, no. 2 (March/April 1996), p. 21.

35. Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye Jr., "Power and Interdependence in the Information Age," *Foreign Affairs* (September/October 1998), http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?TS=91925…1&Fmt=3&Sid=2&Idx=7&Deli=1&RQT=309&D tp February 2, 1999), p. 4.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

38. Axworthy, "Canada and Human Security," p. 6.

39. The Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, "Keynote Address," *Between East and West: Atlantic and Pacific Dimensions of Canadian Foreign* Policy, Proceedings of University of Manitoba Political Studies Students' Conference (January 30-February 1, 1997), p. 27.

40. While this is not an exhaustive list, some of the critiques have included: Kim Richard Nossal "Foreign Policy for Wimps," *The Ottawa Citizen* (April 23, 1998); Barry Cooper and David Bercuson, "Canada's 'soft power' stance won't get the job done," *The Calgary Herald* (January 27,1999); Bob Mills, Chris Champion and Roy Rempel, "Soft on foreign policy," *The National Post* (February 16,1999).

41. Nossal, "Foreign Policy for Wimps."

42. *Ibid.*

43. Keohane and Nye, "Power and Interdependence in the Information Age," p. 6.

44. Lloyd Axworthy, "Towards a New Multilateralism," *To Walk Without Fear: The Global Movement to Ban Landmines* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 448-459.

45. Brian Tomlin, "On a Fast-Track to a Ban," *Canadian Foreign Policy*, vol. 5, no. 3 (Spring 1998), p.14.

46. Lloyd Axworthy and Sarah Taylor, "A ban for all seasons: the landmines convention and its implications for Canadian diplomacy," *International Journal*, vol. LIII, no. 2 (Spring 1998), pp. 189-203.

47. Michael Dolan and Chris Hunt, "Negotiating the Ottawa Process," *Canadian Foreign Poli*cy, vol. 5, no. 3 (Spring 1998), p. 26.

48. Dolan and Hunt, "Negotiating the Ottawa Process," p. 26.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

50. The other four reservations were regarding the definition of land mines, a delay in the entry into force of the treaty, a strengthened verification regime, and a clause specifying that countries could withdraw from the treaty if their national interest was threatened.

51. Dean F. Oliver, "Banning International Land Mines," *International Insights,* vol. 13, no. 2 (Fall 1997), pp. 96-97.

52. See Lloyd Axworthy and Sarah Taylor, "A ban for all seasons: the landmines convention and its implications for Canadian diplomacy," pp. 189-203.

53. It is beyond the scope of this paper to deal specifically with the issue of AP mines and the security interests of states. However, an excellent discussion of this important part of the debate surrounding the Ottawa Process is David A. Lenarcic, *Knight-Errant? Canada and the Crusade to Ban Anti-Personnel Land Mines* (Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 1998).

54. David and Roussel, "Middle Power Blues," p. 146.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 146.

56. Report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, "Canada and the Nuclear Challenge: Reducing the Political Value of Nuclear Weapons for the Twenty-First Century," December 1998 www.parl.gc.ca/InfoComDoc/36/1/FAIT/Studies/Reports/faitrp07-e.htm (March 28, 1999).

57. Peter Goodspeed, "A Rift gets Deeper as NATO nears 50," *National Post* (December 8, 1998).

58. Associated Press, "Canada Abstains from Nuclear Weapons Vote," *Calgary Herald* (November 14, 1998).

59. Joseph S. Nye Jr., "The Challenge of Soft Power," *Time Magazine* (February 22, 1999), p. 30.

60. See for instance, Statement given by Robert R. Fowler, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations, "Promoting Peace and Security: Humanitarian

Activities Relevant to the Security Council," given January 21,1999, New York. www.undp.org/missions/canada/html/s-21jan99.htm (February 7,1999).