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# Direct and Indirect American Influence on Canadian Military and Defense Policy in the Twentieth Century

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# Direct and Indirect American Influence on Canadian Military and Defense Policy in the Twentieth Century

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DIRECT AND INDIRECT AMERICAN INFLUENCE ON CANADIAN MILITARY  
AND DEFENSE POLICY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

by

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## Introduction

Canada would not be content to be “only an echo of somebody else’s voice. . .”<sup>1</sup> Lester B. Pearson, a former prime minister of Canada made this statement in regards to the United States exerting influence on the government of Canada and its policies. He chose, rather, a breakaway from U.S. influence and to allow Canada to conduct and create its own foreign policies and decisions regarding external affairs. During the course of the twentieth century, American influence has pervaded all areas of Canadian military and defence policy, up to and including border defence, national security and international obligations. This paper examines those Canadian military and defence decisions that have been either directly or indirectly influenced by the United States government and its officials.

The beginning of the twentieth century brought about a completely new aspect of Canadian decision making, especially in the realm of military and defence policy. With the emergence of hostile-intentioned world powers, both Canada and the United States had to begin to focus on how North America would defend itself. With the two countries sharing what is and has been the world’s largest unguarded border between two states, it is no surprise that ideas and influence have crossed over that border from both sides.

As the United States was the older country, Canada not having achieved independent status until 1867, it was not surprising to see that the United States had more influence over Canadian government officials. Much of the influence the United States placed on Canada was direct influence. American officials would give the Canadian government the position of the United States on certain issues, and in return, would

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<sup>1</sup> John Hilliker and Donald Barry, *Canada’s Department of External Affairs Volume II: Coming of Age, 1946-1968* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1995), 110.

expect the American ideas inserted into the findings and policies of the Canadian government. Other influences have come indirectly. The American position of an issue would be given to the Canadian government and foreign policy would be drafted, with no mention made of the United States having a say in what was being dictated. Over time, the influence becomes so ingrained into the policy-making decisions that the phenomenon of “unanticipated militarism” occurs. “Unanticipated militarism,” a concept founded by Morris Janowitz, is defined as the “gradual acceptance of policies that do not always coincide with the government’s own assessments of the exigencies of the international strategic environment.”<sup>2</sup> This concept will be mentioned later in this paper.

Over the course of the twentieth century, both direct and indirect influences were enforced on the government of Canada by the United States. Continental security, along with the two world wars and other military engagements fought during this century, were of severe importance to both states in terms of military and defence policy. Since these events were vital to “regional security,” the United States used them to impose its policies on the Canadian government.

### **Fundamental Beginnings: 1900-1914**

During the early years of the twentieth century, relations between the United States and Canada were cordial and uneventful. To the world, the two states appeared to have a friendly relationship. Internally, however, the Canadian government was in fear of a United States takeover of Canada. A former prime minister of Canada, Sir Wilfrid

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<sup>2</sup> Ann Denholm Crosby, “A Middle-Power Military in Alliance: Canada and NORAD,” *Journal of Peace Research* 34 (February 1997): 40.

Laurier, even once said that he liked Americans, but he also knew that they were “caring only for Canada in so far as it may serve their purpose to be friendly.”<sup>3</sup>

During these first years of the twentieth century, the Canadian government was not in fear of foreign powers committing hostile acts against their country. Officials in the Canadian government were more concerned with the United States government exerting too much influence over them. In 1907, negotiations were in progress between the Canadian government and the United States over defence of the two states on the Great Lakes. According to the Rush-Bagot Agreement of 1817, Canada and the United States both restricted themselves to having only four armed vessels each on the Lakes.<sup>4</sup> When the Americans built and launched the *Nashville*, the largest ship launched on the Lakes, Canadian officials did not protest for fear of a naval arms race with the United States.<sup>5</sup> The American government used brute strength and intimidation to directly influence the Canadian government so the agreement could be amended in interpretation. Laurier, in speaking for the Canadian government, also told the British ambassador in Washington, that Canadians, himself especially, lived “in fear and trembling all the time” of what would happen if his country defied the American government.<sup>6</sup>

Following the consolidation of ideas between the two governments, agreements were made regarding the defence of both states on the Great Lakes. Over the next seven years, negotiations and agreements would focus on trade and economics. Then, in 1914, everyone’s worst fears came true. A world war broke out.

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<sup>3</sup> J.L. Granatstein and Norman Hiller, *For Better or For Worse: Canada and the United States to the 1990s* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1991), 35.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>6</sup> *idem*

## **The First World War: 1914-1918**

In 1914, the Austrian-Hungarian empire launched the First World War and enveloped all of Europe in conflict. When Great Britain entered the war, Canada entered the war as well to assist in the defence of the British Empire.<sup>7</sup> When the American government made the decision to not enter the war, this flared a dispute between the American and Canadian governments. The American ideal of isolationism did not appeal to the Canadian government. While the United States government attempted to engage Canadian officials that the war in Europe was Europe's problem, members of the Canadian government were convinced that the defence of the British Empire was at stake. The typical reaction throughout the Canadian government was resentment towards the United States as they [the U.S.] believed they were "too proud to fight."<sup>8</sup> Even with that said, the United States continued its attempt to indirectly influence Canada into staying out of the war.

