

## **Soft Power at the United Nations:**

### **A Compatible Marriage between Canada and the Security Council?**

*By Reesha Namasivayam  
M.A. Candidate, Conflict Analysis  
The Norman Paterson School of International Affairs  
Carleton University*

In a January 22, 1999 speech to the National Forum in Montreal, Quebec, then Minister of Foreign Affairs Lloyd Axworthy stressed that “greater emphasis on the security of people rather than just the security of states is at the heart of the foreign policy that Canada is pushing during its (current) tenure on the United Nations Security Council.”<sup>1</sup> The vehicle through which this human security agenda would be advanced, both in the Council and internationally, was ‘soft power’. Soft power was also the conduit that would be utilized in order to pursue Canada’s principal objectives, delineated during the 1998 campaign for election to a two-year term as a non-permanent member, while on the Security Council. Those goals included Council leadership and effectiveness, making the Council more open, transparent and responsive and of course, human security.<sup>2</sup> However, was the use of what Axworthy called ‘soft power’ effective in achieving Canadian goals while on the Security Council? Thus, can they even be on two opposite sides of the same coin in the pocket of the Security Council? In theory, the Security Council comes as close as any part of the UN in exercising hard power rather than soft

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<sup>1</sup>Canada’s tenure as an elected non-permanent member on the UN Security Council began on January 1, 1999 and ended on December 31, 2000 during which time Canada held Council presidency twice. See speech to the National Forum, Montreal, 22 January 1999, *Canadian Speeches of the Day*, 12:(Jan./Feb.1999), 15-22.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAIT), “Canada World View,” *Canada on the UN Security Council*, 10 (winter 2001): URL: [http://www.defait-maeci.gc.ca/canada-magazine/wv\\_10/10t6-e.htm](http://www.defait-maeci.gc.ca/canada-magazine/wv_10/10t6-e.htm)

power. Paul Knox has referred to the Council as “an inherently cautious and conservative organ.”<sup>3</sup>

This paper will examine the ability of Minister Axworthy and his Canadian counterparts to advance the human security agenda by using soft power during Canada’s term as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. The widespread debate in academic and policy circles as well as within the public forum over the definition and utility of soft power in Canadian foreign policy are only but two factors contributing to the demand for a closer examination of this seemingly controversial subject. This paper will posit, from a Canadian perspective, that although soft power is an increasingly important and relevant tool with significant benefits, it is of limited use to Canada as a means of pursuing a human security agenda in the forum of the UN Security Council. This argument will be postulated in various ways. First, the term ‘soft power’ will be defined in a general discussion on its theoretical conceptualizations according to Joseph Nye Jr. and Lloyd Axworthy. Second, there will be an in depth discussion of soft power in a Canadian context, including an analysis of various critiques of a soft power focus in Canadian foreign policy. Third, several examples and cases where Canada was involved in the decision-making process in the Council will serve as a gauge of Canadian abilities to advance the human security agenda in the Security Council via soft power. Finally, this will be followed by a conclusion which shall include various policy prescriptions for Canadian policymakers with respect to the use of soft power in specific cases.

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<sup>3</sup> Paul Knox, “Canada at the UN: A Human Security Council,” in *Canada Among Nations: Vanishing Borders*, ed. Maureen Appel Molot and Fen Osler Hampson (Ottawa: Oxford University Press, 2000), 305.

### *Theoretical Foundations of Soft Power*

The term ‘soft power’ was originally coined by Joseph Nye Jr., current dean of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and former Under-Secretary of State, stemming from an article he had written on complex interdependence and power. Keohane and Nye’s work in *Complex Interdependence* demonstrated an attempt to link pluralist concerns with the declining autonomy of the state to form regimes. In an effort to bridge realists and pluralists, Keohane and Nye offer an exploration of complex interdependence using a discussion on eroding state autonomy caused by the evolving role of transnational forces.<sup>4</sup> Ten years later, in a ‘re-visit’ to complex interdependence, the authors admit that their concept was really one of ‘strategic interdependence’ where there is an element of power which is always present, even in situations of interdependence.<sup>5</sup>

The concept of soft power itself was initially distinguished in Nye’s book, *Bound to Lead*. The definition of soft power emerged as a reply to academic prophecies foreseeing the end of American hegemony after the Cold War as result of the rising costs and seemingly decreasing value of military power. This was written to counteract the flooring predictions about the decline of US power made in Paul Kennedy’s book, *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*. Nye defines soft power in the following clause:

The ability to establish preferences tends to be associated with intangible power resources such as culture, ideology and institutions. This dimension can be thought of as “soft power”, in contrast to the hard command power usually associated with tangible resources like military and economic strength.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Robert Keohane and Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Power and Interdependence*, (Boston: Little, Brown, 1977).

