DEFENDING THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA, IN NORTH AMERICA AND ABROAD

John J. Noble

From Franklin Roosevelt's Queen's University address of 1938, the mutual defence of Canada and the United States has been the central tenet of Canadian foreign and defence policies. With rare exceptions, notably John Diefenbaker's reneging on accepting nuclear Bomarc missiles in 1963, the policy of mutual defence has been adhered to by every Canadian government since Mackenzie King's in the 1940s. Paul Martin's decision not to participate in ballistic missile defence can be seen as a break with that tradition. John Noble, both a student and practitioner of Canada-US relations, looks back at Canada-US defence policy, from the end of the Second World War and the creation of NATO and NORAD, to the end of the Cold War and the present realities of the post 9/11 world. While he regards BMD "as a high-tech Maginot Line," he also writes that once the US "decided to proceed with BMD we should have supported it."

Depuis le discours de Franklin Roosevelt prononcé en 1938 à Queen's University, le principe de défense mutuelle du Canada et des États-Unis est au cœur de notre politique étrangère et de défense. À de rares exceptions près, notamment lorsque John Diefenbaker a manqué à sa promesse d'accepter les missiles nucléaires Bomarc en 1963, ce principe a été reconduit par tous les gouvernements depuis celui de Mackenzie King dans les années 1940. Aussi peut-on considérer que Paul Martin a rompu avec la tradition en refusant sa participation à la défense antimissile balistique (DMB). À la fois observateur et acteur des relations canado-américaines, John Noble examine la politique de défense de nos deux pays depuis la fin de la Seconde Guerre mondiale jusqu'à la création de l'OTAN et de NORAD, en passant par les derniers feux de la guerre froide et les réalités de l'après-11 septembre. S'il considère la DMB comme « une ligne Maginot de haute technologie », il n'en estime pas moins que « nous aurions dû l'appuyer après que les États-Unis eurent décidé de la mettre en œuvre ».

The recent debates in Canada as to whether or not there should be a North American perimeter strike me as increasingly sterile and miss the point that a perimeter has existed for many years in the defence field. That perimeter is steadily being strengthened in other fields in light of the changing nature of the security threats to North America.

Proposals for a North American security perimeter have been around for some time, and can be traced back to 1823 and President Monroe's unilateral declaration that "the American continents…are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers." In 1904 President Theodore Roosevelt stated that the United States was justified in exercising "international police power" to put an end to chronic unrest or wrongdoing in the Western Hemisphere. This so-called Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine contained a great irony: whereas the Monroe Doctrine had been sought to prevent European intervention in the Western Hemisphere, the Roosevelt Corollary justified American intervention throughout the Western Hemisphere. One could argue, therefore, that those aspects of President George W. Bush's National Security Strategy of September 2002 that deal with pre-emptive action and unilateralism are merely a modification of the Roosevelt Corollary by expanding it from the Western Hemisphere to the entire world, i.e., the new Bush Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine.

In August 1938, on the eve of the Second World War, President Franklin Roosevelt's acceptance speech for an

honorary doctorate at Queen's University included the following commitment: "The Dominion of Canada is part of the sisterhood of the British Empire. I give to you assurance that the people of the United States will not stand idly by if domination of Canadian soil is threatened by any other Empire." Prime Minister Mackenzie King, in response to Roosevelt's pledge to protect Canada, said "we too have obligations as a good and friendly neighbour and that enemy forces should not be able to pursue their way either by land, sea or air to the United States across Canadian territory." That two-way commitment has been the essence of Canada-US defence co-operation ever since, and Mackenzie King's commitment, which no subsequent Canadian prime minister has ever renounced, is even more relevant in the post 9/11 era. Dwight Mason, a former deputy head of mission at the US embassy in Ottawa, and subsequently US co-chair of the bilateral Permanent Joint Board of Defence (PJBD), has suggested that Paul Martin's decision not to be part of ballistic missile defence (BMD) is an opting out of one aspect of North American defence in the knowledge that the United States would have welcomed such co-operation, and that it is therefore a backing away from Mackenzie King's commitment in 1938.

In 1940 Roosevelt and Mackenzie King went on to create the PJBD and the 1941 Hyde Park Agreement co-ordinated economic war mobilization of the two countries. Canada was involved in Project Manhattan, which developed the atomic bomb, and much Canadian uranium made its way into the American nuclear weapons program up until the mid-1960s, when it was stopped by Lester Pearson.