While Canadian officials believed the United States was turning away from its responsibilities to the world, the beliefs of the United States government was the exact opposite.<sup>9</sup> Those involved in the U.S. government became aware of how much the United States was becoming involved, even though it was still maintaining a neutral status at this stage of the war. Following the Vanceboro incident of 1915, in which a German saboteur attempted to destroy the Canadian-American Bridge at Vanceboro, Maine, United States officials began keeping a closer watch on all border-crossing activity. This attempt at sabotage and the subsequent American response occurred two years prior to the United States entering the war effort.

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>9</sup> *idem*

With the United States maintaining its neutrality argument, they should have been unable to support the war effort, either through manpower or weaponry. This was not the case, however. In 1915, United States officials convinced British officials to allow for the shipping of U.S. materials and experts to Canadian shipyards. These materials were then assembled into warships to be used for the defence of the European coasts. When Canada found out about the subterfuge, British officials immediately apologized, taking the blame for the entire incident. Even though the United States was partly, if not entirely, responsible for the incident, there was no mention made of United States involvement.<sup>10</sup>

When the United States finally entered the war in 1917, the influence placed on Canada only got worse. With Great Britain and the United States forming an alliance, Canada was conveniently left behind. American assistance and influence was now waited upon, and knowing this, Great Britain was able to leave all Canadian defence questions in the hands of the United States. When Robert Borden, the then-Prime Minister, asked Great Britain for assistance, the answer returned was the same it always had been. The United States would be there to assist Canada in its defence.<sup>11</sup> Indirectly, the United States, through all of its coerciveness, had become the defence authority for Canada.

In part, the relations between Canada and the United States during the war years were manageable. The two had come together during a critical time, and for the most part, succeeded in defending themselves and each other. At the end of the war, however,

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

many in the Canadian government, Borden especially, realized that Canada had become too dependent and needed to become more self-reliant.<sup>12</sup>

### **The Interim Years: 1918-1939**

Following the conclusion of the First World War, Canada established its first diplomatic representative in a foreign country, located in Washington, D.C. This was done so that Canada could directly conduct foreign policy with the United States.<sup>13</sup> This would, however, become an easier way for the United States to directly influence the Canadian government, as this provided for the “streamlining” of the foreign policy process.

In 1921, Canadian, American and British officials were engaged in negotiations on the issue of the Anglo-Japanese alliance, in place since 1902. This agreement had been drafted as a mutual assistance treaty against unprovoked aggression. The United States was concerned that Japan and Great Britain, the two greatest naval rivals to the United States, would be given too much power in the interpretation of this treaty. The United States convinced Canada to speak out against this treaty. The influence was successful as Arthur Meighen, the Conservative prime minister following Borden, was responsible for lobbying officials in London that a “contented United States must be the central aim of British foreign policy.”<sup>14</sup> While the focus of the negotiations was to have Great Britain give up the alliance with Japan, the direct influence placed on Canada by the United States was responsible for that dissolution.

The 1920s passed with no Canadian foreign policy decisions being influenced by the United States government. The Roosevelt administration was elected in 1932 and, at

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 76-77.

the height of the Great Depression, implemented the New Deal to rebuild the American economy. Many of the programs started by the administration had far-reaching results. Many of the government officials of both countries were in negotiations with each other to assist in the monetary revitalization of the United States, yet some of the programs also helped to stimulate the Canadian economy.

Two such officials in charge of the negotiations were Dean Acheson, Franklin Roosevelt's secretary of state, and William Herridge, minister to the United States from Canada. Acheson, in praise of his friend Herridge, made the comment that Herridge was "one of the ablest diplomats this country [the U.S.] has received. . . a result of his success with 'the fellows behind the scenes,' especially important because the New Deal led to a proliferation of agencies whose activities were of interest to Canada."<sup>15</sup> The direct influence the agencies and departments established during the New Deal had on the Canadian government led to the economic assistance the United States desperately needed. With the United States pulling itself out of economic despair, and Canada providing the assistance that was needed, all members of government believed that the world was in order.

During the 1930s, the entire world watched as fascism and totalitarianism rose to power in Europe. Canada and the United States, both feeling safe and protected by three thousand miles of ocean, knew their defence was vital to each other. Both Roosevelt and Mackenzie-King knew that Canada's defence policy and strength was not up to America's standards.

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<sup>15</sup> John Hilliker, *Canada's Department of External Affairs Volume I: The Early Years, 1909-1946* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1990), 160.

In 1937, Roosevelt took a sailing tour up the coast of the western United States, intending to sail to Washington, but sailing on to Vancouver, British Columbia. During this trip, he commented on the “lamentable” conditions of the Canadian naval forces and coast defences. Roosevelt made it clear to anyone that would listen that the United States would have to take care of its own defences, and if that meant overstepping Canadian forces, then so be it. The United States was not one to stand idly by and would be forced to “do a great deal there” to protect North American defence.<sup>16</sup> This remark greatly influenced the Canadian government directly, as it now knew that its defences were weak and were unable to stand up to the United States’ standards.

