

Lockstep in the  
Continental Ranks:  
Redrawing the American  
Perimeter After September 11<sup>th</sup>

By Stephen Clarkson

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## **Introduction**

The stunning catastrophe suffered directly by New York and the Pentagon and vicariously by the rest of the world, raised a host of questions, and in the immediate aftermath of the September 11 disaster, the answers veered wildly from one extreme to another. The view that everything had changed in the United States so that the world would never be the same again could be heard alongside the belief that nothing was different except for the Americans' loss of their innocence and their revival of a Cold War mentality that pitted them in their righteousness against the forces of the "evil empire."

Four months later, these polarized positions have given way to a more nuanced understanding of the trio of issues that Canadians generally face when looking at the world beyond their borders:

- the nature of the United States in the face of non-state violence;
- Canada's position in the light of American responses; and
- the nature of the North America that Washington keeps redefining.

## **The Hegemon: The United States**

As days turned into weeks and months, the sharp outlines of September's tragedy that seemed so special have blurred into more general dilemmas. When viewed from abroad, for instance, the human tragedy suffered by workers in New York's twin towers and by military staff in the Pentagon brought Americans into the club to which everyone else already belonged. Those three successful and one aborted suicide missions were only spectacular dramatizations of globalization's well-known dark side, which includes the destructive power of small groups whose technical sophistication and discreet fanaticism can elude detection by technologically superior intelligence agencies.

While the scale of the attack and the sophistication of its planning were stupefying, there was nothing particularly new about fanatics who targeted innocent civilians in their plotting. Relentless bombings in Northern Ireland through the 1990s, the indiscriminate violence of the Red Brigades in Italy in the 1980s, even the occasional killings effected by the Front de Libération du Québec in Montreal up to 1970 remind us that terrorism has been a scourge ravaging various societies at different moments. As for the anti-American rage seething in many countries of the Arab world, "jihad" has long been in our vocabulary to mean a martyr-led holy war that Muslims might wage against the U.S. infidel.

The threat of terrorism has been repeatedly discussed at the annual G-7/G-8 Economic Summits whose powerful members have committed themselves time and again to containing the problem, as Ronald Reagan famously did when he

was U.S. president. Even the specific menace of al-Qaeda has been on the American security agenda, both at home since the first bombing of the New York world trade centre and abroad because of the targeting of American embassies and vessels.

September 11 has raised Americans' consciousness of their insecurity from within as well as from without. They are aware that terrorists do not necessarily wear a turban. The attack on their federal office building was done on a freelance basis, with Timothy McVeigh scheming his schemes safely camouflaged amid his white, red-blooded, but less deranged fellow citizens. The connotation of terror as a foreign force remains blurred by his Oklahoma bombing, which was disconnected from global networks, and the likelihood that the autumn 2001 anthrax-bearing letters came from some other group of psychopathic Caucasians.

The vulnerability of two giant buildings to two misguided hijacked airliners pointed not just to the evil that a mastermind could inflict, but symbolized the vulnerability of all societies under present conditions of technological integration. Food supplies and energy flows are dependent on elaborate transportation systems that are easy candidates for disruption by disasters that can be created by natural or human agency. Public health in the U.S. is vulnerable to epidemics inadvertently transmitted by humans, birds, or insects.

Even the prospect of human society's annihilation at its own hands has a considerable history. The threat of nuclear holocaust has loomed over the U.S. for over half a century. It is not easy for the human mind to grasp the meaning of apocalypse, but at some level of consciousness Americans have had to understand the possibility of their urban centres being vaporized by multiple, unheralded nuclear blasts delivered from space by ballistic missiles and followed by irremediable radiation and general social disintegration. In post-September 11 America, the threat seemed somewhat less apocalyptic. Large buildings where civilians work in droves could be plane-bombed again. Vital bridges or fuel pipelines could be sabotaged. The air they all breathe and the water they all drink have become credible objectives for large-scale biological or chemical contamination. Doomsday scenarios became more credible, but no worse than their atomic prototype.