At the start of the Cold War, Canada and the United States worked closely together to create NATO, where an attack on one member was considered an attack on all. The Canadian Forces deployed in Europe from the early 1950s until 1994 were not there as peacekeepers. It was a fighting force of army and air units to help deter the Soviet threat.

Canadian and American forces fought together in the UN-authorized peace-making operation in Korea. Lester Pearson worked closely with the United States during the Suez crisis, and he notes in his memoirs that it was an American that he used to obtain the General Assembly's agreement for the creation of United Nations Emergency Force, for which he was subsequently awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

NORAD was created in 1958 as a joint command to deal with the Soviet manned bomber threat. The DEW line agreement had been signed in 1955, creating a line of radar across Northern Canada, built and maintained mainly by Americans. Just before NORAD came into being, the world witnessed Sputnik, the first Soviet satellite in space and a new threat from intercontinental ballistic missiles against which there was no direct defence. NORAD created a formal defence perimeter around the United States and Canada that had existed informally since the Roosevelt-King exchange of 1938. It was expanded to include the threat from space and missiles, and was renamed the North American Aerospace Defence Command.

At the time of the Cuban missile crisis, Prime Minister Diefenbaker refused to put the Canadian Forces on alert, and discovered to his astonishment that the Canadian military had already done so. Diefenbaker got into even bigger trouble with the US government and military when he refused to arm the Bomarc anti-aircraft missiles, which he had chosen as a replacement for the cancelled Avro Arrow, with the nuclear weapons for which the Bomarc was designed. His government imploded with several ministers, including Douglas Harkness, the minister of national defence, resigning on the issue. Pearson reversed the Liberal Party's stance on nuclear weapons, and won a minority government in the 1963 election in which anti-Americanism played a key part. Pearson not only armed the Bomarcs with nuclear weapons, he also gave our forces in Europe nuclear- tipped short-range Honest John missiles and nuclear bombs on CF-104 Starfighters for offensive use. Pearson's reversal of Liberal policy on nuclear weapons earned him the title "the defrocked Prince of Peace" from Pierre Elliott Trudeau, and was not popular inside parts of the Liberal Party.

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Pierre Trudeau started off his government in 1968 with a review of our commitment to NATO and a very public debate among ministers. Ross Campbell, our ambassador to NATO at the time, tells a wonderful story about Trudeau, Ivan Head and NATO in 1968. He says both believed that if Canada withdrew from NATO, the Czechs would leave the Warsaw Pact! What happened, of course, is that we announced a cut of 50 percent of our troops stationed in Europe, and the Russians then invaded Czechoslovakia. The Europeans at the time feared that such a reduction might encourage a similar move by the United States.

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Prime Minister Mackenzie King and President Franklin Roosevelt in Quebec City in 1936. FDR's Queen's University speech in 1938, where he pledged the mutual defence of the United States and Canada, was the template for the bilateral relationship on continental security.

I understand that Foreign Affairs Canada recently planned a conference on Diefenbaker's foreign policy, but somewhere at the political level it was felt best to postpone it for fear of analogies being drawn between Diefenbaker and the Bomarc and Paul Martin and BMD. My original reaction to this was that there was no real analogy between the Diefenbaker indecision on arming the Bomarcs and the Martin dithering and finally saying "no" to BMD. Rather, I thought, the real analogies are with Pierre Trudeau and his highly unpopular decision to test the cruise missile in 1983 and Brian Mulroney's decision to say "no" to President Reagan's invitation to participate in the Strategic Defence Initiative in 1985.

In 1979, Canada, along with all other NATO countries, adopted a two-track decision in response to the Soviet deployment of intermediate range missiles to target cities in Western Europe. The first track was to counter this deployment with a NATO deployment if the Soviets did not dismantle their INF forces. The second track was to seek ways to get the Soviets to dismantle those weapons. Crunch time came in 1983 when, in the absence of any Soviet pull-back, NATO decided to deploy Pershing and cruise missiles in Europe. At the same time the US government asked Canada for permission to test its air- launched Cruise missile in Canada's northern terrain, which closely resembles that of the Soviet Union.

Trudeau faced the same sort of majority public opinion against testing the cruise missile back in 1983 that Prime Minister Martin faces today, except the threat of a nuclear conflagration with the USSR has receded and BMD is not aimed at Russia, whereas one of the prime targets of the Cruise was to have been the Soviet Union. In the run-up to his decision to ignore majority public opinion and the views of some of his caucus and cabinet (Lloyd Axworthy mentions this in his recent book), Trudeau published an open letter to Canadians in May 1983 in which he said: "Canadians want to benefit from the American nuclear umbrella, but they don't want to hold onto the umbrella's handle. To that extent, the

knee jerk anti-Americanism of some Canadians verges on hypocrisy."

