

THE U.S.-CANADA STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP IN THE WAR ON TERRORISM

IN THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, a U.S.-Canadian relationship so close and symbiotic that it is too often taken for granted was suddenly thrown into high relief. A Canadian general serving as Director of Combat Operations at the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) in Colorado Springs, Colorado, gave the order to launch combat air patrols to protect American cities from additional attacks. With the closure of U.S. airspace, more than 33,000 passengers and aircrews bound for the United States touched down instead on Canadian soil, where they were welcomed with north-of-the-border hospitality and empathy.

As in past national crises – whether during two World Wars, in Korea, the Persian Gulf or more recently in Kosovo – when U.S. service members were sent into battle against Taliban and Al Qaeda forces in Afghanistan, they fought alongside Canadian forces. When a U.S. carrier battle group deployed from the west coast to Southeast Asia in response to the crisis, it included a Canadian frigate, bespeaking a routine yet virtually unprecedented level of defense cooperation between the two countries. A Canadian Naval Task Group on station in the Arabian Sea captured suspected Al Qaeda terrorists and handed them over to U.S. authorities. In a tragic “friendly fire” incident on April 17, four Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan made the ultimate sacrifice while defending our freedoms in the U.S.-led war against international terrorism.

Within just days of the 9/11 tragedy, another sinew in the tightly-interwoven U.S.-Canadian relationship also became painfully apparent. Both Daimler-Chrysler and the Ford Motor Company announced the planned closure of various U.S. auto assembly plants for lack of crucial spare parts produced in Canada and purposely delivered on a “just-in-time” basis to keep expensive inventories to a minimum. The Canadian parts were stuck in long traffic jams along a 5,526-mile U.S.-Canadian border where 70 percent of the traffic flows through just four major crossings.

In normal circumstances the free flow of traffic and goods along that lengthy border serves as an apt symbol of the largest trading partnership between any two countries in the world, conduit to over \$1.5 billion in daily commerce and the crossing of over 200 million people each year. But as the weeks and months following

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the September 11 terrorist attacks all-too conclusively proved, these are anything but normal times.

In many respects, the September 11 terrorist attacks and the United States' declared war on international terrorism have revitalized bonds of shared culture, values and geography that have long been at the center of the special U.S.- Canadian relationship. As history has amply demonstrated, in times of crisis officials in both countries know that their counterparts across the border can be counted upon for aid and cooperation.

As in past times of stress and dynamic change, however, the post-9/11 period has also forced Canadian and U.S. officials to make difficult adjustments in the formal and informal linkages at the core of their relationship in order to meet new challenges. U.S. and Canadian officials, for instance, are in final negotiations over a proposed agreement to expand – possibly to include the realms of land and sea – the operational scope of NORAD, the cornerstone of the U.S.-Canadian security relationship. On October 1, the Pentagon will also stand-up the new homeland defense headquarters Northern Command, whose area of responsibility (AOR) will include the United States, Canada and Mexico. Last December 12, U.S. and Canadian officials also signed a comprehensive and far-reaching Smart Border Agreement designed to improve security and screening along the border, while not impeding the free flow of legitimate goods and people on which both economies are so dependent in this age of global trade.

The intense reappraisal of the U.S.-Canadian relationship necessary to formulate and implement those changes has not been easy or altogether free of controversy. Not surprisingly, relations

between the two countries are often conducted most smoothly at the pragmatic level of day-to-day cooperation – whether at the border, between closely engaged Canadian and U.S. military and law enforcement forces, or in bilateral trade – rather than in the more politicized policy debates that occupy Ottawa and Washington, D.C.

Because they directly touch on issues of national identity, sovereignty and burden-sharing, the proposed post-9/11 reforms have raised difficult questions and highlighted some natural tensions in the relationship. If past periods of dynamic change and challenge offer any lessons, however, it is that the foundation of the U.S.-Canadian relationship will emerge all the stronger for a thorough examination of those ties that bind us as close neighbors, trading partners and strategic allies.

Bound By Geography

For better and worse, throughout their histories the fates of both the United States and Canada have been closely interlinked by geography. In the early years of America's fight for independence and its conflicts with colonial powers Great Britain and France, that natural proximity mostly bred distrust and tension. Though few U.S. citizens likely recall the fact from their history books, American revolutionary troops actually invaded Canada in 1775, capturing Montreal and nearly taking Quebec City. During the war of 1812, U.S. armies once again nearly gained control of Upper and Lower Canada. The Canadian fear of future invasion from the south was a driving factor in the move towards Canadian Confederation in 1867.

