

# Moving Beyond Reflection and Discussion: The Case for Canada to Craft a National Security Strategy

A Monograph

by

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## Abstract

Moving Beyond Reflection and Discussion: The Case for Canada to Craft a National Security Strategy, by Lieutenant-Colonel Shane R. Murphy, Canadian Army, 49 pages.

From post-World War II to 9/11, the government and people of Canada have been content with defining the country's national security through a healthy economy and the protection of societal values. Historical tendencies suggest Canada has perceived few, if any, existential threats and has rested on its geo-strategic position as a means unto itself of providing security. Moreover, Canadian strategic culture has been heavily influenced by the United States, guiding national security interests through an opportunistic approach. But no longer; the Government of Canada (GoC) stated it will not be a "client-state" within the international order; rather, the GoC seeks to positively shape it. In June 2017, the state clearly articulated its national security objectives and its desire to uphold a rules-based international order. Since that time however, there has been no next step to achieve Canada's stated policy objectives. This paper engages the reader in understanding the vital role a national security strategy plays in the policy-strategy relationship, both in theory and practice, as a tool to centrally manage all instruments of national power in the pursuit of Canada's interests. Moreover, through an examination of the global security environment, the application of power and the conceptual approaches a state may take to national security strategy formulation, this paper demonstrates the relevance and value a national security strategy could bring to Canada's national security framework. The GoC has moved beyond The Right Honourable Louis St. Laurent's call for reflection and discussion on matters of national interests. Strategies are not born of "immaculate conception." A positive change is required in Canada's national security framework; the government and citizens of Canada would benefit from the production of a Canadian national security strategy.

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## Acronyms

9/11	September 11, 2001. References a series of coordinated terrorist attacks by the Islamic terrorist group al-Qaeda against the United States September 11, 2001.
CAF	Canadian Armed Forces
GoC	Government of Canada
NDS	National Defense Strategy/National Defence Strategy
NSS	National Security Strategy
WoG	Whole of Government

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## Introduction

We must act as a united people. By that I mean a people who, through reflection and discussion, have arrived at a common understanding of our interests and our purposes.

–The Right Honourable Louis St. Laurent,  
*Secretary of State for External Affairs, 1947*

When St. Laurent spoke these words in Toronto in 1947, delivering the Gray Lecture address under the premise of defining Canada’s foreign policy objectives, his true goal was to unite the country, having recognized a split along Anglo and French cultural lines. He knew if Canada was to have any hope of achieving national interests through the application of meaningful national strategies, the country would first have to band together. Over seventy years later, it would seem Canada continues to suffer from the same affliction – an inability to put its full weight behind the pursuit of its national interests.

Enter the concept of a country’s national security strategy (NSS), a national statement of how, and with what means, a country will pursue its national security interests. Foundationally, the concept of a country’s national security framework speaks to its strategic culture and the need for a strong national base upon which to build national security policy and an NSS, the latter designed to serve several purposes. Chief among them being to direct and coordinate government sub-strategies, to include all instruments of national power, in pursuit of government national security policy objectives. Yet since confederation in 1867, Canada has only once produced an NSS, in 2004, with the expressed purpose of building “a system that works to continually enhance the security of Canadians and contribute to the creation of a safer world.”<sup>1</sup> With this statement being equally applicable today, it begs the question of why Canada does not currently have an NSS. In the words of the current Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chrystia Freeland, Canada’s national security framework needs to chart a path that “serves the interests of

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<sup>1</sup> Privy Council Office, Government of Canada, *Securing an Open Society: Canada’s National Security Policy* (Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, 2004), Prime Minister’s forward.

all Canadians and upholds our broadly held national values; that preserves and nurtures Canadian prosperity and security; and that contributes to our collective goal of a better, safer, more just, more prosperous, and sustainable world.”<sup>2</sup> Based on this expression of government intent, and armed with an understanding of the policy-strategy relationship provided within this paper, the role and value of a Canadian NSS document will become evident.

A forecast of the future security environment reveals a world best characterized as complex and unpredictable. These terms are of course relative and it is not being suggested that Canada has not faced complex global issues in the past; however, what is unique in the current environment is the emergence of a global system wherein, “the United States has retreated from its post-1945 role as the dominant underwriter of a liberal international order.”<sup>3</sup> As such, and as made evident in Canada’s foreign policy, Canada will not and cannot solely rely on seeking shelter beneath a United States umbrella of security; Canada will not be a “client state.”<sup>4</sup> By way of impact and as assessed by professor of international and defense policy, Dr. Kim Nossal, “Canada will have to get serious about defense policy.”<sup>5</sup> By extension, this argument magnifies the necessity for the Government of Canada (GoC) to get serious about national security policy.

In Canada’s June 2017 foreign policy statement, the GoC communicated its vision to its citizens and to the world, as to where it sees itself in the world. However, the GoC has not moved beyond this policy statement, remaining absorbed in St. Laurent’s call for *reflection* and *discussion* as opposed to articulating a whole of government (WoG) strategy that defines the

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<sup>2</sup> Global Affairs Canada, Government of Canada, “Address by Minister Freeland on Canada’s Foreign Policy Priorities,” Global Affairs Canada, June 6, 2017, accessed August 20, 2018, [https://www.canada.ca/en/globalaffairs/news/2017/06/address\\_by\\_ministerfreelandoncanadasforeignpolicypriorities.html](https://www.canada.ca/en/globalaffairs/news/2017/06/address_by_ministerfreelandoncanadasforeignpolicypriorities.html).

<sup>3</sup> Kim Nossal, “Canada’s Strategic Outlook: A Long-Term View,” in “The Strategic Outlook for Canada 2018,” ed. Craig Leslie Mantle and Christopher Cowan, *Vimy Paper*, no. 36 (2018): 1–12, 1.

<sup>4</sup> Global Affairs Canada, Government of Canada.

<sup>5</sup> Nossal, 1.

ways and means of positively shaping the country's future. An NSS document would serve as a viable tool for the GoC to coordinate a WoG effort to pursue its objective of working "tirelessly" to shape a rules-based international order.<sup>6</sup>

In an attempt to illustrate the benefits of drafting a Canadian NSS, this paper will first explore the policy-strategy relationship, highlighting the central role an NSS could play in the pursuit of Canadian national interests. Canada's historic approach to national security will then be explored, revealing a country once, but no longer, able to avoid articulating decisive national security objectives based on geo-strategic factors and a perceived lack of threat. The paper will then briefly examine Canada's current national security framework, one wherein political ambiguity and political risk avoidance have been favored over firm policy and strategy direction. At the heart of this issue is Canada's strategic culture, which will be reviewed in detail. Further, an assessment of the critical issues posed by the future global security environment will highlight the critical role a Canadian NSS document could play in applying all instruments of national power in pursuit of national interests. A brief overview of NSS developmental approaches will then be explored to determine how key allies crafted their own strategies and how these lessons can be applied to the Canadian national security discourse. Finally, the concept of emergent strategy will be explored to determine its pertinence in the development of a Canadian NSS.

This paper offers the reader the opportunity to uncover the relevance an NSS document would offer Canadians, as the GoC pursues its interests on the world stage. The challenges posed by the world today demand an internally coordinated response. The time for *reflection* and *discussion* has passed; the GoC articulated its national security policy objectives, it must now take decisive action to coordinate the ways and means to achieve them.

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<sup>6</sup> Global Affairs Canada, Government of Canada.

## Making Sense of the Policy-Strategy Relationship

Fundamental in examining the best means for Canada to articulate its NSS is the need to have a foundational understanding of the policy-strategy relationship. There is a healthy level of debate among foreign policy academics and practitioners alike as to the definition of strategy and its relationship with policy. For the purposes of this paper, policy is defined as the overarching idea or intent of the government on a given matter. Oxford professor of history Hew Strachan described policy as providing the “logic” of an issue; policy guides strategy development, outlining the national objectives to be attained.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, strategy in turn may be viewed as how policy is pursued. Strategy articulates the course of action to be implemented and allocates the necessary resources to pursue stated objectives; strategy may be considered as the ends, ways, and means of achieving national interests.<sup>8</sup> Grand strategy may be viewed as a broad, long-term, centrally coordinated government strategy which directs all instruments of national power, to include military, political, economic, and information realms. The theoretical relationship between policy and strategy is hierarchical; policy directs grand strategy, which in turn directs sub-strategies. The central idea in this theoretical model is that policy does not directly drive the crafting of a singular departmental strategy; there is an overarching strategy required, a whole-of-government (WoG) undertaking, to coordinate all instruments of national power such that multiple government departments may work in conjunction with one another towards common objectives.

In the context of national security, a policy statement theoretically directs the formulation of a wholistic national security strategy, which in turn directs subordinate instruments of national

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<sup>7</sup> Hew Strachan, *The Direction of War: Contemporary Strategy in Historical Perspective* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 13.

<sup>8</sup> Arthur F Lykke, “Defining Military Strategy,” *Military Review* (January/February 1997): 183–86, 183.

security strategy, such as a national defense strategy (NDS). This simple construct is represented below in Figure 1. Curiously, Canada has national security policy objectives and an NDS yet

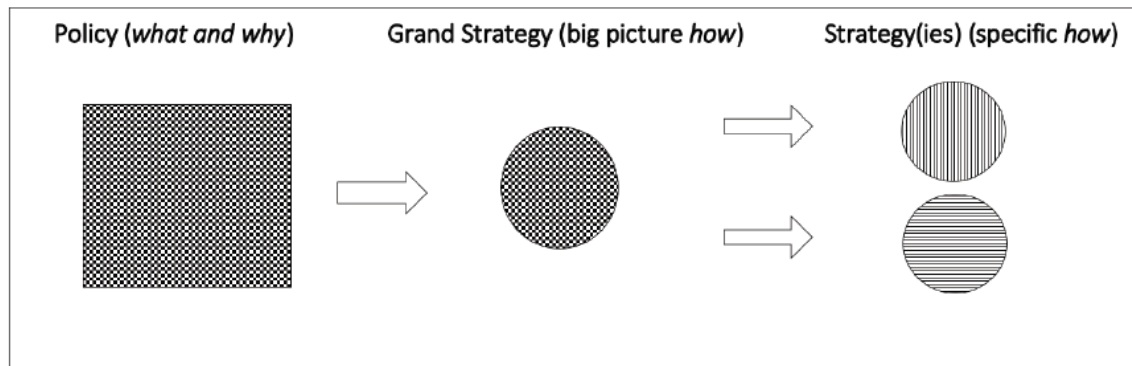


Figure 1. The Policy-Strategy Relationship in Theory. Data from James Cox, “Canadian Defence Policy and Grand Strategy,” in “The Strategic Outlook for Canada 2017,” ed. David McDonough and Charles Davies, *Vimy Paper*, no. 34 (2017): 7-14, 9.

lacks the crucial WoG overarching strategy meant to serve as a central coordination tool. In his critique of Canada’s NDS, former Canadian Army general and current professor of international relations Dr. James Cox argued the Canadian government needs a “conceptual re-set” to ensure a whole-of-government approach to national security, one that incorporates efforts beyond the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF).<sup>9</sup> This idea supports the premise that a comprehensive NSS is needed to adequately inform subordinate strategies. The absence of an NSS runs contrary to the theoretical policy-strategy relationship model. Without central coordination, departmental strategies may inappropriately formulate concepts and allocate resources misaligned with other departments, creating an imbalance between ends, ways, and means; such a risk could place Canada’s national security in danger, or at the very least, sub-optimally prepared to pursue intended policy objectives.

