

# **IS IT TIME FOR THE BEAVER TO HOP OFF THE EAGLE? A CASE FOR CANADA TO RECONSIDER ITS GEOPOLITICAL ALIGNMENT WITH THE UNITED STATES**

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## **Abstract**

Canada is known for its close relations with the United States in the domains of economic affairs, defence and international diplomacy. This arrangement, however, was a product of the great changes brought about by the Second World War. The combination of British decline, Ottawa's desire to achieve full independence from London, and the looming Soviet threat during the Cold War created a political environment in which Canada had to become closely integrated with the United States both militarily and economically. Canada did so to ensure its survival in the international system. With the exception of a few controversial issues like US involvement in Vietnam (1955) and Iraq (2003) as well as Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD), Ottawa has been Washington's closest ally since 1945. On numerous occasions like the Korean War, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and as recently as the War in Afghanistan and the War Against IS (Islamic State), Canada had provided staunch military and diplomatic support to Washington in its engagements around the globe.

In an era of relative peace, stability, and certainty, particularly during the Post-Cold War period and the height of American power from 1991 to 2008, this geopolitical arrangement of continental integration had greatly benefited Canada. This era of benefits, however, is arguably drawing to a close. The Great Recession of 2007-09, the situations in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the insistence on pursuing a foreign policy of global primacy despite its significant economic cost, are sending the US down an uncertain path. Due to its close relations and geographical proximity with the US, Canada now faces a hostile international environment that is filled with uncertainty as a result of superpower decline, great power rivalries, environmental degradation, and failed US interventions.

**Keywords:** Canada, strategy, war, defence policy

There are key questions which arise because of this hostile environment, which Ottawa must address. Will the US remain a reliable partner to Canada, helping ensure its survival? Is it time for Canada to consider a geostrategic realignment with the intent to seek new superpower allies to diversify its alliance system so it is not overwhelmingly dependent on the US? This paper will argue that it is time for Ottawa to consider further enhancing relationships with Canada's European North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies. Canada should particularly look to France, Germany, and the United Kingdom as alternatives to American power and as key supporters to Canadian foreign policy. The basis of this argument stems from the increasingly plausible prospect of American decline as a global superpower. Since the end of the Cold War, the US has consistently acted in a way that undermines its position as a global power. If the pattern continues, Ottawa may face an increasingly unstable and unpredictable Washington whose actions do not align with Canadian national interests. This paper will begin with a definition of Canadian grand strategy for which foreign policy ultimately serves, and its evolution. The paper then examines how the decline of American power and its instability is a threat to Canadian interests, and how an enhanced alliance with Europe will serve as a better alternative. The paper concludes with defence policy recommendations on how Ottawa can turn this vision of enhanced Canadian-European cooperation into reality in the upcoming years.

### **Canadian Grand Strategy: Objectives, Execution, History, and Current State**

Since the end of the Cold War, there is a common perception that Canada had effectively become an "astrategic" power, or rather, a country that does not craft its foreign and defence policy based on logical, sustained, and interrelated ideas that are typically found in strategic thought and international relations (Nossal, 2016, p.151). Instead, Ottawa since 1991 has opted for an approach in which its defence and foreign policy are crafted based on the personal worldviews of its leaders, ruling elite, partisan politics mixed with popularism and ad hoc responses to external pressure (Nossal, 2016). This pattern is only a recent phenomenon. To determine whether or not a country is "astrategic," a short-term view of its foreign and defence policy history is insufficient. A broader, more comprehensive and long-term approach must be used.

Based on its history, Canada is no different than any other state within the international system. Canada's creation was a direct result of British colonial elites on the North American continent facing the environment of an aggressive

United States, rapidly expanding across the continent and a retreating Britain that wanted to cut back on its military commitments to its colonies. As a result, Canada's Fathers of Confederation and their successors had no shortage of appreciation for the realities of the international system. These "realities" are best described by the realist school of thought in international relations. The central tenets of realism are:

1. The international system is anarchic, in which there is no higher authority to control the behaviour of states;
2. All states (particularly great powers) inherently possess offensive military powers that give them the ability to destroy on another;
3. States are never certain of the intentions of others;
4. The primary goal of states is to survive, specifically to maintain their territorial integrity and full control of domestic affairs; and
5. States are rational actors and will think and act strategically to ensure their survival (Mearsheimer, 2014).

