

*Advancing the Canada-US Alliance: The Use of History in  
Decision-Support*

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“To understand the past and to judge the present is to foresee the future.”

J.F.C. Fuller

The events of 11 September 2001 sparked a major reorganisation of the form and structure of the security and defence organisations on both sides of the border between Canada and the United States. As with all situations requiring major changes in response to significant shifts in the security environment, reorganising the configuration is far easier than making rapid and lasting shifts in the underpinning organisational culture; yet both are required. Often, the need for organisational continuity and stability precludes radical reorganisation and thought patterns in response to minor changes to the security environment. This is especially true in defence and security organisations wherein the chaos surrounding such changes is more keenly felt. That said, failing to detect and respond effectively to major changes in

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<sup>1</sup> The views presented in this paper are those of the authors, and do not reflect the policies or positions of the Department of National Defence or the Government of Canada.

the security environment appropriately given the information at hand can prove politically, economically, and socially catastrophic. Defining the security environment is largely a subjective exercise, and therefore it is advisable to augment theoretical and analytical frameworks with the real-world awareness and the emerging operational trends directly from those conducting strategic planning both domestically and beyond. Emerging trends can then be identified and appropriate action taken. At key times, more fundamental changes are needed, with the concomitant requirement for organisations to understand the new threat environment and seek to adjust the way they operate, and perhaps their structure, in response.

In terms of how the new security and defence context affected the Canada-United States alliance, at face value the assumptions laid out by General Renuart, Commander of NORAD and USNORTHCOM, to serve as the guidance for the future of continental defence seem reflective of the current conditions faced by planners in both countries.

- An attack on one country is an attack on the other and will have economic, defense, and security implications;
- The nations believe it advisable to expand military-to-military cooperation;
- Enhanced military cooperation will increase the layered defenses of all participants;
- Improving coordination and reducing seams along borders and among domains will improve the defense and security of all participating nations;
- Increasing decision time will provide decisionmakers a greater ability to respond to threats;
- Current policies do not prevent expansion of military cooperation;
- Differing international perceptions of the value and difficulty of cooperation with U.S. forces will influence the effectiveness of enhanced military cooperation;
- A change to NORAD is a politically sensitive topic;

- Canadian forces may provide a successful conduit for military cooperation with other nations;
- The lines between security and defense have become blurred;
- The concept of CANUS military cooperation is as relevant today as it was during the Cold War and offers a strong foundation for the defense of North America for the next 50 years;
- There is an excellent opportunity to consider expansion of both binational and bilateral cooperation in the areas of multidomain awareness, assistance to civil authority, and information operations.<sup>2</sup>

However, what are the historical and contemporary sources of these assumptions, and are there any that should be questioned by decision-makers? Have previous decision-makers made similar assumptions, either implicitly or explicitly, before making decisions that shaped the Canada-US strategic defence relationship in the past? Are these assumptions at all related to, or derived from, “strategic culture?” In order to begin answering these questions, this paper will point to several dimensions of the Canada-United States strategic relationship with a view to setting these assumptions within a broader context through the lens of national experience. To that end, the use of history is an invaluable conceptual framework not only to understand the complexities of the alliance, but also to provide leaders with a means to challenge current assumptions and courses of action that may result.

### **On Assumptions and Strategic Culture**

The close economic, social, and political ties Canada and the US now enjoy are undeniable and have a long history, but despite recent claims that the level of cooperation enjoyed today has consistently been close throughout the history of both nations, the reality is somewhat different. In a recent speech to the Conference of Defence Associations Annual General Meeting, the Commander of NORAD and US Northern Command, General Victor Renuart, argued “We have been friends for

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<sup>2</sup> Victor E. Renuart Jr., “The Enduring Value of NORAD,” *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Issue 54, 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2009, pp. 95-96.

centuries. We have been partners for centuries.”<sup>3</sup> In another recent speech to Georgetown University, he argued that Canada is “a great partner, have[sic] been our friend, fought at our side, really as long as our history has been alive, even in the Civil War.”<sup>4</sup> This laudable but inaccurate sentiment is not unique to the military leadership. In a recent press conference with Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, US President Barack Obama claimed that “the very success of our friendship throughout history demands that we renew and deepen our co-operation”.<sup>5</sup> While it is difficult to question the latter conviction, the nature and level of cooperation and friendship enjoyed currently has not always been the case, and the relationship has been as strongly shaped by both the negative and positive experiences. Thus, assuming a consistent level of cooperation and friendship ignores central aspects of the relationship that may, in turn, lead to recommendations for its evolution that are unpalatable to voters, and thus politicians, on either side of the border. While at times there has been congruity in approach, at other times and over other issues different perspectives have soured the relationship, based perhaps on the personalities involved or other factors for which generalized assumptions fail to account.

There has been some scholarly work devoted to the idea of strategic culture, but almost none specifically devoted to discussions of Canadian strategic culture.<sup>6</sup> The

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<sup>3</sup> Remarks by General Victor Renuart Commander of NORAD and USNORTHCOM to the Conference of Defence Associations 72<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Meeting, Ottawa, Canada 27 February 2009.

<sup>4</sup> Remarks by General Victor Renuart Commander of NORAD and USNORTHCOM Georgetown University 27 January 2009.

<sup>5</sup> “PM, Obama talk economy, environment and security,” accessed 20 February 2009 at: [http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/20090218/obama\\_visit\\_090219/20090219?hub=TopStories](http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/20090218/obama_visit_090219/20090219?hub=TopStories)

<sup>6</sup> Colin S. Gray, “Comparative Strategic Culture”, *Parameters*, (Winter 1984); Jeffrey S. Lantis, “Strategic Culture and National Security Policy,” *International Studies Review*, Vol. 4, No. 3, (2003); Peter J. Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security : Norms and Identity in World Politics*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Jack L. Snyder, “The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations,” (Santa Monica: RAND, 1977); Colin S. Gray, *Modern Strategy*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1999); Ken Booth, *Strategy and Ethnocentrism*, (London: Croom, Helm, 1979); Valerie M. Hudson, ed., *Culture and Foreign Policy*, (Boulder Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1997); Michael Evans, “The Tyranny of Dissonance: Australia’s Strategic Culture and Way of War 1901-2005,” Land Warfare Studies Centre, Study Paper No. 306, February 2005; Alastair Iain Johnston, “Thinking about Strategic Culture,” *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 4, (1995); Elizabeth Kier, “Culture and Military Doctrine: France between the Wars,” *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 4, (1995); Bruce R. Vaughn, “Australia’s Strategic Identity Post-September 11 in Context: Implications for the War Against Terror in Southeast Asia,”

identification of those characteristics of Canadian strategic culture that have shaped the Canada-US continental defence relationship would be a useful addition to the literature. Thus, a brief description of what strategic culture means in this context is warranted.

A nation's strategic culture does not appear simply in and of itself, but rather flows from its own unique history and experience. As Colin Gray notes, "American strategists have always known, deep down, that Soviet, French, British, and other approaches to security issues differed from their own in good part because Soviet, French, and British policymakers were heirs to distinctive national perspectives."<sup>7</sup> From a nation's unique history and experience comes its political culture and national style in how its leadership deals with others, something that has been debated by political scientists for over half a century.<sup>8</sup> It is from its political culture that its strategic culture is developed and built, referring to modes of thought and action on defence and security matters. All of this is influenced by historical, geopolitical, economic, and other such factors.<sup>9</sup>

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*Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (2004); Adrian Hyde-Price, "European Security, Strategic Culture, and the Use of Force," *European Security*, Vol. 13, No. 4, (2004); Caroline F. Ziemke, Phillippe Loustaunau, and Amy Alrich, "Strategic Personality and the Effectiveness of Nuclear Deterrence," *Institute for Defense Analyses*, November 2000; Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen, "The Test of Strategic Culture: Germany, Pacifism and Pre-emptive Strikes," *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 36, No. 3, (November 2005); Theo Farrell, "Strategic Culture and American Empire," *SAIS Review*, Volume 25, Number 2, (Summer-Fall 2005); Major Kimberly A. Crider, "Strategic Implications of Culture: Historical Analysis of China's Culture and Implications for United States Policy," Air Command and Staff College, *Wright Flyer* No. 8 (September 1999); Jack Snyder, "Anarchy and Culture: Insights from the Anthropology of War," *International Organization*, 2003; Glen Fisher, *Mindsets: The Role of Culture and Perception in International Relations*, 2nd edition, (Intercultural Press, October 1997); Per M. Martinsen, "The European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) – a Strategic Culture in the Making," Paper prepared for the ECPR Conference, Section 17 Europe and Global Security Marburg, 18-21 September 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Colin Gray, "Comparative Strategic Culture," p. 26.

<sup>8</sup> Dennis Kavanaugh, *Political Culture*, (London: Macmillan, 1972); Stephen White, *Political Culture and Soviet Politics*, (London: Macmillan, 1979); Robert Dallek, *The American Style of Foreign Policy: Cultural Politics and Foreign Affairs*, (New York: Knopf, 1983); Alan Pendleton Grimes, *American Political Thought*, (New York: Holt, 1955); Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963); Bert A. Rockman, *Studying Elite Political Culture: Problems in Design and Interpretation*, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1976); John S. Duffield, *World Power Forsaken: Political Culture, International Institutions, and German Security Policy after Unification*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

<sup>9</sup> Colin Gray, "Comparative Strategic Culture," p. 28.

The concept of strategic culture will be used to assist in explaining why Canadian leadership made the decisions they did at key points in its history, to help understand the kind of information provided and sought to inform those decisions, and to use that understanding as the basis to develop specific recommendations for ways to evolve the relationship to meet the challenges faced. In no way is any of this predictive or deterministic. One of the main criticisms of using strategic culture is that it lends itself to such abuse. At most, strategic culture is “the milieu within which strategic ideas and defense policy decisions are debated and decided”.<sup>10</sup> Not only is strategic culture not static, even if its main features tend to endure, assuming an ability to predict future behaviour given even a comprehensive understanding of strategic culture would be folly, as it would not account for intangible factors such as personality in influencing policy decisions.

However, as Jack Snyder points out, a nation’s political culture and national style socialises individuals into a distinctive mode of strategic thinking, and “as a result of this socialization process, a set of general beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour patterns...has achieved a state of semipermanence that places them on the level of ‘cultural’ rather than mere policy.”<sup>11</sup> As a result of this ‘semipermanence’ of strategic culture, new challenges would not be assessed objectively, but rather through the strategic cultural lens. This is not to say we can predict with certainty what the final decision will be in any situation, but the value of analysing the nature and factors associated with a nation’s strategic culture comes through what it provides to the decision making process and senior leadership – the essential context needed to inform those decisions, hopefully bringing an awareness and mindset required to see, in this case, where the national security architecture and military-to-military relationships need to change to meet the threats posed by the current security environment. An essential part of any key government decision, setting this context is but the first step in what must be a determined effort to overcome parochialism and the seemingly inevitable active and passive resistance mounted by organisations as they transform. In that sense, strategic culture is a useful analytical tool not only to explain past actions but also in the way

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Jack Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Nuclear Options*, p. 8.

preconceived notions of what is possible for Canada can limit the range of strategic level decisions as they arise.

### **The Burden of History**

The question of whether the post-September 11, 2001 world represents a radical departure from previous patterns, or is merely the culmination of the evolution of the post-Cold War security environment, has been the subject of much debate. While such questions are of interest, they are less important than the recognition that Canada, and indeed the Western world, is at a key decision point in its history. How Canada and others choose to respond to the threat posed by the existential 'long-war' against the jihadist threat, while simultaneously contending with the threats considered more familiar and traditional, ultimately will determine their success and place in the world. The study of history – both recent operational experience and that which is more distant – has some value in the formulation of an appropriate response. Doing so is not an easy task, but given the truism that “the future has no place to come from but the past,” history has some predictive value.<sup>12</sup> This does not mean the future must always unfold as it did in the past, hence the oft-quoted tendency of the military attempting to fight the last war. However, even departures from previous patterns are evident, to varying degrees, in the recent operational experience and history if properly analysed by those appropriately trained. While the exact nature of the future remains unknown and unknowable, many of its general features and contours are presently evident. Thus, although care must be taken in exploiting the predictive value of history, this does not diminish its importance, especially in terms of developing a more complete picture of how past decision-makers conceived of history, their place in it and how much they differentiated between what they knew, what they assumed, and what they guessed at the time they took decisions. Indeed, the process in place to provide key information and analysis to support decisions is telling.

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<sup>12</sup> Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May, *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision-Makers*, (New York: The Free Press, 1986), p. 251.

Any analysis of options for the evolution of the defence arrangements between Canada and the United States would be profitably informed by, in the words of Richard Neustadt and Ernest May, “the *Goldberg Rule*.”<sup>13</sup> This maxim assists in focusing attention on the central and critical elements of any situation by asking ‘*what is the story?*’, rather than ‘*what is the problem?*’. By doing the former, rather than the latter as is the norm, one sets an appropriate context around which the real problem is illuminated. This idea will be the driving principle behind this analysis of the strategic defence relationship. The authors will argue that analysts and decision-makers should view time as a stream that carries with it that which came before, to one degree or another. In order to understand fully the current strategic defence relationship between Canada and the US, where it may be lacking or in need of evolution or drastic change, one must trace the story back to its roots. From there it is possible to understand all the pertinent factors, what has motivated decision-makers when key choices were at hand, and thus what this says about the nature of each country’s ‘strategic culture’. The absence of this essential context will handicap discussions at all levels in framing the follow-on discussions of how to develop the defence relationship. Indeed, one could go further and say that without first setting the context to which follow-on discussions can refer, there is a risk that an appropriate end-state will not be set. Understanding *the story* will assist in fixing the target cognisant of all the relevant factors. By *understanding the past* it is possible to *look to the future* with confidence and with some assurance that, in this case, the strategic defence relationship will evolve to a place that meets actual and anticipated challenges posed by the current security environment.<sup>14</sup> However, using historical analysis is fraught with difficulties that must be understood and mitigated to the degree possible.