<sup>5</sup> Robert Keohane and Joseph S. Nye Jr., “Power and Interdependence Revisited,” *International Organizations* 41, 4: (autumn, 1987), 726-753.

<sup>6</sup> Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1990), 32.

According to Dahl's definition of power as "the ability to get other to do what they otherwise would not do",<sup>7</sup> Nye posits two factors which compound state influence. He refers to behavioral power as "the ability to obtain outcomes you want", and resource power as "the possession of resources that are usually associated with the ability to reach outcomes you want."<sup>8</sup> Hard power, which is "the ability to get other to do what they otherwise would not do through threats or rewards. Whether by economic carrots or military sticks, the ability to coax or coerce has long been the central element of power."<sup>9</sup> The degree of ability thus depends on the possession of tangible resources such as a commanding military and robust economy. By contrast, soft or co-optive power is "the ability to achieve desired outcomes because other want what you want. It is the ability to achieve goals through attraction rather than coercion and works by convincing others to follow or getting them to agree to norms and institutions that produce the desired behavior."<sup>10</sup> The resources which comprise soft power include intangible, yet traditional, American characteristics such as culture, reputation, ideology and language.

These notions were underscored in Nye and Keohane's 1987 article, *Power and Interdependence in the Information Age*, where the authors assert that in an increasingly globalized world propelled by information technology, the Internet and advanced communication, soft power has an increasing utility for various state and non-state actors. These technological advances have unleashed an unprecedented amount of information for the public. Moreover, while soft power depends "largely on the persuasiveness of the free

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>8</sup> Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye Jr., "Power and Interdependence in the Information Age," in *Is Global Capitalism Working?* Foreign Affairs Reader (1998), 105.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

information that an actor seeks to transmit.... information technology, broadly defined, is likely to be the most important power resource.”<sup>11</sup> However, it is important to note that both Nye and Keohane qualify that “military force still plays a significant role in relations between states, and in a crunch, security still outranks other issues in foreign policy issues.”<sup>12</sup> Moreover, they assert, “in many areas realist assumptions about the dominance of military force and security issues remain valid.”<sup>13</sup> Nye’s similar conclusions in *Bound to Lead* are summed by Hampson and Oliver who state that “the essentially and mutually supportive components of continued American hegemony are unrivaled hard power and soft power resources, plus the political leadership and strategic vision to convert them into real influence.”<sup>14</sup> In it is this important condition or quality of soft power which was neglected in the Axworthy rendition.

### ***Canadian Soft Power***

However, Nye’s conceptualization of soft power appears very different from that of the one referred to by Minister Axworthy. Then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lloyd Axworthy first unveiled his human security platform articulating the need for a stronger focus on soft power in Canadian foreign policy in an article written for *International Journal* in 1997. In the article, Axworthy argued that given the dramatic changes in the post Cold War era, such as the decline of inter-state warfare, increased transnational crime and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, a more humanized approach to

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1990), 260, paraphrased in Fen Osler Hampson and Dean F. Oliver, “Pulpit Diplomacy: A Critical Assessment of the Axworthy Doctrine,” *International Journal* 53 (summer 1998), 390.

security was required to address new security threats.<sup>15</sup> A human security approach he advocated would include:

Security against economic privation, an acceptable quality of life, and a guarantee of fundamental human rights...At a minimum, human security requires that basic needs are met, but it acknowledges that sustained economic development, human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, good governance, sustainable development and social equity are as important to global peace as arms control and disarmament.<sup>16</sup>

Moreover, Axworthy stressed that “lasting stability cannot be achieved until human security is guaranteed.”<sup>17</sup>

A primary vehicle for advancing the Canadian foreign policy agenda of human security, according to Axworthy, would be through soft power, a new conduit that would personify Canadian values while enhancing Canada’s international stature and credibility. According to Fen Hampson, “Axworthy argued through the power of demonstration that the United States did not have a monopoly on soft power - Canada could use it too.”<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, a soft power approach was deemed to be optimum for Canada, given its traditional foreign policy strengths as a diplomatic middle power with strong capabilities in terms of building consensus and cultivating coalitions. In fact, he asserted that “Canada is well-placed to succeed as a leader in a world where soft power is increasingly important.”<sup>19</sup> Canada has many qualities which enable it to effectively use soft power. Those qualities include a well-respected and valuable international reputation, a

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<sup>15</sup> Lloyd Axworthy, “Canada and Human Security: the Need for Leadership,” *International Journal* 52 (spring 1997), 183.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Fen Osler Hampson, “The Axworthy Years: An Assessment,” Presentation prepared for delivery to the Group of 78, National Press Club, Ottawa, 31 October 2000; URL: <http://www.hri.ca/partners/G78/English/Peace/hampson-axworthy.htm>

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

commitment to multilateralism through its membership in various international organizations and notably, a diverse cultural make-up and active bilingual heritage.

