

# SOVEREIGNTY DOES NOT EQUAL SECURITY

*Canada's new defence policy is designed to channel public anxiety about territorial sovereignty into support for increased defence spending. In the process, basic priorities have been confused.*

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**T**HE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT'S White Paper on defence is artful and innovative. While not neglecting traditional Canadian concerns such as peacekeeping and arms control, it attempts to channel the anxieties of the Canadian people regarding territorial sovereignty into new support for increased Canadian commitment for defence. It tries to balance the emphasis on North American sovereignty by reinforcing the Canadian presence on the European Central Front. It seeks to use the legal ruckus with the United States over the North West Passage to drum up support for an active submarine defence against the Soviet Union. The White Paper also proves at least one thing about defence behaviour in the Alliance. The more immediate and territory-related the role, the more ready a government is to face its own electorate with plans for a greater defence effort.

Canadians may wonder about how all of this plays in Washington. But the real Canadian concern ought to be how these actions affect the American capacity to extend deterrence to Europe, and whether the Europeans continue to place confidence in this deterrence and therefore in the unity of the Alliance upon which all depend.

SO WHAT IS THE AMERICAN REACTION to the new Canadian proposal? On the one hand, almost any increase in defence spending by wealthy Canada is welcome and greeted with relief. Provided that generally understood principles are observed, the US can accommodate itself at the tactical

level to virtually any defence policy that Ottawa chooses to implement. Although actual US-Canada defence coordination may not correspond to the public image, because the reality of it concerns "security" while the image has to do with "sovereignty," coordination of tasks will follow the new policy quickly.

On the other hand, without asking themselves a subsidiary question, "how much are we ourselves responsible for the Canadian confusion," some Americans ask, "Is Canada confusing security with sovereignty?" Underlying the concept of the undefended border is a notion of mutual respect for the airspace and under-sea space of both polities. But parallel to the notion of mutual respect is a confidence in the common defence against hostile third parties. Although the White Paper skates over this issue with finesse, it is an issue that will not go away. This is the area where sovereignty and security come together and where recent misunderstanding has arisen.

Some Canadians, for example, cling to the idea that Canada has no enemies. Presumably, in that view, the US is the only member of NORAD that has enemies either because of a lack of skill in its diplomacy or because of innate challenge to interests of otherwise benign third parties. This habit of thought is further reinforced by a conscious or unconscious propensity toward a free-rider mentality which assumes that the United States will involuntarily supply strategic security to Canada because in defending itself it must also defend Canada. The other aspect of the free-rider notion is that even a substantial increase in

Canadian defensive effort will have little impact upon Alliance thinking.

Seductive though the free-rider mentality and the "Canada has no enemies" notions are, and difficult though they are to answer as the White Paper gamely reveals, they contribute to the confusion over the relationship between sovereignty and security. South of the 49th parallel, these notions look different. The US perspective is that Canadian interests and political values are pretty much the same as the American and that together they help provide the basis for the Atlantic Alliance. Moreover, if Canada had the leadership responsibilities the US is expected to assume, it too would be the focal point for hostilities. Yet as policy-makers in Ottawa and Washington are aware, Toronto is as much a nuclear target as Chicago.

As far as the free-rider idea goes, the American perspective is that real defence contributions in the collective interest of the Alliance purchase a genuine seat at the table; free-riderism does not. The key is not only to spend defence dollars, but to pick the areas where those dollars will count, namely where the contribution is most indispensable to the Alliance as a whole.

THE ORIGIN OF CONFUSION BETWEEN sovereignty and security is now clear. Each airspace and under-sea space is equivalent to the other in terms of defensive value. One cannot be defended in the absence of a defence of the other. But each *must* be defended, either by indigenous capability or by the capability of the Alliance partner. In the past, Canada has neither wanted to make a propor-

tionate defence effort nor felt that its air-space and under-sea space could be adequately defended alone. If it now wants to assume more of this defensive responsibility, that is fine with the US. But the defence effort ought to be designed to meet the needs of security, not the political imagery of sovereignty. And the defence effort must be high-grade and credible, not shadows on the walls of Plato's cave. Moreover, the question of what kind of effort is foregone, and what impact the foregone effort will have on the thinking of European Alliance partners, is as grave as any other aspect of defence decision-making, since Alliance security begins and ends in Europe. European confidence in turn is shaped by the perceived willingness of both North American partners to retain their trigger forces in Europe on the one hand, and by the capacity of the US to sustain the credibility of extended deterrence on the other.

This brings us to the crux of the European concern, and therefore of the American concern, regarding the North American under-sea space. Here claims to sovereignty and security must not be allowed to clash. Monitoring, identification, and defence functions ought to be carried out in such a way as to reinforce, not impede, extended deterrence – for example the transit of fleets.

Finally, for a maximum political return on investment, defence spending ought to occur where it is most needed. From the Alliance perspective, Canada's partners will therefore ask whether expenditures on a nuclear submarine force are of the sort that will enhance Alliance security overall to