



CANADA AND THE NEW AMERICAN EMPIRE

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**OBSERVING: INTERNATIONAL
PERSPECTIVES ON CANADA'S ROLE
IN THE NEW EMPIRE**

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SQUANDERED RESPONSIBILITY: CANADA AND THE DISARMING OF IRAQ

Scott Ritter

The Canadian reputation regarding its support of the United Nations is well deserved. This reputation has been paid for with the service and sacrifice of its armed forces, who participated in many peacekeeping operations around the world. In contrast, Canadian participation in perhaps the boldest experiment in disarmament ever attempted in the history of the United Nations – the elimination of Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction programs – is more an accident of history than design.

Canada served as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council when the operative resolution regarding Iraqi disarmament, 687 (1991), was passed, and as such earned a seat on the Special Commission established by that resolution to oversee the implementation of its provisions. Headed by an Executive Chairman appointed by the Secretary General, who reported directly to the Security Council, the fifteen Commissioners of the Special Commission provided advice and expertise but had little influence over executive decision-making. The executive chairman turned to the Office of the Special Commission for the day-to-day implementation of the Council’s disarmament mandate. The Office of the Special Commission was where the administrative and functional expertise regarding weapons of mass destruction

and disarmament affairs resided, and it is where the technical and operational aspects of the weapons inspection process were directed. The influence of the Commissioners was more indirect than direct, reflecting their status as representatives of nations serving on the Security Council. However, representative membership on the Commission did not change with the evolving makeup of the Security Council. Once appointed to the Special Commission, Canada retained its seat even when its term on the Security Council expired.

The original intent behind the formation of the Special Commission was the maintenance of a direct link between it and the Security Council. Hardly anyone anticipated a situation that had the work of the Special Commission lasting more than six months. As the reality of the difficulty entailed in bringing Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs to heel became apparent, the envisioned six-month mission expanded into a year and beyond. The link between the Special Commission and the Security Council became increasingly diluted as the membership of the Security Council changed over time. Canada, like many nations, found itself participating in an advisory capacity to an organ of a Security Council in which it no longer had status. The result was an increasing Canadian detachment from the process of disarmament in Iraq because of dependence on specialists at the tactical level of inspection operations and an indifference concerning the strategic aspects of the commission's work.

The ramifications of this slide into irrelevancy has been tragically exposed by the inability of the Canadian government to formulate a coherent position regarding Iraqi compliance with its disarmament obligation based upon independent assessment and analysis. Instead, the Canadian government was compelled to rely upon information of questionable objectivity and reliability provided by the United States. As a result, when the United Nations could have most used an

independent and credible voice to provide alternative analysis and solutions to the Iraqi crisis other than the path of war being pushed by the United States and Great Britain, Canada was mute. True, Canada opposed the war. But its opposition came very late in the process, was inconsistent in its substance, and lacked any sound alternative solution. Given the commitment of the United States to a unilateral policy of regime removal in Iraq that deviated from the mandate of disarmament set forth by the Security Council, the subordination of Canadian Iraq policy formulation to the United States is not only embarrassing but tragically so, especially when one considers that Canada had been given an historic opportunity to play a completely different and more independent role in the affairs of the Special Commission. How Canada squandered that opportunity needs to be studied by those who make and oversee foreign policy in Canada today so that any lessons drawn from this unfortunate episode of neglect will not be repeated in the future.

The opportunity granted to Canada in 1991 came in the form of three positions of considerable influence filled by Canadian officials. The first, that of a Commissioner of the Special Commission, was filled by Ron Clemenson, a retired Royal Canadian Air Force officer with a specialization in aerial surveillance. The second was the position of Chief of the Information Assessment Unit, an intelligence cell created within the Office of the Special Commission in the fall of 1991 in response to Iraq's inadequate declarations concerning its weapons of mass destruction programs, its obstruction of the work of weapons inspectors in Iraq, and ongoing concealment activity designed to hide proscribed materials and programs from the Special Commission. In an effort to diversify the national composition of the Office of the Special Commission, as well as retain the ability to interface with the United States on matters pertaining to the sharing of classified intelligence,

the executive chairman requested that Canada fill this position with seconded staff (someone who works for the Special Commission but is paid for by the providing government). Lieutenant-Colonel Geoff St. John was selected for this assignment and assumed his post in November 1991.

The third position was on the staff of a shadowy intelligence organization known as “Gateway,” run out of a United States Central Intelligence Agency facility in Bahrain. Although not part of the United Nations or directly affiliated with the Special Commission, “Gateway” was a critical component in the chain of intelligence support and analysis associated with the work of UN weapons inspectors inside Iraq. Bahrain was home to the Special Commission’s field office, where inspection teams assembled and were trained prior to being dispatched to Iraq. Post-mission debriefing of inspection teams, perhaps the most important source of raw intelligence data concerning Iraq’s disarmament status, was likewise conducted in Bahrain. The “Gateway” facility and staff were provided by the CIA to the Special Commission as a vehicle for the provision of sensitive intelligence support to the inspectors and gradually expanded into an all-purpose intelligence resource for the inspectors where pre- and post-mission work was conducted in a secure environment. Canada, together with Australia and the United Kingdom, was invited by the United States to participate in the “Gateway” operation, and the Canadian Secret Intelligence Service (CSIS) assigned officers on a rotational basis to Bahrain for that work.

Canada also made significant contributions to the weapons inspections themselves, providing Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams who carried out extremely dangerous work inside Iraq, safeguarding the other members of the inspection team who were oftentimes operating in areas inundated with unexploded munitions, including unstable cluster bomb units left over from the 1991 Gulf War. These EOD

personnel also doubled as site exploitation specialists, assisting the inspection teams by serving as ground security and by providing documentation exploitation and aerial observers (riding in German-provided CH-53 helicopters to provide overhead surveillance and observation support to teams working on the ground). The result of this considerable scope and depth of involvement in the work of the Special Commission was that Canada was in a position to participate in every phase of the inspection cycle, from political support to inception, implementation, and post-mission analysis and feedback.

Due to the nature of my own assignment and responsibilities with the Office of the Special Commission, I was in a unique position to observe all of this. I first met Ron Clemenson in September 1991, when I was brought into the Office of the Special Commission to assist in setting up the Information Assessment Unit (Lt. Col. St. John assumed command in November 1991). Ron Clemenson was very keen on assisting the Special Commission in developing aerial surveillance monitoring strategies for Iraq. The Information Assessment Unit was tasked with overseeing the U-2 high altitude surveillance program. The United States provided the U-2 spy plane and flew it on behalf of the Special Commission, who determined the reconnaissance targets and received the imagery product, together with imagery exploitation support from the CIA.

Ron and I met on numerous occasions to discuss the integration of the U-2 into a wider, more independent program of aerial monitoring of Iraq. Lt. Col. Geoff St. John and I worked together for the entire duration of his assignment to the Special Commission, defining the role and mission of the Information Assessment Unit and supervising the transition of that unit from a simple analytical support cell into a genuine international intelligence service that not only assumed primacy in the international community regarding intelligence

analysis regarding Iraq's weapons of mass destruction but also became involved in liaison with intelligence services around the world and developed its own independent multi-source intelligence collection capability. As an operational planner and later chief inspector for weapons inspection teams, I not only helped define the inter-operability between the Special Commission and "Gateway" but was directly involved in participating in the process of intelligence support conducted there. This put me in regular contact with the CSIS personnel assigned to "Gateway." And, as an inspector, I had the honour and privilege to serve with the fine representatives of the Canadian Armed Forces who were seconded on a regular basis as members of Special Commission inspection teams on duty inside Iraq.

