

## **Introduction: Is Canada Now Irrelevant?**

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## **Introduction: Is Canada Now Irrelevant?**

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Talk of war and empire is everywhere. In the 2000 presidential campaign, George W. Bush promised a humble United States, mindful of its own business and respectful of others, but the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 transformed him into a war leader. Those attacks, Michael Ignatieff has argued, unleashed 'an exercise in imperialism. This may come as a shock to Americans, who don't like to think of their country as an empire. But what else can you call America's legions of soldiers, spooks and Special Forces straddling the globe?' (Ignatieff, 2002: 28). As we write in early March 2003, President Bush fights his war on terror on several fronts, at home and in Afghanistan, the Philippines, Pakistan, and Yemen. He is on the edge, too, of opening another front in Iraq, which stands accused of links with Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaeda as well as ambitions to launch weapons of mass destruction and build even more lethal ones. North Korea, far more dangerous than any other external threat because its nuclear weapons capability is real, is left to one side, despite its official standing in Bush's axis-of-evil club. War in Asia would be unthinkable. There is a limit even to the power of the American empire.

<B>Empire: 'Get Used to It'

War and empire, as practised in President Bush's Washington, have presented the international community with a daunting challenge: how to cope with an American colossus awakened from a deep sleep of domestic tranquility and economic good times,

and absolutely determined to have its own way in the world. In one sense, the problem is a familiar one, and one with which Canadians have more than a passing acquaintance. The colossal weight of the United States is hardly news. French journalist and politician J. J. Servan-Schreiber used precisely that terminology in the mid-1960s to describe 'not classic imperialism' but 'an overflow of power' deriving from the sheer size and smack of the American economy and the dynamism of American society. (Servan-Schreiber, 1969: x, 69-71).

Nor is there anything novel in the assertion that Americans, one way or another, are empire-builders. At about the same time that Servan-Schreiber was enjoying blockbuster sales, Michael Ignatieff's uncle, George Grant, published a hugely popular polemic, *Lament for a Nation*, about the defeat of a Canadian nationalism no longer able or willing to cope with the American imperial colossus.

In his *American Empire*, Boston University's Andrew J. Bacevich traces the imperial impulses in recent US foreign policy. Combining the administrations of Presidents George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George Bush the younger under a single rubric, he argues that the 'purpose is to preserve and, where both feasible and conducive to US interests, to expand an American imperium. Central to this strategy is a commitment to global openness--removing barriers that inhibit the movement of goods, capital, ideas and people. Its ultimate objective is the creation of an open and integrated international order based on the principles of democratic capitalism, with the United States as the ultimate guarantor of order and enforcer of norms.' Different drummers, same drum, says Bacevich of the transition from Clinton to another Bush. 'Like it or not, America today *is* Rome' (Bacevich, 2002: 3, 223-4, 244).

Still, something is different. George W. Bush's America is angry, unsubtle, and insecure. The style, Secretary of State Colin Powell apart, is all strut and swagger, the tone one of 'piety' and 'triumphal arrogance' (Miller, 2003: AR 13). 'The Bush folks are big on attitude, weak on strategy and terrible at diplomacy', complained Tom Friedman in the *New York Times* (Friedman, 2003: A25). And there is the President himself, because the new US diplomacy is difficult to separate from the leader who is its inspiration and personification. Describing Bush as he visited Europe last year, a *Guardian* columnist noted that he looked a bit like a character from an Oscar Wilde novel, 'one of those middle-aged mediocrities, who have no enemies, but are thoroughly disliked by their friends' (Younge, 2002: 17). A 'moron', blurted the communications director of one of those friends, the Canadian Prime Minister (Fife and Alberts, 2002: A13). Françoise Ducros was dismissed for her slip, but so slowly and reluctantly that it reinforced the impression of a Jean Chrétien government that held the same view of President Bush.