In 1938, during a speech at Queen’s University in Kingston, Roosevelt said that the United States would “not stand idly by if domination of Canadian soil is threatened by any other empire.”<sup>17</sup> This influence, placed directly on Mackenzie King, pressured the Canadian government into making reforms in its defence policy. While Canada was pleased with the support of the United States, it felt pressured by the obligations placed on it by the United States. Canada believed that it was only responsible for what it “reasonably expected to make it” and protecting the United States from an enemy that emanated from Canadian territory.<sup>18</sup>

By the end of the 1930s, the world knew that it was in trouble. Totalitarianism had completely taken over most of the major governments in Europe, and in 1939, the world once again found itself at war.

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<sup>16</sup> Granatstein, *For Better or For Worse*, 125.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>18</sup> *idem*

## **The Second World War: 1939-1945**

In 1939, the armies of Germany invaded Poland, igniting the Second World War. Within a year, all of Europe would find itself enveloped in this horrific atrocity. As much as Canada wanted to support Great Britain in its defence against the forces of Adolf Hitler, then-Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie-King was convinced that sending Canadian troops would destroy Canadian unity.<sup>19</sup> Great Britain, on the other hand, was not as convinced and attempted to persuade Mackenzie-King to send troops to the European front. King, however, decided to adopt the United States' stance on the war. King was "suspicious of Whitehall's [England's] intentions and convinced that Canada's best chance to prosper was by accepting, as the United States had done, its destiny as a North American nation, he wanted to keep out of the overseas wars and entanglements."<sup>20</sup> The United States convinced Canada that a war in Europe was Europe's problem. The indirect influence that was placed on Canada by the United States led to Canada taking a stance against the British government and establishing its own identity as a North American nation, not a European commonwealth.

It was also during this time that the United States and Great Britain began making agreements corresponding to defence strategies and military arrangements. In late 1939, the United States negotiated with Great Britain to place Canadian military forces under American control. The Canadian military was not consulted on this agreement, yet was directly influenced by the agreement. This specific Anglo-American agreement placed Canadian naval and air forces under American strategic command. Following the

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<sup>19</sup> Hilliker, *External Affairs Volume I*, 204.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 205.

announcement of this agreement, the commander of the Newfoundland Escort Force made a public statement, commenting that Britain had “sold us down the river.”<sup>21</sup>

By 1940, Nazi Germany had invaded most of Europe. By June of that year, France had fallen to German forces and as Winston Churchill said, “. . . the battle of France has ended and the battle of Britain has begun.”<sup>22</sup> Canada’s independent and isolationist stance came to an end and troops and a navy were needed to send to Europe to defend the coasts of Britain.

Not all of the influence placed on the Canadian government came from the government of the United States, but rather by and through specific individuals within the United States government. In August of 1940, President Roosevelt met with Prime Minister Mackenzie-King at Ogdensburg, New York. Mackenzie-King did not bring any advisers to this meeting and the two met alone. At the end of the meeting, the two announced the creation of the Permanent Joint Board on Defence (PJBD), a coalition of the two countries’ military forces that would provide a strategic defence plan for North America.<sup>23</sup> The influence placed on Mackenzie-King by Roosevelt is not really known, but with no advisers present at the meeting, it was entirely possible that Roosevelt strong-armed Mackenzie-King into signing the agreement without first consulting Parliament.

Immediately following the Ogdensburg Agreement, the United States made the decision to put the treaty and the PJBD into effect. In September 1940, officials of Great Britain and Canada mapped out a “destroyers-for-bases” agreement, in which British destroyers would be exchanged for a British troop presence on Canadian island bases in

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<sup>21</sup> W. A. B. Douglas, “Marching to Different Drums: Canadian Military History,” *The Journal of Military History* 56 (April 1992): 256.

<sup>22</sup> Rae Murphy and Colin Bain, *Canada since 1867: The Post-Confederate Nation* (Piscataway, NJ: Research and Education Association, 1998), 52.

<sup>23</sup> Douglas, “Marching to Different Drums,” 256.

the Atlantic. Over the next few months, Canadian officials became uneasy when Newfoundland became entangled in the agreement. The air bases on Newfoundland became a forward staging area for American troops, only after which Canada was notified of an agreement giving the United States a long-term lease on bases during an emergency. All of these agreements were undertaken despite Canadian objection and were indirectly influenced by the American government, which acted through the government of Great Britain.<sup>24</sup>

By September 1941, the United States was finding itself more integrated in Canadian military policy. By this time, the Royal Canadian Navy was escorting ships through the Atlantic Ocean as well as hunting German U-boats. Admiral Ernie King, the Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Navy's Atlantic Fleet, wrote to Canada's naval chief of staff, that the Canadian navy did not have the "opportunity to conduct the work involved on the scale required."<sup>25</sup> The American government, specifically the Navy, took matters into its own hands and exerted direct influence in the form of placing the Canadian naval operations under its own command, infuriating the Canadian commanders.<sup>26</sup>

As the war raged on, the United States found more and more reasons to invade Canada, both physically and politically. In 1942, the United States Army began construction on what was to become the Alaskan Highway, a military route designed to ferry military aircraft to Alaska, to protect American interests from Japanese forces in the Aleutian Islands. This "highway" was comprised of military airfields scattered throughout the northern United States, territories in Canada, and ending in Alaska. Many of the airfields built in Canada, mainly the Northwest Territories, however, were built

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<sup>24</sup> Hilliker, *External Affairs Volume I*, 248.