Unlike many other states outlined in realist thought, Canada did not develop its diplomatic, economic, and military power to become a great power to have its voice heard on the international stage and deter potential enemies. Nor did Canada frequently use wars or coercion to change its environment to maximize survival (Mearsheimer, 2014). There are two reasons behind this peculiarity. First, there is a prevalent political culture among Canadians and their leadership on placing the rule of law and peaceful resolutions to conflict as a premium (Ross, 2017). Second, Canada is a state with serious geostrategic deficiencies. Canada is the second largest sovereign landmass in the world making it a continent-sized state (Chapnick, 2007). However, it has an economy and the military capabilities of a middle power, and a population (in proportion to its landmass) of a small power (only 36 million) (Chapnick, 2007). As a result, not only does Canada lack the national capabilities to influence international events outside its borders, it also lacks the capability to effectively defend its own borders without incurring an unbearable economic and social cost (Chapnick, 2007). Therefore, in order to accomplish its strategic objectives, Ottawa since Confederation has always utilized collective defence with another great power to safeguard its national security (Chapnick, 2007).

There are two dominant approaches which Ottawa elites have utilized since Confederation to secure great power support for collective security. The first approach is the "East-West Approach," which was the brainchild of Sir John A. Macdonald and the Conservative Party (Cox, 2005, p. 667-668). The idea behind

this approach calls for Ottawa to create a powerful Canada that unites the northern half of North America and is sufficiently capable of defending itself against a militant US that still has the desire to conquer Canada, or any other threats that may originate outside the North America (Cox, 2005). Based on this, Ottawa ensured that strong economic, cultural, and political connections to Europe, particularly the British Empire, were maintained to safeguard Canadian interests and security (Cox, 2005). The second approach is the “North-South Approach,” devised by a conglomerate of English-Canadian merchants who were wronged by British imperialist and trade policies, as well as Anti-British Francophone Canadians, which together formed the backbone of the Liberal Party of Canada (Cox, 2005, p. 668). This approach calls for economic and eventual political integration with the US (Cox, 2005). The logic was that the close proximity of the US and their isolationist foreign policy will allow Canada to remain out of the imperial wars of Europe as well as allow for the easier assimilation of Quebec once an overwhelming English-speaking majority is formed in the new North American super-state (Cox, 2005). From Confederation to the end of the Second World War in 1945, Canada had largely followed the East-West Approach, as a result of British control over Canadian foreign policy and its status as the world’s leading military power. Subsequently, Canada was heavily involved in overseas wars, such as the Boer War and both World Wars (Cox, 2005).

The North-South Approach started gaining legitimacy in official policy as a result of the horrors of the First World War and factors such as the reduction of American hostility towards Canada and the ruling Liberals’ desire under Mackenzie King to break Canada from British orbit. The end product of this US-Canada rapprochement was the “US-Canadian Security Bargain” of 1938 (Barry & Bratt, 2008, p. 64). The basic premise was that the US would protect the territorial integrity of Canada, and in exchange Canada would do its due diligence to ensure it maintains sufficient military capabilities to ensure Canadian territory does not become a liability for US security interests (Barry & Bratt, 2008). A year after this bargain, the Ogdensburg Agreement and the HydeParker Declaration were signed and ratified which promoted joint US-Canadian management of North American security and armament production (Barry and Bratt, 2008). This series of bargains and agreements would mark the official beginning of US-Canadian integration under the North-South approach.

The Second World War fundamentally changed the geopolitical environment that Canada was situated in. The British Empire was in ruins and could no longer maintain its position as a global superpower or commit to the security of its

subject states. Europe and Asia were devastated in the aftermath of the war and became the political battlegrounds of the US and the Soviet Union, the two countries which emerged as global superpowers following the war.

