

# The Impact of Alliances on Canadian Cold War Politics

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Allying closely with the United States through NATO in the beginning of the Cold War brought the benefit of national security for Canada in return for a substantial Canadian military contribution to NATO. When Pierre Trudeau cut government military funding and foreign missions in the 1970s the balancing of alliance obligations, foreign involvement and domestic matters became more difficult. It will be argued that Canada's lack of revolutionary action towards the end of the Cold War was largely a result of being pulled between domestic issues while trying to fulfill foreign obligations, which stretched resources thinly and had negative implications on foreign policy. Combined with a foreign policy dictated by NATO and a lack of pull in making any major decisions in the global community, Canada was limited in exceeding the role of quiet diplomat and NATO ally. The question that arises is why Canadians were not able to establish and independent yet meaningful role in Cold War negotiations. How did Trudeau juggle internal and external commitments, and where did he go wrong? Furthermore, was Canada able to play a significant role among middle powers even while being excluded from the larger maneuvers of the Cold War leaders?

Oral history interviews were conducted with a number of Canadian politicians and diplomats including John Noble, Robert Fowler, and Paul Heinbecker, and former Canadian ambassador Gaetan Lavertu. Also included are interviews with the New Democratic Party politician Bill Blaikie, and the politician and academic Lloyd Axworthy. These interviews provide the personal views of the politicians on the events that took place in the latter part of the Cold War.

## Structural struggles

First the structures within Canada will be examined to contextualize the political tendencies and trends that arose over the course of the Cold War. Canada is unique in a number of ways that accommodate the role of a middle power with a tendency towards compromise. The age of the commonwealth country, along with the constitutional structure and federal organization are unique factors that contributed to the timid stance and diverging goals of Canadian politicians in the 1970s and 1980s<sup>1</sup>. Keith Banting proposes that the divisions created by linguistic

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Fowler credits Canada's age as a factor in the timid attitude of the Canadian government. Canada gained control of foreign policy in 1932, a relatively recent development.

and regional differences brought together through a tenuous federal system prevented Canadians from making radical changes and revolutionary Cold War gestures.<sup>2</sup> Indeed separations within the federal organization of Canada indicate fractures that run deep. In this organization provinces do not have independent constitutions. Because the centralized Canadian state is wealthier than the individual provinces the centralized government has influence in local development and affairs.<sup>3</sup>

At the height of the Cold War the divisions would feed the fires of Quebec Separatism,<sup>4</sup> as Quebec was only a province pitted against the much stronger federal leaders.<sup>5</sup> According to John Noble the Quebec people were upset when the constitution was officially repatriated in 1982 as they argued that they had not been formally consulted.<sup>6</sup> What appeared as a positive step toward greater independence was complicated by the delicate issue of who has the right to choose Canada's path. Cultural and societal values and goals are not homogenous across Canada, making it tricky to reach solutions that please everyone.<sup>7</sup> This would reflect in the Cold War political situation as prime ministers struggled to please a diverse domestic population while also maintaining foreign obligations.

National dissension caused Pierre Trudeau to attempt to shed the "helpful fixer image" in order to focus on internal issues.<sup>8</sup> Since the end of World War II Canada had substantially invested in overseas military placements through NATO and as such had established the role of peacekeeper and military support.<sup>9</sup> When Trudeau entered office and decided to strengthen Canada from within before draining resources externally this counterweight strategy was confused. He

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Robert Fowler, interview with Alexander von Plato, conducted via Skype, 18 March 2013; Adam Bromke and Kim Richard, "Tensions in Canada's Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* 62 (Winter 1983): 340.

<sup>2</sup> Keith Banting, "Neoconservatism in an Open Economy: The Social Role of the Canadian State," *International Political Science Review* 13 (April 1992): 149.

<sup>3</sup> A. L. Sanguin, "The Quebec Question and the Political Geography of Canada," *GeoJournal* 8 (1984): 99.

<sup>4</sup> Beginning with the separatist groups who sprung from the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s, the movement gained strength with the election of the Parti Quebecois on 15 November 1976. The political aim of the group was to gain self-sovereignty. Sanguin, 99-100.

<sup>5</sup> John Noble, interview with Alexander von Plato, Ottawa, 25 January 2013.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> The quick transformations that took place over the latter part of the Cold War demanded rapid reactions that the Canadian government was not able to provide. According to Gilles Paquet, "Canada is a small, open, dependent and balkanized socio-economy, with a rather unillustrious record when it comes to developing an integrated political economic response to any external shock." Gilles Paquet, "The Canadian Malaise and Its External Impact," *Canada Among Nations 1990-91: After the Cold War*, ed. by Fen Hampson and Christopher Maule (Montreal: Carleton University Press, 1991), 26.