However, in the 20th century especially, with free peoples the world over threatened by the tyrannical scourges of fascism and communism, the United States and Canada formed a natural alliance based not only on their geography, but also on their shared values of democracy, rule of law and free markets. The turning point in formalizing that alliance came in 1938, when U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt and Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King came to an understanding that culminated in the Ogdensburg Agreement, which pledged mutual assistance to repel any attack on the North American continent. In formalizing the

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agreement the two nations formed a Permanent Joint Board on Defense.

In many ways, the tacit principle underscoring the Ogdensburg Agreement is still operative even after five decades of dramatic change in the geo-strategic landscape: the United States agrees to come to the aid of Canada should its northern neighbor be attacked, while Canada agrees not to let its territory be used by any entity that would threaten the United States.

During the long decades of the Cold War, numerous formal plans, memorandums of understanding and agreements between the United States and Canada added operational mortar and concrete to that framework of mutual security and defense. A classified Basic Security Document and Combined Defense Plan postulated a coordinated military response to various Cold War scenarios, including a Soviet invasion of Canadian territory and attacks on the United States launched over Canadian airspace. In addition to the Combined Defense Plan, defense and security cooperation between the United States and Canada is codified in more than 80 treaty-level defense agreements and more than 250 “memorandums of understanding” between the two defense departments.

In response to the growing threat from Soviet bombers, and later missiles, the United States and Canada further institutionalized cooperative security arrangements with the founding of NORAD in 1956. With its integrated early-warning and command-and-control capabilities – and its joint command, with the tradition of a U.S. commander and Canadian deputy commander – NORAD is arguably the most integrated binational defense organization in the world. Inarguably, it is the foundation stone of the U.S.-Canadian mutual security relationship.

In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, NORAD and the close U.S.-Canadian security relationship were largely validated. Canadian Forces immediately increased the number of aircraft assigned to NORAD missions, for instance, and NORAD soon

broadened its scope of operations. In conjunction with civilian air control agencies in the United States and Canada, NORAD today is not only focusing on airborne threats originating outside North America, but is also monitoring potential threats coming internally from within North American airspace.

In addition to the Smart Border Agreement to better secure the U.S.-Canadian border, the two countries also created for the first time a Great-Lakes/Saint Lawrence Seaway Cross Border Task Force to target the illicit traffic of people and goods across the Great Lakes, a historical smuggling route going back to the 1920s Prohibition Era.

Gaps in Defenses and Perceptions

Despite the expanded scope of security operations and unprecedented cross-border cooperation, the aftermath of 9/11 also revealed gaps both in North American defenses and in the threat as perceived from Washington and Ottawa. While citizens of many nations were murdered in the September 11 terrorist attacks in New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania, the psychological trauma undeniably fell hardest on Americans accustomed by history and experience to consider the U.S. homeland as sanctuary from direct attack. Foreign dignitaries visiting Washington since the tragedy have often remarked that the key new dynamic at play in world affairs is that the United States really does see itself as being at war, while even many of its closest allies have come to believe the crisis has largely passed with the fall of the Taliban and roll-up of significant portions of the Al Qaeda terror network.

Even before the 9/11 attacks, much of the rest of the world was attempting to adjust to a rare historical epoch. Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has wielded preponderant military and economic power in relation to any potential competitors. In such a unipolar period, the primary foreign policy challenge for many nations of the world, America's friends and potential foes alike, was how best to manage relations with Washington, D.C.

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As successive U.S. administrations wrestled with the

issue of how to wield the unprecedented muscle of a lone superpower in pursuit of national interests and as a positive influence in the world, tensions have arisen between Washington and even many of its closest allies, including Canada, over issues ranging from trade, global warming, arms control, peacekeeping, international justice, ballistic missile defense and the role of the United Nations.

