



## **Tradition and Isolation:**

### **Canada, NorthCom and the UCP**

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In the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 attacks, defence of the North American continent has returned to the forefront of American national security policy. Domestically, the George W. Bush administration has put forth a proposal to create a cabinet-level department of homeland security. In an effort to better protect the United States, the Administration proposes that the department

“assume responsibility for operational assets of the Coast Guard, Customs Service, Immigration and Naturalization Service and Border Patrol, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service of the Department of Agriculture, and the recently created Transportation Security Administration.” Militarily, the revival of continental defence has resulted in a similar initiative. On 17 April 2002, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Richard Myers, announced that the American Unified Command Plan (UCP) was being updated to include a new regional command, United States Northern Command (NorthCom). Allocated responsibility for the continental United States, Canada, Mexico, portions of the Caribbean and the contiguous waters in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans up to 500 miles off the North American coastline, NorthCom’s mandate is to “provide a necessary focus for [continental] aerospace, land and sea defenses, and critical support for [the] nation’s civil authorities in times of national need.” In no sense an incidental modification, Rumsfeld

estimates that the introduction of NorthCom, and its resulting designation of North America as a geographic command, “is part of the greatest transformation of the Unified Command Plan since its inception in 1947.”

Although NorthCom is a uniquely American command, its presence will inescapably influence those foreign states included in its area of geographic responsibility. Canada, with its historic and continuing military ties to the United States, has witnessed an increase in the number debates regarding the significance of the UCP revision. Particularly, NorthCom and the other modifications of UCP have revived traditional dialogues about Canadian sovereignty and Canadian involvement with ballistic missile defence (BMD). Thus, while NorthCom and the UCP are wholly American ventures, their implications will surely be *North American*.

The following paper will examine possible impacts of NorthCom and the revised UCP on Canadian national security policy. The first section reviews the history of the Canada-U.S. continental defence relationship, paying special attention to Canadian debates regarding sovereignty and strategic missile defence. This serves to highlight lasting trends in the North American continental defence relationship. Next, the impact of NorthCom and the revised UCP on Canadian foreign and defence policy is evaluated. It is argued is that Canada’s future contributions to continental defense will evolve in a way that mirrors its previous experiences, while Canada’s indecision regarding ballistic missile defence(BMD) has led to its being marginalized from future BMD planning.

## **I. Sovereignty and Ambiguity**

In order to evaluate the influence of NorthCom on Canada, it is necessary to review how Canada approached cooperative continental defence with the United States in the past. Doing so elucidates two trends in Canadian foreign and defence policy. First, despite concerns about its sovereignty, Canada has tended to embrace joint continental defence efforts with the United States. At the forefront of these efforts has been the Canadian military, which has been remarkably successful in convincing their political masters of the necessity of binational cooperation in the defence of North America. Second, Canada has been historically inconsistent with respect to BMDs. When Canada first agreed to be part of continental air defence, it

recognized that it was not protecting the North American populace but rather the American nuclear deterrent. However, when active strategic defence advanced beyond air defence to include possible BMDs, the attitude of successive Canadian governments altered and has remained ambiguous since. Together, these two strands of Canadian national security policy provide a foundation from which to ascertain how NorthCom and the modification of the American UCP will affect Canada.

Reflecting on the importance attributed to the North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD), renowned Canadian diplomat John W. Holmes noted the following in 1982:

NORAD, which seems a step in the continentalization of North American defence, can be regarded from another angle as a means of preserving a Canadian role and an appropriate degree of sovereignty in a situation in which, if there were no rules, the Americans would simply take over the defence of the continent.

Typically characterized as a ‘defence against help’ strategy, the reality described by Holmes characterizes the Canadian approach to continental defence for the better part of the twentieth century. To be precise, since before the Second World War, Canada has continually chosen to forego a vulnerable pure sovereignty in favor of a truncated, but better secured, sovereignty by cooperating with the United States. Indeed, of all the trends in the Canada-U.S. defence relationship, this sovereignty dilemma is an ever-present, but surmountable, concern.

Speaking at Queen’s University in August 1938, American President Franklin Roosevelt pledged that “the people of the United States will not stand by if domination of Canada is threatened by any other Empire.” Replying within the week, Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King declared that “enemy forces should not be able to pursue their way either by land, sea or air to the United States across Canada.” This ‘Kinston Dispensation’, as Michel Fortmann and David Haglund have named it, reveals an early manifestation of Canada’s sovereignty dilemma. Faced with an implicit suggestion that America would be willing to protect the continent alone if need be, King realized that Canada had to bolster its own defences to alleviate its neighbor’s concerns. As Joel Sokolsky notes: “[f]or Canada, the problem was satisfying this legitimate concern without compromising, however benignly, its

own national sovereignty." Hence, while Canada and the United States did not establish any joint continental defence measures at this time, Canadian defence policy was nonetheless influenced by American interests.

Following the outbreak of the Second World War, apprehensions about the security of North America were heightened. In an effort to coordinate the defence of the continent, the United States and Canada established the Permanent Joint Board on Defence (PJBD) in 1940. Throughout the war the PJBD was as an essential link between Ottawa and Washington. Most notably, the PJBD served to facilitate cooperation in defence production and infrastructure projects. Interestingly, the PJBD continues to be the highest bilateral defence forum between Canada and the United States, providing both governments with senior military and diplomatic contact. Despite the success of the PJBD, however, the Second World War also informed Canadian decision-makers about the need to be cautious in dealing with the United States. Early in the war, in an effort to build the Alaskan Highway and man the Northeast Staging Route to Europe, the United States stationed a formidable number of its forces on Canadian soil. Suffice it to say, the American presence was not well received by many Canadian officials. For instance, the Canadian high commissioner in London, Vincent Massey, was unapologetic in his sentiment that "Canada has been too preoccupied with her own war effort to cope with the Americans who unfortunately under the cover of the needs of war are acting in the Northwest as if they owned the country." Luckily for Ottawa, before the war's end, guarantees of an American withdrawal were obtained. While Canadian officials did not question that these deployments had been made in good faith, the ease with which they occurred signaled that concrete steps were needed to prevent a similar strain on Canadian sovereignty.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, Canada and the United States expanded their formal military links at the operational level. Whereas the PJBD dealt primarily with political aspects of the defence relationship, a new body, the Military Cooperation Committee (MCC), was conceived to manage joint military planning between American and Canadian forces. Wary of surprise attacks after Pearl Harbor and concerned about the military power of an increasingly hostile Soviet Union, Canadian and American defence officials used the binational planning structure of the MCC to design a first joint continental defence initiative in 1946. Known as the Basic Security Plan (BSP), the new arrangement included "a comprehensive

