

Notes for an Address

**The International Environment
and Canadian Foreign Policy: A Time For Candor**

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Security in a New Era: Rethinking Canadian Defence and Foreign Policy

**Check against delivery*

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Hugh Segal
President
Institute for Research on Public Policy

It is almost axiomatic that the nature of the foreign policy opportunities and threats Canada and our allies now face has changed dramatically. Of course, in strategic terms every time a fundamental shift becomes conventional wisdom, that is a particularly good time to reflect on whether we are creating a new orthodoxy as confining as the last.

The historic decision not to deploy another military rotation to Afghanistan – a decision I view as tragic but likely unavoidable, is a watershed in Canada's defence and foreign policy. It is a watershed because it is the first post-war departure from what I have liked to refer to as the Sokolsky Principle, enunciated on various occasions by Professor Joel Sokolsky, the Dean of Arts and Science at the R.M.C., and an advisor to the IRPP Research programme on National Security and Military Interoperability. Simply stated, in response to the unending concern about an armed forces that is underfinanced, below necessary complement or insufficiently equipped, Sokolsky always arrayed the historic fact that every time Canadian forces were dispatched to do a job, they did it exceedingly well, punched well above their weight, brought honour to Canada and the flag and returned from their task with kudos all around. As every deployment seemed to be extremely well-discharged, why, Sokolsky would ask, would the "government du jour" take the lament about insufficient resources seriously? Now while those who care, including, Sokolsky, understand that the cost of being understaffed in terms of families and training time was huge, from the politician's perspective the Sokolsky Principle held. When Canada had a foreign, domestic or security reason to deploy armed forces, they would be deployed. The outstanding men and women in uniform would do a great job. The problem seemed perpetually manageable.

Well, the Sokolsky Principle only holds water if a deployment can actually be made. If the general staff and the government determine that we lack the capacity or flexibility to make a deployment or a rotation then the Sokolsky Principle no longer applies.

What this particular watershed lays open for the broad public and even the most complacent of politicians is that we now cannot do anything like our fair share in support of like-minded allies and coalitions even when confronting a particular threat to our national security is an absolute national priority; so when any prime minister says in good faith, "we will stand shoulder to shoulder" with our allies, we must add the qualifying phrase – "from time to time."

The outstanding, most recent report of the Standing Committee on National Defence, the work of this Canadian Institute for Strategic Studies, the work of David Bercuson and Jack Granatstein, recent research reports by the C.D. Howe Institute and the IRPP all underline what I needn't repeat here.

So as we look at the spectrum of external opportunities and threats and the way they have changed, we must be mindful of how our lack of political capacity, our lack of will to face the threats directly with genuine resources is at least as central to the threat we face as the actual threat itself.

The recent analysis of the needs of the army of the future distributed by the Commander of the Army, General Jeffrey, is clearly impacted in some considerable respect by this lack of political will. The Commander of the Army is a realist – precisely what Canadians would want a Commander of the Army to be; so his report is both a strategic design around special forces, rapid deployment and enhanced and specialized training and cutting the cloth to fit the likely budgetary reality. All of which, however one might quibble with specifics, seems overall to be broadly logical and rational.

But again, the threat we face is being addressed not in terms of what defence capacities are necessary – but from the perspective of what capacities are possible.

The remarkable new bridge between NATO – surely the cornerstone of Canada's defence strategy – and Russia underlines how the old framework of polarity has been replaced with multipolar and stateless threats that in some respects require different assets than we have traditionally deployed, and far different deployment strategies and tactics for the assets that we have. These new threats of terrorism, biological and guerrilla war do not differ markedly from the fears of internal sabotage that have been traditional concerns of war time leaders in most conflicts in history. So the notion that we face a completely new world threat spectrum is ahistoric and unrealistic.

