

The Lessons of History
Strategic Culture and Canadian Intervention Policy
Since the End of the Second World War

by

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Abstract

Since the end of the Second World War, Canada has gone to war on three occasions. On each occasions the material commitment to the war effort has been relatively consistent, limited contributions deployed in such a manner as to limit Canadian liability. 'Limited liability' has proved to be, over the course of the last fifty-five years, an unspoken assumption with regards to the Canadian material commitment to international conflicts. This study argues that limited liability does indeed inform the decisions made by political leaders, pertaining to participation in war. Moreover, it argues that limited liability is a constructed reality. The construction of this idea can be traced, in the Canadian context, to the period between Confederation and the Second World War. Limited liability, which has emerged as a distinct Canadian strategic culture, rests on two pillars, commitment and constraint. Looking through the lens of dominant societal ideas, it is unlikely that the two pillars of Canadian strategic culture will shift dramatically in the next twenty years, thereby reinforcing the value and importance of ideas in the formation of public policy.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Identifying patterns of intervention

Speaking to Parliament in June of 1950, Prime Minister St. Laurent condemned the aggression on the Korean peninsula, comparing it to the fascist aggression of the 1930s. He continued by noting that both the United Nations and NATO had been created for the same purpose, to avoid war. Canada he maintained had an obligation to support the alliances to which it belonged.¹ The initial Canadian commitment to the Korean War equated to a small naval task force operating in the Korean zone.

Speaking on August 10th, 1990, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney noted that Canada, in the company of other nations, had decided to assist in the deterrence of further Iraqi aggression in the Persian Gulf by contributing to a multinational military coalition.² The initial Canadian commitment equated to a small naval task force of two destroyers and one supply ship mandated with aiding in the enforcement of the naval blockade of Iraq.³

Speaking in the House of Commons on October 7th, 1998, Minister of National Defence, Art Eggleton, informed the House that Canadian participation in Kosovo was in every way consistent with the Canadian approach to international security. He added that Canada has always been prepared to join the international community to aid in maintaining stability and peace. Canada, he continued, had always been ready to stand up and be counted. As in Korea, two European Wars and the Gulf War, Canadian participation was deemed necessary in Kosovo.⁴ Canada's initial contribution to the Kosovo campaign was six CF-18 fighter aircraft and one KC-130 tanker aircraft on standby should NATO require it.⁵

The three preceding examples represent Canada's initial material commitments to three particular conflicts since the end of the Second World War. These three examples, the Korean War, the Gulf War, and the Kosovo War have been specifically chosen since they represent the three occasions since the end of the Second World War that Canada had gone to war.⁶ These examples provide an interesting pattern of policy responses and behaviours on the part of different Canadian governments. Of all the possible policy choices available to Canadian decision-makers, the choice to become engaged in a conflict and the level at which Canadian participation would take place appear predictably consistent. Canadian policy-makers appear to be eager to participate, while at the same time reluctant to enter into overly risky operations. Why does this pattern of intervention behaviour exist?

Explaining Canadian foreign policy choices can be accomplished in a variety of ways, depending largely on the starting point of the analyst. Leigh Sarty uses a structural realist perspective, focusing on the global distribution of capabilities, to explain Canadian internationalism in the post-Cold War period.⁷ Jean-Francois Rioux and Robin Hay argue that Canada is moving from an internationalist to an isolationist position because of economic constraints and international pressures.⁸ In addressing the declining capabilities of the Canadian military, Douglas Bland uses capability as a means of measurement and economic considerations to explain the apparent lack of interest in defence issues by the current government.⁹ What makes the preceding three studies similar is that they all start from the position of capabilities. The underlying assumption made by these analysts asserts that governmental decision-making is a rational process using cost-benefit analysis to determine Canada's military position. I suggest that there is

another starting point for analyzing Canadian foreign policy, one that starts with understanding the dominant ideas that direct national decision-making behaviour.

Contemporary foreign and defence policy analysis is not completely void of ideational contributions. Doug Bland incorporates the ideologies of various Canadian governments as a variable for determining Canadian commitment to defence spending.¹⁰ Denis Stairs insists on incorporating political culture into the explanation of Canadian foreign policy. At the same time, however, he remains apprehensive about the value of culture, claiming that some of the principles and practices of Canadian politics at home may also be evident in our behaviour abroad.¹¹ In a more recent article David Dewitt acknowledges the role of culture, identity and history in articulating a Canadian national security policy.¹² Kim Nossal contends that when we analyze foreign policy decisions (and intervention is a foreign policy decision) it is crucial to look at three political environments – international, domestic and governmental.¹³ He maintains that a foreign policy decision-maker must contend with a wide variety of factors, many of which he/she is unable to change easily or rapidly. Those factors he identifies are geographic location, economic structure, group dynamics, capability, power, societal demands, governmental structure and dominant ideas.¹⁴ The use of ideas, obviously, is incorporated by some of those who analyze Canadian foreign and defence policy. That said, however, ideas rarely, if ever, initiate an analysis. My study by contrast proposes to use ideas as a starting point, as a variable that informs material commitments to Canadian participation in war.

There are a variety of examples in the literature that express specific ideas regarding how Canada should employ or not employ military force. For example: the

images of the fire-proof house, middle power, helpful fixer, non-military people and global peacekeeper. Each of these images suggests a particular predisposition to the use of military force in international relations. For example, the image of the fire proof house suggests an isolationist approach, while the image of global peacekeeper is much more interventionist.¹⁵

If, indeed, ideas inform intervention behaviour as directed by Canadian policy-makers, how can this tendency be explained? Some may argue that economic considerations determine policy choices or, that the immigrant tradition precludes a disposition to the use of violence or, that our colonial heritage steers us in a direction of military dependency. The approach I have chosen asserts that the ideas that inform Canadian intervention policy have been constructed¹⁶. Furthermore, the construction of those ideas rests on an interpretation of history¹⁷, and the lessons that have been learned from Canadian history.

To summarize, my study seeks to explain Canadian intervention policy by using an approach based on dominant societal ideas. Using the constructivist perspective I will argue that Canadian decision-makers are predisposed to framing policy decisions, with regards to intervention, within the framework of two images. Those two images, which are advanced by the dominant ideas present in Canadian society, are Canada as an autonomous nation and Canada as a reluctant warrior. Furthermore, I contend that the development and the rationale for these images can be traced through an analysis of Canadian history.

This study will be divided into six chapters. The purpose of chapter one is to introduce and identify the problem, explain the research methodology and clarify the organization of the paper.

The second chapter will provide the theoretical framework for the remainder of the study. This chapter will accomplish three tasks. First, I will review the constructivist position. Second, building on the constructivist research agenda I will introduce the concept of strategic culture. Finally, I will examine how history acts as a factor informing the construction of a national strategic culture.

Chapter three will examine Canadian intervention behaviour between 1867 and 1945. The primary purpose of this chapter is to illustrate the ideas that informed Canadian intervention policy, and more importantly, to determine if a specific policy pattern exists. Finally this chapter will propose a rationalization, based on dominant societal ideas, for why a given pattern of decision-making existed during this period.

Chapters four to six examine specifically three case studies in the post-1945 period in which Canada has gone to war. The three conflicts are the Korean War, the Gulf War and the Kosovo War. These chapters will illustrate that Canadian intervention policy since 1945 reflects a pattern of policy behaviour similar to the period 1867 to 1945. As an explanation I propose that the direction of Canadian intervention policy is a reflection of a specific Canadian strategic culture, which developed during the 1867 to 1945 period.

The final chapter, chapter seven, will be the conclusion of my research project. There are a number of objectives to accomplish in this chapter. If indeed historical lessons that have shaped Canadian strategic culture can be identified, then I must clarify

what they are and why these lessons have been learned above other possible lessons. Secondly, does the evidence suggest that these lessons will continue to be significant up until 2020¹⁸, or is there evidence to suggest that these lessons will be replaced by more pertinent lessons? If the evidence suggests change, how might Canadian strategic culture look in the next ten years? A final task is to examine the characteristics of Canadian strategic culture against Nossal's claim that foreign policy has to be examined in three political environments: international, domestic and governmental. Through this lens is Canadian strategic culture animated more by one specific environment? In other words, are the characteristics of strategic culture environment specific? This is an interesting question to ponder, since I believe it is possible to make the case that the image of Canada the internationalist has been developed by structural forces (Waltz's third image), while at the same time the image of limited liability has been developed by domestic/societal forces (Waltz's second image).

A concluding question may ask what is the value of this study? There is no doubt that an analysis of Canadian intervention policy that starts with material capabilities has a great deal of truth to reveal. However, the decisions that determine material capabilities are rooted in the dominant ideas held by the society in general, decision-makers and the perceived reality of each specific group. Thus a sociological approach to understanding foreign policy decisions may serve to take us closer to the source of decision or likely decisions than an approach that starts by evaluating capabilities. Moreover, understanding the biases that form the boundaries in which the choices available to decision-makers lay, may serve to dispel certain myths and images.