continental air defence organization, cartography, air and surface surveillance to provide early warning of attack, anti-submarine and coastal defence, counter-lodgments plans, and a joint command structure.” However, the BSP did not at first meet the demands of all Canadian officials. Of particular concern was that the BSP, as an operational arrangement, eluded detailed political oversight. The Canadian Department of External Affairs (DEA) was especially displeased by the fact that it was denied access to the BSP working group on account of its purported secrecy. Irrespective of these reservations, the BSP was approved by both the United States and Canada. Hence, despite the negative experience of the American presence during the Second World War and DEA misgivings, the PJBD and MCC established a precedent of formal discussions and respectful consideration between Canada and the United States regarding the defence of the continent.

The year 1949 was a critical turning point for the future of continental defence. Faced with Soviet brinkmanship over Berlin and Moscow’s refusal to grant promised self-determination to its Eastern European satellites, Canada, the United States and their European allies formed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Being uniquely situated across the Atlantic ocean, Canada and the United States were accorded their own Canada-United States Regional Planning Group (CUSRPG) to coordinate the defence of North America within the NATO structure. Thus, following the rearmament program Canada undertook in response to the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, a substantial portion of the Royal Canadian Navy’s (RCN) 154 ships were assigned to NATO’s Supreme Commander Atlantic (SACLANT). For the most part, the RCN performed anti-submarine warfare (ASW) and escort operations. These efforts inevitably led to close cooperation and joint exercises between the RCN and the United States Navy (USN). Moreover, both navies were permitted to operate in each other’s territorial waters if pursuing Soviet submarines. Hence, with respect to the maritime defence of North America, strong links were forged early on between the RCN and the USN. As Peter Haydon notes, “[b]y the 1960s the cooperation and coordination between the two Atlantic navies reached a level that probably exceeded the original concepts and expectations of the 1946 Basic Security Plan.”

A second 1949 event that shaped North American continental defence was the detonation of an atomic weapon by the Soviet Union. Coupled with the deployment of the

Soviet Tu-4 Bull long-range bomber, the end of the American atomic monopoly imparted a new urgency on continental defence. For Canada especially, McKenzie King's 1938 guarantee that "enemy forces should not be able to pursue their way either by land, sea or air to the United States across Canada" was of greater import than ever before. As the now oft-quoted quip of American Secretary of State John Foster Dulles reveals, Canada had become "a very important piece of real estate." Consequently, while the BSP included provisions for continental air defence, Washington was determined to better protect North American air space. Drafted in 1952, National Security Council Memorandum 159 (NSC-159) explicitly stated: "The present continental defence programs are not now adequate either to prevent, neutralize or seriously deter the military or covert acts which the Soviet Union is capable of launching." Pertaining to air defence in particular, NSC-159 was adamant that new initiative needed to be binational:

It seems clear...that since the success of our distant early warning system and the consequent effective deployment of defensive measures, both military and civil, depend upon the speed with which Canadian cooperation might be brought into play...Canadian agreement and participation on an adequate scale is essential to the speeding up of several of the highest priority programs.

Unfortunately for American planners, the Canadian government of Louis St-Laurent was hesitant. At issue for the Prime Minister and his Minister of Defence, Brook Claxton, were the implied cost and sovereignty infringements of a continental air defence expansion. Being the successors of the King government, the St-Laurent Liberals had experienced first hand the American presence in Canada during the Second World War. Any suggestion by the United States of grander defence mechanisms thereby invoked images of American soldiers on Canadian soil and a corresponding loss of sovereignty. In opposition to the Government, the Canadian Chiefs of Staff argued that American concerns and recommendations were legitimate and necessary. After the detonation of a thermonuclear device by the Soviet Union in 1953, in particular, Canadian military officials implored Claxton and St-Laurent to reconsider their cautious approach. Ultimately, Claxton recognized that Washington's steadfastness left Canada with few options. Geography and the nature of Canada-U.S. relations were such that Canadian involvement in an improved continental air defence system was inevitable when requested by a resolute United States. A securing of Canadian interests, therefore, was better achieved in the negotiation of a favorable regime structure.

In 1953, a Canada-U.S. Military Study Group (MSG) was formed. At Claxton's request, the MSG exposed Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) officers to detailed information about proposed radar installations. In turn, these officials provided the Canadian government with independent assessments of projected air defence infrastructures. When the June 1954 MSG report was released, the RCAF, which had been working closely with the United States Air Force (USAF) since the BSP, supported and bolstered American arguments favoring new binational early warning systems. Specifically, the MSG report stated that the building of a Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line in northern Canada was "necessary if the development of the Air Defense System is to be kept abreast of anticipated improvements in Soviet capabilities to attack by air the vital areas of Canada and the United States." Despite the fact that it meant the return of American soldiers to Canadian soil –albeit in minimal numbers- the St-Laurent government agreed to the building of the DEW Line in September 1954. To address the sovereignty issue, and national defence industry interests, Ottawa ensured that the sites for the primarily American-funded DEW Line radars were chosen by both governments, that Canadian equipment was used to build them, and that Canadian law applied on the sites.

Beyond radar installations, an integrated operational command was seen by both the RCAF and the USAF as a necessary step to enhance the effectiveness of their current collaborative efforts. Though the RCAF and USAF already had a measure of tactical cooperation, both services realized that such an approach was insufficient in light of the Soviet threat. As long as the two air forces functioned independently at the operational level, a measure of efficiency was being sacrificed. As Jockel observes:

To Canadian and U.S. airmen in the mid-1950s, it only made sense to provide a way whereby the various elements of their two national air defence systems could be used rationally and efficiently as part of a well-designed, well-executed, and continent-wide battle plan.