<sup>25</sup> Granatstein, *For Better or For Worse*, 150.

<sup>26</sup> *idem*

without Canadian knowledge.<sup>27</sup> Malcolm MacDonald, the British high commissioner in Canada, reported to Prime Minister Mackenzie-King, warning him of the influence the Americans were placing on Canada by way of the Alaskan Highway. In his report, he said the United States was making decisions that directly placed Canadian interests at risk, all in the name of American interests. Members of the Canadian government had no say in the building of the Alaskan Highway, as the United States needed these airfields as they would become “of particular value for (a) commercial aviation and transport after the war and (b) waging war against the Russians in the next world crisis.”<sup>28</sup> The United States did not take into consideration the burden it placed on the Canadian government, who now not only had to protect its own soil, but the United States’ military interests now in place in Canada.

By 1944, the tide of war had turned in favor of the Allies. The war was drawing to a close, and unbeknownst to many, the United States was in the planning stages of the Manhattan Project, the building of the atomic bomb. This project, spearheaded by the United States, was of vital interest to Canada. While much of the uranium used in the project was supplied by Canada, only a small number of Canadian scientists were involved in the creation of the weapons.<sup>29</sup> Canada, under the direct influence of American military authorities and physicists, found itself not being allowed to give input to the secrets of atomic power creation. With the United States taking the lead on the project, Canada was denied its place in the scientific community and thus all credit for the first practical application of atomic energy in warfare was given to the United States.

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

<sup>28</sup> *idem*

<sup>29</sup> Hilliker, *External Affairs Volume I*, 307.

### **Cold War Beginnings: 1945-1950**

In April 1945, the entire world watched as hostilities came to a conclusion in Europe. Later that year, in August, the world once again rejoiced upon the conclusion of war in the South Pacific and Asia. World War II was over and the world was a new place. New nations were born; others were destroyed. The world was revolving in its life cycle and a new international regime was created, with the United States and the Soviet Union as the forerunners and competitors.

Canada, because of its location, was immediately aligned with the United States when the Cold War erupted. Lester Pearson, who assumed the post of under-Secretary of State for External Affairs in 1946, was convinced that Canada could only deal with the issues that were “on the periphery of East-West relations, since Canada’s firm commitment to the latter deprived it of credibility. . .”<sup>30</sup> Since Canada was in close proximity to the United States and was tied to the British Commonwealth, its “effectiveness depended on close relations with its principal allies, the United States and the United Kingdom. . .”<sup>31</sup> Canada, because of the influence placed principally by the United States, had lost its identity as a sovereign state, and gained the reputation as a subsidiary United States.

By the end of the 1940s, the Cold War front lines had been drawn and states were placed on sides. The Warsaw Pact was defined as the Soviet Union and all of its satellite countries in Eastern Europe, while in 1948, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was formed by the United States, Canada, and their allies in Western Europe.<sup>32</sup> During the process of drafting the founding documents, Canada was under severe

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<sup>30</sup> Hilliker, *External Affairs Volume II*, 30.

<sup>31</sup> *idem*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

influence by the United States. Prior to signing the original treaty, Canada wanted to be assured that its objectives were adhered. Hume Wrong, the ambassador from Canada to the United States, who was placed in charge of the negotiations in Washington, DC, voiced the main objective of the Canadian government. This objective was that the wording of the treaty contained a clearly defined security guarantee; without this, Canada would refuse to sign.<sup>33</sup> In December 1948, Wrong took his case before the Cabinet of Canada to approve the wording of the NATO treaty, and conducted negotiations between Louis St Laurent, who at the time was the Canadian envoy to Washington, DC, and Dean Acheson, the American Secretary of State.

During the course of negotiations, signatory members were placing influence on each other in order to gain concessions over one another. The leader in influencing was the United States. Canada, opposed to allowing Italy entrance into NATO, immediately withdrew its opposition when the United States declared that Italy had a strategic position, and was therefore worth of admission.<sup>34</sup> The United States' opinion outweighed all others, was seen as the rule, rather than the exception, and in negotiations, was not to be refuted.

