

## Introduction

The concept of ‘soft power’ was originally developed by an American academic, Joseph Nye, who, as early as 1971, published an article, “Transnational Relations and World Politics”, in which he advocated an increased involvement of international organizations in transnational relations.<sup>1</sup> In 1977, Nye co-authored with Robert Keohane *Power and Interdependence*, a book that completes the analytical task begun in the article<sup>2</sup>. In both works, the authors are challenging the traditional approach to international relations. According to Nye and Keohane, emphasizing the ever-present possibility of war between states is no longer realistic in a world increasingly ‘wired’. Previously hostile states are gradually beginning to share values, institutions and organizations (for one, multinational companies and their interests are offered as a positive example).

The term ‘soft power’ achieved its academic maturity in 1990, when Joseph Nye published *Bound to Lead*, a book offering arguments that countered the dark prophecies of such authors as Paul Kennedy, who, in his work, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, foresaw the end of American hegemony when the Cold War was won. In the absence of a strong enemy, Kennedy argued, the United States’ global interests and obligations will be harder to validate, and, therefore, harder to financially justify. Also, even if these interests can be validated, it would be increasingly difficult to maintain a balance “between the nation’s perceived defence requirements and the means to maintain

---

<sup>1</sup> *International Organizations* 25, no.3 (Summer 1971); later re-published in *Transnational Relations and World Politics*, a collection of articles focusing on the changes occurring in international politics (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972).

<sup>2</sup> Joseph S. Nye and Robert O. Keohane, *Power and Interdependence* (Boston: Little Brown, 1977).

those commitments”<sup>3</sup>. But Nye predicted that power was in transition, that hard command power will eventually be replaced by soft co-optive power:

“Soft co-optive power is just as important as hard command power. If a state can make its power legitimate in the eyes of others, it will encounter less resistance to its wishes. If its culture and ideology are attractive, others will more willingly follow (...) In short, the universalism of a country’s culture and its ability to establish a set of favourable rules and institutions that govern areas of international activity are critical sources of power.”<sup>4</sup>

Clausewitz’s axiom, according to which power can be defined as “an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will”<sup>5</sup> remains valid, but the means have changed.

According to Nye, no longer can a government achieve the ends it seeks with military power or through diplomacy, as it can with culture, reputation, ideology and language:

“Some observers have argued that the sources of power are, in general, moving away from the emphasis on military force and conquest that marked earlier eras. In assessing international power today, factors such as technology, education and economic growth are becoming more important, whereas geography, population and raw materials are becoming less important.”<sup>6</sup>

It is hard to determine the influence Marshal McLuhan had on Nye and Keohane<sup>7</sup>, especially since the conclusions McLuhan reached in his books became truisms in North American academia before the authors started publishing their most important works. Nevertheless, many of the notions articulated by McLuhan were highlighted in Nye and Keohane’s 1987 article, *Power and Interdependence in the Information Age*, which developed some of the concepts previously made available in their early work. The authors asserted that in an increasingly globalized world, the role of information

---

<sup>3</sup> Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers, Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York: Random House, 1987) p.514

<sup>4</sup> Joseph S. Nye, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1990) pp. 32-33.

<sup>5</sup> Karl von Clausewitz, *On War* (New York: Random House, 1993), p. 83.

<sup>6</sup> Nye, *Bound to Lead, the Changing Nature of American Power* p. 29.

<sup>7</sup> See Marshal McLuhan, *War and Peace in the Global Village* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1968).

technology and advanced communications will be of paramount importance in advancing the importance of soft power<sup>8</sup>. But, Nye and Keohane do not dismiss the weight of military force, because security still trumps all foreign policy issues.

This paper will assess the differences between the traditional concept of ‘soft power’, as formulated by Nye and the model adopted by former foreign affairs minister Lloyd Axworthy. The essay will also determine the impact ‘soft power’ and the ‘human security agenda’ (as articulated by Axworthy) had on Canadian defence and foreign policy.

#### Axworthy’s Version of Soft Power

In the spring of 1997, Lloyd Axworthy, then minister for foreign affairs, described his personal views on the concept of ‘soft power’ in “Canada and Human Security: the Need for Leadership”, an article published in *International Journal*. In his opinion, the collapse of the Soviet Union was to be a time of unprecedented peace and prosperity; however, post-Cold War reality proved to be otherwise. The absence of military threats did not ensure peace. Poverty, the lack of “sustainable development and social equity”<sup>9</sup> and pollution also proved to be challenges to global stability. Since many developing countries faced with these issues are unstable, Canada, freed from the “grip of superpower rivalry”<sup>10</sup> has the ability to play a leadership role in support of human security. In Axworthy’s opinion, Canada should assume her internationalist past and share her values with the world:

---

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

<sup>9</sup> Lloyd Axworthy, “Canada and Human Security: the Need for Leadership”, *International Journal* I52 (spring 1997), p.184.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p.183.

“The question for the future is how to build on Canadian foreign policy traditions so as to adapt Canada’s international contribution to this changing world. Traditional peacekeeping and development assistance are being reconsidered by most Western countries. Canada must shape that debate if it wishes to continue to play an active role on the international stage. It is already actively engaged in this process in a number of key areas: peacebuilding; peacekeeping; disarmament, particularly the campaign against anti-personnel landmines; protecting the rights of children internationally; and promoting economic development through, in part, rules-based trade.”<sup>11</sup>

He also believed that although a middle power, Canada could become a world leader, the champion, through diplomacy and coalition-building, of the cause of human security. Exercising ‘soft power’ would significantly increase Canada’s prestige in the world, while at the same time solving global problems. Axworthy deplored the “baggage of colonialism”<sup>12</sup>, still carried by many developing countries, which sometimes negatively affected the active efforts of European countries to assist former colonies. Canada, herself a product of imperial policies, is free from any colonial burden, and, therefore, the best choice to be a leader of humanitarian causes in the developing world.

Canada is perceived internationally as a country dedicated to the protection of human rights, an open, vibrant and multicultural society where all members are respected and free to pursue their vocations. In Axworthy’s opinion, multiculturalism, and the successful policies it generated, is responsible for some of Canada’s prestige in the world. A country’s image is crucial when she wants to internationally promote her values and culture.

