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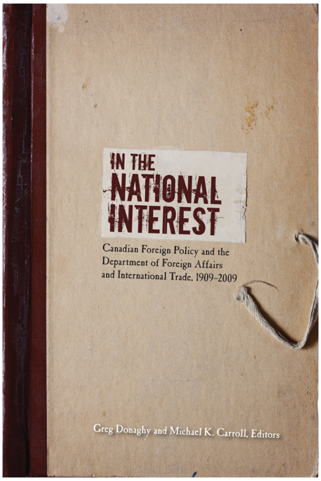

IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST

Canadian Foreign Policy and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 1909–2009

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SETTING THE CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY AGENDA, 1984–2009: PRIME MINISTERS AS PRIME ACTORS?

Nelson Michaud

In Canada, the prime minister is traditionally very involved in the shaping of the country's foreign policy. Promoting and defending the national interest, the prime minister plays a vital role as one of its managers, at times in tandem with the minister of foreign affairs, at times as the key actor. This is due, in large part, to the parliamentary system in which Canadian policies are set. The principle of responsible government, which is at the heart of the Canadian system, solidly anchors the leadership and the authority that the prime minister exercises, especially in the realm of foreign relations.[1] In addition, some observers may argue that foreign policy offers prime ministers glamour and exposure, but they overlook the fact that, unlike the United States where a foreign affairs role has an important impact on domestic perception of the leader, politics in Canada is essentially "local." What is of importance is that these relations are conducted with the prime ministers' counterparts around the world, which helps to explain why foreign affairs fall more easily under the leaders' purview, a phenomenon accentuated by summit diplomacy.[2] This prominent role is reinforced by a bureaucratic and political framework that feeds the prime minister with international issues to which attention should be paid.[3]

There is also a historic factor that comes into play. From 1909, when the Department of External Affairs was first formed, until after the Second World War, foreign affairs fell, for the most part, under the purview of the prime minister. It was not until 1946, when Louis St. Laurent took the reigns of the department from an ageing Prime Minister W.L. Mackenzie King, that the position of secretary of state for external affairs was solidified as a separate entity. For a time in the late 1950s, John Diefenbaker acted as both prime minister and his own foreign minister, but by this time a dual command system had already evolved, and he soon returned the portfolio to a minister, with whom he nevertheless worked closely.

The last quarter of the twentieth century presented unique challenges to foreign policy-making as Canada's national interests were reshaped. Geopolitics were redefined with unprecedented changes in the international context; new actors emerged from civil society and stateless advocates of extremism increasingly resorted to violence in attempts to impose their agenda; conflicts often involved factions within a country rather than two belligerents across a disputed border; and new issues emerged at the international level from economic globalization to environmental threats to the obligation to protect vulnerable populations from the abuses of their own government. Do these factors challenge the influence the prime minister has over Canadian foreign policy and the answers the country offers in line with its national interest? Or is foreign policy "governed from the center" as is the case in so many other policy fields?[4]

This analysis belongs to a body of literature that aims at understanding the role of individuals in policy-making processes,[5] the control of individuals over "uncertainties,"[6] and how personal characteristics influence the content of foreign policy stances.[7] The first section offers a closer look at how the international and domestic contexts were reshaped between 1984 and 2009. It will subsequently explore how prime ministers Brian Mulroney, Jean Chrétien, Paul Martin, and Stephen Harper answered this challenge.[8]

A Context Redefined

Not so long ago, foreign policy was the absolute expression of regalia powers. As late as 1985, Canada's minister of national defence, Erik Nielsen, strongly opposed issuing a defence green paper – to which Canadians could react – on the sole basis that foreign and defence policies were not matters to be discussed with the general public.[9] Today, with the democratization of foreign policy, public diplomacy, and the internet, it is hard to conceive of such a stance. In itself, this bears witness to a new era in foreign policy-making.

The transformation is even starker when evaluated in the longer term. When Louis St. Laurent was sworn in as secretary of state for external affairs in 1946, the Cold War had just ushered in a new environment characterized by the emergence of multilateral institutions. In Canada, the postwar economy was flourishing and foreign policy-making was in the hands of people who would leave a lasting imprint, a practice today known as Pearsonian internationalism.

The last twenty-five years has seen the collapse of a Manichean world and the redefinition of international values as the Berlin Wall collapsed, the eastern block imploded, new countries emerged, and political uncertainty undermined global stability. United States president George H.W. Bush hoped to redefine a "New World Order" in the early 1990s where a hyperpower would dominate and provide guidance and stability for world affairs.[10] Although this geopolitical realignment ended the possibility of a multi-polar world, it was soon followed by the recognition of new emerging players: Brazil, Russia, India, and China. Their suddenly perceived strength forced many countries to re-evaluate policies on several accounts, taking into consideration the foursome as new producers, new markets, and as new potential security threats. At the start the new millennium another American president, George W. Bush, called for a war on terror as security dominated the foreign policy agenda. As part of the United States' security perimeter, however, Canada had very few options at hand to deal with these weighty matters. The Canadian government nevertheless does its best to ensure that neither at home nor abroad is the country perceived as Uncle Sam's puppet.

One strategy Canada has often used to differentiate, without completely dissociating, itself from the United States is through its increasing involvement in multilateral institutions. Interestingly, most of these international forums are characterized by a regional component, allowing Canada to position itself alongside the United States, rather than behind. In this regard, the North American Free Trade Agreement can be regarded as a key accomplishment. Other regional achievements include Canada's full membership in the Organization of American States, and active role in the Pacific region, where Canada became an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) member in 1989. From the cultural perspective, *la Francophonie* emerged in the mid-1980s to offer Canada another international forum, this time without the presence of the United States.