In practice, the policy-strategy relationship deviates from the theoretical model. The relationship between the two is iterative rather than linear, with policy objectives both directing

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<sup>9</sup> James Cox, “Canadian Defence Policy and Grand Strategy,” in “The Strategic Outlook for Canada 2017,” ed. David McDonough and Charles Davies, *Vimy Paper*, no. 34 (2017): 7-14, 9.

and adjusting to the ways and means that strategy outlines are available to achieve them.<sup>10</sup> As such, not only does policy guide strategy development, but the risks and limitations derived through analysis of strategic options shape decision makers in defining policy objectives. In terms of modelling, there is a feedback loop between each of the policy, strategy and sub-strategy components. The feedback loop from a sub-strategy, Canada's NDS for instance, cannot optimally connect directly to government policy; instead, it should first provide feedback into a superior strategy which consolidates information from other subordinate strategy feedback loops to provide a wholistic perspective to inform policy adjustments. This practical concept is represented in Figure 2. In his exploration of how states craft strategy, Dr. Alan Stolberg,

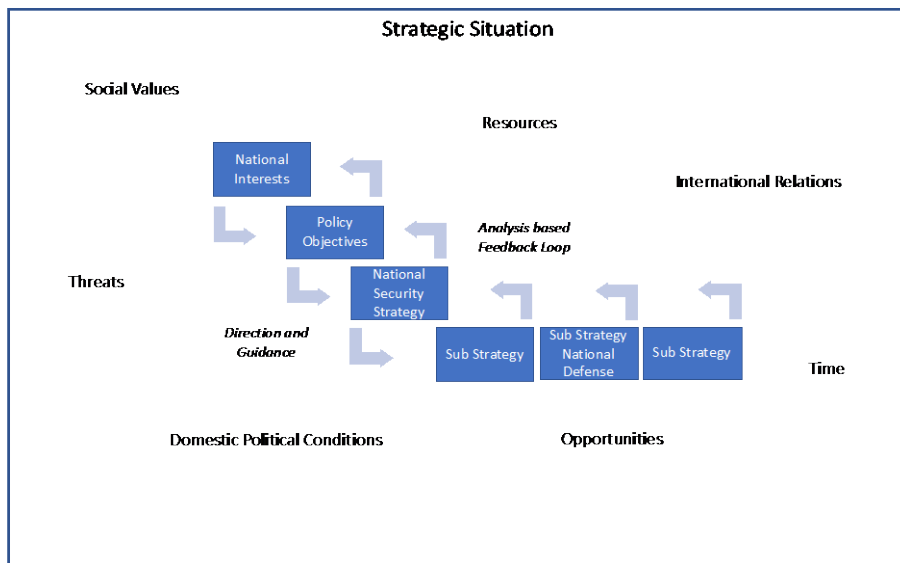


Figure 2. The Policy-Strategy Relationship in Practice. Data from US Department of Defense, *Joint Doctrine Note 1-18: Strategy* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2018), II-2.

associate professor at the US Army War College, outlined several of the practical functions an NSS feedback loop possesses in the policy-making process. He listed these as being the provision of appropriate data with adequate analysis, the consideration of a full range of options, and the

<sup>10</sup> Strachan, 45.

ability to assess policy failure.<sup>11</sup> Without an NSS, the Canadian national security framework appears to not benefit from these practical functions.

As presented, the policy-strategy relationship in practice, much like in theory, promotes the requirement for a government to have an overarching strategy to optimally guide sub-strategies in the pursuit of national objectives and to allow for appropriate policy modifications. As noted however, Canada has only once produced an NSS. It is therefore necessary to explore how the GoC has approached national security in the past, to gain an appreciation of the continued relevance of the state's national security paradigm.

### Canada's Historic Approach to National Security

To create positive within the Canadian national security framework, one first needs to understand Canada's historic approach to national security. From confederation through to the passing of the Statute of Westminster in 1931, which granted full autonomy to the Dominion of Canada, the country's national security policy was defined by the British Empire. Immediately thereafter, the nation was consumed with maintaining its economy throughout the 1930s, leading to its first major sovereign national security decision, the declaration of war on Germany in 1939, albeit without any real alternative.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, the period of historical relevance regarding national security for the context of this paper is the post-World War II to the September 11, 2001 (9/11) era. Through a brief examination of past national policies and practices during this timeframe, a theme is revealed wherein past Canadian governments have chosen to focus their efforts on defining national security through Canada's economic prosperity and placating to the demands of a population divided along cultural and regional lines rather than developing any descriptive NSS.

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<sup>11</sup> Alan G. Stolberg, *How Nation-States Craft National Security Strategy Documents* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 2012), 2-3.

<sup>12</sup> Major-General Éric Tremblay and Dr. Bill Bentley, "Canada's Strategic Culture: Grand Strategy and the Utility of Force," *Canadian Military Journal* 15, no. 3 (2015): 5-17, 12.

To gain an appreciation of Canada's national security history post-World War II, a good starting point is St. Laurent's Gray Lecture address in 1947. Canadian historians view his address as the first willful outline of Canadian foreign policy objectives, described by some textbooks as being "the most authoritative definition of Canadian foreign policy" and by extension, the foundation of a national security framework.<sup>13</sup> Within his speech, St. Laurent outlined five principles to guide Canadian foreign policy to include respect for the rule of law and moral-based action, which remain consistent with Canadian foreign policy today. However, the key principle and the first of which he spoke was the importance of national unity. A key purpose of St Laurent's address was to overcome a national apathetic attitude towards matters of foreign affairs and national security. His words were a call-to-arms to unite Canadians in thought and purpose, such that the government could speak with confidence in world affairs rather than being focused on solving internal disputes.

In the present day, as historian Dr. Adam Chapnik described, Canadian unity "remains central in Canadians' minds and plays a central role in foreign policy formulation."<sup>14</sup> As such, the dominant theme in Canadian foreign policy discourse was, and remains, an inability to reach common thought on the fundamentals underpinning government policy such that descriptive strategies may be developed. As is the case for Canada's current national security framework, the question arises as to whether or not a lack of national unity is the critical obstacle in producing an NSS document. If the GoC is unwilling to authoritatively express and commit to national security objectives for want of defining national interests, it stands to reason that it would be difficult to formulate any form of meaningful strategy.

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<sup>13</sup> Adam Chapnick, "The Gray Lecture and Canadian Citizenship in History," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 37, no. 4 (2007): 443–57, 451.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 454.



From the post-World War II years to 9/11, Canada's NSS was largely defined in the context of the country's economic well-being. It can be asserted that the GoC sought to strike a balance in defense and national security spending, encompassing its pursuit of foreign policy objectives, commensurate to the country's economic prosperity and domestic well-being. As an example, growth in military spending during the late 1950s, made evident through Canada's participation in United Nations missions, exemplified a strong Canadian economy enabling the GoC to pursue national interests on the global stage.<sup>15</sup> Political scientists and professors of international affairs at Queens University, Phillippe Lagassé and Paul Robinson, argued that variances in government defence and national security spending cannot be viewed as neglect or an unwillingness to commit to foreign policy objectives but the work of successive governments to "arrive at an equilibrium of national powers that served the national interests."<sup>16</sup> The weakness of this argument, while being true that it demonstrates the government attempting to find an equilibrium in national spending, is that it promotes a reactionary government posture to national security, a posture of crisis management, rather than proactively seeking to shape the international environment. Moreover, the inference that there was a coordinated WoG strategy to balance instruments of national power lacks corroboration. There was no NSS and as Canadian political scientist Dr. Alan Stephenson highlighted, the term "national security" was not used in any official government strategy or policy document until 2004.<sup>17</sup> Combined with the descriptor

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<sup>15</sup> William J. McAuley, "Beyond Delusions of Grand Strategy: A Centrifugal National Security Strategy for Canada" (PhD. Diss., University of Calgary, 2017), 301.

<sup>16</sup> Phillippe Lagassé and Paul Robinson, *Reviving Realism in the Canadian Defence Debate* (Kingston ON, Canada: Centre for International Relations Queen's University, 2008), 38, accessed August 21, 2018, <https://www.queensu.ca/cidp/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca.cidpwww/files/files/publications/Martellos/Mart34.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> Alan J. Stephenson, "Canadian National Security Culture: Explaining Post 9/11 Canadian National Security Policy Outcomes" (PhD diss., Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada, 201), 155, accessed October 10, 2018, [https://curve.carleton.ca/system/files/etd/71aa12ab-b289-4add-af70-7b2d6e0f5e91/etd\\_pdf/842c00dce2e6714a0c4e3a142b78bb6a/stephenson-canadiannationalsecuritycultureexplaining.pdf](https://curve.carleton.ca/system/files/etd/71aa12ab-b289-4add-af70-7b2d6e0f5e91/etd_pdf/842c00dce2e6714a0c4e3a142b78bb6a/stephenson-canadiannationalsecuritycultureexplaining.pdf).

of Canadians being a “decidedly unmilitary people” lacking national strategic thinking literature, makes the supposition of there being a coordinated WoG strategy to pursue national interests difficult to fathom.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to economic prosperity, as highlighted by Stephenson, national security was also expressed as a product of societal values.<sup>19</sup> As will be explored in a subsequent portion of this paper, this was due to national security, in a threat-based sense, drawing little interest from Canadians. This attitude led to national security being over-shadowed by other national values-based interests for priority status and resourcing.<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately for Canada, notwithstanding St. Laurent’s call for national unity, socio-economic issues continued to divide the country with successive governments placing even greater value in addressing these matters. The risk of this historical tendency lies in present and future Canadian governments continuing to demonstrate a proclivity to allow social issues and short-term budget planning for defense and security to drive national security policy to a larger extent than a rational national security planning process.<sup>21</sup>

Such apathy towards defense and security was enabled by the notion that Canada faced no existential threat. As noted by Lagassé and Robinson, in the relevant historical period for this paper, there has been a “paucity of threats to [Canada] that [could] be effectively addressed with military force.”<sup>22</sup> In the present day however, such thinking is considerably flawed as it

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<sup>18</sup> McAuley, 299. McAuley borrows the term “unmilitary people” from the title of George Stanley’s work *Canada’s Soldiers: The Military History of an Unmilitary People* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1960) to introduce there being a lack of strategic thinking in Canada during the post-WWII to 9/11 period. McAuley also cites additional military historians and Canadian politicians who note Canada as lacking a military culture.