Canada faced a geopolitical situation that was unseen in its history. First, the US emerged as the most powerful state in the Western Hemisphere and was left unchallenged due to the devastation of European great powers (Sutherland, 1962). This meant the US, whether out of security or geopolitical concerns, could easily annex Canada without worries of external intervention (Sutherland, 1962). Second, as per the US-Canadian Security Bargain of 1938, Canada's end of the bargain was no longer a matter of simply defence policy and military posture. With the invention of long-range bombers (and later Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles, or ICBM) and nuclear weapons, both the US and Canada could no longer rely on the stopping power of water that rendered expeditionary operations by Eurasian powers nearly impossible (Kaplan, 2013). Major population centres, military installations, and leadership all came within the striking capabilities of Soviet ICBMs, bombers, and ballistic missile submarines, with Canada located right on the critical midcourse routes and launch areas of Soviet military assets tasked with targeting the United States (Sutherland, 1962). Furthermore, the US at the time was a relatively young and inexperienced great power that had only recently emerged from an isolationist approach to international relations. This meant Washington could often act in ways threatening to international security. These factors placed Ottawa in a dangerous position from erratic American behaviour, or the destruction of Canada as a state due to conflict escalation between the US and the Soviet Union.

To address this geostrategic disadvantage, Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent and his Foreign Minister Lester Pearson devised a complex strategic scheme that maximized Canada's survival via a combination of both East-West and North-East approaches.

First, Ottawa further strengthened its commitment to continental defence with Washington by entering the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD) agreement. In doing so, Ottawa committed itself militarily to bearing the burden of North American air defence and integrating Canada into a complex network of early-warning systems and coordinated fighter deployments with the US, ensuring the security of American ICBM fields and nuclear bomber bases (Sutherland, 1962). In return for this commitment, Canada maximizes its security via the deterrence power of American nuclear weapons and removes incentives

for Washington to annex or strip Canada of its independence as a sovereign state by being a trusted ally.

Second, in order to balance or restrain American unilateralism, as well as to diversify Canada's collective defence partners, Pearson and St. Laurent pushed hard via all diplomatic means to create NATO. On the surface, many would recall NATO's purpose as a collective defence organization that aimed to deter Soviet aggression in the Cold War. However, for Canada, NATO had a much greater strategic significance: by bringing all the Western European great and middle powers into a single alliance system with the US, it allowed Canada to have greater abilities to control American international behaviour. This is because NATO served as an avenue for Canada to rally great powers into collectively pressuring the US and prevent it from engaging in potentially destabilizing activities (Holmes, 1963).

However, since the formation of this arrangement in the 1950s, Canada and NATO's ability to influence American actions had been limited. Despite Ottawa's diplomatic efforts and the use of personal relations-based approaches to counsel American leaders, it did little to prevent the US from acting in ways that got them into major crises. In the Korean War, when Pearson attempted to convince Washington to terminate the conflict that was inflicting an opportunity cost to the defence of Europe in 1950, he described the negotiation process as "Corporal Pearson and General Acheson". This illustrates his subordinate role to the former US Secretary of State (Whitaker, 1991, p.15-16). It would take another two years for the US to terminate the conflict. As time progressed into the 1960s and 1970s, the situation was much of the same. The Americans would walk into the dangerous Cuban Missile Crisis and the strategic blunder of Vietnam, while Canada could do little more than protest.

Canada since the 1960's has given up its efforts in trying to influence American foreign policy. Ottawa began a long process of cutting its military spending and commitments to NORAD and NATO to a level just enough for Canada to have a say in the alliances' decision-making processes (Whitaker, 1991). Canada from the 1960s to the 2000s continued to adopt a more peacekeeping/ "honest broker" role in conflicts (Whitaker, 1991, p.21). In the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century to the present, Ottawa further detached itself from international affairs by shedding its "honest broker" role, now straddling an isolationist role and that of a junior partner in NORAD and NATO. Simultaneously, Canada began a process of economic integration with the US through the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement and later North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), where Canada and

the US (and later Mexico) became a de facto joint economic body that allowed Canada to generate economic prosperity from American success (Cox, 2005).

To summarize, Canada had in effect become part of what Michael Ignatieff called the American “Empire Lite”, a system in which the US serves as the protector of its subordinate states (in this case Canada and European NATO) and creator of stable international environment that subordinates desire. In exchange, the subordinates offer diplomatic and military support to Washington’s military adventures and active contributions to US economic preeminence (Ignatieff, 2006). By engaging in Empire Lite, Canada was able to obtain the security it desired without paying an unacceptable price.

### **Impact of US Decline on Canada and a Case for Trans-Atlantic Solution**

For Ottawa, the biggest question that a US decline poses is the potential security implications for Canada. Unfortunately, given Canada’s economically and militarily integrated position to the US, there are no good outcomes for the future of Canadian stability. There are two outcomes that can result from Canada’s continuation of the North-South approach in an environment of ongoing great power rivalries and American decline entering an era of unpredictability.