Sir Michael Howard has argued that professional historians must be aware of the limitations of their profession and be sceptical of those who claim to draw conceptual lessons from history to form binding precedents for future triumph.<sup>15</sup> While this note of caution seems warranted, “the study of history, properly pursued, has particular

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.,p. 235.

<sup>14</sup> For an understanding of the value of historical analysis for strategic planning see Brad W. Gladman and Michael Roi, *Look to the Future, Understand the Past: The Limitations of Alternative Futures Methodologies*, (Ottawa: DRDC CORA TR 2005-10, 2005).

<sup>15</sup> Michael Howard, *The Lessons of History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 10–11.

relevance in an age of unprecedented change.”<sup>16</sup> In other words, despite Howard’s apprehension, key decision points where tough choices are called for provide the “unique circumstances in which historical study can prove not only helpful but perhaps indispensable.”<sup>17</sup> In particular, the study of history can provide a theoretical or mental framework for looking at change over time. In terms of understanding the factors involved in critical decisions, the nature of the threats to be met, and the appropriate course to chart, one thing seems certain: how one looks at the future can very much depend upon on how one thinks about the past. The study of history “provides the only real evidence against which we can test strategic concepts” and “has advantages in strategic discussion: it is real, it is unclassified, and we know who won.”<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the serious and deep study of history by analysts and those responsible for, in this case, charting the future strategic defence relationship can enable “them to operate within the complex variables of past, present and future.”<sup>19</sup>

As most professional historians can attest, using historical analysis in this manner is no simple task, both in terms of the historical record and with themselves. On the one hand, historians always must be aware of the idiosyncrasies and personal interests that living in the present bring. In both studying and writing history, it is important to assess past events and developments without forcing them into the straightjacket of proving one’s point in the context of a current debate or discussion.<sup>20</sup> In doing so, historians must contend simultaneously with at best an imperfect historical record upon which to base their interpretation of ‘what really happened’, and also deal at times with distorted evidence, as “memory fails or as participants actively warp the

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<sup>16</sup> Gordon Connell-Smith and Howell Lloyd, *The Relevance of History* (London: Heinemann, 1972), p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> Scot Robertson, “The Development of Royal Air Force Strategic Bombing Doctrine between the Wars: A Revolution in Military Affairs?,” *Airpower Journal* (Spring 1998), p. 37.

<sup>18</sup> John Reeve, “Maritime Strategy and Defence of the Archipelagic Inner Arc,” *Royal Australian Navy Sea Power Centre Working Paper No.5*, (Canberra: Royal Australian Navy Sea Power Centre, 2001), p. 2. Available at <http://www.navy.gov.au/spc/workingpapers/Working%20Paper%205.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> Alan Ryan, “Thinking Across Time: Concurrent Historical Analysis on Military Operations,” *Land Warfare Studies Centre Working Paper No.14*. (Duntroon: Land Warfare Studies Centre, 2001), p. 10.

<sup>20</sup> This phenomenon can be seen in some of the current debates on the value or limitations of heavy armour for future warfighting, as each new development in Iraq has been used to prove or disprove the case. Much of this analysis needs to be more dispassionate, attempting to understand what ‘really’ happened and continues to happen in Iraq. A major step in the right direction is provided by Murray and Scales, *The Iraq War: A Military History*.

record to improve their appearance before the bar of history.”<sup>21</sup> In their monograph on the early stages of the recent Iraq conflict, Williamson Murray and Robert Scales have argued that the “historian’s job, fraught with obstacles though it may be, is to make some sense of what is always an ambiguous, incomplete, and sometimes contradictory record.”<sup>22</sup> Despite these methodological impediments, historical analysis, properly conceived and employed, remains one of the best tools to understand the essential factors surrounding any key decision. Although Leopold von Ranke’s desire to see history written and understood ‘as it actually was’ may be an unattainable goal, it is still one for which scholars should strive.<sup>23</sup> It is important to judge past acts by their own standards, if they are judged at all, and not through a current paradigm.<sup>24</sup> From this will come a more nuanced understanding of the factors involved in motivating historical actors and situations, serving to educate an understanding of present and future concerns.<sup>25</sup>

This approach differs from that adopted by the Bi-National Planning Group (BPG) in its final report in 2006, where its references to the long-standing defence relationship between the two countries extend only back to the Ogdensburg declaration of 1940.<sup>26</sup> The brief narrative provided suggests a corner was turned following this declaration away from previous, implicitly negative, patterns and towards a new era of uncompromising cooperation. While this characterisation of the pre-1940 relationship may be satisfactory for the BPG’s purposes, it is misleading to suggest that the post-Ogdensburg relationship has always been smooth. This somewhat unsophisticated description of the strategic defence relationship between the two countries perhaps led the group to propose some courses of action that have proven completely unacceptable

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<sup>21</sup> Murray and Scales, *The Iraq War: A Military History*, p. 13.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 130.

<sup>24</sup> Geoffrey Barraclough, *History in a Changing World*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1956), pp. 21-22.

<sup>25</sup> For an elegantly argued attack on ‘presentism’ see A.O. Lovejoy, “Present Standpoints and Past History,” Hans Meyerhoff (ed.), *The Philosophy of History in Our Time*, (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1959); also see William H. Dray, *On History and Philosophers of History*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1989), chapter 8.

<sup>26</sup> *Bi-National Planning Group Final Report on Canada and the United States (CANUS) Enhanced Military Cooperation*, (Colorado Springs: BPG, 2006), pp. 2, 5, 6, and G-2.

on one or both sides of the border.<sup>27</sup> There are some examples throughout the history of Canada-US relations where the relationship has been as described, but others where there has been friction and it is a disservice to current decision-makers not to examine the sources of that friction. Three cases (Continental Air Defence, the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Arctic) will illustrate some characteristics of Canadian strategic culture that have driven, and continue to drive, this most important relationship.

### **Continental Air Defence**

A main implication in much of the literature surrounding the formation of NORAD is that the Government of Canada under the leadership of John G. Diefenbaker had been duped by senior military leaders into a decision that compromised Canadian sovereignty.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, rather than bring focus to air defence efforts against a common threat, the establishment of NORAD actually confused the situation. Although not directly acknowledged, it is further implied that Canadian political leaders had no clear understanding of defence matters, and that they did not share the same threat perception with their own military advisors or Washington, neither of which can be denied. What frequently is missed, or treated superficially, are the reasons for this discord, whether the criticism levelled at Canadian politicians is justified, and what role the mechanics of decision-making and the nature of Canadian 'strategic culture' played in this friction. More important, however, is the far too common assertion that entering into an air defence agreement with the US or accepting assistance in confronting forcefully an opponent beyond Canada's ability to deal with on its own, both of which actually are expressions of national sovereignty, somehow signed that sovereignty away.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., pp. 36-40.

<sup>28</sup> This section is adapted from Brad Gladman and Peter Archambault, *Confronting the 'Essence of Decision': Canada and the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Ottawa: DRDC CORA TM 2010-250) and Brad Gladman, *Continental Air Defence: Threat Perception and Response* (Ottawa: DRDC CORA TM 2012-257).

<sup>29</sup> For a few examples of the numerous titles offering a somewhat polemical tone to these issues and Canadian Defence Policy in general see Lewis Hertzman, John Warnock, and Thomas Hockin, *Alliances & Illusions: Canada and the NATO-NORAD Question* (Edmonton: M. G. Hurtig Ltd., 1969), Gerard S. Vano, *Canada: The Strategic and Military Pawn* (New York: Praeger, 1988), Andrew Brewin, *Stand on Guard: The*

The related decision to cancel the A.V. Roe Canada (Avro) Arrow without any real thought put to a replacement illustrates the clumsy decision-making structure of the Diefenbaker government. Only then, when faced with the possibility of having US interceptors placed on Canadian bases to fill this gap, was an attempt made quickly to fill this gap with American made missiles and aircraft for continental air defence without much reference to Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) or NORAD requirements.<sup>30</sup> A brief illumination of how the government understood and responded to a changing strategic environment, and whether essential information even reached senior political leadership to enable coherent thinking and considered decisions will show that a degree of strategic laziness had crept into the nation's strategic planning and understanding of the means by which the Soviets might threaten North America.<sup>31</sup> In the end, all of this led to a failure to conceive of a proper role for Canada in continental air defence – one within its socio-economic means that would make a meaningful contribution to the partnership with the US in the defence of the continent, and that would be appreciated as such. A related question concerns how information flowed (or failed to) within government and between the governments of the US and Canada, and where the obstacles were. The effect of this strategic laziness was perhaps a missed opportunity to provide a truly meaningful Canadian role in continental defence, one which would complement the USAF Strategic Air Command's (SAC) focus on warning of impending Soviet attack in time to get its strategic bombers airborne and on target.

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*Search for a Canadian Defence Policy* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1965), Peter C. Newman, *True North Not Strong and Free* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1983), John Warnock, *Partner to Behemoth: The Military Policy of a Satellite Canada* (Toronto: New Press, 1970), David Cox, *Canada and NORAD, 1958-1978: A Cautionary Retrospective*, Aurora Papers 1 (Ottawa: Canadian Institute for Arms Control and Disarmament, 1985), Greg Donaghy, *Tolerant Allies: Canada & the United States 1963-1968* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), John Herd Thompson and Stephen J. Randall, *Canada and the United States: Ambivalent Allies* (Athens GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1997).

<sup>30</sup> Jon B. McLin, *Canada's Changing Defense Policy, 1957-1963* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), p. 102. Also see Directorate of History and Heritage (DHH), 73/1223 Raymont Papers Series 1, Box 1, File 12, Paper prepared at the request of the Chiefs of Staff Committee entitled "Implications of USAF Taking Over RCAF Manned Interceptor Role" April 1959; DHH 73/1223 Raymont papers Series 6, File 3005, *Hansard*, 2 March 1959, p. 1503.

<sup>31</sup> Brad Gladman and Peter Archambault, *Confronting 'the Essence of Decision': Canada and the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Ottawa: DRDC-CORA Technical Memorandum 2010-250), pp. 26-27.

The late 1950s and early 1960s saw what some at the time and since felt was a period of rapid change in the threat environment, one in which the bomber would rapidly be replaced with the ICBM as the main means by which the Soviets would threaten North America. The shock and alarm expressed by Western populations after the successful launch of Sputnik 1, the first artificial satellite to be put into earth's orbit, on 4 October 1957 was plain,<sup>32</sup> and was based on a widespread fear that the Soviets had an insurmountable lead on the US in the development of missiles which could be used to rain down destruction from space. While eventually the ICBM would become a main element of the Soviet threat, until the late-1960s this was not the case; by the late 1950s intelligence supported the position that there was no missile gap of any consequence.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, John F. Kennedy was successful in his Presidential bid partly due to his emphasis of the perceived missile gap with the Soviets, something President Eisenhower knew to be false but about which he could not comment.<sup>34</sup> The perceived uncertainty in Canada about the nature of the evolving Soviet threat to North America, what capabilities would be required in response in the longer term, and where to apply Canada's limited defence resources in conjunction with those of its partner in continental defence were worsened by the clumsy decision-making structure imposed by Prime Minister John G. Diefenbaker. This led to some rather inchoate thinking about defence planning and appropriate responses to Soviet aggression, all of which by 1963 had convinced the US that Canada was an unsteady partner in continental defence.

### **The Avro Arrow Controversy**

The belief in the decreasing importance of the manned bomber as a major threat to North America gained support in the late 1950s and early 1960s, especially by political figures, and was one area where some senior military leaders differed from their political masters. It is likely that both were partly motivated by narrow interests, with politicians interested in cost savings and Air Force officers seeking to avoid losing

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<sup>32</sup> William J. Jordan, "Soviet Fires Earth Satellite Into Space", *New York Times*, 5 October 1957. Accessed on 11 August 2011 at <http://www.nytimes.com/partners/aol/special/sputnik/sput-01.html>.

<sup>33</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy During the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 206.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

the RCAF's unequal share of defence spending, both of which still resonate in defence debates. But the change in threat perception even from late 1955 to early 1959, just over three years, was significant and probably influenced by the 'Sputnik effect'. In late 1955, for example, the Cabinet Defence Committee assessed that the superior performance of the CF-105 Avro Arrow was "essential in the light of the threat" from Soviet bombers, a threat that would "persist throughout the life of the CF105".<sup>35</sup> By late 1958, however, the Conservative government of John Diefenbaker began to view things somewhat differently. As Diefenbaker himself wrote, "technological change has come too fast...who in 1952 or 3 could have predicted ICBMs – Sputniks – Moon Satellites?"<sup>36</sup> In fact, these developments were entirely predictable, and were in no way a revolution in military affairs. Rather, they simply were of the evolution of rocket and nuclear weapon technology developed during the Second World War. The ability to come to terms with changes in the threat environment by asking the right people for frank and rigorously derived perspectives on the nature of that change continually eluded Diefenbaker. Even had he sought such opinions, both the national security structure and insular positions likely would have diminished that advice.

Despite the growing Canadian political belief that the ICBM would replace the manned bomber as the main means by which the Soviets would threaten North America, the RCAF Chief of the Air Staff, Air Marshal Dunlap, pointed to intelligence estimates indicating that the "Soviet manned bomber will be arrayed against us for some years to come."<sup>37</sup> Moreover, and quite correctly, other intelligence demonstrated that the rate of Soviet construction of ICBMs had been far less than initially forecast. The so-called 'missile gap', which Kennedy used as a main feature of his 1960 Presidential election campaign, did not exist. Dunlap went on to say that the manned bomber was the most dangerous threat to hardened ICBM sites and control centres because at that time they were more accurate than ICBMs, could carry several nuclear

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<sup>35</sup> Library and Archives Canada (LAC), Record Group (RG) 2 Vol. 2752, Cabinet Defence Committee Documents, "Memorandum to Cabinet Defence Committee: Reappraisal of the CF105 Development Programme", 4 November 1955, p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> Diefenbaker Canada Centre (DCC), MG01/XII/B/9 Avro Arrow file n.d., 1958-Jan. 1959, handwritten note.