In terms of relations with foreign states, Canada has fostered strong relationships with a variety of countries from both the South and the North. According to Evan Potter, Canada has earned the label of a “helpful fixer” and a “do-gooder” for its diplomatic abilities in negotiating and coalition building while at the same time contributing to various peacekeeping missions and development projects.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, Canadian information technology firms, such as Nortel, rank as some of the most advanced and innovative in the world. These communications advances have translated into the homes and schools of Canadians across the country. Such distinct features have contributed to Canada’s number one world ranking on the UNDP’s development index. According to Paul Heinbecker, former assistant deputy minister and Canada’s current UN Ambassador, “it is this respect from others that underwrites Canada’s soft power.”<sup>21</sup>

Most importantly however, the application of soft power to advance the human security doctrine would be the focal point of Canada’s UN agenda while it was a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. According to Axworthy, the creative use of soft power concepts would include “negotiation rather than coercion, powerful ideas rather than powerful weapons, public diplomacy rather than backroom bargaining...”<sup>22</sup> A particular emphasis was also placed on the use of new communications tools and new information technologies in order to achieve Canadian objectives while on the Council. While addressing a conference on UN Reform at the Kennedy School in Harvard

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<sup>20</sup> Evan Potter, “Niche Diplomacy as Canadian Foreign Policy,” *International Journal* 52 (winter 1996-97), 31.

<sup>21</sup> Paul Heinbecker, “Human Security,” *Behind the Headlines* 56, 4-9: (spring 1999), 8.

<sup>22</sup> Axworthy, *Canadian Speeches of the Day*, 18.

University, Axworthy asserted that “soft power is particularly useful in addressing the many pressing problems that do not pit one state against another, but rather a group of states against some transnational threat to human security. Where there is mutual benefit to finding a solution, skills in coalition building become increasingly important.”<sup>23</sup>

Therefore, human security would supply both a program as well as a justification for the use of soft power at the UN Security Council.

### ***The Academic Critique and Policy Debate***

Although Minister Axworthy and other officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs, such as Paul Heinbecker, were captivated in the power of soft power as a cornerstone of Canadian foreign policy, others were not so convinced in the merit of a soft power focus for Canada, especially during its tenure on the Security Council. Initially, one of the most fervent critiques came from Kim Nossal, who argued in an article published in the *Ottawa Citizen* under the title, *Foreign Policy for Wimps*, that Axworthy’s version of soft power had no force behind by focusing on persuasion and inducements.<sup>24</sup> Robin Jeffery Hay characterized Nossal as accusing Axworthy of “conducting foreign policy on the cheap and misleading Canadians to believe that all this country needs in world politics is a few good ideas that will get other to want what we want.”<sup>25</sup> This brand of foreign policy is also known penny-pinching diplomacy. What followed Nossal’s initial article was an ensuing debate with the Minister himself. David Malone refers to Axworthy’s

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<sup>23</sup> Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Department of Foreign Affairs, “The New Diplomacy: The UN, The International Criminal Court and the Human Security Agenda,” *Notes for an address by the Honorable Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Foreign Affairs to a Conference on UN Reform*, The Kennedy School, Harvard University, Cambridge, 25 April 1998.

<sup>24</sup> Kim Richard Nossal, “Foreign Policy for Wimps,” *Ottawa Citizen*, 23 April 1998, sec. A19.

<sup>25</sup> Robin Jeffery Hay, “Present at the Creation,” in *Canada Among Nations: A Big League Player*, ed. Maureen Appel Molot and Fen Osler Hampson (Ottawa: Oxford University Press, 1999), 223.

response as “uncharacteristically furious.”<sup>26</sup> While Axworthy stressed the importance of influencing state behavior through “a variety of diplomatic and political tools,”<sup>27</sup> Nossal later argued that “Canada needed ‘a full array of *power tools*, including military forces that can be deployed in peacekeeping missions in Rwanda or Kosovo and a well-maintained foreign service to press Canada interests abroad.”<sup>28</sup> On the hand, it can be argued that since Nossal is a resilient Realist, he would not be extremely sympathetic to Axworthy’s, in comparison, idealistic internationalism.