While to some degree natural, those tensions must now be managed within a context of the September 11 attacks, and Washington's determination to lead the fight against international terrorism and restore to the degree possible a wounded American people's sense of security. In somewhat typical American fashion, the United States embarked on that mission at breakneck speed, launching airstrikes in Afghanistan within a month of the terrorist attacks and prosecuting a war against international terror on multiple fronts abroad, even while beginning the largest reorganization of the U.S. government in 50 years in order to improve homeland security. For more deliberative and cautious European and Canadian governments, the pace of U.S. actions and demand for short-term, tangible results can seem at once dizzying and disconcerting.

It is against that backdrop that U.S. and Canadian officials have been negotiating for much of the past year the most fundamental restructuring of the U.S.-Canadian security relationship since the Ogdensburg Agreement and founding of NORAD in the 1940s and 1950s.

Given the sense of urgency and highly charged political atmosphere, it might be tempting for officials on both sides of those negotiations to resort to well-worn arguments about "infringements on sovereignty" and "inadequate burden-sharing." Both sides must resist the temptation. Quite simply, the stakes are far too high in this age of asymmetrical threats, the strategic and economic interests for both sides are too clear, and the areas of fundamental agreement too broad and deep not to reach a consensus on the best ways to improve mutual security and strengthen cooperation between neighbors and natural allies.

Northern Command

The idea of naming a U.S. regional commander-in-chief and military command with responsibility for North America has been debated inside Pentagon corridors for years. After the September 11 attacks, however, that debate greatly intensified and momentum grew for a new command. As part of the bi-annual, Congressionally-mandated review of the Pentagon's Unified Command Plan (UCP), the Joint Staff and service chiefs were thus asked for recommendations on how the U.S. military could better organize itself for the war on international terror and the mission of homeland defense.

As a result of that process, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld announced on April 17 plans to create a new Unified Command called Northern Command, with responsibility for protecting the American homeland and coordinating the operations of U.S. military air, land and sea elements in its area of responsibility.

Because of its classified nature, the UCP review process inevitably created valid concerns on the part of Canadian officials. By necessity the Canadians were not formally briefed on the proposed blueprint for the new command until January, when it was first approved by President Bush, giving Canadian media months to speculate on the potential impact of the new command on mutual security arrangements. Clearly the creation of such a major command would affect the form and function of NORAD. But how exactly?

At first blush, the idea that a U.S. military command would have Canada within its "area of responsibility" was bound to set off warning alarms among Canadians alert to even potential infringements on sovereignty. The Canadian body politic remains determined to protect a national identity and foreign policy distinct of, and distinguishable from, those of the United States.

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U.S. officials must also be sensitive to Canadian counterparts who sometimes rightfully feel that they toil in the shadows as junior partners in the U.S.-Canadian security partnership, their significant contributions oft-times going unnoticed or under-appreciated. Just as Washington does not speak in a single voice or easily adopt a unified position on such complex and difficult issues, so too have Canadians struggled to find consensus on the proposed changes in the security partnership. As both the United States and Canada have learned over the past 50 years as founding members of the North American Treaty Alliance (NATO), accommodating domestic

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However, a careful review of the planned Northern Command, which is scheduled to

become operational on October 1, 2002, dispels most serious concerns. The commander of Northern Command will be no different than his counterparts at the helm of U.S. regional commands in Europe, Asia, Central and South America and the Middle East (European Command, Pacific Command, Southern Command or Central Command, respectively). Each has a geographic area of responsibility, directly commands the activities only of U.S. forces in that region, and coordinates cooperative military-to-military engagements and exercises with friendly countries in the region. As regional U.S. commanders, none automatically assumes “command” over foreign forces within his area of responsibility.

Similar to Southern Command, which has no forces permanently forward deployed in its region, Northern Command will depend not on large standing forces, but rather on forces designated as available for its use under certain scenarios. Secretary Rumsfeld has also made clear that Northern Command’s main mission will be to support civilian agencies in times of crisis, such as helping organize a response to an attack using weapons of mass destruction.

No fundamentally new missions or roles for U.S. forces are envisioned as a result of the establishment of Northern Command, whose area of responsibility will encompass the Continental United States, Canada, Mexico, and a 500-mile air and maritime buffer zone around the North American landmass. The overriding goal of the new command is to streamline command-and-control of U.S. forces assigned to defend the United States. Up until now no single U.S. commander had direct responsibility for coordinating the defense of the United States, a state of affairs that the events of September 11, 2001 proved to be tragically unsustainable.