Once all of the wordings of the treaty were negotiated, and agreements were in order, the respective states took the treaty to their governments. In Canada, the treaty was placed before the House of Commons for ratification. On March 28, 1949, the House approved the treaty with only two dissenting votes, thus strongly stating that Canada would be highly involved in global security.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> *idem*

<sup>34</sup> *idem*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

Once the threat of communism reached the United States, its impact on Canada immediately took precedence in defence policy. While not a physical defence issue, Canada became immersed in the security of its borders. The United States had such a hold on Canadian policy, so much so that it was allowed to investigate Canadian officials for possible communist actions. Herbert Norman, the head of the Canadian liaison in Tokyo, was put under investigation by the American government for possible communist activities and affiliations, and was subsequently subpoenaed by the United States House of Representatives Committee on Un-American Activities.<sup>36</sup> Norman, who was eventually recalled from his post and placed in a research position, was himself a direct recipient of American influence. Norman, reassigned as the Canadian ambassador to Egypt, would eventually commit suicide in Cairo in 1957, with many believing he had been “hounded to death by irresponsible allegations before uncontrollable Congressional committees.”<sup>37</sup>

While Canada was focused on ideological defence, the United States put its attention on physical defence and continental security. While Canada was preoccupied with the spread of communism within its borders, the United States feared the spread worldwide, as well as within its borders. Thus began the use of proxy wars, those wars not directly involving the major actors, but rather fought between satellite states.

### **Korean War: 1950-1953**

The first proxy war fought during the Cold War was in Korea. When North Korea invaded South Korea in the name of unifying the country under a flag of communism, the United States, under the banner of United Nations intervention, inserted

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 67

<sup>37</sup> Granatstein, *For Better or For Worse*, 189.

troops to battle the North Koreans. While “officially a UN war, the first of its kind, it was really Washington’s war and the U.S. very quickly began exerting diplomatic pressure on its friends to send troops to help stop the Communist advance.”<sup>38</sup> Canada, not wanting to lose credibility with the United Nations, sent troops as well. “The minister of national defence and his officials, however, were hesitant about assigning a military contingent on the grounds that there were not enough adequately trained troops available.”<sup>39</sup> Canadian officials, influenced by their positioning in the world, sent troops, knowing that it would not be able to support them and provide proper equipment, in the name of saving face among the United States and other nations. The indirect influence placed by the United States, under the guise of the United Nations, led to an unprepared military being inserted into a conflict not of its own making, into an area of the world that was “not a sphere of much interest to Canada.”<sup>40</sup>

The Korean War also brought about a new era in United States-Canadian relations. This was the first time during the history of relations that Canadian officials were willing to question the actions of the United States and its influence on Canadian endeavors. Escott Reid, a key assistant to Lester Pearson, summed up the opinions of many Canadian officials when he said, “If you consider the United States is proposing to do something unwise and dangerous. . . , how far do you go in standing up to them and opposing them in public?”<sup>41</sup> Canada, while pressing for an armistice in Korea, was finally standing up to the influences placed on it by the United States, even under the auspices of the withdrawal of aid and assistance from the United States. Pearson, well

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 179.

<sup>39</sup> Hilliker, *External Affairs Volume II*, 79.

<sup>40</sup> Granatstein, *For Better or For Worse*, 179.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

aware of the “disadvantages that might result, but keeping the Korean War limited and bringing it to an end as soon as possible were important enough,” he believed, “to run the risk of American anger.”<sup>42</sup> The consequences of going against American policies were becoming unimportant to Canada and the decisions it made reflected this thinking.

### **Continental Defence: 1953-1960**

After the armistice in Korea in 1953, officials in Canada and the United States turned their attention to continental defence. Soviet aggression was on every official’s mind, and the continent needed to be defended at all costs. Canada, however, would soon find itself on the receiving end of American directives.

The beginning of joint cooperation for continental defence began in 1951 with the creation of a radar station system that extended from British Columbia to southern Ontario. This system became known as the Pinetree Line, set in place to provide an advance warning in the event of an air attack.<sup>43</sup> By 1954, Canada and the United States had created a series of radar systems, totaling thirty-four stations. The “agreement to build the radar chains ushered in a new phase in continental defence collaboration, with the United States expected to propose an integrated North American air command.”<sup>44</sup> Many Canadian officials feared a takeover of Canadian defence by the United States, as they were convinced the United States wanted to propose, create, and implement a new type of defence plan, one beneficial to U.S. interests.

The creation of the joint defence plan also led to the issue of who would be responsible. Officials within Defence Liaison (1) Division, the section of the Department of External Affairs responsible for defence and military policy, “observed, however, that

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<sup>42</sup> *idem*

<sup>43</sup> Hilliker, *External Affairs Volume II*, 109.

<sup>44</sup> *idem*

the probable result could be 'to have the responsibility for the air defence of Canada, including the command of Canadian air defence forces, vested in a United States officer.'"<sup>45</sup> Canadian air forces would now be subject to the rules and regulations imposed by a foreign officer, and under the direct influence of the United States command. Fearing a loss of sovereignty was on the minds of all Canadian officials, as this would be the most serious issue up to date in U.S.-Canadian relations.