Notes

- ¹ Dennis Stairs, Diplomacy of Constraint (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), p.88.
- ² Dusty Miller and Sharon Hobson, The Persian Excursion: The Canadian Navy in the Gulf War (Toronto: The Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, 1995), p.1.
- ³ Canada's Military Legacy: The Gulf War (1990-1991) www.dnd.ca/menu/legacy/gulf_e.htm 09-04-01
- ⁴ Speaking notes for the Honorable Art Eggleton Minister of National Defence: House of Commons Debate on Kosovo www.dnd.ca/eng/achrive/speeches/kosovo_s_e.htm 10-04-01.
- ⁵ Canada to participate in NATO military action in Kosovo DFAIT #242 www.dnd.ca/eng/archive/1998/cot98/kosovo_n_e.htm 10-04-01.
- ⁶ Joseph Jockel contends that since the end of the Cold War Canada has been involved in two wars, one against Iraq and the other in Kosovo. See; Joseph Jockel, The Canadian Forces: Hard Choices, Soft Power (Toronto: Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, 1999), p.1.
- ⁷ Leigh Sarty, 'Sunset Boulevard revisited: Canadian internationalism after the Cold War' International Journal 47, 1 Autumn 1993 pp.749-52.
- ⁸ Jean-Francois Rioux and Robin Hay 'Canadian foreign policy: From internationalism to isolationism?' International Journal 54, 1 Winter 1998-1999 pp.57-59.
- ⁹ Douglas Bland, 'A sow's ear from a silk purse: Abandoning Canadian military capabilities' International Journal 54, 1 Winter 1998-99 pp.143-45.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.145.
- ¹¹ Dennis Stairs, 'The political culture of Canadian foreign policy' Canadian Journal of Political Science 25, 4 December 1982 pp.667-68.
- ¹² David Dewitt, 'Directions in Canada's international security policy: From marginal actor at the centre to central actor at the margins' International Journal 15 (2) Spring 2000.
- ¹³ Kim Richard Nossal, The Politics of Canadian Foreign Policy 3rd ed. (Toronto: Prentice Hall Canada, Inc., 1997) p.7.
- ¹⁴ For a full discussion on the variables identified by Nossal see Kim Richard Nossal (1997) pp.7-14.
- ¹⁵ For an interesting perspective on the value of state image see Peter van Ham 'The rise of the brand state: The postmodern politics of image and reputation' Foreign Affairs 80,5 September/October 2001 pp.2-6.
- ¹⁶ The contemporary constructivist approach is explained in Alexander Wendt, Social Theory of International Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
- ¹⁷ Peter Katzenstein, editor, The Culture of International Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996) p.23-24. Katzenstein states: "History is a process of change that leaves an imprint on state identity....the national identities of states are crucial for understanding politics and [that] they cannot be stipulated deductively. They must be investigated empirically in concrete historical settings."
- ¹⁸ The long term Canadian forces planning document is "Shaping the future of the Canadian Forces: A strategy for 2020", for that reason I have chosen the date 2020.

Chapter 2

Constructivism, culture and the weight of history

In 1973 Ernest May observed that the framers of foreign policy are often influenced by beliefs about what history teaches.¹ May continued by stating that sometimes problems are perceived in terms of analogies from the past, foreshadowed by historical parallels or on a continuum of a historically dependent path. Although, by his own admission, May directed his book at professional policy-makers for use as a guide on how to incorporate history appropriately into daily policy-making, unwittingly or not he also raised the question of how history influences our present day actions. Moreover, he questioned how policy decisions are influenced by events, and our interpretation of events, from the past. Ten years later in his book Imagined Communities Benedict Anderson argued that among a number of variables, perception and the understanding of history play a critical role in the creation of national identities.² In sum, these two authors touch upon the central focus of this chapter, that is, the role of history in the creation of ideas, be those appertaining to identity, norms or culture.

In this chapter I will accomplish three tasks. First, I will briefly review the constructivist position. Second, building on the constructivist research agenda I will introduce the concept of strategic culture. Third, I will examine how history acts as a central factor informing the construction of strategic culture.

John Ruggie tells us that constructivism is about human consciousness and its role in international life. Constructivists assert that not only are identities and interests of actors socially constructed, but that also they must interact with a whole host of other ideational factors that originate within human capacity and will.³ Nicholas Onuf,

considered by some to be the architect of the constructivist approach, asserts constructivism holds that people make society, and society makes people in a continuous two-way process.⁴ Alexander Wendt maintains that constructivism is a structural theory based on the assumption that actors are socially constructed.⁵ What have come to be defined as national interests are a result of the social identities held by actors. Similarly, Nicholas Onuf contends that social reality is what people construct or constitute as social reality.⁶ The ideas that are deemed most important by a social group, such as the state, become political by definition. When these interests extend beyond the boundaries of the state (or nation) they become international relations. Constructivism, therefore, defines social reality as an interactive process in which people, forming a social group or unit, continually construct in their individual or collective mind the reality that forms the basis for and is shaped by decisions made.

One of the basic principles of constructivist social theory states that people act towards objects, including other actors, according to the meaning that the objects hold for them.⁷ Individuals and social units act differently towards enemies than they do towards friends because enemies are associated with a threatening behaviour while friends are not. The understanding that individuals or social groups associate with any given object determines the boundaries for behaviour. It is only through a change in the associated understanding of any given object that the boundaries for determining behaviour are altered. Once an individual or social unit decides that a particular object or social group is no longer an enemy, for example, the social understanding associated with that particular enemy is altered. In turn the behaviours applicable to that individual or social

unit are no longer bound by the old parameters. According to Wendt, it is collective meanings that constitute the structures that organize our actions.⁸

The characteristics that define actors are understood as being relatively stable role-specific understandings and expectations of themselves. These identities are acquired through participation in collective meanings. Individuals have many identities linked to institutional roles, such as brother, citizen, and employee. Similarly a state can have many characteristics such as: sovereign, dependent, interdependent, internationalist, isolationist or benevolent. The degree of commitment to any particular identity may vary, but each identity is a social definition of the actor, grounded in the beliefs that actors collectively hold about themselves and each other and that compose the structure of the social world.⁹

Collective identity, or collective intentionality¹⁰, creates what constructivists would identify as social facts. The acceptance by the collective conscious, a mutual recognition so to speak, of a norm or behaviour creates at the simplest level meaning, and at a higher level a constitutive role. The mutual recognition of sovereignty, for example, is a precondition for the normal functioning of a system of sovereign states. Sovereignty exists only within a framework of shared meaning that recognizes it to be valid, by virtue of collective intentionality. However the impact of sovereignty is not restricted to a one-time impact. Sovereignty affects the relationships between states, the survival of states, the empowerment and also the resources of states. The intentional acceptance of a collective identity sets in place a body of not only accepted norms and behaviours, but also a shared understanding and grammar for understanding unforeseen future situations.

The identities, which an individual or social unit possesses, define the interests that will be held as important for that individual or social unit. Wendt maintains that actors do not have a 'portfolio' of interests that exist independently of social context, rather their interests are defined in the process of defining situations¹¹. For the most part situations have a routine quality in which meaning is determined through an institutionally assigned role. Institutions, according to Onuf, are a stable, but not fixed, pattern of rules and related practices through which individuals become rational acting agents.¹² From time to time situations are unique; therefore, meaning has to be constructed through the use of analogy or metaphor or simply invented. The lack of an institutionally defined role tends to lead to confusion and the need to redefine the interest of an actor or group of actors.

Institutions play an important role in defining social reality in the constructivist agenda. Wendt defines institutions as a relatively stable set or structure of identities and interests. These structures he claims are often codified as formal rules and norms, and as Onuf asserts, give society a structure.¹³ Despite this, institutions have no motivational force except by virtue of the actors' participation in collective knowledge. Institutions are primarily cognitive entities that do not exist apart from actors' ideas about how the world works.¹⁴ March and Olsen define institutions as a relatively stable collection of practices and rules defining appropriate behaviour for specific groups of actors in specific situations. Such practices and rules are embedded in structures of meaning and schemes of interpretation that explain and legitimize particular identities and the practices and rules associated with them. These same practices and rules are also embedded in

resources and the principles of their allocation, setting up the possibility of socialization and individual role behaviour.¹⁵

The fact that the existence of institutions is linked directly to the will of collective identity does not detract from the power of institutions to affect the behaviour patterns of individuals or social groups. As Wendt explains, as a collective knowledge, institutions have an existence over and above the individuals who happen to embody them at the moment.¹⁶ In this way, institutions have a persuasive character that directs and bounds individual behaviour.

To review briefly the line of reasoning thus far, constructivism is concerned with the role of the human consciousness in international life. Constructivism holds that international reality is developed from ideas as well as material goods. Ideas express not only individual preference but also the preference of the collective. Equally important is the belief that ideational factors are not independent of time and place. At the level of international politics constructivists hold that structure is permeated with ideas, and that international relations cannot be conducted in a comprehensible manner unless there is an agreement on constitutive rules rooted in collective intentionality¹⁷. The degree of adhesion to these rules will vary according to the issue. Rules may be expressed as a regime, an institution, a norm, a right or a responsibility. Similarly these rules can imply cooperation or conflict. Most important of all, however, from the constructivist position, is the belief that constitutive rules prestructure the domains of action in which regulative rules take effect.¹⁸

Two issues with regards to constructivism remain to be answered, the issue of change and the question of the creation of collective identities. It is possible I believe to

address these two issues at the same time, since change in collective identity essentially represents the creation of a new collective identity. Thus, first it is necessary to identify the variables that lead to change and secondly to explain why certain variables are more or less influential than others.

In their article on understanding change in the former Soviet Union, Kratochwil and Koslowski use a constructivist approach to explain the changes that occurred within that empire in 1989.¹⁹ They argue that in all politics, international or domestic, it is through the behaviour of actors that systems are altered or reproduced. Any given international system is dependent for its existence through the practices of actors. Change occurs when the actors, through their actions and choices, change the rules and norms that define that specific system. Moreover, the change within an international system is dependent on the behaviour of domestic actors. They conclude by maintaining that changes in international politics occur when beliefs and identities of domestic actors are altered, thereby also altering the rules and norms that are primary to their political practices.²⁰

Acknowledging that international change is driven by domestic actors does not tell us why change occurs; however, it does suggest that the domestic setting is the appropriate starting point for uncovering the motivational forces of change. Explaining change is not something that the constructivist approach can easily accomplish. In fact, Koslowski and Kratochwil maintain that constructivism is unable to reduce behaviour to an ultimate foundation that supposedly causes everything else.²¹ For that reason constructivism focuses on practices informed by norms and rules, and the changes in these norms and rules as a means of identifying and explaining change.