However aside from Nossal, other critics such as Hampson and Oliver, referred to Axworthy’s soft power agenda as a form of pulpit diplomacy which “did not ask Canadians to open their wallets when the collection plate got passed around.”<sup>29</sup> In their article, Hampson and Oliver condemned the Minister for transposing soft power from an American milieu to a vastly different Canadian situation. They asserted that the Minister’s illustration of soft power was actually a component of “a tightly focus ed American foreign policy debate” which was “then grafted onto Canada’s very different diplomatic traditions, capabilities and inclinations.”<sup>30</sup> Most importantly however, Hampson and Oliver maintained that the entire notion of soft power was predicated upon the use or at least threat of ‘hard’ or military power to back it up. They cited Axworthy’s diluted support for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the North American Aerospace

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<sup>26</sup> David Malone, “The Global Issues Biz,” *Canada Among Nations: A Big League Player*, ed. Maureen Appel Molot and Fen Osler Hampson (Ottawa: Oxford University Press, 1999), 201.

<sup>27</sup> Lloyd Axworthy, “Why Soft Power is the right policy for Canada,” *Ottawa Citizen*, 25 April 1998, sec. B6 cited in David Malone, “The Global Issues Biz,” *Canada Among Nations: A Big League Player*, ed. Maureen Appel Molot and Fen Osler Hampson (Ottawa: Oxford University Press, 1999).

<sup>28</sup> Nossal, “Our Insecure Foreign Policy,” *Ottawa Citizen*, Oct. 1998, quoted in Malone, “The Global Issues Biz,” *Canada Among Nations: A Big League Player*, ed. Maureen Appel Molot and Fen Osler Hampson (Ottawa: Oxford University Press, 1999).

<sup>29</sup> Hampson.

<sup>30</sup> Hampson and Oliver, 389-90.

Defense Command (NORAD) as examples where Canada was not investing in its hard power abilities.<sup>31</sup> Thus, Canada was short changing its own efforts to effectively practice soft power. Furthermore, Hampson and Oliver referred to the importance of both soft and hard power in the UN Security Council. They cited David Malone's analysis of the UN Security Council in the post-Cold War period as evidence of "the increased willingness of multilateral bodies, like the UN Security Council, to use sanctions or the threat of force against recalcitrant members of the international system."<sup>32</sup> Such reproaches signified a growing academic hesitancy concerning Canada's agenda and soft power antics while on the Security Council.

Even the 'father' of soft power, Joseph Nye, cautioned that although 'Canada has always been good at punching above its weight in world politics.... to keep doing so in the global information age requires not just good ideas in speeches but also an extraordinary degree of political and diplomatic coordination.'<sup>33</sup> Nonetheless, it is important to note that during a speech in Boston on May 2, 2000, Nye asserted, "the US is not the only country with soft power—think of the moral authority of the Vatican, or of Canada on human rights issues."<sup>34</sup> However despite this disclaimer, the extent to which Canada could impel soft power in the Security Council remained questionable. Nye and Keohane assert that "more often soft power is an inadvertent byproduct," as opposed to a reflection of deliberate policies.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, Axworthy appears to place a great deal of importance in the strength of Canada's cultural identity as a driving force behind the soft power

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 391.

<sup>32</sup> David Malone, "The UN Security Council in the post-Cold War world: 1987-97," *Security Dialogue*, 28 (December 1997), 393-408, cited in Hampson and Oliver, 391.

<sup>33</sup> Joseph S. Nye Jr., "The Challenge of Soft Power," *Time* 153, 7 (22 Feb. 1999), 30.

<sup>34</sup> Joseph S. Nye Jr., "Soft Power in the Information Age," IPI Congress, Boston, May 2000. URL: [www.freemedia.at/Boston%20Congress%20Report/boston36.htm](http://www.freemedia.at/Boston%20Congress%20Report/boston36.htm)

<sup>35</sup> Nye and Keohane, "Power and Interdependence in the Information Age," 6.

approach. While it is not in the scope of this paper to examine the influence and extent of Canadian culture, it must be recognized that intense governmental protection of Canada's cultural products (National Film Board, CRTC etc.) demonstrates that Canadian culture is but not as strong compared to American culture.