<sup>19</sup> Alan J. Stephenson, “Canadian National Security Culture: Explaining Post 9/11 Canadian National Security Policy Outcomes,” 7.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>21</sup> William J. McAuley, “Beyond Delusions of Grand Strategy: A Centrifugal National Security Strategy for Canada” (PhD. Diss., University of Calgary, 2017), 301.

<sup>22</sup> Lagassé and Robinson, 94.

obfuscates how the government could choose to apply soft power to achieve national security interests.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, Canada is aligned with allies that view multiple existential threats to their respective positions in the global world order and Canada's own foreign minister articulated key strategic threats to Canada in her delivery of Canada's foreign policy position in June of 2017.<sup>24</sup> It stands to reason therefore if Canada faces threats, which may or may not require the application of military force in some regard, that the government would have a comprehensive strategy to address them. No longer can Canada define its national security interests solely through the context of an NDS and a statement of foreign policy objectives; all the instruments of national power must be considered and coordinated under the umbrella of a WoG strategy. An NSS document could serve as such a tool. It is therefore important to understand how the Canadian government is coordinating its instruments of national power in the absence of an NSS. The following portion of the paper will address Canada's national security framework in an attempt to better understand how the nation can best articulate its security strategy.

## Canada's National Security Framework

Countries facing strategic threats that demand a WoG response necessitates a comprehensive strategy to achieve desired goals. As renowned national security academic and practitioner Joseph Nye argues in *The Future of Power*, the ability for a country to get the outcomes it desires rests upon a "new narrative" of judiciously applying all instruments of national power in concert with each other; efforts must be taken to counter the "misconception" that elements of national power can be used in isolation to achieve policy objectives.<sup>25</sup> It is

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<sup>23</sup> Joseph S. Nye, *The Future of Power* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2011), 11. The concept of soft power is explored in subsequent portions of this paper. To introduce the term, Nye defines soft power as, "the ability to affect others through the co-optive means of framing the agenda, persuading, and eliciting positive attraction in order to obtain preferred outcomes."

<sup>24</sup> Global Affairs Canada, Government of Canada.

<sup>25</sup> Joseph S. Nye, xvii, 23.

striking then that Canada's last National Security Policy Statement, *Securing an Open Society* was published in 2004. Important to note is that notwithstanding the document's "policy" title, its text labels the publication as an "integrated strategy" and so should be considered synonymous with an NSS within the context of this paper.<sup>26</sup> The 2004 NSS expresses the need for the GoC to work collectively in the pursuit of its national interests, stressing the need for integration in the face of domestic and external threats. But rather than having served as a benchmark for future governments to articulate national security interests, the 2004 NSS was an anomaly in Canada's national security framework. Since its publication, the strategy remains the only published NSS to date.

Unlike the *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act* of the United States, there is no codified requirement within Canadian statutes that mandates the government to produce an NSS.<sup>27</sup> The advantages and disadvantages of such a requirement will be juxtaposed against several other states' national security frameworks in a subsequent portion of this paper. At this point, the inference to be drawn is that the Canadian national security framework is less structured in comparison to that of the United States. As depicted in Figure 2, the driver of the Canadian national security framework is the expression of national interests. The weakness of this model however lies in the assumption that the Canadian government, or the people of Canada, are interested in or able to articulate national interests to the extent that enables the production of a comprehensive NSS. Given the diversity of the Canadian population and the country's social fabric, setting firm policy objectives and having the political will to pursue them is not only a

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<sup>26</sup> Privy Council Office, Government of Canada, Prime Minister's forward.

<sup>27</sup> Joint Staff, US Department of Defense, *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986*, Pub. L. 99-433, October 4, 1986, accessed November 14, 2018, [https://history.defense.gov/Portals/70/Documents/dod\\_reforms/Goldwater-NicholsDoDRcordAct1986.pdf](https://history.defense.gov/Portals/70/Documents/dod_reforms/Goldwater-NicholsDoDRcordAct1986.pdf). The act mandates the President of the United States to submit annually to Congress a national security report outlining the national security strategy of the United States, to include national security interests and the means by which they are intended to be achieved, involving all instruments of national power.

challenge but is rife with political risk. As voiced by former president of the Canadian Political Science Association, Denis Stairs, “setting priorities in politics is a risky business and in a democratic environment especially, the most powerful of incentives yield a priority for risk-avoidance, rather than risk-taking.”<sup>28</sup> In his examination of Canada’s national security framework, Stairs argued that the characterization of risk-avoidance promotes a tendency for governments to follow a political tactic of incrementalism. In the Canadian context, governments leverage the notion of Canadian national security being defined by intrinsic values, such that the state avoids the requirement to make any significant vector change in its foreign policy, thus avoiding the associated political risk in so doing. Stairs’ argument highlights the inherent value of strategic ambiguity for Canadian politicians, seeing the articulation of policy objectives yet purposefully avoiding any form of concrete strategy. Further, Stephenson noted that, “secure in ‘fortress North America,’ politicians know that Canadians are not interested in aggressive international policies.”<sup>29</sup> If this argument is true, then it would stand to reason that the GoC does not need an NSS, favoring instead to be strategically ambiguous and incremental in its approach to strategy development. However, the fragility in this line of thinking is that the current GoC is not being ambiguous. Rather, the GoC clearly defined national security objectives to address what it views as strategic threats and the state’s desire to uphold a rules-based international order. If there is be hope of achieving them, a comprehensive strategy is needed. A clear expression of government intent served as a partial catalyst that warranted the Paul Martin government to produce an NSS in 2004.

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<sup>28</sup> Denis Stairs, “The Making of Hard Choices in Canadian Foreign Policy,” quoted in Alan J. Stephenson, “Canadian National Security Culture: Explaining Post 9/11 Canadian National Security Policy Outcomes” (PhD diss., Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada, 201), 455.

<sup>29</sup> Alan J. Stephenson, “Canadian National Security Culture: Explaining Post 9/11 Canadian National Security Policy Outcomes,” 204.

As Paul Martin took the reigns as Prime Minister of Canada in late 2003, he was set to lead Canada in the formational years of the post-9/11 security environment. The idea of Canadians being insulated from the evils of the world was disproven. The traditional approach to matters of Canadian national security, that of leveraging the safety of Canada's geo-strategic position, was arguably rendered insufficient to deal with the complexity of global affairs at the time.<sup>30</sup> The Canadian public knew it and so did politicians. The crafting of the 2004 NSS however was not solely based on threats. Strategic culture was equally a catalyst for the strategy's development; Canadians wanted to be differentiated from the United States, which was choosing its own distinct strategy to deal with the post-9/11 world. Canadian values needed to be defined, reinforced, and made unique from the United States. The Martin government, in a move to display its political astuteness, wanted to be portrayed as the government that understood Canada's ever-so difficultly defined strategic culture and the production of an NSS was viewed as a tool to do so.<sup>31</sup> Interestingly, this approach demonstrates the political value of an NSS as not only a means of communicating national positions to external audiences, but also as an internal tool to build a unified stance on policy options.

*Securing an Open Society* ostensibly remained the foundational document to express Canada's national security objectives, referenced by successive governments, for the decade following Paul Martin's departure in 2007. Although the proceeding Stephen Harper conservative government announced its intention to release an updated NSS in 2007, Canada's national security framework instead reverted to the historical trend of leveraging the national defense strategy along with the release of multiple foreign policy statements to serve as a proxy for an NSS. The gaps in such an approach however are easily recognizable. In their research, Canadian

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<sup>30</sup> Don Macnamara and Ann Fitz-Gerald, "A National Security Framework for Canada," *Policy Matters* 3, no. 10 (October 2003): 7.

<sup>31</sup> Alan J. Stephenson, "Canadian National Security Culture: Explaining Post 9/11 Canadian National Security Policy Outcomes," 205-206.

board member of the Conference of Defense Associations, Don Macnamara, and Director of the Security Sector Management programme at Cranfield University, Dr. Ann Fitz-Gerald, described this gap as a functional one, contributing to “limited or poor analysis and less than coherent and consistent policy development or decision making.”<sup>32</sup> Canada’s NDS of 2007 entitled *Canada First Defence Strategy*, articulated that the NDS was meant to support “broader national security and foreign policy objectives,” implying the existence of a central strategy to fuse the GoC’s instruments of national power. This inference lends credence to the previously discussed practical role served by an NSS in the policy-strategy relationship. However, the means and ways of centrally coordinating national security interests never materialized under the Harper government, leading to criticism that his government needed to get a “strategic grip on the national security agenda” and produce an NSS.<sup>33</sup> Seemingly, the political pressure placed on the GoC of the day to adopt these recommendations was insufficient to warrant change. The gap-apparent national security framework appears to have met the needs of Canadians at the time, allowing the GoC to assume a position of comfort as a self-perceived middle power within the international order.

The current Justin Trudeau government, which took power in 2015, undertook a consultative process in 2016 to engage Canadians on the subject of national security. *Our Security, Our Rights*, a Green Paper released to solicit feedback from Canadians, focused on Canada’s home-game, seeking to understand what should be the appropriate level of impact on the rights of Canadians in the development of security related laws and regulations.<sup>34</sup> The results

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<sup>32</sup> Macnamara and Fitz-Gerald, 13.

<sup>33</sup> Wesley Wark, “Six Ways for Harper to Reclaim the National Security Agenda.” *Globe and Mail*, May 11, 2018, accessed January 15, 2018, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/six-ways-for-stephen-harper-to-reclaim-the-national-security-agenda/article14828339/>.

<sup>34</sup> Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Government of Canada, *Our Security, Our Rights: National Security Green Paper, 2016* (Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, 2016), accessed August 20, 2018. <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/ntnl-scrt-grn-ppr-2016/index-en.aspx>.

of this process, published in the 2017 *What We Learned* report, offers little insight, if any, into how this feedback will be used to guide Canadian national security strategy development. Rather than using the 2017 report to re-examine the 2004 NSS, it appears the government will be uniquely focused on the application of the study to amend Canadian law, such as the *Anti-Terrorism Act*, a bill which takes “measures to protect Canadians against terrorist activity while continuing to respect and promote the values reflected in ... the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.”<sup>35</sup> Such laws, in part, inform NSS development, but do not replace an NSS itself. There is presently no next step defined by the current government to develop an NSS.