Two of the important variables identified by the constructivist school for theorizing change are political choices and history. The justification for these two variables asserts that political choice can override existing practices creating new beginnings and that history is subject to environmental and ephemeral interpretation. Koslowski and Kratochwil use the emergence of modern nationalism as an example of fundamental system transformation. They argue that the emergence of nationalism constitutes the emergence of a new identity, resulting in a challenge to existing institutions of authority and organization.²² The emergence of modern nationalism represents both a political choice contrary to existing institutions, as well as an interpretation of history that is environmentally bound.

The role institutions play is critical for understanding change from the constructivist position. Recall that institutions play both a stabilizing function as well as a destabilizing function. Institutions have the role of reproducing behaviour as well as inducing behavioural change, and serving as the landmark against which change will be measured. If, for example, the state did not exist, then there would be no need for a revolution in which control of the state was the final goal. Institutions are not necessarily eliminated during change; rather they can be simply altered or modified, providing a new benchmark against which further change is defined.

In sum, fundamental changes in international politics occur when the beliefs and identities of domestic actors are altered thereby also altering the rules and norms that constitute their political practices. Patterns of change can be traced and explained, but they are unlikely to be path dependent, or explained by historical laws, be these cyclical

or evolutionary.²³ Thus explaining change from a constructivist position will remain dependent on an understanding of the specific situation to be analyzed.

Building on this analysis of the constructivist research agenda, how can culture, specifically strategic culture, be tied in? Perhaps the best starting point is to define culture, expand the definition to include strategic culture and finally link strategic culture to institutions, which, if we recall, are relatively stable collections of practices and rules defining appropriate behaviours for certain situations.

When it comes to culture there is no shortage of definitions. In his book The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics, Peter Katzenstein asserts that culture is a broad term that denotes collective models of nation-state authority or identity, carried by custom or law. Culture refers to a set of evaluative standards as well as a set of cognitive standards that define what social actors exist in a system, how they operate and how they relate to one another.²⁴ Colin Gray tells us that culture refers to socially transmitted habits of mind, traditions and preferred methods of operations that are more or less specific to a particular geographically based security community.²⁵ Elizabeth Kier, using a definition proposed by sociologist Ann Swidler, explains culture as the set of assumptions so unselfconscious as to seem a natural, transparent, undeniable part of the structure of the world.²⁶ Michael Desch contends that despite the diversity in meanings a useful definition of culture emphasizes collectively held ideas that do vary relatively little in the face of environmental or structural change.²⁷ Alastair Ian Johnston affirms that despite the diversity there is a common thread that links definitions of culture. Culture describes a bounded, inductive system of assumptions. These are not necessarily internally consistent, or rigorously formal knowledge structures. They are

learned cognitive mixtures that allow people to put order, understanding and predictability to the society around them.²⁸ Interestingly, Onuf claims that from a constructivist point of view, rules are always constitutive and regulative at the same time. By definition, rules regulate the conduct of agents because rules are normative, they tell agents what to do. Moreover, the regulation of conduct constitutes the world within which conduct takes place.²⁹

Looking at culture through a constructivist lens yields two important points. First, culture sets out a system of rules, norms and behaviour putting order to society and making it more predictable by predetermining responses to certain situations. Culture, like institutions, has a coercive capacity to set boundaries for behaviour within specific societies. Secondly, according to the definition forwarded by Johnston, culture is learned, evolutionary and dynamic, though the speed of change is affected by culturally influenced learning rates or the weight of history. Culture, therefore, through the constructivist lens, only exists because of the collective intentionality. The rules, norms and behaviours associated with any specific culture find their power and persuasive capability in the fact that the social unit accepts the given characteristics as the social identity. Equally important is the fact that this identity exists in a given temporal environment and is, therefore, subject to change as the collective wills.

The point here is not to get lost in a discussion of culture as a dynamic idea, but rather to illustrate that culture, and the 'sub' versions of culture, can fit well into a constructivist framework. Culture can be explained outside a material framework. Within the ideational framework culture has the power to coerce, set boundaries for behaviour and to change. This is not to claim that material effects cannot alter culture.

A prolonged drought may alter the dietary habits of sedentary groups, or the migratory patterns of transient groups, but culture will inform the decision those groups make as how to deal best with the material problems at hand.

As noted earlier, culture is often expressed as a more specific 'sub' group. When we speak of political behaviour it is common to speak of political culture. When we speak of strategic behaviour we use the term strategic culture. Stephen Rosen explains that strategic culture is in many ways an analogous concept applied not to the political class of a nation, but to the sub-set of political-military decision-makers. The purpose is to capture the beliefs and assumptions that frame their choices about international military behaviour, particularly those concerning decisions to go to war, preferences for offensive, expansionist or defensive modes of warfare, and levels of wartime casualties that would be acceptable.³⁰

Ken Booth explains that strategic culture refers to a nation's traditions, values, attitudes, patterns of behaviour, habits, symbols, achievements, and particular ways of adapting to the environment and solving problems with respect to the use of force.³¹ Johnston's definition of strategic culture builds on the earlier work done by Booth. He contends that strategic culture is 'an integrated system of symbols (eg., argumentation, structures, language, analogies, metaphors) which acts to establish pervasive and long lasting strategic preferences by formulating concepts of the role and efficacy of military force in interstate political affairs, and by clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the strategic preferences seem uniquely realistic and efficacious.'³²

Yitzhak Klein provides another definition of strategic culture that may be more amenable to a study that focuses on war. Klein contends that strategic culture is a set of

attitudes and beliefs held within a military establishment concerning the political objectives of war and the most effective strategy and operational method of achieving it.³³ Klein's definition of strategic culture is similar to the other definitions that have been presented in that strategic culture is viewed as a concept that exists within the realm of ideas.

Klein's definition, however, may be too restrictive, especially for nations where the military is subject to the political leadership, because it is limiting in two ways. First, his definition deals largely with war making scenarios, whereas the realm of strategy exists well beyond the activity of war making. Second, his definition refers to the attitudes and beliefs of the military establishment. Yet in countries such as Canada, the military establishment exists to serve the political establishment. Although we can assume that information, in the form of advice and recommendations, flows from the military to the political leadership, the ultimate strategic decisions are made at the political level. Restricting strategic culture to the realm of the military establishment removes the value of the political input into strategic decisions. In terms of applicability it appears that the definition offered by Johnston is the most useful. His definition does not place restrictions on which actors, political or domestic are subject to the forces of strategic culture, while at the same time he acknowledges that strategic culture has a long term effect.

Klein continues in his article to pose some important questions, one which asks "what are the sources of strategic culture?" He goes on to note that each particular strategic culture is unique and conditioned by its own set of sources. These sources may include history, geography, national culture and politics, economics, technology, etc.³⁴

Similarly, Stephen Rosen identifies two sources of strategic culture; the dominant social structures and the degree to which the civilian and military establishments are split.³⁵

Finally, Johnston asserts that one of the problems with strategic culture is the difficulty in determining what cultural 'artifacts' one should analyze. These 'artifacts' could include the writings, debates, thoughts and words of 'culture-bearing units' such as strategists, military leaders and national security elites. It could also include weapons designs, deployments, war plans, images of war and peace portrayed in various media, military ceremonies or even war literature.³⁶ Despite the similarities between the preceding authors there is an important difference between the first two and the last. Klein and Rosen give us possible sources of strategic culture; history, geography, social structures, etc... Johnston, on the other hand, tells us what to look at as objects of analysis. Much of what Johnston points to falls into the previously identified categories. For example, writings, debates, thoughts, words and war literature all fall into the domain of history.

Here we have a convenient point of departure. Recall that the focus of this investigation is to examine the role that history plays in constructing a strategic culture that predisposes or limits a nation to a particular set of policy choices. History, then, is one of the variables that informs the development of strategic culture, but how?

History dominates both the actions and rhetoric of international politics. Leaders and publics tend to think of current policy questions in terms of past experiences: Is a past failure about to be repeated? How can previously successful policy be applied to a new problem? The twentieth century may come to be known as an era of syndromes, as international discourse has been haunted by the ghosts of Sarajevo, Munich, and Vietnam.³⁷

Much has been written about learning the lessons of the past, learning them well enough so as not to repeat them. To that end political leaders and decision-makers have

often evoked the lessons of history when struggling with current issues. For example: the 'lessons of Munich' were incorporated by Harry Truman in Korea, Anthony Eden in the Suez, John Kennedy during the Cuban Missile Crisis and Lyndon Johnson during the Vietnam War. The 'lessons of the Vietnam War' influenced the American debate during the Gulf War as well as during the crisis in the Balkans.³⁸

It would be a mistake, however, to believe that the influence of history is limited strictly to a conscious choice determining the outcome of behaviour. Indeed, the previous examples all seem to suggest that decision-makers are aware of historical lessons and apply them as if they were choosing from a recipe book. However, as Robert Jervis states, decision-makers need not always identify current situations with a past one; rather, the past can influence perceptual predisposition without the decision-maker being aware of it.³⁹ This 'perceptual predisposition', applied not only to the individual but to an entire social unit, is strategic culture.