Membership in international organizations has enriched Canada's foreign policy through a diversification of issue areas as well as its partnerships. At the same time, however, Canada's increased participation in multilateral institutions has limited the influence a prime minister has on foreign policy-making. As an example, one need only remember Jean Chrétien's fierce resistance to the North American Free Trade Agreement while on the opposition benches, a treaty which he ultimately signed once in power.[11]

Multilateralism, important as it may be, is not the only demand on the foreign policy-making apparatus. Starting with the Mulroney government in the mid-1980s, the influence of individuals and groups from civil society on foreign policy increased steadily. Be it through parliamentary committees, the short-lived Centre for Foreign Policy Development, ministerial forums under Lloyd Axworthy, *A Dialogue on Foreign Policy* with Bill Graham, and especially with the proliferation of the internet, Canadians' opinions on foreign issues have mattered.[12] As a political consequence, prime ministers have had to show that they have not only heard but they have indeed listened to the public's input, consequently limiting their range of foreign policy options. Since Stephen Harper's election in 2003, however, public input on foreign policy decisions has not been solicited and policy formulation is once again considered by the government to be the prerogative of the prime minister and his inner circle.

Up until the 2009 budget, presented by Conservative Finance Minister Jim Flaherty, all governments since Brian Mulroney have committed themselves to strengthening the economy and fighting the deficit. The subsequent reduction of available resources in the realm of foreign affairs, even under Harper's Conservatives, has been harshly felt. The political price to pay for closing a few legations abroad or cutting policy analyst positions at headquarters in Ottawa was immensely preferable to the political costs associated with cuts that had a direct impact on domestic social, health, or higher education programs.

Against the background of these contextual changes, we must ask ourselves, has the prime minister's role as the ultimate foreign policy-maker diminished? Or has it increased?

Brian Mulroney (1984–1993)[13]

Brian Mulroney can be ranked as one of the most activist Canadian prime ministers in foreign affairs, for as historian Jack Granatstein points out, by "the sheer force of will, Mulroney made himself and Canada matter in world affairs."[14] Mulroney's performance on the world stage, however, was somewhat surprising given his lukewarm attitude towards foreign affairs at the beginning of his first term. Even as a contender to the leadership of his party in 1983, Mulroney remained shy in terms of foreign policy statements. He addressed the commitment capability gap the Department of National Defence then faced, but his speeches did not reflect a major or an enlightened commitment towards international questions.[15] As leader of the official opposition, he was highly critical of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's attitude and policies, which sharply increased tensions between Canada and the United States, particularly following Ronald Reagan's swearing in as president in January 1981.[16] Mulroney contended that Canada should embrace a "special relationship" with the United States, promising to "refurbish" relations by introducing a "new era of civility."[17] For Mulroney, however, this was not an issue of foreign policy but rather was crucial for the health of the Canadian economy. These first commitments bear Mulroney's personal imprint: they are clearly related to his own background as a chief executive officer of an American-based multinational company.

Once in power, Mulroney became increasingly sensitive to a wider range of international issues. One of the first crises he faced was the famine that plagued Ethiopia, where the government's actions helped define Canada's reaction.[18] First, the Canadian public's response to the images of horror broadcast nightly on the news – "a quite remarkable demonstration of interest by ordinary Canadians," said then secretary of state for external affairs, Joe Clark – expressed an impulse that the government felt obliged to match.[19] The government responded by appointing David MacDonald, a former Tory cabinet minister, as emergency coordinator to curtail diplomatic red tape that would have slowed down the relief effort.[20] While helping to co-ordinate Canada's relief effort, MacDonald's appointment served to highlight the influence of non-governmental organizations on Canadian foreign policy.

Early in its first term, the Mulroney government established new foreign policy-making ground rules that opened up the decision-making process. Members of Parliament and ordinary Canadians became involved in the shaping of foreign policy white papers through the work of the parliamentary committee that toured the country to hear citizens' concerns. Hence, if a "birthday" can be associated with the democratization of the foreign policy-making process in Canada, it lies within these years. These new paths, while explored under Joe Clark's stewardship, were nonetheless the fruit of Mulroney's commitment and leadership.

The prime minister's interest in African questions grew from the East African famine and relief efforts, and culminated with his efforts to shoulder the fight against apartheid in South Africa. On this issue, Mulroney was able to persuade both Ronald Reagan and British prime minister Margaret Thatcher to support the transition to a more democratic society.[21] Mulroney also intervened personally to help African leaders find common ground from where they could solve problems of mutual interest.[22]

These personal relationships with world leaders were a prominent aspect of Canada's foreign policy in this decade, a process where the prime minister's direct influence came to the forefront. Given the importance of the Canada–United States relationship, both in terms of the economy and in matters of security, and considering the weight this question represented when Mulroney led the opposition, it is not surprising that the rapport that

Mulroney established with both American presidents, Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush, was especially visible.

One of the major legacies that came out of the relationship between the American presidents and the Canadian prime minister is the Canada–United States Free Trade Agreement that was signed in 1988, as well as its extension to include Mexico five years later. At first, while advocating the importance of trade for the prosperity of Canada,[23] Mulroney was sensitive to the potential political backlash such a proposal could generate and was not eager to involve his country in such a deal.[24] The Macdonald Commission report of 1985, which strongly advocated the implementation of a continental economy, nonetheless impressed Mulroney. It was the prime minister's personal contact with Reagan, however, that got discussions started and took care of the president's last reluctance about an issue that raised concerns in Congress.

This personalization of diplomatic relations was another major change in the conduct of Canadian foreign policy. Although other Canadian leaders have established good personal relationships with their American counterparts in the past (one may think of the Roosevelt–King, or the Kennedy–Pearson exchanges), the establishment of regular summits between the two leaders was an unprecedented move, and in sharp contrast with the much cooler attitude Trudeau had shown towards the American presidency. As a result, during the Mulroney years, the Canadian prime minister enjoyed a level of access and influence at the White House hard to match in Canadian diplomatic history.

This is not to suggest that there were no conflicts in Canadian–American relations during Mulroney's time in power. Bilateral disputes and differences over policy remained a vivid part of the landscape. Trade disputes proliferated, despite the free-trade negotiations that were underway. There was also conflict over American extraterritoriality in Cuba, American unilateralism towards international institutions, American policy in Central America, and American challenges to Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic. Acid rain was also an important source of conflict during most of the Mulroney years as it had been during Trudeau's final term of office.