Furthermore, although Axworthy's soft power approach called for increased cooperation with non-governmental organizations and other coalitions of the willing in order to advance the human security agenda, it can also be interpreted as diluting the Canadian commitment to multilateral organizations. Consequently, this type of rhetorical lack of faith in international institutions could have weakened Canadian credibility at the UN and even worse, at arguably, the foremost multilateral organization in the world, the Security Council. In a presentation to the Group of 78 at the National Press Club, Fen Hampson asserted:

But nowhere was Axworthy's skepticism about formal multilateral institutions more evident than in his embrace of the concept of soft power - a concept that essentially empowers nongovernmental organizations, the so-called voices of civil society, suggesting that they, not international institutions, are in the vanguard in the provision and advancement of human security. This is not to say that Axworthy felt that international institutions are not needed and cannot support the human security enterprise. But Axworthy more than his predecessors viewed them as a means to an end and not an end in themselves.<sup>36</sup>

Such warnings about the utility of soft power, especially in the forum of the UN Security, were not exclusive to academia. Hay asserts that even former DFAIT diplomats, such as Graham N. Green, had "also poured cold water on the notion that Canada could

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<sup>36</sup> Hampson.

advance the human security agenda at the UN...”<sup>37</sup> According to Hay, Green declared that ‘any attempts to champion non-traditional issues will almost certainly end in failure and, worse, would weaken Canada’s international credibility and influence.’<sup>38</sup> However, with the success of two non-traditional issues namely, the landmines treaty and the International Criminal Court, it should be recognized that such conclusions may be overly presumptuous or hasty, at the least.

While these confounding criticisms which were calling for a dose of pragmatism to the soft power approach, it is important to note that these critiques do not call for a total abandonment of Axworthy’s initiatives. As Hay asserts, “human security has to be developed as a necessary complement to our hard-power obligations...”<sup>39</sup> The growing definition of what constitutes threats to international peace and security has expanded to include other sources of insecurity, such as crime, terrorism and drugs. DFAIT responded to this by making several initiatives (which will be discussed in a later section of this paper) to emphasize the need for the Security Council to incorporate other pressing global problems into the Council’s decisions and actions. While soft power may “not rest solely on the foundation of hard power”, “military power remains important in some critical domains of international relations.”<sup>40</sup> The critique of the Canadian proposal to advance soft power underscored the importance of strengthening Canada’s military forces and other hard power assets. Hay and others merely affirm that “a balanced human security agenda, including a proportionate emphasis on *both hard and soft power*, is a defensible, even

<sup>37</sup> Graham N. Green, “Canada’s formula for failure,” *Ottawa Citizen*, 2 Jan., B7, cited in Robin Jeffrey Hay, “Present at the Creation,” *Canada Among Nations: A Big League Player*, ed. Maureen Appel Molot and Fen Osler Hampson (Ottawa: Oxford University Press, 1999), 223.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Hay, 227.

<sup>40</sup> Nye and Keohane, “Power and Interdependence in the Information Age,” 5, 7.

realistic, approach to international relations today.<sup>41</sup> Fiscally stingy foreign policy initiatives will not bolster international respect for a Canadian human security agenda. Thus, these so-called human security cynics were in fact, not cynics at all. They were merely cautious that a foreign policy based on the effective use of soft power required hard power as well. In other words, the two were not mutually exclusive.

### *Canada at the Security Council, A Discussion*

#### *Accomplishments....*

The following section will discuss the application of Axworthy's soft power in the UN Security Council and will answer the question: Did Canada manage to achieve its goals using soft power? In fact, did Canadian even adhere to its own soft power objectives? To begin with, it is important to recognize the achievements of Canada while it was a non-permanent member of the Council. First, significant progress to incorporate the human security agenda into the procedures and mandates of the Council was demonstrated as Canada managed to increase the number of open council meetings. Second, while Canada held the position of Council President, it introduced a theme of protecting civilians in armed conflict, thereby removing some of the Council's focus away from state sovereignty and other traditional security concerns. As a result of efforts during its monthly terms as Council president in February 1999 and April 2000, the Council adopted a resolution that not only condemned the deliberate targeting of civilians during warfare, but also detailed requirements for enhancing the physical protection of civilians

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<sup>41</sup> Hay, 225.

caught in the crossfire of conflict.<sup>42</sup> This was a major accomplishment and was largely achieved using ‘soft power’ or non-coercive methods. What resulted was a formal Council commitment to ensure that peacekeeping operations could protect civilians in conflict situations such as Sebrenica and Rwanda. As a result, Canada was instrumental in winning a strong mandate for the UN’s peacekeeping mission in Sierra Leone, East Timor and arguably, the Congo.