In terms of relations with other states, Canada has traditionally fostered strong and flexible relations with countries from both hemispheres. According to Kim Nossal, Axworthy’s discourse, came into direct conflict with his actions: the development

---

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p.185.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p.193.

assistance budget actually shrunk during his tenure<sup>13</sup>. Furthermore, Robert Bothwell challenged the statements made by the former minister regarding the Canadian proud internationalist tradition.<sup>14</sup>

In “Canada and Human Security: the Need for Leadership”, Lloyd Axworthy also introduced the concept of ‘like-minded country’<sup>15</sup>; such a country is a natural ally. He believed that though Canada is committed to work with her traditional allies, new alliances should be forged outside the North Atlantic community. “Issue-based coalitions will become as important to the management of Canadian foreign policy as the alliance structure once was.”<sup>16</sup>

‘Soft power’ should not be exclusively exercised through traditional diplomatic means. Lloyd Axworthy reminded his readers that in an international political landscape dramatically transformed by information technology, new opportunities could be exploited:

“The Canadian International Information Strategy (CIIS) will provide a framework for enhancing Canadian influence – its soft power – and will strengthen the delivery of Canadian foreign policy. It will, first, establish an integrated approach to projecting abroad information about Canada. Canada has competitive cultural and information exports in both French and English, is a leading producer of television programmes and computer software, and excels at distance education. There is no lack of material to raise Canada’s profile in the world in a focussed, informative and entertaining way. The CIIS would also seek to bring coherence and co-ordination to the efforts of the myriad public and private organizations already engaged in providing information about Canada to the world.”<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> Kim Richard Nossal, “Pinchpenny Diplomacy”, *International Journal* (winter 1998-9), p.91

<sup>14</sup> See Robert Bothwell, “The Canadian Isolationist Tradition”, *International Journal* (winter 1998-9).

<sup>15</sup> Lloyd Axworthy, “Canada and Human Security: the Need for Leadership”, *International Journal* 152 (spring 1997), p.193.

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

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p.194

The former minister for foreign affairs concluded by emphasizing the importance of an open foreign policy process in which all sectors of the Canadian society would be involved. The ability of the government to harness the ingenuity and creativity of all Canadians will be of paramount importance, if future diplomatic successes are to be achieved. According to Axworthy, the democratization of the foreign policy process is a way of projecting 'soft power', of positively influencing a fast-changing world.

Lloyd Axworthy continued to define and refine his conceptualization of 'soft power' in "A Ban for All Seasons", an article published in 1998 in International Journal. The article was written to highlight the efforts that were put into organizing the Ottawa Convention, signed by 122 countries determined to eliminate the manufacture, use and export of anti-personnel landmines.

Axworthy saw the signing of the convention by so many nations as so much more than a major diplomatic accomplishment. For him, the event had a "broader significance"<sup>18</sup>: the changing nature of international relations reflected in the focus on human security, the importance of 'soft power' and the necessity for an international humanitarian law that could trigger a more positive international behaviour. In the age of globalization, nation-states are no longer isolated players faced with specific issues. A threat, confronting one country, could also challenge many other countries. Moreover, the international traffic of drugs, arms and persons, the spread of terrorism, the degradation of the environment and crime are now targeting communities and individuals, not necessarily states. Naturally, there is an indirect threat to the state itself, only it is an

---

<sup>18</sup> Lloyd Axworthy, "A Ban for All Seasons", International Journal (spring 1998) p.190.

insidious one operating through individuals. Therefore, “security goals should be primarily formulated and achieved in terms of human, rather than state, needs”<sup>19</sup>.

In Axworthy’s opinion, the Ottawa process is a clear example of the success of the second growing trend in international politics, the application of ‘soft power’, without which many the issues facing the global community could not be solved. He gives credit to Joseph Nye for coining the term ‘soft power’ as the means to draw, rather than compel others to your agenda:

“Skills in communicating, negotiating, mobilizing opinion, working within multilateral bodies, and promoting international initiatives are increasingly effective ways to achieve international outcomes. By such means smaller states and non-state actors can play a greater role internationally than they once might have done.”<sup>20</sup>

If Nye is the theoretician of ‘soft power’, those involved in organizing the Ottawa convention were, according to Axworthy, the first practitioners of the new concept<sup>21</sup>.

Among them were non-governmental groups who used all their power and influence to mobilize public opinion and compel governments to sign. In Axworthy’s opinion, while the NGOs and other non-governmental actors such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) were at the forefront of the battle to ban landmines, the ‘larger’ powers were suspicious or hostile to the convention. Only a handful of countries traditionally associated with hard power supported the cause: Canada, Norway and Belgium. But, according to the former minister, all these countries have a significant thing in common:

“In the past, these countries would have been limited in the exercise of their skills as honest brokers by the rigidities of cold war alliances and divisions. In the current, more fluid, international situation, however, this core group was able to

---

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p.191.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p192

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p.193.

exercise soft power skills to a much greater, global effect. We were not simply acting as mediators; we were setting the agenda and providing international leadership.”<sup>22</sup>

‘Soft power’ is therefore, as defined by the Axworthy, the power of the less powerful. And that is arguably why there is an informal coalition between governments that felt less effective diplomatically during the Cold War and non-governmental actors, traditionally ignored by larger power brokers.

For Axworthy, the campaign to ban landmines that eventually led to the signing of the Ottawa Convention, a campaign in which the Canadian government had a key role, was only the beginning of an international process that would set the stage for increased co-operation and co-ordination among medium powers, NGOs and other core international players. In Axworthy’s opinion, this successful teamwork would lead the larger powers, such as Russia, the United States and China to comply. But failing to convince these countries, along with other sceptics, such as India and Pakistan, that a world free of anti-personnel landmines is a better world should not be seen a setback. After all, “they are not essential to the process”<sup>23</sup>. Moreover, the reticence of larger powers should not discourage the coalition of the good-willing in pursuing a range of other pressing challenges such as small arms, children-soldiers, the creation of the International Criminal Court and various others peace-building initiatives.

Axworthy clearly expressed in his article the commitment of the Canadian government to make all diplomatic and financial efforts necessary to pursue causes that are traditionally associated with the work of NGOs and other non-governmental actors<sup>24</sup>. But, he admitted that even ‘soft power’ has its limitations. It failed to persuade Saddam

---

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p193.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p.199.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p.201.

Hussein in accepting inspectors that would monitor Iraq's compliance with its commitment to be a country free of weapons of mass destruction:

“Soft power is not, of course, suited to all issues and all circumstances. As Khofi Annan, the secretary-general of the United Nations noted publicly during the recent crisis over United Nations weapons inspections in Iraq, sometimes diplomacy works best when it is backed up with firmness and, ultimately, force.”<sup>25</sup>

The former minister for foreign affairs concluded his article with a stern warning for those sceptical about his approach to international relations. All advocates of realpolitik should acknowledge the changes that had occurred in the world after the end of the Cold War. Reproving their ‘hard headed’<sup>26</sup> attitude, Axworthy expressed his disbelief in the future ability of military power to solve international crisis. The sharp reduction in the appropriateness of hard power can be linked to an obvious trend: the democratization of foreign policy, a reality that should be applauded, rather than opposed.