However, what characterized the Mulroney government's foreign policy is how conflicts tended to be managed during the Conservative era. Policy disagreements with Washington were always conducted with the recognition that, while some aspects of the hugely complex Canadian–American relationship were relatively unaffected by changes in government policy, other aspects were quite fragile and easy to damage. Moreover, relations were conducted with the shadow of the future in mind: how conflicts are played out today shape responses to future disagreements. An excellent example of this approach is how Canada responded to the invitation to join Reagan's strategic defence initiative, commonly known as Star Wars: the Canadian government would not be directly involved but would not prevent Canadian business interests from taking advantage of the contracts associated with the development of the defence shield.

However important the Canada–United States friendship was during the Mulroney years, Canadian foreign policy of the time cannot be summed up solely by these exchanges. It was during this period that Canada became a member of the Organization of the American States, a decision that Mulroney took after hearing the advice of Louise Fréchette, assistant deputy minister for Latin America and the Caribbean, who prevailed over her deputy minister, Raymond Chrétien, who was staunchly opposed to this change in Canadian hemispheric policy.[25] Mulroney's personal involvement with Québec's premiers and French president François Mitterrand led to the establishment of *La Francophonie*, in which some of Canada's provinces – Quebec and New Brunswick – would play a permanent and legitimate role. When the first summit was held in Paris in February 1986, premiers Robert Bourassa of Quebec and Richard Hatfield of New Brunswick attended as virtually equal participants with Mulroney.[26]

During the years Brian Mulroney was prime minister, the international and domestic contexts no doubt influenced the shaping of the Canadian foreign policy. But we cannot ignore the influence the prime minister himself exercised over who was involved in the process, which issues were to take prominence, and how to conduct exchanges with representatives from other countries. Questions related to human rights, good governance, and a redefinition of state sovereignty – heralding the "responsibility to protect" – took on a new importance due to Mulroney's personal interest in these areas.

Jean Chrétien (1993–2003)

Some of Mulroney's diplomatic initiatives, especially the Canada–United States "super-relationship," did not please everybody. Mulroney's political rivals, the Liberals, exploited what they portrayed as a too cozy connection that could jeopardize Canadian sovereignty. In their electoral platforms of 1993, 1997, and 2000, the Liberal party called for a very different foreign policy and Liberal leader Jean Chrétien emphasized the need to base foreign policy on Canadian values, openly linking foreign and domestic policies. His government advocated a "voluntary, independent and internationalist" role for Canada in world affairs and, like Trudeau, insisted on keeping its distance from the American administration. The message raised concerns south of the border and reassuring signals that NAFTA would not be renegotiated had to be sent from Ottawa.[27] In 1997, the Liberals seemed inspired by Mitchell Sharp's Third Option when they talked of a strategic vision that looked beyond North America and towards Europe. And in 2000, the Liberals again promoted Canadian values as the basis of Canada's international leadership.

Chrétien himself had some international experience as he headed, although briefly, both the departments of External Affairs and Industry and Trade, which could have prepared him to play a major role as Canada's prime foreign policy actor. However, contrary to Professor John Kirton's early assessment that saw in Chrétien a "leading definer and often the deliverer of Canadian foreign policy,"[28] my own evaluation reveals that his interest in foreign affairs was limited. Chrétien, like his political mentor Trudeau, was primarily motivated by domestic policy rather than by foreign affairs. The prime minister's attitude vis-à-vis foreign policy is well-illustrated by his decision to abolish the cabinet committee that dealt with foreign affairs, thereby allowing Canada's foreign affairs ministers to promote their own initiatives. As a result, Chrétien's foreign policy inspired many writings and analyses that deplored Canada's declining influence and lack of clout on the world scene.

Experts, both from academia and from the observers' realm, do not conclude that the Chrétien government left a rich foreign policy legacy. Political scientist Kim Nossal deplored Canada's pinchpenny diplomacy.[29] Jennifer Welsh, professor of international relations at Oxford University, called for a more focused role and a redefined foreign policy practice.[30] Michael Ignatieff, then a professor at Harvard University, questioned the value of multilateralism in an article published in *Policy Options*, a piece to which thirty-seven journalists, policy practitioners, and academics reacted.[31] Ignatieff also contributed his own view by delivering the *2004 O.D. Skelton Memorial Lecture* advocating that, based on the values of peace, order, and good government, Canada should acquire "a prevention capability: to strengthen rule of law, improve police, conciliate ethno-religious conflict, create political dialogue; an intervention capability, not just peace-keepers, but civilian police, administrators, water sanitation and humanitarian experts; and, a reconstruction capability: from constitution-writers to contractors and construction engineers."[32] Others reflected on priorities, policy issues, and foreign policy prospects;[33] and journalist Andrew Cohen explored "how we lost our place in the world."[34] These analyses were based on the need to look anew at Canada's role in the world in a context that had dramatically changed, and it is not surprising to observe a perceived weakening of Canada's international stature.

It was under foreign minister André Ouellet that the Chrétien government's foreign policy statement, *Canada in the World*, was issued, taking a sharp turn in the orientation Canada would pursue in its foreign relations. The policy was based on "three pillars" where, clearly, prosperity trumped security, and "the promotion of Canadian values" completed the agenda. Apart from this legacy, Ouellet "made little impact on Canadian Foreign Policy."[35] Under his leadership, trade took precedence over diplomacy. "Team Canada" banners were prominently displayed in the halls of the Pearson building, the headquarters of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. This trade initiative allowed the prime minister to be portrayed as the captain of a united team – often composed of provincial and territorial premiers, prominent business people, and small business entrepreneurs – travelling abroad to sell Canada's greatness. The appointment of Ouellet and the image of a united country was a way to put foreign affairs at the service of a domestic concern: national unity in the months leading to the 1995 Québec referendum.