The role and influence of the IAU in shaping the work of the Special Commission cannot be underestimated. Not only was the IAU the source for the fundamental assessments regarding Iraqi compliance, but it was also the originator of every innovation in terms of intelligence collection and operational employment of inspection teams. The IAU was behind large document search inspections, the incorporation of helicopter-borne cameras into the Special Commission's aerial surveillance program, the tactical use of U-2 imagery, utilization of ground-penetrating radar in the search for underground facilities, the use of communications intercept teams embedded with the weapons inspectors to detect Iraqi command and control of concealment activities, the debriefing of Iraqi defectors, and other, more sensitive programs. With a Canadian at the helm of the IAU, Canada was in a unique position not only to be aware of every aspect of the Special Commission's disarmament work but to influence how this work was carried out. Canada has long prided itself as a defender of the legitimacy of an impartial and objective United Nations. Lt. Col. St. John's tenure as chief of the IAU epitomized this

standard. He worked hard to build a viable, independent intelligence capability for the Special Commission, one that was dedicated to the Security Council's disarmament mandate. He struggled to overcome not only Iraqi duplicity and obstruction but also the sustained efforts of the United States to undermine his efforts. The regime removal policy of the United States regarding Iraq's president meant that the United States only viewed the weapons inspection mandate of the Special Commission as useful insofar as it facilitated the containment, destabilization, and eventual elimination of the Saddam regime. While much of the world's attention was focused on the struggle between weapons inspectors and Iraq, an equally titanic battle to preserve the integrity of the Special Commission's mandate was waged between the IAU and CIA over the independence of the Special Commission's intelligence functions and capabilities. Lt. Col. Geoff St. John was at the forefront of this struggle and deserves great credit for persevering in the cause of the United Nations while under tremendous pressure to do otherwise.

Ron Clemenson was also a champion of independence and viability in regard to the Special Commission, especially as it pertained to imagery collection and analysis in support of inspection operations. In the spring of 1993, when the Special Commission, through the IAU, was exploring the expansion of its in-country aerial surveillance operations beyond the rudimentary helicopter-borne Aerial Inspection Team (AIT) to a more robust Aerial Inspection Group (AIG) that incorporated the AIT, a Russian AN-30 multi-sensor collection platform, and Iraqi Mirage F-1 aircraft flying under UNSCOM control, Ron Clemenson provided critical support in obtaining a qualified officer from the Canadian Air Force to be seconded to the Special Commission to head up AIG operations inside Iraq. This type of support was the ideal utilization of the members of the Special Commission. While the Commission

itself met only twice a year to discuss the work of the inspectors in Iraq, individual commissioners were repeatedly called upon by the Office of the Special Commission to intercede on behalf of the inspectors with their respective governments on matters pertaining to support. Ron Clemenson's intervention on behalf of the AIG is representative of this.

With Canadian support leading the way in terms of intelligence and aerial surveillance operations inside Iraq on behalf of the Special Commission, and with Canadian personnel embedded on almost every ground inspection of note, the CSIS representative at "Gateway" was in a position to be involved in the assembly of a comprehensive picture of the overall disarmament effort being implemented by the inspectors. Given the senior level of Canadian representation in critical nodes of the Special Commission's inspection efforts, the potential of CSIS to influence and shape implementation of Iraq's disarmament exceeded that of even the United Kingdom. Additionally, the ability of the CSIS "Gateway" representative to provide first-hand intelligence reporting on the intimate details of the Special Commission's work inside Iraq meant that Canadian decision-makers would have access to all the data necessary to formulate effective policy in support of the United Nation's disarmament mandate.

Sadly, the Canadian government squandered this unique position. By the summer of 1993, the Canadian government no longer held its seat on the Security Council, and interest in supporting the work of the Special Commission waned as other fiscal priorities emerged that competed with those resources then being dedicated to Iraq's disarmament. Lt. Col. Geoff St. John's period of assignment expired in May 1993, and the Canadian Government chose neither to extend Lt. Col. St. John nor to provide a replacement. Canada lost its seat at the head of the IAU. Likewise, Canada stopped filling its CSIS position at "Gateway" on a full-time basis. Inspection teams would

thereafter be dispatched and debriefed from the “Gateway” facility in Bahrain without any direct Canadian involvement. Not only did Canada lose its ability to influence inspection decision-making, but the Canadian Government was put in the position where it became dependent on intelligence reporting from the United States and the United Kingdom. Given the competing and contradictory policy objectives of the United States (regime change versus disarmament), this was not a good position for Canada to be in, if it was in fact serious about an independent, objective United Nations.

The dramatic reduction in Canadian presence and support for the Special Commission severely impacted Ron Clemenson’s role as commissioner as well. Without major backing from the Canadian Government, the AIG initiative fizzled and with it Mr. Clemenson’s influence as a commissioner. My last impression of Mr. Clemenson in that role was in November 1997, during an emergency meeting of the Special Commission, when his comments on the imagery collection and analysis conducted by the IAU in support of a series of controversial inspections reflected his then isolation from and lack of knowledge regarding the work of the Special Commission. When I compared that performance with the more dynamic interventions that he made in the period 1991–93, the contrast was considerable.

The work of the Special Commission underwent dramatic transformation between the years 1994 and 1998. Major events and developments took place, which shaped the commission’s disarmament mandate. These included the Iraqi acknowledgment of a biological weapons program in April 1995; the defection of Hussein Kamal (Saddam Hussein’s son-in-law and mastermind behind Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction programs) in August 1995; the interception of Russian missile parts in Jordan in November 1995 (and the unspoken role of the Special Commission’s relationship

with Israeli intelligence in that and other IAU-affiliated operations); the counter-concealment inspection campaign targeting Saddam Hussein's security apparatus which started in 1996 and continued through 1998; sensitive site inspection modalities agreed upon in June 1996; communications intercept operations carried out by the Special Commission from 1996 to 1998; the fracturing of relations between the Special Commission and Iraq in 1997 and 1998 and the corresponding demise of the Special Commission's relations with the United States. All took place without Canada's direct involvement or knowledge.

The demise of the Special Commission as an inspection organization in 1998 took Canada by surprise with resulting uncertainty how next to proceed. The slide into policy impotence was evident as early as the spring of 2000, when I met with a Canadian Government representative at the Canadian embassy in Washington, D.C. This representative all but acknowledged that Canada was completely beholden to the United States for information regarding Iraq's disarmament status and as a result was unable to meaningfully influence United Nations policy formulation, which was then heavily influenced by the position of the United States and United Kingdom. The level of American influence was still very much in evidence when I travelled to Ottawa in June 2002 for meetings with Canadian defence and intelligence specialists, as well as Canadian Parliamentarians. The Canadian government had no ability to independently comment on the situation in Iraq and was forced to simply parrot the position of their more powerful U.S. ally. This lack of independence of data manifested itself most recently and tragically when Canada proved incapable of mounting any serious opposition to the United States' drive towards war with Iraq. Despite a Canadian population overwhelmingly opposed to war with

Iraq, the Canadian government proved to be capable of doing nothing more than voicing qualified words of caution.

When one considers the unique position Canada found itself in in 1993, when it 1) headed the Special Commission's intelligence function, 2) had a Canadian commissioner who was a player of note in the affairs of the Special Commission, 3) had an intelligence officer deeply embedded in the centre of intelligence data collection efforts carried out by the CIA, and 4) contributed Canadian inspectors involved throughout the scope of disarmament activities inside Iraq, the fact that Canada found itself reduced to the status of impotent observer as the Iraq situation devolved in 2002–03 is inexcusable. Given Canada's stated goal of being a defender of the United Nations Charter and the rule of international law contained within it, this inability on the part of Canada to influence events of such global importance represents not only a squandered opportunity but, more critically, a gross dereliction of international duty.