Bush is a mediocrity perhaps. He is no intellectual, certainly. But he is a believer, solid in his messianic convictions and firmly in control of his administration (Woodward, 2002: 106). He is easy to underestimate. He will not be shaken, and that, for those who worry, is the most worrying aspect of all about Bushism.

Members of the Bush team, understandably enough, shy away from admitting that they are in the business of empire, but the imperial shout is very much in vogue (Lapham, 2003: 7; Dowd, 2003a: A23). 'The American Empire', announced a red-white-and-blue cover of *The New York Times Magazine* on 5 January 2003, complete with a bit of mellow advice, neatly tucked away in brackets at the bottom of the page, 'Get Used to It.' (Ignatieff, 2003). Underlying George Bush's powerful speech to the US Congress, nine

days after 11 September, was the claim that the United States had the right to defend itself and 'defend freedom' wherever it deemed necessary. The 'war' (a word unfashionable in the Bill Clinton 1990s, but back in the American strategic lexicon with a vengeance) on terror was to be an all-out crusade, with no room for ambiguity. The President who said he wanted to preside over a modest country gave the world a blunt ultimatum on 20 September, and he has repeated it dozens of times since: 'Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists' (Bacevich, 2002: 225-32).

In Bush's efforts to disarm and oust Saddam Hussein, the US sought the hearts and armies of old allies and new friends for an attack on Iraq. The response was uneven. Tony Blair's British government saluted loyally, and so did Australia. Eight European nations, including Spain and Italy, signed an open letter of support, and the 10 Vilnius nations of eastern Europe did the same. But many others, including the French and the Germans, made their reservations known and happily gathered up political and diplomatic capital from their disagreement. The governments of Russia, China, Mexico, the Gulf states, South Africa, Turkey, and Canada, among others, voiced their concern about the American strategy. Publics dissented everywhere, letting it be known that unless it was a UN war they wanted no part in it (AFP, 2002). 'American imperialism used to be a fiction of the far-left imagination', the *Guardian* reported in an article on European opinion, 'now it is an uncomfortable fact of life' (Bunting, 2003: 13). The President of the United States did not waver, and issued a new threat. As the *New York Times* put it, 'President Bush did not say, You're with us or against us. He said something far more shrewd: Either you're with us, or you're irrelevant' (Schememann, 2003: WK 1).

The admonition of irrelevance has a particular resonance for America's northern neighbour. It has become conventional wisdom to think of Canada as a vulnerable country in international decline, so dependent on the United States that what little room there was for manoeuvre exists no more (Molot and Hillmer, 2002: 6-7). The media are jammed with commentators and experts saying just that. Canadians, writes veteran observer Richard Gwyn, have become 'invisible' and 'irrelevant' on the international stage (Gwyn, 2003: A13). Historian Michael Bliss has gone so far as to propose that Canada consider joining the United States (Bliss, 2003: A14), a strategy reminiscent of late nineteenth-century annexation movements that sought to tie a struggling Canada to a brilliantly shining United States. Yet Canadians have always married their admiration for the US with a stubborn skepticism towards the American experiment, particularly when the White House is in the grip of those thought to be warmongering Republican ideologues like Ronald Reagan or Bush Two. What to do, then? How to become or stay relevant? Is relevance, defined by President Bush, relevant for Canada and Canadians?

#### <B> The Bush Doctrine

Canada and the world at large are witnessing a major new assertion of US 'hard' power and influence. The Bush administration has made it abundantly clear that it will not permit its allies or international institutions to stand in the way of the projection and use of that power when real or imagined vital security interests are threatened. The President's National Security Strategy (NSS), promulgated one year after 11 September, proceeds from the assumption that the United States is in a position of unparalleled

military strength, political influence, and economic power. It identifies America's main threat as failing states and discounts deterrence and containment as ineffective in a world of amorphous and ill-defined terrorist networks (*Economist*, 2002). The threats in the world are so dangerous that the US should 'not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right of self-defense by acting preemptively' (NSS, 2002: 6). The strategy also states that the US aims to create a new world order that favours democracy and defeats terror at the same time.