The absence of a signal from the government to develop an NSS is lamentable. Given the volatility of the current international order and the complexity of the security environment, an azimuth check, at the very least, is required on Canada’s 2004 NSS. Although Canada released a new defence policy in 2017, *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, it is, as has been argued, an insufficient tool to address national security writ large. Notwithstanding a description of national objectives and a forward from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the 2017 NDS is focused exclusively on the Department of Defense. As argued by Cox, *Strong, Secure, Engaged* fails to address the broader issues of defense and security, describing the document as being “not a full defence policy for the Government of Canada.”<sup>36</sup> In fact, what one may infer Cox is arguing is not so much the weakness of the government’s defense strategy but the need for the GoC to produce a comprehensive government tool to coordinate sub-strategies across all departments. Much like the era faced by the Martin government in 2003, the current strategic environment is changing and demands a comprehensive strategy to pursue national objectives. As Stephenson concluded:

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<sup>35</sup> An Act Respecting National Security Matters, House of Commons, Bill C-59, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 1<sup>st</sup> sess., 3<sup>rd</sup> reading, *Parliament of Canada Record*, June 19, 2018, preamble, accessed January 15, 2019, <http://www.parl.ca/DocumentViewer/en/37-1/bill/C-36/royal-assent/page-16>.

<sup>36</sup> James Cox, “Canada Still Has No Real Defence Policy,” Macdonald-Laurier Institute: Inside Policy, June 14, 2017, accessed August 20, 2018, <https://www.macdonaldlaurier.ca/canada-still-has-no-real-defence-policy-james-cox-for-inside-policy/>.



It would behoove the government to conduct a holistic review of national security to provide specificity to domestic policy statements contained in the current national security [policy statement] and to ensure alignment with its international policy goals. Given the significant public consultation that has occurred during the Defence Policy Review and the ongoing National Security Green Paper 2016 process, the government is ideally situated to begin formulating a comprehensive policy statement on national security.<sup>37</sup>

It would appear the GoC recognized a strategic gap in the delivery of its then new defence policy in 2017. Just a day before the release of *Strong, Secure, Engaged* on 7 June 2017, Canada's foreign minister stood in the House of Commons to articulate Canada's foreign policy priorities and offer a way forward to safeguard Canada's national security. Her words clearly articulated Canada's values, national security interests and the need to act abroad to uphold these very things; it was a firm expression of policy.<sup>38</sup> The glaring absence is the equally clear expression of the ends, ways, and means the government will use to achieve its expressed policy objectives. To believe that a simple foreign policy statement in conjunction with the current NDS provides the requisite guidance and coordination to pursue national security objectives fails to consider the policy-strategy relationship both in theory and in practice. It would seem a step has been taken to move the Canadian national security agenda forward; whether or not it is a first step towards an NSS is unclear.

### The Perpetual Challenge of Defining What it Means to be Canadian

Before a determination can be made as to how Canada can best articulate its national security interests, those interests first need to be defined. Such definition can be articulated in part through strategic culture. Analysis of Canada's strategic culture reveals a country and government with a historical reliance on other states to aid in defining its national objectives and

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<sup>37</sup> Alan J. Stephenson, *Staying Ahead of Trump on Security Requires a Holistic Review of Canadian National Security* (Ottawa, Canada: Canadian Global Affairs Institute, 2017), 5, accessed August 20, 2018, [https://www.cgai.ca/staying\\_ahead\\_of\\_trump\\_on\\_security\\_requires\\_a\\_holistic\\_review\\_of\\_canadian\\_national\\_security](https://www.cgai.ca/staying_ahead_of_trump_on_security_requires_a_holistic_review_of_canadian_national_security).

<sup>38</sup> Global Affairs Canada, Government of Canada.

a population with divergent views on what comprises the state's national interests. Historically, this has forced multiple governments to adopt an opportunistic approach to statecraft. If the foundation upon which national security policy is built is strategic culture, Canada needs a stronger base; however, disunity cannot be made to become the limiting factor in crafting an NSS.

Much like strategy, there is no consensus on the definition of strategic culture. Military historian and theorist Liddell Hart posited that strategic culture is a statement of a nation's "way of war," which became one accepted school of thought.<sup>39</sup> However, as Colonel Eric Laforest highlighted in his monograph exploring Canadian strategic culture, the concept of war and strategic culture are not necessarily synonymous.<sup>40</sup> Instead, strategic culture, in the context of this paper, is better viewed as the sum of the components that make up the identity of a country. It is a, "set of shared beliefs, and assumptions derived from common experiences and accepted narratives (both oral and written), that shape collective identity."<sup>41</sup> National security policy or strategy, in the Canadian context, is an expression of strategic culture, which represents the will of the Canadian people; it is a reflection of their interests, or at least what the government perceives those interests to be. The idea of strategic culture being based on the interests of the citizens of a country is reinforced by anthropologist and defense analyst Montgomery McFate's study of culture wherein he argued, "it is not nation-states but cultures that provide the underlying structures of political life."<sup>42</sup> It therefore becomes important to define the critical components of

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<sup>39</sup> Rashed Uz Zaman, "Strategic Culture: A "Cultural" Understanding of War," *Comparative Strategy* 28, no. 1 (2009): 68–88, 71, accessed November 7, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01495930802679785>.

<sup>40</sup> Eric Laforest, "Sleeping with the Elephant: A Canadian Strategic Culture," (Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, Fort Leavenworth, 2016), 5.

<sup>41</sup> John Glenn, "Realism versus Strategic Culture: Competition and Collaboration?," *International Studies Review* 11, no. 3 (2009): 523–551, 530.

<sup>42</sup> Montgomery McFate, "The Military Utility of Understanding Adversary Culture," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, no. 38 (2005): 42–48, 43.

Canadian strategic culture to understand their specific influence on national security policy. In their paper exploring this very issue, co-authors Canadian Major-General Tremblay and Dr. Bill Bentley outline the four critical components of Canadian strategic culture as geography, history, a triad of culture, religion, and ideology, and finally governance.<sup>43</sup> To understand the relevance of these components to Canada's national security narrative, each will be reviewed individually.

In terms of geography, Canada's geo-strategic position is unique compared to most states. Canada is surrounded by three oceans and bordered to the south by its ally and global superpower the United States. Well-endowed with natural resources and a strong economy, historically the state has been able to distance itself from the challenges of the developing world. As previously explained, past governments habitually only acted outside Canadian borders while able to maintain a balance with the country's own internal prosperity. For the better part of Canada's short history, "the common Canadian narrative was about shaping the natural landscape and building up population and industry."<sup>44</sup> As such, Canada enjoyed a benign level of security based on its physical location within the world. However, globalization, technology and the characteristics of warfare, which incorporate all the instruments of national power, are now negating this historically leveraged geo-strategic advantage. While Canada may be geographically distant from the hot spots of the world, it is no longer removed. *Strong, Secure, Engaged* highlights this fact in stating that contemporary national threats transcend national borders and "undermine the traditional security once provided by Canada's geography. Defending Canada and Canadian interests thus not only demands robust domestic defence but also requires active engagement abroad."<sup>45</sup> Assuming Canada will address these threats through means that

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<sup>43</sup> Tremblay and Bentley, 6.

<sup>44</sup> Andrew Pickford and Jeffrey Collins, *Reconsidering Canada's Strategic Geography: Lessons from History and the Australian Experience for Canada's Strategic Outlook* (MacDonald Laurier Institute, 2018), 30.

<sup>45</sup> Department of National Defence, Government of Canada, *Strong, Secure, Engaged - Canada's Defence Policy* (Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, 2017), 14, accessed September 5, 2018,

include all the instruments of national power, it stands to reason that the government needs a comprehensive strategy to address them.

Understanding Canada's past also aids in assessing its strategic culture. The country's history includes a foreign policy narrative wherein associated national security interests have been heavily influenced by foreign states and alliances. From its roots, the country's "time as part of the British Empire inclined it to see strategic problems not in Canadian terms" but in those of the Empire and other international bodies.<sup>46</sup> Compounding the issue of looking externally for policy steers, throughout much of Canada's history, the state was fighting an internal battle. The divide between English and French Canadians consumed policy debate on a number of issues, making the advancement of a national security agenda difficult, for want of a shared expression of national interests.<sup>47</sup> For this reason, in part, Canada continued to tuck itself under the wing of larger powers and alliances for matters of security.<sup>48</sup> The concept of seeking security through other states is especially true when viewed through the lens of geography.

Canada's unique geo-strategic position encouraged the establishment of strong bilateral agreements with the United States, specifically related to the economy and security. As concluded by Colonel Laforest, the detailed study of geographic, economic and social factors confirms the existence of a powerful United States influence on the development of Canadian national security policy.<sup>49</sup> It is an understated conclusion when viewed in the light of a recent poll indicating seventy-six percent of the Canadian population believes the country needs government policies

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[http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/201/301/weekly\\_acquisitions\\_list-ef/2017/17-23/publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2017/mdn-dnd/D2-386-2017-eng.pdf](http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/201/301/weekly_acquisitions_list-ef/2017/17-23/publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2017/mdn-dnd/D2-386-2017-eng.pdf)

<sup>46</sup> Michael S Neiberg, "A Middle Power on the World Stage: Canadian Grand Strategy in the Twentieth Century," *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 14, no. 2 (2012): 6.

<sup>47</sup> Chapnick, "The Gray Lecture and Canadian Citizenship in History," 447.

<sup>48</sup> Neiberg, 8.

<sup>49</sup> Laforest, 27, 40.

that will prevent it from being subsumed by the United States.<sup>50</sup> As professor of political science Tom Keating wrote, “much of Canada’s foreign policy since World War Two has been designed to adjust to the conditions resulting from its geographic proximity to the United States.”<sup>51</sup> This quote is a reflection of Prime Minister P.E. Trudeau’s famous analogy of Canada-US relations being like a mouse sleeping next to an elephant. In the historical context of national security however, Keating’s words have meant Canada choosing either to share in defense and security or risk being “tossed aside.”<sup>52</sup> Considering the relative position of Canada to the United States in the international order, this implied the need for Canada to retain a certain degree of flexibility in defining policy objectives, allowing room for adjustment should the elephant stir unexpectedly. It would seem not much has changed since Lester Pearson declared in 1951 that, “the first principle of Canadian diplomacy is founded on the inescapable fact that no country in the world has less chance of isolating itself from the effect of American policies and decisions than Canada.”<sup>53</sup> Yet interestingly, a recent poll indicated Canadians do not want to become more like the United States, suggesting Canadians do not see the United States as the “shining city on the hill.”<sup>54</sup> One could argue that it is Canada that is attempting to build a reputation as the “shining city”; however, Canadian diplomacy is not focused on imposing our values on other states, but to

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<sup>50</sup> Major-General Éric Tremblay and Bill Bentley, “Canada’s Strategic Culture: Grand Strategy and the Utility of Force,” *Canadian Military Journal* 15, no. 3 (2015): 5–17, 15.

