

Defence Policy Review Submission by Dr. Alexander Moens, Professor, Simon Fraser University, April 27, 2016

The three tasks of Canada's defence policy--the defence of Canada, the defence of North America with the United States, and the pursuit of international peace and security—remain firm.

Assuming that enduring logic, I submit three brief points, two of which are in this written brief.

1. Why Canada's Armed Forces need Broad-based capabilities

The technological complexity and cost of military systems and training makes it very difficult for even large states to afford a broad range of equipment and abilities. Canada is not a superpower. Only its geography falls into the class of super-big. In economic terms, we have more geographic and military *demand* for defence than we have demographic and economic *supply* of defence. That is the first problem. If you factor in far-north operations, the complexity multiplies.

This problem always invokes an alternative: to pursue more specialized (niche) capabilities. Perhaps today we call this a leaner military? But this is a mistake. We should not specialize in a limited array of tasks with high quality tools at the cost of losing a wide array of tasks with adequate tools.

To be sovereign we require *a Maximum Range of Modest Capabilities*. To cooperate with the United States we need *a Maximum Range of Modest Capabilities*. To join international security needs as Canadians expect our country to do, we also require *a Maximum Range of Modest Capabilities*. Canadian politicians, the media, and the Canadian public need constant reminding why this is the case.

By way of example: We have four submarines, but more ocean front than all of Europe. What is the conclusion? Get rid of the four, build ten more, or is there a sound middle way?

Why must Canadian defence remain based on broad capabilities and a wide scope of action?

Canada's defence differs from our West European friends. Geographically small and politically integrated countries such as Belgium and the Netherlands find that the bulk of the evidence leans towards specialization of defence tasks. For them, high degrees of specialization embedded in larger multi-national military units with the Germans, the French, or the British are increasingly replacing the old concept of national defence.

Two reasons guide this logic. First, the defence relationship between small and big European state is truly interdependent. Defence integration flows both ways. The large European powers – Germany, France, and Britain – struggle to maintain broad-based militaries themselves. Hence, for these larger states specific niche capabilities add value and save costs, such as Dutch artillery units inside a German armoured division. Second, these states are federated and institutionalized into shared sovereignty and community law in the European Union. The combination of NATO and the EU is their guarantee.

The Canadian situation is different. US military preparedness remains essentially American, period. Second, our bilateral defence policy relationship is ad hoc. It is not set in community law, federation or political integration. This is not a critique. At the operational level few militaries work better together than Americans and Canadians.

But we must not lose sight of the reality that the Canadian Armed Forces can bring little added value to the super-sized American armed forces, even as American soldiers and officers realize the high quality of

Canadian personnel and the tasks they perform. An American military commander can see it, but an American decision-maker most of the time does not.

The sum of the matter is this: for all three pillars of Canadian defence the keyword is *augmentation*. The United States can and is usually willing to augment what we are doing in North America and around the world. In order for the United States to augment our effort, we need an effort, in order to have an effort we need broad-based capabilities across the spectrum. It may be air one day, sea the next, and an expeditionary campaign the day after.

The USA can augment our 4 submarine capability when both of us agree it is in our interest. The same with conducting air patrol over North America. The opposite of augmentation is substitution. If we cannot do all the tasks we face substitution. US substitution happens when we abandon broad-based capabilities. It is a recipe for domestic and bilateral political problems.

2. The Multiplier Effect of Allies and Partners

In nearly all Canadian Defence Policy Review debates the third pillar (international peace and security operations) receives most attention.

I plead for a functional charter to envision this task. The previous government may well have made this file too political and partisan. I plead for this government not to respond in kind. We live in a polarizing world. Canadian defence policy must be anchored to our values and interests, not partisan shadow boxing.

There is no need for competition between worldviews in this regard. There should be a no pro-NATO and pro-UN party divide. Rather, the two build on each other. Let me explain.

The United Nations based system, broadly defined, represents the pursuit of a rules-based international order by means of international law. All member nations recognize basic rights, including sovereignty, legal equality, independence, and non-interference. On this structure various broad policy areas are based, such as the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. The security competence of the UN is of course channeled through the Security Council.

This primary structure of international relations lacks two crucial components. First, it cannot overcome great power divides such as currently among the United States, Russia, and China. Second, it cannot mount international peace and security operations with success.

Canadian *diplomacy* ought to play a large role in enhancing the effectiveness of the UN system, but Canadian Armed Forces face serious limitations in this context. Significant problems remain with mounting military operations through the UN machinery, including with the concept of a Standby-High Readiness Brigade. There is no critical mass of shared values, interests and capabilities large enough to propel the UN into modern crisis management operations. Today, the UNSC permanent members are quite divided while the level of force, risk, and equipment needed to mitigate international peace and security operations is much higher. Canada can make the most valuable contributions with Allies and Partners as it did for example in assisting France in Operation Serval in Mali in 2013.

The functional charter for Canadian operations in international peace and security lies in what I call the Allies and Partners Framework (APF). For example, in November 2015 the UNSC unanimously called for

members to fight ISIS. But the fight is conducted by a global coalition. There is no ideological competition. Our military focus has to be on this APF.

Canada's Allies and Partners are proper names. By Allies I mean the United States, the NATO Allies, and European Union Partners that are not in NATO, and through NATO's Partnership various countries across the globe, including in Africa, and in Asia-Pacific, such as Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand. Finally, Canada has also Partners in South America with whom stronger defence relations can emerge.

Sometimes, at the operational level, we work with non-Democratic countries in the world. However, the practical reality of Canadian values and interest is such that most of the time we align with a certain peer group. This consort of Allies and Partners does things together in missions abroad, and in so doing create specific synergies on how defence is done in general.

In sum, Canadian defence capabilities for international security and peace operations must focus on how to make the APF capable. We are not in this Allies and Partners Framework because we want to be taken seriously, or because we feel shamed or pressured by certain allies to 'do something.' Canada is in this group because the mix of values and interests we want as Canadians enjoy substantive content overlap with these countries. When we act, we act with them first and foremost. There we find the multiplier effect for our capabilities.