First, if war were to break out, Canada would not be able to avoid the possibility of military strikes on its own soil. Due to the high levels of military integration with the US via NORAD, NATO, and the Five Eyes community, Canada is considered by Russia and China as the same target set as the US as many CAF and defence facilities within the country serve as support or force multipliers for American war-fighting capabilities.

Second, if war does not break out but great power tensions reach Cold War levels, the strategic environment for Ottawa would still be concerning. As per the 1938 US-Canada security bargain, Washington would inevitably utilize a variety of social, economic, political, and military pressures to coerce Ottawa into adopting military force postures, acquiring military capabilities, or forcing American troops onto Canadian soil to bolster its own security (Barry & Bratt, 2008). If any of these requests were to be rejected, it could result in the possible occupation of Canada or a Washington-sponsored regime change in Canada similar to the one in 1963 that brought Lester Pearson into power as a result of John Diefenbaker’s refusal to assist the US during the Cuban Missile Crisis (National Post, 2015).

Whether great power wars start or not, the prospects for Canada's survival are minimal, as the only fate awaiting Ottawa will be either state destruction via a nuclear fire-fight, or the end of Canada's status as a sovereign state as a result of American actions. In the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Canada is on the cusp of a power transition between two global superpowers; similar to the aftermath of the Second World War, the great power that is handing over power will once again be a key provider of Canadian security. Therefore, this paper suggests that there is only one solution for Ottawa. Ottawa must reduce Canada's military and economic integration with the United States to minimal levels and pursue collective defence with another great power that is both more responsible on the international stage and more willing to hear Ottawa's advice.

### **(Back to) The Future: A Trans-Atlantic Solution**

Excluding the US, there is only one great power (or a community of powers) that Ottawa can rely on to replace the role of Washington; Canada's European NATO allies. In particular, the leading states on the continent such as Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, and The Netherlands due to their economic and military power (Eurostat, 2017). The primary reason why China and Russia are not considered is because currently, these two countries are the US' strategic rivals. If Ottawa were to develop close relations with these two countries, particularly in the military sphere, it would trigger a harsh reaction from the US out of its security interests.

Other than being Canada's only safe option for collective defence, European NATO members embody economic and strategic characteristics that are compatible with Canadian interests. First, in terms of economic power, with a population of 511 million and a GDP of US\$16.39 trillion (The World Bank, 2017), European NATO members are a source of diversification for Canada. Due to Europe's intense reliance on natural resource imports (European Commission, n.d.), and the signing the of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between Ottawa and Brussels in 2017 (European Commission, 2017), there will be significant potential for EU-Canada trade and economic integration in the years to come if Ottawa decides to further develop its relations with Brussels. If this deepened economic and political relationship becomes a reality, Ottawa will become less susceptible to Washington's influence on defence and foreign policy issues via exploiting Canada's heavy dependence on US-Canada trade (in which 20% of Canada's GDP comes from exporting natural resources and goods to the US) (Embassy of the United States of America, 2014), which in turn will safeguard Canadian foreign policy independence.



Second, when it comes to political and strategic characteristics there are many overlapping values and interests that Europe shares with Canada. First, Europeans have a strong distaste for centralized rule over the continent. Instead, many states prefer pluralism, which over centuries became the defining trademark European of order and practices (Kissinger, 2015). Europe as such, strongly favours management of continental and international affairs within a multilateral framework as opposed to a unilateral alternative controlled by a single great power (Kissinger, 2015). Despite the recent decision of the UK to leave the European Union, the values that have prevailed in the continent still favour a multilateral framework, as opposed to a unilateral alternative, controlled by a single great power. Throughout history, the majority of Europe's wars were fought to prevent the continent from being dominated by a single power, which can be seen in the Thirty Years War against the Catholic Church, the Napoleonic Wars led by Napoleon Bonaparte, and as recently as the two World Wars against Germany (Kissinger, 2015). Second, unlike the US, Europe tends to avoid conducting regime changes and imperial adventures abroad. Since the founding of its current power structure under both NATO and the EU by its post-war leaders, Europe has rejected the path of pursuing a foreign policy based on military primacy. Instead, it has chosen to create conditions for human betterment at home and abroad (Kissinger, 2015).