From a military perspective, therefore, close operational coordination of air defence forces was a logical necessity.

Recognizing the political sensitivity of joint operational control, the St-Laurent government deferred their decision to commit to a new air defence arrangement until after the June 1957 election, which they expected to win. Unfortunately for the Liberal party, the

election was carried by the Conservatives of John Diefenbaker. This left the Canadian military in an odd position. On one hand, the Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff, General Foulkes, had made a great deal of progress towards convincing the Liberals to accept a binational air defence initiative. On the other hand, the neophyte Conservative party, not having won an election since 1935, might be more easily swayed with respect to the necessity of a Canadian acquiescence. Foulkes chose to use the latter fact to his advantage. Falsely linking continental air defence to NATO, while simultaneously minimizing its joint operational control provisions, Foulkes convinced the new Minister of National Defence, former General George Pearkes, that the government *had* to commit to the proposed Commander-in-Chief Air Defense Canada-United States (CINCADCANUS). Not doing so, Foulkes argued, would inevitably damage Canada-U.S. relations and the security of the continent. Owing in large part to the fallacies he propagated, Foulkes obtained Diefenbaker approval for Canadian participation in CINCADCANUS on 24 July.

At the request of its first Commander-in-Chief, CINCADCANUS was renamed North American Air Defence Command (NORAD) in late August 1957. Though still an unsigned arrangement (the agreement was officially signed on 12 May 1958), NORAD 'stood-up' on 12 September 1957. Headed by an American Commander-in-Chief (CINCNORAD) and a Canadian Deputy Commander-in-Chief, NORAD was structured to give each country a relative equality of representation – despite their disproportionate financial and force contributions, where the United States shouldered the greater burden. As part of its binational status, CINCNORAD was to report to both Canadian and American military authorities. Moreover, to uphold the sovereignty of the states involved, a key factor in the formation of NORAD was the retention of national command over respective military units. Specifically, the selecting of permanent stations, the maintenance of discipline, and the training, logistical support, and composition of national forces remained the responsibility of the Canadian and American governments. As recommended by the USAF, RCAF and MSG, the critical component of NORAD was joint operational control of continental air defence forces. Joint operation control was defined as "the power to direct, coordinate, and control the operational activities of forces assigned, attached, or otherwise made available." Simply put, this meant that CINCNORAD was given the "authority to commit Canadian and American forces to air battle without immediate reference to either government." The rationale behind this delegation of authority was clear: in the event

of a Soviet bomber attack, near-immediate response time was of the utmost importance. Implicit in the NORAD agreement, therefore, was the principle that forces would be available when needed. Any political concerns regarding the availability of air defence forces was assumed to have been resolved when the NORAD structure had been negotiated.

Regrettably, Diefenbaker failed to understand the subtleties of NORAD and the requirements of Canadian participation within it. Seeing NORAD as a component of NATO, Diefenbaker believed that consultation between Canada and the United States would precede any military action. Within the NATO system, "assigned forces, no matter what the nationality of the commanders, were subject to the political control of the NATO Council, itself a committee of the allied governments." Correspondingly, Diefenbaker expected that Canadian forces were only to be made operationally available to NORAD if the Canadian government was duly consulted. Therefore, in sharp contrast to RCAF and American expectations, Diefenbaker anticipated that Canadian political concerns were to be addressed before CINCNOAD was permitted to assume operational control of Canada's air defence forces. Predictably, these disharmonious views of NORAD were destined to clash.

On 14 October 1962, an American U.2 reconnaissance plane photographed Soviet construction of Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile (IRBM) sites in western Cuba. After several days of White House debate on how to deal with what he perceived to be a uniquely American-Soviet confrontation, President John F. Kennedy announced on 22 October that the United States was imposing a quarantine on military equipment heading for the Caribbean island. At the speech's end, the United States military, including NORAD, increased its state of readiness. Following standard operating procedures, CINCNOAD solicited his Canadian Deputy to place Canadian air defence forces on increased alert, to arm USAF aircraft stationed at Canadian air fields with nuclear weapons, and to allow a dispersal of US aircraft to additional Canadian air fields. At the request of Deputy CINCNOAD and the RCAF, the Minister of Defence, Douglas Harkness, sought to fulfill CINCNOAD's petition. To do this, however, Harkness needed Diefenbaker's authorization. Given the timely requirements of continental air defence, the implicit notion of binational solidarity included in the NORAD agreement and the severity of the crisis at hand, Harkness expected Diefenbaker to sanction the required preparations. To Harkness' astonishment, Diefenbaker refused to consider the issue on 22 October. His reasons

for this were twofold. First, Diefenbaker was irked that Kennedy had not properly consulted him about the Cuban situation or the increased NORAD alert status. Second, the Prime Minister was not in agreement with the American position; in Diefenbaker's mind, a negotiated solution to the crisis was preferable to brinkmanship. Hence, in so far as he saw Canada's NORAD commitments as being contingent on proper consultation and respect for its government's political proclivities, Diefenbaker refused to allow the RCAF to meet their continental air defence obligations.

The next day, 23 October, the Cabinet met to discuss the continuing crisis. Once again, Harkness pressed the Prime Minister to meet CINCNORAD's requests. Backed by his avidly anti-nuclear Secretary of State for External Affairs, Howard Green, Diefenbaker informed Harkness that he "would not be rushed into such action." Finally, on 24 October, after SAC escalated to yet a higher state of nuclear readiness, Diefenbaker succumbed to Harkness and allowed the Canadian military to assume an alert status of Military Vigilance. This in turn transferred command authority to the service Chiefs. The RCAF quickly informed CINCNORAD of its new operational status. After two days of stalling, the Diefenbaker government was now prepared to meet the obligations that the United States assumed were part and parcel of binational continental defence efforts.