While nothing can be done to undo the damage caused to the United Nations Charter as a result of the U.S. invasion of Iraq in the spring of 2003, maintenance of the Charter and the UN as a viable force in preserving global peace and security in the years to come can only come about when the UN's individual members reflect on where they went wrong in defending the Charter and what they can do in the future to improve upon their respective records. Given the missed opportunities afforded Canada during the decade of inspections in Iraq, there is much to be discussed in Ottawa today.

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DOGGONE DIPLOMACY? THE IRAQ WAR, NORTH AMERICAN BILATERALISM, AND BEYOND

Imtiaz Hussain

Introduction

The U.S. battlefield strategy of “shock and awe” also rocks diplomacy! Against a post-9/11 “with-us-or-against-us” U.S. attitude, countries economically dependent on the United States make reluctant foreign policy choices! Whether these countries transacted with pre-war Iraq as Russia and Syria allegedly did, hindered military movements like Turkey, or opposed the war as Canada and Mexico boldly opted to, each faces a “damned-if-I-do; damned-if-I-don’t” predicament.¹ Accenting Mexico’s and Canada’s cases, I argue how and why twenty-first century diplomatic imperatives of other countries also carry symptoms of this malaise!

Mexico’s telltale experiences were ill-timed. On the eve of 9/11, President Vicente Fox Quesada not only got away by proposing the unthinkable – relaxing border controls for U.S.-bound migrants – but also assertively seating Mexico on the Security Council as a non-permanent member as part of his activist foreign policy. Confusion in formulating a coherent UN Iraq policy approach made Mexico’s third Security Council appear-

ance both unlucky and ironic. The French/Russian threat to veto UN Resolution 1441 if a military ultimatum was imposed upon Iraq found Mexico's sympathy but also revived memories of Mexico's staunch opposition to adopting the veto itself as an instrument in 1946, when it first took a Security Council seat.² Mexico's second stint in the Security Council, under President José López Portillo during 1980–81, sought to balance rather than embrace U.S. interests. By reversing this order, instead of strengthening Mexico's special relationship with the United States, as was actually intended, Fox discovered its seamy side. His own foreign policy incongruencies paralleled the ups and downs of UN Resolution 1441 itself.

The Ghost of UN Resolution 1441

Mexico's foreign policy activism under Fox literally meant putting all his eggs in the U.S. basket! One casualty was Mexico's remarkable historical relationship with Fidel Castro's Cuba. Yet, by the time Resolution 1441 was tabled in autumn 2002, Mexico had shifted from the centre of George W. Bush's foreign policy radar to a distant blip. Fox and Foreign Secretary Jorge Castañeda were left with three options: (a) unambiguously support the United States, like Great Britain's Tony Blair and Jack Straw; (b) passively support non-interventionism, thus swaying with public opinion; or (c) actively promote multilateralism over U.S. unilateralism, whatever the consequences. Mexico's Cuban *volte-face* after Fox's election in 2000 pursued the first track and even erroneously assumed the United States would drop barriers on Mexican migrants as a *quid pro quo*.³ Yet, even before 9/11, the U.S. Congress was resistant. The second route of passivity just did not mesh with the styles of either Fox or Castañeda but briefly explained reality anyway; and the third option became

increasingly impossible, given Mexico's dependence on the United States and its history of introversion with little or no experience in high-voltage international politics.

Five actual Mexican responses can be identified during the Iraq crisis at the UN, as Table 1 profiles. First, Mexico sought to act as a balancer until 8 November 2002. Whereas France sought more discretion and time for the UN inspection process, the United States arm-twisted Security Council members to put Iraq on a short deadline. Mexico sympathized with the former but fell prey to U.S. pressure. Second, Mexico's shift to neutrality when Hans Blix reported on the progress of the weapon's inspection process on 27 January 2003 was built on a three-tiered approach: leave the issues to the protagonists – France, Germany, Britain, and the United States;⁴ officially urge Iraqi compliance, which appeased the United States; and simultaneously magnify the role the UN should have to a wary public. On the positive side, this thwarted charges of Mexico abdicating its Security Council responsibilities to an equally wary South America; played to public opinion; and permitted diplomatic piggy-backing. On the negative side, it exposed the constraints of dependence on the United States.

Mexico moved from second-stage neutrality to third-stage ambiguity after Blix's second report on 14 February 2003. As it scrambled to define a coherent position, other Security Council members scurried in three different but decisive directions: support for continued UN inspection, rally behind a U.S.-led invasion, or play France and the United States off for economic rewards. Under new foreign secretary Luís Ernesto Derbez, Mexico's ambiguity meant supporting the UN and appeasing U.S. interests by urging Iraqi compliance. Meanwhile, a British-Spanish-U.S. initiative for a second resolution found support from only Bulgaria, while China, France, Germany, Pakistan, Russia, and Syria remained opposed, leaving Angola, Cameroon, and Guinea in search of the highest economic

bidder. As Chile pursued a compromise initiative of its own, Mexico faced its worst Security Council nightmare, enduring diplomatic isolation in the process.

Inconsistent domestic and external developments produced a fourth Mexican response of abnegation after Blix's 7 March report, which paved the way for its fifth response of officially opposing the U.S. war declaration. Fox shifted from ambiguity towards subordinating the U.S. call to arms because of growing domestic disenchantment and restlessness. When the Bush–Blair 16 March Azores decision to wage war eliminated even the faintest hope of a no-border migration deal with the United States, Fox had no choice but to be counted among the opponents. Consequently, Mexico's routine turn to preside over the Security Council during the month of April was tantamount to a lost opportunity: It could not pursue any initiative in peacekeeping, balance U.S. interests, coattail its northern neighbour, or espouse other widely felt needs to its fellow members. All that was left for it to do was to call for supporting humanitarian issues, even then *a posteriori*. The resultant message is significant: Without diversifying economic and political partners, when push turns to shove, the weaker partner is condemned, often twice over – first for lack of principles such as loyalty and second for a supposed lack of realism about the consequences to itself.

Extending the Argument to Canada

To what extent is this “damned-if-I-do; damned-if-I-don't” argument valid for the other U.S. neighbour, Canada? A comparative survey of Canadian responses to Resolution 1441 is insightful. Like Mexico, Canada is a U.S. neighbour, and under greater U.S. scrutiny for being an alleged gateway to would-be terrorists. It is not part of the current Security Council.