<sup>8</sup> Bromke and Richard, 342.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

believed that the threat of a Soviet attack was no longer imminent and that the cost to maintain bases in Europe and NATO membership was unnecessary. Therefore, he cut foreign military spending in order to focus on establishing sovereignty, but by the 1980s Canada's military equipment and contribution was greatly diminished.<sup>10</sup> The pull between maintaining a positive national situation while also preserving Canada's counterweight was central to Canada's search for an appropriate role in the Cold War. And central to this tug-of-war was the longstanding relationship with the United States of America.

### **A complicated alliance**

Canada became closely linked with America after the end of World War II as a counterweight and economic partner.<sup>11</sup> After the war Canada had the choice of strengthening the Commonwealth by enforcing relations with Britain or to build an alliance with the United States.<sup>12</sup> Choosing Britain would have deflected Soviet attention from Canada but allying with America would benefit the already interdependent economies and shared resources of the North American powers.<sup>13</sup>

To better understand the contradictions that Trudeau's government encountered it is helpful to survey the Canadian-American alliance as one that has lasted decades and thus changed context from the beginning to the end of the Cold War. The alliance was nurtured by the proximity of the two countries in a time when the Western and Eastern worlds were being reorganized around the rising Soviet power.<sup>14</sup> The natural resources in Canada and the vast wealth of America also benefitted the partnership.<sup>15</sup> At the beginning of the Cold War American individuals and corporations controlled over 78% of foreign money invested in Canada as well as sectors of the Canadian economy.<sup>16</sup> Since the International Materials Conference (IMC) of 1951, in which America and Canada were the two main players, Canadian energy policies have been formed by American markets, government policies and primarily by the interests of American oil companies.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> John Barrett, "Arms Control and Canada's Security Policy," *International Journal* 42 (Autumn 1978): 731, 735; Neil Macfarlane, "Implications for the Canadian-America Security Relationship," *International Journal* 46 (Winter 1990/91): 60.

<sup>10</sup> Melissa Clark-Jones, *A Staple State: Canadian Industrial Resources in Cold War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 15.

<sup>11</sup> Norman Hillmer and J.L. Grananstein, *Empire to Umpire: Canada and the World to the 1990s*, (Toronto: Copp Clark Longman, 1994), 267.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Tiegrob, *Warming Up to the Cold War: Canada and the United States' Coalition of the Willing, From Hiroshima to Korea* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 5.

<sup>13</sup> Clark-Jones, 15.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Hillmer and Grananstein, 256-7.

<sup>17</sup> Clark-Jones, 25.

From 1960 to 1975, consumption of energy in America doubled and the oil industry grew at a rapid pace.<sup>18</sup> It was argued that the natural gas in Canada was necessary for US security and leadership and the IMC continued to stress the integration of American and Canadian economies into the 1970s.<sup>19</sup>

While the alliance sustained a strong economic relationship and was beneficial for both countries, an imbalance of power had political implications that were felt by the smaller partner. Trudeau envisioned the Canadian-American relationship as a mouse and an elephant in bed together where the mouse would feel every movement while making little impact of its own.<sup>20</sup> As a counterweight to the superpower Canada was an important but secondary player in the protection of North America and Europe.<sup>21</sup> It soon became apparent that escaping “the solitary embrace of the United States” would be harder than expected.<sup>22</sup> The differences between the two nations became obvious as the years went on and nuclear strategy changed, the threat of nuclear war decreased, and Canada welcomed Trudeau into leadership, bringing Trudeau and Ronald Reagan into an era of tense relations.<sup>23</sup>

One main issue that strained the alliance was the differing attitudes towards nuclear weaponry. Canadians had raised doubts about the benefits of an anti-Soviet campaign led by the Americans.<sup>24</sup> But proponents of the anti-communism campaign often silenced the voices of dissension.<sup>25</sup> This silencing is characteristic of the alliance.<sup>26</sup>

The counterweight strategy pushed Canada closer to America and as America dominated the international scene so too was Canadian action largely determined by the choices of the NATO alliance.<sup>27</sup> Where unilateralism was favored by superpowers such as America, Canada traditionally favored

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<sup>18</sup> Stephen Randall and John Thompson, *Canada and the United States: Ambivalent Allies* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 256.

<sup>19</sup> Clark-Jones, 19.

<sup>20</sup> Robin Ranger, “Canadian Foreign Policy in an Era of Super-Power Détente,” *The World Today* 28 (December 1972): 548.

<sup>21</sup> While talking with John Noble, this need to keep the Americans in good relations was injected throughout his interview with the sentiment: “The Americans were always going to be first.” John Noble interview.

<sup>22</sup> Greg Donaghy, “Domesticating NATO: Canada and the North Atlantic Alliance, 1963-68,” *International Journal* 52 (Summer 1997): 445.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Bromke and Richard, 339.

<sup>25</sup> Tiegrob, 9.

<sup>26</sup> Noble speaks about Trudeau at the 1984 European Economic Forum. Trudeau asked the audience whether it was believable that America would sacrifice one of their own cities if Russians were to attack Europe. The French Prime Minister Raymond Barre replied by saying this question was one that could not be asked. John Noble interview.