After this political storm vanished, things changed, allowing Lloyd Axworthy, who held the foreign affairs portfolio from 1996 to 2000, to exercise a major influence in a new role for Canada in the world. Axworthy, whose tenure was not unanimously applauded,[36] touted a human security agenda for Canada. Human security was defined as an umbrella covering the protection of civilians, peace operations, conflict prevention, public safety, and good governance – that is, the rule of law, human rights, and accountability. Among the many results that came from this approach, one may note the issue of war affected children and child soldiers, a problem that brought together non-governmental organizations and government officials and culminated in an international conference held in Winnipeg. Axworthy's agenda also supported the creation of the International Criminal Court and, while sitting on the United Nations Security Council, Canada promoted the prevention of armed conflicts.

This list of achievements was crowned by the adoption of the ban on the anti-personnel landmines, informally known as the Ottawa Treaty. Perhaps the most visible success in recent Canadian foreign policy history, many saw it as an expression of the purest Pearsonian peace-seeking tradition. Although the Geneva conference that reviewed the UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons in 1996 failed to reach an agreement on anti-personnel landmines, Canada, which was not in a position to influence the outcome of the meeting, had aligned itself strongly and clearly in favour of a ban. As early as January 1996, Canada unilaterally declared a total ban on anti-personnel landmines. In the days following this announcement, it held a first meeting where eight countries, later known as "the core countries,"[37] joined thirteen non-governmental organizations and the International Committee of the Red Cross to prepare a course of action. Thus, at the conclusion of the Geneva conference, Canada announced it would host "an international meeting to develop a strategy for achieving a comprehensive ban on AP landmines."[38] When launching the Ottawa Process, Axworthy also made a statement that took most participants by surprise: a treaty would be signed no later than the end of 1997. The following months were used to muster support for the Canadian initiative, including more "like-minded" governments and non-governmental organizations, among them the International Campaign to Ban Land-Mines chaired by Jodi Williams: an effective exercise of the new "public diplomacy." Fourteen months after the first Ottawa meeting, fast-track diplomacy bore fruit when 122 countries returned to Ottawa to sign the convention. Axworthy continuously applied pressure in order to have more countries sign and ratify the treaty before it came into effect on 1 March 1999.[39] The whole episode was presented as an unmitigated success. Chrétien himself may have contributed "countless hours"[40] to support the effort, but nowhere – not even in his memoirs – do we see traces that this was his initiative.

Axworthy also instructed the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade to work with a host of non-governmental organizations as a means of implementing Canada's foreign policy agenda. This was true throughout the Ottawa Process but was also used to gain support for, and contribute to, the short-lived Centre for the Development of Foreign Policy. Axworthy also organized a series of meetings, allowing Canadians from coast to coast to discuss foreign policy issues. For Canadian foreign policy officers, this was an abrupt cultural change in how to deal with foreign policy questions. Grassroots activists, not the prime minister, provided direct input.

The model of remote prime-ministerial influence survived Axworthy's days. When Canada tried to improve its relationship with the United States in early 2001, it was the newly sworn in foreign minister, John Manley, who led the way to Washington, and not Jean Chrétien. Strengthened by his successful stint as minister of industry, Manley was convinced of the importance of a powerful United States–Canada commercial relationship as a tool to achieve economic well-being and prosperity. Moreover, it was Manley who sat behind the minister of foreign affairs' desk on the fateful morning of 11 September 2001, when Islamic terrorists attacked New York and Washington. No doubt that concepts such as the "intelligent border" and other aspects directly related to the new American sensitivity towards territorial security needed to be addressed, and it was Manley, more than Chrétien, who provided Canada's input to solve these sensitive questions.

Manley's successor, Bill Graham, was a cabinet rookie who stepped into his ministerial shoes, having chaired the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade. In contrast to both Manley and Axworthy, Graham's agenda embraced large chunks of policy with no clearly defined priorities; though this was partly due to the context in which he had to operate. In his key speeches, Graham walked on a tight rope: on the one hand, he tried to defend Canada's multilateralist tradition; on the other, he had to respond to newly defined post-9/11 challenges, without leaving the impression of taking marching orders from Washington. No doubt it was an uncomfortable situation. As a result, criticism about Canada's role in the world grew louder and the prime minister recognized the need to finally exert direct leadership. This being said, Graham did leave an important imprint on the department and on Canada's foreign policy as a whole. Through his *Dialogue on Foreign Policy* and the use of internet forums, the Department was more than ever open to different forms of policy-making democratization.

It was on questions related to Africa that Jean Chrétien left his mark on Canada's foreign policy agenda. Gravely impressed by television reports of the turmoil in the Great Lakes region of Eastern Africa, Chrétien made Africa his top foreign policy priority. In doing so, he included the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) on the G8 summit agenda at the Kananaskis meeting in 2002. NEPAD was a successful recognition-based partnership between the G8 and African states that aimed at consolidating democracy, encouraging sound economic management, and promoting peace and development. Canada's commitment, leadership, and traditional "honest broker" role were put to work in the attainment of this collective commitment, despite a lukewarm reception from the United States. According to former New Democratic Party member of parliament Steven Langdon, Canada's efforts were "so energetic … that African civil society groups and parliamentarians became suspicious that this was really a Canadian set of proposals being circulated through key African leaders" and not a locally supported attempt to enhance economic, political, and security environments on the continent.[41]

Even though the prime minister seemed to enjoy being involved in foreign affairs related questions,[42] his apparent lack of interest in foreign policy was emphasized in a series of diplomatic gaffes: misstatements in the Middle East by the prime minister himself, inappropriate remarks about the American president by his staff, and the sending of his minister to a head of state's funeral. All of this eroded Canada's reputation abroad and diminished its middle power status. It is only slightly surprising then that, in the wake of the tragic events of 11 September 2001, President Bush forgot to thank Canada when he listed allies supporting the United States, even though Canadians had graciously hosted thousands of stranded American airline passengers on 9/11 and in the days that followed.[43] Political scientist