Canada thus learned important lessons from the Cuban missile crisis/NORAD incident. The events of the crisis reinforced the fact that NORAD was a military – not political - agreement that necessitated allied solidarity and an impromptu availability of forces. Extensive deliberation was not a luxury that could be afforded in a time of crisis or immanent attack. Interestingly, a further fact can be ascertained from Canada's Cuban missile crisis experience: since Diefenbaker was able to disrupt NORAD's *operational control* of assigned RCAF units, it is clear the United States did not exercise *command* over Canadian forces. Thus, while the Diefenbaker debacle hindered continental air defence and dented Canada-U.S. relations, it also demonstrated that participation in NORAD was an exercise, and thus not a compromise, of Canadian sovereignty.

Rather than alienating Canada and its leaders from NORAD, the perceived mishandling of the Cuban missile crisis by the Diefenbaker government strengthened the country's commitment to continental air defence. On 8 April 1963, the Liberal party, led by Lester B.

Pearson, was elected as a minority government. A principal campaign issue was the acquisition of nuclear BOMARC-B surface-to-air missiles and MB-1 Genie air-to-air missiles. Though the weapons were deemed to be essential for the NORAD mission, the Diefenbaker government had resisted their installation. Seizing the moment, the Pearson Liberals reversed their traditional opposition to nuclear weapons and campaigned in favor of the missiles. Clearly, the Canadian people were not opposed to a robust binational continental defence.

Continental air defence, however, was sliding into obscurity by the early 1960s. The advent of the intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) and the submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) made the bomber threat a secondary concern. Moreover, American Secretary of Defence Robert McNamara was unenthusiastic about air defence. Such measures did not fit well with his ideal of a nuclear peace maintained by the threat of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD). Nevertheless, NORAD persevered. By the late 1970s, new threats, such the cruise missile and stealth aircraft technology, reinforced the need to maintain and strengthen continental air defence. To meet these challenges NORAD – renamed North American Aerospace Defence Command in 1981- underwent a substantial modernization program in 1985. This project included the replacement of the aging DEW Line with a new North Warning System (NWS), the basing of American E-3 Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft in Canada, and the deployment of over-the-horizon backscatter (OTH-B) radar to monitor ‘dead areas’. Alongside these systems, Canada currently assigns four CF-18 Hornet squadrons to NORAD.

In sum, Canada’s approach to continental defence has been remarkably consistent since 1938, despite the divergence of the Diefenbaker government. Beginning with the Kingston Dispensation, Canada and the United States recognized that their security was inescapably intertwined. This reality first manifested itself with the creation of the PJBD. With the presence of large numbers of American soldiers on Canadian soil during the Second World War, however, the need to be cautious about cooperation became evident. After the war, the MCC was added to the PJBD structure. This allowed an expansive collaboration on the part of the Canadian and American militaries. Their efforts produced the BSP, the first Canada-U.S. continental defence plan. The maritime component of the BSP was bolstered in 1949 with the formation of NATO and the creation of the CUSRPG. Most importantly, the presence of a

equally threatening nuclear-capable Soviet Union drove both Canada and the United States to create an air defence system which executed joint operational control of binational forces. Yet, when radar sites were built in northern Canada, guarantees were obtained such that a broad conception of Canadian sovereignty was respected. Similarly, when the CINCADCANUS was negotiated, both countries retained their national command authority. Although Diefenbaker's failure to comprehend the nuances of effective air defence frustrated NORAD's effectiveness during the Cuban missile crisis, the true lesson of the debacle may have been that the system worked. Canadian sovereignty was respected, in spite of the fact that the and offensive forces and defence of the United States was compromised. Finally, Canada's approach to NORAD in the aftermath of the Cuban missile crisis has been marked by reverence and enthusiasm. The trend is thus unmistakable: Canada has stood next to the United States in the defence of North America. While Canadian governments are careful to properly balance their sovereignty dilemma, geography and military logic compel them to participate in continental defence initiatives.

Though relative consistency marked Canada's approach to conventional continental defence cooperation with the United States, the same cannot be said about strategic missile defence. Whereas Canadian involvement in NORAD contributed to the defence of American nuclear weapons, consecutive governments have been reluctant to commit Canada to ballistic missile defence (BMD). While Canada's position does not appear to have harmed Canada-U.S. relations thus far, defence analysts have repeatedly warned Canadian governments that such a stance might imperil NORAD and the derivative benefits Canada enjoys through its participation in the binational command.

When American planners began examining the need for more effective air defences in the late 1950s, one of their central concerns was the relationship between air defence and nuclear strategy. In so far as air defence could not credibly prevent the destruction of North America's numerous and concentrated civilian targets, its principal function would be to defend the United States' retaliatory forces. According to the 1957 Joint Chiefs of Staff *Statement of Policy on the Objective of Continental Defense*, air defence thus served to "minimize the effect of any Soviet attack as to permit an immediate and effective counter-offensive and the successful prosecution and conclusion of a general war." Therefore, in

forming NORAD with the United States, Canada was not preparing to defend cities and industries. Instead, Canada defended the American nuclear deterrent against a Soviet counterforce strike. Consequently, through NORAD, Canada was directly involved in the strategic defence of American nuclear weapons.

Inconsistently, one decade after signing the NORAD agreement, Canada chose to distance itself from a new type of strategic defence. As discussed, the advent of the ICBM and SLBM greatly diminished the utility of air defence in the 1960s. Conventional approaches to air defence were unable to mount any challenges against the ballistic missile. These weapons reached their targets too quickly for any fighter-interceptor to be deployed, and conventional surface-to-air missile batteries lacked the proper mechanisms to target reentry vehicles. Hence, to defend against ballistic missiles, a new approach was required. In 1967, after several years of internal squabble and bitter feuds, the typically anti-strategic defence Secretary of Defense McNamara announced that the United States planned to deploy an anti-ballistic missile (ABM) system to guard against counterforce strikes. According to McNamara, the ABM system served to “provide for defence of the retaliatory force” – NORAD’s original function. Yet, rather than embracing this new strategic defence innovation, Prime Minister Pearson negotiated a clause into the 1968 NORAD renewal such that “cooperation on continental air defense in no way spilled over to ballistic missile defence.” Canada, it seemed, was prepared to participate in strategic defence against Soviet bombers, but not Soviet missiles.