An understanding of Northern Command's intended role and structure also makes clear what the new command will not be. It is not an instrument for integrating U.S. and Canadian armed forces under the command of a permanent, U.S. Unified Command. Canadian forces will continue to patrol their own skies and maritime approaches, just as their U.S. counterparts will below the northern border.

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Any cooperative, military-to-military engagement will likewise honor the cardinal principle of selective participation that has long governed U.S.-Canadian bilateral defense relations. A Canadian frigate does not accompany virtually every U.S. carrier battle group deployed from the west coast because a U.S. military officer "ordered" it to. Rather, the arrangement persists because both the United States and Canada selectively judge that routinely exercising and demonstrating such interoperability between their naval forces serves each nation's interest.

NORAD: Strategic Keystone

There is no question that establishment of Northern Command raises important questions about its relationship and impact on NORAD, the keystone of the U.S.-Canadian security relationship. To answer those questions, a High Level Working Group of senior Canadian and U.S. defense and foreign affairs officials has worked for much of the past year to discuss ways NORAD might be adapted to better interface with the new

Northern Command and improve both countries' defenses against future terrorist attack.

The bilateral talks have been careful and deliberative, reflecting an understanding that the High Level Working Group is entrusted with the future of one of the most successful binational security organizations in history.

From its present headquarters at Peterson Air Force Base and command center at the Cheyenne Mountain Operations Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado, NORAD fuses intelligence and early-

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warning information from a worldwide and space-based network of sensors and radars.

Data from sensors in Canada is collected and analyzed at the underground complex at

Canadian Forces Base North Bay, Ontario, then forwarded to Canadian NORAD Region Headquarters at Canadian Forces Base Winnipeg. From there, potential threat and tracking information is relayed to the NORAD command-and-control center in Cheyenne Mountain. If an airborne threat such as an unidentified aircraft is tracked and verified, NORAD can also coordinate a defensive response that is virtually seamless across national boundaries.

The first important decision has already been made: the commander of Northern Command will also command NORAD. At present, U.S. and Canadian plans for continental defense are divided between two commands, NORAD for air forces and U.S. Joint Forces Command, with Canadian liaison participation, for land and sea. In the aftermath of September 11, it is clear that a more streamlined and efficient command arrangement is required. Because the U.S. side of the equation will now be consolidated under NORTHCOM, it seems logical to consider extending NORAD's planning and deployment capabilities to include land and sea forces.

U.S. officials would thus like to see NORAD's operational scope – which is now limited to warning against missile attack and

detection and defense against air threats such as bombers – expanded to include the maritime, land and civil support domains. That would make NORAD’s organizational structure roughly parallel with the new Northern Command, which will likewise include air, land and sea elements, as well as civil support functions. That parallel structure is reflected in the fact that a four-star commander will wear two hats as the commander both of NORTHCOM and of NORAD, where he will operate with a Canadian deputy commander. This “dual-hatted” arrangement reflects long experience in NATO where, for instance, the U.S. four-star Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (who commands multinational NATO forces) also commands the U.S. European Command.

The move potentially averts a controversy brewing over Space Command’s likely integral role in a U.S. missile defense system.

Significantly, as part of the Unified Command Plan changes, the U.S. commander of NORAD will no longer also head U.S. Space Command. That linkage was broken when Space Command recently migrated to U.S. Strategic Command. The move potentially averts a controversy brewing over Space Command’s likely integral role in the Pentagon’s proposed Ballistic Missile Defense system, which numerous Canadian officials and politicians have openly opposed.

U.S. officials have been quick to stress that the proposed NORAD reforms focus mostly on command streamlining, organizational efficiency, and force designation. The U.S. Office of the Secretary of Defense has issued guidance, for instance, that the stand-up of Northern Command and changes to NORAD are not to require major increases in staff or new military construction. Costs and resource commitments should be kept to a minimum.

Meanwhile, U.S. and Canadian naval forces already routinely interact at numerous operational and planning levels, up to and including frequent exercises and joint deployments. With the proposed changes, U.S. officials hope to capture and formalize existing maritime cooperation – already spelled out in numerous military-to-military “memorandums of understanding” – under the umbrella of an expanded NORAD.