<sup>51</sup> Tom Keating, *Canada and World Order* (Toronto, Canada: McLelland and Stewart, 1993) in Robert W. Murray and John McCoy, “From Middle Power to Peacebuilder: The Use of the Canadian Forces in Modern Canadian Foreign Policy,” *American Review of Canadian Studies* 40, no. 2 (2010): 171–88, 174.

<sup>52</sup> Joseph R Nunez, “Canada’s Global Role: A Strategic Assessment of Its Military Power,” *Parameters* 04, Autumn 2004 (2004): 75–93, 80.

<sup>53</sup> Lester B. Pearson, “The Development of Canadian Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Affairs* (1 October 1951), accessed August 21, 2018, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/canada/1951-10-01/development-canadian-foreign-policy>.

<sup>54</sup> Ryan Maloney, “Canadians Don’t Want This Country to Become More Like U.S. In Trump Era, Poll Suggests,” *HuffPost Canada*, April 27, 2017, accessed December 12, 2018, [https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2017/04/27/canada-us-poll-trump-abacus-data\\_n\\_16294726](https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2017/04/27/canada-us-poll-trump-abacus-data_n_16294726).

protect these value both domestically and abroad.<sup>55</sup> It would appear Canada is caught in a paradox of wanting to be different from the United States yet lacking a unified voice to expressly state how.

The third component adding to strategic culture is focused on the concept of culture itself; the values, beliefs and norms of a society. In his research on the vast influence culture has on strategic culture, Tremblay described the concept using the German term “*weltanschauung*,” meaning a particular outlook on life.<sup>56</sup> The challenge for Canada, as it looks to establish unified national interests to inform national security policy, is that there is no one pre-dominant outlook on life. In fact, Canada’s pluralistic society creates a political climate wherein politicians are resistant to grand strategy, apprehensive of absolutes and by consequence, moderate in the development of policy and any associated adjustments. As a result, incrementalism becomes the preferred path of many governments. Stairs notes this tendency as being a “peculiar” condition of the Canadian political narrative.<sup>57</sup> Although there are strengths of such an existence, the key weakness is:

in a context in which the ruled can rarely be persuaded to agree, and when their disposition to disagree is encouraged by differences rooted in economic interest, ethnic identification, and regional attachments, it is hardly surprising that those who govern them should come to view survival rather than leadership as their principal challenge, and to act as brokers in pursuit of the workable rather than aspire to innovation and command.<sup>58</sup>

When considered in the context of crafting an NSS, the notion of articulating and resourcing long-term objectives is not only representatively difficult, it is politically untenable. One can now better understand why it is that the state’s historical tendency to favor strategic ambiguity has

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<sup>55</sup> Government of Canada, Global Affairs Canada.

<sup>56</sup> Tremblay and Bentley, 6.

<sup>57</sup> Denis Stairs, “The Political Culture of Canadian Foreign Policy,” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 15, no. 04 (1982): 667.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 686.

been a favored position within the Canadian political narrative. The constant maintenance of internal harmony as a national pre-occupation of a pluralistic society comes at the expense of pursuing national interests. Canadians, and their elected officials, need to focus on the greater good. The danger of the alternative is that with, “no national goals, no explicit sense of coexistence for some purpose, pluralism becomes an uninspiring end in itself.”<sup>59</sup>

Last in the assessment of the components of strategic culture is governance, which is meant to examine the structure and nature of a state’s institutions. Tremblay and Bentley proffered a similar perspective to that derived in studying the component of culture in arguing that Canadian governance has historically been preoccupied with the internal management of multiple cultures, led through a political mantra of compromise and patience.<sup>60</sup> However, the state’s second preoccupation with governance post-World War II has been the pursuit of defining Canada as a middle power within the liberal international order. Canada was always able to be easily differentiated from the great powers; its interest however has been, and remains, being distinguished within the international order and global alliances from smaller states, in terms of influence on global issues.<sup>61</sup> To understand Canada’s desire to be a recognized middle power, it is important to first comprehend the term “middle power,” which is ill-defined and laden with ambiguity as it pertains to relative influence in the international order. The term is meant to provide a descriptor of a state’s capabilities but lacks any measure of its willingness to act.<sup>62</sup> As such, Canada’s position in the international order is perhaps best defined through the concept of

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<sup>59</sup> Romulo F. Magsino, “Multiculturalism in Canadian Society: A Re-Evaluation,” *The Journal of the Canadian Philosophy of Education Society* 12, no. 1 (1998): 9.

<sup>60</sup> Tremblay and Bentley, 7.

<sup>61</sup> Adam Chapnick, “The Canadian Middle Power Myth,” *International Journal* 55, no. 2 (2000): 188–206, 193.

<sup>62</sup> Paul Gecelovsky, “Constructing a Middle Power: Ideas and Canadian Foreign Policy,” *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 15, no. 1 (2009): 77–93, 79.

functionalism, which posits that non-great power states take on a larger responsibility in niche areas as enabled by specific national capabilities and resources.<sup>63</sup>

The challenge of the functionalist concept for Canada is that the country's power status, in terms of position of relative influence over other states within alliances and the international order, is not a permanent state of being. Rather, Canada's position needs to be earned every day, through contribution and participation within the mechanisms of the international order, should the GoC wish for its voice to be heard around any alliance table.<sup>64</sup> Accordingly, the internal narrative of Canada as a middle power risks being considered as "mere rhetoric – words carefully manipulated to promote Canada as being more powerful than it is."<sup>65</sup> None-the-less, successive Canadian governments throughout history have used the notion of being a middle power as a means to create a national identity; it is, as demonstrated however, a false narrative. If Canada wants to possess a greater degree of power relative to other states within alliances, it must back its articulated policy objectives with contributions and actions. Such backing of policy objectives necessitates a strategy, one that harnesses all instruments of national power. As professor of international relations Paul Gecelovsky concluded in his analysis of Canadian governance on the world stage, "Canada must think more about the kinds of power we wield, where we can best wield it, and for what purposes" and that the country "needs to choose those areas where we want to contribute and where we are willing to apply our resources to make a difference."<sup>66</sup> Again, these conclusive statements describe the need for Canada to articulate the ends, ways, and means of achieving its national interests or risk losing power status. Canada's contemporary approach of

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<sup>63</sup> Gecelovsky, 79.

<sup>64</sup> Adam Chapnick, "The Canadian Middle Power Myth," 200.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 206.

<sup>66</sup> Gecelovsky, 89.



resting on platitudes and conceit will not guarantee the safeguarding and promotion of our strategic interests.<sup>67</sup>

To summarize this portion of the paper, analysis of the four critical components of Canadian strategic culture reveals that Canada's geo-strategic position no longer offers the perceived level of security it once arguably provided; the country's historical tendency of allowing national policy objectives to be guided by more powerful states is insufficient to achieve Canada's current national security policy interests; and the position the GoC looks to obtain in the international order must be based on function, not rhetoric. These conclusions highlight the requirement for the GoC to act should it wish to wield power and influence within the international order; the government needs a strategy to articulate exactly how. Notwithstanding the country's diversity, politicians must unite Canadians in pursuit of the greater good. Strategic culture, as explained in professor of international relations Dr. Uz Zaman's analysis, is time-specific, having a "semi-permanent influence on security policy."<sup>68</sup> As presented, the components of strategic culture that have allowed Canada to exist without an NSS have shifted and therefore so too must Canadian strategic culture. The following portion of the paper, which examines the future security environment in greater detail, will illustrate why Canada's time-specific strategic culture needs to change to support the crafting of an NSS.

### The Future Needs a Focused Canada

A detailed overview of the international order and the future security environment is beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, a synopsis of the critical issues associated with each will

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<sup>67</sup> Scot Robertson, "Finding a Way: National Security and Defence Policy for a New Liberal Leadership," *Policy Options*, December 1, 2003, accessed October 29, 2018, <http://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/paul-martin/finding-a-way-national-security-and-defence-policy-for-a-new-liberal-leadership/>.

<sup>68</sup> Uz Zaman, 76.

be provided, demonstrating a need for Canada to clearly articulate its interests in the pursuit of stability in what will be an uncertain future.

The stability of the current international order, anchored by the United States as the world's sole great power, is perceived to be at risk. In his research report on the subject produced for the RAND Corporation, political scientist Michael Mazaar outlined several threats to the order to include a rise in revisionist powers, increased nationalism, and shifting power balances leading to a, "world adrift."<sup>69</sup> Certainly China's grand strategy, to include the one belt one road initiative, along with Russia's strategic posturing and desire for recognition on the global stage provide evidence of a shift away from stability to a theme of great power competition. Moreover, the volatile policy actions of the current United States administration are creating an unwelcomed sine wave in the steadiness of global alliances. The dramatic withdrawal of the United States president from the May 2018 Group of Seven Summit in Canada after publicly lambasting key allies serves as but one example of the world being in, "serious danger of unraveling."<sup>70</sup> The NSS of the United States outlined similar threats to the international order as those described by Mazaar, stating that the world has returned to an era of great power competition, causing upset to the stability countries like Canada have enjoyed since the end of World War II.<sup>71</sup>

Examining Canada's strategic outlook, there is a shared view that the global order will shift away from a United States hegemon due to the "rise of the rest."<sup>72</sup> Although this view acknowledges the change will be based on the actions of non-allied states in the international

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<sup>69</sup> Michael J Mazarr et al., *Understanding the Current International Order* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2016), 2.

<sup>70</sup> Andrea Hopkins and David Ljunggren, "U.S.-Canada Dispute Escalates after Tense G7; Trump Renews...," *Reuters*, June 11, 2018, accessed November 13, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-g7-summit-wrapup-idUSKBN1J60TG>.

<sup>71</sup> US President, *National Security Strategy for the United States of America* (Washington, DC: The White House, 2017).