Canada argued that ineffective sanctions regimes in Iraq and Angola had a negative humanitarian impact on the civilian population and also undermined the credibility of the Security Council. Ambassador Fowler’s commitment to exposing the Angola sanctions-busters set a precedent for future sanctions and also underscored the need for more effectively targeted sanctions.<sup>43</sup> These robust results were achieved through Canada’s position as chair of the Council’s sanctions committee on Angola (SADC) and more specifically, the naming and shaming campaign which publicized sanctions violators in Angola. According to Knox, Canada did succeed in “pushing the UN towards more assertive action against Angola’s rebel movement.”<sup>44</sup> In addition, Canada was instrumental in holding the first ever debate in the UN on the issue of sanctions reform. Furthermore, Canada led the creation of a working group on council recommendations regarding sanctions and worked in consultation with a range of academics and NGOs. The UN efforts regarding Angola have served as a model for other sanctions efforts such as the UN sanctions against the Taliban in Afghanistan.

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<sup>42</sup> DFAIT, Canada on the UNSC (winter 2001):

URL: [http://www.dfait-maecir.gc.ca/canada-magazine/wv\\_10/10t6-e.htm](http://www.dfait-maecir.gc.ca/canada-magazine/wv_10/10t6-e.htm)

<sup>43</sup> Knox.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 305.

However, it is important to recognize that once the report was filed with recommendations on improving the sanctions regime in Angola, including the call for tighter targeted sanctions against rebel factions in Angola (UNITA), the Council made no decisions to take action.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, the Council also refused a proposal to impose sanctions against countries that violated UN sanctions. What is even more important to recognize is that despite the significant contributions Canada made towards reforming the UN sanctions regime, sanctions remain a highly coercive instrument at the disposal of the Council. Although sanctions are motivated by a reluctance to use military force, it is a primary example of hard power, one that rivals military intervention. In fact according to Meuller and Meuller, “economic sanctions may well have been a necessary cause of deaths of more people in Iraq than have been slain by all so-called weapons of mass destruction throughout history.”<sup>46</sup> While this paper is not meant to be a discussion on economic sanctions it is important to note that given the widespread destruction and fatalities caused by sanctions, they are not components of soft power. They are of the harshest power and it is often argued that such coercive measures must be enforced with military intervention. Whether they are applied comprehensively or in a targeted fashion, sanctions “may have contributed to more deaths during the post-Cold War era than all weapons of mass destruction.”<sup>47</sup> Nothing about sanctions is ‘soft.’

### ***Trials and Tribulations....***

Despite worthy achievements, concrete discrepancies exist between Canadian practice and Canadian rhetoric concerning the use of soft power and the Security Council.

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<sup>45</sup> Knox, 313.

<sup>46</sup> John Meuller and Karl Meuller, “Sanctions of Mass Destruction,” *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 1999), 51.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

Paul Knox deduces that ultimately, “there were strict limits to the UN’s usefulness as a mechanisms for pursuing Canada’s global interests.”<sup>48</sup> This may have been hampered by the Minister’s insistence on using soft power techniques, at all costs.

On January 30, 1999, the Council voted to accept a Canadian to allow the Council to advance the issue of Iraq.<sup>49</sup> This followed after Iraq’s refusal to allow UN weapons inspectors to return after a series of UN and British air strikes.<sup>50</sup> There was considerable debate between the France and Russia, who favored the easing of sanctions on Iraq, against a rigid US government that called for total Iraqi compliance before the removal of any sanctions.<sup>51</sup> At the urging of Canada, the Council passed a resolution to establish three panels which would be responsible for assessing issues pertaining to Iraq’s humanitarian needs, its compliance or lack there of, with Council provisions on disarmament, as well as other issues stemming from the war in the Persian Gulf. However, according to Knox, “it was hard to see this as a success” since both China and Russia abstained from the formal vote, the new agency was still not accepted by Iraq (as of April 2000).<sup>52</sup> Canadian soft power was not working in the Council and it was difficult to ease sanctions against Iraq. However, it can be suggested that it is difficult to imagine soft power to work in a ‘hard’ dispute involving a country like Iraq. Nevertheless, this argument still beckons the questions the validity of soft power in the Security Council. The Council remains divided over imposing either targeted or comprehensive sanctions against Iraq. Canada was even accused of working to lower the standard of Iraqi compliance after it suggested that the

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<sup>48</sup> Knox, 305

<sup>49</sup> Fen Osler Hampson, Michael Hart and Martin Rudner, “A Big League or Minor League Player,” *Canada Among Nations: A Big League Player*, ed. Maureen Appel Molot and Fen Osler Hampson (Ottawa: Oxford University Press, 1999), 19.