In Axworthy's opinion, the opposition he encountered was due to ideologues that would rather “stick their heads into sand”<sup>27</sup> than take advantage of new opportunities. Only true realists could recognize the strengths of the new diplomacy of ‘soft power’. It is the way of the future, an approach that will provide new tools in dealing with the non-traditional problems facing the post-Cold War world.

In September 2000, Lloyd Axworthy resigned his post as Foreign Minister and took over as the chair of the Liu Centre for Global Issues, a think tank connected to the University of British Columbia, where he pursued his commitment to soft power.

---

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p.202.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

In 2003, he published a book called *Navigating a New World, Canada's Global Future*, in which he defends his 'soft power' concept and his human security agenda. Although written in a period when hard power is still the most effective weapon against failed, failing and rogue states, Axworthy seemed determined to push constructive engagement policies<sup>28</sup>. But, he has toned down his previously aggressive rhetoric and seems resigned to enumerate past successes and deplore the lack of effective standards and effectual international institutions. In Axworthy's opinion, certain failures – such as the Commonwealth's failure to deter Robert Mugabe from becoming an autocrat – should not discourage political leaders from using soft intervention in the protection of the people. The former Canadian minister for foreign affairs seem to suggest that the debacles cannot be linked to the concept of 'soft power' itself, but to a lack of sufficient belief in the principle. Even if the principle itself might be idealistic, it is always the preferable approach, rather than employing the alternative, hard power and the greediness that comes with it:

“There are still too many predators, public and private alike, who prey upon the riches of the many poor countries, exploit and foster conflict to fill their pockets and contribute to depths of human misery.”<sup>29</sup>

#### The Human Security Agenda

The term "human security" was first used by the United Nations in the early 1990s. The concept itself predates even that. Recognition that people's rights are at least as important as those of states has been gaining momentum since the end of the Second World War. The UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the genocide conventions all recognize the inherent right of people to personal security.

---

<sup>28</sup> Lloyd Axworthy, *Navigating a New World, Canada's Global Future* ( Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf Canada, 2003) p.74.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p.252.

In Canada, the term was ‘consecrated’ by Lloyd Axworthy, who believed that the 1990s announced a shift from traditional security fears towards ways of shielding the individuals from the abuses of oppressive, failed or failing states. He called this change: a focus on the human security agenda<sup>30</sup>. The ‘Ottawa Process’<sup>31</sup> was not the only achievement inspired by the human security agenda. Since Axworthy thought that humanitarian protection trumped national sovereignty, he held discussions during his tenure with the UN secretary-general, ‘who expressed strong concerns on the intervention issue’<sup>32</sup>. As a result, a body was set up to examine the matter. In Axworthy’s words, the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty was ‘the last and most important of my initiatives’<sup>33</sup>. More than a year after its creation, in December 2001, the commission published a report called *The Responsibility to Protect*. It advanced the idea that

“...sovereignty is based on the ability and willingness of governments to accept the responsibility to protect their own citizens. Failing that, the international community has a right to intervene.”<sup>34</sup>

According to Axworthy, the ‘responsibility to protect’ project operated a major shift of paradigm in international affairs. The initiative favored the oppressed individuals, while dismissing as a priority the unilateral right of the national state to protect itself through pre-emptive intervention. The focus was no longer on the intervener, but the victim.

---

<sup>30</sup> Notes for an address by the honourable Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars .

<sup>31</sup> The Ottawa Convention.

<sup>32</sup> Lloyd Axworthy, *Navigating a New World, Canada’s Global Future* ( Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf Canada, 2003, p.157.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

Authoritarian regimes and dictatorships are not, according to Axworthy, the only states threatening the security and well-being of individuals: failed and fragile political entities are comprising another group. The main challenge posed by the latter is its predisposition to cause humanitarian crisis and the inability, due to corruption and inefficiency, to successfully confront them. Moreover, the vacuum of power triggered by the absence of governmental control was filled by the presence of criminal organizations who often created parallel administrations. The clash between these groups and governmental forces led in the past to humanitarian disasters.

Many of today's wars are fought within, not between states, by irregular forces and ragtag groups armed with small arms. Invariably, the victims are innocent civilians caught in the crossfire or exposed to the greed, cruelty or cynical needs of the warring factions. The most vulnerable groups (women and children) within a failed or failing states have the most to suffer during civil strife and other internal conflicts:

“In the First World War, civilians accounted for 5 percent of casualties. In Mozambique, they accounted for 95 percent. In Sudan they accounted for 97 percent. These figures are not a revelation to any of you in this room, nor even to the non-expert outside. By simply reading the newspaper or watching the news, it is clear that civilians are increasingly the victims, if not the primary targets of conflict. It became just as clear to us, then, that the practice of foreign policy needed to change to include their protection. Times have changed in other ways too. More people, more of them poor, live in areas prone to disasters.”<sup>35</sup>

In order to prevent humanitarian disasters, responsive and responsible governments have to address key international issues such as drugs, small arms, endemic poverty, human trafficking, ending the practice of using child soldiers in wars and last, but not least, the degradation of the environment. Corruption, injustice and authoritarianism comprise a different set of problems that can only be dealt with after an

---

<sup>35</sup> Notes for an address by the honourable Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars.

agreement will be reached in the international community in regard to the moral responsibility to waive traditional, in international law, rights, such as sovereignty. Furthermore, Axworthy was one of the main supporters for the creation of the International Criminal Court. He believed that individuals suspected of genocide or other egregious crimes against humanity should be held responsible and prosecuted by an international court if the national courts are unwilling or unable to do it. According to Lloyd Axworthy no one should be allowed to hide behind a wall of national impunity. The creation of the International Criminal Court was in fact the expression 'of the right to try people, not nations, for breaking norms of international law based on humanitarian principles.'<sup>36</sup>.

The International Policy Statement (Diplomacy) published by the Canadian government in the spring of 2005 recycled many of Axworthy's beliefs. There are exceptions, though. Although failed and fragile states are mentioned (but not defined), the issue of oppressive and authoritarian regimes is not brought up. The priorities of the Department for Foreign Affairs and International Trade are going to be:

- dealing with failed and fragile states;
- countering terrorism and organized crime;
- combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD); and
- promoting human security.<sup>37</sup>

Though the Responsibility to Protect initiative is mentioned, it is only associated with weak or failing states and not dictatorships; and so is START (the Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force). Also, for Lloyd Axworthy, countering terrorism and

---

<sup>36</sup> Lloyd Axworthy, *Navigating a New World, Canada's Global Future* ( Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf Canada, 2003, p.201.

<sup>37</sup> The International Policy Statement (Diplomacy) published by the Government of Canada.

organized crime was part of the human security agenda. In the new foreign policy statement, they become separate. It is hard to determine if the change of focus is part of a more realistic or a more cautious (financially and diplomatically) foreign agenda.