<sup>72</sup> Nossal, 3.

order, interestingly, the shift is arguably partially attributable to a change in United States domestic culture and politics. Dr. Kim Nossal, a former executive director of policy studies at Queen's University in Canada, argues that contemporary United States politics have created significant fissures not only in the international order but also in the country's social fabric, dividing the nation along lines of ethnicity and socio-economic status. The damage caused will be irreparable if the current administration continues along its path of marginalizing its allies and dividing its own citizens, potentially causing the America First strategy to morph into an "America Alone" strategy in the immediate future.<sup>73</sup> By consequence, Canada's historical trend of aligning policy and strategy with the United States could be in peril, pointing to a need for the government to be more mindful of the steering of its own policy objectives.

The GoC recognizes the anticipated shift in the international order as being a significant challenge to its national security. Minister Freeland addressed the issue specifically in her foreign policy statement in June 2017 in stating Canada needs a system wherein, "more powerful countries are constrained in their treatment of smaller ones by standards that are internationally respected, enforced and upheld" or Canada risks being significantly disadvantaged.<sup>74</sup> It is therefore clear that the stability of the international order, and its mechanisms, need to be reinforced. This necessitates Canada to act with, or lead, aligned states in pursuit of national interests. Unfortunately, there is no strategy which outlines how this will be accomplished. In his review of Minister Freeland's June 2017 remarks, foreign policy research fellow at the United States Studies Center, Brendan Thomas-Noone, assessed an underlying theme of choice; Canada currently has the benefit of choosing its foreign policy objectives whereas it may lose a certain

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<sup>73</sup> Nossal, 5.

<sup>74</sup> Global Affairs Canada, Government of Canada.

degree of decision-making space in an illiberal international order.<sup>75</sup> As such, it would seem the choice may be now for the GoC to produce a comprehensive strategy that upholds the international order and by virtue, protects its freedom of choice in the future. The other key statement made by Minister Freeland, resonating more now based on events which have transpired since her foreign policy address, is that Canada cannot be a “client-state” of the United States; Canada must act in its own national interests.<sup>76</sup> The notion of Canada needing to be more bellicose in expressing its national security interests is reinforced by such instances as when the United States President made a statement saying that he would, “punish the people of Canada” after not agreeing with an idea expressed by the Canadian Prime Minister.<sup>77</sup> The United States President’s remark could be dismissed as political rhetoric but when viewed in the context of Nossal’s assertion of America going-it-alone, it provides gravitas for Canada to shift its strategic culture and move away from the proverbial elephant. One could argue that a shift by Canada away from United States policy alignment has been occurring for several years, which is true. The point being stressed is that the current shift is far less subtle than in the past, providing the impetus for the GoC to articulate a strategy for how it will act, on its own accord, in a shifting world order. The United States is, and will remain, a great ally of Canada; but the nature of the relationship has changed. So too must Canada’s approach to articulating its NSS.

The trends of the future security have emerged. The concept of globalization will reign supreme and in a certain context make borders relatively obsolete, creating open access to information, influencing cultures and connecting economic markets. This trend includes the

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<sup>75</sup> Brendan Thomas-Noone, “Canada, Australia and the Liberal International Order in the Trump Era,” *Lowy Institute: The Interpreter*, June 27, 2017, accessed August 21, 2018, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/canada-australia-and-liberal-international-order-trump-era>.

<sup>76</sup> Global Affairs Canada, Government of Canada.

<sup>77</sup> Daniel Dale and Alex Ballingall, “Trump Says He’ll Punish “the People of Canada” Because of Trudeau’s News Conference,” *Star*, Ottawa, Canada, June 12, 2018, accessed November 13, 2018, <https://www.thestar.com/news/world/2018/06/12/we-just-shook-hands-trump-confused-by-trudeaus-pushed-around-comment-after-g7-summit.html>.

opening of new domains of activity for state and non-state actors, to include space and cyber domains. Transnational crime and terrorism will continue to exploit globalization to pursue respective agendas, challenging states' national security frameworks across the global. Threat states, as defined by Western interests, will also use these domains as they look to exert influence through asymmetric means. In this vein, conflict below the threshold, a term used to describe a level of ambiguous aggression falling below that which would incite an armed response from an affected state, will be exploited to avoid western and alliance strengths.<sup>78</sup> The Russian cyber-attack against Estonia in 2007 that temporarily crippled Estonia yet did not invoke a NATO Article V declaration serves an example of such tactics. This example demonstrates that warfare will no longer be waged solely on the traditional battlefield; it will exist in the global commons. With all this in mind, the strategic utility of force will be proportional to Canada's ability to respond within all domains, invoking all instruments of national power.<sup>79</sup> Relying solely on an NDS, the lone extant strategy document of the current GoC to combat these threats, will prove to be an insufficient tool to appropriately coordinate military action with political, economic, and other levers of GoC power.

In terms of predicting the impact of the future security environment on the utility of force is a challenge. Political scientist Dr. Colin Gray argues that attempting to do so is wasteful and for a country such as Canada, perceived as not facing any existential threat, the only available strategy is to remain as flexible as possible to respond to an unpredictable security environment.<sup>80</sup> Such an argument could be construed as negating the requirement for anything absolute in the

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<sup>78</sup> David Barno and Nora Bensahel, "Fighting and Winning in the Gray Zone," *War on the Rocks*, May 19, 2015, accessed November 13, 2018, <https://warontherocks.com/2015/05/fighting-and-winning-in-the-gray-zone/>.

<sup>79</sup> Chief of Force Development, Department of National Defence, Government of Canada, *The Future Security Environment, 2013-2040* (Winnipeg, Canada: Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, 2014), accessed November 13, 2018, <http://www.deslibris.ca/ID/246204>.

<sup>80</sup> Colin S. Gray, "The 21st Century Security Environment and the Future of War," *Parameters* (Winter 2008-2009): 13–26.

form of an NSS. It is short-sighted however to believe so as Gray's argument is focused on the application of force, rather than the utility of it and ignores the interconnectedness brought forth through globalization. As Rupert Smith notes, conflict is first decided at the political level and military force is but one tool, and should be the last, used to pursue national objectives.<sup>81</sup>

Accordingly, defense strategy needs to be nested in a larger WoG strategy which encompasses all instruments of national power working towards common objectives.

These general trends, the shift in the international order and the challenges posed by the future security environment, demonstrate that Canada will face significant risks in the future, more so than those encountered during the past five decades.<sup>82</sup> Canada's geo-strategic position, if not rendered irrelevant, is less advantageous than in the past. Its heavy reliance on the United States as a means to inform national security interests is no longer viable. There needs to be a realization that the world is in a perpetual state of conflict, with ebbs and flows in its intensity and characteristics. The application of power and the comprehensive means to address the challenges of the security environment become paramount to a state's national security. To address these matters, in his book, *The Future of Power*, Joseph Nye outlines the critical requirement for a state to formulate a WoG response. He describes this comprehensive approach as the judicious application and blending of hard and soft power. A concept focused on achieving behavioural outcomes, the importance of applying the instruments of national power is placed on converting national resources into means to obtain national objectives.<sup>83</sup> He coins this concept as "smart power" and convincingly argues that it must be built on a the foundation of a "smart strategy," a strategy that defines preferred outcomes, provides resourcing from all government departments,

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<sup>81</sup> Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007), 211-214.

<sup>82</sup> David McDonough and Charles Davies, ed., "The Strategic Outlook for Canada 2017," *Vimy Paper*, no. 34 (2017): vi.

<sup>83</sup> Nye, 22-24.

analyzes power behaviours, and applies resources accordingly.<sup>84</sup> For the un-initiated, one could argue that Nye’s “smart strategy” moniker can be used synonymously with the term NSS, assuming the latter is effectively crafted. Critiqued at times for its lack of military hard power, the smart power construct could prove to be Canada’s best way to get more of the outcomes it wants in the international order without increasing defense spending and sacrificing the state’s focus on economic prosperity. An NSS would support the application of such a construct, serving as a tool to articulate how the GoC would convert its soft power resources into strategic outcomes. Prior to concluding how this could be accomplished, it is advantageous to first examine how other states are approaching the formulation of national security strategies.

### No Strategy is Perfect, but Something is Better than Nothing

Notwithstanding the information provided thus far, there remains a lingering question of what purpose an NSS document is meant to serve. In exploring an answer to this question, analysis reveals an NSS can be the product of varying contextual approaches to national security and articulated via different means. Comparative analysis of the approaches to security strategy development espoused by several allied states exposes the relevance of an NSS document for Canada.

In his comparative analysis of several states’ national security strategies, Stolberg proposed three primary reasons a state should produce an NSS document.<sup>85</sup> Firstly, he contended that an NSS could serve as a means of control and coordination for elected officials to ensure government intent is publicly articulated and followed by subordinate departments. In this regard, an NSS becomes a tool of accountability and a baseline for performance measurement. Secondly, Stolberg noted that such a comprehensive document could be used by legislative bodies to inform and facilitate appropriations and guide decision making. Lastly, he posited that an NSS could be

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 208.

<sup>85</sup> Stolberg, 2-3.

used as a government strategic communications tool for both internal and external audiences. The inherent value of all three reasons is applicable in the Canadian national security context; however, the political risk associated with producing an NSS document and failing to meet outlined objectives is significant. As earlier identified, political capital becomes a significant factor in deciding whether or not to produce an NSS. In the Canadian political context however, the political risk associated with failing to achieve national security policy objectives should not outweigh the functional principle, which highlights the need for Canada to maintain multilateral institutions and to “create a rule-based international order for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”<sup>86</sup> In this regard, Canada should leverage the value of using an NSS as a means to coordinate these efforts.

With demonstrated practical value, it becomes relevant to explore the conceptual approaches a state may take to develop an NSS, as it will aid in understanding how the GoC could pursue the production of such a document. International relations and strategic studies fellow, Dr. Peter Layton of the Griffith Asia Institute in Australia, posited that there are three overarching conceptual approaches that may be used to develop an NSS, grand strategy, risk management, or opportunism.<sup>87</sup> He explained the grand strategy approach as being a comprehensive method to build a state’s desired future through a series of successive actions; it encompasses vision and intent for the country within the global order. Comparatively, a risk management approach is more focused on means, not necessarily targeting a specific objective but seeking to mitigate state identified risks presented by the complex adaptive system within which the state operates.<sup>88</sup> Lastly, opportunism is seen as another means-centered approach,

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<sup>86</sup> Global Affairs Canada, Government of Canada.

<sup>87</sup> Peter Layton, “An Australian National Security Strategy: Competing Conceptual Approaches,” *Security Challenges* 8, no. 3 (2012): 103–20, 104.

<sup>88</sup> Donella H. Meadows, *Thinking in Systems: A Primer* (White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2008), 188. Meadows defines a system as an inter-connected set of elements that interacts in space and time. A complex adaptive system is one that diversifies and evolves over time based on actions within the system, having the ability to make its structure more complex.



emphasizing flexibility in policy and strategy development, described by Layton as “the ship of state is simply sailing on the sea; it has not left a known port nor is it headed towards a desired landfall...the government—is simply seeking to take advantage of any favourable winds.”<sup>89</sup> Each conceptual approach will be explored in the context of other state approaches to national security strategy formulation to derive applicable lessons to the Canadian national security discourse.