Table 1: Mexico's Evolving Security Council Responses

| Thresholds: | Mexico's Responses: | Plausible Considerations: | Possible Consequences: |
|---|---|--|---|
| <i>1. Deliberations leading to UN Resolution 1441 (October–November 2002):</i> | Balancing role sought: sympathy for French position, reluctant support for U.S. position | External factors more evident than internal: Identity with France and Russia more symbolic than substantive, but still more influential than domestic considerations | Castañeda's resignation one of the many dominoes to fall, altering atmosphere for Mexican foreign policy-making |
| <i>2. U.S. challenges UN and Blix's first report (27 January 2003):</i> | Shift to neutrality, prompted by Blix report, and based on three considerations | External factors still more evident than internal: Continued identity with France, this time with Germany and Russia | Exposes constraints of dependence on U.S.: abdication of Security Council responsibilities |
| <i>3. U.S. brinkmanship within the context of Blix's second report (February 2003):</i> | Neutrality turns into ambiguity: new foreign secretary supports UN role but appeases U.S. | Security Council torn in three directions – Mexico, uncomfortable in any, faces <i>unsplendid</i> isolation | Virtual isolation in the wake of GB-Spain-U.S. proposal for second UN resolution |
| <i>4. Tripartite resolution amidst the most promising Blix report against war (first week of March 2003):</i> | Policy of abnegation | External and domestic interests collide: electoral calendar enters foreign policy calculations | Public opinion unconvinced; UN-based approach not delivering |
| <i>5. Road to war (16 March Azores summit and after):</i> | Official opposition to U.S. war declaration; call for mobilizing humanitarian support | External factors outweigh domestic factors for the short-term, but electoral accountability casts long-term shadow | Lost opportunities: principles abandoned, but interests trampled |

Although its final word on Resolution 1441 was identical to Mexico's, the route taken was not similar. How Canada tossed and turned between neutrality and ambiguity echoed Mexico's predicament. Although balancing was not attempted, Canada differed most radically from Mexico because it was partially engaged militarily. Jean Chrétien's "Canada will not participate" affirmation in the House of Commons after the Azores die had been cast was true to the bone: Canada refrained from a combat role.

Yet other roles lay in waiting in terms of preparatory work, psychological boost, and participating in the broader campaign against terrorism as well as supplementing Operation Iraqi Freedom. However, Canada jumped in with both feet: It deployed three naval vessels to join the U.S.-led coalition fleet in the region, dispatched twenty-three military officers to parley with their U.S. counterparts in the Qatar command-control centre from February, provided thirty-odd AWAC officers for sorties in or near the Iraqi combat zone, desired to be part of any post-war reconstruction plans and provide post-war security forces, and currently supervises, with over two thousand soldiers, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. On the other hand, Canada and Canadians cannot forget how four of their soliders were killed by friendly U.S. fire in Afghanistan – worse still, how the culprits escaped court-martial. At the same time, Canada worked diligently with UN Security Council members both before Resolution 1441 was unanimously passed in November 2002 and after. When a breakdown looked likely in February 2003, its UN ambassador, Paul Heinbecker, canvassed the ten non-permanent members with a bridging deadline proposal. This didn't work, and probably none of the representatives were listening anyway. As a previous section indicated, their preferences and preoccupations were elsewhere. Lost in this maelstrom was a Canadian-Mexican opportunity, if

not to slow its preponderant neighbour, then to initiate an independent, long-term bilateral compact.

Far from being chimerical, a thriving Canada–Mexico political understanding may become the most feasible exit option for both from their utter U.S. dependence. To be sure, neither of these relationships with the United States are drastically Machiavellian: Both have enjoyed spells of special status, and the United States did not force either into any commercial engagement. Just as Brian Mulroney proposed a free trade agreement to the United States at the ‘Shamrock’ Summit, September 1986, Carlos Salinas de Gortari did likewise in Davos, February 1990.⁵ The Mexican proposal, interestingly, was fully rejected by Canada – for six months or so. Since then, relations have spiralled at both societal and state levels, as Chrétien himself acknowledged at the 450th anniversary of Mexico City’s Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México in late February 2003.⁶ He highlighted the million-or-so Canadians who visit Mexico each year, more than ten thousand Mexican students studying in Canadian institutions of higher learning, over four hundred agreements bringing universities of the two countries together, and growing cultural exchanges between them, for example, Canada’s strong participation in Mexico’s annual Cervantino Festival. Canada had become Mexico’s second largest trading partner, Mexico Canada’s fourth best customer, and both currently accounting for almost one-third of the U.S. market. In reality, both bilateral trade and investments are small: Bilateral Canadian–Mexican trade accounts for less than 5 per cent of Mexico’s overall transactions, and European investments far outweigh Canadian, especially in the lucrative, denationalized banking sector. Without expansion in both areas, diversification possibilities remain limited; and formidable barriers await such expansion anyway: A large portion of exports to the other could more easily be marketed in the United States; both

naturally gravitate towards the United States, which is partly why a “damned-if-I-do; damned-if-I-don’t” predicament prevails; and, as a huge tract of land between the two, the United States remains a natural barrier to bilateral transactions between the two countries

Argument in Even Broader Light

Although the degree varies, helplessness against the United States is a common Mexican and Canadian frailty. What specific features of their “damned-if-I-do; damned-if-I-don’t” helplessness may be of general relevance to other countries, or even predict their own specific futures? Four specific issues are explored before identifying some general features:

First, domestic politics influence foreign policy outcomes. For Fox this involved electoral considerations, while for Chrétien it was his retirement. With the public overwhelmingly against a war before Mexico’s mid-term legislative elections in July 2003, Fox pragmatically trimmed his external interests to suit domestic realities. It didn’t help, since his PAN party lost anyway, and precisely because external interests in the United States had soured: U.S. unilateralism and recession prevented much needed domestic reforms.⁷ Similarly, Chrétien’s greater manoeuvrability in opposing the war, stemming to some degree from his impending departure from politics, not only jeopardized relations with the United States, but also left other Canadian sectors unhappy, especially the business community and media. Paul Martin’s prime ministership suggests a return to an antebellum Canadian–U.S. camaraderie.⁸

Second, deep trade dependence on the United States also reduces foreign policy options and initiatives of both neighbours. Although any significant U.S. retaliation against Mexico or Canada would undoubtedly prove costly for

the United States too, given the high degree of economic complementarity in both bilateral relations, the United States is less exposed and vulnerable than its two neighbours by virtue of its greater size and diversity in partners. Nevertheless, North America's hitherto win-win progression under NAFTA is expected to be negatively affected, if not by the Iraqi fallout, then by a recessionary U.S. economy.

Third, an oppositional foreign policy doesn't help if the goal is to strengthen ties with the United States. Fox's strong support of democratization and liberalization, two core U.S. ideologies, while reducing Fox's personal political fortunes domestically, had little currency in a belligerent U.S. Canadians could also learn from Pierre Trudeau's ill-fated Third Option.⁹ Pursued vigorously during the 1970s to diversify economic partners beyond just Great Britain and the United States, it simply could not overcome the U.S. gravitational pull on Canadian trade and investment. As its failure was being recognized in the early 1980s, the MacDonald Report also found the Canadian-U.S. economic relationship to be the springboard of Canadian economic growth.

Finally, the replacement of long-cherished principles or constitutional provisions by pragmatic amendments is unlikely to always bring desired results. Fox's plans to eventually privatize such sensitive sectors as electricity and petroleum are also likely to leave him embattled for the remainder of his tenure.

Four features of general relevance emerge from the discussions: (a) the nature of *special* relations with the United States amidst a global crusade; (b) the growing state-society disjuncture; (c) balancing reciprocal domestic-external determinants; and (d) adjusting long-cherished principles to pragmatic needs.

Ordinary rather than Extraordinary

How Mexico's and Canada's special U.S. relationships broke down alerts us against taking them for granted or as a permanent feature of the political landscape for several reasons: policy divergences are as routine as convergences; special relationships are not immune to business swings, which generate even sour moods; the presence of resilient *binational* populations in all three North American countries complicate post-9/11 economic liberalism more than they help; and embedded asymmetry softens neither the growing dependence of Canada and Mexico on the United States nor the plight both countries may face under difficult circumstances.