<sup>27</sup> Randall and Thompson, 256.

multilateralism.<sup>28</sup> Robert Keohane defines multilateralism as “the practice of coordinating national policies in groups of three or more states, through ad hoc arrangements or by means of institutions.”<sup>29</sup> Because America was powerful enough to use unilateral policy-making Canada was able to contribute as a counterweight. Thus Canadian strategy was externally influenced due to its multilateral basis while America tended towards a unilateral path that allowed for greater control.<sup>30</sup>

## Bound through NATO

NATO was central to the alliance as it provided a context for each country to act according their respective styles and strategies. Upon its creation America became the main architect and administrator of the treaty.<sup>31</sup> The structure of NATO has always been voluntary and nations are accepted if they can contribute to the collective defense that NATO provides.<sup>32</sup> This lowers the defense costs of the organization while providing more protection for individual nations.<sup>33</sup>

The benefit of NATO membership was that Canada could assert a presence in international affairs.<sup>34</sup> The relationship allowed great flexibility in foreign and strategic policy as the watchdog of America offered protection against external threats.<sup>35</sup>

Burden sharing was part of the NATO strategy with the US shouldering the majority of the NATO burden.<sup>36</sup> Upon its creation the American Congress was an obvious leader, and as Stanley Sloan acknowledges the result was an American presence that often dominated international relations.<sup>37</sup> Due to the burden-sharing structure more power belonged to those who contributed the most and as a result

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<sup>28</sup> Leigh Sarty, “Sunset Boulevard Revisited? Canadian Internationalism After the Cold War,” *International Journal* 48 (Autumn 1993): 753.

<sup>29</sup> Robert Keohane quoted in *ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* Bromke and Richard propose that the counterweight strategy suited Canadian policy due to the tendency towards gradual change and compromise that characterizes Canada’s diplomatic role. Bromke and Richard, 335.

<sup>31</sup> Teigrob, 8.

<sup>32</sup> Keith Hartley and Todd Sandler, “NATO Burden-Sharing: Past and Future,” *Journal of Peace Research* 36 (November 1999): 666.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> Kristen Raferty, “An Institutionalist Reinterpretation of Cold War Alliance Systems: Insights for Alliance Theory,” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* (June 2003): 342.

<sup>35</sup> Ranger, 548.

<sup>36</sup> Todd Sandler, “Sharing Burdens in NATO,” *Challenge* 31 (Spring 1988): 30.

<sup>37</sup> Stanley Sloan, “Managing the NATO Alliance: Congress and Burdensharing,” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 4 (Spring 1985): 398.

the American government was often able to maintain control of NATO action.<sup>38</sup> Thus America was free to lead the way while Canada providing support.

Canada's military involvement in the FRG was largely a result of membership in NATO.<sup>39</sup> After withdrawing forces from Europe in 1946 they returned in 1951 to provide solidarity in protecting Europe<sup>40</sup>. At the highest point of investment Canada was provided \$300 million in mutual aid to Europe.<sup>41</sup> Canada was making one of the lowest military contributions to NATO and held a significant amount of influence and the fourth largest defense budget in the alliance.<sup>42</sup> This would not be the case thirty years later.

### **The question of appropriateness**

Trudeau questioned Canada's role in NATO and as a result reshape the military and political role of Canada.<sup>43</sup> Before Trudeau a great deal of investment had been put into placing Canadian troops in the FRG.<sup>44</sup> Underlying the thirty year-old strategy was the hope that the American partnership would strengthen the economic relationship with Europe and create solidarity in the North Atlantic, thus opening the door for Canada into Europe.<sup>45</sup> But by the time Trudeau entered politics this hope had faded while Canada continued to drain resources into maintaining a significant role in NATO, and the question of appropriateness of Canada's role in NATO rose to the forefront of Canadian debates.<sup>46</sup> As Fowler reflects "the bases in Germany were symbolic but by that time everybody knew the Russians weren't coming".<sup>47</sup> The situation had changed since the 1950s and thus Trudeau reasoned, so should Canada's contribution.

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<sup>38</sup> Rodolfo Gonzales and Stephen Mehay, "Burden Sharing in the NATO Alliance: An Empirical Test of Alternative Views," *Public Choice* 68 (January 1991): 108.

<sup>39</sup> According to Noble, "The existing theology by some people was that the Canadians had to stay because if the Canadians ever left Germany the Americas would use that as a pretext as well." This comment reflects the interdependent nature of the North American alliance that was enforced by tense and uncertain relations with the Soviet Union. John Noble interview.

<sup>40</sup> Roy Rempel, *Counterweights: The Failure of Canada's German and European Policy 1955-1995* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 109.

<sup>41</sup> Donaghy, 445.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Rempel, 126.

<sup>44</sup> R.B Byers, "Defense and Foreign Policy in the 1970s: The Demise of the Trudeau Doctrine," *International Journal* 33 (Spring 1978): 312.

<sup>45</sup> Donaghy, 445.