<sup>37</sup> DHH, Raymont Papers, 73/1223 Series 1 File 306, Memorandum to the Minister from the Chief of the Air Staff, *Canadian Bomarc Squadrons*, 22 February 1963.

weapons, thus were more flexible and could be recalled.<sup>38</sup> Intelligence from a variety of sources reached the Minister of National Defence, and should have reached the Prime Minister had the decision-making structure been less confused, showing that the ICBM threat would overtake the bomber threat only in the late 1960s, and even then the Soviets would still be able to put hundreds of bombers over North American targets.<sup>39</sup> All of this supported his position that Canada would be “compelled to retain good defences against the Soviet bomber threat for the foreseeable future.”<sup>40</sup>

This assessment was completely in accordance with the agreed Canada-US intelligence assessment of the air threat to North America, which indicated that the bomber threat would continue through the 1960s. Curiously, Canadian and American intelligence authorities were “not wholly in agreement on the extent of its duration and the rate at which it will diminish in strength in relation to the missile threat.”<sup>41</sup> Indeed, the American National Intelligence Estimate (NIE), the NATO Standing Group, and the Canadian Joint Intelligence Committee views all differed, with the Americans believing the bomber would continue to be a significant threat longer than their Canadian counterparts. In particular, NORAD intelligence staff went further, disagreeing with many of the assumptions underpinning the NIE including that “a mass attack by manned bombers would throw away the initiative of surprise” and thus the Soviets would no longer pursue these weapons.<sup>42</sup> The CINCNORAD maintained that there was no assurance of warning before a Soviet bomber attack, that “a sneak attack by bombers is feasible and, therefore, likely to be followed by the mass attack.” Furthermore, and possibly influenced by provincial interests, CINCNORAD questioned the assumption that a nuclear deterrent was sufficient to maintain peace, asserting that preparations to

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> The National Intelligence Estimated indicated that 400-500 aircraft might be committed to strikes against North America, while the USAF estimated as many as 750 aircraft. See John F Kennedy Presidential Library (JFK), Theodore C. Sorensen papers, Classified Subject Files 1961-1964, Box 49, Memorandum for the President, Continental Air Defense, 12 November 1962, 10.

<sup>40</sup> DHH, Raymont Papers, 73/1223 Series 1 File 306, Memorandum to the Minister from the Chief of the Air Staff, *Canadian Bomarc Squadrons*, 22 February 1963.

<sup>41</sup> DHH, Raymont Papers, 73/1223 Series 1 File 54, Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee, Canada-US Ministerial Committee, Continental Air Defence, 28 June 1960, 5-6; DCC, MG01XIVD26 Volume 10, Defence Questions for Discussion, 4 November 1959, p. 1.

<sup>42</sup> DHH 79/469, Air Vice Marshal M. M. Hendrick Papers, Daily Diary, 30 May 1958.

meet the Soviet bomber fleet were essential to the preservation of the deterrent.<sup>43</sup> The lack of a forceful consensus prevented the development of a detailed threat estimate that could be used to determine specific defence requirements. At times of rapid changes to aspects of the security environment, a clear dialogue based on sound analysis and frank, operationally-focused advice between the military and political leadership is all the more essential in order to ensure, to the extent possible, that defence investment delivers relevant capabilities.

Very quick on the heels of the NORAD agreement came the decision to cancel the CF-105 Avro Arrow. This decision, which killed the development of a Canadian-built aircraft with undeniable potential as an air superiority fighter, is less important than an examination of the decision-making process and what that may indicate about the nature of Canadian strategic culture in the early Cold War. In the time since that decision, the story of the Arrow has become more myth and legend,<sup>44</sup> with some arguing that variants of the aircraft would still be front-line fighters flying today. The latter, of course, is highly unlikely, but what is notable is the persistence of the enduring belief that an opportunity was missed, and that a lack of political vision and courage sacrificed a chance for Canada to lead the US in a critical element of continental defence. More importantly, at the political level insufficient thought was given to the need to replace the obsolescent CF-100 all-weather fighter, which was the main contribution to continental air defence, as the Arrow program was cancelled. Ironically, this may have led to a situation that, for a government and Prime Minister seemingly obsessed with the derogation of sovereignty, would be forced to allow US interceptors on Canadian

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> For examples of this extensive literature see James Dow, *The Arrow*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1997); Murray Peden, *Fall of an Arrow* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1987); Palmiro Campagna, *Storms of Controversy: the Secret Avro Arrow Files Revealed*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: Stoddart, 2000); E.K. Shaw, *There Never Was an Arrow*, 2nd ed. (Ottawa, ON: Steel Rail Educational Publishing, 1981); Randall Whitcomb, *Avro Aircraft and Cold War Aviation* (St. Catherines: Vanwell Publishing, 2002); Greig Stewart, *Shutting Down the National Dream: A.V. Roe and the Tragedy of the Avro Arrow*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1997); Peter Zuuring, *The Arrow Scrapbook* (Dalkeith: Arrow Alliance Press, 1999); Les Wilkinson, Don Watson, Ron Page and Richard Organ, *The Story of the Avro Arrow from its Evolution to its Extinction* (Erin: Boston Mills Press, 1980).

bases to defend against any Soviet bomber attack.<sup>45</sup> In the absence of much thinking about a capable replacement to the CF-100 and the cancellation of the Arrow, this was one option the Canadian government was forced to consider.

In continental defence, Canada had benefitted since 1951 from “an apparent willingness within the US administration to achieve greater continental integration in defence production and trade by supplying increased quantities of components or finished products, especially from the aviation and electronics sectors.”<sup>46</sup> This trend showed signs of diminishing with the expected end of the Korean War, and with President Eisenhower’s stated desire to reduce defence spending.<sup>47</sup> This was particularly true for continental defence which, according to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Radford, was “taking a large amount of money and [was] expected to take more.”<sup>48</sup> Reflecting the general attitude of senior US military leadership, Radford felt “that a sizeable reduction should be made in the amount of money being given to this.”<sup>49</sup> However, these sentiments were not entirely universal. For example, in September 1953 Secretary of State John Foster Dulles wrote that “Our collective security policies require urgent reconsideration” and that from a US standpoint there was a need for increased continental defence.<sup>50</sup> This did not necessarily mean, however, an increase in US military spending in Canada that would help offset the costs of the development of the Avro Arrow, nor did it mean the USAF would be likely to support the acquisition of the CF-105. By the fall of 1953, Claxton “reported glumly to his Prime Minister that major cuts to the US military aircraft budget would

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<sup>45</sup> DHH, 73/1223 Raymont Papers Series 1, Box 1, File 12, Paper prepared at the request of the Chiefs of Staff Committee entitled “Implications of USAF Taking Over RCAF Manned Interceptor Role” April 1959; DHH 73/1223 Raymont papers Series 6, File 3005, *Hansard*, 2 March 1959, p. 1503.

<sup>46</sup> Donald C. Story and Russell Isinger, “The Origins of the Cancellation of Canada’s Avro CF-105 Fighter Program: A Failure of Strategy”, p. 1030.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Library of Congress (LC), Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower, Eisenhower Diaries, reel 22, Memorandum of Conversation with the President, 15 July 1959, p. 1.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library (DDE), Papers as President 1953-61, Ann Whitman File, International Series Box 36, Draft Memorandum, 6 September 1953, p. 1.

likely mean the cancellation of US aircraft-building programs at Canadair Limited in Montreal.”<sup>51</sup> In order for the program to succeed, other orders were needed.

One of the most often cited sources on Canadian defence during this period is Jon McLin. His work *Canada's Changing Defence Policy* has attempted to come to terms with many of the issues surrounding the development and cancellation of the Arrow, as well as the purchase of the BOMARC missile and CF-101 Voodoo fighter.<sup>52</sup> Since this work came out, some forty-five years ago, more information has been declassified allowing a new look at these issues that have become part of the accepted national narrative. Of particular relevance are McLin's arguments about the inability of Canadian political leaders to secure foreign orders for the aircraft.<sup>53</sup> There were a number of meetings between MND George Pearkes and his American counterparts. For example, one such meeting took place in Paris at a NATO ministerial meeting. Pearkes discussed a potential US order for the Arrow with Secretary of Defense Neil McElroy, only to be told again that the US would not order the aircraft for its own use. As McLin wrote, “there would be no U.S. order even if substantial cost reductions were made in the Arrow.”<sup>54</sup> It will be shown here, both challenging and enhancing McLin's argument, that while the Americans were consistent in their rejection of the Arrow for their own use, it did not reflect their lack of interest in the Arrow and desire to see it used by both British and the RCAF. Moreover, it was not, as some writers assert, that the US was attempting to bully Canada to procure US equipment only.<sup>55</sup> Rather, as fairly recently declassified material shows clearly, senior US military leadership was interested and sincere in absorbing the costs of procuring the aircraft in greater numbers than planned for both the RCAF and Royal Air Force (RAF) air defence squadrons. It also will be shown that Canadian political leadership likely did not know of this potential. The flow, or lack thereof, of information to those responsible for important decisions is the focus of this case-study, and it is these details that are far more useful to current defence debates than whether the Arrow was cancelled or not. It is not the author's intent to

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<sup>51</sup> Donald C. Story and Russell Isinger, “The Origins of the Cancellation of Canada's Avro CF-105 Fighter Program: A Failure of Strategy”, p. 1031.

<sup>52</sup> Jon B. McLin, *Canada's Changing Defense Policy, 1957-1963*, especially pp. 61-105.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 70-73.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>55</sup> See Palmiro Campagna, *Storms of Controversy: the Secret Avro Arrow Files Revealed*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: Stoddart, 2000).

justify the means by which RCAF requirements were set and changed, or to suggest that a reasonable procurement strategy for Canada would be to build something of high quality and high cost and then hope the Americans would buy it for us. Thus, the debates surrounding the production costs and related matters to the aircraft's development are intentionally avoided.

### **Significant Foreign Interest**

Popular depictions of the cancellation of the Arrow always include an element of unsubstantiated conspiracy amongst senior US and Canadian leadership – the most popular is that which alleges a US desire to see the cancellation of the project – and these assumptions must be challenged since recently declassified documents tell a different story.<sup>56</sup> They show that not only did USAF leadership see a role for the aircraft, although not in USAF service, but that the RAF also was interested in procuring it for their own use. Even scholarly works on the strategic thinking behind the decision to cancel the Arrow overlook, or outright ignore, the importance and level of foreign interest in the design, and all pay no mind to the significant roadblocks to the flow of this information to Canadian senior leadership.<sup>57</sup>

At the time the Arrow was under initial development, both the RAF and USAF were awaiting their own supersonic interceptors. The USAF had the North American F-108 Rapier on the drawing boards, the specifications of which were beyond those of the CF-105 making it less likely that the USAF would procure the Arrow for their own squadrons, something Pearkes learned when he discussed the matter with McElroy.<sup>58</sup> But this did not mean they were unappreciative of the Canadian design. Indeed, in a meeting between the Canadian ambassador and the Secretary of the USAF, James H.

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<sup>56</sup> This incorrect story continues to this day: see Michael Byers "Ghost of the Avro Arrow Haunts the F-35", *The Star*, <http://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorialopinion/article/1156769--ghost-of-the-avro-arrow-haunts-the-f-35>, accessed 12 April 2012.

<sup>57</sup> Donald C. Story and Russell Isinger, "The Origins of the Cancellation of Canada's Avro CF-105 Fighter Program: A Failure of Strategy", p. 1047.

<sup>58</sup> LAC RG 25 volume 4584 File 50046-40 File part 7, Memo to File Annex I to Appendix 'G' "Continental Air Defence – Foreign Policy Implications", 1; also see Bill Gunston, *Fighters of the Fifties* (Cambridge: Patrick Stephens, 1981), pp. 178–9.

Douglas and others in 1958, the secretary remarked that his view was that despite the USAF "inability to absorb CF-105's into their interceptor system" the Department of the Air Force was willing "to purchase CF-105's in squadron strength, to be integrated into the continental defence system, to operate from Canadian bases, and to be manned and maintained by R.C.A.F personnel".<sup>59</sup> This was no idle musing, but obviously the result of serious consideration of both the aircraft's potential, the threat environment, and a means to enable the RCAF to meet more effectively the manned-bomber threat from the Soviet Union. So much so that when met with comments from the Canadian Ambassador that "this would pose certain problems against the background of Canada having remained aloof from Lend Lease and from the acceptance of aid from the U.S. or any other country" the Secretary "reiterated his personal view that he would like to see CF-105's employed in squadron strength in Canada in greater numbers than was currently being planned for."<sup>60</sup> Another USAF participant, General Putt, then suggested that the desired end of having the Arrow in Canadian service could "be achieved through NORAD indicating the desired disposition of U.S. and Canadian interceptor strength on the continent and, on this basis, showing an essential requirement for a number of squadrons based in Canada considerably greater than those presently planned for commitment to continental defence by the R.C.A.F." Presented as such, General Putt continued, the purchase of Arrows might be cast in terms of continental defence, and thereby be more acceptable to Canadians. Another possibility, demonstrating the degree to which this topic must have been debated within USAF circles before the meeting, was offered by General Putt who suggested that some eight SAC refuelling bases were planned for Canadian soil, and "that possibly some "saw-off" or "swap" arrangement might be worked out, i.e. purchase of CF-105's in exchange for work which might be done by Canada in readying the refuelling bases to give SAC a longer reach."<sup>61</sup> Indeed, the "establishment of tanker base facilities at four bases in Canada" and the expansion of other airfields to accommodate SAC bombers had

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<sup>59</sup> LAC RG 25 volume 4584 File 50046-40 File part 7, Memo to File Annex I to Appendix 'G' "Continental Air Defence – Foreign Policy Implications, 1.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., pp. 1-2.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

already been recommended to Cabinet in January 1957, so the end result would have been little or nothing.<sup>62</sup>

Contrary to the common belief that US officials are ignorant and unconcerned with the Canadian situation or Canadian desires or inclinations,<sup>63</sup> this incident shows a serious attempt by a very senior US figure who, according to those present at the meeting, “had been thoroughly briefed on the Canadian-built weapons system and had also discussed it more than casually with his top military people” and who “showed a familiarity with a variety of subjects associated with continental defence which indicated a knowledge of U.S.A.F.’s interests in Canada.” More importantly, he showed a clear “understanding of associated Canadian problems, both political and economic”.<sup>64</sup> All of this points to an ally with a detailed understanding of the potential value of the Arrow in the Canadian context, and offering a number of measures that would allow the US to purchase the aircraft for Canadian use, along similar lines that eventually would be used to procure the CF-101 Voodoo for Canadian squadrons, without a political blow-back that would be problematic for Canada-US relations and continental defence.<sup>65</sup> This reinforces the view that this was no idly musing or a statement of personal view, but a serious offer by the Department of the Air Force to absorb the costs of acquiring a significant number of CF-105s for the RCAF.