In 1958, the issue of continental defence would take on immense proportions when Canada and the United States entered into a formal arrangement, which would become known as the North American Air Defence Agreement (NORAD). NORAD combined the continental defence forces of Canada and the United States, aligning them under a joint command. The forces were then to be used a first line of defence in the event of strategic attacks by the Warsaw Pact. While the agreement was being drafted, and after being sent to the Canadian government for approval, it was understood by officials that "the Canadian military was under almost daily pressure from the military in the United States."<sup>46</sup> The influence from the United States also came directly in the formation, as when the compilation of forces was finally agreed to "the NORAD Command was predicated upon a nuclear weapons role for Canadian air defence forces operating in Canada and neither the Prime Minister nor the Department of External Affairs was fully aware. . ."<sup>47</sup> The United States took it upon itself to include the nuclear weapons clause in the initial agreement without giving prior knowledge to anyone in the Canadian government.

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<sup>45</sup> *idem*

<sup>46</sup> Granatstein, *For Better or For Worse*, 198.

<sup>47</sup> Crosby, "Middle Power Military," 37.

It is during this period that Canadian defence policy found itself under the strains of “unanticipated militarism,” mentioned earlier. Again, this concept is when policies are gradually accepted, even when they do not coincide with the government’s ideals. The prime example of this concept is the Canadian acceptance of American nuclear weapons. The Canadian government was against the use of nuclear weapons in continental defence, but due to the influence placed by the American government on Canadian officials, Canada was left with no choice but to accept the weapons. The use of such weapons was believed by many to be “directly related to activities arising from the cooperative Canadian/US professional military relationship.”<sup>48</sup> By accepting American nuclear weapons, Canada cemented the position that it would listen to all American “suggestions” to its defence policy.

#### **From Cooperation to Vietnam and Back: 1960-1975**

Once regional and continental defence was stabilized in North America, Canada turned its eye to events occurring around the world. Many of them did not affect Canada directly, but nevertheless, Canada was subject to influence from the American government during these events.

In the early 1960s, the first event of global proportions that affected the Canadian government was the Cuban missile crisis, taking place between the Americans and the Soviets. Following the discovery of Soviet missile sites in Cuba, John F. Kennedy, then the American president, readied plans for a naval blockade of Cuba to prevent Soviet ships from reaching Cuba. The Canadian government was consulted, as the missiles that would potentially be aimed at the United States would be capable of reaching Canada as well. While the Cabinet in Canada wavered, the defence minister, Douglass Harkness,

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

made the decision to stand beside the American government. The reasoning behind the waver, however, was many believed, and voiced by minister of External Affairs Green [Howard Green] that “if Canada went along with the Americans now ‘we’ll be their vassals forever.”<sup>49</sup> Eventually, Prime Minister Diefenbaker would respond to the wishes of his defence minister and the entire military would be placed on alert. Diefenbaker was, however, angered, as under the terms of the NORAD agreement, Canada was to be “entitled. . .to be fully consulted before the forces went on alert.”<sup>50</sup> While the Canadian public was upset with Diefenbaker for wavering in the face of Soviet initiated nuclear war, the Cabinet was under the impression that the entire situation could have been avoided, had it not been for American egoism.

By the mid-1960s, the United States found itself completely involved in the war in Southeast Asia. Canada, however, had remained outside of American influence to involve troops in the conflict. It was, however, involved in other ways, the main activity being that of involvement in the International Control Commissions (ICC), founded during the creation of the Geneva Convention in 1954. This commission was responsible for the withdrawal of troops, the exchange of prisoners and the transfer of peoples from North Vietnam to South Vietnam.<sup>51</sup> While Kennedy was in office, during the beginning stages of the war, the United States had made several attempts to ensure Canada’s participation in the war. Each and every time, Canada flatly refused, claiming its membership in the ICC “made an active role in the war impossible.”<sup>52</sup> The American influence placed on the Canadian government was, in this case, unsuccessful.

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<sup>49</sup> Granatstein, *For Better or For Worse*, 204.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 205.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 229.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 230.

After the war began to escalate further, and more American troops were being inserted into both North and South Vietnam, American officials again began to attempt to influence Canadian officials into sending Canadian troops into the fight. Canada made the decision to send a communications team to Hanoi in attempt to negotiate with the North Vietnamese, but was warned that the team would lose access “if they came ‘only as a mouthpiece to American propaganda.’”<sup>53</sup> Upon hearing this news, Pearson [Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson] commented that it would be a “sad ending to our initiative [of keeping some peace in Vietnam] in this matter if we became merely an instrument of USA propaganda. . .”<sup>54</sup> The influence that the United States had attempted, once again, was unsuccessful in swaying the government officials of Canada into supporting the U.S. position in Vietnam.

In 1965, Pearson delivered a speech at Temple University in Pennsylvania, speaking out against the United States’ position in Vietnam. A two-man team, comprised of Livingston Merchant, twice ambassador to Canada, and Arnold Heeney, twice ambassador to the United States were then assigned to produce acceptable results “which would make it easier to avoid divergencies in economic and other policies of interest to each other.”<sup>55</sup> Their report, *Canada and the United States: Principles for Partnership*, was seen as a response to Pearson’s speaking out against Johnson [U.S. President Lyndon Johnson], as the report was distributed only a few short months after his Temple University speech. Because of this, many in Canada believed that Heeney was duped by Merchant into agreeing to the United States’ position. As one Canadian columnist stated, “If the Heeney-Merchant doctrine catches on, it seems certain to confirm our lackey

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<sup>53</sup> Hilliker, *External Affairs Volume II*, 375.