Only recently has it been accepted in policy circles that state failures are the single biggest predicament facing the world today, and the NSS document is laudable in recognizing the importance of addressing state failure as an immense structural and global problem that is unlikely to go away in the short run. Many states in the world have failed, are failing, or will fail, largely because the support they received from one or both of the superpowers as proxy allies during the Cold War withered away after the fall of the Berlin Wall. As a result, many weak states were left on their own to live or die or find some existence between the two. The list of failing states is extensive and growing, and all regions of the world are affected by the multiple consequences of these failures: state failures serve as the breeding ground for extremist groups, and most contemporary wars are fought either within nation-states or between states and non-state actors. Few wars pit one nation-state against another. One legacy of the Cold War is that many governments are more readily prepared to wage a conventional war against non-state actors, which are moving targets because they depend on highly decentralized structures that are semi-autonomous and can act and survive on their own.

Bush's National Security Strategy recognizes that conventional approaches to developing a US security policy are inadequate to the task. These traditional approaches can be defined as interest-based or capacity-based. An interest-based strategy is inherently state-based and incapable of addressing faraway and imprecise problems, such as terrorism, that are apparently unrelated to a narrowly defined national interest. A capacity-based approach emphasizing the pursuit of national security policy within existing capabilities is even less applicable because US capabilities and resources now outstrip anything that an adversary could or would want to develop. The NSS suggests a third way based on threat assessment. The US is manifestly in danger both at home and abroad. The Bush strategy is to establish a safe and secure homeland while countering threats, manifest or emergent, from abroad.

None of this is easy or straightforward. In the immediate aftermath of 11 September, media reports indicated that primary countries harbouring terrorists included Afghanistan, Sudan, and Algeria. However, dismantling the Al-Qaeda network now involves intelligence and law enforcement efforts in the over 30 countries where the terrorist gang is believed to have cells. There is also the danger that emphasis will be placed on immediate military solutions to terrorist threats, while the long-term prevention of emergent threats is given a lesser priority. As a consequence, the American penchant for making foreign militaries preferred partners of co-operation in the war against terrorism may undermine delicate civil-military relations in countries such as Pakistan, the Philippines, and Colombia. The implications for countries with fragile or emerging democracies are serious. Hard-won civilian control will be compromised. In other cases, dictators will seize the opportunity thrown up by the Western shift of focus to the fight

against terrorism. They might return to old, dictatorial ways, similar to those seen in the Cold War era. Hard-earned progress towards democracy, progress, and regional integration could be lost.

James Wolfensohn of the World Bank, as well as others who recognize these problems, has called for attention to the root causes of terrorism and state failure, including poverty, political marginalization, and inequality. To be sure, the Bush government's efforts to address threats abroad do take other forms beyond military intervention. Continuities in US foreign policy exist, including training for armies and police forces trying to deal with terrorism, such as in the Philippines, Pakistan, and Yemen; enhanced American participation in multilateral aid programs, where aid is increasingly tied to 'good governance' by recipient countries; and the pursuit of 'integration', which has the US directing many of its policies towards helping countries to join the international flow of trade and finance. As the world's first 'hyperpower', the US will continue to act firmly within the international system—promoting global public goods, encouraging a world economy, sustaining co-operative relationships with the world's principal powers, curbing rogue states, and helping failed states.

But discontinuities are also notable. The Bush National Security Strategy points to three significant changes in US foreign policy. First, it marks a shift towards military pre-emption to address potential security problems, as opposed to imminent threats. Second, with its emphasis on American-centric norms of appropriate state behaviour, the Bush strategy constitutes a revival of ideological differences, based primarily on democratic principles as defined by the US, as a means to differentiate clearly between allies and enemies. Third, with the wars on Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden at centre stage,

the current strategy emphasizes the superficial construction of international politics based on personality, the demonizing of individual leaders rather than a more critical and deeper assessment of national and international problems.