Tom Keating's portrait adequately sums up Chrétien's influence on foreign policy: "While the rhetoric and the spirit were unequivocally internationalist, the tangible commitment of resources reflected a passivity not seen for many decades."[44]

Paul Martin (2003–2005)

One cannot think of Paul Martin's leadership in foreign affairs without having in mind the ungenerous nickname *The Economist* gave him: Mr. Dithers. This came after the Martin government sent mixed signals while simultaneously avoiding a concrete decision, before eventually declining Washington's invitation to take part in an anti-missile shield initiative. Perhaps it was also his indecision or the lack of leadership that let interdepartmental exchanges continue before ultimately settling on the move of Canada's troops from Kabul to Kandahar. Depending on the sources one consults, the answer varies. Yet one thing remains clear: despite the fact that Paul Martin took excessive time to weigh issues, his contribution to foreign policy was more active than his predecessor's or, as we will see in the next section, his successor's.

Expectations were high. The experts who were critical of the Chrétien government's foreign policy performance expected a lot from the incoming government, and prominent academics offered their recommendations to the incoming prime minister in an issue of the *International Journal*.[45] Martin came to office ready to face this foreign policy challenge. At home as minister of finance, he had contributed to revitalizing Canada's finances and economy, providing room for new initiatives. The need for a new policy was not disputed, the only question that remained was how strong the prime minister's leadership would be in conducting the foreign policy review. In hindsight, what we witnessed was a return of the strong role played by the prime minister in the shaping of foreign policy. Janice Gross Stein and Euguene Lang in their book, *The Unexpected War: Canada in Kandahar*, do not hesitate in their evaluation of the foreign policy review: "The Prime Minister wanted this done and done quickly."[46]

Martin was indeed quite sensitive to foreign policy issues. His father's legacy as secretary of state for external affairs was dear to him and, as minister of finance, he was at ease playing in international circles, meeting his counterparts at gatherings of the G8, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and other multilateral forums.[47] More importantly, Martin sensed an urgent need to invest in foreign policy issues. As he reported himself: "Our foreign policy should reflect our own interests and values.... In order to show leadership, however, we have to back up our rhetoric with resources. The real problem with our foreign policy [is] that we talk a good game but don't deliver."[48]

Martin made it clear that, while "Canada's role in the world is not simply to support a great power,"[49] it was necessary to recognize the importance of Canada's relationship with the United States; and he did so in a more open manner than his predecessor. Martin brought back a foreign policy unit around the cabinet table and his key ministers, Bill Graham and Pierre Pettigrew, were not preaching from Lloyd Axworthy's gospel of anti-Americanism. Moreover, the appointment of Rick Hillier as chief of defence staff sent a strong signal in terms of like-mindedness with Canada's southern neighbour. Hillier quickly introduced to Canada the "three block war," where armed forces must be prepared to support humanitarian aid and reconstruction, patrol a ceasefire line, and engage in combat in the same theatre of operations. At a time when Washington conducted the most offensive and realist foreign policy[50] of its history, it was a message White House officials appreciated.

Martin's commitment towards a renewed foreign policy was admittedly among his top priorities when he became Canada's twenty-first prime minister in December 2003 and, in April 2005, it would bear fruit with the publication of *Canada's International Policy Statement*. This multifaceted foreign policy statement covered diplomacy, defence, aid, and trade issues in separate booklets that were presented as one policy. The existence of an overarching policy that did in fact unify the silo-designed approach was questioned by most observers. In short, many initiatives were suggested, but the means to reconcile all of the objectives were few.

The statement nevertheless presented a new face to Canadian foreign policy at large. The prioritizing that characterized the three pillars option advocated in Chrétien's *Canada in the World* was put to rest and the government embraced a much larger approach that tackled all aspects of Canada's role abroad. The government advocated a "3D approach" with diplomacy, defence, and development working together – much to the dismay of trade officials who insisted on referring to a 3D+T strategy. The key objectives of the policy were to help failed and failing states, to improve Canada's relationship with the United States, and to increase the capability of Canada's armed forces; all elements that were music to Washington's ears following the Chrétien government's distant stance. To keep the usual sovereignty concern in check, Prime Minister Martin made sure to add the appropriate Canadian touch in the foreword to the policy statement: "We want to make a real difference in halting and preventing conflict and improving human welfare around the world; [this] is a doctrine of activism that over decades has forged our nation's international character."[51]

The policy received mixed reviews. Some academics argued that it brought nothing new, simply listing actions to which Canada was already committed. Tom Axworthy, a former Trudeau policy advisor, described this as "new bottles for old wine,"[52] while Professors David Bercuson and Denis Stairs offered a more nuanced, but just as biting, analysis.[53] It was perhaps political scientist Kim Nossal who advanced the most overarching critique. Taking his cue from the "responsibility agenda"[54] outlined in the policy statement, he called for the "responsibility to be honest."[55] Yet despite the criticism, some aspects of the policy had a longer life than the Martin government itself. Parts of the statement were still referred to by officials after the Harper government was sworn in, as was the case with the defence policy to which Chief of Defence Staff Rick Hillier had heavily contributed.

Despite his short tenure as prime minister, Paul Martin was personally and actively involved in shaping Canada's foreign policy. Martin wanted to distance himself as much as he could from the Chrétien years, and, in terms of foreign policy-making, there is no doubt that he succeeded. His practice was consistent with the active role Canadian prime ministers have usually played. If Martin swung the pendulum the other way, its course was to continue much farther with Stephen Harper coming to power.

Stephen Harper (2005–2009)

Although he has twice been elected by Canadians, Stephen Harper's record in foreign affairs is still to be written, and it is in this context that the analysis of his role must be understood. First indications, however, reveal that, since January 2006, Harper has shaped Canada's foreign policy with what some have called a one-dimensional approach. This is revealed in terms of his foreign policy priorities as well as his foreign policy management.