<sup>46</sup> Rempel, 126.

<sup>47</sup> Robert Fowler interview.

Trudeau warned Canadians that NATO was the only defense policy Canada could turn to,<sup>48</sup> and ordered a complete review of foreign policy to reflect national rather than NATO interests.<sup>49</sup> Even more troubling for Trudeau was the influence of defense policy on the foreign policy, which he saw as backwards.<sup>50</sup> To correct this Trudeau reduced forces in Europe by fifty percent in 1969.<sup>51</sup> He also removed the frontline brigades and withdrew from NATO's nuclear mission in hopes of streamlining Canada's military.<sup>52</sup>

A foreign policy that was less affected by international events and more focused on domestic issues was the goal.<sup>53</sup> Harald von Riekhoff frames Trudeau's attitude on foreign policy and national interests as a result of his desire to provide support from a solid base of federal and national harmony rather than draining resources externally while crumbling internally.<sup>54</sup> Throughout the century NATO had formed the basis of Canadian foreign policy and required much attention and energy.<sup>55</sup> By 1972 the air groups' nuclear mission was dropped which made Canada the only NATO military participant that did not have a nuclear role for its forces.<sup>56</sup> Trudeau's goal of getting away from the "helpful fixer image" that the Pearson government had aimed for was reflected in these cuts and developments. Rather than sacrificing national interests for the "greater good" of NATO, Trudeau forged a different path that resulted in a depleted foreign military contribution.<sup>57</sup>

Beyond the economic advantage of decreasing military spending, Canadians also struggled with balancing an ideological commitment to peace and nuclear disarmament that contradicted NATO and NORAD obligations. Since 1959 Canada had been bound to the agreement to accept nuclear weapons from America in order to protect the North American continent.<sup>58</sup> In the 1960s the Diefenbaker government purchased weapon systems, including the F-104 Starfighters and Honest John missiles, which required Canada to have functioning

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<sup>48</sup> R.B. Byers, "Defence and Foreign Policy in the 1970s: The Demise of the Trudeau Doctrine," *International Journal* 30 (Spring 1975): 312.

<sup>49</sup> Hillmer and Grananstein, 285.

<sup>50</sup> Byers, 312.

<sup>51</sup> Rempel, 126.

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

<sup>53</sup> Byers, 318.

<sup>54</sup> Harald von Riekhoff, "The Impact of Prime Minister Trudeau on Foreign Policy," *International Journal* 33 (Spring 1978): 269.

<sup>55</sup> John Noble interview.

<sup>56</sup> Rempel, 137.

<sup>57</sup> Hillmer and Grananstein, 285-6.

<sup>58</sup> Ann Deholm Crosby, "A Middle-Power Military in Alliance: Canada and NORAD," *International Journal* 52 (Winter 1996): 37.

nuclear warheads.<sup>59</sup> Membership in NORAD would prepare Canada to join in the American defense programs in 1981.<sup>60</sup> The signing of NORAD unified the Canadian and US air defense command structures and acted as another connecting force in the North American continent.<sup>61</sup> Thus, while Trudeau held the opinion that NATO should be “busting our asses for peace;” it was ultimately the agenda of the more established allies that led NATO action.<sup>62</sup>

The NATO and NORAD commitments made independent military role difficult for Canadians.<sup>63</sup> According to Blaikie, “NATO was part of the nuclear arms race, and if you were against the nuclear arms race, it was pretty hard to be a non-critical supporter of Canadian participation in NATO.”<sup>64</sup> The silencing of protestation was a result of being allied with a much stronger and louder partner.

### **Turning on the hub of a superpower: Arctic sovereignty and the cruise missile**

The hub and spoke metaphor for multilateral connections is helpful in examining the impact of NATO on Canadian action. Fen Hampson and Christopher Maule picture smaller countries as spokes that move around the more powerful “hub” countries.<sup>65</sup> America was the hub that propelled and directed the wheel, and as a mere middle power being pulled along it was hard for Canada to establish an independent path.<sup>66</sup>

One example of Canada attempting to assert independence but ultimately compromising with their more powerful neighbor was in the issue of Arctic sovereignty. American power was focused on the North beginning in World War II.<sup>67</sup> With the entrance of Trudeau into parliament Canadian sovereignty in the North became a renewed goal.<sup>68</sup> The North had become a valuable geographical

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<sup>59</sup> Jeremy Kinsman, “Who is My Neighbour? Trudeau and Foreign Policy,” *International Journal* 57 (Winter 2001/2002): 338.

<sup>60</sup> Crosby, 37.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> John Noble interview.

<sup>63</sup> Charles Rheaume, “Cautious Neighbor Policy: Canada’s Helping Hand in Winding Down the Vietnam War,” *Cold War History* 11 (May 2011): 223.

<sup>64</sup> Bill Blaikie, interview by Alexander von Plato, 25 March 2013.