#### Domestic and International Reactions

The first domestic critic of Axworthy's theoretical foundations of Canadian 'soft power' was McMaster University political scientist Kim Nossal . In "Foreign Policy for Wimps", an article published in April 1998 in the Ottawa Citizen<sup>38</sup>, Nossal attacked what he believed was Axworthy's gross underestimation of hard power and the traditional institutions providing it. In Nossal's opinion, applying the concept of 'soft power' in a Canadian context would mean undermining the foundations of the military and those of a highly trained professional foreign service. Moreover, Kim Nossal reminded Axworthy that persuasion and enticements would never work without hard power<sup>39</sup>.

Two days after Nossal published his article, the former minister for foreign affairs replied in the same newspaper with a letter<sup>40</sup> in which he chastised Nossal for being backward-looking and unable to grasp basic contemporary truths. Axworthy's vituperative and emotional response somehow contradicted his rhetoric promoting peaceful and rational negotiation.

Arguably, the most eloquent academic criticism of the Axworthy 'doctrine'<sup>41</sup> came from Fen Osler Hampson, professor at the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, at Carleton University, who in 1998 co-authored an article with Dean F. Oliver in

---

<sup>38</sup> See Kim Richard Nossal, "Foreign Policy for Wimps", Ottawa Citizen, 23 April 1998, sec A19.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Lloyd Axworthy, "Why Soft Power Is the Right Policy for Canada", Ottawa Citizen, 25 April 1998, sec. B6.

<sup>41</sup> Hampson referred to Axworthy's principles as a doctrine, although Canadian historians have customarily avoided the American tradition of naming foreign policies after presidents or foreign secretaries.

International Journal, entitled “Pulpit Diplomacy”, analyzing the underpinning of Canadian ‘soft power’. An apprehensive Hampson seemed perplexed by Axworthy’s attacks on Nossal, which he labelled as ‘lacking introspection over critical issues’<sup>42</sup> and denoting a worrying ‘official smugness’<sup>43</sup>.

The authors acknowledged in the article that Canadians, as ‘assertive internationalists’<sup>44</sup> welcomed many of the diplomatic initiatives of the Chretien government, and supported numerous initiatives advocated by Lloyd Axworthy, such as the campaigns to ban anti-personnel landmines, to control the international trade in small arms and to prohibit the use of children as soldiers in wars. All these campaigns reflected, in Fen Hampson’s opinion, core Canadian values. He also noted that the credit for these actions should go to Axworthy himself, ‘whose vigorous personal commitment to human rights, disarmament, and other causes has energized both his department and, frequently, his government’.<sup>45</sup>

Since all credible criticism is based on a conscientious analysis, Hampson skilfully summarized Axworthy’s core principles:

- soft power is the most effective channel in international relations;
- military force is becoming obsolete in international politics;
- the diplomacy of negotiation is increasingly effective in the ‘global village’;
- NGOs are the vanguard of all diplomatic efforts;
- In international relations, state security is being replaced by human security;

---

<sup>42</sup> Fen Osler Hampson & Dean F. Olivier, “Pulpit Diplomacy, A Critical Assessment of the Axworthy Doctrine”, *International Journal* 53 (summer 1998), p. 382.

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

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p.379.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p.380.

- Canada should lead ‘coalitions of the willing’ with ‘like-minded’ countries.<sup>46</sup>

The basic propositions Axworthy articulated in his doctrine are in fact, in Hampson’s opinion, the crystallization of the often prudent but confused ruminations of his predecessors.<sup>47</sup> The former minister for foreign affairs was not shaping a new Canadian vision in international politics. He was merely outlining clear objectives to guide Canada into the next century:

“Axworthy’s Canada is thus not only a confident middle power liberated by the passing of the cold war (sic), but it is also a charter member of what we might call the ‘moral minority’ that distinguished (and self-styled) group of states and organizations whose ‘moral multilateralism’ is predicated on their faith that the enunciation of a new set of global norms will lead inexorably to the creation of a just and more equitable international order.”<sup>48</sup>

Axworthy theoretically established Canada as a power liberated from the constraints of the Cold War, from an international stage dominated by two giants. In his opinion, Canada’s moral multilateralism would eventually led to a more just and humane international order. Or, so the former minister for foreign affairs hoped. Hampson’s analysis of his assumptions, however, is leading to conclusions that could dampen his optimism.

Is a security agenda driven by combating crime, drugs, pollution, human rights abuses and alleviating the effects of epidemics and natural catastrophes sensible? In the 1990s, 90% of conflicts were triggered by intrastate conflicts; which means that the former foreign minister was right when he advocated on focusing on such issues. But, his perspective was quantitative and not qualitative. A war on the Indian subcontinent over Kashmir between two nuclear powers, Pakistan and India, could have grave

---

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p.381

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

consequences for the entire world. China seems quite obstinate in making sure that Taiwan does not achieve independence and her sabre-rattling sends chills up and down the spines of international diplomats. Finally, in the Middle East, after four costly, in human lives and resources, wars, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon and Syria seemed more determined than ever to destroy the state of Israel, the only Jewish homeland.

According to Axworthy, the focus of all Canadian diplomatic efforts must be human, and not state, security. In failed or failing states, women and children seem the most vulnerable to abuses and the former foreign minister's efforts to curb mistreatment and offer humanitarian assistance were certainly commendable. Unfortunately, according to Hampson, that meant ignoring the very reasons why a state collapsed or is collapsing, it means disregarding the vital importance of basic institutions that could have prevented the abuses in the first place: courts, parliaments, the police. In his opinion, Axworthy offered palliatives, rather than cures:

“Traditional liberal theorists recognized that there was a close link between the vitality and legitimacy of the institutions of state and the basic security needs of individuals in civil society. Somehow, in the current fixation with human security, many commentators have lost sight of this connection. (...) The current preoccupation with civil society and human security needs seems to ignore this relationship by downgrading the role of the state.”<sup>49</sup>

Any intervention focusing on the needs of the individual, the victim, and not the source of the problem, the victimizer, which is, in most cases, a state deprived of efficient, responsible and responsive institutions, cannot achieve results. Sending innumerable teams to provide humanitarian assistance and economic relief might be nothing more than a quick fix that flatters the ego of Canadians and provides the ideal justification for officials not to act decisively, but politically correctly. The pervasive

---

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p.386.