Canada’s schizophrenic approach to strategic defence continued until 1972, when the United States and the Soviet Union signed the ABM treaty. At the time, it appeared that the intricacies of the superpower relationship had relieved the Canadian government of its confused posture. Consequently, Canada removed the ABM clause from the NORAD agreement in 1981 on the assumption that the ABM treaty masked its strategic duplicity. It was a short-lived relief.

Ballistic missile defence (BMD) returned to the forefront of Canada-U.S relations in March 1983, when President Ronald Reagan launched the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). Highly unpopular in arms control circles for its possible contribution to an expanded arms race and purported destabilizing attributes, SDI once again forced Canada to clarify its position on BMD and NORAD. The decision increased in importance in 1985 when the United States

formed Space Command (SpaceCom) and 'dual-hatted' its Commander-in-Chief with CINCNORAD. Specifically, there existed fears within the Canadian defence establishment that a decision on the part of the government to limit NORAD to air defence would marginalize the command, thus hindering efforts to establish close ties between Canadian and American space programs. Furthermore, if Canada did not participate in SDI, the utility of NORAD itself was put into question. In the end, the Conservative government of Brian Mulroney chose to reject official Canadian involvement with SDI in 1985. Canadian companies, however, were permitted to solicit SDI contracts. Although the more dire warnings of non-participation did not come to fruition, the Canadian military was excluded from high level strategic defence planning. Luckily for Canada, the SDI rebuff did not appear to harm Canada-U.S. defence relations.

Although SDI did not survive the 1980s, the BMD debate did. From 1994 to 2001, the Republican party controlled both houses of the United States Congress. A stated defence policy aspiration of Congressional Republican leadership was the deployment of a BMD system. This desire was expressed in 1999 with the passage of the National Missile Defense Act. According to the Act, "it is the policy of the United States to deploy as soon as technologically possible an effective National Missile Defense system capable of defending the territory of the United States against limited ballistic missile attack." Forced to contend with Democratic President Bill Clinton, however, Congressional Republicans were only moderately successful in advancing their cause. The Clinton administration was determined to keep the United States bound by the ABM treaty, which it deemed the "cornerstone of stability." Since the BMD system sought by the Congress likely violated the ABM treaty, the Administration was hesitant to endorse it. Consequently, no concrete decisions on BMD were made during the Clinton presidency.

In Canada, the Liberal government of Jean Chrétien adopted a position of "wait-and-see" towards BMD in the 1990s. From a military point of view, the end of the Cold War and the threat of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation favored Canadian support for BMD. As a result, the 1994 White Paper on defence proposed a policy of consultation between Canada and the United States on BMD. Opposing this assessment was the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT). The stated DFAIT policy on WMD issues was one in favor of "robust multilateral non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament regime[s]." Clearly, American BMD initiatives that necessitated the violation or termination of

the ABM treaty was in disaccord with the DFAIT commitment to arms control. Also, BMD continued to be linked to global instability, despite the end of the Cold War standoff. Presented with conflicting assessments of Canadian involvement in an American BMD, the Chrétien government thus abstained from declaring a definitive position.

With the election of Republican George W. Bush as President of the United States in 2000, the American BMD debate was laid to rest. On 31 December 2001, Bush announced that the United States was withdrawing from the ABM treaty. Citing improvements in Russo-American relations and the growing missile threat from “terrorists, and some of those who support them,” the President declared that his administration is determined to deploy a National Missile Defense (NMD) system. A recent missile interception test suggests that NMD development is progressing steadily. The Canadian response to these unfolding events, however, has been muted. No public statement was issued by the Chrétien government after the American withdrawal from the ABM treaty, and no stance on Canadian participation in NMD has been declared. At present time, therefore, it appears that the Canadian government continues to “wait-and-see”.

All told, unlike its steady acceptance of conventional continental defence cooperation with the United States, Canada has been noticeably conflicted about strategic missile defence. Arguably, Canadian indecisiveness on this issue has not strained Canada-U.S. relations thus far. Nevertheless, a recurrent fear amongst defence analysts has been that a lack of Canadian cooperation in ballistic missile defence (BMD) could undermine NORAD and the benefits that Canada accrued from it, including privileged access to SpaceCom. Before the UCP revision of April 2002, these apprehensions were ignored by the Chrétien government. As no direct link between BMD participation and space collaboration came from the United States, the Canadian government could continue its policy of ambiguity towards BMD. In fact, while the BMD debate raged in the United States, the NORAD agreement was renewed a year early in 2000.

## **II. Canada, NorthCom and the UCP**

Without a doubt, the events of 11 September 2001 cultivated a sense of heightened vulnerability in the United States. After decades of being primarily concerned with external

concerns, the United States has shifted a considerable portion of its focus and resources to internal threats. Although the United States had been moving steadily towards bolstering the defence of its homeland in the late 1990s, it is an unfortunate reality that only the 2001 terrorist attacks instilled homeland defence with its current priority. From a military perspective, nothing better illustrates this point than the revisions to the Unified Command Plan (UCP).

The UCP was first implemented in 1946. In light of the United States' emerging superpower status and its corresponding leadership of the Western powers, the UCP established the structure through which the United States coordinated its world-wide military responsibilities. Two types of command exist under the UCP: regional commands and functional commands. Regional commands are assigned geographic sections of the world. For instance, Europe and much of Africa fall under the umbrella of United States European Command (EuCom). Moreover, it is critical to note that while regional commands are responsible for military operations in their designated geographic area, they are uniquely American. Though joint operations may be conducted with allied states, regional CINCs do not command foreign militaries under the auspices of the UCP. For their part, functional commands control a specific branch of the United States military. United States Strategic Command (StratCom), for example, oversees the American nuclear arsenal. Finally, each UCP command is under the direction of a CINC who reports to the National Command Authority, made up of the President of the United States and the Secretary of Defense.