<sup>65</sup> Fen Hampson and Christopher Maule, eds., *Canada Among Nations 1990-91: After the Cold War* (Montreal: Carleton University Press, 1991), 13.

<sup>66</sup> Frank Costigliola, “An ‘Arm around the Shoulder’: The United States, NATO and German Reunification,” *Contemporary European History* 3 (March 1994): 87.

<sup>67</sup> Kenneth Eyre, “Forty Years of Military Activity in the Canadian North, 1947-1987,” *Arctic* 40 (December 1987): 294.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 296.



agent, a “military entity,” with a range of natural and military resources to offer.<sup>69</sup> As this value became more apparent the North became something to protect and utilize.<sup>70</sup>

From 1969 to 1971 the *Manhattan*, an American supertanker, made two voyages in the Arctic to research the possibility of crude oil transportation from Alaska through the Northwest Passage.<sup>71</sup> This created panic amongst Canadians regarding the American possession of northern resources and rights.<sup>72</sup> The government reacted by introducing the Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act that was meant to establish a 100-nautical-mile pollution prevention zone, enhancing Canadian security on activity in the northern waters.<sup>73</sup>

The issue of sovereignty resurfaced in 1985 during Brian Mulroney’s time in office. Without Canadian permission the American government sent the *Polar Sea* icebreaker into Canadian waters with the reason of moving it from the West to the East Coast.<sup>74</sup> The main controversy was that the Americans had not asked for Canadian permission.<sup>75</sup> The military importance of arctic waters comes from the strategic positioning as an entrance into North America, and the responsibility to ask permission stems from this significance.<sup>76</sup>

With the controversy over the *Polar Sea* protecting the Canadian North became a renewed goal. The Canadian diplomat Robert Fowler mentioned three white papers released to establish a policy regarding Northern sovereignty. These papers came out in 1987, 1992 and 1994, and were in regards to building bases in the North and acquiring air crafts in order to protect the territory, as well as supporting the surveillance of the Rhine.<sup>77</sup> However with the fall of the wall in 1989 more cuts were made and the defense department again shouldered much of these cuts, making it difficult to effectively assert sovereignty in the North.<sup>78</sup>

The cycle of Canadian assertion of sovereignty and American dominance demonstrates the intertwined interaction of Canadian and American activity.<sup>79</sup> While Trudeau spoke about the need to protect the ecological balance of the North in October of 1969,<sup>80</sup> the momentum was lost in the 1970s.<sup>81</sup> By the 1980s

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<sup>69</sup> Matthew Farish and Whitney Lackenbauer, “The Cold War on Canadian Soil: Militarizing a Northern Environment,” *Environmental History* 12 (October 2007): 921.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 923.

<sup>71</sup> Eyre, 296.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 296-7.

<sup>73</sup> N.D. Bankes, “Forty Years of Canadian Sovereignty Assertion in the Arctic, 1947-87,” *Arctic* 40 (December 1987): 287.

<sup>74</sup> John Noble interview.

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

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> Robert Fowler interview.

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

<sup>79</sup> Eyre, 299.

<sup>80</sup> Farish and Lackenbauer, 933.

Trudeau and Carter approved the pipeline that ran from Alaska, allowing imported oil to be replaced by American and Canadian oil.<sup>82</sup> The transported oil would reach around seven hundred thousand barrels a day by 1984.<sup>83</sup>

The testing of the cruise missiles and the Strategic Defense Initiative also demonstrated the contradictions between alliance commitments and national interests. When the Russians deployed missiles targeted at Europe in 1979, NATO responded by proposing the defense initiative that would protect the continent from incoming missiles while allowing cruise missiles to be launched on the offensive while evading radar detection.<sup>84</sup> Trudeau was a strong advocate for nuclear disarmament but situations like this did not leave Canada with many options.<sup>85</sup> Blaikie reflects on the time as one binding Canada to the nuclear arms race through NATO, though the Canadian public was strongly opposed to the testing of the missiles and nuclear involvement in general.<sup>86</sup>

Testing was to be done in Canada due to the similarity to Russian terrain and climate.<sup>87</sup> While Trudeau agreed to allow testing more than fifty percent of the population did not agree with the initiative.<sup>88</sup> This included several of Trudeau's ministers.<sup>89</sup> Trudeau responded by writing an open letter to the Canadian public saying that if Canadians wanted to be included under the American nuclear umbrella refusing to test the cruise missiles would be hypocritical.<sup>90</sup> The paper marked a change in Canadian attitude toward nuclear weaponry as Trudeau had to adapt his strategy to accommodate the American agenda.<sup>91</sup>

Most importantly NATO membership provided protection in uncertain times.<sup>92</sup> To relinquish this was not an option for Trudeau.<sup>93</sup> According to Blaikie,

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<sup>81</sup> Bankes, 289.

<sup>82</sup> Farish and Lackenbauer, 933.

<sup>83</sup> Randall and Thompson, 265.