Despite what McLin says about the British desire to have “Canada settle on the TSR-2 which they were developing”, the RAF showed equal interest in acquiring the Arrow, something which developed due to delays in the arrival of its next fighter, the Gloster Javelin.<sup>66</sup> In 1955 the British “Minister of Supply, Reginald Maudling, toured the Avro plant in Toronto. He was impressed by the aircraft, especially when Avro officials

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<sup>62</sup> LAC RG 25 volume 4584 File 50046-40 File part 1, Memo for the Cabinet Defence Committee, “U.S. Air Force Request for Tanker Base Facilities in Canada, 28 January 1957, p. 3.

<sup>63</sup> See Michael Byers “Ghost of the Avro Arrow Haunts the F-35”, *The Star*, <http://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorialopinion/article/1156769--ghost-of-the-avro-arrow-haunts-the-f-35>, accessed 12 April 2012.

<sup>64</sup> LAC RG 25 volume 4584 File 50046-40 File part 7, Memo to File Annex I to Appendix ‘G’ “Continental Air Defence – Foreign Policy Implications, p. 2.

<sup>65</sup> LAC MG32 B19 Papers of Douglas Harkness, volume 57, “Air Defence Review”, 23 December 1960, p. 8.

<sup>66</sup> McLin, *Canada’s Changing Defense Policy*, p. 70.

assured him it would be operational before the Javelin.”<sup>67</sup> The British Air Staff also preferred the Arrow to the Javelin, and the Air Ministry also wanted “to acquire the Arrow as a replacement.”<sup>68</sup> As frequently happens, Treasury concerns trumped military desires, and there were both pecuniary and strategic reasons for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to rule out purchase of the aircraft. Buying the Arrow directly from Avro or building it under license in the UK both were found to be too expensive, and although both the RAF and Air Ministry wanted the Arrow, they wanted the Americans to buy it for them as part of the Mutual Defense Assistance Program. Initially, the US showed signs they were more than willing to do so. USAF General Putt, who was a fan of the Arrow and pleased that Canada was producing something of value to continental defence, viewed the British plan to acquire the Javelin as “an example of our (Britain’s) attachment to antiques.” He felt the Arrow would meet both British and Canadian requirements far better than any of the alternatives. Furthermore, in 1955 in a similar approach to the British that his successor would take towards Canada in 1958 in discussions about the Arrow, the Secretary of the USAF told the UK Minister of Supply, Reginald Maudling, “that the US would co-operate with the UK to secure the Arrow for the RAF.”<sup>69</sup> The RAF eventually equipped 14 squadrons with Javelins, and the RCAF had originally intended some 400 CF-105s for air defence purposes, indicating the numbers being discussed could have been somewhere in the neighbourhood of 600 aircraft. Even if the numbers proposed for the RCAF, given the reference to “greater numbers than was currently being planned for”, were broadly similar to what the RAF had planned it would still total over 330 aircraft.<sup>70</sup>

Following the cancellation of the CF-105 Avro Arrow, the US State Department was aware of the “psychological shock to many Canadians” that demonstrated

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<sup>67</sup> Peter Archambault, *The Informal Alliance: Anglo-Canadian Defence Relations, 1945-1960*, unpublished PhD Thesis (Calgary: Department of History, 1997), p. 297.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., pp. 297-298. See also UK National Archives, Kew, Surry AIR 19/671, Minister of Supply to Minister of Defence, 8 December 1955.

<sup>70</sup> LAC RG 25 volume 4584 File 50046-40 File part 7, Memo to File Annex I to Appendix ‘G’ “Continental Air Defence – Foreign Policy Implications, pp. 1-2.

“Canada’s inability to play an independent role in the field of modern weaponry.”<sup>71</sup> While there is an element of truth to this, at times such dependency results from choices made, and perhaps a lack of strategic courage. In the case of the Arrow, Canadian industry had produced an aircraft of considerable potential, and one that provided the most effective means to counter what intelligence assessments indicated would be an enduring threat, the Soviet manned bomber. Canada’s partner in continental defence was prepared to purchase the aircraft in considerable numbers for both Canada and possibly Britain to ensure the Western Alliance was ready to meet this challenge. Accepting such assistance is not a challenge to sovereignty, as a very similar deal was made to give 66 CF-101 Voodoo aircraft to the RCAF for continental defence. Neither was entering into a bi-national air defence command, NORAD.<sup>72</sup> Rather, these acts are, or would have been in the former case, expressions of sovereignty in the context of an understanding of the realities of the threats faced and the means available to address them. In this instance, the decision-support system failed the Prime Minister. While there is no guarantee Diefenbaker would have accepted US assistance in acquiring a Canadian-made response to the Soviet bomber threat, there is no evidence in the available record showing he ever received the ‘Memo to File’ on discussions between the Canadian Ambassador and the Secretary of the USAF.<sup>73</sup> Moreover, while there was intelligence indicating the enduring nature of the Soviet manned bomber threat, there is no sign Diefenbaker was aware of this. His main source of information on the speed with which the Soviets would switch from bombers to ICBMs came from the Secretary to the Cabinet and Clerk of the Privy Council, R.B. Bryce.<sup>74</sup> Indeed, Russian bombers continue to probe routinely the air defence identification zones of Canada and the US to

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<sup>71</sup> National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), College Park MD, RG 59, Records of the Department of State, Entry 5298 Records Relating to Military Matters 1942-1966, Box 9. Memorandum entitled “Defense” undated, p. 2.

<sup>72</sup> LAC MG32 B19 Papers of Douglas Harkness, volume 57, “Air Defence Review”, 23 December 1960, p. 8.

<sup>73</sup> Palmiro Campagna, *Storms of Controversy: the Secret Avro Arrow Files Revealed*, refers to a priority message back to Canada from the air staff in Washington, but this document is not in the file to which Campagna refers. There is a summary of the US and UK interest in a different file part, but its distribution is limited and reinforces this paper’s argument that this information did not reach either the MND, PM, or Sidney Smith. See, LAC R112 volumes 33410-33411, File S-1038CN-180A, File parts 14 and 20.

<sup>74</sup> University of Victoria Special Collections (UVSC), The Papers of MGen George Pearkes, accession 74-1 Box 7, “Interview with General Charles Foulkes”, 9 March 1967, p. 14.

this day. Meeting that threat has been part of the calculus for the purchase of the CF-18 Hornet and its replacement.

Moreover, when considering the cancellation of a project of this magnitude, and for which intelligence could and should have indicated a clear need to defend against an enduring Soviet bomber threat, it behooves a government at the helm of the nation's defence to put serious effort into consideration of an alternative fighter. Failing to do so meant that for a government so obsessed with avoidance of US intervention in Canadian affairs, and adamant that Canada would consider withdrawing from NORAD and go on its own<sup>75</sup> forced it to consider putting United States fighter squadrons on Canadian airfields to counter a Soviet bomber attack.<sup>76</sup> While the CF-101B Voodoo eventually was offered by the US in a deal that saw them absorb two-thirds of the cost while Canada picked up the remainder, the delay in its acquisition put Canadian and North American security at risk, and threatened Canadian sovereignty far more than entry into NORAD. The causes of this confusion are of relevance to current security and defence decision-making, as many of the root causes that led to the fumbled Arrow decision still seem to influence defence decision-making today.

### **Decision-Making, Diefenbaker Style**

Ultimately, the real question remains whether the decision-makers received the appropriate information, and whether the right voices from within the defence establishment were given the volume commensurate with their responsibilities.<sup>77</sup> In

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<sup>75</sup> DCC, MG01XIVD4 volume 7, File Avro Arrow, rough notes written in Diefenbaker's hand, undated.

<sup>76</sup> LAC, RG 2 A-5-a volume 2744, Cabinet Conclusions, 4 February 1959, 4; DHH, 73/1223 Raymont Papers Series 2 Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee and Chief of Defence Staff, File 827, Canada-United States Defence Relations, c. 1963, p. 4.

<sup>77</sup> The previous Liberal Government seems to have had a more reasonable decision-making structure, where the Prime Minister attended most Cabinet Defence Committee meetings and received more relevant information than Diefenbaker. For example, in the 17 November 1955 Cabinet Defence Committee meeting, PM St. Laurent was informed that the "The Ministers deferred consideration of the proposal to proceed with the CF105 development programme pending enquiries to be made by the Minister of National Defence of the United States Secretary for Air as to the possibility of the United States sharing in or taking over the whole of the programme." Obviously, this information did not pass

such cases, the perspective of the commander with the responsibility and accountability for, in the case of NORAD, conducting air defence of North America operations ideally should drive the debate. The fact that NORAD was a bi-national command whose commander was a USAF general complicated matters, and prevented the development and delivery of requirements to both governments. Still, the view of those involved in continental air defence is far more valuable in determining the way forward than, for example, the Secretary of the Cabinet with no formal training in defence matters. In the case of the decision to abandon the Avro Arrow, and given Diefenbaker's dislike of the Cabinet Defence Committee coupled with his seeming mistrust of senior military leadership, the advice on which he relied came from the Cabinet Secretary, R. B. Bryce. Indeed, Foulkes realised that the only way to get advice to Diefenbaker "was to put it across to Bryce, who was the Secretary of the Cabinet, and Bryce would try and get in [sic] sometimes", showing the role personality often plays in such circumstances.<sup>78</sup>

### **Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to Cabinet R.B. Bryce**

Robert 'Bob' Bryce was both the Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to Cabinet from January 1, 1954, to June 30, 1963. Initially a student of engineering at the University of Toronto in 1932, Bryce later studied economics at Cambridge and Harvard universities where he became a strong supporter of John Maynard Keynes,<sup>79</sup> to the point where, according to John Kenneth Galbraith, some "called Keynes Allah and Bryce his Prophet."<sup>80</sup> Thus, Bryce had a strong set of beliefs about government spending and its role in Western economies, and also had an understandable focus on efficiency – something he carried through his long career in government. His public service began with the Department of Finance in 1938, and because of his considerable abilities and

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from the Liberal to Conservative governments. See LAC RG 2 volume 2749 File volume VIII, Cabinet Defence Committee, 17 November 1955, p. 6.

<sup>78</sup> UVSC, The Papers of MGen George Pearkes, accession 74-1 Box 7, "Interview with General Charles Foulkes" 9 March 1967, p. 14.

<sup>79</sup> DDE, Eisenhower, Dwight D: Papers as President 1953-61, Ann Whitman File, International Series Box 6, Canada (2), Biography of Robert B. Bryce, Secretary to the Cabinet, undated.

<sup>80</sup> David Colander, "Political Influence on the Textbook Keynesian Revolution God, Man, and Laurie Tarshis at Yale", in O. F. Hamouda and B. B. Price, eds., *Keynesianism and the Keynesian Revolution in America: A Memorial Volume in Honour of Lorie Tarshis* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 1998), p. 59.

service during the Second World War, by 1947 he was the Assistant Deputy Minister of Finance and Secretary of the Treasury Board. Bryce served as Clerk of the Privy Council and Cabinet Secretary, one of the most influential positions in the Canadian Government, to Prime Ministers St. Laurent and Diefenbaker.

The American State Department felt Bryce may have been “one of those who [had] pushed the notion of Canada being a leader of the ‘Middle Powers.’” Moreover, they knew of his interest in and considerable influence on Canadian defence policy, and thought Bryce felt Canada would do well to push for a period of “nuclear stalemate when means of detection and delivery reduce the importance of Canadian facilities to the United States.” This would allow for “greater Canadian independence from the United States and a possible role for Canada in preventing smaller countries from becoming nuclear powers.”<sup>81</sup>

With this assessment in mind it is interesting to look at Bryce’s role as the conduit for defence information to the Prime Minister, especially as it concerned continental air defence. On 5 September 1958, R.B. Bryce “sent a very long memo to the Prime Minister on what should be done with the Arrow.”<sup>82</sup> He felt that “in light of the changes in military advice, and the inevitable difficulties in forming judgements on such important yet uncertain information,” Bryce tried to reach a reasoned conclusion, but perhaps was not equipped to do so.<sup>83</sup> His recommendations, which show little sign of any influence from the Commander responsible for continental air defence, included the “cancellation of [the] entire CF-105 contract”, measures to acquire the Bomarc missile batteries, and “ordering 40 or 50 F-106C aircraft from the United States...at the lowest prices possible and with the best possible cancellation rights.”<sup>84</sup> Many of these recommendations became government policy. The numbers bore no relation to RCAF or NORAD requirements, but rather seemed conjured out of thin air. This was not lost on senior military officials. In a report from the Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee it was noted that “Mr. Bryce's organization...is becoming involved more and more in the

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> DCC, MG01XIVD6 Volume 7, Defence – Memoranda, Memorandum 2: The Arrow: 1956 to September, 1958, undated, p. 2.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid; see also, DCC, MG01XIVD26 volume 10, Memorandum for the Prime Minister from R.B. Bryce Re: The 105 Problem, 5 September 1958.

co-ordination of governmental activities within Canada involving more than one department, to such an extent that his position soon may rival that of a senior minister in the Cabinet.”<sup>85</sup> Moreover, it is notable that the Cabinet Secretary served essentially as a national security advisor to the Prime Minister, by default rather than any official designation.