<sup>54</sup> *idem*

<sup>55</sup> Granatstein, *For Better or For Worse*, 234.

status.”<sup>56</sup> While not a direct influence by the United States, many Canadian officials believed that the accounts provided by Merchant and Heeney only served to lessen the Canadian opinion to the world.

By 1968, tensions between the United States and Canada were taking their toll in other areas of cooperation. While NORAD was under scrutiny already by the Canadian government, and was due to expire, the realization came to both states that the “manned bomber threat (the main reason for NORAD when the agreement had been signed in 1958) was slowly declining while the threat from ballistic missiles was growing. . .”<sup>57</sup> Continued Canadian cooperation in NORAD rested solely on the level of Canadian participation, rather than the need. The United States, politely “suggested” to the Permanent Joint Board on Defence, and agreement was given by Pearson, that “studies carried out by the board should be based on. . .continued Canadian participation. . .and they relate to the extent and the form of Canadian co-operation in aerospace defence for the period after 1968.”<sup>58</sup>

After reviewing the plans for continued Canadian cooperation, Pearson requested further information from the United States on the threat of ballistic missiles. Robert McNamara, the American secretary of defence, met with Canadian officials and informed them that deployment of ballistic missiles for continental defence would be placed on American soil and Canadian cooperation was no longer required.<sup>59</sup> In a turnabout, the United States influenced the Canadian government by not including them in defence policy at all, making all decisions for continental defence on its own.

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 235.

<sup>57</sup> Hilliker, *External Affairs Volume II*, 383.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 384.

<sup>59</sup> *idem*

By 1973, Canada removed itself completely from the Vietnam situation by pulling out of the ICC. It no longer felt compelled to return to a situation in which its greatest alliance, the United States, asserted itself against a foreign government with unattainable results. By 1975, the United States had removed all of its troops from Vietnam, and once again, Canada turned to the United States in an attempt to restore previous, more friendly, relations.

### **Expansion and Missile Defence: 1975-1989**

With the end of Vietnam, and the fall of Saigon, the largest by-proxy war of the Cold War was over. Canada and the United States were able to turn their attentions to the agreed upon enemy, the Soviet Union, and thus return to a sense of cooperation and mutual engagement.

The first order of business for Canada, according to the United States, was an upgrading of forces in Europe. The Soviet threat had to be neutralized on its home front, and the United States wanted Canada to have a role in the fight. As U.S. Defense Secretary James Schlesinger said, “The basic premise, I believe, is that unless we are prepared to defend parts of the world other than the North American continent, we will soon have nothing more than the North American continent to defend and that would be a calamity from the standpoint of both our nations.”<sup>60</sup> The United States put all of its efforts onto Canada to increase its number of troops as this was “. . .in line with the long-held U.S. view that Canadian contributions to North American defence did not offset Canada’s obligations to Europe.”<sup>61</sup> This subtle change in United States’ policy, to battle

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<sup>60</sup> Joel Sokolsky, “A Seat at the Table: Canada and Its Alliances,” in *Canada’s Defence: Perspectives on Policy in the Twentieth Century*, ed. B.D. Hunt and R.G. Haycock (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, Ltd., 1993), 155.

<sup>61</sup> *idem*

the Soviets on the European mainland, had direct and indirect influence on Canadian policy, as the argument for increased Canadian presence was also voiced by the European alliance. To answer the United States' calling for an increase in Canadian forces, by 1987 Canada had "increased its forces stationed in Europe by 1,500 and. . ." made the commitment that "the number will grow further with improvements such as low-level air defence."<sup>62</sup>

Throughout the early 1980s, the main focus of Canadian policy turned to the sharing of missile defence responsibilities with the United States. The creation of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) by then-United States President Ronald Reagan, and the idea of the Star Wars defense system, led the Canadian government to adopt the same ideals and positions. By 1987, Canada had drafted the White Paper entitled *Challenge and Commitment: A Defence Policy for Canada*. This paper was drafted as a direct result of Canada deciding to opt out of the SDI research undertaken by the United States. "Minister of National Defence Perrin Beatty declared that it [*Challenge and Commitment*] represented a 'made in Canada' defence policy."<sup>63</sup> While this paper was not a result of American influence, it marked the beginning of the end of American influence on Canadian policy.

By the end of 1987, however, United States influence had returned to Canada. Canadian policy adopted United States defence policy as "the Soviets develop new generations of cruise missiles, as the sophistication of their SSNs increases, and as the arctic becomes more of a strategic arena."<sup>64</sup> The United States' policy of Soviet

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<sup>62</sup> Canada, Ministry of National Defence, *Challenge and Commitment: Defence Policy for Canada, 1987 White Paper*, June 1987, 17.