In terms of land forces, even military planners trained to imagine virtually every possible contingency cannot conceive of the need for joint Canadian-U.S. operations to repel an invasion of North America. U.S. officials can far too easily conceive, however, of the need for NORAD to coordinate military support for civil authorities involved in responding to the detonation of a weapon of mass destruction. In the case of a massive terrorist attack, NORAD might also need to rapidly respond to an order from national command authorities in Ottawa and Washington to coordinate the deployment of military forces to protect oil pipelines, power stations and other critical infrastructure on both sides of the border.

There is no reason, however, to view Canadian sovereignty and NORAD reforms as competing with one another.

For their part, Canadian officials have made clear that they will not agree to any changes or reforms that diminish NORAD's stature, or subjugates it to another command such as NORTHCOM. Beyond that, they have adopted a "go slow" approach of weighing each proposed expansion of NORAD's mission against the cardinal imperative of preserving Canadian sovereignty and foreign policy independence.

Recently, Lieutenant General Macdonald, vice chief of the Canadian Defense Staff, has indicated that Canada would prefer not to formalize command channels and assigned forces for the land and sea missions into NORAD, preferring instead to leave such arrangements to be settled on an informal basis. Whatever the outcome of the NORAD reform talks, however, here is no reason, however, to view Canadian sovereignty and NORAD reforms as competing with one another.

As Canadian Deputy Prime Minister John Manley has rightfully noted, NORAD has long served Canadian sovereignty by providing a mechanism for joint consultation on security matters of interest to both nations. Its regional structure – with the three NORAD subcommands each reflecting the principle of shared command between U.S. and Canadian senior officers – is likewise respectful of sovereign boundaries.

Perhaps most importantly, each nation retains the right to act independently of NORAD, and its actions are approved on a case-by-case basis. “The Canada-U.S. bilateral defense relationship has always been based on the principle of selective participation,” Lt. Gen. George Macdonald testified earlier this year. “Our collaboration within NORAD has not undermined our sovereignty. If anything, NORAD has helped protect and enhance our sovereignty by establishing a bi-national structure that ensures Canadian participation in the defense of North America.”

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With the October 1, 2002 deadline for stand-up of Northern Command fast approaching, pressure is mounting for the High Level Working Group to reach agreement on proposed NORAD reforms. The results of their negotiations are not expected to be a treaty that requires Senate ratification, but rather an addendum to the original bilateral NORAD Agreement, or else a new NORAD Agreement altogether. This will build on the success of the NORAD model over nearly a half-century, and capitalize on the familiarity of both nations with the underlying principals and purposes of the NORAD Agreement.

As they attempt to reach consensus, both Canada and the United States might also take a page from the original drafting and focus on a broad blueprint and general principles that can be filled in later with operational detail.

In focusing on those general principles, U.S. officials would do well to remember that while the strategic importance of Canadian territory may have seemed to dwindle in an age of globe-spanning weapons such as Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles, the terrorist attacks of September 11 and the beginning of an asymmetrical war have made it newly relevant. As the capture of an Al Qaeda terrorist armed with explosives on the U.S.-Canadian border in December 1999 drove home, in the war on international terror geography and proximity matter once again.

For the Canadians, a long-standing principle of Canadian defense policy holds that defending the homeland is most effectively accomplished in close cooperation with the United States. That security cooperation, most obviously reflected in NORAD, gives Canada access to senior U.S. national security officials, significant influence in a joint decision-making mechanism, and access to the largest and most sophisticated intelligence-gathering system in the world.

NATO and Burden Sharing

When Canadian forces joined the U.S.-led campaign against international terrorism – naming their deployment Operation Apollo – they solidified their position as perhaps the most interoperable of all the world’s armed forces in terms of joint operations with the U.S. military. As mentioned, Canadian frigates even routinely integrate with U.S. carrier battle groups. Canadian forces were also second only to the U.S. military in terms of strike sorties flown in NATO’s 1999 war in Kosovo, largely because of the interoperability of Canadian CF-18 aircraft (a version of the U.S. Navy’s F-18), with U.S. command-and-control and strike elements. U.S. and Canadian air forces routinely train together during annual “Maple Leaf” exercises in Canada, and, so far this year, 1,300 Canadian army reservists took part in Exercise Bold Venture at Fort Know, Kentucky, which incorporates live-fire urban combat training.