According to Yaacov Vertzberger decision-makers who use history in decision-making act as practical-intuitive historians.⁴⁰ He contends that decision-makers are practical in the sense that they distinguish between the historical past and the practical past. The practical past is viewed as consisting of artifacts and expressions alleged to have survived from the past, having a value in terms of their worth in current political engagement. The practical past does not become available because of critical inquiry, but rather the practical past is recalled for utility in the present. Decision-makers are intuitive because they rely on historical facts and transform them by summarizing, evaluating, analyzing, inferring, judging and interpreting. Moreover, all depend on unconscious or conscious techniques for coding, storing and retrieving data.

Vertzberger provides a concise and thorough examination of how history can be used by decision-makers.⁴¹ However his discussion does not shed any light on how historical lessons are articulated into strategic culture and why certain history is chosen over other history to become part of the package known as strategic culture. Recall briefly that I started with the premise that our social reality is constructed. Part of that social reality is strategic culture, which predisposes individuals and social units to certain strategic choices. Finally I asserted that one of the variables that informs the development of strategic culture is history. Indeed, more often than not history is interpreted in the framework of a specific cultural bias, with the sole purpose, either consciously or unconsciously, to reinforce the status quo.

Individuals who use history do not objectively absorb the lessons from specific historical events. Individuals learn from history by filtering and interpreting information through their own specific lens. As a result of differing lenses history is used differently by different actors. Indeed, if political actors understood history the same, then history would be of no value for explaining differing policy choices.

What then are the historical experiences individuals and the collective are most likely to incorporate? Dan Reiter concludes, that with regards to alliance building of minor powers, choices were based on formative national experiences. Moreover, states learned in a simple fashion such that success promoted continuity and failure stimulated innovation.⁴² Singer and Hudson conclude that what we learn is based on what we perceive as reality. From our perception of reality we acquire knowledge and build models of the world so that we are better able to understand the world around us, our

relationship to it, and how to accomplish our objectives in it. Because we learn, we adapt to the environment and modify our behaviour.⁴³

Central to any understanding of how decision-makers use history is the work done by Robert Jervis. In his book, Perception and Misperception in International Politics, Jervis argues that what one learns from key events in international history is an important factor in determining the images that shape the interpretation of incoming information.⁴⁴ However, decision-makers tend to learn broad general lessons from history, but this type of learning tends to hinder productive thinking rather than aid it.⁴⁵ Jervis goes on to identify five pitfalls that decision-makers fall into when using history as a guide to contemporary problems.⁴⁶ In the end Jervis seems to be repeating an observation made earlier by Ernest May, that decision-makers use the lessons of history when framing foreign-policy; however, for a variety of reasons they tend to use it poorly.⁴⁷

Since I maintain that decision-makers construct strategic culture based on an interpretation of past experience (plus other variables), which types of events are they most likely to use in constructing and/or modifying strategic culture? Again I turn to the work done by Robert Jervis, who succinctly presents five critical variables. Jervis states that the events most likely to impact a decision-maker are: events experienced first hand, the time in the individual's life at which the event occurred, degree of consequences, familiarity with alternative perceptions⁴⁸ and the impact of the decision-maker's domestic political setting.⁴⁹

Of the events that individuals or nations experience, the events that have the greatest consequence for the individual or the nation also tend to be the events with the greatest degree of impact. The result is long lasting, deeply held and universal

conceptions and predispositions. Events such as revolution, natural disasters and war tend to account for the most profound and long lasting shifts in beliefs.⁵⁰

Another factor identified by Jervis that tends to affect the construction of a decision-maker's or a nation's concept of reality is the availability of alternative analogies. As I noted earlier, our conception of reality and how we construct that perception is restricted by our capacity to understand reality. The impact of this restriction is direct on the decision-maker. A decision-maker with few conceptual frameworks will fit events into a category quickly and with limited information. Following this line of logic one could argue that experience really is the best teacher,⁵¹ or alternatively that lack of experience perpetuates myth.

The final variable identified by Jervis is the impact of domestic politics on the decision-maker. The impact of domestic conditions on the decision-makers is significant since culturalist approaches tend to privilege domestic politics.⁵² As Jervis notes, from our own political system we tend to learn our most basic ideas about politics, and those ideas colour our perspective on both international and domestic politics. Equally important is the fact that ethnocentrism, of which an individual may well be unaware, can influence his/her worldview. Even if the decision-maker is enlightened enough to have an awareness of his/her political bias, the domestic population as a whole may present a conflicting view to which the decision-maker must be sensitive.

Canadian domestic politics provides an interesting study in the effect of domestic politics on decision-makers, for two significant reasons. First, Canada is a regional multi-ethnic country, as opposed to a mono-ethnic centralized state. Many Canadians tend to identify themselves with specific regions and/or ethnic groups. One need not look

far to see contemporary and historical examples. The Alliance Party of Canada and the Bloc Quebecois both equate to regional parties, and in the case of the latter, ethnic as well. Historically, regional politics saw the formation of the Progressives, CCF and Western Canada Concept to name a few. The second reason is, that as a nation founded on two distinct cultures, and built by immigration, Canadians have, in the past and present, identified themselves with other nations. Thus young men of Empire descent were ready and willing to fight the battles of the motherland, while their French-Canadian counterparts showed somewhat less enthusiasm.

In conclusion the theoretical approach can be summed up as follows. The introduction identifies a policy preference with regards to Canadian participation in war since 1950. The Canadian stance is distinguished by two characteristics: internationalism and limited liability. I define internationalism as a desire for active involvement in world affairs, support for effective international organizations and a search for mechanisms and opportunities to help resolve international conflict.⁵³ Limited liability is defined by a reluctance to commit Canadian resources to situations that may prove either too dangerous or unpalatable for the domestic population. Rather than use a materialist approach to explain this policy predisposition, I opt instead to explain this behaviour using a framework based on ideas.

The constructivist agenda maintains that reality is constructed and gains existence through the value we apply to certain ideas. Thus, the strategic preference exhibited by social groups is constructed based on the interpretation of ideas held within the social group. This preference is known as strategic culture. The development of strategic culture is the result of a number of variables. I assert, however, that the formation of

Canadian strategic culture can be traced back to certain historical lessons. These lessons have had to be applied and reapplied since the end of the Second World War.

Furthermore, I have argued that change in strategic culture takes place when decision-makers and entire social groups decide to alter their behaviour for any number of reasons. Using case studies I will illustrate the historical trends that have developed into Canadian strategic culture. Moreover, based on our understanding of how decision-makers learn I will attempt to illustrate the future developments in Canadian strategic culture and how they will affect strategic predisposition.

Notes

¹ Ernest May, Lessons of the Past: The Use and Misuse of History in American Foreign Policy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), preface.

² Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities revised edition (New York: Verso Books, 1983), pp.1-36.

³ John Ruggie, 'What makes the world hang together? Neo-utilitarianism and the social constructivist challenge' International Organization 52, 4 Autumn 1992 p.856.

⁴ Vendulka Kubalkova, Nicholas Onuf and Paul Kowert eds. International Relations in a Constructed World (London: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1998), p.59.

⁵ Alexander Wendt, in James Dougherty and Robert Pfaltzgraff, Contending Theories of International Relations: A Comprehensive Survey 5th ed. (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, Inc., 2001), p.166.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.167.

⁷ Alexander Wendt, 'Anarchy is what states make of it: The social construction of power politics' International Organization 46,2 Spring, 1992 p.397.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.397.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.397-98.

¹⁰ Searle, quoted in John Ruggie, 'What makes the world hang together? Neo-utilitarianism and the social constructivist challenge' International Organization 52, 4 Autumn 1998 p.869.

¹¹ Wendt, 'Anarchy is what states make of it', p.398.

¹² Kubalkova, Onuf and Kowert, International Relations in a Constructed World, p.61.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p.61.

¹⁴ Wendt, 'Anarchy is what states make of it', p.398.

¹⁵ Jonathon March and James Olsen, 'The institutional dynamics of international political orders' International Organization 52,4 Autumn 1998, p.948.

¹⁶ A. Wendt, 'Anarchy is what states make of it', p.398.

¹⁷ J. Ruggie, 'What makes the world hang together?', p.878-79.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.879.

¹⁹ Fredrick Kratochwil and Reg Koslowski, 'Understanding change in international politics: the Soviet empire's demise and the international system' International Organization 48, 2 Spring 1994 pp.215-47.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.216.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p.225.

²² *Ibid.*, p.223-24.

²³ *Ibid.*, p.216.

²⁴ Peter Katzenstein, editor, The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p.6.

