

CANADIAN DEFENSE POLICY – A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

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Canada and the United States closely cooperated in most security issues during the 20th century. In recent years, however, security relations between Canada and the United States have become strained, mainly due to disagreements on the methods used by the United States in prosecuting the Global War on Terror. The first policy issue was the Canadian government's decision to decrease security resources significantly in the wake of the Cold War. The second issue centers on Canada's disagreement concerning Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, as well as other U.S. policy decisions such as the use of Guantanamo Bay.

Happily for everyone concerned, the Government of Canada is addressing the first issue. The Ministry of National Defence has announced a spending plan that eventually could inject up to C\$15 billion into the Department of National Defence. This increase is long overdue and will stand the United States and other partners in the Global War on Terror in good stead as it augments Canadian military capabilities around the world.

The first portion of the spending is C\$2.1 billion for three modern supply vessels to support deployed troops around the world. The Minister of National Defence announced the plan on June 26, 2006, in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, flanked by the Chiefs of Defence Staff and Maritime Staff. Additional defense spending is geared toward helicopters (probably *Chinooks*), other new aircraft (probably replacement C-130s and new C-17s), and a new family of heavy transportation vehicles. In addition, the Department of National Defence plans to expand the number of uniformed individuals in the Canadian Forces, adding approximately 10,000 personnel to the regular forces and 3,000 to the reserve forces over the next several years. The Chief of Defence Staff views these personnel and equipment improvements as general capabilities that "provide the spine for the Canadian Forces" so that they can transport military members on a variety of missions from disaster relief, humanitarian assistance, and combat operations in Canada, North America, and around the world.

This spending will come as a welcome relief to the Canadian Forces. Canada suffered from significant cutbacks in early 1993 which have continued to the present day. Antiquated equipment and declining numbers of troops in uniform heightened both operations tempo and personnel tempo to levels that have stretched the Canadian Forces almost to the breaking point. Heroic efforts on the part of the men and women of the Canadian Forces have saved the day thus far, but relief has been needed.

Canadian security changes are not just about providing more resources. Canada is making structural and doctrinal changes as well, seeking interagency synergy to make their limited resources carry further. The Canadian Forces have stood up four new commands as of February 1, 2006. Canada Command provides command and control of all forces deployed within the country. Canadian Expeditionary Force Command handles command and control all forces deployed outside of Canada. Canadian Special Operations Forces Command is responsible for all special operations, and Canadian Operational Support Command provides support to the operational commands. The government of Canada has responded in kind, creating the Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force Secretariat, an organization that reports directly to the government to prevent the internecine struggles that often accompany governmental reorganization.

Extra resources at the national level made this effort possible. In spite of years of budget surplus, the military has not received any new resources. Recent petroleum-driven windfall profits have made it easier for the government of Canada to funnel more resources to the military. Rebuilding the Canadian Forces is an excellent use of U.S.-provided oil money. Whereas other countries use such money to fund *madrassas* or populist adventures, Canada is wisely investing it in the military.

The second contention between the two governments is real but has been overstated. In spite of the strained relationships between the governments of Canada and the United States, the Canadian military has remained very supportive in a global sense. The military deployed in support of the solution in the Balkans. It recently deployed to Haiti in support of both the Multinational Interim Force—Haiti and the current United Nations operation. It has deployed in support of U.S.-led operations such as the air war over Kosovo (where Canada flew the second largest amount of sorties) and Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. Additionally, Canada remains our partner in the North American Aerospace Defence Command. Members of Canadian forces serve in more than a dozen countries. Their largest contribution has been to Afghanistan, where they currently have 2,300 soldiers on the ground, mainly in Kandahar.

The disagreements between the two governments may be ending. Canadian support for the Global War on Terror (minus Iraq) is strong. The formation of U.S. Northern Command and Canada Command has focused attention on North American security matters, where the interests of the two countries coincide strongly. This rapprochement was signaled recently when the Strategic Studies Institute, Queen's University, and the Canadian Land Force Doctrine and Training System sponsored a conference titled "3Ds; Defence, Diplomacy, and Development: Canadian and U.S. Military Points of View" in Kingston, Ontario, Canada. The conference highlighted the commonality of security thoughts between the two countries. This conference, combined with recent Canadian deployments to Afghanistan and increased resourcing, should mark a renewed relationship between the U.S. and Canadian militaries. With the renegotiation of our North American security relationships and the potential addition of the Mexican military to the mix of continental and international security requirements, stable and well-resourced partners are a welcome addition. Everyone, not just the Canadian Forces, should be thanking the government of Canada for making a wise investment.

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