<sup>50</sup> Knox, 309.

<sup>51</sup> Hampson, Hart and Rudner.

<sup>52</sup> Knox.

Council recognize that a complete verification of disarmament in Iraq would be unattainable.<sup>53</sup> These problems resulted in a relative paralysis of the Council when it came to weapons inspections and sanctions in Iraq.

Also, Russia continued to block all attempts to mandate UN action in Chechnya and worse yet, China vetoed any Council efforts aimed at the continuation of the UN's preventative peacekeeping force in Macedonia.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, Canada faced stiff opposition from Russia for even attempting to place the civilian issue of Chechnya on the Council's agenda.<sup>55</sup> Even after Canada and 'a coalition of like-minded states' persuaded the Council to form a civil-military mission to oversee the transition to independence in East Timor, it was four months before a UN force could take charge in East Timor.<sup>56</sup> Meanwhile the initial force that had been sent into East Timor was comprised of troops from "willing and interested countries and was funded by voluntary contributions."<sup>57</sup> Soft power could have been used to motivate quicker reaction and allocation of resources regarding East Timor, however, little progress by Canada was actually made in the Council. These events underscored the difficulties with Canada's soft power approach to safeguarding civilians while on the Council.

Canada disregarded its commitment to soft power in actions the government chose to take after India and Pakistan conducted a series of nuclear tests in May of 1998.<sup>58</sup> As outlined by Louis Delvoie, the Canadian government's response included a combination of

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<sup>53</sup> Knox.

<sup>54</sup> DFAIT, *Canada on the UN Security Council 1999-2000*,  
URL: <http://www.dfait-maecir.gc.ca/onu2000un/press-e.htm>

<sup>55</sup> Knox, 316.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 314.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Hampson, Hart and Ruder, 20.

condemnations, sanctions and exhortations, otherwise termed, *cuts and condemnation*.<sup>59</sup>

This included strong criticism of both governments, the discontinuation of non-humanitarian aid, the cancellation of CIDA consultations and a recall of Canadian High Commissioners. Delvoie asserts that this policy was counter-productive and ineffective in deterring Pakistan and India from proliferating nuclear weapons.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, while on the Council Canada remained quiet regarding the nuclear situation in South Asia and no action or decisive resolutions were passed by the Council with respect to the nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan. While Delvoie agrees that “there certainly is an important place for soft power in Canadian diplomacy...it is not a panacea suitable to all situations.”<sup>61</sup> Clearly, any discussions to deter the testing and proliferation of nuclear weapons in the Security Council through soft power would be balked at and staunchly criticized.

The modification of decisions [regarding nuclear weapons testing] is not likely to be brought about by an array of soft power, but rather by the exercise of influence rooted in significant political, economic and military capabilities of the kind possessed collectively by the leading members of the G-8.<sup>62</sup>

This statement reflects the fact that soft power is not able to address all security concerns, especially those dealt with by the Security Council. Nuclear weapons have direct effects on the civilian population of countries where they are tested. In this way, nuclear weapons also affects the advancement of the human security agenda.

However, the ultimate event that degraded Canada’s own commitment to soft power was the Council’s action and inaction regarding the escalating crisis in Kosovo.

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<sup>59</sup> Louis Delvoie, “Taming the South Asian Nuclear Tiger,” *Canada Among Nations: A Big League Player*, ed. Maureen Appel Molot and Fen Osler Hampson (Ottawa: Oxford University Press, 1999), 244.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 243-45.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 245.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 249.

When Canada promoted a Council mandated intervention (humanitarian) in Kosovo, it abandoned all attempts to persuade Milosevic to back down using soft power. There was a clear sense that the Council and the rest of the UN would not be able to come to a consensus on a resolution to intervene in Kosovo. Also, it demonstrated that the Council was willing to use intervention selectively and only where it had strategic or national interests to do so.<sup>63</sup> In the Kosovo case, the diplomacy with Serbia was abandoned in favor of the use of force. Thus, hard power was successfully used to back up the Council's soft power rhetoric, but remained exclusive to cases where the Council was truly committed to ending violence.