The 2017 United States NSS may serve as the best example of a grand strategy approach to NSS development. The document’s expressed purpose of using all instruments of national power to address global threats, making “America First” on the global stage, meets the very definition provided by Layton.<sup>90</sup> As highlighted earlier, a critical component of the United States national security framework, the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986, mandates the production of a “national security strategy report” on an annual basis outlining intended short and long term plans for all instruments of national power.<sup>91</sup> Comparatively, Canadian government Bill C-59, *An Act Respecting National Security Matters*, which remains before the Canadian Senate as of November 2018, with a stated outcome of “enhancing Canada’s national security framework,” solely mandates the requirement for various government security agencies to produce an annual briefing to a central government review agency.<sup>92</sup> There is no mention of the word “strategy” within Canadian Bill C-59. Arguably, codifying the requirement to produce an NSS in law does not guarantee outcomes; notwithstanding the *Goldwater-Nichols Act*, national security strategies in the United States have not been produced annually by various United States administrations. However, by enshrining the requirement in law, national security strategy is made to be part of government discourse; a lesson worth observing for Canada.

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<sup>89</sup> Layton, “An Australian National Security Strategy: Competing Conceptual Approaches,” 110.

<sup>90</sup> US President, II.

<sup>91</sup> Joint Staff, US Department of Defense, Sec 104(a)(2).

<sup>92</sup> House of Commons, Bill C-59, preamble.

National security strategies produced using the grand strategy concept are easily attacked by academics for their lack of descriptive means and ways to attain national objectives. The United States NSS is certainly not immune, having been described as expressing “grandiose ambitions and laundry lists of priorities” with no definitive goals nor resources.<sup>93</sup> However, when related back to Layton’s chief purposes of such a strategy, the United States NSS in fact achieves all of Layton’s described outcomes. The US 2017 NSS may not be perfect, but it communicates intent and provides a reference point for subordinate efforts and appropriations. In a government system designed to have the NSS reviewed annually, the ability to make adjustments is inherent. To argue that Canada, as a middle power, is not positioned to employ a grand strategy conceptual approach to NSS development is short-sighted. As Cox argues, the Canadian government must conduct serious intellectual reflection with a “big Canada mind-set” to produce a grand strategy that will enable Canada to optimally pursue its national interest.<sup>94</sup> In *Making a Canadian National Security Strategy*, Layton support Cox’s premise in arguing that of the various conceptual approaches to national security, that which makes the most sense for Canada is that of grand strategy.<sup>95</sup> Layton’s argument is focused on outcomes, dismissing the notion that a vision for the world is left only to great powers. The GoC’s foreign policy statement of 2017 offers a vision of the world and Canada’s role therein. Accordingly, the next step for the state should be the crafting of a comprehensive strategy to achieve its stated policy objectives. Such an approach would require constant attention and collective intellectual capital yet offers the greatest return on

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<sup>93</sup> Rebecca Friedman Lissner, “The National Security Strategy Is Not a Strategy,” *Foreign Affairs*, December 19, 2017, accessed July 18, 2018, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2017-12-19/national-security-strategy-not-strategy>.

<sup>94</sup> Cox, 13.

<sup>95</sup> Peter Layton, “Making a Canadian National Security Strategy,” *On Track* 20, no. 1 (2015): 37–41, 41.

investment for Canada, in terms of maintaining the country's respected international status by choosing to act, and lead, as a functional power within the international order.<sup>96</sup>

The contemporary Australian experience of developing an NSS may be the most similar to the Canadian narrative. It was not until 2013 that Australia government produced the country's first NSS. Until that point, Australia's national security interests were expressed primarily via the country's national defense strategy, supplemented by foreign policy statements, delivered orally in parliament.<sup>97</sup> This almost mirrors the current Canadian framework. In the late 2000s however, Australian public discourse on national security was prevalent as the country's national security White Paper had not been refreshed post 9/11. There were multiple political overtures made to set in motion the publishing of an NSS based on the public sentiment that:

the procession of *Defence Updates* over the past five years have failed to provide an integrated security strategy, offering instead a collection of complacent and temporizing nostrums that ignore both the complexity of the security problems facing Australia and the need for comprehensive "whole of government" actions.<sup>98</sup>

As much as the 2013 Australian NSS was produced to address the security challenges of its time, its production was also politically driven, motivated by the Labour Party's perceived need to boost its security platform prior to an election.<sup>99</sup> One of the most interesting themes contained within the 2013 Australian NSS when compared to that of the United States is the lack of mention of a defined threat to Australia. The strategy instead emphasized Australia being "a safe and confident country" and that a "major war" was assessed as unlikely. The focus of the NSS was placed on the pursuit of opportunities for the country vice espousing a realist perspective of the

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<sup>96</sup> Layton, "Making a Canadian National Security Strategy," 41.

<sup>97</sup> Stolberg, 18.

<sup>98</sup> Allan Behm, "The Need for an Australian National Security Strategy," *Security Challenges* 3, no. 3 (2007): 9–23, 9.

<sup>99</sup> Ernest Bower, "Australia's National Security Strategy: Lessons from the Pivot Down Under," Center for Strategic and International Studies (January 31, 2013), accessed November 14, 2018, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/australia%E2%80%99s-national-security-strategy-lessons-pivot-down-under>.

need to compete using hard power.<sup>100</sup> One's assessment of the viability of the 2013 Australian NSS given the current security environment and shifting international order is irrelevant; tangentially speaking, there are calls within Australia to produce an updated NSS. Rather, the deductions needing to be drawn to inform the Canadian national security discourse are two-fold. Firstly, an NSS is not reserved for great powers backed by a realist vision wherein conflict is a means to an end. Australia's NSS was produced using a conceptual grand strategy approach expressly designed to meet Stolberg's previously identified three purposes of coordinating, informing and communicating a state's activities. Secondly, the production of the 2013 Australian NSS was driven by the citizens of Australia, who expressed the need for the government to act within a changing world. The GoC has recognized the world is changing. What seems to be absent however is the awareness of this fact amongst the Canadian public; for it is Canadians, as evidenced by the Australian experience and Canada's own history, who need to give the GoC the mandate to produce an NSS.

From the various comparative studies of states' national security strategies examined for this paper, there are two additional deductions needing to be highlighted. First, there is no best way to conceptually develop an NSS. Its utility however is irrefutable, in that an NSS serves as a navigational beacon for matters of national security, "represent[ing] benefits to both stakeholders and audiences to ensure the security of the respective state."<sup>101</sup> Second, the notion of a perfect strategy is out of reach for most states. Constraints, to include domestic politics and limited resources, will always exist. However, their implications must be crafted into an NSS, vice being viewed as impediments to its production.<sup>102</sup> Otherwise, a state is forced to adopt an opportunistic approach to national security, placing its interests in the hands of other players within the

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<sup>100</sup> Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Australian Government, *Strong and Secure: A Strategy for Australia's National Security 2013* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2013), 58.

<sup>101</sup> Stolberg, 112.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

international arena. The question remains of whether or not there is value in such an approach for Canada, which will be explored in the next section of this paper.

### Pure Emergent Strategy Does Not Exist, nor Is It Effective for Canada

Given the complexity of the contemporary security environment and the stated need for adaptability in multiple states' approaches to national security, including Canada's, it could be argued that the more flexibility that exists within an NSS, the greater the benefit to the state. Accordingly, and as noted by political scientist Dr. Ionut Popescu, there is a growing number of academics promoting the applicability of emergent strategy in the practice of statecraft and by virtue, national security strategy development.<sup>103</sup> The concept of emergent strategy is best defined by renowned academic and author Henry Mintzberg in *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning*. He described emergent strategy as being a series of individual actions and decisions resulting in a realized pattern where one was not purposefully intended.<sup>104</sup> Figure 3 distinguishes emergent strategy from a deliberate strategy by illustrating that patterns occurring in a system may form a strategy absent of specific intent. In his thought-provoking exploration of grand strategy versus emergent strategy, Popescu leveraged Mintzberg's emergent strategy concept to argue grand strategy lacks real world applicability, as the focus of strategic planning should be "about learning and adapting, not about the plans themselves."<sup>105</sup> Popescu contended that in an uncertain global environment and within a non-unified domestic political environment, emergent strategy should guide a nation's foreign policy objectives, allowing for the greatest degree of flexibility in modifying the ways, means, and ends of strategy. In his Ph.D. dissertation on the subject of

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<sup>103</sup> Ionut C. Popescu, "Grand Strategy vs. Emergent Strategy in the Conduct of Foreign Policy," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 41, no. 3 (2018): 438–60, 439.

<sup>104</sup> Henry Mintzberg, *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning* (Free Press, 1994), 25.

<sup>105</sup> Popescu, 448.

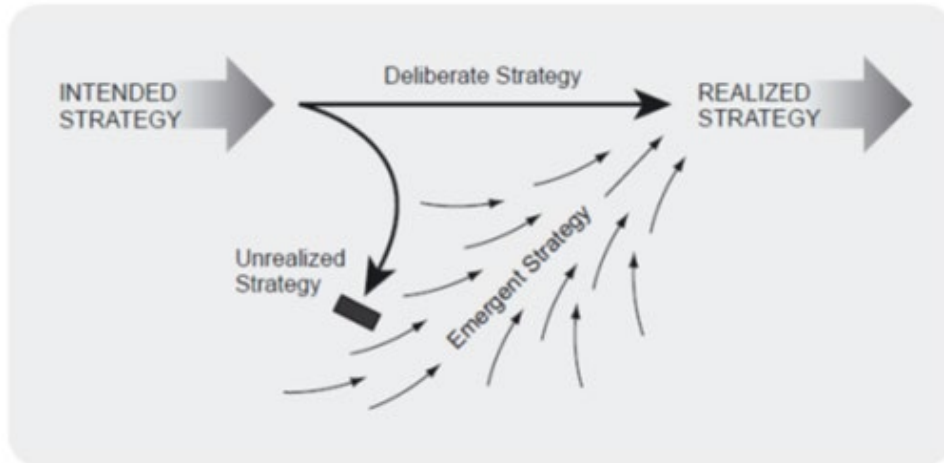


Figure 3. Forms of Strategy. Data from Henry Mintzberg, *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1994): 24. Reproduced in “Five Ps of Strategy,” Open.edu, accessed January 10, 2018, <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/money-management/management/what-strategy/content-section-2>.