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- ²⁵ Colin Gray, War, Peace and Victory: Strategy and Statecraft for the Next Century (New York: Simon and Schuster Inc., 1990), p.45.
- ²⁶ Elizabeth Kier, Imagining War: French and British Doctrine between the Wars (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), p.26.
- ²⁷ Michael Desch, 'Culture clash: Assessing the importance of ideas in security studies' International Security 23, 1 Summer 1998, p.152.
- ²⁸ Alastair Ian Johnston, Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), p.34.
- ²⁹ Kubalkova, Onuf and Kowert, International Relations in a Constructed World, p.68.
- ³⁰ Stephen Rosen, 'Military effectiveness: Why society matters' International Security 19, 4 Spring 1995 p.12.
- ³¹ Ken Booth, quoted in Colin Gray, Weapons Don't Make War: Policy, Strategy and Military Technology (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1993) p.192 note 28.
- ³² Alastair Ian Johnston, 'Thinking about strategic culture' International Security 19, 4 Spring 1994 p.46.
- ³³ Yitzak Klein, 'A theory of strategic culture' Comparative Strategy 10, 2 Spring 1991 p.5.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.5.
- ³⁵ Rosen, 'Military effectiveness', p.6.
- ³⁶ Johnston, 'Thinking about strategic culture', p.49.
- ³⁷ Dan Reiter, Crucible of Beliefs: Learning, Alliances and World Wars (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996) p.1.
- ³⁸ Jack Levy, 'Learning and foreign policy: Sweeping a conceptual minefield' International Organization 48, 2 Spring 1994 p.279.
- ³⁹ Robert Jervis, Perception and Misperception in International Politics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976) p.219.
- ⁴⁰ Yaacov Vertzberger, The World in Their Minds: Information Processing, Cognition and Perception in Foreign Policy Decisionmaking (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990) pp.296-98.
- ⁴¹ For a complete discussion on the practical-intuitive historian see *Ibid.*, pp.296-341.
- ⁴² Dan Reiter, 'Learning, realism and alliances: The weight of the shadow of the past' World Politics 46, 4 July 1994 p.526.
- ⁴³ Ernest Singer and Valerie Hudson eds. Political Psychology and Foreign Policy (Boulder: Westview Press, Inc., 1992) p.21.
- ⁴⁴ Jervis, Perception and Misperception in International Relations p.217.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.228.
- ⁴⁶ See *Ibid.*, p.229-38.
- ⁴⁷ Ernest May, Lessons of the Past, preface.
- ⁴⁸ Jervis, R. Perception and Misperception in International Politics p.239.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.283.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.261-70.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp.270-01.
- ⁵² See for example: Elizabeth Kier, Imagining War, pp.20-38.
- ⁵³ John Kirton and Don Munton Canadian Foreign Policy: Selected Cases (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada, Inc., 1992) p.1.

Chapter 3

Intervention behaviour 1867-1945

In his classic study on the nature of warfare Carl Von Clausewitz wrote that ‘war is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on by other means’.¹ Clausewitz was, undoubtedly, assuming that political intercourse was the prerogative of national leaders and political elites, who prosecuted war informed largely by the international dynamic. Without a doubt this model accurately depicted conflict in eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe and even conflict in some twentieth and twenty-first century states. Does this model, however, provide any utility for describing the ideas that informed Canadian intervention between confederation and the end of the Second World War? The short answer is yes, but not much. Canadian political leaders believed a sovereign autonomous nation must possess a particular image. The quest to achieve this image in the post-confederation period precipitated Canadian participation in war between 1867 and 1945. More important, however, is the fact that the level of participation promoted by Canadian political leaders was a direct response to the constraints and urges of the Canadian domestic population - a population best described as regionally and ethnically divided.

Before continuing with a comprehensive examination of the ideas that informed Canadian intervention between 1867 until 1945, I should like first to turn my attention to justifying the choice of time span and to defining the most relevant terms. 1867 is chosen as the starting point simply because on July 1st, 1867 Canadian status shifted from that of colony to dominion of the British Empire. With that shift came new responsibilities for the government as well as the challenge of creating a new image consistent with the new

responsibilities. This chapter ends with 1945 since that date corresponds closely with two significant events. The first is the creation of the bipolar world, under the sway of two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, which eventually gave rise to the Cold War. The second event is the intentional shift by Canadian political leaders and policy-makers to an internationalist stance.²

The key term defining this study is intervention. By intervention I mean war. The term 'war', like so many other terms, has the potential to be quite confusing. Finding a definition that adequately separates war from peacekeeping is necessary, particularly in the Canadian case. For a simple yet useful definition of war I defer to Clausewitz, who defines war as act of violence intended to compel our opponent to fulfill our will.³ Using this simple definition allows me to differentiate between what might be characterized as traditional peacekeeping and war. Traditional peacekeeping can be understood as the non-violent use of military force to preserve peace.⁴ This definition, while useful for differentiating first generation peacekeeping, does not differentiate more recent peace-making and peace enforcement from war. Perhaps the best way to distinguish between war and peace-making/enforcement is to examine the question of impartiality. In warfare states identify a specific belligerent; by contrast, peace-making/enforcement maintains the political guise of impartiality. Thus intervention refers to the conduct of war, which is defined as the use of force to compel an identified belligerent to bow to our will.

The creation of the Canadian dominion in 1867 enhanced the level of control with regards to domestic politics, previously executed by the Canadian political community. External affairs, the little that Canada had developed up to 1867, were to remain,

according to the terms of the BNA Act, the business of the British government. Stacey notes that the arrangement by which the British government maintained control of Canada's external relations was not considered strange. The common understanding of the day was that external relations should remain the prerogative of the mother country.⁵ The command of Canadian external affairs by the British government should come as no surprise given the cultural predisposition of the colonial politicians. To be sure, the politicians who framed the BNA Act, those thirty-six delegates who became known as the Fathers of Confederation, were not Canadian nationalists, inclined towards a totally independent country. They were rather mid-Victorian colonial politicians whose political principles were reflective of their culture, values and beliefs. They were British subjects who saw themselves as legitimate heirs to the British constitutional heritage, defined by such institutions as constitutional monarchy, parliament and responsible government.⁶

Despite the pro-British orientation of the colonial politicians change, was inevitable, for more than one reason. Stacey notes that the writing was on the wall with regards to the modification of the Canadian system. It seemed a fairly simple proposition; a state independent with regard to internal affairs would eventually become independent with regard to external affairs. Even the pro-British Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald harboured ideas of what Canada's future position in the world and the Empire would be. Comments made by Sir John A. in 1865 were reflective of the beliefs held by some of Canada's other political leaders.

Gradually a different colonial system is being developed and it will become, year by year, less a case of dependence on our part, and of over-ruling protection on the part of the Mother Country, and more a case of healthy and cordial alliance. Instead of looking upon us as a merely dependent colony, England will have in us a friendly nation – a

subordinate but still powerful people – to stand by her in North America in peace or in war.⁷

There are two significant questions that arise directly related to the shift in Canadian status. First, did the shift in status motivate a reciprocal shift in political behaviour? If so what was (were) the motivating factor(s)? Second, what were the images used by Canadian politicians to construct the idea of a sovereign autonomous nation?

Perhaps the best way to handle the first question is to look at it backwards, and try to understand, first, if factors existed that could potentially promote a change in political behaviour. Without a doubt reconciling the separation of external and internal affairs caused problems for the Canadian political establishment. External relations could not remain the jurisdiction of a foreign government. Indeed, reconciling internal politics to fit into an external program created by a nation thousands of miles away, with interests generally not reflective of the interests of Canada, particularly French Canada, was a problem for Canadian politicians. This arrangement between Canada and Great Britain was doomed from the start. It seemed that as long as pro-British sentiment was the dominant variable in the relationship between Canada and Great Britain, the relationship could work. However, once economic, ethnic and regional issues began to outweigh the value of sentiment, the relationship was no longer functional.

Understanding that the division of power between Canada and Great Britain was not reasonable, Canadian political leaders were left with the problem of promoting Canada as a fully autonomous state, in essence a shift in political culture.⁸ In the world of autonomous states the world community provided plenty of examples for the Canadian political leaders to mimic. As Charles Lockhart contends, complete change in (political)

cultural orientation can occur; however, it is rare (if it were not one would question the value of culture as a tool for explaining social behaviour). Another possible way to explain change is to assert that change occurs as a result of conscious problem solving efforts on the part of adherents of a culture to adapt institutions. In responding to changing circumstances adherents of a culture are more likely to adjust their institutions so as to support better their way of life than they are to transfer their allegiance to a rival culture.⁹ For Canadian political leaders this had two effects, maintaining close ties to the Empire and using Great Britain as the image of how a sovereign nation should behave and appear.

What then does the changing image of Canada as an autonomous nation have to do with intervention and the act of war? Autonomous nations in the international community relied on power, manifest in the act of war and intervention, as a political tool for achieving foreign policy goals. Thus, as Carl Berger argues, the Empire provided a means through which Canada could possess a 'sense of power', and a vehicle through which Canada could participate in the international community.¹⁰ In essence it was the idea of how an independent nation participates in the international system that drew Canada into the world of intervention. Alternatively Canada could have opted to disregard requests for troops during the Sudan Crisis and the Boer War. Canada could have refused to participate in World War One and World War Two. At the very least, Canada could have refused to participate as 'Canadians', insisting instead that those who wished to join in the various conflicts did so under the flag of another nation. However, Canadian political leaders did not chose to remain aloof from the conflicts of the international community, rather they favored to respond to war as a means to promote

Canadian autonomy and identity internationally, through participation dictated by the demands and desires of the domestic population. This point is critical and deserves repetition. The international system created the yardstick through which sovereignty and autonomous identity were measured, including participation in war as an autonomous nation. However, it was the Canadian domestic population that set the standard by which Canadian intervention would be employed.

Canada's domestic population can best be described as regionally and ethnically divided. Although the regional boundaries and ethnic mix have a dynamic nature to them, in 1867 there was a clear division between the English population of Canada West and the French population in Canada East.¹¹ In 1867 Canada was marked by a majority body politic sentimental to British ideas, tradition, values and institutions.¹² The next largest segment of the domestic population was made up of French Canadians who certainly felt little affinity for British tradition and values. In fact the French Canadians, who had long been dependent on themselves, felt no affinity for any foreign nation, nor did they wish to become involved in the affairs of foreign nations. Indeed since 1763 political interaction between French Canada and Great Britain cannot be described so much as cooperation, as a struggle to ensure the cultural integrity of French Catholic Canadianism.