<sup>63</sup> Sokolsky, "A Seat at the Table," 158.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 159.

engagement was inputted into Canadian continental defence policy, but was of immediate influence as this thinking brought “about a heightened American concern for continental defence (consistent with U.S. thinking on strategic defence).”<sup>65</sup> American fears of Soviet aggression had suddenly become Canadian fears. By 1989, the fears of both the United States and Canada were put to rest as the Soviet Union disintegrated, the Berlin Wall was taken down, and the Cold War came to an end.

### **Peacekeeping and Canadian Breakaway: 1990-2000**

By the beginning of the 1990s, Canadian military and defence policy had been changed to incorporate an aspect that had been started by Lester Pearson: peacekeeping. Canadian forces became integrated with United Nations forces all over the world, engaged in skirmishes that covered the globe.

In early 1992, Canada committed troops to two major conflicts engulfing Europe and Africa. Twelve hundred Canadian troops were attached to the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Somalia in March of that year. By the following month, another 750 peacekeeping troops had been committed to the United Nations operation in Somalia (UNOSOM1). These operations were conducted without any influence from the United States, signifying a new era of Canadian defence and military policy, one free of foreign influence.

By 1994, this idea of Canadian independence was beginning to waver. Canada wanted to begin a de-escalation of its cooperation with the United States to focus on its peacekeeping operations around the globe. It was believed, however, that even with Canada staying focused on its own issues, it “[Canada] would still be obliged to rely on the United States for help in protecting its territory and approaches – and this assistance

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<sup>65</sup> *idem*

would then come on strictly American terms, unmitigated by the influence Canada enjoys as a result of its defence partnership with the United States. . .”<sup>66</sup> The direct pressure placed on Canada was now not only coming from the United States, but from other allies as well.

The peacekeeping operations, however, were Canada’s policy focus. By the mid-1990s, Canadian forces were highly involved in the escapades unfolding in Bosnia and Croatia, spearheaded by NATO and the United States. These were the operations that created a pinnacle of Canadian breakaway from U.S. influence. “Some countries, especially the United States, came to support the use of force. . .Canada, on the other hand, strongly encouraged the use of UN peacekeepers and the primacy and authority of the United Nations as the legitimate organization that should respond to the Bosnian civil war.”<sup>67</sup> By April of 1994, however, influence by the United States once again permeated Canadian policy, as “the Chretien government reluctantly came to support NATO-led air strikes in spite of the fact that these subsequently led to Canadian peacekeepers being taken hostage by the Serbs.”<sup>68</sup> The reach of the United States was so long that the Canadian military was not able to ward off policy influences. The direct influence placed by the United States “proved difficult to resist, even though it meant that Canadian peacekeepers would be put at a risk.”<sup>69</sup>

By the end of the 1990s, Canadian defence policy had returned to the aspect of missile defence. However, the adversary was no longer the Soviet Union, rather Iraq,

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<sup>66</sup> Canada, Ministry of National Defence, *1994 White Paper*, 1994, 14.

<sup>67</sup> Hevina Dashwood, “Canada’s Participation in the NATO-led Intervention in Kosovo,” in *Vanishing Borders*, ed. Maureen Appel Molat and Fen Osler Hampson (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2000), 280.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 281.

<sup>69</sup> *idem*

Iran, North Korea, and other countries poised against the United States. The United States had incorporated its National Missile Defence (NMD) policy and was adamant about having Canadian cooperation. The United States maintained, however, that if “President Clinton decides in favour of going ahead. . . a year after a decision by the President to proceed further with NMD, a formal invitation to participate would be tendered to Ottawa.”<sup>70</sup> With the United States being so adamant, was this a sign of a lessening of influence on Canada? Would Canada finally be free of the United States in formulating defence policy if it decided to decline the invitation? This has yet to be proven but the projected outcomes are not highly desirable. Those involved in the decision making for this process believe that “Canada’s declining to be involved in NMD would almost inevitably lead to the United States eventually placing not only NMD but also the linked warning and assessment responsibilities under an all-US command.”<sup>71</sup> As of 2000, Canada had maintained its steadfast position against participating in the NMD program.

### **Conclusion**

Over the past century, Canadian military and defence policy has reverted between having heavy American influence to having European influence to having no influence from outside sources whatsoever. Canada has maintained its position as a middle-power in the world and will continue to maintain that status and will continue to grow in strength and influence of its own. If not, and Canada decides to allow the influence of the United States to become an integral part of its defence policy, then “Canada could let

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<sup>70</sup> Joseph Jockel, “US National Missile Defence, Canada, and the Future of NORAD,” in *Vanishing Borders*, ed. Maureen Appel Molat and Fen Osler Hampson (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2000), 74.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

the United States assume the entire North American air defence role if it were willing to have American troops stationed in Canada.”<sup>72</sup> Canada, however, is not ready to allow this to happen and will continue in its role as an international peacekeeper and defender of peace. It is only a matter of time before countries realize that Canada is an independent nation and has its minds set on its policies and will make its policies as it sees fit.

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<sup>72</sup> Sokolsky, “A Seat at the Table,” 147.

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