Prior to 9/11, Fox's relationship with Bush even outshone Blair's with Bush. Even the *cinco mayo* Mexican commemoration of the eviction of the French monarch in the 1860s was celebrated, for the first time, in the White House, while *rancho politics* between the two presidents led many Mexicans to actually believe bilateral relations were being structurally altered for the better. No single issue epitomized these sentiments, and the resultant miscalculations, better than Mexican emigration.¹⁰ By inducing the United States to relax border controls, the Fox-Castañeda team increased the salience of the ever-growing binational population in both Mexican and U.S. politics.¹¹ This also helped dampen nationalistic resistance to privatizing key public sectors and marketizing agriculture in Mexico.¹² What may be critical is not the expected congressional opposition to any such plan in the United States or how severely it was undermined by 9/11, but the sheer absence of any Mexican alternative. Astute as he was, Castañeda only began to fill the missing blank with Resolution 1441, by which time, for at least three reasons, miscalculation was inevitable: the costs of balancing U.S. interests were too prohibitive for a country as dependent as

Mexico; the benefits of bandwagoning on the United States did not match the loss of Mexican reputation; and the only remaining role for Mexico was to straddle. His New Year's resignation became the dividing line between Fox's activist foreign policy epoch and an uncertain era of reluctant support, indicating a foreign policy bereft of meaningful purpose.¹³ Luis Ernesto Derbez, the new foreign secretary, toned down the country's voice, but indecisiveness, for example, in both supporting the UN and appeasing U.S. interests by urging Iraq to comply, reiterated how meaningless the Security Council membership had become.¹⁴ On the Canadian–U.S. front, the two countries share the longest unfortified boundary in the world. That it also witnesses the largest flows of goods and merchandise between any two countries adds to the specialty of the relationship. In the final analysis, both Canada and Mexico are among the top three trading partners of the largest economy in the world today; and the United States alone absorbs over three-quarters or more of the exports of the two neighbours! With 9/11, but more particularly Operation Iraqi Freedom, while many of these long-term trends are unlikely to change significantly, the special status they acquired for both U.S.-based bilateral relationships are expected to dim to some extent. To what extent remains the puzzle, not just for these two countries, but also for the dozens of others for which the United States is the largest market or source of investment funds.

State–Society Disjunctures

Arguments about an overloaded state are not new but assume new meanings in the wake of the stupendous information revolutions underway.¹⁵ With even the most rigid boundaries collapsing, the emerging global village and rapidity of

technological innovations only predict greater anomie and further anarchy even in very stable societies.

Three impacts are noteworthy. First, states and societies no longer move in the same direction, and the widening gap between them exacerbates the democratic deficit between policy demands and supplies. Secondly, in turn, especially in emerging democracies, tenures of elected officials may become shorter than before, thus adding to the flux. Finally, just as both of the above dynamics challenge the legitimacy of the domestic order, it is but one short step towards challenging the international order! Behind the ricocheting effects of internal-external reciprocal dynamics stands a more robust version of public opinion than hitherto. It is a critical emerging force in many countries of the world, while in other countries more subtle struggles persist in manipulating it. Whether the media constitute a fourth branch of government or not, they can cast a spell on the public faster than any politicians or most policies and hold both politicians and policies at bay almost as effectively as electoral votes can. How Resolution 1441 exposed the gap between policy positions and public preferences in various countries alerted us to both the power of the latter over foreign policy and the potentially disruptive effects of state-society divergences.

Reciprocating Domestic–External Dynamics

Under the onslaught of boundary-eroding globalization, liberalization, and democratization (GLAD) forces, nationalistic tendencies do not necessarily help. Not only that, but increasing state porosity and transparency also lets the proverbial cat out of the bag, for whatever the results may be!

Mexico's disoriented foreign policy today is an example of the GLAD-induced results. Its hallowed strategy of import

substitution was abandoned from the 1980s precisely because global competitiveness had significantly chipped away at Mexican nationalism, isolation, and economic viability. In turn, enormous democratic pressures were released in what the Peruvian poet Mario Llosa Vargas dubbed the “*perfect dictatorship*.” Against these forces, like Trudeau’s Third Option, Mexico’s President Carlos Salinas de Gortari also sought, through his complementation policy in 1989, diversified economic partners in the European Community and Japan to lessen the dependence on the United States. Yet, German unification and the start of Japan’s first post-World War II recession thwarted his initiative. His free trade proposal to George Bush Sr. dittoed Mulroney’s to Ronald Reagan four years earlier, and for similar reasons. Unpredictable domestic-external intertwinings affect not just Mexico and Canada, but all countries!

Principles versus Pragmatism

Adjusting to the rapidly moving post-Cold War world creates strange bedfellows, not the least between revered principles and ad hoc pragmatism. Mexico’s 180-degree turn towards the United States since the 1980s buried the import substitution culture, first institutionalized by Lazáro Cardenás in the 1930s, then reaffirmed by every subsequent president until Miguel de la Madrid in the 1980s. It generated national pride and inflated nationalism. Even by embracing liberalization these deep nationalistic chords are not being tempered. The result is a half-breed circumstance almost every country of the world recognizes in one way or another. It is experienced by *transitional* countries like China, India, or Malaysia, their *developed* counterparts, such as Canada, Japan, or Switzerland, even *underdeveloped* states such as Bangladesh, Nepal, or

Somalia, not to mention today's *outliers*, Afghanistan, Cuba, or North Korea. Routine adjustments are themselves problematic enough, but when they are forced, reactions and a more deteriorating atmosphere seem inevitable.

Conclusions

Trapped as they are between a rock and the United States, countries such as Canada, Mexico, and several others need to reinvent the wheel, if need be, to find an escape route. On the one hand, policymakers under GLAD circumstances must respond to a fair share of public desires, if only to be re-elected. On the other is the desire to profit from the largest economy in human history, and with it all sorts of problems of how to balance domestic welfare considerations or sentimental outbursts with the efficiency imperatives or cutthroat approaches of global competitiveness. The circumstance is an old puzzle fated to continue well into the foreseeable future. Two previously tried options remain: diversifying economic partners or accepting vulnerability. Either way, Mexican President Porfirio Díaz's lament at the start of the twentieth century of his country being too far from God and too close to the United States resonates even louder in the twenty-first, not just for Mexico, but also for Canada.

Notes

- 1 Similar posturings have been widely discussed in the media. On Mexico, for example, see Raúl Benítez Manaut, "Mexico: Dilemmas in the Irak [*sic*]-U.S. conflict," *Voices of Mexico*, no. 62 (Jan.-Mar. 2003): 7-9; Traci Carl, "Mexican president weighs Iraq decision,"

CNews, 12 March 2003, in <http://cnews.canoe.ca/CNEWS/World/2003/03/12/41654-ap.html>; Martin Lloyd, "Security Council: with D.C. waiting, Mexico debates," *The Boston Globe Online*, 3 December, 2003, in http://www.bostonglobe.com/dailyglobe2/071/nation/With_D_C_waiting_Mexico_debates_vote+...; "Mexico's dilemma," from review of the Mexican press by Jana Schroeder, *World Press Review*, 7 March, 2003, in <http://worldpress.org/Americas/982.cfm>; and Nick Miles, "Mexico's Iraq vote dilemma," *BBC News*, 2 March 2003, from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/2812795.stm>