### **CINCNORAD’s Advice**

Just prior to the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962, the Commander of NORAD still held the view that “North American aerospace defense [was] a key factor in the deterrent equation and [was] a significant element of our persuasive deterrent strength.”<sup>86</sup> In broadly similar terms, while speaking to the Canadian Industrial Preparedness Association, Deputy CINCNORAD Air Marshal Slemon said that it was

a safe forecast, therefore, that an aggressor’s offensive air strategy is unlikely to rely on ballistic missiles alone for a considerable number of years. This situation forces us to maintain and improve our air defence system to cope with the manned bomber threat, and to employ manned interceptors in our system for as long as the manned bomber is part of the threat. We cannot ignore the manned bomber because if we fail to maintain our ability to ward it off, a bomber attack, by itself could be decisive against us.<sup>87</sup>

Thus, both the Commander and his Canadian Deputy, in the context of intelligence assessments on the Soviet capabilities and efforts to test NORAD’s air defences, were clear that this aspect of the Soviet threat to the continent would persist for the foreseeable future, and that credible defences were essential to protecting both the homelands and the strategic deterrent. These requirements do not seem to have reached Diefenbaker in any forceful way, due largely to the confused decision-support system

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<sup>85</sup> DHH, Raymont Papers 73/1223, Series IV File 2126, CCOS Report on Working Group on War Measures, 21 January 1957, p. 1.

<sup>86</sup> DCC, MG01VI108 Defence Volume 45, Memorandum presumably written by Comd NORAD entitled “Some Facts About NORAD,” 28 September 1962, p. 1.

<sup>87</sup> LAC MG32 B19 Papers of Douglas Harkness, volume 29, “Statement by Crawford Gordon, President, A.V. Roe Canada Ltd. To Annual Meeting of Shareholders, October 27, 1958, p. 2.

that served to impede rather than push the views of those in whom both countries had trusted the air defence of North America. An argument could be made that when countries establish an operational-level command (bi-national or national) with specific responsibilities for which its commander is responsible and accountable, they also need to provide that commander with a means to ensure the command's requirements (both short and long-term) are one of the main driving factors informing political leadership in its thinking about defence matters.

As with the discussions between the Canadian Ambassador and the Secretary of the USAF, NORAD requirements and threat assessment do not seem to have reached the MND, and certainly not the Prime Minister. While the confused decision-making structure, dislike of committees, and seeming mistrust of senior military leadership were inescapable features of Diefenbaker's personality, there is evidence that he was failed by those entrusted with ensuring needed information was pushed forward. In this case, information that told of a potential US commitment to assist in the acquisition of larger numbers of CF-105s to meet NORAD requirements and answer an enduring threat to the continent did not reach Diefenbaker. While it is far from certain Diefenbaker would have jumped at this chance, and the cost of training fighter pilots would have to be factored into the whole defence program, the matter was rendered academic because of a blockage in information flow. As a result, the main voice from whom Diefenbaker heard was that of R.B. Bryce, also seemingly unaware of these developments and whose focus on economics clouded his judgement.

This example has focused on defence decision-making and information flow to political leadership from both military and civilian advisors. The obstacles to the smooth flow of relevant perspectives and requirements, some created by Diefenbaker and some of which he was merely a victim, led directly to decision-making in a vacuum without a true appreciation of a) the nature of the Soviet threat, b) where Canada could and should focus its limited defence resources in direct defence of its own population centres and as a contribution to the USAF strategic deterrent, and c) how the partnership with the US could be exploited to mutual advantage. There are many layers of inadequacy responsible for creating this situation, from Diefenbaker's mistrust of military advice through to a lack of focused defence advice brought about by parochial service interests and further complicated by the bi-national nature of NORAD. Both

factors are as relevant to today's defence and security decision-making as they were then. While the contemporary threat environment may be different, coming to terms with uncertainty is not. In the case of defence requirements, hearing from the Commander with the responsibility and accountability for conducting operations is the only way to ensure a realistic statement of requirements and avoid being subjected to parochial service interests. In the case of continental air defence, however, this is complicated by the bi-national nature of NORAD under an American commander.

The effect of this strategic laziness was a failure to close the circle on some important issues. On the one hand the 1957-58 decision to enter into an air defence arrangement with the USAF made a great deal of sense given the serious threat posed by the manned Soviet bomber, as did the decision to begin development of the Avro Arrow, a made-in-Canada solution to this problem. However, key pieces of information on the nature of the Soviet air and missile threat to North America and an interest by both the British and Americans in the Avro Arrow never reached either the MND or Diefenbaker. Neither did the willingness of senior US officials to fund far larger numbers of Arrows for the RAF and RCAF than either had ever dreamt possible. While it is not certain this would have swayed Diefenbaker away from cancelling the Arrow, doing so armed with this information would have displayed a far greater lack of strategic courage than even Diefenbaker's worst opponents accused him of possessing. At the very least, it would have made it clear that if the Arrow was to be cancelled, some clear plans had to be in place to provide a replacement for the obsolete CF-100 before it was cancelled. Failure to do so, especially by a government overly concerned with the preservation of Canadian sovereignty, forced Canadian officials to at least consider the placement of USAF fighters on Canadian bases as a means to close a serious hole in the air defences of North America. CINCNORAD knew better than any other commander the nature of this threat, but his advice went to the Canadian Chiefs of Staff whose decisions had to be unanimous. In this context, the advice to Diefenbaker's government consisted of a watered-down compromise with the other service chiefs.

This case also reinforces the fact that advice to senior military and civilian leadership must follow structured organisational pathways to get the right information to decision-makers in a timely fashion. It has been shown here that when those

pathways are ignored, and advice is allowed to deteriorate into a random series of informal discussions where perspectives are abandoned in favour of uninformed opinions of mandarins whose authority is derived from proximity and personal relations rather than expertise, incoherent decision-making is difficult to avoid. At the very least, under such circumstances the vagaries of a leader's personality are most keenly felt, not always to the benefit of sound decision-making. *Ad hoc* discussions are no substitute for informed decision-making, and as this case demonstrates, can have disastrous consequences for the national security debate, Canada's status as a reliable ally, and Canadian and continental security writ large.

### **Cuban Missile Crisis**

Much of the literature of this incident and the Canadian response points to confusion at the highest levels, but does not account sufficiently for it.<sup>88</sup> It shows that Canadian political leadership hesitated at a key time when, despite misgivings over a lack of prior consultation, it was time to close ranks with our closest ally in defence of the continent. However, the literature either misinterprets what the military could have done on its own accord, or excuses the military's inaction by assuming that no approved Department of National Defence (DND) War Book was in place to permit raising CF readiness levels in lockstep with the US in defence of the continent. This brief example will show that useable, if not ideal, measures were in place by which the

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<sup>88</sup> Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971); Graham T. Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (New York: Addison-Wesley Longman, 1999); James M. Minifie, *Open at the Top: Reflections on US-Canada Relations* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1964); John W. Warnock, *Partner to Behemoth: The Military Policy of a Satellite Canada* (Toronto: New Press, 1970); Patrick Nicholson, *Vision and Indecision* (Toronto: Longmans, 1968); Peyton Lyon, "The Cold War: Cuba-October 1962", *Canada in World Affairs, 1961-63* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1968); Peyton Lyon, "Prime Minister Diefenbaker and the Cuban Missile Crisis", Thomas A. Hockin, ed., *Apex of Power: The Prime Minister and Political Leadership in Canada* (Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1977); Peter C. Newman, *Renegade in Power: The Diefenbaker Years* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1963); Peter T. Haydon, *The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis: Canadian Involvement Reconsidered* (Toronto: The Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, 1993); Jon B. McLin, *Canada's Changing Defense Policy, 1957-1963: The Problems of a Middle Power in Alliance* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1967); Sean M. Maloney, *Learning to Love the Bomb: Canada's Nuclear Weapons during the Cold War* (Washington DC: Potomac Books, 2007).

Chiefs of Staff Committee could have raised the readiness levels of all services, and NORAD and naval forces in particular, without appealing to Cabinet. So, although the literature is correct in capturing the delay in raising readiness levels due to lengthy commiseration, the question of whether the delay was necessary has hitherto eluded scholars. The effect brought about by a confused and convoluted decision-making structure discussed above was compounded by the military's inability to provide sound advice at a critical moment in what became a grave crisis in Canada-US relations. It contains stark lessons for today's military decision-makers and those providing decision-support.<sup>89</sup>

Immediately after the briefing by Livingston Merchant on the planned US quarantine of Cuba, Minister of National Defence Douglas Harkness met with the Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, Air Chief Marshal Frank Miller, and "told Frank to order the Chiefs of Staff to put their forces on the "READY" state of alert."<sup>90</sup> Unfortunately, as Harkness later recalled, the Chairman questioned whether these measures were available to the Defence Minister. The difficulty arose because an updated version of the Department of National Defence War Book, which included detailed descriptions of the instances in which the Defence Minister had authority to raise the alert levels of the Canadian Forces, had been under review by various government departments since at least early 1961, and had yet to be approved by Cabinet. Thus, Harkness later described, "my legal right to take such action was not clear."<sup>91</sup> After a short discussion it was decided that this action needed to be cleared with the Prime Minister. This mistaken advice opened the way for extended debate at a time when united and timely action was called for both to defend the continent against a burgeoning threat, and to avoid the appearance of a divided Western alliance at a time of severe crisis.

The reasons for the need to revise both the DND and Government War Books were that the existing DND War Book presupposed a conventional war, "because policy

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<sup>89</sup> For a full accounting of the Canadian approach to the Cuban Missile Crisis see Brad Gladman and Peter Archambault, *Confronting the 'Essence' of Decision: Canada and the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Ottawa: DRDC CORA TM 2010-250, November 2010).

<sup>90</sup> LAC, MG 32, Papers of Douglas Harkness, vol. 57, "The Nuclear Arms Question and the Political Crisis Which Arose From it in January and February, 1963", pp. 8-9.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

guidance for a nuclear war was inadequate at the time it was being prepared.” As well, the Canadian Formal Alert Measures from 1955 were “increasingly unrealistic to deal with the speed and decisiveness with which a nuclear attack [could] be delivered.”<sup>92</sup> In this instance, capable planners had identified and looked for a means to overcome this weakness.

Since it was believed that the declaration of a Formal Alert by the Government of Canada, and the time required to do so, would unnecessarily alarm the public and could increase international tensions, a series of revisions were proposed to the Cabinet Defence Committee for certain measures that could be taken without instituting a Formal Alert.<sup>93</sup> These were the ‘States of Military Vigilance’ to be ordered when the readiness of the Canadian Forces needed to be raised, but where there was no need to begin mobilizing national resources for a war. It was noted at the time that there were several instances in which a ‘State of Military Vigilance’ could have been applied appropriately, including the Suez and Lebanese crises, as well as those in the Congo and Laos.<sup>94</sup> While there was a significant difference between incidents like the Congo crisis and a direct threat to North America from Soviet missiles in Cuba, what is interesting in these debates is the assumption that declaring a Formal Alert would alarm the public and increase international tensions. One wonders where this belief originated or whether any rigorous analysis went into its formulation, or if this was another example of opinion becoming ‘received wisdom’ that could not be challenged? In any event, the assessment of the speed with which a nuclear conflict could develop certainly was true. At the very least, these beliefs drove the Joint Planning Committee (JPC) to seek to update the DND alert measures.

The new alert states recommended by the JPC would alert the CF “during a period of international tension prior to the declaration of an Alert by the Canadian

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<sup>92</sup> DHH, Box 83, File 2002/17, Joint Staff Fonds, “Memorandum to The Minister: Revised DND War Book,” August 1961.

<sup>93</sup> LAC, MG 32 Papers of Douglas Harkness, vol. 57, “The Nuclear Arms Question and the Political Crisis Which Arose From it in January and February, 1963”, p. 11; LAC, RG2, Cabinet Defence Committee Documents, Vol. 2752, File D-1-6-1, “Memorandum to Cabinet: Revised DND War Book, 9 January 1962.

<sup>94</sup> DHH, Joint Staff Fonds, 2002/17, Box 83, Memorandum to the Minister, “Revised DND War Book”, p. 2.

Government.”<sup>95</sup> The two proposed states, ‘Discreet’ and ‘Ready’, of military vigilance would be called by the Chiefs of Staff, and the Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee would inform the Minister. The ‘Discreet’ state of military vigilance would, amongst other things, require the services to review their emergency plans, place ships and aircraft on short notice to move, increase the readiness of intelligence and communications facilities.<sup>96</sup> The ‘Ready’ state of military vigilance increased force protection measures at bases and defence installations, cancelled military leave, deployed mobile and alternate headquarters, alerted standby battalions for deployment, and brought units up to wartime strength. These states of military vigilance were designed for use prior to the existing Canadian formal alert system of Simple, Reinforced, and General alerts which could only be implemented by the Federal Cabinet.<sup>97</sup> Before these amendments were made, the War Books simply did not meet the requirements of the threat environment that the country faced. But the point here is that changes were made to the War Books in operation during the Cuban Missile Crisis, and that the measures could have been used by military and political leadership without a requirement for Cabinet approval. According to the Canadian Army’s Director of Military Operations and Planning (DMO&P), the states of military vigilance (discreet and ready) “were adopted by the Chiefs of Staff Committee on 18 Jun 1959.”<sup>98</sup> He went on to write that those states of military vigilance had “been added to the DND War Book by Amendment No.1 dated 21 Dec 59.”<sup>99</sup>

The incident served as a stark reminder of the need for a national security apparatus to bring forward to decision-makers in a timely fashion all relevant information. This is not to suggest that information and advice necessarily will be heeded, or that it will bring Canadian political leadership into line with their American counterparts on all issues. Rather, the process through which this understanding is developed and presented to senior leadership increases the likelihood that they will

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<sup>95</sup> LAC, RG 24, Department of National Defence Records, vol 549 file 096 103 v.3, Joint Planning Committee to the Chiefs of Staff Committee, “Canadian Forces States of Increased Military Vigilance, 23 December 1958.”