As Canada attempted to deploy 2,000 men and women of the Canadian forces to Afghanistan, however, they were forced to get in a long line awaiting U.S. airlift due to a lack of strategic airlift in the Canadian arsenal. The incident highlights the increasingly difficult plight of a Canadian military that many Canadian analysts consider overstretched, underfunded, and badly in need of modernization. There have also been reports, for instance, that Canada’s plans to contribute ground forces to Afghanistan were severely limited by inadequate medical infrastructure and insufficient logistical support.

“The condition of the Canadian Forces was in crisis before September 11,” according to a June 2002 report by the C.D. Howe Institute Commentary, based in

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Toronto. “Defense spending of \$12 billion (Canadian dollars) in 2002 has proved insufficient to support even a force of 60,000 personnel (the actual effective strength in mid-2002 is at least 10 percent lower). Canada’s defense spending of \$265 (U.S. dollars) per capita is less than half the NATO average, and its 1.1 percent of gross national product devoted to defense is precisely half the NATO average.

According to the C.D. Howe report, authored by noted Canadian defense expert J.L. Granatstein, Canadian spending on defense equipment acquisition faces an \$11 billion (Canadian dollars) deficit over the next 15 years, while the annual shortfall in the Canadian Forces’ operations and maintenance budget is about \$1.3 billion (Canadian).

“Army units operate at something approximating 50 percent of strength and, for lack of money, army battle groups train together only every three years,” according to the report. “Three navy vessels were tied up for want of sailors to crew them; and the air force is short of pilots and still years away from replacing its 1960s vintage Sea King helicopters. Very simply, the Canadian forces have all but lost the capacity to undertake operations for a sustained period.”

Canadian military officials stress that they have plans to upgrade the avionics of Canada’s 80 CF-18s, and there have been proposals for Canada to buy or lease a handful of C-17 airlifters and build strategic sealift ships to improve Canadian Forces mobility. A defense review is also underway.

However, Canadian military officials concede that the problem is a chronic lack of adequate funding. The Canadian Forces had expected a major infusion of new funding in the December 2001 federal budget, for instance, with Canadian opinion polls suggesting support for increased defense spending in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks. Except for increased funds for some CF-18 upgrades and strengthening Joint Task Force-2, the Canadian military’s small anti-terrorism force, the budget included few bright spots for military forces.

In assessing the confluence of stagnant defense budgets, a looming modernization crisis and an increase in the tempo of operations after the September 11 attacks, Gen. Raymond Henault, the Chief of the Canadian Defense Staff, was unusually blunt in an annual report released earlier this year. “The status quo,” Henault wrote, “is not sustainable.”

Canadian Forces have already declined by roughly 50 percent since the end of the Cold War.

Burden-sharing tensions are nothing new within the NATO alliance, of course, and the United States has for many years implored its NATO allies to increase their defense spending to meet the alliance goal of three percent of gross domestic product. Given the size of U.S. economic output and the fact that the nation is embarked on a war against international terrorism, it is perhaps not surprising that the United States is far outpacing all of its allies combined in defense spending.

In the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, however, Canada’s refusal to adequately modernize or capitalize Canadian Forces that have already declined by roughly 50 percent since the end of the Cold War raises particular concerns. Canada gains significant influence from its special relationship with the United States, and through its ability to link arms in a synergistic way with U.S. forces in times of crisis. By being so interoperable with their American counterparts, Canadian Forces punch well above their weight on the world stage. Losing that ability risks forfeiting a key pillar in the special relationship Canada maintains with its superpower neighbor.

A number of experts also worry that the lack of adequate Canadian defense spending may throw Canadian Forces into a destructive spiral from which it will be difficult to recover.

“There is a tipping point beyond which any effort to right yourself requires a really Herculean effort, and I think the Canadian military is already below it,” Dwight Mason, former co-chairman of the U.S.-Canadian Permanent Joint Board on Defense, told the Center for the Study of the Presidency. “You get into a vicious

cycle where the amounts of money needed grow ever bigger until politicians throw up their hands and say we could never justify that level of spending, so let's give up and leave defense of North America to the Americans. That's dangerous thinking, however, because Canada has long recognized that in order to stay in the game and maintain its special relationship with the United States, they had to ante up a certain minimum amount of military capability. Canada has now fallen below that minimum.”

