

The Match Between Canada's Transformation and NATO Transformation

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There is a new bounce in the step of the Canadian Military. There is a sense of revival, the smell of a new opportunity to rebuild capability and to refocus purpose. There is a Prime Minister committed, there is a defence minister who himself was a soldier, there is a chief of the Defence staff whose 'can-do' mindset energizes everyone below.

I know I have only pointed your attention towards the tip of the iceberg, but we need to stop a moment and realize the enormous changes in play for Canadian defence.

After two decades of little or no investment while Canadian Forces were stretching from one operation to the next, credible analysts predicted the coming implosion of the military.

Canadian Forces were not only subjected to systemic lack of funding amidst a demanding tempo of operations, they were also the subject of policy neglect and intellectual arrogance by many in government, in academia, and in the media.

Some wanted the forces to become a type of gendarmerie assisting non-governmental organizations or simply to be enablers of international organizations such as the United Nations which were held up as the 'real' solution to armed conflict and the real promise of lasting peace. The forces became a play thing of national whims and international agendas.

Two developments turned this dangerous trend around; one national, and one international.

At the national level, groups such as the Conference of Defence Associations and the Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute, a few key politicians, and academic analysts and journalists were able to turn the tide of political and then public opinion. After years of a focused message, most Canadians now understand that the Canadian Forces have been hollowed out. They now understand that the military is a force for good and not some sinister cold war relic. Most important of all, they now understand that Canada needs a robust tool to defend its security and interests at home and abroad. Therefore, the new leadership has a mandate from the Canadian public to transform the military.

The second development that turned around the years of neglect and that has many Canadians now on board for a strong military is the gathering clouds of threats inside our country and faraway.

The threats are international terrorism, weapons of mass impact, and aggressive dictatorships. To deal with these, a country needs a whole range of tools from proactive intelligence to strong cooperation among like-minded states to highly capable armed forces to targeted civilian plans to help people rebuild societies after conflict.

Military capacity must first be built at home before it can be put to work abroad in ways that multiply its effect.

Part of Canada's recently begun transformation is the understanding that national security is job number one, and that national security and continental security are going to blend. To that end, the new Canada Command and the US Northern Command should find plenty of ground to work closely. As we know from NORAD, bi-national commands are more effective than ad hoc bilateral arrangements. Canadian

participation in national missile defence is in our interest because Rogue-state missiles even when used only as a weapon of denial threaten the interests of both our countries. We must accept our part of this responsibility.

The transformation of the role of Canadian Forces in international security is still a big challenge for how do you take a force that was originally built to kill tanks, long-range bombers and submarines and turn it into a force that can take on a major insurgency while at the same time secure a shattered society while beginning to rebuild parts of it?

The Expeditionary Forces Command recently stood up is an important ingredient, as is a new emphasis on Special Operations Forces.

Now money is needed to train and equip the forces to make the jointness effective in action. Here the embarrassing Canadian gap of several types of capability on land in the air and on sea needs to be filled quickly, not least of which is several types of airlift. We need to get away from "niche" thinking because we did not dare to assume a bigger budget and replace this "niche thinking" with necessary but reasonable expenses given the size of landmass we cover and the type of missions we undertake. For example, it is not a question of either Joint Strike Fighters or Unmanned arial vehicles, but what combination of the two.

And then we come to the question of how international relationships can help us multiply the objectives we seek abroad by the means we have built at home.

Let's be clear, ad hoc UN peacekeeping as we did in Croatia and Bosnia has taught us a simple lesson: never again. The command and control system was dysfunctional, the mandate was too weak. Just being there got mistaken for results. There is nothing apparent in UN reform that would

make operations directly run by the UN any better today than they were in the Balkans or Rwanda.

The European Union has important humanitarian, development and police coordination functions. In some crises combining our strength in these areas with EU missions can be an effective way to get results, but putting Canadian forces under the European Union in military operations does not bring grist to our mill. The European Security and Defence Policy is not an effective force multiplier for Canada.

The multiplier effect for Canadian interests in international security is to work in coalitions of the committed, including some specific NATO configurations and nearly always with the United States whether directly as in Kandahar or behind the scenes as that may be in the interest of both countries.