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> DHH, File 115.3M1.009 (D6), Colonel AJB Bailey, Director Military Operations and Planning, “Draft Amendment – Army War Book, States of Military Vigilance,” 12 February 1960.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

develop a common perception of the threat. How that threat is dealt with will be the subject of debate, but with the advantage of being armed ab initio with a deeper understanding of what are very complex matters. The alternative is incoherence. In the absence of a rigorous and expert-driven national security structure, military and political leaders were too easily able to accept reasons to justify inaction in the face of a grave threat to North America.

In effect, the sad story of how Ottawa handled the Cuban Missile Crisis is replete with leaders, both political and military, too readily accepting reasons to justify inaction in the face of a clear and present danger. Thus, while having a more streamlined national security structure cannot always negate the effect of personality on decision-making, the national security structure in place during the crisis permitted military and civilian leadership to get away far too easily with finding reasons for inaction. While it is accepted that personality always makes itself felt, the lack of rigour in the system did nothing to soften its sharp edges since it did not force realistic and timely assessments of the nation's geostrategic imperatives, or of the developing threat from Soviet missiles in Cuba. Indeed, a degree of strategic laziness, enhanced by a slow move away from a mobilisation paradigm to one with large forces in-being, had crept into the nation's strategic planning and understanding of the likely nature of the next conflict. The American 'essence of decision', while far from perfect, attempted to understand the context, the adversary's perspective, and tried to apply a degree of rigour to the decision-making process that may have prevented the crisis from developing into a major war. The 'essence' of Canada's decision was even further from perfection; flawed military advice leading to needless debate by a government more concerned with a perceived slight over lack of prior consultation instead of dealing appropriately with a clear and present danger to both Canada and the United States.

### **Arctic**

While the Cuban Missile Crisis and Arrow episodes exposed certain weaknesses in Canada's decision-making structure that affected continental defence cooperation, the Arctic is a perennial challenge for Canadian decision-makers because it overlaps national and continental interests, and as such demonstrates its centrality in Canadian

strategic culture.<sup>100</sup> Although many economic, social and political questions have raised the ire of Canadian nationalists and the spectre of anti-Americanism, the very nature of the 'North' or the 'Arctic' question has put it at the centre of bilateral defence relations many times as a physical, as opposed to a cultural, threat to Canadian sovereignty. As 'Arctic sovereignty' looms large once again in Canadian political debate, it is worthwhile to account for how the problem has played out in the past, as Canadian interest in the Arctic has waxed and waned on a number of occasions since Confederation. It is commonplace to consider that interest primarily as a defensive measure against the United States, oft cited as Canada's main threat in the North.<sup>101</sup>

There is little doubt that the Arctic, or, alternatively, the North, holds a special place in Canada's identity, both historical and contemporary. Strategist Kenneth Eyre, writing in 1987, described that place most succinctly when he observed that "The 'North' to Canadians is more of an idea than a place."<sup>102</sup> While Eyre dealt mainly with the military aspects of what constitutes 'the North,' as a concept relating to "those lands and seas beyond the frontier, beyond the national transportation grid," his main point is an apt descriptor of Canada's Northern narrative. For most Canadians, their attachment to the North is spawned by the notion that it is synonymous with the country itself. The North has been called "part of Canada's greatness," and a recent study suggests that "In its most basic sense, the Arctic and the Northwest Passage is symbolic of Canada's destiny."<sup>103</sup> Canada is, after all, the 'True North strong and free.' Canada's 'northernness' is indisputable, but the stark contrast between that and the equally undeniable 'southernness' of the United States is palpable.

Such abstract notions have not arisen by accident, as Canadian nationalists have used it repeatedly and skilfully to define their country as a distinct North American

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<sup>100</sup> This section is adapted from Brad Gladman and Peter Archambault, *The Canada US Strategic Defence Relationship: Methodology and Case-Study Synopses* (Ottawa: DRDC CORA TM 2009-063), pp. 53-62.

<sup>101</sup> For instance, consider this matter-of-fact assertion: "...during the last 40 years the greatest practical threat to Canadian aspirations in the Arctic has been posed, curiously enough, by its formidable ally to the south, the United States of America.," in N.D. Bankes, "Forty Years of Canadian Sovereignty Assertion in the Arctic, 1947-1987," *Arctic*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (December 1987), p. 285.

<sup>102</sup> Kenneth Eyre, "Forty Years of Military Activity in the Canadian North: 1947-87," *Arctic*, Vol.40, No.4 (December 1987), p. 292.

<sup>103</sup> Kyle D. Christensen, "Arctic Maritime Security and Defence: Canadian Northern Security Opportunities and Challenges," DRDC CORA Technical Report TR2005/01, February 2005, 2

nation. In the pre-Confederation period, political leaders like George Brown and John A. Macdonald cited potential American expansion to Rupert's Land and the Northwest Territories as a reason for Canadian acquisition of the vast lands from the Hudson's Bay Company.<sup>104</sup> In the uncertain years after Confederation, when Loyalist sentiment stoked the country's suspicion of the United States, the Canada First movement used the image of Canadians as sturdy and disciplined 'Northmen' to contrast with the more frivolous and excessive Americans of the South.<sup>105</sup> Historically, the North's importance in the general history of Canada-US relations is significant *because* of how it generates that sort of symbolic nationalistic rhetoric. As Jack Granatstein points out, this rhetoric is rooted in the context of the long history of Canadian anti-Americanism which, "has for two centuries been a central buttress of the national identity."<sup>106</sup> As such, the North is a critical piece of Canada's national narrative, a good part of which relies on the existence of 'the other' in North America, because Canadian policy-makers seem to have embraced the region as the nexus of the endless struggle between sovereignty and security.

Shelagh Grant has chronicled how Ottawa tried to deal with that struggle, real or perceived, in the active years surrounding the Second World War. *Sovereignty or Security? Government Policy in the Canadian North, 1936-1950*, is her meticulously researched study of how sovereign control of the North and defence against possible attacks came to dominate activity and spending among other government programs related to social, economic and political development of the region. Grant's study shows how the 'new North', hitherto treated with little interest in Ottawa, was given a military emphasis in the sovereignty, security and stewardship decisions made by governments in this critical period.<sup>107</sup> Of course, the key events for her examination involved the U.S.

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<sup>104</sup> Canada acquired Ruperts Land and the North-Western Territory from the Hudson's Bay Company in 1870.

<sup>105</sup> J.L. Granatstein and Norman Hillmer, *For Better or For Worse: Canada and the United States in the 1990s* (Mississauga: Copp Clark Pitman, 1991), pp. 13-14.

<sup>106</sup> J.L. Granatstein, *Yankee Go Home? Canadians and Anti-Americanism*, (Toronto: Harper Collins, 1996), p. 4.

<sup>107</sup> Shelagh D. Grant, *Sovereignty or Security? Government Policy in the Canadian North, 1936-1950* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1988). Readers should also consult Morris Zaslow, *The Northward Expansion of Canada 1914-1967* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988) for a study of development, both centralized and local.

military build-up in the North that accelerated after the attack on Pearl Harbor and subsequent US entry into the war. The Ogdensburg and Hyde Park agreements provided a framework for wartime collaboration. Canada-US activity in the North comprised a series of projects building air and land routes to Alaska and the CANOL pipeline and road from Norman Wells to Whitehorse. All of these projects had been proposed in various ways before the war, but became urgent for the United States especially after Pearl Harbor and increased concern over the Japanese threat to Alaska and the Aleutian Islands, and even the threat of a Nazi presence in Siberia – just across the Bering Strait. For the United States, that meant bases in Alaska and the ability to supply them. The Northwest Staging Route, comprised of airfields throughout Western Canada and Alaska, provided the capability for the US to ferry men, supplies and aircraft to Alaska, but also provided a route for the movement of lend-lease aircraft to the Soviet Union, critical to the overall war effort.<sup>108</sup> A chain of air bases called the Crimson Route was built to provide a route northeast to Europe.

For Washington, Northern defence projects were approached within a ‘framework for hemisphere defense’ that became national policy after the Munich crisis of 1938. Stetson Conn and Byron Fairchild compiled ably the various defence plans and actions that comprised this ‘framework,’ which was a throwback to Monroe Doctrine principles of guarding against foreign intrusion.<sup>109</sup> While American activities in the North were part of its broad hemispheric defence program that looked to secure territory against possible threats, especially by Japan, most literature on Ottawa’s perspective argue that the Government considered US activities in the North as more of a potential threat to Canada’s physical control over its territory than any potential Japanese incursions. King was no stranger to suspicions about US motives, and his operating political philosophy and world view are well known. Still, despite Hyde Park and Ogdensburg, he managed to express a degree of shock that the US Government actually was going to launch head-first into mobilization.

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<sup>108</sup> The role of the route in lend-lease is chronicled in Bob Hesketh, ed., *Three Northern Wartime Projects* (Edmonton: Canadian Circumpolar Institute, 1996, p. 32

<sup>109</sup> Stetson Conn and Byron Fairchild, *The Framework of Hemisphere Defense* (Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 1960),p. 3.

In *Canada's War*, Jack Granatstein points out that Mackenzie King was particularly paranoid of Alaska Highway construction. The PJBD recommended the highway a month earlier, "to be constructed along the general line of the existing airway."<sup>110</sup> In March 1942, four months after the US entered the war, King commiserated with Malcolm Macdonald, the British High Commissioner to Canada, over America's apparent manipulation of potential threats to build the highway, which was "less intended for protection against the Japanese than as one of the fingers of the hand which America is placing more or less over the whole of the Western hemisphere."<sup>111</sup> King's attitude of dismay at US motives and expressed surprise over the seriousness with which Washington approached the North was perhaps naïve, but also a misreading of American strategic culture. To expect timidity from the United States after Pearl Harbor and Roosevelt's 'day that will live in infamy' speech possibly was naïve, but definitely was disingenuous. After all, the United States had been attacked and was now fully at war.

Bernd Horn has examined the place of Canada-US relations in the North during the Second World War and made the reasonable observation that, because of US activities in the Second World War, Canada's "northern security became focussed primarily on protecting national sovereignty from the encroachment of an ally rather than the guarding of an unprotected flank from hostile invasion."<sup>112</sup> While there is little question that the presence of American troops in Canada's North was a major bugbear for Canadian politicians during the war, what is less clear is whether the concerns were legitimate or contrived.

There is evidence that Washington viewed its Northern activities as temporary and driven by war-time 'big picture' requirements as opposed to being 'imperialistic' in design.<sup>113</sup> Throughout the war, the strategic significance of the North gradually

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<sup>110</sup> C. Stacey, *Arms, Men and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1970), p. 346.

<sup>111</sup> J.L. Granatstein, *Canada's War: The Politics of the Mackenzie King Government 1939-1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), p. 321.

<sup>112</sup> Lt Col Bernd Horn, "Gateway to Invasion or the Curse of Geography? The Canadian Arctic and the Question of Security, 1939-1999," in Bernd Horn, ed. *Forging a Nation: Perspectives on the Canadian Military Experience* (St. Catherines: Vanwell Publishing Ltd., 2002), p. 311.

<sup>113</sup> Stanley Dzuiban, *Military Relations Between the United States and Canada, 1939-1945* (Washington, 1959), p. 172.

decreased, and so did American military activity. Ottawa bought back control of the North by reimbursing the US Government for Northern defence projects after the cessation of hostilities. The US was also quick to pull its military personnel out of Canadian territory, putting to rest any idea that its presence on Canadian territory was anything but temporary. Indeed, it is difficult to square the image of imperialist America with that of Hugh Keenlyside's remarks on the activities of the PJBD:

At all times the United States representatives recognized the political impracticality of any development of the kind [acquiring title to naval and air bases in Canada] and scrupulously avoided proposing any step that would constitute a violation of Canadian sovereignty.<sup>114</sup>

Real or imagined, however, Canadian attitudes toward the US, perhaps best symbolized by that of Mackenzie King, concentrated on US insensitivities to Canadian sovereignty.<sup>115</sup> The literature is less satisfactory in explaining why Ottawa was caught so off-guard by the speed with which the US undertook its move north. Did this reflect an inability to understand American strategic culture, or was it simply indicative of Canadian strategic culture? Did Canadian decision makers lack so deeply in sufficient information or advice? Did they not know which questions to ask to understand more fully US intent?

Furthermore, such examination should indicate to what extent Canadian decision makers anticipated how war-time reactive behaviour vis-à-vis the Arctic would become a pattern in post-war years. Bernd Horn argues that the experience of the Second World War caused Mackenzie King and his government to insure against "further American encroachment in the Arctic." Referring to early post-war American and Canadian assessments of the potential threat posed by the Soviet Union, Horn shows that Washington was treating the Arctic as a continental defence problem, while Ottawa's support for a defence build-up in the North was motivated not by security "but remained one of countering perceived American penetration in the interest of sovereignty." Horn also outlines the accepted threat perceptions shared by Canada and

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<sup>114</sup> Thomas M. Tynan, "Canadian-American Relations in the Arctic: The Effect of Environmental Influences Upon Territorial Claims, *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (July 1979), p. 411.