When it comes to military affairs, France and the UK built nuclear arsenals just big enough to be considered great powers, and other European states, much like Canada, built a conventional military with just the right strength to defend collectively against the Soviet threat as well as secure a voice in NATO decision-making and in turn influence the direction of US military pre-eminence (Kissinger, 2015). During the Cold War, except for the UK, France and The Netherlands, which conducted wars outside of Europe due to conflicts with their colonies, Europe has kept its militaries within the confines of the continent. This policy was maintained despite major disturbances like the Iran-Iraq War and the Arab-Israeli Wars which threatened oil imports (Gallis, 1987). In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Europe remains consistent with such policy despite the dominance of US primacy. Since 1991, the Europeans have largely been critical of US overtures for regime change and primacy. As a result, many European states have largely refused to participate in any US-led foreign venture. Instead, in the last 26 years Europe has largely focused on peacekeeping operations in Former Yugoslavia and stability/capacity-building operations in the Sahel region in Africa and Mediterranean Littoral. The intention of these operations is to assist states in resolving conflicts before instability can expand into a regional crisis that would endanger European stability. The only exception to this pattern would be the

War in Afghanistan and Libya, where Europeans joined US regime change operations either to check and influence Washington's unilateralism or to fulfill the geopolitical objectives of a few EU/NATO member states (Tierney, 2016). These European overtures both ended in failure, which further convinced Europe that it should avoid military operations that are not absolutely necessary to its strategic survival. Furthermore, the failure of Afghanistan in particular has proved to the Europeans that the US will behave unilaterally when their perceived interests are at stake regardless of allied positions (Ross, 2011, p.3637).

Third, the election of Donald Trump and his lambasting of both NATO and the EU over their free-riding off US military capabilities, and accusations of achieving economic success at the expense of Americans, has pushed European tolerance of the US (Olterman, 2017). Additionally, American primacy on the European continent and its peripheries has caused further tensions. As a result of US pursuit of primacy against Russia through expansion of NATO and attempting to suppress Russian nuclear capabilities, Europe is now a target of Russian conventional military coercion. Moreover, unconventional hybrid warfare in which far-left and far-right movements spawned by Russian psychological warfare are threatening to destroy the political stability of nearly every major European power.

Furthermore, US wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and to a certain extent Syria have led to the destabilization of the Middle East (Mearsheimer, 2017). The resulting refugee crisis in which millions of Afghani, Iraqi, and Syrian refugees flooded various European countries has triggered a massive wave of instability across Europe in the form of extreme racial tensions and terrorist attacks. As a result, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and former French President Francois Hollande announced that "Europe's fate is in our hands" (Cook, 2017), which is now viewed by many as a declaration that European NATO and the EU will conduct their foreign and defence policy independent of American action. Though policies for creating a brand new joint military command among EU member states without the involvement of the US are new (Cook, 2017), some of the critical foundational work has begun. Most notably, Germany has created multinational brigades, where elite troops from various major EU/NATO states are integrated into the German military command and operational structure (Braw, 2017). The use of English as the lingua franca breaks down cultural and historical barriers, while the harmonization of operational procedures, and interoperability of military capabilities achieved in this framework will be very likely adopted by the EU (Braw, 2017).

## **Policy Recommendations: Canadian Defence Policy in the Incoming New Era**

In order to make such a strategic realignment possible, Canada must undergo a significant change to its foreign and defence policy. This paper will only offer recommendations on Canadian security policies and CAF force structure in order to meet this proposed change.