That is not the type of statement that most Canadians associate with Pierre Trudeau, but he issued the letter. Trudeau's public letter to Canadians has stood the test of time, and the hypocrisy he saw in parts of his cabinet and caucus is still there today, in even greater quantity. The key point is that Trudeau was not only prepared to exercise leadership, he was prepared to try to sell the decision to Canadians before it was announced.

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Brian Mulroney promised to increase defence spending, which in fact started in Trudeau's last year in office. Mulroney did increase the size of the forces, but ran into stiff opposition from the US Navy when he decided to acquire some nuclear powered submarines. Mulroney got Reagan to overrule the US Navy's objections, but he was forced to cancel the project in the 1990 budget, along with a large icebreaker, which was also known as the world's largest flag pole.

Mulroney had earlier said "no" to Reagan's invitation to join the Strategic Defence Initiative. The initial invitation had been conveyed to NATO defence ministers in Brussels by Casper Weinberger, and Defence Minister Eric Neilsen ordered our ambassador not to report this back to Ottawa, because he wanted to report directly to the PM. Neilsen didn't realize that Weinberger had left the NATO ministerial meeting to tell the press about the invitation. Astute members of the opposition in Ottawa had a field day embarrassing Joe Clark, who had no information from his representatives in Brussels about the event. Mulroney handled the invitation by asking a special parliamentary committee to look at it along with issues related to trade liberalization with the United States.

Mulroney also appointed a special adviser, Arthur Kroeger, to report to him on whether or not we should join. While some of us had predicted that Mulroney's decision might cause problems for us in Washington, that did not happen, in large part because Mulroney had already established good relations with President Reagan and he hadn't dithered on the issue. Nor had the American ambassador in Ottawa made this a touchstone of the relationship, as Paul Celluci did over BMD.

Mulroney worked closely with the first President George Bush on many issues, as outlined in the memoirs Bush and Brent Scowcroft published several years ago. On President Bush's first trip to Ottawa in January 1989, the Mulroney government announced a decision to permit the testing over Canadian territory of the advanced "stealth" cruise missile. Mulroney had delayed a decision on this matter for over 18 months. In January 1988, at the Calgary Winter Olympics, Joe Clark told President Reagan's chief of staff, Ken Duberstein, that the government could not make a decision on the issue until after the free trade issue was resolved. The American administration accepted that at face value and did not make it a public issue. The Free Trade Agreement was secured in the November 1988 general election. One of the first jobs I had as director general of the International Security and Arms Control Bureau was to ensure that Joe Clark's commitment was honoured. The fact that there were only 12 protestors out to denounce the decision must have made Americans wonder why Mulroney had been so sensitive. But times were changing.

Secretary of State James A. Baker accompanied George Bush to Ottawa and was told by Joe Clark that there had to be some progress on the issue of short range nuclear weapons, an issue that was dividing NATO between the US and most of the Europeans (except Margaret Thatcher). That debate continued through the spring of 1989 on the front pages of the *New York Times* and European newspapers. At the same time the Bush administration made known it was looking for initiatives with respect to the Soviet Union. My team in the International Security and Arms Control Bureau had been developing a proposal to revive Eisenhower's 1954 "Open Skies" proposal for aerial surveillance of Warsaw Pact territory by NATO and vice-versa. The CFE negotiations had started in Vienna and would require some strict verification methods. Satellites have certain limitations. I went to Washington in late April to speak to my American counterpart in State and also people at the NSC and the Pentagon. We were knocking on an open door. Prime Minister Mulroney subsequently sent a letter to President Bush recommending this proposal, and he and Joe Clark discussed it with the president in early May when he went to Washington to open the new Canadian embassy. The telling argument used by Mulroney was that if Bush didn't suggest it, Gorbachev might propose it himself. Three days later Bush made a major speech on East/West relations, which included the Open Skies proposal. There was no great enthusiasm for it in the American media, which prompted Joe Clark to write an op-ed for the *New York Times*

saying "don't dismiss the Open Skies proposal." In late May the NATO Summit endorsed the idea and I went off to Eastern Europe to try to sell it to the Hungarians, Czechoslovaks, Poles and Russians.