The often-argued assumption that US foreign policy is somehow guided by a choice between unilateralism and multilateralism is also troubling. International politics has never been a simple choice of one over the other. Current problems such as human rights, regional conflicts, and terrorism, as well as larger dilemmas such as the growing power and wealth disparities in the world, do not lend themselves to such simple dichotomous analytical frameworks.

A much more significant concern is whether the US is an 'assertive hegemon' or a 'multilateral leader'. Both terms do not deny American power and importance, but they differ in their interpretation of intent. An assertive hegemon is imposing and blind to the interests of its allies; its emergence results in counterbalancing by regional blocs. Multilateral leadership is a more benign interpretation of American power, suggesting a hyperpower sensitive to and cognizant of the needs and interests of allies and a willingness to work through institutions. Gains on all sides are expected and lead to ongoing co-operation and reciprocity.

Critics who accuse the US of hegemonic ambitions call the war on terrorism a 'war without end' that will 'provide a breeding ground for the terrorism the war aims to eliminate' (Light: 2002). Others say the necessity to have allies, intelligence-sharing, and use of foreign airspace and facilities has made the US more multilateralist than ever, adding that, in Dumbrell's words, 'the US under Bush is committed to a new mixture of unilateralism and multilateralism—defined and pursued almost entirely on America's

terms' (Dumbrell, 2002). Whether the US is in what EU foreign policy commissioner Chris Patten calls 'unilateralist overdrive' (ibid.) may be debatable. What is clear is that traditional US allies are clearly uncomfortable with America's stance. America's relationships with its friends are strained, and the institutions that once held them together are deteriorating under the Bush Doctrine. Can the US hold onto a unilateralist foreign policy and its friends at the same time?

<B>Pre-emption or Prevention?

Disconcertingly for its allies, the Bushites claim the right of pre-emption. In fact, the Bush administration often uses the terms 'pre-emptive' and 'preventive' interchangeably, though these terms have vastly different meanings, logic, and policy implications. Traditionally, 'pre-emptive' action refers to times when states react to an imminent threat of attack. For example, when Egyptian and Syrian forces mobilized on Israel's borders in 1967, the threat was obvious and immediate, and Israel felt justified in pre-emptively attacking those forces. While pre-emptive attacks refer to military action taken in the face of an imminent threat, 'preventive' action usually refers to responding to high-risk situations before they become violent or, in the face of violent conflict, deterring further escalation through limited force and threats to use force.

New in the Bush policy is the application of a 'preventive' doctrine not only to global terrorists but to undesirable state behaviour as well, such as in the case of armed intervention in Iraq. This innovation in foreign policy could have the potential of encouraging other states to follow suit (for example, the Russians in Chechnya) under the

protective cover of the Bush canon. The emerging parameters, targets, and approach of the war on terrorism could represent a dangerous 'free licence' for alliance members to attack a range of groups that oppose the state for sound reasons. Attacks on legitimate political expression could spawn a reckless backlash, with uncertain but doubtless substantial consequences.

As John Ikenberry (2002: 45) points out, the critical inconsistency inherent in the new US strategy is that it has the potential to make sovereignty more absolute for the United States even as it becomes more conditional for countries that challenge American standards of internal and external behaviour. By eschewing a multilateral approach aimed at maintaining a global balance of power through containment and deterrence while building order around personalized political relations, the United States may be weakening essential ties with its allies and placing itself in a more insecure and hostile world as a result. In essence, efforts by the US to strengthen its security through 'cowboy diplomacy' could reverse decades of coalition-building and developing international institutions. Marginal states on the threshold of breakdown, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Indonesia, could find themselves abandoned and even weaker.

