

The Cold War era saw Canada play an active role in the international arena. Often characterized as a middle-power, Canada was not a central actor in the balance of power politics that took place between the United States and the Soviet Union. But Canada fulfilled an important role. As a middle-power, in both the normative and physical sense of the term, Canada tried to foster better relations between the two main Cold War rivals so that the Cold War never went Hot. Canada also supported the construction of multilateral, rules-based trade and security regimes - - both as a way to secure its own liberal open society, and a way to secure its national interests abroad. Thus within the Cold War balance of power, Canada had a niche role to play, both within the Western Camp and as a balancer between the Cold War rivals.

With the end of the Cold War, the relevance of balance of power in international relations theory and in practice has been questioned. On May 17-18, 2002, in Montreal, scholars from across Canada and the United States met to discuss and debate the relevance of balance of power in international relations today.¹ The brief paper presented here examines some of the main issues raised during the discussion and debate, and their implications for Canada. As such, it is a work in progress. In brief, several points will need to be highlighted:

- Canada does not balance in the international system anymore, and may never have.
- In the security and economic arenas, Canada bandwagons, clearly on the side of the lone hegemon in the international system, the United States. This is not the best policy choice, if we examine Canada's situation from balance of power perspectives.
- While Canada does bandwagon, it does not do so passively. Canada attempts to structure its bandwagoning relationship to its greatest benefit.
- As such, Canada balances (through creative "rhetoric"), when in fact it is attempting to gain leverage (deepening the "substance") in its bandwagoning relationship with the United States.
- This Canadian approach to structuring relations between states is not new, and is a continuation of policies began as early the Pearson era.

To begin this discussion, we need to highlight some of the main conclusions that were drawn from the discussion on balance of power at the Montreal conference. First, when we discuss the issue of balance of power, we need to examine it from both a military/alliance standpoint, and second, from an economic standpoint. When a state balances, it can take one or the other, or both, as its policy choice. Second, states balance because they feel threatened - - either due to a major power threat to the international state system, or locally through threats to their domestic regime stability. Third, in a traditional balance of power, states balance in word and in deed. In the post-Cold War version of balance of power, states may balance rhetorically while bandwagoning in substance, or may balance in substance while bandwagoning rhetorically. These three conclusions are not an exhaustive summary of the conference findings, but are the ones that can be best used to examine Canada and the balance of power in the 21st Century.