Ethnic and cultural cleavages make up only part of the domestic package influencing the behaviour of Canadian political leadership. Nation building further directed the interests and behaviour of Canada's political and business elite. In the years following Confederation the attention of Canada's political leadership was directed at the construction of a nation and the infrastructure that entailed. First and foremost was the

development of a railway linking the Maritime Provinces with central Canada, a promise that lured the Atlantic region into confederation. The construction of a transnational railway, the opening of the west to settlement, and dealing with western discontent and rebellion further directed the attention of Canada's policy-makers.

Ethnic Cleavage and Intervention

The existence of two distinct and established ethnic communities had two effects on the behaviour of the Canadian government with respect to intervention during the 1867-1945 period. The dual ethnic composition of Canada both restrained and encouraged Canadian participation in war. For example during the Sudan Crisis of 1884 the request from London to raise a contingent of Canadian volunteers was not met with an enthusiastic response. For whatever reasons (arguably national economic interest) the Macdonald government's response to the British War office was that they could raise a contingent but at British expense.¹³

In contrast to Macdonald's less than warm reception of the idea of a Canadian contingent, hundreds of offers to volunteer for active service in the Sudan came from individuals of British descent residing in Canada. Since the end of the War of 1812 British colonial policy was biased towards the settlement of British soldiers. For a variety of reasons soldiers were felt to provide a loyal immigrant base, while at the same time possessing the strength and fortitude necessary for survival on the Canadian frontier.¹⁴ This left Canada, after 1867, with a strong British military tradition, untouched by the political agreement that formed Canada. It is possible that Macdonald could have opposed even allowing volunteers to participate in the Sudan crisis, but that would have served no political goal. Opposition to Canadian volunteers would might

only have promoted the alienation of the two-thirds majority of the Canadian population of Empire descent.

Fifteen years after the crisis in the Sudan, Canada was called upon once again to provide military support to an Empire operation in South Africa. Despite the fact that Macdonald's Conservatives had been replaced by Laurier's Liberals little else had changed. London's request was again met with reluctance by the politicians and support by that segment of the domestic population inclined towards Empire demands. Despite the fact that the House of Commons passed a resolution supporting Britain's cause in South Africa, Laurier still refused to provide military assistance. It was only amidst protest from English Canadians and offers of providing private militias that Laurier finally agreed to a Canadian commitment of an infantry brigade of 1000 men.¹⁵

From the perspective of the developing Canadian strategic culture, particularly where it involved the commitment of Canadian military forces to war, Laurier continued the pattern set out by Macdonald fifteen years earlier. Two important ideas underscore the actions of the Laurier government. First, when faced with the realization that domestic considerations would not allow Canada to avoid commitment, Laurier opted for participation, but on Canadian terms. The difficulty Laurier faced was largely the result of the fact that he was dependent on Quebec for political support. Quebec Francophones were united in opposition to involvement in the South African War.¹⁶ As a result Laurier could not openly accept terms of involvement dictated by either English Canada or Great Britain. In order to maintain an air of legitimacy, Laurier had to balance the demands of an ethnically divided country, while at the same time affirming his leadership. He was able to achieve this by committing a Canadian contingent under Canadian command,¹⁷

affirming Canadian autonomy and asserting political leadership over a developing Canadian military.

Participation in the South African War might best be described as reluctant participation. Had the Canadian government decided to remain aloof from British requests for military aid, the end result probably would have been civil disruption and political turmoil. In the end Canadian soldiers would have ended up in South Africa as part of a British brigade. The political leaders of the time, who carried the ideas that were responsible for constructing the developing strategic culture, understood the futility of refusing to participate. It was clear that domestic political demands set the course for intervention.

On August 4th, 1914 Great Britain entered into a European conflict that would eventually encompass most of the world for the next four years. Under the terms of the BNA Act Canada entered the war at the precise moment as Great Britain. Nossal maintains that it was the sentimental attachment to the British Empire that underlay the willingness with which many Canadians went to war in 1914. He continues by adding that the legalities were unimportant: Canadians would have flocked to the aid of the mother country regardless of legal obligation.¹⁸ Canadian entry into the First World War was inevitable because of cultural identities and the inability of the Canadian government to maintain effective domestic control in the face of identity based demands. What makes the First World War different from previous interventions is the fact that the English politicians and the French political leaders were, in the beginning, united in the belief that participation was necessary.¹⁹

It appears that at the outbreak of the conflict in 1914 both parties were prepared to abstain from the necessary partisan rhetoric and move directly to imperial support. As Stacey notes, Laurier, who at the time was the leader of the opposition, was in full approval of the government's action.²⁰ What is interesting to note is that the perception of domestic unity also gave rise to political unity. As long as there was not a great deal of domestic opposition the government was unified on the cause of intervention. The point at which the debate over Canadian intervention began to arise was when domestic pressure was put on political leaders. There are two ideational themes worth exploring at this point. The first is to examine the ideas behind Borden's strategy for gaining imperial influence. The second, which results directly from the first, is the ideational conflict that arose from the conscription crisis.

The enthusiasm with which Borden entered the war effort is indeed a strong testament to his imperialist leanings. However, as Stacey demonstrates, shortly into the war Borden was discontented with the degree of influence (or lack of) Canada had been accorded in the war effort.²¹ Speaking with reference to the lack of consultation between Canada and England on the requisition of ships, Borden commented:

I do not think it can fairly be said that just recognition has been accorded; indeed the Admiralty officials have sometimes adopted towards our representations an attitude of suspicion and arbitrariness that might perhaps be appropriate in dealing with a private firm but is scarcely to be expected or tolerated by the Government of one of the Dominions of the Empire. Such difficulties no doubt largely arise from the present anomalous constitutional organization (or lack of it) of the Empire.²²

Borden responded to the lack of position accorded Canada by augmenting the number of soldiers being sent into the war effort. This did not seem to be such a significant problem in the early years of the war. Indeed, only a few senior military

officers recognized the potential problem of keeping such a large force in the field.²³ As the war progressed between 1914 and 1916 so too did the Canadian contribution of soldiers. The numbers increased from a starting point of 25,000 to 500,000 by January of 1916. Much of the increase appears to be a response to Borden's dissatisfaction with British willingness to include Canada in wartime planning. As Stacey notes, it appears that the gestures of augmentation on Canada's behalf (often enacted unilaterally by Borden) were intended to impress the British government.²⁴ For his part Borden was able to parlay the significant Canadian contribution into an ongoing argument that given the size of the Canadian contribution Canada should have a role in war planning. In a letter to the Canadian High Commissioner Sir George Perley, Borden wrote:

It can hardly be expected that we shall put 400,000 or 500,000 men in the field and willingly accept the position of having no more voice and receiving no more consideration than if we were toy automata. Any person cherishing such an expectation harbours an unfortunate and even dangerous delusion.²⁵

The second ideational conflict that arose from Borden's strategy to gain an international position was the domestic response opposing conscription. Borden's commitment to contribute half a million soldiers to the European battlefield ran into a roadblock when it was realized in mid-1917 that volunteer recruitment levels could not fulfill Canadian commitments. According to Morton, Borden believed conscription was the price Canada had to pay for a more dignified status in the world, and that Canadian autonomy hinged on the success of conscription.²⁶ The success of the Borden government in the 1917 'conscription election' was possible only because Borden was willing to creatively 'deal' with the population at large and other political figures. By enfranchising certain groups, disenfranchising others, promising a countless variety of

exemptions to conscription and by seeking support from other parties, Borden was able to form a union government in 1917.

The level of political deal making and maneuvering undertaken by the Conservative Government during the 1917 election illustrates the acute awareness held by the political leadership of the ethnic cleavages in Canadian society. That cleavage was no longer uniquely defined along French and English lines, but now included a new immigrant class, the majority of which were of Eastern European origin, located predominantly in Western Canada. The effect of Borden's mishandling of the 1917 election and the management of the war effort would pay huge dividends to the Liberal Party in the next election and for the following thirty years. The cost to the Conservative Party would be significant, especially in terms of support in Quebec and amongst organized labour. Borden's mistake of ignoring domestic demands during the war would entrench even deeper the lesson that intervention, and the level to which intervention could proceed, was possible only so far as the domestic population would allow.

By 1939 and the outbreak of the Second World War the lessons of adhering to domestic demands appear to have been ingested by the Canadian political leadership. Writing in 1937 Escott Reid summarized King's foreign policy in seven statements based on King's actions and statements. The most important 'guiding principle', according to King, was the maintenance of Canada as a nation.²⁷ This seems to suggest that foreign policy was subject to domestic politics, and that only in so far as foreign intervention was beneficial to all of Canada would intervention be considered.

To understand King's approach to managing the crisis of the Second World War it is necessary to see his behaviour in the context of competing domestic forces. King

was well aware that if there were another war in Europe, especially one in which Great Britain was involved, it would be impossible for Canada to stay out. Despite the fact that the Canadian population was no longer clearly composed of a majority of Empire descendants²⁸, the group made up a powerful economic, political and social group. In September of 1938 King wrote in his diary:

We (pertaining to a conversation with Norman Rogers) both agreed that it was self-evident national-duty, if Britain entered the war, that Canada should regard herself as part of the British Empire, one of the sisterhood of nations, which should cooperate lending every assistance possible, in no way asserting neutrality, but carefully defining in what ways and how far she would participate.²⁹

King understood that the entrance into another European conflict could potentially be a cause for domestic strife. During the First World War King was conscious of the problems between French and English Canadians. He was aware that the French came to believe the war was an English war not a Canadian war. He was also painfully aware of the domestic cost paid by the Conservative Party in mishandling the management of the First World War. The problem of domestic pressure was compounded by the emergence of western Canadian political forces, which were also potential opponents of participation in another European conflict.³⁰

For King there was only one safe political route, that being leaving the decision of intervention in the hands of Parliament. As early as January of 1937, King was repeating the Liberal position: 'our policy is that Parliament alone can commit Canada. I cannot make that too clear. At the present time there are no commitments, so far as Canada is concerned, to participate in any war.'³¹ By putting the onus for entering into conflict on Parliament King was clearing himself and the Liberal Party from the potential for accusations of favoritism towards either English or French Canada. King understood that

the only way in which domestic disagreement could be reconciled or avoided was through the institutions designed to govern the country, and a cautious approach to participation in any war.