Canadian national security strategy, William McAuley also argued in support of emergent strategy as a viable approach to guide Canadian NSS formulation. He viewed the need for a Canadian NSS approach to be “centrifugal” in nature; a term meant to reflect the necessary and continuous adaptation required of strategy in a complex adaptive system rather than the need for it to exert a centripetal force in the system itself.<sup>106</sup>

Interestingly however, one should consider that the idea of emergent strategy is not greatly different from Strachan’s previously described policy-strategy relationship in practice wherein he argued that political objectives may need to be adjusted based on the ways and means available to achieve them, and vice-versa.<sup>107</sup> Therefore, even a deliberate strategy needs to be flexible enough to adjust to the emerging conditions of the system in which the strategy is applied. It is therefore conceivable that a clearly articulated NSS would allow for the ways, means, and ends of the strategy itself to be adapted. As such, the argument for pursuing emergent

<sup>106</sup> McAuley, 273.

<sup>107</sup> Strachan, 45.

strategy in Canada's national security framework carries little weight in that the flexibility desired by supporters of the emergent strategy concept is already inherent within more deliberate forms of strategic planning. Moreover, both Mintzberg and Popescu acknowledged that there are key limitations in applying emergent strategy. The principal limitation, as Mintzberg noted, is that few strategies can be purely emergent as an organization would have to accept a complete lack of control, within, or over, a given environment or system.<sup>108</sup> Furthermore, adopting a conceptual emergent strategy approach to national security would ignore the purposes that an NSS document is meant to serve. Chiefly, a state would forgo the opportunity to communicate its national security interests both domestically and internationally and the executive branch would lose a valuable tool for coordination and oversight of state affairs. In fact, Mintzberg himself concluded that most often organizations use umbrella strategies that provide a broad outline of intent, approaches, and objectives to frame a strategy while comprehensive details emerge based on interactions within a given system.<sup>109</sup> In practical terms, this appears not so much to refute the benefit of crafting an NSS but highlights that an NSS cannot be seen as an absolute over time. The need for this flexibility is exemplified in the United States model for NSS development by having a codified annual requirement to produce a strategy report to re-shape any of the components of the NSS based on changes in the environment.

One must also remember that the means of achieving national security interests are allocated within a bureaucratic system, which is purposefully deliberate and unable to keep pace with an emergent approach to NSS formulation. To overcome such a challenge, Canada would need to "reinvent the architecture and ideology of modern management."<sup>110</sup> An examination of government systems is beyond the scope of this paper; suffice it to say that bureaucracy impedes

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<sup>108</sup> Mintzberg, 25.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Gary Hamel, "Bureaucracy Must Die," *Harvard Business Review*, 4 November 2014, accessed November 29, 2018, <https://hbr.org/2014/11/bureaucracy-must-die>.

emergent strategy development and provides a substantial deterrent to the thought of adopting any pure form of emergent strategy as a conceptual approach to NSS development.

Undoubtedly, there is great attraction to apply the concept of emergent strategy to Canadian statecraft as it supports that which is arguably preferred by most politicians, ambiguity. Moreover, adopting an emergent strategy approach is made even more attractive when considered in combination with McAuley's argument that a grand strategic conceptual approach to NSS formulation is lost on Canada. He described the state's strategic objectives as being "positional rather than aspirational" and that Canada was "not in a position to seek an independent condition based solely on its own interests."<sup>111</sup> In the context of NSS formulation, these ideas promote the previously examined conceptual approach of opportunism, wherein Canada's proverbial ship of state would sail at the mercy of the seas, not truly knowing its destination. Such arguments however fail to consider the current political context; the GoC has categorically dismissed an opportunistic approach in pursuing its national interests. Although the complexities of the global environment will demand flexibility in the design of Canada's national strategies, it is critical to once again emphasize the GoC's intent to no longer be a "client-state" but rather choose to set its own course.<sup>112</sup>

A review of the concept of pure emergent strategy reveals that as a tool of government, it fails to provide the control and coordination necessary to pursue national security interests. Rather, its applicability in NSS formulation lies in allowing for flexibility within a given strategy yet not negating the need to provide the framework of the strategy itself. In so doing, a state would be better poised to achieve Mintzberg's description of an effective strategy, one that mixes the characteristics of deliberate and emergent strategy "in ways that reflect the conditions at hand,

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<sup>111</sup> McAuley, 273.

<sup>112</sup> Global Affairs Canada, Government of Canada.



notably the ability to predict as well as the need to react to unexpected events.”<sup>113</sup> There will always need to be inherent flexibility embedded within a national security framework to respond to emerging threats and “black swans” which risk attaining national security objectives.<sup>114</sup> These challenges however demand intellectual rigour on the front-end of statecraft vice solely employing that rigour in a crisis management context due to lack of forethought. The argument for emergent strategy in statecraft is one for the necessity to monitor and adjust to changes within a complex adaptive system. There is no disputing this requirement; however, there needs to be a baseline from which to adjust and a framework strategy in which to operate.

## Conclusion

There is talk occasionally about flexible planning, but as with the pregnant virgin, the obvious contradiction is seldom addressed – except, of course, by those who believe in planning as immaculate conception.

–Henry Mintzberg, Canadian author and academic on business and management

Through examining multiple facets of Canada’s national security discourse, this paper has attempted to demonstrate the benefits bestowed upon Canada by producing an NSS document, serving as a tool to coordinate government sub-strategies and to operationalize the government’s policy objectives. Undeniably, there are challenges in pursuing such a path and the GoC can always find reason, notably exercising the politically safe option of being strategically ambiguous, to steer away from crafting an NSS. However as Mintzberg wrote, “not to our fantasies – may they mostly fall as fast as they rise – but to the wonders of reality” must the

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<sup>113</sup> Mintzberg, 25.

<sup>114</sup> Nassim Nicholas Taleb, “The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable,” *New York Times*, 22 April 2007, accessed August 20, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/22/books/chapters/0422-1st-tale.html>. Taleb describes a black swan as an outlier event, one which is described as a rarity with extreme impact, having only retrospective predictability.

government respond.<sup>115</sup> As observed, the realities of the global security environment, the practical role played by an NSS within the policy-strategy relationship, and Canada's need to act within the international order as a functional power all point to the benefits of producing a Canadian NSS.

Consider first that the global security environment has changed. Although change has occurred throughout the Canada's history, the key difference now is that Canada can no longer find safety in its geo-strategic position. There is recognition within multiple government documents that, "the global security environment transcends national borders, requiring Canada to help promote peace and stability abroad in order to maintain security at home."<sup>116</sup> Yet Canada is aligned with allies who view existential threats to their applicable position within the international order and the GoC articulated key strategic and existential threats to the nation via its most recent foreign policy statement. It stands to reason therefore that Canada would have, and need, a comprehensive strategy to address these threats, as strategy provides the required "grammar" for the logic of a given policy.<sup>117</sup> Absent an NSS document, it would appear the GoC is choosing to view the development of a national strategy as "immaculate conception."<sup>118</sup>

Moreover, the GoC's commitment to a rules-based international order manifested through institutionalism binds Canada to act outside its borders. And act it must; there is no guarantee of Canadian middle power status within the current international order. Instead, Canada must deliberately choose where, how, and to what end it will inject itself in global issues; it is the foundation of being a functional power and it is the only guarantee of choosing a path that "preserves and nurtures Canadian prosperity and security; and that contributes to our collective

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<sup>115</sup> Mintzberg, dedication.

<sup>116</sup> Department of National Defence, Government of Canada, 57.

<sup>117</sup> Strachan, 28.

<sup>118</sup> Mintzberg, 25.

goal of a better, safer, more just, more prosperous, and sustainable world.”<sup>119</sup> An NSS can provide the framework to achieve this outcome. To argue against such a position fails to consider the Australian experience, which demonstrates that functional powers can adopt a conceptual grand strategic approach in formulating an NSS, choosing to focus on the impact a state can have within the international order and the opportunities it desires to pursue.

Second, there needs to be a realization within Canada’s psyche that national security extends beyond defense. Canada’s tendency to rely on its NDS to act as a proxy for an NSS is an incomplete approach to national security; it fails to leverage the value of using an NSS as a means to coordinate a WoG effort towards the pursuit of national interests. In their analysis of Canada’s national security framework, Macnamara and Fitzgerald arrive at the very conclusion that GoC planners fail to clearly understand that national security, “goes beyond...military issues and takes into account the whole range of government activities.”<sup>120</sup> Canada’s national security interests cannot be solely attained through the application of military force; it demands, as Rupert Smith argued, a coordinated effort of all levers of national power, enumerating objectives to be achieved along with a corresponding resource allocation.<sup>121</sup> Such a coordinated effort is the application of Joseph Nye’s “Smart Power” concept, practically exercised through an NSS.

Canada possesses a well-articulated foreign policy statement, providing the necessary logic to guide strategy development. Unfortunately, there is a break in the policy-strategy relationship, an easily discernable gap in the expression of the ways and means to achieve the ends. It is not enough for the GoC to allow its ship of state to be at the mercy of the winds of the international order. Nye reinforced this position in noting that from a “policy-oriented perspective, intentions matter in terms of getting preferred outcomes;” in order to have a chance

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<sup>119</sup> Global Affairs Canada, Government of Canada.

<sup>120</sup> Macnamara and Fitz-Gerald, 8.

<sup>121</sup> Smith, 378, 391.

at successfully attaining these outcomes, a specified framework is needed to establish “who gets what, where, how and when.”<sup>122</sup>

Canada’s Achilles’ Heel of its national security discourse remains the country’s inability to commit to a unified vision, the very thing St. Laurent set out to promote in 1947. As Macnamara lamented, “a consensus of what, precisely, constitutes our vital national interests would permit a rational and logical analysis” of Canada’s national security issues, allowing the GoC to move forward and craft an NSS document.<sup>123</sup> Committing to a unified position must be the first task of the GoC, which promotes that “there can be no greater role, no more important obligation for a government, than the protection and safety of its citizens.”<sup>124</sup>

A desire to remain strategically flexible is not substantial enough reason to forego crafting an NSS. Flexibility must be built into Canada’s national security framework; however, an actual strategy is required to provide the framework for how, and with what, the state will pursue its national security policy objectives. Canada is past the point of St. Laurent’s call for reflection and discussion. With a view to bringing about positive change and strengthening Canada’s national security framework, the GoC should make the production of an NSS a priority.

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<sup>122</sup> Nye, 7.

<sup>123</sup> Don Macnamara, *National Security and Government Responsibility: Towards a National Security Strategy* (Ottawa, Canada: CDA Institute, 2016), 1.

<sup>124</sup> Privy Council Office, Government of Canada.

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