Clearly, the Council was resigned to using hard power in Kosovo to support its earlier relatively 'softer' language. Specifically, in June of 1999, the Security Council passed resolution 1244 which brought back the issue into the Council's chambers while at the same time, authorizing the presence of a NATO led peacekeeping force.<sup>64</sup> In other areas where hard power was not seen as of worthy use, only soft power was used and there were few subsequent changes in the dimensions of several internal conflicts. Knox asserts that "by joining the bombing in Yugoslavia, Canada showed that when the chips are down it remains prepared to resort to the quite traditional application of force in justification of its human security goals—at least as long as they are shared by its allies."<sup>65</sup> The case of Kosovo demonstrated that Canada was willing to push its human security agenda in the Council using any means necessary, including hard power. However, in circumventing the Security Council's authorization on the use of force and supporting NATO, Canada also

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<sup>63</sup> Knox, 318.

<sup>64</sup> Canada on the UNSC 1999-2000.

<sup>65</sup> Knox, 318-19.

demonstrated that it was willing to abandon a commitment to multilateralism through the UN. Not only was soft power a legitimate instrument for Canada, but so too was hard power, whether in or out of the Council, as exemplified in Kosovo.

### ***Concluding Prescriptions***

By diluting its commitments to use soft power in the Council, Axworthy implied that hard power was a necessary aspect of the human security agenda. The need for mandates of humanitarian intervention and peace enforcement as part of human security emphasizes the need for Canada to reinforce its own source of hard power, the Canadian military; if for no other reason than to ensure that its focus and use of soft power be effective, legitimate and most importantly, credible. Hence, there is room at the Security Council for soft power initiatives, but nevertheless, the Council remains committed to the ability to resort to its hard power resources when needed. Although Axworthy and the Canadian delegation did have a considerable degree of success in issues that lend themselves more effectively to the application of soft power, a hard power nucleus could only bring more weight to these initiatives. According to Hampson, Hart and Rudner, the crisis in Kosovo and the subsequent NATO responses “further demonstrate that soft power or negotiations frequently have to be backed up by hard power, i.e., the threat or use of force.”<sup>66</sup> If Canada is to have a more influential role on the Security Council during its next term, perhaps ten years from now, it will need a hard power arsenal to back up its soft power rhetoric and any other initiatives it may want to introduce while at the United

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<sup>66</sup> Hampson, Hart and Rudner.

Nations. In Joseph Jockel's book on soft power and the Canadian forces, Harald von Riekhoff was quoted as stating that in the Gulf War,

Canada's military contribution was entirely respectable and was not doubt, appreciated by other coalition members. But given its limited size and cautious deployment in order to minimize the risk of involvement in direct combat, it was hardly sufficient to support the claim to Principal Power status.<sup>67</sup>

In fact, Axworthy himself conceded to the importance of both soft and hard power in Canadian foreign policy when he stated, after the commencement of the bombing campaign in Kosovo, that "when all options are exhausted, sometimes more robust measures are necessary."<sup>68</sup> Thus, the question that now remains is, how is Canada going to advocate and support these more robust measures while remaining within a soft power approach? The answer is that it cannot support robust measures by relying exclusively on soft power. Thus, if Canada is to increase its influence in the Security Council, advance a human security agenda and enhance its capabilities of wielding soft power, it must solidify its commitment to peacekeeping and humanitarian missions by invigorating its hard power resources. The need for this is imminent as it is an area where the Chretien government has made itself vulnerable to criticism, thus placing Canada's international reputation and heritage are on the line.

Despite making a big splash at the UN Security Council with initiatives that included an International Court of Justice and an International Ban on Land Mines program already under its belt, the human security agenda was constrained by the soft power approach. Perhaps one of the greatest contributions which Canada made to the

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<sup>67</sup> Harald von Riekhoff, cited in Joseph Jockel, *The Canadian Forces: Hard Choices, Soft Power*, (1999), 9-36.

<sup>68</sup> Lloyd Axworthy, cited in Mollie Royds, "Middlepowerism in the Post-Cold War era: A Critique of Axworthy's Security Policy," University of Calgary, URL: [www.stratnet.ucalgary.ca/Journal/article4.html](http://www.stratnet.ucalgary.ca/Journal/article4.html)

Security Council during its 1999-2000 tenure was by taking the discourse on human security from academic channels to the Council itself. While there are numerous novel ideas behind soft power, such as its focus on forming coalitions, building consensus and working with a range of societal actors, particularly NGOs, it ultimately relies on hard power for a backbone. Negotiations to establish UN peacekeeping operations have distorted mandates simply because states seek to peacekeep on the cheap. Several Canadian initiatives while on the Council, namely its calls for increased protection of civilians, demonstrated that coalitions of like-minded states using a soft power approach could be successful, given the right issue and the right forum. Ultimately, Canada learned that the Security Council remains a 'hard' forum. A balanced approach to human security in the Council involves the use of both hard and soft power.

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