<sup>84</sup> Ann Denholm Crosby, "The Print Media's Shaping of the Security Discourse: Cruise Missile Testing, SDI, and Norad," *Journal of Peace Research* 34 (February 1997): 91.

<sup>85</sup> John Noble interview.

<sup>86</sup> Blaikie states, "I mean there was the largest rally ever in Manitoba's political history, in front of the steps was 25 000 people out there, saying no to the Cruise Missile and yet the Liberal government of the day with Trudeau as the prime Minister testes, they agreed to the NATO request." Bill Blaikie interview.

<sup>87</sup> John Noble interview.

<sup>88</sup> John Barrett and Douglas Ross, "The Air-Launched Cruise Missile and Canadian Arms Control Policy," *Canadian Public Policy* 11 (December 1985): 712.

<sup>89</sup> John Noble interview.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> Barrett, 731-2.

<sup>92</sup> Keith Hartley and Todd Sandler, "NATO Burden-Sharing: Past, Present and Future," *Journal of Peace Research* 36 (November 1999): 666.

<sup>93</sup> Barrett and Ross, 714.

even if Trudeau wanted to stop the testing NATO membership would have made such an action impossible.<sup>94</sup> Furthermore testing was more affordable than buying new weaponry while still providing a sense of defense solidarity.<sup>95</sup> Given the government's approach to military spending at the time this may have been a benefit that was too good to turn down regardless of the public opinion.

The development of SS-20 missiles also required the NATO allies to work together under America in order to protect the strategic balance in Europe.<sup>96</sup> America had asked for NATO support to negotiate the SS-20's out of Eastern Europe. If the Soviet Union did not agree NATO would threaten it with the Pershing and cruise missiles.<sup>97</sup> This "Two-Track decision" would lead either to détente or a renewed arms race, and as NATO decided this was the best course Canada was also bound to the decision.<sup>98</sup>

### Peacekeeping

Reagan desired confrontation while Trudeau wanted to improve relations in order to solve the problem.<sup>99</sup> Gaetan Lavertu refers to Trudeau's approach to the Soviet Union as the "Third Option" that did not attempt to draw closer to the Americans as Mulroney would, but did not draw away either.<sup>100</sup> Simultaneously Trudeau adopted an unconventional approach when interacting with communist leaders, nurturing "special relationships" with Fidel Castro, Mikhail Gorbachev, and Alexander Yakovlev, all of which were personal and not shared by Trudeau's cabinet.<sup>101</sup> As Heinbecker states, "Trudeau was very much a believer in engagement with the Russians."<sup>102</sup> This approach left Canada caught between two superpowers, allied with one and trying to smooth relations with the other.<sup>103</sup> But nonetheless Trudeau's willingness to establish these close relations was unique in that it differed from the traditional path of the U.S. and further enforced Canada's

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<sup>94</sup> Bill Blaikie interview.

<sup>95</sup> Randal and Thompson, 271.

<sup>96</sup> Robert Bothwell, *The Big Chill: Canada and the Cold War* (Concord ON: Irwin Publishing, 1998), 96.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

<sup>99</sup> Edward Kolodziej, "The Cold War as Cooperation," *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 4 (April 1991): 13; Hillmer and Granatstein, 307.

<sup>100</sup> Gaetan Lavertu, interview by Alexander von Plato, Ottawa, 22 January 2013.

<sup>101</sup> Lloyd Axworthy, interview by Alexander von Plato, University of Winnipeg, 2 November 2012.

<sup>102</sup> Paul Heinbecker, interview by Alexander von Plato, Ottawa, 21 January 2013.

<sup>103</sup> Hillmer and Granatstein, 307. John Noble also recalls Margaret Thatcher commenting on Trudeau being a "comfort to the Kremlin" after Trudeau insisted that NATO needed to "bust our asses" for peace at the 1983 G-7 Summit. John Noble interview.

leading role in diplomacy and peacekeeping, regardless of remaining in the realm of middle powers.

The centrality of peacekeeping in Canadian policy is illustrated in this excerpt from the House of Commons report from 1990:

For the past forty years, the East-West divide has been the most prominent feature of the international landscape from which we have taken our bearings; our membership in the western community of nations has served as a compass for Canadian policy.<sup>104</sup>

This was a role that remained available even when military contribution had decreased Canada's peacekeeping fulfilled the role of a small but integral balancing power of moral integrity that was often lost in the maneuvers of the world's larger centers of power.<sup>105</sup>

As an alternative contribution to improving détente, Trudeau created the Initiative in East-West Relations and International Security, otherwise known as Trudeau's peace initiative.<sup>106</sup> The aim was to bring an end to the Cold War, or at least counteract the rising tensions.<sup>107</sup> The political opposition doubted the effectiveness of the initiative due to the diminished credibility of Trudeau and Canada in the Western alliance.<sup>108</sup> The bases in Germany were symbolic of Canada's NATO commitments and when they were closed Canada's contribution was brought into question.<sup>109</sup> There was also the aspect of the initiative that was very different from Canada's traditional role of quiet diplomat and follower.<sup>110</sup> According to Fowler, leaders such as Helmut Kohl, Reagan and Margaret Thatcher saw the initiative as Trudeau overstepping the role of "minor North America player" in pushing for quick resolutions.<sup>111</sup> The Canadian politician Paul Heinbecker notes how officials in Washington did not feel the need for Trudeau's input and felt he was "meddling" in important developments.<sup>112</sup> Canada's role

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<sup>104</sup> House of Commons Report, "Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade," Issue No. 54 (June 7, 1990), Chairman: The Honourable John Bosley, P.C.