- 2 From "Statement of the permanent representative of Mexico to the United Nations, Ambassador Manuel Tello, in the working group on the reform of the Security Council, during the consideration of the question of the veto," <http://www.un.int/mexico/discur97/veto-eng.htm>
- 3 On the waning of Cuba in the country's foreign policy firmament, see Roger E. Hernandez, "Mexico and a new Cuba," *News*, 5 April, 2002, 12; and Susan Ferris, "Castro, Fox spar as Mexico 'abandons' Cuba," *ibid.*, 25 April, 2002, 12. This used to be a Mexico City English daily which went out of circulation from 1 January 2003, leaving the city without any daily English newspaper for the moment.
- 4 A number of incidents fueled this growing great power antagonism: It was Germany's turn to represent Europe in the Security Council; the fortieth anniversary of the Elysees Treaty reaffirmed Franco-German camaraderie; U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell had just shifted, inexplicably at that, from a diplomatic solution to the Iraq crisis towards outright confrontation; U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld provocatively divided Europe into old and new camps, causing great consternation across Europe; and trumped-up reports villainizing Saddam Hussein's regime by both the United States and Great Britain were not only increasing but were also being challenged for their authenticity! See, among others, Paul Johnson, "French Kiss Off: Lafayette, where are you?" *National Review*, 24 February 2003, 17–18; and "Rumsfeld: France, Germany are 'problems' in Iraqi conflict," CNN, 22 January, 2003, from <http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/01/22/sprj.irq.wrap/index.html>

- 5 On the Mexican proposal, see Frederick W. Mayer, *Interpreting NAFTA: The Science and Art of Political Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 39–40; and on Canada's, see Gilbert R. Winham, *Trading with Canada: The Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement* (New York: Priority Press, 1988). On Canada's initial rejection of Mexican membership, see Andrew F. Cooper, "Canada's Ambivalence: Canada as a Nation of the Americas," Paper presented at the annual convention of the International Studies Association, Chicago, February 1995.
- 6 Source of the data in this paragraph is his speech itself. See "Notes for an address by prime minister Jean Chrétien to the National Autonomous University of Mexico, February 27, 2003," from pmo@pm.gc.ca
- 7 PAN lost more than 50 seats in the 500-strong lower house, from the 207 it held to about 155, while the left-wing PRD improved from 56 to 96, and the PRI, which governed Mexico for seventy years until Fox's revolutionary victory in 2002, from 208 to 223, becoming the largest vote-getter by a larger margin. See "Putting the brakes on change," *The Economist*, 12–18 July 2003, 50.
- 8 Clifford Krauss, "Canadian candidate suggests an effort to mend ties with U.S.," *The New York Times*, 4 May, 2003, from <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/05/04/international/americas/04CANA.html?ntemail1>, and "Manley's exit, Martin's test," editorial, *Toronto Star*, 23 July 2003, from http://www.torontostar.com/NASApp/cs/ContentServer?pagename=thestar/Layout/Article_T...p28/07/03
- 9 See Jack A. Finlayson and Stefano Bertasi, "Evolution of Canadian Postwar International Trade Policy," *Canadian Foreign Policy and International Economic Regimes*, eds. A. Clair Cutler and Mark W. Zacher (Vancouver, BC: British Columbia University Press, 1992), 36–46.
- 10 For a view untainted by 9/11, see Mónica Vereá Campos's "Mexican Migration to the U.S.: Is Regularization Possible?" *Voices of Mexico*, no. 53 (Oct.–Dec. 2000): 69–75.
- 11 Flavour captured by Anthony York, "Howdy Partner: With Fox Riding High, the Cowboy Summit Showed Mexico is on Top of Bush's List," *MB: The Magazine of the NAFTA Marketplace* 8, no. 1 (July 2000): 14–16; themes reaffirmed by George Bush's first post-

- 9/11 ambassador to Mexico, in Matthew Brayman, "15 minutes with Tony Garza," *Business Mexico* (February 2003): 8–11.
- 12 Why agriculture liberalization is thorny is discussed by Pav Jordan, "New NAFTA Phase Seen as Death Blow to Nation's Farmers," *News*, 31 December 2002, 2.
 - 13 Newspaper coverage portrays this vividly. Contrast the upbeat assessment of Mexico's balancing performances prior to the passage of Resolution 1441 with the subdued reports throughout 2003: For the former, see Ioan Grillo, "Mexico's key U.N. Role Applauded by President: Fox: We Had a Lot to Do with the Result," *News*, 9 November 2002, 2; Julia Preston, "Mexico Emerges as Swing Vote at Security Council," *ibid.*, 26 October 2002; 4; "Mexico, France United on Iraq Stance, Fox Says," *ibid.*, 16 November 2002, 2; and Tim Weiner, "Mexico Refuses to Support U.S. Resolution on Iraq," *ibid.*, 28 October 2002, 2. For the latter, see Rodolfo Echeverría Ruiz, "Callejón sin salida," *El Universal*, 7 March 2003, A28; Alejandro Torres Rogelio, "Se mantendrá firme la posición de paz, dice Creel," *El Universal*, 7 March 2003, A14; and Patricia Ruiz, "Vicente Fox reitera a George Bush su postura pacifista," *Milenio Diario*, 7 March 2003, 10.
 - 14 For more, see Alberto Armendáriz, "Proponen a ONU explorar soluciones pacíficas al conflicto: Llama México a Iraq a cumplir con desarme," *Reforma*, 8 March 2003, 2^a.
 - 15 Several articles examine the United States from state, societal, and systemic perspectives in G. John Ikenberry, David A. Lake, and Michael Mastanduno, eds., *The State and American Foreign Economic Policy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988); while the strong–weak thesis is propounded and applied by many others in Peter Katzenstein, ed., *Between Power and Plenty: Foreign Economic Policies of Advanced Industrial States* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978).

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THE MORAL SUPERIORITY COMPLEX IN THE UNITED STATES POSES A MORAL DILEMMA FOR CANADA

Satya R. Pattnayak

The recent U.S.-led war in Iraq and its aftermath have the potential to change the world balance of power in the next few years. Canada as the most important neighbour of the United States faces a moral dilemma. On the one hand, it strives to stabilize and even strengthen the multilateral institutional structure of the United Nations so that world conflicts can be diffused and resolved effectively. On the other hand, however, the Canadian leadership is at pains to see its most important economic partner embark upon a path separate from most members of the UN Security Council. What course of action could Canada possibly have? This chapter contemplates a series of scenarios in which Canada could play a more effective role in the world and hemispheric affairs in the post-war scenario in Iraq.

Canada Faces a Moral Dilemma

The war in Iraq was consistently characterized by the Bush administration as a moral cause. The United States and its allies, as we were told, took a moral stand against a brutal

dictator who had defied the UN since the end of Gulf War I in 1991.¹ The official logic was that, unless dealt with immediately, Iraq was likely to use its suspected arsenal of biological, chemical, and possibly nuclear weapons and could strike at the heart of the United States either directly or through surrogates like Osama bin Laden's notorious terrorist organization – al-Qaeda. The British prime minister, Tony Blair, even predicted a scary picture in which Iraq was indeed capable of striking its western enemies with the weapons of mass destruction in a matter of only forty-five minutes. But as a consequence of this “either/or” logic, nations that did not support a pre-emptive military strike against Iraq were demonized not only by key members of the Bush administration but also by the media, in particular the major television networks based in the United States.² Of course, the Bush administration probably believed that once the Iraq issue was dealt with in moral terms, then, nations would have to take a stand, and the expectation was that they would support the military campaign.