Ottawa must pursue a twin approach to its foreign and security. First, the 1938 US-Canada Security Bargain and the implied threat to Canadian sovereignty it carries will be a reality that Ottawa will have to deal with so long as Canada exists as a sovereign state. With great power rivalries increasing to Cold War levels, and the introduction of cutting edge technologies, North America is once again under the threat of nuclear annihilation. Though the hypersonic weapons threat from China may be minimal due to the mutual assured deterrence, the Russian Tu-160M2 will pose a significant threat to continental security. Russia, like the US, has a nuclear counterforce first-use policy, in addition to being the power most threatened by American military primacy. There is a very high possibility that if tensions in Eastern Europe escalate and Moscow thinks a NATO conventional attack is imminent, Russia will resort to tactical nuclear escalation to force the potential invading countries to halt their military advance (Majumdar, 2016). Utilizing Tu-160M2 bombers to launch conventional Kh-104 cruise missiles to target American BMD and C4ISTAR sites in North America could also potentially be a part of that plan. For Canada the prophetic assessment of late R.J. Sutherland is making a comeback: in the coming years, there will be heavy-handed pressure from Washington to coerce Ottawa to ensure Canadian soil, Air Defence Identification Zones (ADIZ), and areas of responsibilities under NORAD do not become gaps that Russian bombers can exploit (Sutherland, 1962). As a result, before enhancing its strategic relations with Europe, Ottawa must ensure the safety of the North American continent for the sake of its sovereignty and foreign policy independence. For the CAF, such policies will entail the major procurement of ABM and air defence capabilities in large numbers to ensure there is full defence coverage of North American airspace, as well as rapid response methods to deal with incoming Russian bombers.

Second, Ottawa will inevitably be required to field a significant defence commitment that may even approach the level of Cold War commitments to the European continent as well as other geographical areas that are either joint concerns for both parties or just Europe. Though it is in the nature of collective defence that Ottawa contributes it forces to the alliance, there are two additional

reasons why such commitments must be made. First, the security situation on the European continent has reached dire levels unseen even during the height of the Cold War. Russia has few strategic buffer zones and will likely attempt land grabs while also utilizing hybrid warfare to cause political disruption and create a more favourable strategic environment. As a result, in order to keep Europe a credible concert of great powers that can serve as a force multiplier for Canadian interests, Ottawa will have to inevitably commit a fairly large military contingent to reassure European states. To the same effect, the refugee crisis will also continue to cause disruption. Out of Canadian interests as well as for the security of its European allies, conducting a variety of peacekeeping and stability operations in these European periphery regions (particularly the Sahel Region and Libya) will become a necessity. As a result, a significant Canadian ground and naval commitment will be needed to carry out the dual tasks of preventing these regions from becoming failed states as well as curbing the flow of refugees into Europe.

### **Resurrecting the CAF**

The CAF at its current state is in a poor state to handle the two-theatre military mission that will be asked of it under this new foreign and security policy. Since the 1990s, and with the exception of the period between 2006 and 2008, the CAF has suffered a series of budgetary and political neglect by three consecutive governments, and as of 2017, Canadian defence spending has hit its historical all-time low straddling 1% of GDP (“North America”, 2017). As a result of this neglect and cutback, no service branches within the CAF are in a state to effectively fulfill their mandate.

The Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) is rapidly losing its capabilities to fulfill its mandate of North American continental air defence and support of NATO operations abroad. Since 1983 the procurement of its current CF-18 Hornets, the fleet has rapidly decreased from 138 fighters to 77, due to the cannibalization of fighters to maintain operation readiness under a constrained budget (Gortney, 2017). This number is expected to further decrease as these fighters are now serving past their 30 years recommended shelf-life (Gortney, 2017). If no new fighters are procured, the RCAF may be downgraded into an air patrol/police force as the degrading airframes and dated electronics render these fighters completely obsolete in a modern air war. This means in the near future they will not have the capabilities to effectively intercept incoming bombers heading towards North America or conduct air missions in contested aerospace.

In 2017, the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) became a de facto green-water navy that is only capable of independently operating within Canadian coastal waters and immediate maritime periphery as opposed to being a blue-water navy that can conduct maritime expeditionary operations. There are two primary drivers behind this degradation of operational capabilities.

First, is the retirement of the Iroquois-Class guided-missile destroyer (DDG). This class of DDGs armed with SM-2 Block IIIA surface-to-air missiles (SAM) served a critical role of providing area air defence for a naval taskforce (Wagner, 2016). Without these SAMs and their ability to detect and engage incoming missiles from a long distance the Halifax-class frigates become extremely vulnerable as their Evolved Sea Sparrow SAMs are only designed to detect and engage incoming threats at a close range (Wagner, 2016).

Second, with the retirement of Protecteur-Class supply ships, none of the RCN's warships will be able to operate far from Canadian waters ("North America", 2017). The RCN is still internationally recognized as a blue-water navy however, because of the dual effects of the RCN's high interoperability with the US navy (Wagner, 2016) and the naval replenishment agreement signed with Spain and Chile ("North America", 2017).