The largest change is in the anthropology of the American enemy. Like any leading state, the U.S. has always had concerns about spies from the other side seeking secret information or doing actual damage during wartime, whether hot or cold. Now the threat is less from visible states than from non-state actors with their networks of destructive capacity cunningly embedded throughout the industrialized world's multicultural mosaic. From what is known about al-Qaeda's training camps and the machinations that culminated on September 11, Americans have to assume that "sleepers" continue to go about their otherwise normal daily routines in all countries. Some may be illegal immigrants, but others have their papers in order, hold down steady jobs, date white women, and are fathers--or perhaps mothers--in interracial households. They may even be

fully fledged citizens who profess they love America as much as Allah. So the most dangerous enemies are not hiding in a Himalayan mountain redoubt, but going about their business unrecognizable within their multiracial communities.

A collective post-traumatic stress syndrome in the U.S. has been treated by the media's homage to the firemen and police heroes and its recounting the personal stories of hundreds of the victims. Public opinion research has shown a return of individual values to bedrock concerns for family and friends, community and patriotism. A broad self-confidence is expressed in a resilient stock market and signs of the economy's basic soundness. In short, there seems to have been a spontaneous reaction to rebuild the country's social capital. This is not a response that has been given much support in Washington.

While the American public seems to have grown more mature in its grieving, George W. Bush's much acclaimed emergence as a strong, in-command, High-Noon president conceals a disturbing incapacity to rise above his ideological positions and reflect his electors' wiser responses. In foreign policy, he has rebranded American unilateralism. Domestically, a reactivated American state has been rededicated to the engorgement of the rich.

### **Back to the activist state?**

To talk of a state-led campaign against anything would still have been apostasy within the Washington beltway as late as September 10. But even rugged American individuals look for a collective remedy when struck by calamity. The very government which Republicans have been so focused on getting off the backs of business has become their means for its salvation. The market, whose invisible hand was meant to do it best, has embarrassingly failed to provide either secure airports or safe airplanes.

The trimmed-down, tax-cut, deficit-free, tough-love neoconservative state didn't come off much better. Its immigration and intelligence services failed to interdict, let alone monitor the assassins. If its public services were able to cope with the airborne disaster, this was because there were so few survivors from among the thousands of victims. As for letter-borne disaster, it was the small dimensions of the postal problem that saved the situation, not the public domain's inherent capability to cope with crises of epidemic proportions.

If only the right-wing Nixon could go to China to recognize its communist regime, is it only the right-wing Bush who could reactivate the American state once it became manifestly indispensable as the prime agent for shoring up the stricken economy, national security, and the public health system? But the smaller-the-better, market-led view of government was not displaced. There is no sign that the postal and emergency services will be reconstructed in a revived public domain. Lobbyists worked furiously and successfully to maintain airport security in the same private-sector hands that failed to detect 25 hijackers on four separate flights. Promises of tens of billions of dollars to reconstruct New York have been whittled down. The real money will go to

strengthening the various manifestations of U.S. police power, primarily the CIA and the FBI, whose proven incompetence is being duly rewarded by increased budgets.

The U.S. state is more conservative in strengthening its national security powers, but not more compassionate. The administration even had a perverse response to the macroeconomic problem of an established recession aggravated by the September 11 blow to consumer confidence. The White House spoke the Keynesian language of economic stimulus, but was bent on using hundreds of billions of dollars to reward its corporate friends with retroactive tax breaks for the largest transnationals and accelerated tax cuts for the richest plutocrats. Comforting the super-rich meant exacerbating social disparities, since social security funds have been depleted at the very moment when the five-year limit to individuals' receipt of social assistance brought in by President Clinton's welfare "reform" kicked in. Even if regulations were changed to permit extended relief for the distress of the impoverished and of the recession's newly unemployed, the Bush administration has preempted such an alternative by starving the federal government of the resources it would need.

#### From unilateralism to coalition-building to unilateralism

For years the world's hyperpower had been the despair of the globally minded because of its withdrawal from the multilateral institutions it had enthusiastically created after World War II. Its refusal to participate in most manifestations of international law's expanding scope signalled a dismissive disdain for cooperation and community building with other states. Even if sage observers in the early months of 2001 maintained that the newly elected George Bush *filis* was not an isolationist, his rapid rejection of the Kyoto accord on state measures to reduce global warming and of the anti-ballistic missiles treaty made it hard for his allies to see whether there was much to choose between Dubya's unilateralism and genuine, old-fashioned, hard-core U.S. isolationism.