US initiatives to build European support for its war against terrorism have centred on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's push eastward into Central Asia and the Baltics and the encouragement of its members to spend more on defence and to enhance their collective military capabilities. The Iraq issue has divided Europe, and the Germans and French, joined by the Russians, have reacted to American coalition-building for war with a coalition of their own. The Franco-Russian-German declaration of 5 March 2003 against Bush's rush to a military engagement with Saddam Hussein was, in the hyperbole

of one journalist, possibly 'the loudest "No!" shouted across the Atlantic in a half century or more' (Tyler, 2003).

The French and German governments remain friendly to the United States, if George Bush will let them. Many European governments are US-boosters, even over Iraq. That issue has torn the European Union asunder--so much for the EU as a rival centre of strength to the US. Beyond Europe, no great alliances are in the making. Russia, China, and India are likely to side with the United States on a great many global issues; Beijing and Moscow have been working hard to build stronger ties with Washington. The complex relationships between Russia, China, and India, furthermore, make co-operation among them unlikely (De Roquefeuil, 2002).

Yet there can be no doubting the Bush administration's rough-and-tumble international conduct on a range of issues on which it would brook no compromise. The US withdrew from the Kyoto Protocol on the environment. It damned the International Criminal Court. It rejected suggested new enforcement provisions for the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. It refused to send the comprehensive test-ban treaty to the US Senate a second time for ratification. It decreased funding for nuclear arms control and raised the possibility of designing and testing a new generation of nuclear bombs. So there is a context for the complaints and alarms of the community of nations about American foreign policy and for the polls that find, for example, that a majority of Europeans (55 per cent) believe that the US is itself partly to blame for 11 September (AFP, 2002).

## <B>Threats, 'Real, Immediate, Here'

In Canada, where similar doubts and concerns are rife, anti-Americanism is enjoying one of its recurrent seasons. The Bushites are a rich target for criticism, a tough breed of 'swaggering and contemptuous' ally-adversaries, to adopt the words of an American career diplomat who resigned in early 2003 to protest against the administration's policies (Krugman, 2003). Those 'damn Americans. I hate those bastards', Liberal parliamentarian Carolyn Parrish scowled as President Bush inched closer to an Iraq war, making it clear that her feelings of animosity centred on the government in Washington. Her colleague Colleen Beaumier had met sympathetically with the Iraqi leadership in late 2002, winning her the nickname 'Baghdad Beaumier' (Fagan, 2003: F2). 'When even the Canadians, normally drearily polite, get colorfully steamed at us, we know the rest of the world is apoplectic', wrote an American commentator (Kristof, 2003). Added another, "We are scared of the world now, and the world is scared of us' (Dowd, 2003b: WK13)

Richard Gwyn's argument about Canada's irrelevance suggests that anti-Americanism might be an expensive luxury after 11 September. Up until then, it was possible for Canada to parade as the world's great multilateralist, a stance pleasing to a national ego proud of being un-American, while in fact living an existence as a resolutely North American country, increasingly dependent economically and militarily on the United States. The terrorist attacks made the Americans no longer tolerant of lax Canadian security and military policies. A choice must be made, Gwyn believes, between standing 'with the US at its time of need' with the attendant compromise on 'some cherished Canadian values' or standing apart, 'provided we're prepared to pay the

economic and diplomatic price . . . The one thing we cannot do is continue to pretend to ourselves that we can eat our cake and have it.' That would be 'reckless irresponsibility . . . when the conditions that made it possible to maintain the hypocrisy no longer exist' (Gwyn, 2003: A13).

The North American agenda is shaped by international terrorism. Reports by both the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service (CSIS) have underlined the need for a common and tighter security approach, at least on the home front. In March 2002 George Tenet, the CIA director, testified before Congress that terrorism is the most pressing threat to the United States and thus to North America. CSIS concludes that another attack by Islamic extremists remains very likely, drawing attention to the fact that many of Canada's security preoccupations originate abroad, making it imperative to identify and understand overseas developments that could become 'homeland issues' for Canada. A senior Canadian intelligence agent, Michael Kelly, has stated that the threat to Canada 'is real, it's immediate, it's here' (Stern, 2002).