By late summer the Russians and Americans had agreed, and official invitations were sent out for the first ministerial meeting between NATO and East Bloc foreign ministers in Ottawa in February 1990. For a ministerial meeting to be held less than a year after a proposal is first made was most unusual. The Ottawa Conference was most remembered because we witnessed first hand the dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, when the foreign ministers of the Pact took issue with the position of Soviet foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze on almost every issue. The Ottawa conference also saw the announcement of the 2+4 exercise on German unification, and an infamous NATO ministerial meeting where much angst was spilled over the "Berlin four" leaving the other NATO allies out of the process.

The Open Skies Treaty took several more negotiating conferences to be completed, and its relevance declined significantly after the demise of both the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union. But up until the Ottawa Convention on Antipersonnel Land Mines, it was the only major arms control treaty driven largely by Canada, with close cooperation from the United States.

At the 1989 NATO Summit, the debate on SNF reached the boil and an impasse, and the leaders sent off their foreign ministers to try to resolve it at a midnight meeting. Before doing so Prime Minister Mulroney turned to President Bush across the NATO table and publicly reminded him (in the words of US Supreme Court Justice Learned Hand) that "leadership to be effective has to take into account the views of others." Bush 41 and Jim Baker did a lot of listening, and during the late night session, one of Baker's aides, Dennis Ross, came over to Joe Clark and asked that he put forward some of the ideas for bridging the gap that Mulroney and Clark had first discussed with Bush and Baker in Washington. The eventual compromise did include some of our ideas and Mulroney gave credit to Joe Clark's "deft pen."

The Mulroney government also participated in the first Gulf War in light of the clear violation of international law by Iraq in its invasion of Kuwait. The Chrétien Liberal Opposition, with the sole exception of former leader John Turner, voted against Canadian involvement in an operation authorized by the UN Security Council. Canada was on the Security Council at the time and supported the authorizing resolution.

NORAD's longstanding detection and tracking capability and the American retaliatory capacity (conventional or nuclear) are all that is required to deter any state, rogue or otherwise, from using a missile to attack the United States. We learned from 9/11 that low-tech means can wreak havoc in North America.

Throughout the 1990s, the Balkans Wars resulted in some tension and ultimately close cooperation between Canada and the United States. After Mulroney ensured that Canada had the second largest contingent in UNPROFOR in the summer of 1992, there ensued a debate between the Canadian and American chiefs of defence (Generals John de Chastelain and Colin Powell) about how many troops Canada needed to secure the airport at Sarajevo. General Powell, using traditional American war fighting strategies, suggested 6,000, while General de Chastelain, using Canadian peacekeeping experience, suggested 600, and he was right, at least in the short term. As long as the United States didn't have any troops on the ground, Canada and other NATO allies resisted American efforts to have NATO bomb the Serbs and their Bosnian allies. We feared having our soldiers getting taken hostage, and that was exactly what happened after the first American bombings, when Canadian soldiers were handcuffed to telephone poles as human shields. Gradually the Clinton administration realized that the only way to extricate UNPROFOR (which had a large number of NATO troops) was to get involved itself. Hence the Dayton accords and the replacement of UNPRFOR by NATO's SFOR and, ultimately, the NATO intervention in Kosovo, where Canadian CF-18s flew 10 percent of the missions without authorization by the UN Security Council.

On BMD there are lots of things one could say. For over 15 years I have regarded BMD as a high-tech Maginot Line, because anyone wanting to attack the United States with a nuclear weapon would not resort to delivering it by a missile, which is the most readily detectible and identifiable means. It would be the equivalent of waving a red flag in front of the most powerful bull in the world. NORAD's longstanding detection and tracking capability and the American retaliatory capacity (conventional or nuclear) are all that is required to deter any state, rogue or otherwise, from using a missile to attack the United States. We learned from 9/11 that low-tech means can wreak havoc in North America. BMD does not provide defence from a nuclear attack on North America, only from a nuclear attack by missile. We would better serve the objective of protecting North America from nuclear attack by concentrating a lot more effort and money on the dangers of nuclear proliferation and the hordes of existing nuclear weapons rather than on the

one delivery system least likely to be used. That being said, when the United States decided to proceed with BMD, we should have supported it.

NORAD's early warning and tracking information is an essential element to any BMD system. By agreeing that the NORAD information could be provided to the BMD system last August, Canada became part of BMD, whatever the minister of defence or the PM may claim. If they really didn't want to have any part in BMD, they should have denied use of the NORAD information. That wouldn't have stopped BMD, since the Americans could certainly replicate NORAD's capacity elsewhere. What it would have done is make NORAD totally redundant, and clearly the Canadian government of last August didn't want to do that. The government is claiming it has said "no" to BMD, when in fact it has said "yes" to the only thing that the United States needs from Canada from a technical viewpoint. While the American administration would have liked to have political support for a project designed to provide defence for North Americans, they don't need that for the system to become operational.