In order to mobilize a sufficient number of nations behind its military policy in Iraq, or an alliance of the willing, the Bush administration put considerable pressure on many countries, including Canada. It used intimidating language through public announcements by some of the key members of the administration. The characterization of Germany and France as “Old” Europe and being less relevant to the United States contributed to a trans-Atlantic impasse between Washington on the one hand and Berlin and Paris on the other, not seen since the Suez Crisis in 1956. Of all nations that were against the immediate military strike in Iraq, France in particular was subjected to the most embarrassing negative campaign in the United States. Even the speaker of the House, Dennis Hastert, advocated a boycott of French products in the United States. But this was only the tip of the iceberg of a “we don't really need any of them” attitude.

Countries not as economically or politically powerful as Germany and France were subjected to more open political and diplomatic intimidation by members of the Bush administration. In some instances, financial incentives were offered to stand in line behind the U.S. military strike in Iraq, which was subsequently characterized as one intended to liberate the Iraqi people from a cruel and brutal dictatorship.

If a given nation considered important by the U.S. administration did not openly commit itself to stand behind the United States in this simplistic but monstrous battle of biblical proportions between “good” and “evil,” then, a significant portion of the media in the United States characterized that country as a “traitor” to the cause of Western civilization.³ In particular, Canada as the immediate neighbour was put in a really difficult situation. In many ways, the Iraqi problem posed a moral dilemma for Canada.

Based on the newspaper and television coverage in the U.S. of Canada, as limited as it had been, one could say that the public sentiment in Canada was divided to a significant degree. On the one hand, according to some Canadian polls before the war, most “Canadians ... found American foreign policy overtly aggressive and thought American leaders took them for granted.”⁴ But, on the other hand, “Canadians also thought of themselves as friends of the United States, so at times when anti-Americanism appeared to have been growing, there was always a snap-back reaction. More often than not, Canadian emotions and policies toward the United States were characterized by ambiguity.”⁵ It was more than just that; it presented a real problem for Canada.

This dilemma was sustained by several hard facts: (1) Canada had had a long-standing commitment to using multilateral forums to resolve international disputes; (2) a long, open border with the United States; (3) an economic partnership that had created the world’s two largest trading

partners of each other's products; and (4) to people living outside of the North American continent, Canadians, with the exception of Quebec, were not very distinguishable from Americans culturally and linguistically. Of course, Canadians and Americans would dispute this simplistic version of their respective national existence. But the truth is that in order to maintain some semblance of independence from the colossus to the south, successive Canadian governments, although they have cooperated with armed campaigns overseas alongside the United States, at times have done so only grudgingly. In that respect, the recent Canadian cooperation in the campaign against the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan in the aftermath of September 11 was noteworthy. Unfortunately, that cooperation also had produced Canadian casualties. Four Canadian soldiers died when they came under fire by mistake from a U.S. National Guard F-16 fighter jet during a training exercise.⁶

The general feeling in some sections in the United States was that, if it could be avoided, Canada would rather use multilateral forums of negotiation and bargaining and not hard military power. In that context, Canada's insistence that the United States use the United Nations in its quest for international legitimacy did not come as a surprise.⁷ When that did not materialize, largely due to the intransigence of the U.S. diplomats, Canadian leadership found itself in a difficult situation. In early February of 2003, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien delivered a major speech at the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations in which he had advised that, in spite of U.S. frustrations with the UN, "the long-term interests of the United States would be better served by acting through the United Nations, than by acting alone."⁸ In this sense, Canadian preference to act through multilateral organizations such as the United Nations was quite similar to that of Germany and France. The prime minister's speech turned out

to be prophetic by the late summer of 2003. Due to sustained hostilities to the U.S. military presence and casualties in Iraq, the American Secretary of State Colin Powell returned to New York to ask for the UN support so that the problems in administering a fragmented Iraq would be minimized. It is to be noted that the same U.S. secretary of state had admonished the UN a few months earlier, when the war talk was heating up in Washington, for not acting on its resolutions aggressively.

Evidence of Hard Power

According to many scholars of the U.S. security policy, this divergence could be explained on the basis of stark differences in hard power.⁹ After the end of the Cold War and the realignment of the East Bloc countries, the new Russian Federation was, and remains, neither an economic nor a political challenge to the United States. In addition, the gap between the major NATO countries and the United States also widened, more starkly so since the late 1980s. These vast differences could be explained in terms of the respective perceptions of threat and priorities.¹⁰ While NATO and its European member states focused on creating a European economic powerhouse that would rival the economic dominance of the United States, they had indeed neglected the military component of such power. That disparity has only increased in recent years.¹¹

According to the World Bank, the Canadian economy is about 2.2 per cent of the world economy. With 31 million people, the ratio of the size of the economy to the population is 0.071. Compared to this, the U.S. economy is about one-third of the world economy (32.6%) while it caters to a population of 284 million. The corresponding ratio for the United States amounts to 0.115, a much more favourable ratio indicating a more solid base. In plain language, it came down to this:

while the United States possessed 9.2 times the population of Canada, its economy was 14.8 times larger than the Canadian economy.¹² Of course, this asymmetry in hard power becomes much too large to ignore if the preponderance of the U.S. military power is taken into account.

After Gulf War I, the U.S. military spending declined somewhat until 2000, but in the aftermath of 9/11 it increased significantly. Based on the 2003 estimates, the U.S. military spending is now about 40 to 45 per cent of the world military spending.¹³ This asymmetry in economic and military power does not end with Canada. The United States also enjoys a disproportionate amount of advantage vis-à-vis Germany and France as well. For example, the economies of Germany and France together constitute about 10.2 per cent of the world economy, which is less than one-third of the U.S. economy. Germany and France cater to a combined population of 141 million. For comparison sake, the U.S. population is about twice the combined population of Germany and France, but its economy is more than three times that of the two economies put together.¹⁴ This power asymmetry is magnified when the military dimension is added. While the NATO economies have been intent on stabilizing or reducing military spending in the aftermath of the demise of the Warsaw Pact, the United States has indeed consolidated and actually augmented its military striking power vis-à-vis the rest of the world combined, commensurate with its unchallenged superpower status.¹⁵ Hence, in U.S. thinking, the military option is likely to be entertained sooner, as only the United States has the capacity to intervene and neutralize threats to its security across this universe, in multiple places simultaneously if necessary. In such a scenario of drastic imbalance of hard power, what could Canada possibly do?

Canada's Place in the Future Balance of Power

Despite its limits in terms of the economic and military power, Canada is no ordinary country for the United States. As stated earlier, it is the biggest trading partner for the United States, but looking at it from the Canadian perspective, the United States imports more than 80 per cent of all Canadian exports, leaving it vulnerable to possible reprisal from Washington. The economic stakes have been ominous in the pronouncements by prominent members of the Canadian political landscape.¹⁶ For example, Canadian Alliance leader Stephen Harper and others had repeatedly asked that Canada should support the American plans for military strikes against Iraq regardless of whether or not it had UN support. These tensions have strong economic undertones. The world's longest open border is also the world's busiest. Despite the dilemma in moral terms, Canadian leaders are aware of the negative economic implications of any protracted disagreement with the United States.

Yet, there are theoretical and, by implication, futuristic limits to the Bush administration's hypothesis that Iraq was a moral problem and that the United States and Britain were on the morally superior side. The reverse logic behind such an hypothesis was that those nations that opposed the 17 March deadline proposed by the Bush administration were immoral by implication, in particular France.

First of all, the demonizing of France and, to a lesser extent, Germany by the Bush administration and the popular media in light of the gridlock in the UN Security Council is only a small problem compared to what might develop in the next three to five years in the form of a competing power bloc, a real counter weight to the United States in the world balance of power.