Smart Border Initiative

When U.S. Customs agents arrested Al Qaeda terrorist Ahmed Ressam on December 14, 1999, as he attempted to cross into the United States from Canada with a car full of explosives, they helped thwart a terrorist “spectacular” planned to coincide with Millennium celebrations. The result of intuitive police work and plain good luck, the arrest set off an alarm that became a clarion call for action following the September 11 attacks.

While initial concerns that Canada had become a hotbed for Al Qaeda activity were misleading – the September 11 hijackers, for instance, had received visas and were living in the United States – the Ressam incident did suggest that Al Qaeda had identified the more than 5,500-mile U.S.-Canadian border, the longest continuous, non-militarized border in the world, as a potential weakness. The cross-border trade thus put at risk accounts for 25 percent of the United States foreign trade, and fully 90 percent of Canada's foreign trade.

On December 12, 2001, both nations stepped forward to aggressively counter that vulnerability with the signing of the Smart Border Declaration, a 30-point action plan designed to insure the secure flow of people and goods across their common border, protect critical infrastructure in the border region, and improve intelligence-sharing and cooperation between U.S. and Canadian law enforcement and border control agencies.

The comprehensive Smart Border initiative may well become a model for other nations hoping to secure common borders and enhance the security of the global trading and transport system, as

well as serve as a possible prototype for improvements along the U.S.-Mexican border.

“In addressing the global threat of terrorism we quickly concluded that national and economic security were mutually reinforcing objectives,” Canadian Deputy Prime Minister John Manley and U.S. Homeland Security Adviser Tom Ridge declared in a joint statement issued at Niagara Falls, Ontario on June 28, 2002. “We recognized that we could and must enhance the security of our border while facilitating the legitimate flow of people and goods upon which both of our economies depend. In short, we decided to develop a smart border – one where we could identify and expedite low risk people and goods, and focus our resources on higher risk traffic.”

In terms of better securing the flow of 200 million people who cross the border each year, the Smart Border initiative calls for the implementation by the end of 2003 of a border-wide NEXUS program to essentially create a “fast lane” for pre-screened, low-risk travelers. As part of the program, officials in both nations are working to develop common standards for international travel documents such as passports, and to harness new technology in the realm of “biometric identifiers” – such as fingerprints, facial recognition, and iris scanning – for reliable identification of travelers.

By next month new Joint Passenger Analysis Units manned by both U.S. and Canadian officials are expected to be up and running at airports in Vancouver and Miami in order to better identify and intercept travelers identified as “high risk” by a classified threat matrix system. For the first time, both nations are also now sharing Advance Passenger Information and Passenger Name Record data for air travelers.

To secure the flow of goods, U.S. and Canadian officials have also launched the Free and Secure Trade (FAST) program to better align their procedures for processing commercial shipments. Drawing on lessons from existing supply chain security programs – including Canada’s Customs Self Assessment and Partners Protection program and the U.S. Custom Service’s Trade

Partnership Against Terrorism – the program is a holistic attempt to establish a reliable “chain of custody” for all cargo. Such a chain would include certification that a cargo container, for instance, was packed in a secure environment; sealed so that its contents cannot be tampered with while underway; and transported under the control of a certified and responsible shipper.

To create incentives for companies willing to commit to the improved security measures, the program would also establish a “fast lane” for pre-authorized importers and commercial truck companies. Both countries are also training Customs inspectors to better target “high risk” cargo, with U.S. agents deploying to Halifax, Montreal and Vancouver, and Canadian agents to Seattle and Newark.

A Binational Steering Group has been formed to assess infrastructure vulnerabilities, with some security improvements already implemented on bridges and tunnels in the border region. New transportation security agencies, meanwhile, have deployed cross-border Air Marshals and Aircraft Protection Officers, and fielded additional bomb detection systems, high-energy X-ray and Gamma-ray screening machines, and advanced information systems better able to weed out high risk people and cargo.

Intelligence sharing and coordination between Canadian and U.S. law enforcement agencies has likewise increased markedly under the Smart Border initiative. For the first time, for instance, Canada is now participating in a U.S. Foreign Terrorist Tracking Task Force, and the two nations have scheduled a major Joint Counter-Terrorism Training Exercise for next spring. Under Project Northstar, federal, state and local law enforcement agencies on both sides of the border will meet regularly to better coordinate

Integrated Border Enforcement Teams (IBETS) are being expanded to address the counter-terrorism threat.

operations and facilitate intelligence sharing.