I agree with those like the Conference of Defence Associations who argue that we need a foreign policy review and a defence review to actually produce an integrated, going-forward defence and foreign policy thrust. Our new Minister of National Defence, the very decent, able and thoughtful John McCallum, referred Tuesday to a "defence update." I'm not sure whether a policy "review" becoming an "update" is good news or bad. But if it takes place in a vacuum – if foreign policy is not part of the mix, it will end up being a well-intentioned effort to launch the future on one wing, and that would be less than helpful.

Surely, it is time Canadians assessed the new foreign policy environment with a little less of the naivety and sense of perpetual protection from threat that may well have typified some post-Cold War sentiments. Much of our foreign policy during the Cold War was tied to the explicit threat Canadians faced from a thermonuclear exchange between the old USSR and our American allies. Any world tension, local or regional, that had any risk of escalating into a nuclear confrontation between the great powers was a threat to us. So, whether it was Korea, Suez, the Belgian Congo or some other hotspot, working to douse or contain the tension was a clear and precise Canadian foreign policy goal. And, when the time came in the 1980s and early 1990s to stand with President Reagan and Prime Minister Thatcher, Canada under the Mulroney administration stood with the allied position on meeting the Soviets and exceeding them in tactical theatre nuclear weapons, and other deployable assets. This helped produce the incentives for Secretary Gorbachev to choose the path of glasnost that led to the end of the old totalitarianism, the beginning of democracy, the replacement of the old Soviet Union with independent and modestly more democratic states.

In the Cold War's beginning, middle and end periods, between 1945 and 1980, the driving issue of our own national security produced a foreign policy of flexible military deployment, determined peacemaking and peacekeeping engagements and dependable solidarity with NATO allies most of the time. Ironically enough, Prime Ministers Trudeau and Diefenbaker were, for some of their collective 22 years in power, outliers to this intrinsic Canadian position largely because of their distrust of the United States.

St-Laurent, Pearson, Mulroney, Turner and Clark did not share the Diefenbaker-Trudeau "Yank Angst" which always struck me as less of a *cri de couer* for sovereignty and more of a little Canada-based worldview that diminished both our options and perspective.

So now the question we must face squarely is how best to calibrate a foreign policy that addresses Canada's vital interests within the context of the real world we face.

The real world has changed in several critical ways since both the end of the Cold War and the events of September 11, 2001:

1. The polarity that defined opposing powers and forces, and a myriad of client-state relationships everywhere in the world is gone. Russia and the United States, while still competitive, are no longer strategic military enemies; nor are they containing regional policemen who can easily use their client-state relationships to restrain excess in the Middle East, or South Asia, or the Indian subcontinent. The power they had to threaten each other, the networks of the Cold War they maintained, the will to be military enemies has, to everyone's credit been replaced with a less bellicose and more co-operative stance. But that evolution has actually produced a contribution to instability in Central Asia, Africa and the Middle East.
2. The stateless terrorist threat we now face from Al Qaeda and related networks, and the tacit accommodation of terrorism by Iraq, Iran, the Palestinian Authority and others is diffuse, widely arrayed and hard to defend against. Without wasting our time this morning on the causes of this threat (I don't have much patience for the "they are poor—we are rich" justification offered by some on the anti-globalization radical left) it is important to observe that whether they have come from Algeria or Saudi Arabia, the Palestinian refugee camps or elsewhere, the absence of democracy in the nation of origin is a common reality.
3. The bipolar world that ended with the end of the Cold War is slowly being replaced by a world defined by collaborative alliances that exist to advance explicit values and purposes:
 - A. NATO, a clearly growing network of nations freely associating to promote security, democracy, non-aggression and, in the present context, the combating of terrorist threats to all its members – including the now bridged and supportive Russian Federation.
 - B. Shanghai – 6 (Shanghai, co-operation organization including China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan), a revitalized alliance covering a huge part of the globe, embracing many more people than NATO, and dedicated to regional and military co-operation and combating terrorism is noteworthy not only for its size and scope, but for its various linkages with the United States and the allied effort in Afghanistan and elsewhere.
 - C. The European Union, which, while still in some disarray in the issue, is trying to forge a European Security capacity independent of American or purely NATO resources.