When George II emerged from the psychic rubble of September 11 as an apparently reborn leader, his discourse did seem transformed. No longer was it "my way or the highway." Military attacks on Afghanistan were preceded by a diplomatic exercise to build a coalition-based engagement. Having repudiated the kind of consensual global governance articulated through treaties negotiated and signed by the international community, Washington under Bush was taking responsibility for global security, projecting American power around the world, and doing all this under the mantle of a new global alliance against rogue-state and non-state terrorism.

Hopes for a new era of American-led international coalition building have quickly faded. The U.S. president felt no need to get endorsement from the United Nations Security Council for the United States's military offensive against the Afghan government. International war trumped international law. The very success of the bombing campaign in routing the Taliban seems to have confirmed

Bush in his Gary Cooper role in the OK Corral. Using the might of the armed forces (whose devastating capacity turned out to be completely up to the challenge, notwithstanding Governor Bush's attacks on Clinton's military policies during his presidential campaign) makes him not just American but global commander-in-chief. At the same time, he has also become sheriff-in-chief: he will decide how Osama bin Laden or an American citizen captured fighting with the enemy is brought to justice, and how rough that justice will be.

Coalition politics is relegated to the complementary sphere of immediate humanitarian relief and then the less glorious and more difficult task of helping reconstruct a society in ruins – two functions Washington clearly prefers to leave to others. The issues become whether the European Union uses the occasion to redeem itself diplomatically and militarily from its embarrassingly indecisive performance in the Balkans. With a general lack of American interest in dealing with the physical, economic, human, and social wreckage left by its bombing, a straitened United Nations will be left holding the bag in a political context in which the warlords are already turning their populations to the greater and very profitable cause of heroin production and trafficking.

Meanwhile, the Bush administration is exploiting its high ratings with the public to push ahead with its original plan to militarize space and abrogate its anti-ballistic missile and non-proliferation treaties. Widespread concern among its so-called partners has not changed U.S. unilateralism in the area.

For the next stage, there is no indication that the U.S. plans to rally to the United Nations-led process of finalizing treaties to contain the use and distribution of chemical and biological weapons, even though this approach would signal a shift towards a more responsible multi-lateralism that incorporates the views of those states on whose support against terrorism Washington claims to rely.

Crucial in this deadly game is who gets to define what constitutes terrorism. Israel was hands-down winner in November 2001 when it brought Arafat to his knees following a fresh spate of attacks against Israelis. The extreme volatility of both the Israel-Arab imbroglio and the India-Pakistan standoff over Kashmir has brought the State Department back into the picture in a reactivation of the interventionist mediation that President Clinton tried to make his trademark. Hero of the Gulf War though he may be, Colin Powell is not likely to have more influence and more staying power than his hawkish cabinet colleagues in moderating his government's proclivities to extend its self-granted licence to take its war against any target it defines as terrorists.

These two intractable conflicts are only paramount among half a dozen other serious powder kegs in the Islamic world that include the roles of Iraq and Syria as governments intimately involved with terrorist networks. It is a virtually impossible task for the Bush administration to generate an approach to these problems acceptable to all its allies, since so many are themselves parties engaged in these conflicts. Defeat of the Taliban and putting al-Qaeda on the

defensive will lower the pressure for total solidarity. As cohesion in counter-terrorism crumbles, other factors will come into play, such as the United States's ambiguous relationship with those Arab regimes such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia, which are themselves threatened by fundamentalist movements. The CIA trained bin Laden's men in basic guerrilla war knowhow and supplied them with missiles to help push the Soviets out of Afghanistan. But in defiling Moslem space with permanent military bases in Saudi Arabia, the United States became a greater insult to Koran-reciting fundamentalists than the U.S.S.R. had ever been.

Washington seems to be forgoing another chance for creative leadership in reregulating the global capital markets. A combination of international treaties applied with much greater rigour under U.S. oversight will interdict international flows of funds for al-Qaeda. In the process, the United States is proving that the allegedly uncontrollable global capital market can be controlled if the hegemon and its associates so decide. If Washington wanted to show itself really serious about the illegal financing of all kinds of terrorism, it would go beyond trying to freeze bin Laden's money supply and champion a general, state-led attack on all tax havens which its own transnational corporations—Enron most recently and most spectacularly—happily exploit alongside the Mafia's less savoury money launderers.