King's strategy of Parliamentary debate and caution became evident as Europe became engulfed in conflict. By waiting one week before taking a declaration of war to the Parliament, King demonstrated both his commitment to Canadian autonomy and his belief that Parliament should decide such issues. His cautionary approach to participation, initially offering material and air training rather than manpower was designed to appease the English demanding Canadian participation and the French demanding Canada keep clear of any European conflict. Although King's cautious management of the domestic population did not yield any great dividends in terms of French Canadian voluntary participation levels,³² he did successfully manage to avoid what two historians have called a potential civil war with Quebec.³³

The information presented suggests that the decision to participate or not to participate in intervention operations was one of the tools that the Canadian government used as a means of expressing political autonomy in international relations. More importantly, however, is the manner in which the expression of political autonomy was directed by domestic political demands. Ethnic divisions, along French and English boundaries, as well as the development of a new immigrant class in the period after 1900 dictated the terms on which Canada would participate in war. Consciously or unconsciously the Canadian government had to cling to an awareness of domestic political demands or face the political cost, as did the Borden government after 1917.

The terms of intervention promoted by the Canadian government between 1867-1945 set the stage for a behaviour pattern that would continue into the post-1945 period. The Canadian strategy for participation in war would continue to be characterized by a cautious approach to taking part, with one finger on the pulse of the international community and the other on the pulse of the domestic population. Intervention as a strategy for promoting Canadian autonomy would only be successful in so far as the Canadian population promoted or encouraged the Canadian government into action. In short, Canadian strategic culture, as it emerged in the post-1945 period rested on two pillars, autonomy and domestic constraint.

Notes

¹ Carl Von Clausewitz On War edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984) p.87.

² For a definition of internationalism and a brief overview of Canadian internationalism see; Kim Richard Nossal The Politics of Canadian Foreign Policy 3rd ed. (Toronto: Prentice-Hall Canada, Inc., 1997), pp.154-59.

³ Clausewitz On War p.75.

⁴ The Blue Helmets: A Review of United Nations Peace-keeping United Nations, 1996 p.4.

⁵ Charles P. Stacey, Canada and the Age of Conflict Volume 1: 1867-1921 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), p.3.

⁶ Donald Creighton in Carl Wallace, Robert Bray and Angus Gilbert eds., Reappraisals in Canadian History: Post Confederation 2nd ed. (Toronto: Prentice Hall Canada, Inc., 1996), p.3.

⁷ Stacey, Canada and the Age of Conflict Volume 1 p.2-3.

⁸ Sidney Verba defines political culture as a sense of national identity, attitudes towards oneself as a participant, attitudes towards one's fellow citizens, attitudes and expectations regarding governmental outputs and performance and knowledge about and attitudes toward the political process of decision-making. See Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, eds., The Civic Culture Revisited (London: Sage Publications, Inc., 1989), p.26-27.

⁹ Charles Lockhart, 'Political Culture and Political Change' in Richard Ellis and Michael Thompson, eds., Culture Matters: Essays in Honour of Aaron Wildavsky (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), pp.94-95.

¹⁰ Carl Berger, The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Nationalism 1867-1914 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970)

¹¹ In 1867 citizens of British origin represented two-thirds of Canada's population, a ratio that would not change until the end of the First World War.

¹² Seymour Martin Lipset notes that many British ties continued to exist well into the 20th century. For example Canadians could not hold citizenship within Canada until 1947, until 1949 the Privy Council of Great Britain was the ultimate court of appeal and only in 1967 did 'O Canada' replace 'God Save the Queen' as Canada's national anthem. See; Seymour Martin Lipset, Continental Divide: The Values and Institutions of the United States and Canada (New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc., 1990), p.46.

¹³ The complete story of Canadian involvement in the Sudan Crisis is told in: Stacey, Canada and the Age of Conflict Volume 1 pp.40-44.

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- ¹⁴ John Findlay and Douglas Sprague, The Structure of Canadian History 2nd ed. (Toronto: Prentice Hall Canada, Inc., 1984), p.102.
- ¹⁵ Stacey, Canada and the Age of Conflict Volume 1, p.67.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.72.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.70.
- ¹⁸ Nossal, Politics of Canadian Foreign Policy, p.147.
- ¹⁹ Stacey notes that in private conversation with Borden, Laurier spoke of having 'trouble with some of his men'. See Stacey, Canada and the Age of Conflict Volume 1, p.176-77.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.176.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, pp.177-201.
- ²² *Ibid.*, p.183.
- ²³ For example General Gwatkin, Canadian Chief of Staff commented as early as 1915 that the potential existed for a recruiting crisis. See; Desmond Morton, Canada at War: A Military and Political History (Toronto: Butterworth and Co. Ltd., 1981), p.56.
- ²⁴ Stacey, Canada and the Age of Conflict Volume 1, p.191.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.192.
- ²⁶ Morton, Canada at War, p.71.
- ²⁷ Escott Reid 'Canada and the threat of war: A discussion of Mr. Mackenzie King's foreign policy goals' in Jack Granatstein, editor, Canadian Foreign Policy: Historical Readings revised ed. (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1993), p.151.
- ²⁸ According to Canadian census data, between 1931 and 1941, the percentage of the Canadian population with British Isles origin declined from approximately 52% to just less than 50%, this number includes those born in Canada. Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Department of Trade and Commerce Ninth Census of Canada: 1951 Volume I Population (Ottawa: Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationery, 1953) p.480.
- ²⁹ Stacey, Canada and the Age of Conflict Volume 2, p.236.
- ³⁰ See for example; Walter D. Young, Democracy and Discontent 2nd ed. (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1978), p.66-67.
- ³¹ Stacey, Canada and the Age of Conflict Volume 2, p.195.
- ³² During the First World War 2.4/100 French Canadians participated, between 1939-45 that number had risen to 3.95/100. The average for the rest of Canada during the Second World War was closer to 10/100. *Ibid.*, p.372.
- ³³ Findlay and Sprague, Structure of Canadian History, p.370.

Chapter 4

The Korean War

One of the more common interpretations of Canadian foreign policy in the post-1945 period asserts that Canada moved from an isolationist stance to an internationalist stance somewhere during the war period. The reasons suggested for this radical change are twofold. First, Canadian involvement in the Second World War, the level of human and material commitment, and the extent of death and destruction, made Canadians, as well as other nations, realize the futility of isolationism. The second reason asserts that a new breed of diplomat and politician was prepared and committed to lead Canada onto the world stage and international commitment.¹ With the shift from an isolationist to an internationalist stance, one would expect correspondingly a shift in Canadian intervention behaviour. However, as the analysis of the following three case studies will illustrate, intervention policy continued to be dictated by two major considerations, the image of autonomy and the restraint implied by domestic politics. If indeed the Second World War had an impact on Canadian intervention behaviour, it was to drive the death stake into the heart of imperialist tendencies. With the decreasing importance of the imperialist bias, intervention, informed by ideas of multilateralism, found a new home in emerging multilateral institutions such as NATO and the United Nations, still restrained, of course, by Canadian domestic politics.

This chapter will examine Canadian involvement in the Korean War, the first of three occasions since the end of the Second World War that Canada has participated in war. An examination of those three cases will illustrate that Canadian intervention continues to be driven by the idea of the need to demonstrate an autonomous foreign policy, while at the same time restrained by implied or perceived images of Canadian

domestic political behaviour. Remember that for this entire analysis it is the ideas that are important, thus the actors may change and the domestic concerns that the nation expresses as a whole may vary, but the ideas that drive the decision-makers, consciously or not, remain the constant.

The belief that the Korean War served as a watershed in Canadian foreign policy is well documented. Tom Keating² and Desmond Morton³ argue that Korea represented the first test of collective security and the United Nations. Norman Hillmer and Jack Granatstein⁴ assert that Canada was caught up in playing an anti-Communist role by supporting the right to self-determination. Analysts who see the development of Canadian foreign policy in these terms tend to start from a perspective of rational actors making rational decisions for the power of the country. The underlying assumption is one of rational decision-making to enhance the power of the state, although in the case of Canada it is more often than not couched in the rhetoric of altruism. Thus the Korean War becomes Canada's first foray into internationalism, as well as the first step in developing a degree of international influence. However, if we take a step back and examine the Canadian decision to go to war in Korea in terms of ideas what emerges is a continuing pattern of behaviour. That pattern is characterized by the desire to be viewed as an autonomous actor, while contributing just enough so as not to disrupt the domestic political balance. I would like to begin with a brief overview of Canada's contribution to the Korean War.