<sup>105</sup> Sarty, 755.

<sup>106</sup> Bromke and Richard, 339.

<sup>107</sup> Hillmer and Granatstein, 309.

<sup>108</sup> Gregor Mackinnon, Michael Pearson, and Christopher Sapardanis, "'The World is Entitled to ask Questions': The Trudeau Peace Initiative Reconsidered," *International Journal* 41 (Winter 1985/1986): 129.

<sup>109</sup> Robert Fowler interview.

<sup>110</sup> Mackinnon, Pearson, and Sapardanis, 130.

<sup>111</sup> Robert Fowler interview.

<sup>112</sup> Paul Heinbecker interview.

was to remain as a middle power, and Trudeau's proposal was not taken very seriously.<sup>113</sup>

While Trudeau wanted to counteract the rising international tension by decreasing Canada's contribution to the conflict, being allied with a power that relied on military establishment to bolster the internal status quo left Canada on the outside of the American-led trend of military re-equipment.<sup>114</sup> By 1987 Canada was making a smaller NATO military contribution than Denmark, which despite its size had twice as many mobilized troops than Canada.<sup>115</sup> Nonetheless Granatstein and Hillmer argue that Trudeau was right to try to counteract the rising tensions through the peace initiative.<sup>116</sup> The initiative demonstrated a traditional inclination towards peacekeeping presented in a new form. Regardless of its success or lack thereof, the initiative saw Canadians attempting to lead the way with the economic and political resources that were available. In this way Canada was able to demonstrate that an effort towards a meaningful contribution to peace was possible for middle powers even though the most significant developments were exclusive to the superpowers.

### **A leader among middle powers?**

With the switch from Pierre Trudeau's Liberal leadership to Brian Mulroney's Progressive Conservative government the political orientation of Canada took a new form. Mulroney was eager to stay in step with American interests,<sup>117</sup> and shortly after being elected Mulroney announced that good relations with America would be the cornerstone of the Canadian foreign policy.<sup>118</sup> According to Noble, Mulroney considered good relations with America as the key to improving Canada's place in the international sphere.<sup>119</sup> Noble agrees: "And I think he is right. If you are perceived by other countries to [be] listened to in Washington, then you are likely, more likely, to be listened to elsewhere."<sup>120</sup> As a result

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<sup>113</sup> Fowler argues that the design of the United Nations limits Canada from playing a larger role. Outside of the UN larger powers often saw Canadian politicians as exceeding their power when trying to set the pace of change during the Cold War. This situation limits Canada and is enforced by the Canadian predilection for quiet diplomacy and compromise rather than forceful revolutionary action. Robert Fowler interview.

<sup>114</sup> R.B. Byers, "The Canadian Military and the Use of Force: End of an Era?" *International Journal* 30 (Spring 1975): 285.

<sup>115</sup> Steven Canby and Jean Edward Smith, "Restructuring Canada's Defense Contribution: A Possible Key to Western Security," *Political Science Quarterly* (Autumn 1987): 441.

<sup>116</sup> Hillmer and Granatstein, 311.

<sup>117</sup> Randall and Thompson, 264.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> Noble also mentions Mulroney's attitude toward Trudeau's foreign policy approach: "Trudeau had done his peace initiative, Mulroney hadn't been very keen on that." John Noble interview.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

Mulroney aimed to give the benefit of the doubt to the Americans on foreign policy issues.<sup>121</sup>

The Open Skies Conference saw Canada acting significantly in promoting forward-thinking politics once again. Canadian politicians made the initiative even though the larger players did not see it as Canada's place to move things forward.<sup>122</sup> Open Skies was drafted after the opening of the Austria-Hungary borders and according to Fowler there was a sense of provoking the Soviet Union.<sup>123</sup> Here Canadian action was focused towards bringing about freedom and human rights, as is characteristic of the Canadian government in the 1980s.