## **The Periphery: Canada**

Since for most Americans the rest of the world starts at their northern border, Canadian officials, who were despairing a year ago that they were marginal in the mindscape of the president from Texas, may now regret their former irrelevance—unless their personal mission is to complete the process of political integration activated by free trade a decade and a half ago. Even if the terrorists involved in the September 11 massacres plotted not in Hamilton but in Hamburg, Canada has shifted from being far out on the Bush administration's cognitive periphery to becoming the prime concern on its strategic perimeter. The change wrought by one cataclysm is impressive when seen in the context of seven months. But in the context of seven decades, it is more a matter of affixing a new label marked "counter-terrorism" to the old bottle of continental defence.

Back in the late 1930s, when the hitherto unthinkable threats to North America from Nazi Germany and imperial Japan were becoming thinkable, the elected leaders of the U.S. and Canada set the template for the way they would cope with common security threats. In a speech in Kingston, Ontario, on August 18, 1938, Franklin Delano Roosevelt declared that the U.S. "would not stand idly by" if Canada were attacked. William Lyon Mackenzie King responded with his own declaration two days later in the sleepy town of Woodbridge outside Toronto to the effect that "enemy forces should not be able to pursue their way either by land, sea or air to the United States across Canadian territory."

Thus defined as a willing American protectorate, Canada's military relationship with the United States passed through various phases, most notably the active continental cooperation at both the military and economic levels during the final four years of World War II. The early 1940s' mobilization for total war made it easy for the two countries to move towards military and economic integration during the Cold War. Blending Canada into a single military-industrial system was effected industrially by the Defence Production Sharing Agreement and militarily by the North American Air (now Aerospace) Defence Command.

In the struggle of the liberal-capitalist democracies against the Soviet bloc, Canada chose to be a target for Soviet missiles because it had taken the lead in causing the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to be born and in supporting the anti-communist cause led by Washington. For the next four decades Canadian leaders endorsed whatever strategic doctrine on nuclear retaliation the Pentagon might issue as it responded to new circumstances and incorporated its military-industrial complex's latest technologies. Canadians may have been somewhat uncomfortable when they realized they provided the flight path along which Soviet or American nuclear bombers and missiles would likely be shot down in any U.S.-U.S.S.R. exchange. Nonetheless, their hearts were squarely on the American side in the Cold War.

A general consensus on ends did not prevent occasional divergence over means. Throughout, Canadian political leaders were often privately critical of their American counterparts' penchant for manicheistic, good-vs-evil representations of the conflict, and of the Pentagon's preference for high-tech over diplomatic solutions to security problems. President Lyndon Johnson's anger at Prime Minister Lester Pearson when he recommended a pause in the U.S. bombing of North Vietnam reminded all concerned that the limits to Canadian diplomatic influence were defined by how Washington defined its strategic interests. Canadian divergence reached its crescendo in the early 1980s when Pierre Trudeau openly contested Ronald Reagan's nuclear brinksmanship with the Soviet Union. That such independent-mindedness was exceptional was confirmed by both Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's and Jean Chrétien's comfort with American global leadership.

A number of understandings completed this picture of happy continental cooperation. If Canadians didn't want the U.S. taking over their airspace, they had to invest enough resources to do the job to the Pentagon's satisfaction, a stance known to military analysts as "Defence against Help." Eager to oblige, the Canadian armed forces lobbied for the armaments necessary for them to participate actively within the U.S.-defined parameters. To produce the requisite weaponry using leading-edge technology, the Canadian defence industry, which was largely comprised of American branch plants, gained privileged access to Pentagon contracts, in return for which the U.S. Defence Department pressed a cost-conscious Ottawa to spend more on its military.



Immediate post-catastrophe behaviour on both sides of the 49th parallel confirmed these basic features of this ritualized CanAm security relationship. George Bush's declaration of a war against terrorism connected Canada to the state of global affairs that existed before the Berlin Wall came down, namely a war that rallied the forces of light against an evil, if invisible, empire. Since these forces are led by the United States, Canada finds itself back in the familiar position of sitting directly on its superpower neighbour's defence perimeter. When President Bush equated neutrality with support for the ideological enemy, he stood in the shoes of John Foster Dulles, President Eisenhower's secretary of state, for whom non-alignment was tantamount to endorsing communism. Equally programmed to respond with due deference, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien immediately endorsed the Bush Doctrine and offered his armed forces for the execution of its first, tactical, phase.