Third, the primary problem of the Canadian Army concerns its numbers. At the time of writing, the Canadian Army is approximately 34,800 strong with its frontline troops divided into three Canadian Mechanized Brigade Groups (CMBG, with approximately 5000-6000 troops each) commanded by three of the five divisions currently fielded by the Canadian Army ("North America", 2017). Based on the CAF standard and battle-tested operating procedure, the "rule of three" must be followed in order to effectively sustain long term expeditionary operations for the Canadian Army, as well as the Royal Canadian Air Force and Navy. The rule of three states that whenever a major expeditionary operation is undertaken, the Canadian Army must dedicate three times the number of troops required to sustain the task. One unit will be in theatre, one unit will be preparing to deploy, and a final unit will be on a rest cycle (Gurney, 2016). If any deployment exceeds the size of a battlegroup, the deployment will automatically turn into a full brigade level operation (Gurney, 2016). Given the Canadian Army's current structure, the number of forces that the Canadian Army sustains will only allow Ottawa to commit effectively to a single theatre which will be grossly inadequate given the deteriorating geostrategic situation in both Europe and its peripheries (Gurney, 2016).

Rebuilding the CAF after nearly three decades of neglect will require significant funding increases and equipment procurement from Ottawa that will run Canadian defence spending up to at least 2% (or double the current budget) and well beyond the increases recommended by Ottawa's recent defence review (BBC News, 2017). This paper will only make recommendations for 3 important capabilities that the CAF would require (hereby the "Big Three") under a Europe-aligned foreign and defence policy.

The first is the replacement of the RCAF fleet of near-obsolete CF-18 Hornet fighters. Whether for continental air defence or expeditionary operations, the RCAF must possess combat aircraft that are fast, possess advanced radar systems that are capable of detecting stealth aircraft, and utilize beyond visual range ordinance capable of destroying hostile aircraft at long distances (Ross, 2015). This will be particularly important when it comes to continental air defense and protecting American nuclear deterrence where the RCAF will be facing state-of-the-art and stealth capable Russian Tu-160M2 and Tupolev PAK DA bombers (Ross, 2015). The most ideal option for the RCAF would be American made fighters in the form of the F-22 Raptor, F-15C, or the F/A-18 E/F Super Hornet (Ross, 2015). However, due to the Bombardier-Boeing trade dispute as well as the US-Canadian hostility over the NAFTA negotiation, it will be very unlikely for Ottawa to procure American-made fighters in the near future.

The next best option outside of American made fighters will be the Airbus/BAE Eurofighter Typhoon. The Typhoon is a 4.5<sup>th</sup> generation fighter that possesses an immense amount of cutting-edge capabilities that will meet, if not surpass, RCAF requirements. First, the Typhoon is equipped with the state-of-the-art EJ-2000 turbine engine (Eurofighter Typhoon, n.d.). These engines make the fighter capable of flying at top speeds of Mach 2 with the use of afterburners, as well as the ability to fly at supersonic speeds while cruising, which are capabilities that no American fighters other than the F-22 and F-35 possess (Eurofighter Typhoon, n.d.). Because of these specifications, the Eurofighter Typhoon possesses an impressive combat radius of almost 1400km, which can be further extended with the use of mid-air refuelling (FAS Military Analysis Network, 2017). Second, the Typhoon is equipped with both an Active Electronically-Scanned Array radar and Infrared Search and Track suite for its avionics (Eurofighter Typhoon, n.d.), which provide the fighter the best means with current airborne technology of tracking stealth aircraft (Ross, 2015). What makes the Typhoon truly effective is the ordinance it is capable of carrying. Not only can the Typhoon carry all American-made air-to-air ordinance currently fielded by the RCAF, it is also equipped with the world's deadliest air-to-air missile, the MBDA METEOR. The

METEOR missile's 100+km range, ability to conduct speed and course correction, and its massive no-escape zone (distance in which aircraft cannot evade incoming missiles solely by manoeuvre, give the Typhoon an edge that no state can currently match (Beckhusen, 2016). When the Typhoon gets forward deployed to airfields close to the approach path of any potential incoming bombers and working in conjunction with American capabilities via NORAD, the probability of a successful attack on the North American continent will be cut dramatically. Due to the characteristics of bombers being slow and lacking manoeuvrability, their chances of surviving or breaching an intercept by a fighter like the Typhoon will be very small. In addition, due to recent upgrades, the Typhoon can utilize a wide variety of air-to-surface ordinance ranging from anti-ship cruise missiles to precision-guided ordinances like the JDAM and Paveway bombs, which also makes the Typhoon an excellent platform for expeditionary operations (Beckhusen, 2016).