The proposition of Open Skies came at an opportune time for Canada. Paul Heinbecker accounts Canada's prominence on this action as a result of speaking up when this issue was suddenly of great importance.<sup>124</sup> American President George Bush Sr. was looking for initiatives to promote détente with Gorbachev and Canada had suggestions. The initiative allowed countries to overfly each other's territory with the chance to photograph defense and military installations.<sup>125</sup> The transparency was hoped to clear the air in tense times.<sup>126</sup> It was also meant to reduce the chance of surprise attacks.<sup>127</sup>

In April 1989 Mulroney wrote to George Bush formally proposing Open Skies.<sup>128</sup> However SNF dominated negotiations at the time and Open Skies fell to the wayside in NATO meetings.<sup>129</sup> Noble recounts, "at one point Brian Mulroney looked across the table at Bush and he said 'You know, I want to remind you Mr. President of the words of one of [your] former Supreme Court Justices Learned Hand[...]' 'for leadership to be effective [it] has to take account of the views of others'."<sup>130</sup> Again the Canadian government was able to speak up against the superpower and reach a solution that would separate SNF and Open Skies discussions into separate meetings, ensuring that both issues would be properly addressed.<sup>131</sup>

The 2+4 negotiations were an example of Canada's exclusion from serious negotiations but also of Canada's leading role among middle powers. While

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<sup>121</sup> Paul Heinbecker interview; John Noble interview.

<sup>122</sup> Robert Fowler interview.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> Paul Heinbecker interview.

<sup>125</sup> David Koplow, "Back to the Future and up to the Sky: Legal Implications of 'Open Skies' Inspection for Arms Control," *California Law Review* 79 (March 1991): 421.

<sup>126</sup> Noble: "Basically it's a confidence building measure to show that nothing is, you know, you've got nothing to hide." John Noble interview.

<sup>127</sup> Koplow, 421.

<sup>128</sup> John Noble interview.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

Canada was asked to host the conference an invitation into the negotiations was not extended as well. This was not raised as a serious issue within the Canadian government, which according to Fowler indicates the low expectations of Canada's ability to handle large-scale developments.<sup>132</sup> According to Fowler "The whole design of the Western lance was and the whole design of the United Nations [...] militates against Canada playing a larger role."<sup>133</sup> From this perspective Canada enforced the boundaries set out by the stronger international players by accepting the small voice assigned in international situations.

In the case of 2+4, Canada was not the only nation that felt effected by the negotiations. Gaeten Lavertu, a previous ambassador of Canada, recounts how the countries bordering Germany such as the Netherlands and Belgian wanted a voice in the negotiations, as "NATO members are interested in being consulted."<sup>134</sup> Lavertu recalls Canada facilitating talks with the foreign ministers of NATO in order to decrease tensions around not being included in negotiations.<sup>135</sup> This is another example of Canada playing the part of mediator, a role that was perfect for the middle power as the main participators were distracted with concluding the pressing issue of reunification.

There was mixed opinions in the interviews about whether or not Canada should have been included. Fowler insists that the fifty-year military commitment in Europe should have resulted in a larger role for Canadians.<sup>136</sup> In contrast Fowler does not believe the military cuts were the reason for Canada's exclusion from 2+4 but rather Canada's lack of assertion and reputation as a minor player that led to this exclusion.<sup>137</sup> One could also refer to Rempel's argument that military cuts decreased Canada's influence in the last part of the war for clues as to why Canada was not invited to the conference taking place in Ottawa.<sup>138</sup> While these cuts no doubt damaged Canada's reputation in NATO, they were likely not the main reason that Canada was not included in 2+4.

The conclusion presented here is that the exclusion was in step with Canada's treatment as a minor player whose main purpose was as a support and counterweight to America. As Lavertu acknowledges, "well we had to be realistic.

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<sup>132</sup> Robert Fowler interview.

<sup>133</sup> In Fowler's view, Canadians were more willing to promote other countries to larger roles while neglecting their own role. An example from 1945 when the UN Charter was being created and Canada stood up for France's inclusion in the UN while making no propositions of Canada's right to be included as well. Canada's age may have contributed to this silence at the time. Fifty years later the same could be said of the two-plus-four negotiations when the government did not demand a more prominent position. *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> Gaeten Lavertu interview.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> Robert Fowler interview.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>138</sup> Rempel, 160.

It's always nice to be in, but at the time we did not have the mandate over Berlin that the French or British or the Russians had."<sup>139</sup> In Lavertu's view the exclusion from 2+4 was a reflection of the realistic dimensions of Canada's situation in the world. Robert Bothwell sees Canada assuming a supportive role as Mulroney made "encouraging noises" that approved of the decisions made by Reagan and Bush.<sup>140</sup> This included staying out of the way while Russia, America and Germany, along with Britain and France, negotiated the future of Europe.

The power of Canada in comparison with the United States, along with proximity of the alliance both economically and militarily, made it difficult to envision a different situation in which Canada would realize a more assertive role. The internal situation in the 1980s drew away Trudeau's attention at a time when Canada possibly could have forged a different path that went beyond providing support. While Canada was unable to exceed the role of middle power, this presented the opportunity for the Canadian government to exercise skills in peacekeeping, diplomacy and human rights as Pierre Trudeau was apt to do, and to act as a significant support to the American government while playing a leading role among middle powers as Mulroney excelled at.

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<sup>139</sup> Gaetan Lavertu interview.

<sup>140</sup> Bothwell, 105.