Much of the inspiration for crafting the Harper government's foreign policy apparently came from Roy Rempel's book, *Dreamland*. The work claims that Canada's foreign policy has eroded its sovereignty and pushed the country into the status of an American protectorate. Rempel suggests this is "because the country's leaders have had a poor sense of the national interest and an ideologically skewed approach to international relations."[56] It is not only a matter of size or power; Canadian leaders have simply lived in a dreamland. Rempel calls for better involvement of the public to build a national consensus reflecting "the interests of all Canadians rather than the view of a select few," to remove ideology in the building of a strategic culture, to make international policy "as non-partisan as possible," and consider the building of a close partnership with the United States as a first priority.

In line with what Paul Martin had started, Harper has fully recognized the United States as Canada's first ally. Harper and President George W. Bush got along well, though the prime minister did not trumpet this friendship. However, there was still little evidence of any overt influence by Canada in Washington, as opposed to the Mulroney years. Issues such as the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America, implemented in 2005, continued to be among the key topics referred to in terms of Canada–United States relations. However, there were no definite indicators of Canada's priorities in this relationship. Given the dismal state of the Canadian armed forces resources, reinvestment in military equipment cannot be, in itself, an indicator of an American driven agenda. Rather, the purchases serve the domestic *Canada First* policy.

The quiet friendship with Washington is characteristic of the Harper government's attitude towards foreign policy in general. This can be explained, in part, by the prime minister's view of foreign policy which is, by his own admission, not high, and by the narrow width of foreign policy topics that interest him.[57] After years of perceived neglect followed by a slight revival of foreign policy under Martin, observers expected to see clear signals coming from the new government. None came. Not only did the Conservative government refuse to publish a foreign policy statement of its own, but speeches by key ministers often provided little in the way of new information. Speaking before Canadian diplomats posted in Asia, Maxime Bernier, minister of foreign affairs from August 2007 to May 2008, declared: "Canada's foreign policy is anchored in the pursuit of Canadian interests of security and prosperity and in our respect for the values of freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law."[58] Any minister of any Canadian government over the past twenty-five years could have said the same.

Where then does Canada stand? Given the one-dimensional aspect of Stephen Harper's foreign policy, peace and security are priorities that immediately come to mind. As deputy minister Len Edwards mentioned in Canada's remarks at the UN General Assembly in 2008: "Today Canada is contributing to peace and security – and making sacrifices – in places as diverse as Afghanistan, Haiti and Sudan. Each of these Canadian engagements flows from a UN mandate."[59] Of these, Afghanistan takes precedence, both in terms of resources and in terms of the government's policy agenda. This engagement encompasses the need for a rapprochement with the United States while the ever-present Canadian call for multilateral action is satisfied.

Canada's role in Afghanistan also serves to illustrate foreign policy decision-making under Harper. It was reported that the first extension of the mission was decided without the input of his ministers of national defence and foreign affairs.[60] Here again, we observe a one-dimensional apparatus where important decisions are concentrated in the hands of experts within the Prime Minister's Office and the Privy Council Office. Officials in the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade are ill at ease with this way of making policies, their expertise often disregarded, or simply not solicited. This general malaise is amplified by the lack of support given to public input at home and public diplomacy abroad.[61]

This concentration of power in the hands of a select few goes sharply against Rempel's call for consensus building based on wider input into key national interests and foreign policy priorities. It could be explained, in part, by the weakness of ministers who were appointed to foreign affairs related portfolios. At Foreign Affairs, neither Peter Mackay nor Maxime Bernier were considered stars. Similarly, as minister of national defence, Gordon O'Connor failed to fulfil the expectations he created among the attentive public, the serving military, and foreign policy analysts as an opposition critic and author of the Conservative defence platform. General Hillier's resignation underlines how top strategists found themselves isolated and felt a lack of support from their political masters.[62] The resulting vacuum left plenty of room for the prime minister and his close advisors to have a direct influence on the shaping of Canadian foreign and defence policy. What are the results of this influence?

It is too early to provide a final assessment of the Harper government's contribution to Canadian foreign policy. Heading a minority government and facing a major economic crisis, however, there are few incentives for the government to modify its attitude. A resurgence of foreign policy as a key topic on the government's political agenda before the next election would be surprising.

Different Styles that Matter?

Over the last twenty-five years, prime ministers have been influential in the shaping of Canadian foreign policy. How and to what extent they have been involved is of import as the context in which foreign policy is set has dramatically changed in response to external pressures on the national interest. Theoretically, Canada's institutional framework gives a huge advantage to the prime minister who can dominate the policy-making process. Is this advantage strong enough to curtail these contextual pressures? To answer the question we have reviewed the mandates of Brian Mulroney, Jean Chrétien, Paul Martin, and Stephen Harper.

The first finding is that, indeed, despite changes in the political environment, prime ministers matter in foreign policy formulation and decision-making. Even when Jean Chrétien showed a lesser degree of involvement, he simply left room for strong ministers to capably manage foreign affairs. A second point worthy of note is that there is no consistency in the prime ministers' role and influence on foreign policy-making. To illustrate and explain these differences, it might be useful to use a typology that relates the interest (high or low) of a prime minister towards foreign policy questions and his foreign policy managerial style (hands off – that is, leaving ample room to his ministers – or hands on – that is, controlling as much as possible of the content and of the process). Table 1 offers a portrait of the four types that result:

This typology brings to light an interesting reading of the period studied. First, one can see that prime ministers do not follow a unique pattern when they get involved in setting their foreign policy agenda and work in defence of the national interest: Mulroney was generally of the captain style; most of the time Chrétien was lenient; Martin was a commander; and Harper, in his first years of government, appears as a shackler. Each of these leaders corresponds to a type, but of course to varying degrees.