<sup>115</sup> R. J. Sutherland, "The Strategic Significance of the Canadian Arctic," in *The Arctic Frontier*, ed. R. St. J. Macdonald (Toronto, 1966), p. 262.

the US, in particular the former's certainty that the latter was exaggerating the threat posed by the former.<sup>116</sup> Ron Purver suggests that "Canadian analysts – while self-admittedly hampered by a lack of independent sources of intelligence were, on the whole, at least initially, far less alarmist than their American counterparts intentions and/or the pace of the developing military threat." He goes further, though, and also suggests that the threat itself was 'questionable' and that Canadian efforts were required more to counter "a massive American over-reaction, with all the pressures that would bring to bear on Canadian sovereignty in the area."<sup>117</sup>

Unfortunately, Purver offers no evidence of why Canadian analysis was superior to American, or on what basis such a comparison of threat assessments should be made. It is possible to emphasize those differences too much, however, as Canadian and American assessments of the developing Soviet threat were not substantively different. As Lawrence Aronsen points out, between 1945 and 1947, Ottawa was in the process of shifting its primary intelligence relationship from Britain to the United States, and was understandably pressured to develop 'made in Canada' assessments. To that end, he argues that there were some differences between Canadian and American views of Soviet intentions and capabilities, especially which should be emphasized in assessing threats in the 'air-atomic age', but also concludes that his examination of the Canadian Joint Intelligence Committee's assessment of 1947 supports recent scholarship that the Western allies were largely consistent in their assessments of the Soviet threat.<sup>118</sup>

Of course, to the venerable Mackenzie King, military affairs generally were troublesome and to be avoided as much as possible. Canada's defence programme itself was far from settled, and defence policy in general drifted through 1946. Service Chiefs and the Government were both certain of the most likely threat to Canada -- the Soviet Union -- but wholly uncertain of what to do about it. No external defence commitments, financial or otherwise, could be made until the Cabinet decided how much money would be available for defence.<sup>119</sup> Much like its Labour counterpart in

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<sup>116</sup> Horn, pp. 318-319.

<sup>117</sup> Ron Purver, "The Arctic in Canadian Security Policy, 1945 to the Present," David B. Dewitt and David Leyton-Brown, *Canada's International Security Policy* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1995), p. 82.

Unfortunately, Purver offers no evidence of why Canadian analysis was superior to American, or on what basis such a comparative assessment should be made.

<sup>118</sup> Lawrence Aronsen, "Preparing for Armageddon: JIC 1 (Final) and the Soviet Attack on Canada," *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 19, No. 3, Autumn 2004, p. 506.

<sup>119</sup> LAC, RG 2, 16/7 Cabinet minutes, 6 November 1946.

London, the King government's emphasis on building a benevolent state was first and foremost in its objectives; defence was something Canada grudgingly had to deal with because of the nature of the Soviet threat and Canada's moralistic goal of collective security and multinational cooperation.<sup>120</sup>

Thus, King's approach to the Arctic was very much driven by the goal of cutting the military, while trying to contain unwanted publicity of defence discussions with the US. Between 20 and 23 May 1946, the newly-formed Canada-United States Military Cooperation Committee (MCC) approved two documents: an "appreciation of the Requirements for Canadian-US security," and the "Joint Canadian-US Basic Security Plan." In the appreciation, the planners outlined their assessment of the strategic threat to North America. Within three to five years, the document warned, a potential enemy (none was specified) could possess atomic weaponry. North America could be vulnerable to attacks from "guided missiles, rockets or aircraft launched from submarines and from Arctic bases seized for the purpose," or even long range bombardment of its vital industrial areas. The security plan called for "a comprehensive air warning, meteorological and communications system," extensive air bases for interceptor aircraft and anti-aircraft defences. With King's blessing, the MCC continued throughout the year to add specific proposals to the Basic Security Plan"<sup>121</sup>

As it has been suggested that the 1946 US request for the construction of several weather stations was a "threat of unilateral action [that] led to major concerns within the Canadian government" because it would initiate US reconnaissance flights that might compromise Canadian sector claims west of Greenland, it is essential to validate, as much as possible, those concerns and whether they drove early post-war Canadian continental defence activity more than the perceived Soviet threat.<sup>122</sup> There is little

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120 (NAC), Mackenzie King Diaries, 13 November 1946; Privy Council Officer Records volume 246. Memorandum for the Prime Minister re: Defence Discussions, 12 November 1946.

<sup>121</sup> Jockel, *No Boundaries Upstairs*, pp. 33-35

<sup>122</sup> The stations were vital not only because they "provided information for aircraft in flight, but also because in some cases their airstrips could be used as possible secondary bases if needed." Grant, p. 214. It was normal throughout the Cold War for the two sides to be standoffish even on what seems to be insignificant meteorological and monitoring proposals. See O. Young, *Arctic Politics: Conflict and Cooperation in the Circumpolar North* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1992), as cited in Douglas C. Nord, "Searching for the North in North American Foreign Policies: Canada and the United States," *The American Review of Canadian Studies*, (Summer, 2007), Vol. 37, No. 2, 210.

question that, once the decision was taken in 1947 to establish the stations, five in all, Ottawa wanted to give the public impression that it was in charge. As CD Howe, the Minister of Reconstruction and Supply, told the House of Commons, the US was merely assisting Canada in constructing and operating the stations, which will be run and manned by Canada. Of course, Canada was slow to man the stations, US personnel were present until 1972, but this episode demonstrates the King government's tendency to operate reactively to US suggestions, despite the wartime experience that might have demonstrated the need for Canada to think in terms of defence of a continental strategic entity. As it is, we are left with the impression that Ottawa considered Canada's defence requirements to be independent of those of Washington's.<sup>123</sup>

King was outraged by a *Financial Post* article claiming that US authorities had given Canada an ultimatum to fortify her northern frontier or allow America to take over. The *Post* ran a similar article three weeks later, concluding that "the moral is clear: Canada must quickly get a policy of her own for developing the North or someone else may insist on doing it for us."<sup>124</sup> Mackenzie King rebuffed the article in the House of Commons, stating that the US was not pressuring Canada into any formal treaty arrangements. Because the plans had not been approved by the Cabinet or Parliament, that was true. A cursory examination of documents, however, shows that King was getting advice that supported continuing relations between the military staffs as if a *de facto* alliance existed, but on a low profile and sensitive to overzealous reporters.<sup>125</sup>

The point of this example is simple: analysis of the Arctic-related decisions made by Mackenzie King and his government during the Second World War and immediately after must differentiate between the politics of sovereignty and nationalism and the more sober assessment of interests, threat perception and the limits in Ottawa's knowledge of Soviet intentions and capabilities with respect to North American security. Or, and perhaps more importantly, our assessment must determine to what extent concern over US threats to Arctic sovereignty was real or a bogeyman to draw attention from Ottawa's lack of activity in the North, that came to be contrasted so

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<sup>123</sup> Bankes, p. 287. The apparent concern was that the US might justify claims to unexplored territory.

<sup>124</sup> *Financial Post*, 29 June; 6 July 1946.

<sup>125</sup> (NAC) RG 25, G2 Acc 84-85, volume 11, file 9061-40. Memorandum for the Prime Minister; Cabinet Defence Committee, minutes of 20 June 1946. DO (46) 20th meeting.

sharply with the US surge there in the first half of the 1940s. In other words, was the King government working on a sound strategic framework for its defence activities in the Arctic or acting out of embarrassment over its lack of action? If there was no need to counter potential Soviet lodgements in the North, by seizing wartime airstrips for instance, why was the Army reorganized for a brief period to an air-transportable brigade (the Mobile Striking Force) to deal with such a scenario?<sup>126</sup> Why did the King Government cite its inability to sail in Arctic waters as the reason to send the carrier HMCS *Warrior* back to the UK in 1947 in favour of HMCS *Magnificent*?<sup>127</sup> To what extent did Canada's military leadership think strategically about the North as a fundamental planning responsibility as opposed to a diversion from more critical commitments overseas as part of United Nations or NATO alliance missions? Was Canada really trying to take an international approach to the Arctic after 1945 in order to emphasize scientific and developmental collaboration or, as Lester Pearson put it in a 1946 article for *Foreign Affairs*, "Peaceful development in cooperation with all the Northern nations is Canada's sole desire. In that development the Canadian accent is on resources and research, not on strategy and politics."<sup>128</sup> Really?

These are questions we must consider, because the weather station controversy was a harbinger of future reaction to continental defence initiatives in those early Cold War days, clearly a critical decision point in the narrative of Canada's story of Arctic sovereignty. Consider, for instance, how the DEW-line initiative has been perceived by various commentators and scholars. John Warnock suggested that the 1955 DEW line

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<sup>126</sup> The Canadian Army allocated substantial resources to the Mobile Striking Force (MSF), which consisted of three airborne battalions and, hypothetically, RCAF air mobile support (which really was only sufficient to lift one battalion). See Sean M. Maloney, "The Mobile Striking Force and Continental Defence 1948-1955," *Canadian Military History*, volume 2, number 2, Autumn 1993.

<sup>127</sup> (NAC) RG 25 A 12, volume 2119, file AR 10208, vol. 2. "RCN acquisition of ships from UK," Norman Robertson to Lester Pearson, 12 February 1947; Brooke Claxton to Lester Pearson, 11 February 1947; Cabinet Conclusions, 14 January 1947. *Magnificent* and two destroyers visited Churchill in the summer of 1948, the next year, a frigate trained in Frobisher Bay and, in 1950, a vessel participated in a joint US-Canadian scientific project in the Chukchi Sea. The Government also announced its plan to build an arctic patrol vessel for the navy. HMCS *Labrador*, an icebreaker, would be the first warship to transit the Northwest Passage, but it was duly transferred to the Coast Guard in 1957. See JM Lemming, "HMCS *Labrador* and the Canadian Arctic," James A. Boutilier, ed. *RCN in Retrospect* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1982), p. 286.

<sup>128</sup> L.B. Pearson, "Canada Looks 'Down North,'" *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 24, Issue 4, (1946), p. 644.

agreement was a surrender of Canadian sovereignty in the North.<sup>129</sup> Gordon Smith argued that Canada was justified in worrying about a creeping US threat to Canadian sovereignty in the North, even though he admitted that Canadian rights were fully protected. In 1959, James Eayrs was alarmed that the agreement meant that, “de facto control of the Canadian North has passed into American hands.”<sup>130</sup> Possibly in keeping with previous examples of diverting attention from military activity, Shelagh Grant suggests that the St. Laurent government’s 1955 announcement of a new Department of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources was not just a coincidence. In the same way, she argues, the next Prime Minister, John Diefenbaker, would espouse a ‘Northern Vision’ coincidentally with the creation of NORAD.<sup>131</sup> These possible connections must be examined further in order to understand the place of the North in Canada’s strategic culture. If nothing else, it certainly would help to validate Joseph Nye’s observation that increased “transnational interactions... may stimulate nationalism.”<sup>132</sup>

In terms of its strategic significance other than as a transit way for Soviet missiles, the Arctic declined through the remainder of the 1950s and 1960s; there was not even a mention of the Arctic in the 1964 White Paper.<sup>133</sup> While Canadian sovereignty over the land mass of the Arctic Archipelago appeared to Canadian policy-makers as beyond question after the Second World War, except for the potential of new discoveries that surrounded the weather station controversy, the next sovereignty episode involved Arctic maritime jurisdictional claims. While there is a substantial amount of literature on the legal aspects of this very specialized issue of international law, our emphasis is on significant episodes and decisions made in the context of the Arctic sovereignty narrative.

For the most part, those episodes revolve around the Northwest Passage and the internal waters issue (which is really a combination of up to seven passages that connect

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<sup>129</sup> John Warnock, *Partner to Behemoth: The Military Policy of a Satellite Canada* (Toronto: 1970), p. 114.

<sup>130</sup> Warnock, Smith and Eayrs are cited in Tynan, p. 413.

<sup>131</sup> Grant, p. 247.

<sup>132</sup> Annette Baker Fox, et al., eds., *Canada and the United States: Transnational and Transgovernmental Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), p. 402.

<sup>133</sup> Paul Hellyer, White Paper on Defence (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1964)

the Bering Strait to the Davis Strait and Baffin Bay<sup>134</sup>), but they also include claims of jurisdiction, such as Canada's ability to enforce pollution law in the Arctic waters. There is much written about differences between Canadian and American legal positions on the Northwest Passage.<sup>135</sup> Canada claims it is internal waters contained in the straight baselines of the Arctic Archipelago, with no right of passage; the United States maintains that it is an international strait and, as such, should be allowed uncontested free passage along the lines of the custom in other such waters, such as the Straits of Malacca.<sup>136</sup> Put simply, Canada tends to view the Passage in largely nationalistic terms, fitting into its limited international role, while the United States approaches the Passage within the context of its global role, wherein decisions normally have implications and effects in other regions.<sup>137</sup>

The two primary Cold War episodes that drove maritime Arctic politics were the voyages of the *Manhattan* in 1969 and 1970, and that of the *Polar Sea* in 1985. Both were, and remain, seen as affronts to Canadian sovereignty. After the discovery of oil reserves off Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, the Humble Oil super tanker SS *Manhattan* sailed to test the viability of year-around transport of oil from Alaska to the East Coast via the Northwest Passage. Humble did not ask Canada for permission, but the Canadian Coast Guard nonetheless provided Coast Guard escort icebreakers for each cruise, perhaps as a

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<sup>134</sup> Donat Pharand, "The Arctic Waters and the Northwest Passage: A Final Revisit," *Ocean Development & International Law*, 38:3-69, 2007, pp. 29-30.

<sup>135</sup> A capable overview of some of the legal issues surrounding the issue of Arctic sovereignty is Lieutenant-Commander Guy Killaby, "'Great Game in a Cold Climate': Canada's Arctic Sovereignty in Question," *Canadian Military Journal*, Winter 2005-2006.

<sup>136</sup> Some examples of the ample literature on the Northwest Passage include Donat Pharand, *Canada's Arctic Waters in International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Morris Zaslow, ed., *A Century of Canada's Arctic Islands, 1880-1980* (Canada: Royal Society of Canada, 1981); Franklyn Griffiths, *The Politics of the Northwest Passage* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill and Queen's University Press, 1987); Rob Huebert, "Canadian Arctic Maritime Sovereignty – The Return to Canada's Third Ocean," in *Canadian Military Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (Summer 2007); Donat Pharand, "The Arctic Waters and the Northwest Passage: A Final Revisit," *Ocean Development & International Law*, 38:3-69, 2007.