corruption and incompetence afflicting numerous failed or failing states sometimes requires more than assistance and diplomatic efforts. It requires the presence of strong international military force acting as the guarantor of the commitment to bring peace, prosperity and stability to a certain beleaguered region. But, the use of substantial military force to curb abuses was never an option for Axworthy. According to Hampson, he would rather advocate resonant banalities, costly policy-planning exercises and numerous conferences that will solve next to nothing. “Canada’s so-called niche diplomacy can perhaps more accurately be dubbed nickel diplomacy”.<sup>50</sup> Not only is the Canadian government caught in a self-serving trap of idealistic assumptions and domestically convenient international actions, it will not even be consistent:

“Norway, with barely one-seventh of Canada’s population, donated more money sooner to the anti-personnel landmines crusade than did Canada; the United States, though vilified by many anti-landmine stalwarts for its failure to sign the final agreement, has anted more than ten times as much. To be serious (and credible) in these areas Canada must put its money where its mouth is.”<sup>51</sup>

Hampson also criticizes Axworthy for his pretentiousness. ‘Soft power’, for which Axworthy is taking credit, has been a part of Canadian foreign policy for many years. Canada used ‘soft power’ when she proposed the creation of the unsuccessful International Trade Organization, which ultimately resulted in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. Canada also used ‘soft power’ in other instances, such as trying to promote détente between the United States and the Soviet Union, or smoothing differences between the United States and her allies. Lester B. Pearson’s innovative approach to the 1956 Suez crisis was arguably the moment of glory of Canadian diplomacy. It was also a triumph of ‘soft power’. Throughout the 20th century, Canada

---

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p.388.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

used the mobilization of national and international public opinion, she exercised her ability to build coalitions and she encouraged the pursuit of international goals through multilateral bodies. The element of novelty brought by Axworthy was making ‘soft power’ the only instrument in shaping international relations. Attaching “ideological baggage”<sup>52</sup> to a functional concept will, however, not make it universally applicable. According to Hampson, it will only ruin it. Furthermore, taking an American construct out of the context in which it was created and blindly applying it to Canada’s diplomatic tradition is a major mistake. In addition, ‘soft power’, just like any other policy, has its limitations even within an American context, unless backed by hard power. “Soft and hard power are thus two sides of the same coin”.<sup>53</sup>

Used exclusively, ‘soft power’ was successfully employed by Canada in international political contexts where the core security interests of the state were not perceived to be directly threatened. That is why Axworthy achieved results in the campaign to ban landmines and that is why he encountered no major international opposition when he pursued a foreign policy agenda that included the control of light weapon proliferation or banning the practice of using children as soldiers in wars. Nevertheless, ignoring hard power is “a myopia just as surely injurious to Canadian foreign policy as any alleged concentration on hard-power assets”.<sup>54</sup>

The assumption that Hampson found most problematic was the decline of the utility of military force in achieving the ends of state. The sharp drop in military expenditure in the post-Cold War period is a fact. Countries on both sides of the Iron Curtain made drastic cuts in their defence budgets immediately after the collapse of the

---

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p.389.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p.390.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p.392.

Soviet Union. But, according to Hampson, this is not the symptom of a terminal disease that will eventually lead to the death of the military. The collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe signalled the end of excessive military spending, not the future disappearance of armed forces.

In Canada, where domestic issues always take precedence over military matters the optimism that arose after the end of the Cold War was exploited “to downplay the need for military preparedness”<sup>55</sup>. The buoyancy was such that in North American academia some were arguing that the state itself was futile and obsolete, and that policy-makers should look beyond traditional means of pursuing long-term international goals. Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm came as a shock to the revisionists besieging the fortress of the realist school of analysis, especially because the United Nations, the most prestigious international body, among ‘soft power’ supporters, approved the use of force. The conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Somalia further ‘traumatized’ the proponents of ‘soft power’ diplomacy. While realist members of NATO were pushing the alliance from collective defence to collective security, Canadian diplomats were counterproductively criticizing key members for their lack of sensibility in approaching human security goals:

“During NATO’s recent response to events in Kosovo, for example, Canada was the only ally possessing an air force that failed to participate in the multilateral display of force; instead, the foreign minister complained vigorously and unsuccessfully that Serb forces had deployed anti-personnel land mines against Kosovar guerrillas.”<sup>56</sup>

Axworthy’s “pulpit diplomacy” emphasized the importance of negotiation as an efficient instrument in international relations. According to Hampson, in the polls conducted during his tenure, Canadians supported his approach on international politics.

---

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p.393.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p.395.

They even backed his financial hesitation when he failed to pay for the kind of global engagement he was advocating. “Like many a congregation, they (Canadians) applauded the sermon, but quietly pass the empty plate”.<sup>57</sup>

Lloyd Axworthy’s commitment to human rights causes have attracted widespread praise, and rightly so. The abuses to which a great number of people are subjected worldwide today compel us to act. A responsible and responsive government cannot ignore the precarious political, economic and social situation in which some people are living, even if it is outside of its borders. At issue is not the diagnostic, but the treatment. In Hampson’s opinion, dogmatically addressing international problems while ignoring the chances for success is hypocritical and futile:

“...it may be time for Canadians to rethink what exactly their global interests are and what they are prepared to pay to advance them. It may be time for our foreign policy makers to do the same. Both might discover that the principal international challenges to Canada lie in a world both more confusing and perhaps more dangerous than it seemed a decade ago. It is a sobering thought, but a realistic one.”<sup>58</sup>

The September 19, 2000 issue of the National Post was dedicated almost in its entirety to Lloyd Axworthy’s resignation as minister for foreign affairs. University of Toronto historian Robert Bothwell author of one of the articles, praised Axworthy for his active international conscience and for the noble causes that he championed, but also criticized him for the fact that many of his ideas were not established in Canadian diplomatic tradition. Bothwell believed that Axworthy’s assumptions were inspired by the American radical left-wing politics of the 1960s. The opposition to the Vietnam War had shaped, according to the author, the former minister’s perception of hard power. In

---

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p.405.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p.406.

another article, “Axworthy Plans to Continue His Crusade as Author”, Robert Fife described the former minister as the ‘dominant voice of left-wing ideology’<sup>59</sup>, while Jane Taber labelled him in her article, “Beyond the Portfolio”, ‘a populist hooked on ordinary people’<sup>60</sup>.

Maclean’s published in its July 13 1998 issued an article presenting ‘the street-smart’<sup>61</sup> Axworthy as a distinctive voice in the Liberal caucus:

“His leading role in the campaign for global anti-landmine (sic) treaty that bears Ottawa’s name brought a dash of glory to the Liberals. But Axworthy also hears grumbling from more somnolent colleagues who, tsk, tsk, disapprovingly as he barges from one issue to the next, involving Canada in every cause from ending child labour and the use of child soldiers, to stopping the spread of small arms and creating an international criminal court.”<sup>62</sup>

The author of the article also commends Axworthy for the Lysoen Declaration, a partnership agreement between Canada and Norway. Both countries pledged to act together on several different humanitarian issues and to extend their partnership to other ‘like-minded’ countries such as South Africa, Ireland or Switzerland.