Prime ministers also tend to move from one type to another when they stay for some time in power. This is something Martin, with his short time as prime minister did not experience: he came in and stayed a commander, though he appeared hesitant at times. Harper has steadily shown the characteristics of a shackler. Both Mulroney and Chrétien, however, came in as lenient and, with time – a short time for Mulroney, but much longer for Chrétien – moved towards forms of captainship. These categories may help us better understand the type of influence a prime minister exercises on foreign policy-making; however, it is possible to imagine two prime ministers falling within the same type, but at sharply different levels. More studies are needed to refine the categories in order to better depict the range of possible behaviours adopted by prime ministers.

This research demonstrates that it is not only the prime ministers' personalities that influence their foreign policy behaviour. It undoubtedly plays a role, but external factors are also part of the equation, as we have seen with Jean Chrétien and NAFTA. This enriches the basis of political scientist Margaret Hermann's frame of analysis which, with further research, could enlighten our understanding of the prime ministers' role on foreign policy-making.

TABLE 1. STYLES OF INFLUENCE.

		Interest	
		Low	High
Management style	Hands off	*Lenient*	*Captain*
	Hands on	*Shackler*	*Commander*

The last twenty-five years have confirmed the importance of the role played by the prime minister in serving the national interest. This role has changed according to who was holding it and, to a lesser extent, a changing environment. Prime ministers of the future will demonstrate how this trend will evolve.

NOTES

1 The principle of responsible government means that the ministers of the government must receive, individually and collectively, the support of a majority of the elected members of parliament.

2 John J. Noble, "Serving the Prime Minister's Foreign Policy," in *Canada among Nations, 2007: What Room for Manoeuvre?* ed. Jean Deaudelin and Daniel Schwanen (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007).

3 Nelson Michaud, "The Prime Minister, PMO and PCO: Makers of Canadian Foreign Policy?" in *Handbook of Canadian Foreign Policy*, ed. Nelson Michaud, Patrick James, and Marc J. O'Reilly (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006), 21–48.

4 Donald J. Savoie, *Governing from the Centre: The Concentration of Power in Canadian Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

5 Graham Allison, "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis," *American Political Science Review* 43, no. 3 (1969): 689–718. Among others, also see Graham Allison, *The Essence of Decision* (Boston: Little Brown, 1971), and Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999).

6 Michel Crozier and Erhard Friedberg, *L'acteur et le système. Les contraintes de l'action collective* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1971).

7 On this, see works led by Margaret Hermann, for instance: Margaret Hermann, Thomas Preston, Baghat Korany, and Tim Shaw, "Who Leads Matters: The Effects of Powerful Individuals," *International Studies Review* 3, no. 2 (2001): 83–132.

8 I deliberately left Kim Campbell off the list, whose short tenure (June–November 1993) did not allow her to leave a lasting imprint on Canadian foreign policy, despite her interest in the question.

9 Erik Nielsen, *The House is Not a Home: An Autobiography* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1989).

10 Hubert Védrine, *Face à l'hyperpuissance* (Paris: Fayard, 2003).

11 To get an interesting outsider's view of this change in policy stances, see James J. Blanchard, *Behind the Embassy Door: Canada, Clinton and Quebec* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1998).

12 On this, see Gerald Schmitz and James Lee, "Split Images and Serial Affairs: Reviews, Reorganizations and Parliamentary Roles," in *Canada among Nations, 2005: Split Images*, ed. Andrew F. Cooper and Dane Rowlands (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005).

13 For a complete analysis of the period, see Nelson Michaud and Kim Richard Nossal, ed., *Diplomatic Departures: The Conservative Era in Canadian Foreign Policy, 1984–1993* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2001).

14 J.L. Granatstein, *Whose War Is It: How Canada Can Survive in the Post-9/11 World* (Toronto: Harper Collins, 2007), 205.

15 Brian Mulroney, "Canada in the World: Notes for a Speech," 10 June 1983, author's archives; Brian Mulroney, *Where I Stand* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1983).

16 Stephen Clarkson, *Canada and the Reagan Challenge: Crisis and Adjustment, 1981–85*, rev. ed. (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1985); Adam Bromke and Kim Richard Nossal, "Tensions in Canada's Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* 62 (Winter 1983–84): 335–53.

17 David Taras, "Brian Mulroney's Foreign Policy: Something for Everyone," *The Round Table* 293 (1985): 39.

18 An interesting account of the Ethiopian crisis is in David R. Morrison, *Aid and Ebb Tide: A History of CIDA and Canadian Development Assistance* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1998).

19 Cited in Maureen Appel Molot and Brian W. Tomlin, "The Conservative Agenda," in *Canada among Nations, 1985: The Conservative Agenda*, ed. Maureen Appel Molot and Brian W. Tomlin (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1986), 9.

20 Brian Mulroney, *Memoirs* (Toronto: Douglas Gibson Books, 2007), 399.

21 David R. Black, "How Exceptional? Reassessing the Mulroney Government Anti-Apartheid 'Crusade'," in *Diplomatic Departures*, 173–93.

22 J.H. Taylor, "The Conservatives and Foreign Policy-Making: A Foreign Service View," in *Diplomatic Departures*, 211–19.

23 See Mulroney, *Where I Stand*.

24 Mulroney, *Memoirs*, 280.

25 Louis Bélanger and Nelson Michaud, "Canadian Institutional Strategies: New Orientations for a Middle Power Foreign Policy," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 54, no. 1 (2000): 97–110.

26 John Kirton, "Shaping the Global Order: Canada and the Francophone and Commonwealth Summits of 1987," *Behind the Headlines* 44, no. 3 (1987): 1-17.

27 Blanchard, *Behind the Embassy Door*.

28 John Kirton, "Foreign Policy under the Liberals: Prime Ministerial Leadership in the Chrétien's Government Foreign Policy-making Process," in *Canada among Nations, 1997: Asia Pacific Face-Off*, ed. Fen Osler Hampson, Maureen Appel Molot, and Martin Rudner (Ottawa: Carleton University Press 1997), 27.

29 Kim Richard Nossal, "Pinchpenny Diplomacy: The Decline of Good International Citizenship in Canadian Foreign Policy," *International Journal* 54, no. 1 (1998–99): 88–105.