Inserting counter-terrorism into this pattern has of course changed the nature and location of the combat. If Canadians are again worried about their security, it is not because of their North Atlantic response to Soviet imperialism, but because of Islamic responses to what is generally perceived throughout the Middle East as *American* imperialism. Now Canada is an unwilling possible target, exposed to the effects of al-Qaeda's retribution primarily because it happens to be situated next door to the United States. Of course, once it rallied to support Washington's military campaign against Afghanistan as the haven for bin Laden, it had to consider itself a hated crusader by association. Sending frigates to the Middle East or offering troops for peace-making were gestures of its international solidarity with the American war against the Taliban and its terrorist cadres.

The decision to put 750 Canadian soldiers under U.S. command was something other than symbolic of Canada's good standing in the multilateral alliance. Ottawa chose deliberately not to exploit its strength in peace-building which focuses on reconstructing a civil society from the devastation of war. In offering to do Washington's dirty or, rather, deadly work in the mopping-up phase of its high-tech bombing war, the Chrétien government sent an unmistakable, if disconcerting, signal. Because this action runs counter to major traditions in Canadian foreign policy, we may infer that concern for Afghanistan was not the main story. Ottawa's main priority was building Washington's confidence in Canadian security at home. Integrating its troops in the U.S. military machine gave the message to the White House that Canada is fully on side.

This apparently cavil subordination of Canada's military identity within that of the United States is not in fact a novel move. Rather, it is a reactivation of the traditional bilateral CanAm defence relationship.

In September, when the U.S. government pressed its ally to tighten security measures, the Canadian government complied with a mix of front-stage reluctance and back-stage enthusiasm. Despite Chrétien's instantaneous messages of sympathy and the government's immediate organization of a mass

demonstration of support on Parliament Hill, the prime minister was soon outshone by his British counterpart. In setting the standard for unreserved, even embarrassing America-pushing, Prime Minister Tony Blair (who brilliantly outflanked the opposition Tories on his American front so that he could take Britain into Euroland) made the Canadian PM's support appear emotionally and politically reserved.

There was, however, no question that Ottawa endorsed the Pentagon's strategic analysis. The federal government proceeded to take measures that will strengthen Canada's internal defences against terrorism, not just to its own satisfaction but to that of its extremely anxious neighbour, knowing Washington must feel its security is not jeopardized along its northern border or in Canadian airports. While it might have been expected that Ottawa would resist spending as much as the U.S. government would want, Finance Minister Paul Martin's fall budget allocated C\$5 billion to the various border maintenance programs, a sum that seems proportionately larger than the U.S. assignment of US\$9 billion to the same objectives.

The known infiltration through all liberal capitalist societies of terrorist networks now recognized to be in a formal state of *jihad* did not so much require new policies as tightening a number of existing laws that have long been in place and putting more state resources behind their implementation. Ottawa has accordingly moved on a wide variety of fronts:

- controlling the flow of funds through legitimate financial institutions to suspect networks;
- reinforcing the security of potential targets for economic sabotage and social disruption;
- improving the background checking on immigration applicants made by the visa office in Canadian embassies;
- securing Canadian airports, now an integral part of the United States's, and every other country's, defence perimeter; and
- making intelligence gathering more reliable in obtaining advance warnings that can abort attempted strikes.

With the significant exception of Bill C-36, which provides a definition of terrorism absent from the Immigration Act and greatly strengthens police powers to the considerable dismay of civil liberties and ethnic groups, all of these areas are already addressed by federal and/or provincial legislation, regulations, or agencies, many of which implement Canada's obligations spelled out in treaties Ottawa helped negotiate. As a result, Canada has adjusted smoothly to the new era which feels so much like a variation of the old. Measures announced in order to satisfy the government's two publics—its electorate at home and the hegemon in Washington—raise the perennial question of Canadian sovereignty. Clearly, what Uncle Sam wants is what Uncle Sam gets. But if the Canadian

public agrees with its government and the military in wanting the same heightened security, it is not clear how much autonomy has been sacrificed.

Within this context, the issues involving national sovereignty are not substantially different from those that governments overseas face in dealing with the increased level of threat. With the globalization of interdependence, domestic security has become transnationalized. As for other states, Canada's defence perimeter now extends to every visa office and international airport, whether Heathrow, Charles de Gaulle, Frankfurt, or Tokyo, from which potential terrorists can fly to this country presenting themselves as immigrants, refugees who have lost or destroyed their documents, or tourists. Defence against terrorism therefore requires a generalized sharing of data among intelligence services, which will use the latest technologies for trying to recognize dangerous individuals and then tracking their movements.