Washington's interest in Canada and the border is unmistakable, and sometimes uncomfortably so for Canadians. The administration has, through a variety of private and public channels, been pressing Ottawa hard to spend more on defence. The Chrétien government, after a long and willful neglect of the military, surrendered an \$800 million annual increase for the armed forces in the 2003 budget, to the mild applause of American critics. A Planning Group Agreement of December 2002 arranges for the development of Canadian-American contingency plans to meet a terrorist attack or national disaster (DND, 2002), while US Northern Command, established 1 October 2002, has military operations in the United States, Mexico, and Canada within its

jurisdiction (Priest, 2003: 38). American and Canadian officials signed, on 12 December 2002, a comprehensive Smart Border agreement designed to improve security and screening along the border while not impeding the free flow of legitimate goods and people. The Bush administration has also put in place entry visa requirements for Canadian landed immigrants amid continuing accusations, notably from New York Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, that Canada is a terrorist haven. As of 1 March 2003, the new Department of Homeland Security unleashed a bewildering security bureaucracy, which was bound to create border lineups, difficulties for business, and fewer admissions to the United States from Canada (Segal, 2003: A15).

More is doubtless coming. The US seems intent on a common North American security zone covering land, air, sea, and even outer space. There is likely to be continuing pressure to keep Canadian energy markets open and to strengthen North American energy security in the face of continued vulnerability to disruptions in oil and gas exports from the Middle East, the Persian Gulf, Latin America, and Africa. In the effort to control the flow of illegal immigrants and refugees, the demand is growing for a harmonization of American-Canadian policies and perhaps even a move in the direction of a common, EU-style customs and immigration zone. Will the 'smart border' prevent a rupture of the Canada-US frontier in the event of future terrorist attacks in the United States? Will the United States government be convinced that Canada has done everything possible if it is discovered that the terrorists came from the north? If Canada is a grudging partner (or no partner at all) in future US-led 'coalitions of the willing'--or what might better be called 'coalitions of the conscripted'--will the White House rush to Canada's defence when Congress demands that the northern border be closed or tightened?

## <B> The Fusion of Economics and Security

With the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Canada-US relations may be entering an era of 'forced linkage' and the fusion of economics and security. The US looks northward, worried about its physical security more than ever before, and embarks on a widespread series of measures to secure its territorial space. The American response to 11 September dramatically demonstrated that Washington will close its borders and stop all traffic if it feels sufficiently threatened. American politicians like Senator Clinton, rightly or wrongly, continue to express concerns about whether their borders are sufficiently protected. An open border--and the relatively free mobility of goods, services, and people across that border--was not very long ago taken for granted. This concept is now hostage to US national security interests and a domestic debate, much of it highly partisan, about how best to keep Americans secure. President Bush has turned a hard face towards the world. He has threatened Mexico with reprisals if it does not support the US over Iraq, saying that 'there will be a certain sense of discipline' if his southern neighbour or other allies oppose him (Krugman, 2003). Perhaps that was careless and inadvertent chatter, perhaps not.

The history of Canadian-American relations has been remarkably free of linkage, the practice of making threats and tying policy performance in one area to another. Canada has pursued its policies without fearing reprisals or sanctions from its neighbour when priorities clashed. The two countries shared values, interests, and goals during the long darkness of the Cold War and into the 1990s. They placed a premium on keeping

economic and security policies separate, and the border open for business. Cross-border trade and investment flourished, and the relationship remained on an even keel despite the irritations and controversies of the moment. Historian Greg Donaghy's fine book, *Tolerant Allies: Canada and the United States, 1963-1968*, depicts an alliance constantly negotiated and renegotiated by mature governments:

Between 1963 and 1968 the Liberal government adopted diplomatic and military postures that acknowledged the diminished Soviet threat, European recovery, and growing domestic demands for a Canadian approach to the world. It undertook this task carefully, with due regard for Washington's strategic interests in North Atlantic solidarity and continuing bilateral arrangements for continental defense. The United States generally accepted Ottawa's evolutionary approach and realistically amended its expectations for Canadian policy. (Donaghy, 2002: 178)

The fusing of economics and security in Canada-US relations--a direct consequence of the US war against terrorism and other security threats in Asia and the Middle East--has occurred with such speed and such a sense of urgency that the dimensions and seriousness of the problem are not as yet fully appreciated. Canada has entered front and square into the American political consciousness because of US concerns about how to manage its borders and reduce its vulnerability to a wide range of internal and external security threats. As the United States looks across its northern border, sometimes glaringly, Canada can react defensively, fuelling American fears, or it can engage the United States, putting forward initiatives of its own and demonstrating that Canada is a strong and reliable ally. The first option probably exposes Canada to ever

greater American pressure and might force it to accept decisions that are not of its own making. The second holds out the hope and possibility of setting the agenda or at least influencing the terms of the debate.

The pressures for the deeper integration of North America are inescapable. Formal institutions may be required to facilitate the rapidly expanding flows of goods, services, capital, and even labour, and to accommodate the post-11 September United States. A number of ideas are in the air, aiming at a Canada-US 'strategic framework' linking the American homeland security requirements to Canada's economic security imperative (Fagan, 2003: F2). Allan Gotlieb, the former Ambassador to the United States, calls in this volume for a 'grand bargain' to establish a North American community designed for the continental context but taking inspiration from the European Union. 'It must be bold', he wrote in the *National Post*, 'it must come from Canada and be espoused at the highest level. It must be comprehensive so as to allow trade-offs and broad constituencies to come into play. It must address the US agenda as well as ours. Incrementalism won't work' (Gotlieb, 2003: A14).

It might be necessary to reinvent Canadian conceptions of 'sovereignty' and the understanding of what is to be 'Canadian' in a world where some walls are coming down while others are apparently being erected or resurrected. In recent years, through such initiatives as the International Criminal Court and the International Commission on State Sovereignty, Canadians have led the charge to redefine international conceptual and legal meanings of sovereignty in failed and ailing states where human rights are routinely trampled. Something need not be lost if new institutional relationships are devised to manage and define the North American relationship. Nor is it inevitable that Canada will

weaken or lose its international influence if it embraces a continental agenda and develops a new relationship with Washington. It is at least arguable that the Mulroney government's close alignment to the US from 1984-93 gave Canada unparalleled weight in Washington, translating into economic benefits and global significance. In a unipolar world, access to the most powerful state could elevate international standing, especially if others perceive that Canada has credibility and clout where it counts.

### <B>Tolerant Allies Still

The portrait of difficulty and discord is easily overdrawn. The irritation was admittedly all too evident on the face of US National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice when she watched Chrétien declare victory for the United States in Iraq on an American political talk show in early March 2003 (ABC News, 2003), long before either George Bush or Saddam Hussein would have admitted it was so. The Prime Minister is seen in Bush's Washington as an old-guard political hack--hence his nickname, 'Dino', for dinosaur--weak on defence, easy on would-be terrorists in Canada or clamouring to enter it, and no Brian Mulroney in his devotion to American causes. On the first anniversary of 11 September, Chrétien's commentary, linking the terrorist attacks to the gap between rich and poor countries (Alberts, 2002: A1) rather than to the bile of anti-American thugs, were extensively reported in the US, and extensively resented. So, too, were the remarks by Ducros and Parrish, members of Team Chrétien.