One of the most supportive articles was written by Paul Heinbecker, former assistant deputy minister for global and security policy in the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and published in the spring of 2000 in Canadian Military Journal<sup>63</sup>. Heinbecker praised Axworthy’s address to the 54<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly, in which he clarified the Canadian stance on human security. According to both Heinbecker and Axworthy, the quest for global peace could not longer ignore the well-being and safety of individuals. He noted that concepts such as national interest and

---

<sup>59</sup> Robert Fife, “Axworthy Plans to Continue His Crusade as Author”, National Post, 19 September, 2000.

<sup>60</sup> Jane Taber, “Beyond the Portfolio”, National Post, 19 September, 2000.

<sup>61</sup> Bruce Wallace, “Axworthy’s Soft Power”, Maclean’s, 13 July, 1998.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Paul Heinbecker, “Human Security: the Hard Edge”, Canadian Military Journal nr. 1 (spring 2000).

national sovereignty have to evolve beyond their traditional definitions, following the changes rapidly occurring in the international system. The creation, at the outcome of the Second World War, of a body of international law and practices that gave, according to Heinbecker, an increased primacy to the protection of individual rights and safety, as well as the setting up of the Statute of the International Criminal Court, are clear signs that nation-state can no longer be the unique basis for international relations. Increasingly, NGO are: "...growing in importance and number. Called to fill a void left by the reluctance of states to address intrastate conflicts, humanitarian NGOs have asserted themselves as powerful and independent international actors."<sup>64</sup> Moreover, there are other forces capable of circumventing the usual diplomatic channels to influence governments, such as corporations, drug cartels and terrorist organizations.

Paul Heinbecker supported Axworthy's commitment to the human security agenda because of Canadian values (such as the respect for human rights, tolerance and democracy) and traditions: "Canadians are moved by humanitarian impulse, not by the cold-blooded or rational calculations of realpolitik. Principles are often more important than power to Canadians."<sup>65</sup> It has been a long time – over a century – since Canada faced a direct external threat, so traditionally the focus for our foreign and security policy has been on forward defence. For Heinbecker and Axworthy, the emphasis on human security is forward defence. A foreign policy agenda driven by human security entails, in his opinion:

- prioritizing the preoccupation for the security of individuals and their communities;

---

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., pp.12-13.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid. p.12.

- considering individual safety as instrumental in achieving global stability and security;
- recognizing the importance of non-state actors in international relations;
- focusing on both military and non-military threats, especially within failed or failing states.<sup>66</sup>

Although the state has not become obsolete, disintegrating states are as dangerous to their own citizens as dictatorships. Therefore, human security working within the confines of humanitarian law (e.g. the Geneva Convention and Protocols) and human rights law will be more effective than the traditional approach relying on interstate treaties.

Just like Axworthy, Heinbecker is quite vague when it comes to the enforcement of the norms and mechanisms assisting the implementation of human security. Although military force was mentioned, no in-depth attention was given to the limitations to which UN contingents are subjected through the rules of engagement and through other factors specific to the command and control of an international force. Also, Heinbecker does not mention ‘soft power’. Arguably, the reason for the convenient neglect could be that Canada’s participation in the Kosovo campaign contradicted Axworthy’s previous approach on ‘soft power’.

The author concluded the article by defining human security being as so much more than humanitarian intervention:

“...an ounce of conflict prevention is worth a pound of humanitarian intervention. Further, there is much more to protecting people than responding to conflict, actual or apprehended. The concept of human security and the precedents it sets provide a framework for putting people at the center of international relations.

---

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p.13.

Human security is becoming a new central organizing principle of international relations.”<sup>67</sup>

If Lloyd Axworthy got mixed reviews in Canada, internationally the theoretical foundations of Canadian ‘soft power’ came under attack from the originator of the concept. In an interview with Maclean’s, Nye confessed that he somehow felt betrayed by Axworthy. ‘Soft power’ should not be used to create another international forum for the growing world sport of America bashing. “Sticking a finger in the American eye might make you feel self-righteous’, Nye warned, ‘...but you won’t have changed the world’.”<sup>68</sup>

In “The Challenge of Soft Power”, an article published in Time magazine on February 22, 1999, “, Joseph Nye praised Axworthy for focusing on issues relating to basic human security. But, at the same time, he warned the former minister not to make the mistake of perceiving transnational issues as the root of all global security problems. The world is very complex and its predicaments should not be reduced to a single dimension: human security. Such broad generalizations are leading, according to Nye, to conceptual mistakes. “States still matter, and hard power still matters in relations among states. (...) After all, it was NATO, not the U.N., that was able to dampen the conflict in Bosnia.”<sup>69</sup> Nye concluded by clarifying the differences between his notion of ‘soft power’ and Axworthy’s Canadian variant. He meant ‘soft power’ depends on the persuasiveness of information and not necessary on diplomatic skills. It is Nye’s contention that the cultural appeal could, through enticement, replace brute force. But this

---

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p.16

<sup>68</sup> As quoted in Maclean’s, “Axworthy’s Soft Power”, Maclean’s, 13 July, 1998.

<sup>69</sup> Joseph S. Nye Jr., “The Challenge of Soft Power”, Time Magazine, 22 February 1999.

certainly cannot be achieved by barren speeches and idealistic pomposity, but rather by concrete actions.

“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>70</sup>

#### Axworthy's Impact on the Canadian Foreign Policy

Before assessing the effects of Lloyd Axworthy's 'doctrine' on Canadian foreign policy, it is important to consider whether or not if his core principles and propositions crystallized in a theoretical and empirical vacuum.

Although inspired by the works of Joseph Nye, his conceptualization of soft power is original. Few Canadian officials before him articulated foreign policy principles in such a forceful and convincing manner. Lloyd Axworthy's vigorous agenda was pushed with the determination of a man convinced of the justness of his cause. Arguably, he was the first to chart a clear theoretical course for Canadian foreign policy in the post-Cold War era; although his commitment to peacekeeping, human rights or international institutions was not a novelty, his approach was. According to Fen Osler Hampson, though notionally Pearsonian, Axworthy's principles have strayed away from the Canadian 'traditional diplomatic moorings'<sup>71</sup>. In sum, he created a new concept that appealed to many Canadians and with it he re-shaped a national foreign policy that had lacked an identity after the collapse of the Soviet Union. His original theoretical

---

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Fen Osler Hampson & Dean F. Olivier, "Pulpit Diplomacy, A Critical Assessment of the Axworthy Doctrine", *International Journal* 53 (summer 1998), p. 381.

foundations of ‘soft power’ exploited the Canadian diplomatic legacy to justify a foreign policy agenda driven along three different but interrelated paths.