Prevailing commentaries assert that the acid test for Canada will be American satisfaction that Ottawa and the provinces are doing what Washington defines as necessary. At one extreme, this mutual confidence could be achieved by the complete *harmonization* of the two countries' practices and the full integration of their personnel and data-gathering. Under this model, the question about which country's norms will become the common standard may seem to have an obvious answer. But a moment's reflection will cause us to reject the apparently obvious. Canadians are unlikely to agree to lower their gun control standards to the U.S. level, since this would increase their sense of insecurity. Nor would it make sense for Canadian cities to wind down their public transit systems in order to harmonize their municipal services to the American level. For a complex of reasons, Canadian cities are less dangerous—more “secure”—than are their neighbour's. A full policy harmonization that weakened Canadian laws that are in some cases stricter than their American counterparts, exported all U.S. practices, and North-Americanized the insecurity that characterized U.S. society before September 11—including the ease with which the plotters could train at flight schools—would clearly be retrograde.

An intermediate position would be the harmonization of selected practices in both countries, such as vetting applicants for immigration. But Canadian procedures seem to have proven more effective at screening out terrorists than have American. Legislation discriminating more sharply between the desirable and the dangerous and ensuring that rejected applicants leave the country had been in the parliamentary pipeline well before September.

There has been talk of integrating specific types of personnel such as immigration officials, and merging relevant services such as intelligence. Here, too, what seems easy at face value would become immediately problematic once we moved from thought to action. It is inconceivable that Congress would tolerate giving a foreign security service full access to the CIA's data base. If Canada agreed to abolish its immigration service and contracted this function to the American government, the politics would be extremely tricky. Jobs would be

at stake. Labour unions and politicians would soon be at the barricades if taxpayers' money was taking work from Canadians and giving it to Americans.

Last fall's accord signed with U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft will extend the location of U.S. officials in Canadian departure points from immigration officials in airports to customs officials in seaports.

Whatever may be the sober reality of Canadian-American compatibility in internal security matters, a congenitally misinformed Congress alarmed by panicky media—which are fed by too-smart-by-half pundits, who are themselves chronically ignorant about Canada—can be expected to generate continual turbulence about the security of the United States's perimeter. Richard Holbrooke, former Clinton ambassador to the United Nations, deserved first prize in this field for reportedly referring to Canada as “a Club Med for terrorists.” Senator Hilary Clinton could qualify as runner-up for publicly stating that the terrorists came to the U.S. through Canada. Confirming the U.S. media's general ignorance and contributing to the public's misinformation about the space to their north, the gripping TV series “The West Wing” even referred in one episode to terrorists crossing a non-existent Ontario-Vermont border.

Within the understandable hysteria and over-reaction around these issues, the American ambassador to Canada has been an important voice of calm and reason. As articulated by Paul Cellucci, the issue is mutual confidence. When translated from diplomatese, this means the issue is U.S. confidence in Canadian procedures. Standards for accepting desirable immigrants and procedures for despatching dangerous applicants could be the same, or different, as long as they seem effective. A process of tense and intense discussions took place through the autumn in which Canadian officials explained their practices to their predictably overbearing U.S. colleagues. The end result appears to be a mutual recognition of each other's systems' characteristics and, possibly, the adoption of each system's best practices.

The Supreme Court's unanimous ruling in January 2002 to allow the deportation of an Iranian assassin on the grounds of national security will strengthen the government's case in Washington that Canada is no safe haven for terrorists. When Prime Minister Chrétien hived off the security functions from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and left them in the hands of John Manley, who has been point man on Canada-U.S. security relations since September 11, he reinforced this message. By promoting Manley to be his deputy, the prime minister gave maximum governmental authority to the man for whom the Bush administration has the greatest trust. He also signaled not only how completely Canada had moved into lockstep with Washington, but that the process of responding to American demands for the integration of selected policy fronts will continue quietly on a piecemeal basis, one small, low-profile issue at a time.