The second item on this paper's "Big Three" list will be the procurement of the Aegis Combat System for the RCN's next generation warships to replace the current fleet of Halifax-class frigates in the late 2020s to early 2030. The Aegis is a dual role combat system that allows any equipped warships to have the capabilities of ballistic missile defence and area air-defence utilizing an array of sensors and radars, as well as an arsenal of missiles (SM-3 missiles for missile defence and SM-2 Block IIIA for area air-defence) equipped onboard Mark 41 VLS pods installed on warships (Martin, n.d.). This system will resolve a large number of capability gaps the RCN faces. First, Canadian warships will regain the capability of independently operating in dangerous waters such as the Baltic Sea or eastern sections of the Mediterranean Sea where Russian A2/AD presence is heavy. Second, the ballistic missile capabilities of the Aegis could be tied into the American BMD system via the Aegis Global Network at any given time if the need arises to enhance North American continental security, thus giving Washington additional assurance that Ottawa is a staunch contributor to its security. This translates into more independence for Canadian foreign policy and the reduction of American pressure for freeriding.

Finally, the last item of the "Big Three" will be a massive expansion of the Canadian Army. With the current structure of maintaining only three CMBGs, the Canadian Army will very likely face a scenario where its soldiers will be stretched extremely thin across many theatres, be overworked as rest cycles are cut to or moved from primary reserve positions at home into expeditionary roles, thus degrading the Canadian Army's ability to address domestic emergencies. In order to prevent this, the Canadian Army must expand from the current three

CMBGs to five or six. The process, which will involve recruiting up to 15,000 troops, will take many years to accomplish. However, Ottawa could start this process by converting the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division, which currently serving as both a mobile headquarters and an operational enabler unit (made up of 4 Air Defence Regiment, 21 Electronic Warfare Regiment, and 4 Combat Engineer Support Regiment), into a full frontline unit by adding a CMBG into its order of battle (Government of Canada, 2017). By doing so, it will temporarily help to alleviate the problem of being overworked in a potential multi-theatre brigade-level expeditionary operation. By having a fourth CMBG to tap for manpower, smaller scale battlegroup-sized missions can be conducted despite having an entire CMBG already committed elsewhere.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, Canada currently resides in a world that is undergoing a major shift in the global balance of power. The US, once seen as global superpower, is now seeing its hegemony challenged. Driven by this strategic thinking, the US has brought about its own decline by over-extending itself by simultaneously engaging in two wars that are proven to be decade-long quagmires, and great power rivalry with both a rapidly rising China and a resurging Russia. The problem of such over-extension has been exacerbated by Washington's mismanagement of its economy, which led to the loss of livelihood for tens of millions of its citizens. Now, tensions are at an all-time high among great powers worldwide, with political elites in Washington that feel like there is a closing window of opportunity where a war must be fought to preserve America's dominance.

For Canada, a middle power that requires foreign security guarantees either from a great power or a from collective defence alliance, will suffer grievously if it continues the status quo of extracting such guarantees from the US. The only option that Ottawa can utilize to maximize its survival will be to distance itself from the US by returning to its roots and forming an enhanced security relationship with Europe that shares Ottawa's concerns and vision beyond the framework currently established by NATO.

In the coming decades, Canada will witness a historic phenomenon that will mirror the events of 1945 to 1948 when the last change of global superpowers occurred. The key to Canadian salvation will once again be the strategic ingenuity and diplomatic excellence possessed by people like Louis St. Laurent and Lester Pearson, who guided Canada through its last superpower transition. However,



given the unpredictability and potential volatility of the last transition, having capable leaders at the pinnacle of power in Ottawa is not enough. There also must be a concerted effort by the Government of Canada and the Canadian public who have the will to settle for nothing short of success to accept the reality of the geostrategic environment that Canada currently resides in and take the action required to maximize chances of survival. That will inevitably include rebuilding the CAF to a size unseen since the height of the Cold War despite unwillingness from both the incumbent government and the public.

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