30 Jennifer Welsh, *At Home in the World: Canada's Global Vision for the 21st Century* (Toronto: Harper Collins, 2004).

31 Michael Ignatieff, "Canada in the Age of Terror – Multilateralism Meets a Moment of Truth," *Policy Options* 24, no. 2 (February 2003): 14–18; Graham F. Walker, ed., *Independence in an Age of Empire: Assessing Unilateralism and Multilateralism* (Halifax: Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, 2004).

32 Michael Ignatieff, *Peace, Order and Good Government: A Foreign Policy Agenda for Canada* (Ottawa: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 2004).

33 Norman Hillmer, David Carment, and Fen Osler Hampson, *Is Canada Now Irrelevant?* (Calgary: Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute, 2003).

34 Andrew Cohen, *While Canada Slept: How We Lost Our Place in the World* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2003).

35 Graham Fraser, "Liberal Continuities: Jean Chrétien's Foreign Policy 1993–2003," in *Canada among Nations, 2004: Setting Priorities Straight*, ed. David Carment, Fen Osler Hampson, and Norman Hillmer (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), 173–74.

36 Denis Stairs, "The Changing Office and the Changing Environment of the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Axworthy Era," in *Canada among Nations, 2004*, 19–38.

37 These countries are: Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Ireland, Mexico, Norway, and Switzerland.

38 Robert Lawson, "The Ottawa Process: Fast-Track Diplomacy and the International Movement to Ban Anti-Personnel Mines," in *Canada among Nations, 1998: Leadership and Dialogue*, ed. Fen Osler Hampson and Maureen Appel Molot (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998), 84.

39 See Christopher Kirkey, "Washington's Response to the Ottawa Land Mines process," in *Canadian–American Public Policy* 46 (Augusta: Canadian–American Center, University of Maine, 2001).

40 Jean Chrétien, *My Years as Prime Minister* (Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2008), 336.

41 The G8 Canadian Sherpa and prime minister's personal representative for Africa, Bob Fowler, outlines the origins of the agreement in "Canada's leadership and the Kananaskis G8 Summit," in *Canada among*

Nations, 2003: Coping with the American Colossus, ed. David Carment, Fen Osler Hampson, and Norman Hillmer (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2003), 219–41. In the same book, the chapter by Steven Langdon, "NEPAD and the renaissance of Africa," provides a ground-based analysis of the program.

42 See, Chrétien, *My Years as Prime Minister*.

43 Bush finally thanked Canada for its generosity when he visited the country led by a newly elected prime minister, Paul Martin, in late 2004.

44 Tom Keating, "A Passive Internationalist: Jean Chrétien and Canadian Foreign Policy," in *The Chrétien Legacy: Politics and Public Policy in Canada*, ed. Lois Harder and Steve Patten (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), 139.

45 Canadian Institute of International Affairs, *Foreign Policy for Paul Martin. Eight articles on Canada's International Relations for the new Prime Minister*. Published as an issue of the *International Journal* 58, no. 4 (2003).

46 Janice Gross Stein and Eugene Lang, *The Unexpected War: Canada in Kandahar* (Toronto: Penguin, 2008), 140.

47 Paul Martin, Jr., was sworn in holding tight the Peace Tower flag that flew half mast when the country mourned the passing away of his father, Lester B. Pearson's foreign affairs minister.

48 Paul Martin, Jr., *Hell or High Water: My Life in and out Politics* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2008), 328–29.

49 Ibid., 330.

50 On this doctrine, see John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2001).

51 Government of Canada, *Canada's International Policy Statement*, 5 booklets (Ottawa: Supply and Public Works Canada, 2005), 1.

52 Thomas Axworthy, "New Bottles for Old Wine: Implementing the International Policy Statement," in *Canada among Nations, 2005*, 271–82.

53 David J. Bercuson and Denis Stairs, "Canada's International Policy Statement: What's New, What's Old, And What's Needed," in *In the Canadian Interest? Assessing Canada's International Policy Statement*, ed. David J. Bercuson and Denis Stairs (Calgary: Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute, 2005), 1–4.

54 These responsibilities include: "the 'responsibility to protect,' [which] seeks 'to hold governments accountable for how they treat their people, and to intervene if necessary to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe'; the 'responsibility to deny,' [which] seeks to prevent terrorists and 'irresponsible governments' from acquiring weapons of mass destruction; the 'responsibility to respect,' [which] seeks to 'build lives of freedom for all people' based on 'the fundamental human rights of every man, woman and child on earth'; the 'responsibility to build,' [which] seeks to ensure that Canadian development assistance programs provide 'the tools that ordinary people really need to get on with their own development'; and the 'responsibility to the future,' [which] embraces the goal of sustainable development 'through better management of global public goods.'" Kim Richard Nossal, "The Responsibility to be Honest," in *In the Canadian Interest?*, 40–44.

55 Nossal, "The Responsibility to be Honest," 46.

56 Roy Rempel, *Dreamland: How Canada's Pretend Foreign Policy Has Undermined Sovereignty* (Kingston: Breakout Educational Network and the Queen's University School of Policy Studies released through McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), 180.

57 John J. Noble, "Serving the Prime Minister's Foreign Policy," 45.

58 Maxime Bernier, *Notes for an Address at a Meeting of the Asian Heads of Mission*, March 12, 2008, http://w01.international.gc.ca/minpub/publication.aspx?publication_id=385946&lang=eng&docnum=2008/4.

59 Leonard J. Edwards, *Notes for an Address on behalf of the Minister of Foreign*

Affairs, to the United Nations General Assembly, September 29, 2008, http://w01.international.gc.ca/minpub/publication.aspx?publication_id=386530&lang=eng&docnum=2008/19.

60 See, Gross Stein and Lang, *The Unexpected War*.

61 Evan Potter, *Branding Canada Projecting Canada's Soft Power through Public Diplomacy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009).

62 Nelson Michaud, "Hillier: le refus de tenir un pari rendu impossible," *Le Soleil*, 19 April 2008, 39.