In sum, because of their overall commonality in perceptions, we can expect both federal and provincial governments to cooperate in the exercise of strengthening their policing functions while claiming to defend the integrity of their own immigration, refugee, and counter-terrorism policies. At the same time, they can be expected to resist excessive spending, and will quietly urge moderation on their American counterparts. An acid test for their autonomy in the field will be whether Canadian troops observe the Geneva convention on prisoners of war, which Washington has decided to ignore by refusing to regard the captives it has taken as legitimate soldiers.

In this delicate situation, the president will be less of an asset to Ottawa than is his political team. The advantage for Canada of “Dubya” surrounding himself with aged but experienced Republican alumni is the familiarity of Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney with Canada from Cold War days. With those connections to NATO and NORAD and with Colin Powell’s basic moderation, apocalyptic scenarios in which Canada has to sacrifice its sovereignty to gain admission to Fortress Bush seem far-fetched. Nevertheless, the nature of a post-catastrophe North America itself remains to be redefined.

## **The Continent: North America**

The future of the continentalization that was formalized in 1994 by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) appears to depend on how the U.S. government approaches its security imperative along its territorial borders. Under NAFTA, continental economic integration had been proceeding under conditions of political separation, with minimal institutions for collective governance. The corporate management paradigm on which the single North American market was premised, such as just-in-time production, is jeopardized if Washington’s national vision switches from an expansive growth strategy to a defensive security stance.

If from the ashes of Ground Zero a new Fortress America were to be constructed, the issue for both Canada and Mexico becomes where its ramparts will be located. If these customs and immigration fortifications are to be a new Hadrian’s Wall along the United States’s territorial boundaries, then the St. Lawrence River, the Great Lakes, and the Rio Grande will become the moats across which the two peripheral states look in tortured frustration at their once-promised markets.

In this gated-nation scenario, September 11 sidelined President Vicente Fox’s agenda for legalizing the status of all Mexican migrants in the U.S. – shortly after he seemed to have gained general support in Bush’s Washington. Mexicans’ historically determined reluctance to endorse a U.S. military campaign against a Third-World country pushed Mexico City off the administration’s policy horizon for the rest of the autumn of 2001.

If stiffened border control measures significantly slow down the flow of Canadian exports, the painful restructuring provoked by trade and investment liberalization will not only have been suffered in vain, but have turned into a monumental disaster with an impact north of the border no less significant than the destruction of New York's twin trade towers. Plants, whose production can only be used when integrated with operations in the U.S. or Mexico, would close as Canadians learned once more the lesson that Richard Nixon tried to teach them in 1971: that there are high risks to any economy built on the principle of continental economic integration without equivalent continental political institutions to control the hegemon's policies.

The prospect of the U.S. border staffed by legions of National Guard, customs and immigration officials suggests a reprise of the isolationism instituted in 1930 by the huge tariffs of the Smoot-Hawley Act. An elementary realism calls on us to take such a retro scenario seriously. The historical default position for Canadian governments has been to maximize continental integration in the belief that prosperity would be enhanced by participation in the larger American market. John A. Macdonald only introduced his National Policy to develop a more autonomous Canadian economy working on an east-west basis in 1879 when he had failed to persuade post-bellum Washington to reinstitute the reciprocity agreement it had abrogated during the Civil War. Pierre Trudeau only sanctioned the "Third Option" strategy of reducing Canadian vulnerability to the vagaries of American policy when Nixon jacked up economic barriers. In short, Canadians have traditionally wanted in, with the Americans deciding whether to open or close the door.

If history suggests that Canada's economic fate is in the hands of Washington, is it not for the post-catastrophe hegemon to decide whether Canada is to be defined inside or outside its defence perimeter? Yes and No. "Washington" is not a unitary actor free to do whatever it likes. Its past actions establish constraints which limit its future options. Consider very summarily how some of Washington's previous policies affect its present choices:

- During the Cold War, it promoted a continental decentralization of its strategic industries to spread over a wider area the targets it offered the Soviet military. The American companies that obligingly developed substantial branch operations in Canada have an interest in not losing their investments to the excessive zeal of the border police.
- More recently, many U.S. transnational corporations restructured their Canadian operations from servicing the domestic market to developing product mandates that serve their continental or global production strategies. From automobiles to software, powerful American firms have a stake in maintaining an open CanAm border free of shipment disruptions.
- Even Canadian investment in the United States weighs in the balance. If some 300 of the largest Canadian firms are listed on American stock exchanges, we

can imagine that these semi- naturalized companies have some political muscle in the corridors of American power.