I don't believe that the US system will be capable of differentiating between missiles aimed at Buffalo or Toronto, or Detroit and Windsor, or Vancouver or Seattle, or Montreal and New York, and that the vast majority of Canadians will be protected by the system just as much as Americans. Many Canadians seem comforted by their belief that we are not threatened by a nuclear attack on the United States, without realizing the horrible consequences to many Canadians of a nuclear attack on many centres in the United States. They, and the government that is supposed to lead us, are either sleepwalking through history or living in cloud cuckoo land.

The BMD decision shows there is no taste in the Martin government for leadership in the face of public opinion, in contrast to Lester Pearson in arming the Bomarcs and Trudeau with respect to cruise missile testing in Canada. I have come to the opinion that the analogy between BMD and the Bomarc is perhaps the right one, but in that case, Diefenbaker's defence minister had the courage to resign, whereas Bill Graham would have us believe we are not part of a system that can't work without the information provided by NORAD.

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Stephen Harper lost a golden opportunity for statesmanship by not standing up in the House some time ago and assuring the PM that his party would support BMD, even if members of the Liberal Party would not. The stance he has taken on BMD since last July is not one of leadership.

But I am not a Cassandra, predicting the end of NORAD or dire consequences for the Martin government in Washington as a result of the BMD decision. The relationship is too deep, too diversified, and too important to the national interests of both countries for that.

So here are some of the lessons I want to suggest:

1) Canada-US defence relations have a long history of cooperation. There have been times when that cooperation has been strained, mainly by political actions on either side of the border. The decision on BMD is not the first and certainly not the worst example on the Canadian side of the border. The relationship has withstood the test of time because we are both part of North America and neither of us can defend the continent without the active support and cooperation of the other. We have a border with 15 smart points and 5,000 miles of primeval forest. Experience has shown that the United States is unable to prevent massive illegal penetration across its southern border, which has 10 times as many Americans officers patrolling it as do our much more vast and remote land and water frontiers.
2) Two of Canada's cherished Liberal leaders, Lester Pearson and Pierre Trudeau, didn't shy away from taking decisions on defence issues that were politically unpopular with their caucus and public with opinion. Even Mackenzie King, the original Mr. Dithers, promised that no one would be allowed to attack the US from Canadian territory. Similarly, Brian Mulroney wasn't afraid to say "no" to President Reagan on SDI, because he had established a clear working relationship with Reagan and had increased defence spending and addressed other American preoccupations.

3) Interpersonal relations between Canadian and American leaders are important as they establish the basis on which differences can be better understood and accepted. Martin wants to be seen in Washington as being different from Jean Chrétien, but his BMD decision casts him in the same light.
4) The US will never be satisfied with the level of defence spending by Canada, which is only ever taken seriously in Canada in times of real crisis. If the US really wants Canada to do something involving difficult domestic political decisions, it is perhaps best to do it behind closed doors rather than through public admonishments from their ambassador in Ottawa. Public diplomacy has a role to play in both Ottawa and Washington, but so does quiet diplomacy. The US needs an ally like Canada that doesn't always see issues through the same prism and isn't afraid to make its views known in a constructive manner. But Canadian governments also need to avoid falling for the knee-jerk anti-Americanism that pervades our culture and political process.
5) Our new ambassador to Washington, Frank McKenna, may have precipitated the announcement of the BMD decision by his honesty. In future he may have to be more careful in his public statements, unless he is absolutely certain what the real intentions of his political masters are.
6) Sometimes Canadian objectives can best be achieved by privately urging the US president to make proposals rather than have them come from the prime minister of Canada. Pearson used to say you can get a lot more done if you give someone else the credit, and Mulroney proved that with the Open Skies proposal.
7) Don't count the welcome commitments in the February 23 budget on increased defence spending as money in the bank. Most of it won't come until after another federal election.

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8) NORAD remains in the strategic interest of both countries. Indeed, the extension of NORAD-type arrangements for our land and sea forces, which also have a long history of cooperation, would clearly be in our strategic national interest.

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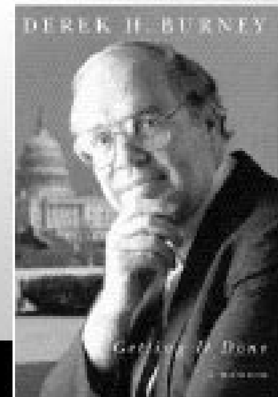

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