On 17 April 2002 revisions to the UCP were announced. Most significant was the unveiling of United States Northern Command (NorthCom). A regional command, NorthCom has been assigned geographic responsibility for the continental United States, Canada, Mexico, portions of the Caribbean, and the contiguous waters in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans up to 500 miles off the North American coastline. The new command's functions are twofold. First, NorthCom will assume the defense of the American homeland. This role requires that NorthCom "conduct operations to deter, prevent, and defeat threats and aggression aimed at the United States, its territories, and interests the assigned area of responsibility." Second, NorthCom will, "as directed by the President or the Secretary of Defense, provide military

assistance to civil authorities including consequences management operations.” Both of these NorthCom missions have impacted on the requirements and structures of the United States military, the National Guard and United States Coast Guard.

Previously, the defence of the American homeland and support to civil authorities were delegated to United States Joint Forces Command (JFCOM). Immediately following the attacks of 11 September, Joint Force Headquarters-Homeland Security (JFHQ-HLS) was formed. JFHQ-HLS is responsible for the territorial and shore defence of the continental United States. In addition, JFHQ-HLS coordinates the U.S. military’s aid to civil authorities by working in conjunction with agencies such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). JFHQ-HLS is complimented by two subordinate commands: Joint Task Force-Civil Support (JTF-CS) provides military assistance to civil authorities, and Joint Task Force 6 contributes military counter-drug support to civilian agencies. Among its operations undertaken since 11 September, JFHQ-HLS has trained rapid reaction forces, established bio-attack consequence management elements, and coordinated military support for security during the Super Bowl and the Salt Lake City Winter Olympics. Under the revised UCP, these units are now under NorthCom. For its part, JFCOM became a functional command, concentrating “almost entirely on military transformation and joint interoperability.”

In conjunction with those forces conceived as part of JFCOM’s original homeland defence organization, NorthCom is expected to be given the authority to command forces from all services in a time of need. More precisely, it has been suggested that NorthCom will be permitted to utilize all “Atlantic-oriented” service commands for vital continental defence operations. Hence, if needed, the USN Atlantic Fleet, UASF Air Combat Command and U.S. Army Forces Command may come under the direction of CINCNorthCom.

Although NorthCom is responsible for the defence of the continental United States, the air defence of North America remains NORAD’s charge. Indeed, post-11 September, NORAD has seen its role expanded. Notably, NORAD has begun tracking North American air traffic in conjunction with the American Federal Aviation Administration and Nav Canada. This new responsibility also includes the streamlining of new Rules of Engagement, allowing for a more aggressive defence of North American airspace. Previously, NORAD was principally concerned with external aerospace threats and drug trafficking. Furthermore, to better coordinate their

intertwined and mutually relevant tasks, the UCP review 'dual-hatted' CINCNORAD and CINCNorthCom. CINCNORAD General Ralph E. Eberhart thus assumed command of NorthCom when it 'stood up' on 1 October 2002.

NorthCom's homeland defence and aid to the civil authority priorities will also affect the National Guard. Traditionally, the National Guard has fulfilled three roles. First, as the militia of the individual States of the Union, National Guard forces have been called upon by State governors to aid local civil authorities. As part of its aid to the civil authority function, the National Guard currently deploys approximately thirty WMD Civil Support Teams (WMD-CST). Secondly, National Guard reservists can be integrated with the professional forces of the United States military for overseas operations as part of the Total Force Concept. Lastly, under Titles 10 and 32, the National Guard can be mobilized and commanded by the National Command Authority to serve as "an integral part of the first line defenses of the United States." Coupled with their aid to the civil power and WMD-CSDT capabilities, this last function ensures that National Guard forces will be included in NorthCom homeland defence planning. In fact, the Department of Defence has noted that under Title 10, the National Command Authority can transfer command and control of the National Guard to CINCNorthCom. Moreover, as part of its regional command prerogatives, NorthCom will be directly involved in setting the training and readiness standards of the National Guard. However, when not under Title 10 status, authority over the National Guard remains with the State governors. Hence, while the National Guard are an essential component of those forces made available to NorthCom for homeland defence, their State and Total Force Concept contributions are not to be diluted.

For its part, the United States Coast Guard is likely to undergo an organizational alteration. Before the attacks of 11 September 2001, the Coast Guard was under the direction of the Department of Transportation. Recently, in an effort to enhance border security, the Bush administration has proposed that control over the Coast Guard be transferred to the proposed Department of Homeland Security. In the Administration's estimation, this would allow for better communication and coordination between the Coast Guard, the Immigration and Naturalization Service and Border Patrol, the Customs Service and the Transportation Security Administration, all of which are slated to be amalgamated under the Homeland Security department. Interestingly, the Department of Defense (DOD) appears to have a

different vision of the Coast Guard's future. Recent dialogues between high-ranking Coast Guard and USN officials show that there is interest in strengthening peacetime ties between the U.S. Coast guard and the USN. As early as September 1998, the Coast Guard and USN issued a joint statement in favor of a 'national fleet'. This concept would see the Coast Guard and the USN cooperating "more closely in various areas, including ship acquisition, research and development, concepts of operations, logistics, training, exercises, and deployments." Thinking more broadly, the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review, released shortly after the 11 September attacks, envisaged as follows:

Preparing forces for homeland security may require changes in force structure and organization...It is clear that U.S. forces, including the United States Coast Guard, require more effective means, methods, and organizations to perform these missions. As part of this examination, DoD will review the establishment of a new unified combatant commander (for homeland security) to help address complex inter-agency issues and provide a single military commander to focus military support.

Echoing these sentiments, Admiral Vernon E. Clark, Chief of Naval Operations (USN), has recommended the creation of a "maritime equivalent to NORAD...established under the control of the Coast Guard with support from the Navy, other federal agencies and the private sector." Furthermore, "this capability must be coordinated with NorthCom." Finally, recent statements by General Eberhart, CINCNorthCom, indicate that a "naval NORAD" linked to NorthCom is being considered by the DOD.