- In a corporate environment reconfigured by NAFTA to continentalize investment strategies, transnational business will exert pressure to ensure or safeguard free capital movements and the resulting trade flows.
- In this rapid overview, we cannot leave out the question of energy. The Bush administration is pressing hard for a further integration of the three countries' energy sectors. While the Canadian government is unlikely ever to say this out loud, it certainly has an energy card to play in negotiating some agreement on what kind of border controls are appropriate.
- Neither can Mexico be excluded from this continental calculus because, like its gated communities, Fortress America will need workers to do its dirty work. (Under globalized economic integration, "gringos" need to maintain a small Third World *inside* their economy to stay competitive with real Third-World industrializers.)

Yes, there are going to be new border burdens on business. Tightened procedures. New surveillance technologies. Advanced clearance of sealed trucks. High-tech ID for business travellers. Co-location of immigration and customs officials in each other's airports. More detailed documentation describing the contents of shipments arriving from abroad. We may consider these changes to be the latest phase in managing a common frontier under conditions of advanced continentalization adjusted to confront the new condition of sophisticated but containable terrorism.

Proponents of a deep integration agenda have seized the United States's catastrophe as an opportunity to trot out their nostrums for completing the unfinished job of continental union. A North American counterpart to the European Monetary Union—to be christened NAMU, perhaps—is a favourite candidate for those who see Canada's future as a fully American territory, although Argentina's unhappy experience with dollarization will make currency union without political influence a hard sell. A customs union in which the three countries establish a common external tariff would connect Canada and Mexico more closely to the American superstate. In neither case do we hear much about how the Americans would cope with Canadians and Mexicans having votes and seats on the Federal Reserve Board, or having a say in determining how high their common tariffs should be. These developments may eventually see the light of day, but the present post-catastrophe turmoil makes a less-than-ideal midwife for their birthing.

## **Conclusion**

The question raised by where the American perimeter will be drawn is far from answered because the associated issues it raises are not resolved:

- We are not sure about how effective al-Qaeda's terrorist capability remains.
- We have yet to learn definitively whether the Afghan war will engender a successful coalition of states, reinforce the world's hyperpower as global bully, or even generate still more desperate ventures by the rogue states.
- And for North America, we cannot tell whether its integration will be deepened by a trilateral consensus on securing the continent against terrorism, or whether the United States's borders will be raised so high that its two neighbouring states will find themselves outside the fortress, with their NAFTA-accelerated vulnerability turned to their devastating disadvantage, or – more likely – whether the continent will be managed as two separate U.S.-controlled relationships.

We know that the governments of Mexico and Canada are struggling hard to be included within the United States's anti-terrorist defence zone. We know that the voices of business have been heard loud and clear within the councils of all three governments, repeating a similar message. That NAFTA itself had nothing to offer by way of institutions or processes that might insert themselves usefully in continental decision-making has been proven by the absence of any trilateral summit. So we can infer that the politics of post-catastrophe North America will see a reprise of the double dialogue of CanAm and MexAm relations, perpetuating an asymmetrical bilateralism that keeps Washington comfortably in control. What Washington *wants* will ultimately decide the main issues.

What Washington *thinks* it wants will be determined by a struggle of many forces. The final impact on Canada and the shape of North America will be directly affected by how prominently, loudly, and effectively the Canadian government inserts itself into this highly indeterminate situation. As Ottawa battles for access to Washington's mind, it will need to activate moderate opinion leaders within the U.S. Success in this effort will likely depend on bringing to bear the skills it learned in wielding soft power outside the United States, as when it negotiated a land mines treaty through mobilizing non-governmental organizations around the world. Canadian diplomats have known for 25 years that there is no single recipe for managing the U.S. relationship, because there is no single power centre in the American system of government. Mobilizing American constituencies that are friendly and understanding towards Canada will be necessary if Ottawa is to resist simplistic pressures for policy harmonization.

We are living under conditions of high indeterminacy. We cannot tell whether this pressure will recede in the coming months, or intensify. Renewed terrorist attacks might foster an outcry across the continent for deeper political integration. A sustained exposure to terrorism might alternatively cause Americans to withdraw from both their northern and southern neighbours.



NAFTA, for which so many working people laid down their jobs, has little to contribute in the way of furthering political integration. As in the Cold War, Canadians will need to turn back to the state to protect their interests.