Since the end of the Cold War, the successive U.S. administrations from Bush I to Clinton to Bush II have created an aura of invincibility around themselves. That aura is sustained by default, meaning that no real competition exists in terms of any worrisome challenge to the U.S. dominance in economic, technological, and military matters. That is at least the perception perpetuated by the hawks in the Bush administration, resulting in an extraordinary amount of arrogance, but not statesmanship and diplomacy. Of course, by comparison with the current Bush administration, the Clintonians look like the nicest people on earth. However, remembering the hawkish posture of the former secretary of state, Madeline Albright, over the war in Serbia, one could make the argument that there has indeed been a greater willingness on the part of the U.S. policy-makers in recent years toward a military solution to a crisis overseas. But that is nothing compared to what might unravel because of an apparent lack of understanding of or patience over the intricacies of international diplomacy.

The temporary spring 2003 alliance of France, Germany, Russia, and China – countries that had opposed the U.S.-British-Spanish proposal in the UN Security Council to wage war in Iraq – could very well become a real, strategic economic, technological, and military alliance. This has an even greater potential as a rival power bloc if Japan joins them in the next few years. Japan has been quite uncomfortable with the current situation in Iraq, and its continued dependence on Mideast oil complicates the issue. Japan has been quietly but seriously interested in signing contracts with Russia that, once successful, would build a pipeline from the Russian oil-rich provinces to the eastern ports, and then on to Japan.

Economically, the alliance of France, Germany, Russia, China, and Japan would be as powerful as that of the U.S.-led alliance. Based on the 2002 data, France and these allies would

account for about 30 per cent of the world economy while the U.S.-led alliance (U.S.-UK-Spain) would control 39 per cent of the world economy. Technologically, this rival alliance will have the German, French, and the Japanese know-how and, although it may be slightly behind that of the United States in some areas, would be quite at par in electronics, robotics, and communication. Militarily, the United States cannot really threaten the alliance, as Russia still possesses at least as many nuclear weapons as the United States.¹⁷ The Chinese armed forces by most accounts are the largest in the world. This alliance, if it takes shape, would indeed become a competing power bloc in all major dimensions of power – economic, technological, military, and political. With the exception of China, the U.S.-led alliance cannot claim that the competition is between democracy and free market versus totalitarianism and state socialism.

In this possible scenario, Canada could play an effective bridge between the two power blocs, thus becoming more important than at the present for the U.S. policy-makers. With its close political contact with European nations, in particular France and the United Kingdom, this is a likely scenario. The second possible scenario for Canada, although not as glamorous, could be effective as well. Since Canadian refineries process a significant amount of crude oil destined for the U.S. market, it would make prudent sense for the Canadian leadership to work closely with Mexico and Venezuela in the area of oil exploration and distribution. In fact, the recent U.S. Department of Energy data show that Canada, Mexico, and Central and South America together account for more than half of the daily oil imports to the United States.¹⁸ A coordinated platform of Canada, Mexico, and Venezuela together with continued U.S. dependence on foreign oil is bound to accord Canada a greater weight than it currently gets from the United States. Finally, an organized campaign in concert with

the various U.S. business houses and chambers of commerce to keep politics out of economics would also be a start. Since the Canadian economy is strongly embedded with the U.S. economy, this option may actually be easier to realize. All of these formations take time, but if played judiciously, Canada would have a more important role to play than at the present in world peace and stability.

As things stand at this critical juncture, there are very few takers of U.S. arrogance internationally. It defies logic when the U.S. administration declares a deadline on Iraq and asks the UN Security Council to vote on it and yet threatens reprisal for non-support. For example, the U.S. ambassador to Mexico hinted at possible reprisals when Mexico could not make up its mind on the U.S.-led proposal.¹⁹ When nations are insulted and are taken for granted, they are likely to organize and make efforts to change the balance of power. That would mean of course that NATO would break up in the next three to five years, and if the current attitude of belligerence continues in the U.S. administration, it will only pave the way for a rival power bloc in the making. And that would spell bad things for the real U.S. national interest. But it could make things more interesting for Canada in a positive way.

In a Post-War Scenario

What is contemplated in the earlier section is theoretical. Scholars writing on the international balance of power among states have consistently predicted the rise of a rival power bloc from an essentially unipolar world, due to a number of game-theory calculations toward gaining economic, political, strategic, and diplomatic advantage over rival states.²⁰ But there are signs that many of the members of the contemplated rival power bloc are mending fences with the United States. For

example, the UN Security Council voted overwhelmingly to recognize the U.S.-imposed Iraqi Governing Council and even agreed to get involved in the post-war reconstruction of Iraq. Canada has already manifested its willingness to work with the United States in the post-war reconstruction efforts. Although these do not include the sending of Canadian soldiers, the Canadian leadership has promised significant help in some key areas. For example, the Canadian prime minister has promised significant help in infrastructure building, humanitarian help, and educating Iraqis in democratic governance.²¹

Both France and Germany are on a “kiss and make up” mode. Both President Chirac of France and Chancellor Schroeder of Germany have been publicly sympathetic toward offering a helping hand in the rebuilding of Iraq. The United States is also facing a rising opposition to the fast-increasing human and financial costs of rebuilding in Iraq. As U.S. soldiers die almost daily in scattered resistance and the cost of maintaining an administration and military presence amount to 4 billion dollars a month, popular opposition is showing signs of emerging. The Democratic Party has also picked up on its opposition to the post-war developments. In this changed scenario, it would also be advantageous for the U.S. administration to get some support from both the UN and its former opponents. In such a situation it is quite easy for Canadian policy makers to forget the long-term repercussions of the U.S.-led war in Iraq without a UN Security Council mandate and, instead, concentrate on the good things Canada shares with the United States, albeit in an asymmetrical fashion.

Without publicly acknowledging it, the U.S. administration has been campaigning for a multilateral military force that would slowly relieve some of the work now being done by the British and American forces. The Central American countries of El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua have recently sent

about 900 soldiers to join the military peacekeeping operations in Iraq.²² Soldiers from Georgia, Ukraine and Poland are already on the ground. With the UN resolution now in favour of a multilateral involvement in the reconstruction of Iraq, it is entirely possible that countries such as Jordan, Turkey, Bangladesh, and India could send their military personnel to Iraq to relieve some members of the U.S. forces. It seems there is a grudging acceptance by both sides of the pre-war debate of the new ground realities in post-war Iraq. The post-war Canadian overture to help out the United States in supplying transport aircraft, disaster management assistance, and even hard dollars in the amount of \$106 million in Iraq indicates that the larger relevance of the multilateral conflict management through the UN is being compromised by the desire to return to the *status quo antebellum*. The U.S., by turning to the global community for support in re-creating Iraq under its mandate, also acknowledges that its unilateral approach cannot be sustained without serious cost to itself. It would seem that American isolation during the war is coming to an end and that Canada is playing a role in the thaw.

Notes

- 1 President George W. Bush's televised address to the nation, 17 March 2003, ABC News.
- 2 The Fox network and the MSNBC have been notorious in this regard, in particular the former.
- 3 In this regard, talk shows like "O'Reilly Factor" on Fox network are openly hostile to foreign countries that did not wholeheartedly support the U.S. position at the UN Security Council.
- 4 Clifford Krauss, "Canadians of Two Minds Over Neighbor to the South," *New York Times* (17 March 2003), A10.
- 5 *Ibid.*, A10.
- 6 CBC News, taken from <http://www.cbc.ca/stories/2002/04/cdcdeaths020418>.

- 7 <http://www.recorder.ca/cp/national/030320/n032099A.html>.
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