American contemplation of a "naval NORAD," homeland defence and civil support inevitably raises questions about Canadian collaboration. Despite the fact that NorthCom is a uniquely American command which does not, and will not, integrate any foreign forces into its configuration, geographic necessity demands that a successful completion of the NorthCom mission be undertaken alongside the United States' North American neighbors. Consequently, the United States has communicated a decided interest in securing Canadian cooperation in an expanded continental defence. As the American ambassador to Canada, Paul Cellucci, remarked on 10 September 2002: "We can't defend North America alone. Canada occupies a huge piece of territory here in North America and we need Canada's help in defending the air, the land and the sea." In response to the American appeal, the Canadian government is following its traditional path, being politically cautious while quietly studying new military

arrangements.

On the day of the terrorist attacks against New York and Washington, the Canadian government immediately offered assistance to the American government and people in their time of need. Nearly all civilian flights headed to American cities were diverted to Canadian airports, Canada's CF-18 jets were mobilized through NORAD, the entire Canadian Forces (CF) was put on a state of increased readiness, and the CF Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) from 8 Wing Trenton, Ontario, was prepared to deploy to any part of the United States. Similarly, in the months that followed, Canada allied with the United States in its war on terrorism, joining American ground and naval forces in and around Afghanistan. In addition, the government of Canada passed Bill C-36, the Anti-Terrorism Act, and signed a Border Security Declaration with the United States on 12 December 2001. Clearly, in light of these undertakings, the Chrétien government has been unambiguous in its expression of solidarity with the United States. Yet, to date, no formal affirmations have been made by the Prime Minister, the Minister of National Defence or the Minister of Foreign Affairs regarding a possible expansion of the Canada-U.S. continental defence relationship. Instead, as in the early years of the Cold War, negotiation of new binational continental defence efforts have been entrusted to Canadian military officials.

For the Canadian Vice-Chief of the Defence Staff (VCDS), Lieutenant-General George Macdonald, asymmetric threats from terrorist and criminal elements are a menace to Canadian security. Indeed, even if Canada is not directly targeted by such groups, the destructive effects of WMD and the disruption of vital communications and economic stability recognizes no national borders. Moreover, echoing Mackenzie King, the VCDS was unequivocal that "[w]e cannot permit Canadian territory to be used as an avenue of attack on the United States." For high-level CF officials, therefore, there is no question that Canada should work with the United States to protect North America from dangerous elements and the asymmetric means they employ.

As part of this effort, the VCDS formed a High Level Working Group to negotiate what DND labels "Enhanced North American Security" with the United States. Reports from the *National Post* indicate that the High Level Working Group is focusing its efforts on the "creation of a special Canada-U.S. team to coordinate naval and land force operations in the event of a

terrorist attack or natural disaster.” Among the scenarios being discussed is the possibility of allowing both the Canadian and American navies and coast guards to patrol the entire continent, irrespective of national waters. Recalling that the USN and RCN have a long tradition of cooperation dating back to the NATO CUSRPG, joint maritime continental defence would be nothing new. Truth be told, given that interoperability with the USN is a central tenet of the RCN, “it may be easier for Washington to reach an (maritime) agreement with Canada than amongst the American services and other federal agencies.” At this time, however, Macdonald does not envisage the creation of a large-scale “naval NORAD” to meet the maritime requirements of Enhanced North American Security. With respect to aid to the civil authority operations, the option of permitting specialized Canada-U.S. civil support units to operate in both countries has been agreed to in principle. In reality, such a deployment would be no different than the offer to send the CF DART to the United States on 11 September. Noted one High Level Working Group official: “If we are in the middle of a crisis and you need 200 engineers or 200 doctors or a nuclear biological team and you need them in 20 minutes and if U.S. forces or Canadian forces were closer, they would be sent.” Given that the CF is trained to fulfill civil support functions, the VCDS has asserted that these new arrangements will not require “the assignment of any new standing forces for the defence of the continent.” Thus, in spite of Ambassador Cellucci’s assertion that “we need our allies to put the resources in as well,” it appears that the Chrétien government aims to improve continental defence without having to increase defence spending.

Canadian reactions to the invigorated interest in continental defence have been divided. Senator Colin Kenny, Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, has been a leading voice in Parliament supporting greater Canada-U.S. cooperation in continental defence matters. Kenny’s committee recently released a report recommending a substantial increase in land and maritime harmonization between the two countries. As pertains to maritime defence, the Committee on National Security and Defence advocates “the establishment of a Canadian-U.S. joint operational planning group that would include representatives of the Canadian Navy, the Canadian Coast Guard, the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Coast Guard.” Equally, for land and civil support forces, the Committee holds that “a joint Canada-U.S. land force planning unit be established to allow for the armies of the two neighbouring countries to plan for potential disasters, natural or otherwise, that jointly

threaten both countries.” In so far as the Committee heard testimony from members of the High Level Working Group, it is not unlikely that the creation of joint land and maritime operational planning groups resembles DND’s conception of Enhanced North American Security.

Conversely, the likelihood of increased cooperation between Canadian and American forces has also invoked critical appraisals. Foremost among these detractors is Michael Byers of Duke University. In his report, *Canadian armed forces under U.S. command*, Byers provides several cautionary warnings about Canadian involvement in an expanded joint continental defence with the United States. Among these, the degradation of Canadian sovereignty and undue American influence in the foreign and defence policies of Canada are most prominent. For Byers, the notion of American operational control of Canadian forces - as in the NORAD model - is problematic. Precisely, Byers believes that the line between operational control and national command is too easily blurred. Most especially, if operational control of forces allowed an American commander to direct the movements of Canadian forces when they are located on Canadian soil, Byers estimates that national command has in fact been relinquished. The distinction between operational control and command is thus merely an exercise in semantic logic. In the areas of foreign and defence policy, Byers presents two arguments. First, he argues that an integration of forces will permit the United States to draw Canada into conflicts it may not want to be involved with (the Cuban Missile Crisis being the case in point.) Second, the United States could theoretically use the force requirements of continental defence to prevent Canada from engaging in unilateral endeavors, such as an airlift to Cuba. In opposition to greater Canada-U.S. defence cooperation, therefore, Byers resurrects the sovereignty arguments that have plagued Canadian participation in continental defence since its beginnings.