The Chrétien policy on Iraq infuriated critics at home and in the United States as it zigged and zagged its way through the crisis. But it was clear, in the Prime Minister's

murky way. He thought Saddam an ogre who must be disarmed. In line with its long-standing multilateralist impulses, Canada supported the United Nations in efforts to bring Iraq to heel and was prepared to fight in order to enforce UN resolutions demanding Saddam's compliance if the world body sanctioned it. Canada did not lust after 'regime change' (Lindgren, 2003: A1) or want a war outside the auspices of the UN, but its overall support for the United States was solid. The coverage of his major foreign policy speech in Chicago, on 13 February 2003, emphasized that support (Aduroja, 2003: 1, 6; Chrétien, 2003).

Canada, furthermore, at about the same time put a resolution before the UN that 'gave Iraq a firm deadline and clear benchmarks to meet if it wants to avoid war' (Knox and Sallot, 2003: A11; Alberts, 2003: A12). There were meanwhile two Canadian frigates patrolling the Gulf of Oman as part of the war on terror, and a destroyer went on its way to the same mission after the embarrassing crash of its Sea King helicopter. A Canadian commodore was put in charge of coalition forces in the Persian Gulf, and 25 Canadian Forces officers were assisting the US military in Qatar. A battle group and brigade headquarters of peacekeepers were assigned to Afghanistan, easing the US burden there (Blanchfield, 2003: A1). And all this took place against the background of a public opinion twitchy about Bush and 83 per cent against war with Iraq if it does not carry the UN seal of approval. Half of the Quebecers polled opposed a war with or without the UN (*Economist*, 2003: 26; Brean, 2003: A2).

Relations between the two governments are strained. That cannot be refuted after US Secretary of State Colin Powell suggested to his Canadian counterpart, Bill Graham, that the government ought to put on display some of the persistently friendly (and, Powell

said, effective) diplomacy of Chrétien's hated rival, Mulroney (Fife, 2002: A5). The confusion over Iraq, and there is confusion, does not help because it gives, at the very least, the impression of a government that is irresolute on the great issue of the day, and one at the heart of US policy. Perhaps deliberately, the Prime Minister emphasizes one aspect of his thinking the first day and another a second day, and refuses to commit categorically to participation in an American-led coalition that is not under the banner of the UN.

Relations between the two countries are nevertheless strong. They are not in a state of crisis. After 11 September, Canada moved quickly to assuage American fears that it was a terrorist nest, and a major effort has been underway since to harmonize customs and immigration policies, prepare for awful contingencies, share intelligence, and facilitate cross-border traffic in people, goods, and services. At the bureaucratic and inter-agency level, Canadian and American officials continue to work closely together to reduce continental vulnerabilities to various internal and external threats. There would be, it is true enough, obvious benefits to the long-term strategic planning and guidance that has been absent in the Chrétien decade, and Paul Martin, the Prime Minister's almost certain successor, has pledged to provide them (Fife, 2003: A6).

Canada remains as internationally relevant as a secondary power can be. Its activist diplomacy in trying to bridge the gaps at the UN over Iraq in February-March 2003 demonstrated that. Nor is the issue Canada's relevance to President Bush's America. He will be in office one more year, or five, but not forever. Canada's dependence on the United States is well-known and documented, but 'it as well to remember that the two countries are interdependent. If that had been missed in a Washington intoxicated by

Mexican President Vicente Fox or pleased by their new acquisition, Tony Blair, 11 September brought the fact back home. Those eagle eyes are fixed intently upon Canada now, and we look back with nostalgia at the days when they were ignoring us and we were bleating about it' (Hillmer, 2002). Canada is America's leading trading partner in terms of exports and imports, and the largest global supplier to the US of oil, gas, electricity, uranium, and motor vehicles. Five American states send more than 50 per cent of their exports to Canada, and 33 more have Canada as their leading market (Molot, 2002). Canada is relevant to the US because it needs a stable, secure northern partner in order to feel prosperous and safe.

#### <B>Note

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