Perhaps most significantly, U.S. and Canada have created six new

Integrated Border Enforcement Teams (IBETS) composed of police, immigration and customs officials from the two countries.

IBETS were first developed in 1996 as a way to combat cross-border crime, but are being expanded to address the counter-terrorism threat. The new teams bring to 10 the number of IBETS created to date, with a total of 14 planned in the next 18 months.

“September 11 demonstrated the depths of destruction that terrorists seek to import to our peaceful continent. However, that tragic day also highlighted the strong friendship and cooperation that exists between the United States and Canada,” U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft said in announcing the new IBETS on July 22 at the sixth annual Canada-U.S. Cross Border Crime Forum in Banff, Canada.

The increased cooperation also spilled over into the legislative realm. Similar to the U.S. Patriot Act passed by Congress on October 25, 2001, the Canadian government introduced an Anti-Terrorism Act that will make it easier to identify, investigate, prosecute and convict terrorists. The legislation defines and designates various terror groups, introduces tougher sentences for terrorism, and relaxes some restrictions on electronic surveillance aimed at terrorist groups.

In terms of immigration reforms, Canada has also increased the number of its Immigration control officers deployed overseas. In the past six years, Canadian immigration control officers abroad have stopped more than 33,000 people with false documents from boarding planes bound for North America. Amendments to its Immigration Act after September 11 also stiffened the penalties for people smuggling; gave Canadian immigration officers the authority to arrest foreign nationals in Canada unable to credibly identify themselves; and allowed for the termination of asylum proceedings if there are reasonable grounds to believe the claimant belongs to a terrorist organization.

Conclusion

The audacity that both U.S. and Canadian officials revealed in rapidly developing and moving to implement the Smart Border Initiative serves as a cogent reminder of how closely our nations remain bound by geography. Even in an age of global trade, instant

communication and jet-age travel, the common space we inhabit in North America continues to shape and cement the unique U.S.-Canadian relationship.

Canada's actions immediately following the September 11 tragedy also showed that deeper even than soil is the common cause of free and democratic peoples united in a time of crisis. It is that spirit of cooperation that both nations must now take advantage of in reshaping the U.S.-Canadian relationship to meet the emerging threats of asymmetrical warfare and catastrophic terrorism. Prime Minister Jean Chretien evoked that challenge on September 14, 2001, when he addressed the American ambassador before a crowd of 100,000 Canadians gathered in a day of National Mourning:

“Generation after generation, we have traveled many difficult miles together,” said Chretien. “Side by side, we have lived through many dark times, always firm in our shared resolve to vanquish any threat to freedom and justice. And together, with our allies, we will defy the threat that terrorism poses to all civilized nations. Mr. Ambassador, we will be with the United States every step of the way. As friends. As neighbors. As family.”

PARTICIPANTS

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Commander Cundari is a Special Advisor for Political-Military Affairs for the Center for the Study of the Presidency. In this capacity, he has contributed to the Center's projects on US-Canadian affairs and NATO. Commander Cundari is a Senior Analyst for Science Applications International Corporation and works with the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for C3I. Previously, he served in the Pentagon for the Joint Staff as the Executive Assistant for the Deputy Director, Politico-Military Affairs Europe, as a Strategic Plans and Policy Analyst for the NATO and European Policy Division and as a National Military Command Center (NMCC) Briefer. As a naval aviator, CDR Cundari performed various operational assignments for the Navy within the United States and overseas in Europe and Asia, and he holds an M.A. in National Security Studies from the U.S. Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island. He resides in Alexandria, Virginia, with his wife, Patricia, and three sons, Matthew, Bradley and Kyle.

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ABOUT THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF THE PRESIDENCY

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In late 1999, the Center for the Study of the Presidency began a series of projects and initiatives focusing on a variety of related issues that lead to a report to the President-elect in early 2001. Working with scholars, practitioners, and seasoned government experts, the Center completed the aforementioned by publishing a book of case studies and an in-depth review of Presidential decision-making in Cold War and post-Cold War military interventions. Efforts contributing to this work eventually identified new challenges to, as well as new solutions for, Presidential leadership in the 21st Century, and this project is a part of that on-going dialogue.

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