Ultimately, in light of Canada’s traditional response to continental defence, the arguments of Byers and other fervent Canadian nationalists will be acknowledged, but unheeded. Concerns about Canadian sovereignty and independence will give way to the close Canada-U.S defence relationship, the “defence against help” argument, and the presence of a common threat. Canada and the United States have cooperated in defence of the continent since the BSP of 1946. From a certain perspective, therefore, the joint operational planning

groups which are likely to come to fruition are simply another manifestation of this long-standing relationship. In addition, NORAD and its structures are typically seen as an achievement of Canadian defence policy, and thus not a failure. As such, suggestions of building new continental defence agreements according to the same model, or similar to it, will probably be embraced. Moreover, as NORAD demonstrates, threats to Canadian sovereignty resulting from military cooperation with the United States are generally exaggerated. The compromise of sovereignty envisaged goes both ways. As the possible deployment of the CF DART team emphasized, Canadian soldiers could find themselves on *American* soil. Similarly, the USN and RCN have been permitted to operate in each other's waters since the CUSRPG. Furthermore, as has been the case since the declaration of the Kingston Dispensation, Canadian governments are keenly aware that they must contribute to the defence of North America, or they run the risk of having the United States shoulder the burden alone, usurping the final pillar of any national sovereignty: self-defence. Hence, the true threat to Canadian sovereignty is not collaboration with the United States in defence of the continent; rather, it is an abstention from it. Finally, as with a nuclear-capable Soviet Union, the threat posed by terrorist and criminal elements is perceived by the Canadian military to be a common one. Given the Chrétien government's continuing participation in the war on terrorism, it seems unlikely that the current, or future, Prime Minister will not reach a similar conclusion. Clearly, if an enemy is worthy of being pursued across the globe, he merits being defended against. In due course, therefore, Canada can be expected to work alongside the United States and NorthCom in defence of the North American continent.

Prospects for future Canadian involvement with NMD are altogether different. In addition to creating NorthCom, the UCP revision of April 2002 contained a command realignment: United States Space Command (SpaceCom) was merged with StratCom. As discussed above, CINCSpaceCom had been 'dual-hatted' with CINCNORAD. In so far as SpaceCom was, and is, to play a central role in NMD, it seemed logical to link the two commands that participated in strategic defence. Equally logical, however, was the fusing of the two commands that focus on ballistic missiles, defensively at SpaceCom and offensively at StratCom. Thus, when CINCNorthCom and CINCNORAD were dual-hatted due to their complimentary continental defence function, SpaceCom was easily reconceived as a subset of StratCom thanks to NMD. Citing Deputy Secretary of

Defense Paul Wolfowitz: “The new Strategic Command, with its focus on space and information capabilities, will improve our ability to warn and defend against all manner of attack –nuclear and non-nuclear.”

While no concrete evidence exists to suggest that decades of Canadian irresolution on BMD contributed to severing of SpaceCom from NORAD, lack of Canadian support for NMD has long been recognized in Washington. In fact, DOD is working to be able deploy an effective NMD system without constructing installations on Canadian soil. Though Canadian participation in NMD is still attractive to DOD, it is no longer a prerequisite. Surely, this simplified the decision to relocate SpaceCom. Hence, an unmistakable result of the SpaceCom shuffle has been a silencing of the Canadian NMD debate by the United States; Canada is no longer needed, and will likely no longer be petitioned. The principled Canadian conceptual distinction between NORAD and BMD is now American policy.

Lamentably for DND, the SpaceCom/StratCom unification may also spell the end of joint Canada-U.S. outer space development. When CINC NORAD was dual-hatted with CINCSpaceCom, Canada enjoyed a close proximity to American space technology and initiatives. Particularly, in the 1990s, Canada and the United States cooperated on the Joint Space Project (JSP), and the CF used American Military Satellite Communications (MILSATCOM) on overseas deployments owing to a lack of indigenous capability. Despite this cooperation, however, over the past two decades the United States has been reluctant to grant Canada complete access to sensitive intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance data. Arguably, the severance of SpaceCom from NORAD threatens to encourage further American protectiveness of its space data and to jeopardize the growth of the JSP. Were this to happen, Canada might find itself deficient in key space assets, particularly those used in overseas deployments.

Debatably, the move of SpaceCom from NORAD to StratCom affects Canadian national security policy more than the introduction of NorthCom. Whereas increased defence spending resulting from new continental defence measures can be avoided, the need to construct a wholly Canadian space capability is liable to be beyond the reach of current

funding levels. As a result, the Canadian government will remain dependent on the United States for critical space technologies, while having lost the nearness to SpaceCom. Regarding NMD, Canada is on the verge of inconsequentiality. After years of ambiguity, Canada's maneuverability on the BMD issue has been drastically reduced. Unless the Chrétien government announces that Canada is interested in helping to defend the continent against ballistic missiles in the very near future, the United States plans to do so unilaterally and without the use of Canadian territory. Put bluntly, Canada is being shut out. Consequently, though the introduction of NorthCom signaled a desire on the part of the United States to expand the long-established Canada-U.S. continental defence relationship, the repositioning of SpaceCom endangers the continuance of Canadian space development, erects new obstacles to Canadian overseas deployments and has silenced Canada's voice on BMD.

### **III. Conclusion**

At present, it is difficult to ascertain what form the arrangements being negotiated by the High Level Working Group will take. If the MSG that preceded NORAD is any indicator, the Canadian government may find itself entering into a larger accord than it currently foresees. Either way, what is certain is that the CF will work next to NorthCom in the land and maritime defence of North America, whether through operational planning groups or grander schemes following the NORAD model. The history of Canada-U.S. continental defence collaboration provides an abundance of evidence suggesting that Canadian sovereignty concerns will be overcome by the military necessity of binational initiatives. Conversely, uncertainty reigns in predicting the future of Canada-U.S. space cooperation and Canadian NMD participation. In this case, Canada's history of ambiguity and confusion about strategic defence yields no answers. What can be said is that unless the Liberal government approaches the Bush administration to become party to NMD or brokers a separate agreement to preserve joint space developments, there is a strong possibility that Canada will be marginalized in both matters.

In conclusion, therefore, there is no doubt that NorthCom and the recent revisions to the

UCP have had, and will have, a noticeable impact on Canadian national security policy.

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