The first path was human security. The Anti-Personnel Landmine Convention signed by 122 countries in Ottawa in December 1997 was for Axworthy a promising victory. It encouraged him to pursue other efforts directed at the protection of civilians during war, with a focus on the most vulnerable social group: the children. He initiated the creation of a committee on the issue, which brought together governments representatives and NGOs. Furthermore, Axworthy pushed for the implementation of measures that would first limit and then eventually eliminate human trafficking. One major step taken towards preventing human rights abuses was Canada’s drafting, under Axworthy’s tenure, of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. Outlined in collaboration with Norway, the declaration seeks to promote tolerance, acceptance, universal human rights and freedoms<sup>72</sup>.

The second path of Axworthy’s agenda involved a number of initiatives directed towards the establishment of organizations promoting international law. Arguably, the former minister was instrumental in the creation of the International Criminal Court. Empowered to judge war crimes, crimes against humanity and crimes against peace, the Court is also complementary to national criminal jurisdictions<sup>73</sup>.

The third path was Lloyd Axworthy’s initiation of a number of innovative partnerships with ‘like-minded countries’. One of these partnerships was with Norway. The Lysoen Declaration signed on the Norwegian island of Lysoen in May 1988,

“...commits Canada and Norway to a framework for consultation and concerted action on landmines; the establishment of an International Criminal Court; human

---

<sup>72</sup> <http://www.ohchr.org/english/issues/defenders/declaration.htm>

<sup>73</sup> <http://www.icc-cpi.int/about.html>

rights; international humanitarian law; women and children in armed conflict; small arms proliferation; child soldiers; child labour; and northern Arctic co-operation.”<sup>74</sup>

The diplomatic success of the bilateral treaty encouraged him to seek the expansion into a much bigger coalition committed to advancing various aspects of the human security agenda –dubbed the Humanitarian Eight – comprised of Canada, Norway, Switzerland, Austria, Thailand, South Africa and Sweden.

At this point, one very important question arises: are Canadian values such as gender equality, civility, multiculturalism and human security typically Canadian? After all, they are guidelines for policy in many democratic countries, such as the Netherlands, Sweden, and Norway. Shouldn't Canada have a foreign policy for Canadians? What about interests? How is the promotion of human security furthering Canadian interests? The traditional answer to the question is that Canada, being a trading nation will thrive in a peaceful and prosperous international environment. There is a problem with this statement, though; the United States accounts for 84.52% of total exports and for 58.80% of total imports<sup>75</sup>. And Canadian governments, including the Martin government never missed a chance to antagonize the Americans.

'Soft power' is for Axworthy nothing more than the flexible means to achieve international human security goals. Defined as the ability to build consensus and cultivate coalitions, the concept is, undoubtedly, Lloyd Axworthy's trademark. All the diplomatic successes the former minister achieved are, according to his critics, symbolic and idealistic. For instance, the Ottawa Convention was not signed by important mine

---

<sup>74</sup> <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/canada-magazine/issue01/1t6-en.asp>

<sup>75</sup> [http://www.2ontario.com/welcome/coca\\_401.asp](http://www.2ontario.com/welcome/coca_401.asp).

producers<sup>75</sup>. The situation becomes even complicated when even a tin can and some explosives or as much as a hand grenade can be used to put together an efficient antipersonnel mine. All the organizations he created, even those that survived his tenure, became nothing more than forums where officials lament human rights abuses. By divorcing pragmatism, Axworthy condemned Canada to a form of benign isolation. All countries applaud the speeches made by Canadian diplomats, but few are actually interested in acting on them; and those that do have no clout in international politics whatsoever.

#### Axworthy's Impact on Canadian Defence Issues

The end of the Cold War provoked an unprecedented crisis within the Canadian defence community. Since the reason for maintaining overseas military capabilities was the rivalry between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Warsaw Pact, the collapse of the former made some Canadian officials question the logic for the retention of extensive military assets:

“Since the end of the Cold War, there has been no consensus within Canada that such forces are even needed. There have continually been voices calling for a shift in Canadian defence policy away from war-fighting capabilities and towards peacekeeping.”<sup>76</sup>

Already disappointed with the 1994 White Paper, the proponents of the defence industry and the members of the Canadian Forces alike became particularly worried by Lloyd Axworthy's opinions or insights on Canada's international role in the post-Cold

---

<sup>75</sup> Such as the United States, China, Israel, etc.

<sup>76</sup> Joseph T. Jockel, *The Canadian Forces: Hard Choices, Soft Power* (Toronto: Brown Book Company, 1999), p.46.

War period. For Axworthy, the military was actually part of the problem, not of the solution, a threat to human security in certain countries.

Since, according to Axworthy, diplomatic coercion through military means should be replaced by negotiation, compromise and coalition-building, the need to have and support armed forces becomes somehow superfluous.

But, Lloyd Axworthy's views on the pointlessness of maintaining important overseas military capabilities were not new. The Canada 21 Council and its influential 1994 report foresaw for the CF little more than a constabulary role. Also, arguably, the murder of a Somali teenager prompted the dissolution of the Canadian Airborne Regiment, and also the damaged the prestige of the armed forces in general, at a time when esteem was badly needed. After the Somalia debacle, and especially with the adherents of 'soft power' questioning the role of the military in a post-Cold War global context, investing in equipment and training for overseas combat capabilities became an issue<sup>77</sup>.

The Prime-Minister at the time was Jean Chrétien, a politician generally dismissive of the armed forces. A pragmatist more interested in electoral-sensitive domestic issues than new equipment for the Canadian Forces, Chretien welcomed Axworthy's assumptions.

“For Liberal Party politicians, “soft power” arguments could then provide a justification, a way to assert that the further diminution, if not the disappearance, of Canadian overseas combat capability, would not undermine fundamental interests abroad.”<sup>79</sup>

---

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p.7

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

Two decades of Liberal neglect of the military culminated with the crystallization of a doctrine discrediting hard power. Axworthy's chief legacy is that he raised Canada's international profile. By doing so, he increased the Canadian Forces' international operational cadence. But, this intensification in the number of deployments was not supported by any real financial engagement. This negligence should not be confused with the disregard for international development assistance (nickel diplomacy); that was an inconsistency, to say the least:

“A peacebuilding fund of \$10 million in fiscal years 1997-8 and 1998-9, managed by the Canadian International Development Agency and drawn from the overseas development assistance envelope, plus a \$1 million fund managed by the Department of Foreign Affairs and drawn from its budget, are modest by any stretch of imagination.”<sup>80</sup>

In the case of defence budgets, however, things were different. For Lloyd Axworthy and his supporters, any long-term and serious investment in the Canadian Forces' equipment and training was pointless, since 'hard power' was in decline. The partial incapacitation of the armed forces in Canada was calculated and dogmatic. It is nevertheless true that defence budgets have been steadily diminished since 1968, simply because Canadian prime ministers have believed wars involving Canada are a remote possibility. But the 'human security agenda' and particularly 'soft power' created the theoretical framework for a justification of cuts in the budget of the armed forces.