This changing framework, combined with instability hotspots in various parts of the world, should suggest a Canadian foreign policy stance that reflects our core values of democracy, human rights, economic and individual freedom, including that uniquely Canadian embrace of tolerance and diversity. It should suggest a strict, pre-emptive posture on terrorist organizations, harbouring countries and strategic terrorist weapon storage facilities. These should be allied military targets – targets of opportunity, and Canada must have the capacity to use its intelligence sources to hunt them down and eliminate them. Waiting until atrocities are committed is not good enough.

That should be a critical part of our threat spectrum analysis of the foreign policy environment. On the opportunity side, we must look at how Canada and Canadians can encourage the development of democracies abroad, support and strengthen emerging democracies and contribute in real terms to the strengthening of the democratic infrastructure of the so-called "second" and "third" worlds. Organizations like CIDA would do well to build less wells and bridges in countries headed up by repressive totalitarian dictators – and invest more in democratic development. Democracies are not likely to make war on each other. Democracies are not usually the source of terrorist threats. A Canadian-inspired "Alliance for Democracy" that saw countries who shared our commitments to democracy investing heavily to build the democratic infrastructure of fair election rules, judicial independence, secret ballot and freedom of political association along with the supportive follow on activities of democratic training, and educating the educators would build wells of goodwill and bridges between like-minded people.

And, as folks speculate about how an unexpected windfall of 7 billion dollars in surplus might be spent, serious investment in more complement and genuine strategic lift capacity for our armed forces is clearly a national priority. With a Finance Minister who is also responsible for national security and a new Defence Minister with strong linkages both to Bay Street and the Department of Finance the opportunity for serious investment should not be missed.

Our economic interests – and the challenge of what I call second-tier globalization should also figure prominently in the foreign policy challenge we face. As Tom Courchene, our Senior Scholar at the IRPP has argued recently, we must now humanize globalization by having the instruments of globalization reflect environmental, democratic, human capital, and social aspiration issues, as well trade rules.

And, we would have a more clarifying and enabling foreign policy if we skipped the endless existential debate about who we are, what we believe in and what makes us unique.

We are a proud and unique country, with a national identity that reflects our European and First Nations founders and the compelling breadth and depth the peoples of the world have brought to our shores.

We are proudly multi-racial, officially bilingual and defiantly pluralist. Our democracy separates church and state, embraces universal participation and accommodates diversity better than most. We have fought with bravery and distinction in wars alongside one mother country, and to liberate the other on various occasions. We have defended freedom and democracy and sent thousands of our young men and women to liberate Europe from the Nazis, defend the sea lanes for our allies, stop communist aggression in Korea and ease global tensions in the Middle East while providing security from mass murders and terrorists as part of our role in Bosnia after the Dayton accords. We are economically productive, massively exporting, with literacy and longevity levels the envy of the world. The Americans are our closest allies, and our toughest competitors, but like all great powers they are self-absorbed and a little myopic. They are still our greatest allies, and we should get over all the complexes and adolescent anxieties, and maximize every possible Canadian benefit from all aspects of the relationship. No foreign policy that fails in this regard is any kind of foreign policy at all. This is about competence – not ideology. Real sovereignty comes from economic strength – the strength that facilitates economic performance, social progress and

genuine military preparedness and combat capacity – whether in the traditional war-fighting context or in the special forces category so relevant in these anti-terrorist days.

Today's foreign policy conditions produce a broad spectrum of threats and opportunities. Our failure to access the opportunities will simply deepen the security and economic threats at the other end of the spectrum.

There are consequences to any action we might take; but the consequences of inertia should not be discounted.

The consequences of lacking the will to pursue, fund and project our specific foreign policy national interests, support our allies and sustain our sovereignty by pulling our weight would be the worst of all, and sadly almost entirely avoidable threat to our well-being. The country we share and the citizens who share it with us deserve far better.