Many Canadians mistakenly think NATO is a thing of the past. In fact, the Alliance is more future oriented than most organizations out there. It has weathered many storms and come out stronger. Its last two major storms were very serious, yet NATO has emerged from them with an agenda focused on specific capabilities rather than elusive political ideals. I will first address the two storms and then highlight NATO's agenda for new capabilities.

The first storm broke in the early 1990s when the European Union began to act as an assertive unilateralist. Europe of course came out of World War II in three dimensions: a 'communist Europe,' a 'common market Europe' and an 'Atlantic security Europe.' When the Communist dimension fell away, common market Europe wanted to absorb Atlantic Europe and establish a single supranational superpower in economics, politics and defence. As the Union would grow, the NATO Alliance would shrink. But it has not turned out that way.

The second storm erupted when the United States under George W. Bush revolutionized the international security agenda unilaterally in response to 9/11 and then began to coach NATO into a new global security task. Both storms for a while reduced political solidarity in the Alliance.

But NATO is emerging from these troubles. In some ways, its most tumultuous years were also its most productive. For example: it admitted ten new states from Eastern Europe who still appreciate the idea of one for all and all for one; it has gone way out of area into Afghanistan where the United States, Canada and various European NATO members work hand-in-glove; it has handed NATO operations in Bosnia over to the European Union—thus making European security more European-- while staying on to help with planning, command and control; it has set up an ambitious plan for members to generate and get ready an expeditionary capability called the NATO Response Force; it has dedicated one top command to guide nations through transformation without each country having to re-invent the wheel; and, finally, it is beginning to pick up constructive multilateral consultations again about common threats including such serious ones as coming from Iran.

What does this transforming NATO mean for Canada? Two things.

First, too many European NATO members do not have enough expeditionary forces. Thus, any scheme NATO can devise to get those numbers up helps our efforts. At its meeting in Istanbul in 2004, NATO has set 40% as the expeditionary target for how members should structure, prepare and equip their land forces and 8% as the minimal number ready to go or actually deployed. A look at Canada's record shows that we have been above these targets for fifteen years. In 1993, we had 25% of land forces in the Balkans. From 1999 onwards we have been committing between 12% and 20% of our forces to expeditionary

operations each year. At the current rate, by the end of 2006, half of the Canadian army will have been in Afghanistan. My point is this: The more European members can help in challenging operations such as in Afghanistan, the better our prospects are for progress.

Second, NATO can help in the quest for more capability in global security operations. Of course, if countries do not invest, NATO can declare all it wants, but nothing will happen. The Americans have bumped their head on this low ceiling for years. Europe spends over \$220 billion US dollars a year on defence and maintains some 2.2 million soldiers, but on aggregate Europe has few specific capabilities that work well far away from Europe.

As I mentioned earlier, Canada's superb human resources are held back by numerous capability gaps. If NATO's transformation and capabilities commitment plans can get some synergy among willing allies to plug various holes together, we can close these gaps quicker. NATO has a template; it can build onto its established record in command and control similar common strengths in logistics support, shared tactics, network-enabled operations, and force protection. As someone said, "It takes a network to fight a network."

In this area Allied Command Transformation can help bring the thinking and planning of member states in line. It helps members ask the right questions about how new force configurations and capabilities can work together in future security operations.

We should not expect too much from NATO as it has never really functioned as a unified or single entity. The idea is not to make NATO into a unified supranational military, but more practically to get willing members more long-term soft and hard tools to streamline their efforts.

As NATO concentrates on capabilities, it will make it easier to be flexible and adaptable. For example, Japan and Australia participate in the Allied Transformation programs and Australian troops work in Afghanistan. Thus, in the future, coalitions of the committed and specific NATO functions may blend better.

In conclusion: the initial difference in approach between the United States and major European countries on how to tackle the global war on terror and political transformation in the Middle East is narrowing. The two differing worldviews of how to tackle the threat are converging as the United States needs nation building in Iraq and Afghanistan and the Europeans and Canadians need military power to fix Afghanistan.

We have a specific common goal. We need to set Afghanistan on the path toward political and economic development and we need to make it a one way street. Countries committed to make this happen will find the best placed platform to work from in NATO.

Thank you