### Conclusions

Axworthy made a serious, convenient and self-serving mistake when he altered Nye's concept of 'soft power': he opposed it to 'hard power'. 'Hard power' means, according to Nye, military and diplomatic pressure, while 'soft power' means the appeal

---

<sup>80</sup> Fen Osler Hampson & Dean F. Olivier, "Pulpit Diplomacy, A Critical Assessment of the Axworthy Doctrine", *International Journal* 53 (summer 1998), p. 388.

of culture, prestige and language working jointly with hard power. The Canadian former minister completely ignored martial might and, therefore, reduced Canadian foreign policy to a few prestigious, but ineffectual idealistic assumptions that coincided with the image the government – and by implication Canadians more generally - have of the country’s diplomatic tradition. Idealistic internationalism is a convenient, mild form of isolationism. Convenient because, if one defines internationalism as “community, good international citizenship, and voluntarism”<sup>81</sup>, although the Canadian government is involved rhetorically, it does nothing practical. And this is how

Canadians have discovered that they can get away with an underequipped constabulary, rather than a military force, (...) with allowing the development assistance budget to drop to the low 0.3s, (...) with downsizing, privatizing, co-locating, and contracting out key elements of Canada’s international diplomacy. Back-stopped by budget-friendly notions like ‘niche diplomacy’, ‘soft power’ and ‘co-operative security’, Canadians (and their government) have discovered that they can just say no – without guilt and without having to spend too much money.<sup>82</sup>

If, through the concept of ‘soft power’ Axworthy managed to convince Canadians that they are involved internationally, while, in practical terms, doing next to nothing, with the armed forces he was quite straightforward: a decline in importance equaled governmental inattention.

The Axworthy doctrine was not a dramatic shift in Canadian foreign policy. Arguably, it slightly radicalized a number of features already present in international relations since the 1970s. The former minister’s chief legacy is raising Canada’s profile internationally amongst ‘like-minded countries’, while assertively condemning its armed forces to governmental neglect.

---

<sup>81</sup> Robert Bothwell, “The Canadian Isolationist Tradition”, *International Journal* (winter 1998-9), p.102.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p.103.

Often it is impossible to untie the Gordian knot of political problems that inevitably emerge in the conduct of foreign policy without using a sword. But Axworthy believes that the utility of military force in achieving the ends of the state has been greatly diminished in the post-Cold War time. While the withering of armies after the collapse of the Soviet union and the Warsaw Pact no doubt provided the main stimulus for this conviction, the realism of such an opinion is doubtful. History has not ended.

## Bibliography

### Books

Axworthy, Lloyd. Navigating a New World, Canada's Global Future. Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf Canada, 2003.

Hampson, Fen Osler et al. Madness in the Multitude, Human Security and World Disorder. Don Mills: Oxford University Press Canada, 2002.

Hampson, Fen Osler. Nurturing Peace, Why Peace Settlements Succeed or Fail. Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996.

Hampson, Fen Osler et al. Herding Cats, Multiparty Mediation in a Complex World. Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1999

Horn, Bernard. Forging a Nation: Perspectives on the Canadian Military Experience. St. Chaterines: Vanwell Publishing, 2002.

Government of Canada. Canada's International Policy Statement. 2004.

Jockel, Joseph T. The Canadian Forces: Hard Choices, Soft Power. Toronto: Brown Book Company, 1999.

Kennedy, Paul. The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers, Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000. New York: Random House, 1987.

Keohane, Robert O. et al. Power and Interdependence. Boston: Little Brown, 1977.

Keohane, Robert O. et al. Transnational Relations and World Politics. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972.

Maloney, Sean. *Canada and UN Peacekeeping: Cold War by Other Means*, St. Chaterines: Vanwell Publishing, 2002.

McLuhan, Marshal. *War and Peace in the Global Village*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1968.

Nye, Joseph S. *Bound to Lead, the Changing Nature of American Power*. New York: Basic Books, 1990.

Rempel, Roy. *The Chatter Box, an Insider's Account of the Irrelevance of Parliament in the Making of Canadian Foreign and Defence Policy*. Toronto: Breakout Educational Network in association with Dundurn Press, 2002.

Sokolsky, Joel J. et al. *Canada and Collective Security, Odd Man Out*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1986.

Stanley, George. *Canada's Soldiers: The Military History of an Unmilitary People*, Toronto: Macmillan, 1974.

#### Articles

Axworhty, Lloyd. "Canada and Human Security: the Need for Leadership", *International Journal* 152, spring 1997.

Axworhty, Lloyd. "Why Soft Power Is the Right Policy for Canada", *Ottawa Citizen*, 25 April 1998, sec. B6.

Axworhty, Lloyd. "A Ban for All Seasons", *International Journal*, spring 1998.

Axworthy, Lloyd. "Notes for an Address by the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars".

Bothwell, Robert. "The Canadian Isolationist Tradition", *International Journal*, winter 1998-9.

Bothwell, Robert. "Axworthy, Man of Principle", *National Post*, 19 September, 2000.

Bothwell, Robert "The Canadian Isolationist Tradition", *International Journal*, winter 1998-9.

Fife, Robert. "Axworthy Plans to Continue His Crusade as Author", *National Post*, 19 September, 2000.

Hampson, Fen Osler et al. "Pulpit Diplomacy, A Critical Assessment of the Axworthy Doctrine", *International Journal* 53, summer 1998.

Heinbecker, Paul. "Human Security: the Hard Edge", *Canadian Military Journal* nr. 1, spring 2000

Noble, John J. "Soft Power in the Hands of the Hyper-Power", *Policy Options*, December 2004-January 2005.

Nossal, Kim Richard. "Pinchpenny Diplomacy", *International Journal*, winter 1998-9.

Nossal, Kim Richard. "Foreign Policy for Wimps", *Ottawa Citizen*, 23 April 1998, sec. A19.

Nye, Joseph S. "The Challenge of Soft Power", *Time*, February 22, 1999.

Smith-Windsor, Brooke A. "Hard Power, Soft Power Reconsidered", *Canadian Military Journal*, autumn 2000.

Taber, Jane. "Beyond the Portofolio", *National Post*, 19 September, 2000.

Wallace, Bruce. "Axworthy's Soft Power", *Maclean's*, 13 July, 1998.