<sup>137</sup> *National Security Presidential Directive 66*, issued in January 2009, states the position as thus: "Freedom of the seas is a top national priority. The Northwest Passage is a strait used for international navigation, and the Northern Sea Route includes straits used for international navigation; the regime of transit passage applies to passage through those straits. Preserving the rights and duties relating to navigation and overflight in the Arctic region supports our ability to exercise these rights throughout the world, including through strategic straits."

symbol of ownership.<sup>138</sup> The incident prompted the Trudeau government, after substantial media pressure decrying Ottawa's soft stance on sovereignty, to amend the Territorial Sea and Fishing Zones Act to extend Canada's territorial waters from 3 to 12 nautical miles. The government also passed a second piece of legislation, the Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act, which created a zone for pollution prevention up to 100 miles from the mainland by regulation of, among other things, hull and fuel tank specifications, manning, pilotage and imposed obligations upon shippers regarding insurance and indemnity.<sup>139</sup>

Based primarily upon their different interpretations of internal/international waters with respect to the Northwest Passage, Ottawa and Washington took different views on whether the legislation itself was even legitimate, Canada going so far as to deny the International Court's jurisdiction to rule on the dispute, sparking the United States to charge that Canada was taking unnecessary 'unilateral' action.<sup>140</sup> President Nixon supposedly refused to take a call from Trudeau to discuss the new policy, and American attempts to mobilize a conference to tackle the issue from a multilateral perspective failed. In their study on Trudeau and Canadian foreign policy, Robert Bothwell and Jack Granatstein suggested that "some Canadian officials, and Senator Paul Martin," supported the notion of international jurisdiction, "but they did their complaining in private." However, there is no source provided for this statement, and therefore no evidence as to how that advice was given or on what basis it was formulated.<sup>141</sup> We need to investigate the way these points of view were generated and included in the decision-making process. While Paul Martin reviewed his position in his memoir, we lack a comprehensive view of the Manhattan crisis and its handling based on primary sources.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Eyre, p. 296.

<sup>139</sup> See the Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act at <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/A-12/index.html>, accessed June 2012.

<sup>140</sup> Fox, *et al*, Eyre, p. 296.

<sup>141</sup> JI Granatstein and Robert Bothwell, *Pirouette: Pierre Trudeau and Canadian Foreign Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), p. 81.

<sup>142</sup> John Kirton and Don Munton provided a synopsis of events, entitled "The Manhattan Voyages and Their Aftermath" in Franklyn Griffiths, *Politics of the Northwest Passage* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill Queen's University Press, 1987), pp. 67-97.

As Canada was claiming specialized jurisdiction more so than territorial sovereignty in the 1970 surge of law-making, one scholar suggests that it is “unclear... why claims to territorial sovereignty and associated arguments were not pressed more forcefully in 1970.”<sup>143</sup> This is a question that further research must consider, specifically in the context of what strategic or long term considerations were part of the Cabinet discussions in 1970, as well as the type of advice being advanced by the bureaucracy to various ministers.<sup>144</sup>

The issue of transit through the Northwest Passage and the implications for innocent passage appeared again in political debate 15 years later when, in 1985, the US Coast Guard icebreaker *Polar Sea* transited it on its voyage from Greenland to Alaska. Descriptions of this event are often inconsistent and not fully explored, especially as to whether permission was granted by Ottawa for the transit. Marc Milner, for instance, suggests that the passage of the *Polar Sea* “without permission was a slight that could not be ignored.”<sup>145</sup> Permission was not sought, but it was indeed given, and Canadian observers were aboard.<sup>146</sup> To confuse matters further, Donat Pharand states that notification was given, but Canada responded that it considered all waters of the Archipelago as

historic internal waters and that a request for authorization would be necessary. The United States refused to make such a request and, eventually, the two governments agreed that the transit would take place without prejudice to their respective legal positions. The transit did take place without any request and, indeed, the United States later denied that it even had given Canada prior notice. Nevertheless, there was good cooperation between the officials of both countries and three Canadian representatives were accepted aboard: one from the navy, another from

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<sup>143</sup> Bankes, p. 289.

<sup>144</sup> Whitney Lackenbauer and Peter Kikkert, *The Canadian Forces and Arctic Sovereignty: Debating Roles, Interests, and Requirements, 1968-1974* (Waterloo: LCMSDS Press of Wilfrid Laurier University, 2009). The book examines some internal Government of Canada thinking on the issues of sovereignty, and the military role in the Arctic in this critical period.

<sup>145</sup> Marc Milner, *Canada's Navy: The First Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), p. 292.

<sup>146</sup> Elizabeth Elliot-Meisel, “Still Unresolved After Fifty Years: The Northwest Passage in Canadian-American Relations, 1946-1998,” *The American Review of Canadian Studies*, Fall 1999, Vol. 29, Issue 3, p. 411.

the coast guard, and the third from the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs.<sup>147</sup>

A similar legislative flurry resulted from the event, again after considerable media pressure, this time by order-in-council to claim waters landward of the baselines as historical internal waters, and therefore not subject to the convention of right of innocent passage.<sup>148</sup>

While the complex issues surrounding the Law of the Sea are substantive and a critical part of Canada-US relations, of more interest is the connection between this incident and the broader story of the role of these Arctic-related incidents to the foreign and defence policies of the Trudeau and Mulroney governments. In general, Trudeau ended up emphasizing sovereignty and continental defence as a result of its security policy reviews, perhaps exploiting, or perpetuating, the Canadian public's paranoia that Manhattan was only an indication of what was to come. In 1971, Maxwell Cohen observed "Manhattan's two voyages made Canadians feel that they were on the edge of another American "steal" of Canadian resources and "rights" which had to be dealt with at once by firm governmental action."<sup>149</sup> If this reflected the sentiments of Canadians, it certainly is indicative of a vague anti-Americanism rather than a well considered strategic perspective? That is perhaps to be expected of an uninformed public, but was the sentiment used cynically as a reason to reorient, and reduce, the Canadian military, especially in light of the halving of NATO commitments?<sup>150</sup> Trudeau's defence policy, articulated in the 1971 White Paper, *Defence in the 70s*, emphasized the primary mission of protecting sovereignty, despite the Government's position that, other than the uncertainty surrounding the Northwest Passage, "there was no challenge to Canadian sovereignty over northern lands, either continental or archipelagic. Similarly, territorial waters and the Arctic seabed were seen as being

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<sup>147</sup> Pharand, 39.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., p. 58. Pharand has considered historical waters and straight baselines as two possible legal bases for Canada's claim that waters inside the Archipelago are its internal waters. He discounts the former and suggests that the latter, straight baselines, is sufficient.

<sup>149</sup> Maxwell Cohen, "The Arctic and the National Interest," *International Journal*, Vol. 26, No. 1, (1970-1971), p. 72.

<sup>150</sup> For an entertaining, if polemical, indictment of Trudeau's defence policies, see Gerald Porter, *In Retreat: The Canadian Forces in the Trudeau Years* (Publication location unknown: Deneau and Greenberg, 1978)

firmly within Canada's sovereignty.<sup>151</sup> But was a military response to a non-military problem appropriate? Did it matter to policy-makers? The main task given to the CF in the sovereignty program was surveillance, but no new capabilities were planned to provide it.

In a similar vein, the Polar Sea episode occurred in the run-up to *Challenge and Commitment*, the 1987 White Paper on Defence, the Mulroney government's attempt to invigorate Canada's military that had declined to such an extent.<sup>152</sup> Again, protection of sovereignty, and particularly Arctic sovereignty, was used to guide defence policy and programs. Specifically, the White Paper called for a North American Air Defence Modernization Program (North Warning System), five Forward Operating Locations for CF-18s north of 60, a northern training centre, an icebreaker and, most significantly, a fleet of nuclear submarines, ostensibly part of a move toward building a "three-ocean navy."<sup>153</sup> As Kenneth Eyre pointed out in his seminal piece on the military in the Arctic, the White Paper, "when viewed from a "northern" perspective is a striking document: it contains not one but three polar projection maps to illustrate various defence-related realities and perceptions."<sup>154</sup>

Many questions remain, and current leaders would do well to ponder them. Notwithstanding the air of unreality that blanketed the 1987 White Paper, shelved soon after as the Cold War ended, to what extent were perceived American threats to Canada's sovereignty in the Arctic used to justify increased defence spending? Was the concept of a continental strategic entity lost in the discussions of sovereignty? Even though most of the big ticket items proposed in 1987 never materialized, what was the

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<sup>151</sup> Eyre, p. 297.

<sup>152</sup> In 1985, a US admiral also told Congress that US submarines travelled to the North Pole annually, and announced contracts for additional under-ice capable submarines. Adam Lajeunesse, "Sovereignty, Security and the Canadian Nuclear Submarine Program," *Canadian Military Journal*, Winter 2007-2008, p. 76.

<sup>153</sup> *Challenge and Commitment*.

<sup>154</sup> Eyre, p. 298. It may also be too easy to overemphasize the 1987 White Paper's attention to the Arctic as a strategic driver. Commenting shortly after the document's release, Harriet Critchley suggests it was only a marginal reinforcement of previous policies, but she only used the statement in the White Paper itself that "The Government has reviewed our defence effort. This review has confirmed that Canadian defence policy, as it has evolved since the Second World War, is essentially sound." W. Harriet Critchley, "The Arctic", *International Journal*, Vol. 42 (Autumn, 1987), p. 773. This does not answer the question, however, of why the Arctic as a symbol of Canadian priorities was so markedly used.

depth of the 'vague uneasiness' Ottawa tended to associate with US activities in the Arctic and what effect did it have in guiding policy on the north?<sup>155</sup> For example, how much of Canada's Arctic-related defence policies are driven by nationalist objectives based on the myth of the 'Northmen'? Do American political leaders intend for their actions in the Arctic to be seen as threatening to Canada or, more specifically, is the charge that Americans are insensitive to Canada's sovereignty justified? Is it possible for Canada and the United States to approach the North within the framework of a continental 'strategic entity'? Any analysis of future defence cooperation should consider these questions.-

### Conclusions

To return to General Renuart's guidance on the future management of continental defence, the Arctic, Cuban Missile Crisis and Continental Air Defence examples demonstrate that in order to advance the defence relationship, an ongoing assessment of where Canadian and US interests are parallel, identical, or may even differ is advisable. Such an assessment should exist as part of a larger conceptual framework encompassing political views and constraints on the extent to which North America can be considered a 'strategic entity' and thus amenable to being shaped as a single unit.

This framework is essential because Canada and the United States are indivisible in terms of potential attacks and aftershocks involving weapons of mass destruction, but also only divisible to a degree in terms of being a target for terrorists. In Canada's case, a response to these threats might require a national security policy and follow-on strategy that clearly articulates the national interests and how domestic and international security relate, charting a clear course towards a layered defence of the

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<sup>155</sup> Two recent overviews of the wide variety of current perspectives on how to conceive of the Arctic and its significance as a security issue demonstrate the difficulties associated with strategic planning. See Franklyn Griffiths, The Honourable Paul Okalik, Suzanne Lalonde, Rob Huebert and Whitney Lackenbauer, "Canada's Arctic Interests and Responsibilities," *Behind the Headlines*, Vol. 65, No. 4, 2008, and Brian Macdonald, ed., "Vimy Paper 2007: Defence Requirements for Canada's Arctic," (Ottawa: Conference of Defence Associations Institute, 2007).

homeland.<sup>156</sup> Of course, this assumes that Canada controls its own national security agenda, an assessment not shared by some scholars who see “military integration” of Canada and the US as a main driver of the “historical construction of hegemony.”<sup>157</sup> Are Canadian policy-makers, then, locked into a historical narrative that has gradually choked their freedom of action? Simply put, no. Rather, it is clear that Canadian policy makers do have freedom of action, but as illustrated in the Continental Air Defence example above, the decision-making process has not always supported decision makers well by preparing them to consider the strategic effects of chosen courses of action.

As pointed out earlier, it is the ‘story’ rather than the ‘problem’ that should focus decision-makers on the critical aspects of complex strategic questions. Culture and the narrative of historical experience do matter when it comes to shaping courses of action for decision-makers.<sup>158</sup> A nation’s unique strategic culture does not spring into being quickly or easily, but rather is defined by decisions that, in turn, shape its national style in behaviour. When attempting to chart a course to the future, analysts and decision-makers should understand that “the future has no place to come from but the past,” and view time as a stream that carries that which came before to one degree or another.<sup>159</sup> In order to understand fully the current Canada-US strategic defence relationship, and where it may be lacking or in need of evolution or drastic change, the complete story must be understood, and it must encompass scholarly, political, strategic and operational narratives, and shed light on how they interact. Armed with a fulsome understanding of the pertinent factors motivating decision-makers when key choices were at hand will serve to frame the follow-on discussions of how to advance the defence relationship as part of a Whole of Government approach.<sup>160</sup> Indeed, one could

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<sup>156</sup> Integration for operational efficiency’s sake is the basis of a proposal for merging NORAD and NorthCOM into a new organization to be named NADO (North American Defence Organization). See Todd Charles David, “We Need a North American Defence Organization,” *US Naval Institute Proceedings* (October 2007, Vol. 133, Issue 10), pp. 42-47.

<sup>157</sup> Bruno Charbonneau and Wayne Cox, “Global Order, US Hegemony and Military Integration: The Canadian-American Defence Relationship,” *International Political Sociology* (2008), vol. 2, p. 306.

<sup>158</sup> Victor Davis Hanson, *Carnage and Culture: Landmark Battles in the Rise of Western Power* (London: Anchor, 2002).

<sup>159</sup> Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May, *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision-Makers*, p. 251.

<sup>160</sup> For a full discussion of the military contribution to a Whole of Government or Comprehensive Approach, see Brad Gladman and Peter Archambault, *An Effects-Based Approach to Operations in the*

go further and say that without first setting the context to which these follow-on discussions can refer, there is a risk of setting a course that may seem sound from an operational perspective, but which is not embedded in a broader strategic view. Finally, there may well be a history of Canada-US defence relations “as it actually was,” but there also personalities, assumptions, narratives and cultural proclivities that remain decidedly powerful and, at times, serve to defend received wisdom.