Canadian participation in Korea began with the United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK) in 1948. The commission, which was mandated with the task of supervising the democratic elections on the entire Korean peninsula, was a non-starter from the outset, given the refusal of the Soviet Union to cooperate. A

modified plan, under the leadership of the United States and openly opposed by Canada, saw elections take place only in the south on May 10th, 1948. Canadian opposition to elections in the south went back to an original agreement between King and St. Laurent in which King agreed to Canadian participation on the Commission as long as both superpowers were involved. King's fear was that a lack of superpower balancing would turn the Commission into an instrument for American foreign policy. The refusal of the Soviets to allow UNTCOK to operate in North Korea made the mandate of UNTCOK questionable. Canada argued that since the commission could not function in the north the terms of reference had been changed, hence the mandate of the commission also had to be changed. The Americans, on the other hand, were anxious to go ahead with elections in the south, and argued convincingly that UNTCOK should go ahead with planning elections in the south. In the end the American resolution was approved, opposed only by Canada and Australia.⁵

Canadian interest in Korea ended with the dissolution of UNTCOK and the subsequent replacement by the United Nations Commission on Korea (UNCOK) on December 12, 1948.⁶ However, with the invasion of June 1950 interest was rekindled within the Canadian diplomatic and political ranks. In general though, Canadian interest and knowledge of the affairs of the Korean peninsula were next to non-existent. Liberal MP Jean-Francois Pouliot, although alone as a dissenting political voice, was not so inaccurate in his depiction of Korea. 'What interest do we have in Korea, he asked? There may be a few Canadian missionaries of various denominations in that place, but how many Canadians are there in South Korea?'⁷ The Ottawa Journal found it interesting that Canadian legislators were so unanimous in their call for participation.

There was the Canadian Parliament begging its executive ministers to send ships, or troops or planes to fight in a far-off mountainous land where no Canadians are and whose economic interests to Canada is less than that of Smiths Falls. And the begging was being done though nobody had declared war on anybody. It was being done, too, without any speeches of appeal or pressure having been made by the executives.⁸

It is interesting to note that as a domestic issue Canadians really did not have a great deal of interest in the happenings in Korea. Indeed, if King had still been in power, the likely outcome would have been business as usual, which would have been just fine with the Canadian population. However, King was not in power. As Canada entered the summer of 1950, it appeared that Canadian decision-makers could construct foreign policy unconstrained by the ideas of imperialism and domestic pressure, and restrained only by the ideas of political and strategic culture.⁹

Despite the fact that domestic and imperial pressures at the outset were limited, as the war progressed the Canadian government found itself responding to the same issues as in the past. Canadian decision-makers were faced with a number of issues, all of which had a degree of authenticity as well as a degree of perceived reality. Autonomy, one of the central ideas behind Canadian intervention policy since the beginning, and the fear of losing it, were now under attack not only from the forces sympathetic to the Empire, but also from those who were suspicious of US leadership, especially American leadership in United Nations. Secondly, even though public opinion was largely indifferent, Canadian decision-makers understood the importance of maintaining public confidence. The response of the Canadian diplomats and politicians was to find a means by which Canadian autonomy could be maintained and domestic opinion of the war effort remain favorable.

I mentioned above that the immediate post-1945 period was characterized by limited Imperialist tendencies. I would be remiss to claim that the feelings of the imperial link had disappeared completely from political life. During the debate over the formation of the Commonwealth Division the Canadian government expressed concern over calling the group the 'Commonwealth Division'. Canada was happy to serve alongside other Commonwealth nations, indeed to serve in the same divisional formations. However, it was felt that by using the title 'Commonwealth', the political emphasis on the fact that Korea was a UN operation was being sacrificed.¹⁰ As a result of forwarding this position the government of Louis St. Laurent came under attack from certain quarters of the opposition party who accused the government of 'trying to ease Canada out of the British Commonwealth by the back door'.¹¹

Although some pressure for imperialist ties still existed it was overwhelmed by the urge to make a concerted effort at appearing autonomous in the light of US leadership. Mackenzie King had made the observation fully three years before the outbreak of the war that the United States was using the UN as a means to implement its foreign policy.¹² Three years later with the war underway, under the command of the United States, unilaterally making decisions inside the United Nations framework, it appeared as though King was correct. The unilateral decision by the United States to send air and naval forces to Korea, done in advance of a Security Council resolution to do so, appeared to delegitimize the idea of collective security.¹³

The unilateral action taken by the United States became a focal point for Canadian policy during the initial period of the Korean War. Both St. Laurent and Pearson felt as though the unilateral action by the United States weakened the concept of collective security through the United Nations and that it was in Canada's best interests to

insist upon collective action through the United Nations.¹⁴ American unilateralism was not only a threat to Canada's domestic image of autonomy, but also threatened the second assumption of Canadian strategic culture, limiting liability in order to assure domestic support. The strategy the Canadian government opted for, according to the Lester Pearson's memoirs was two fold, and reminiscent of the Canadian debate during other intervention campaigns. First, Canada wanted to participate but as a member of a United Nations force, while at the same time remaining absolutely certain that the operation be a UN operation and not an American operation. Secondly, Canada wanted to ensure that everything possible was being done to emphasize the United Nations character of the operation; 'that a United Nations force is now in being and that the United States army is only part of that force'.¹⁵ As Denis Stairs notes, for the Canadians involved most directly the politics of the Korean War consisted of attempts to make the collective, or United Nations, aspect of the crisis the dominant one. Success in this regard was found in constraining American ambitions.¹⁶

The insistence by the Canadians that the Korean operation appear as a United Nations operation may well illustrate the Canadian commitment to the concept of collective security. More important however, is the fact that Canadian insistence on UN leadership reflected the concern, held deeply by Canadians within their concept strategic culture. Strategic culture dictates that any decision to intervene and the commitment to intervention must appear to be an autonomous Canadian decision while at the same time upholding the necessity of a collective effort. Moreover, any commitment had to pay heed to the demands and desires of the Canadian domestic population. The ghost of imperial commitment still haunted Canadian decision-makers, only now the British Empire had been replaced by an American one and French and English Canada ceased to

be split on intervention issues. Pearson seemed well aware of the anxiety Canadians felt about appearing dependent on another nation. This anxiety was, in his words, 'deep-seated and unconsciously felt,' originating in a feeling of dependence on the United States and frustration over the fact 'that we cannot escape it'.¹⁷ With reference to domestic concerns, one External Affairs officer stated: 'We cannot jump from an imperial frying pan into an American fire'.¹⁸

Denis Stairs argues in his book The Diplomacy of Constraint that one of the roles that Canada undertook during the Korean War was to constrain the decision-making of the United States. Ironically, however, it appears that many of the decisions that were made were done so outside the influence of the Canadians. The head of the Canadian Liaison Mission in Tokyo, E.H. Norman, complained to Ottawa a full ten days after the North Korean invasion had begun that he was still unable to reach General McArthur to obtain a first hand report of what was happening. Other diplomats had similar difficulties.¹⁹

In attempting to maintain some level of control over the direction of the war effort the Canadian government adopted a two-prong strategy for 'containing' American unilateralism. The first step was to increase the level of commitment made by Canadian forces. It was felt in Ottawa that only by increasing the Canadian liability could Canada have the moral sway to hold legitimacy in the United Nations. The other step of the Canadian strategy rested on the ability of the United Nations to direct the war effort, in spite of the dominance of the United States.²⁰ The Canadian government was intent on maintaining a war effort directed not by the United States but by the United Nations. In a speech delivered to the United Nations General Assembly in September of 1950, Pearson made it clear that achieving the objectives set out for the Korean conflict must be

'achieved by the United Nations action and not through decisions reached by certain of its members'.²¹ There is no doubt that this speech was directed at the United States, which up to this point in September of 1950, had used the UN as a means by which it could assert policy previously decided by American policy-makers.

As stated earlier, Canadian decision-makers although concerned with autonomy and contribution levels had to keep in mind the domestic population, by whose authority Parliament had the right to govern. Past governments, especially the government of the recently departed Mackenzie King, had always been aware of the national pulse, dictated largely by the ethnic and regional cleavages of Canada. The St. Laurent government was no exception. Pearson states that the Prime Minister was sensitive to the Quebec press, which, in some cases, was critical of American policy.²² The Quebec newspaper 'Le Devoir' for example exclaimed that those who supported a Canadian contribution were 'like little dogs who are impatient to show their master [the United States] that they adore him, who need but a gesture and they will throw themselves into the water'.²³

Government sensitivity to the domestic population was also clearly illustrated in the outright rejection of conscription as a possible means through which to raise a ground force to send to Korea. Undoubtedly the Liberal government, with a French Canadian Prime Minister, was well aware of the potential problems if the conscription issue was to be successfully raised by either the opposition or the press as a viable option for Canadian policy. Although in principle St. Laurent was not opposed to conscription, he was able to stop any debate before it even started by clarifying the Canadian position on collective security. Conscription, he maintained, was not needed to address the current security concerns in Europe and Korea; however, should that situation change, then so to might the policy change.²⁴

Ever mindful of the domestic population, American requests for ground forces, and the need to appear 'committed enough' to the crisis, particularly in terms of manpower and equipment, the St. Laurent government moved ahead with the commitment of ground forces. A Canadian poll taken on August 3rd found that 59 percent of respondents felt Canada should contribute equipment, 34 percent favoured manpower and 39 percent were opposed to sending both troops and equipment.²⁵ The numbers hardly suggest, as some analysts do, a unified country with regards to Canadian policy in Korea. On the other hand, American demands to make a greater military contribution, and the potential gains in relational power²⁶ to be realized outweighed the lukewarm interest or lack of interest amongst the Canadian population. On August 7th, 1950 Prime Minister St. Laurent announced that a Special Force would be recruited for service in Korea. He safeguarded Canadian control of this force by stating that the force would be 'available to carry out Canada's obligations under the UN Charter or the North Atlantic Pact ...and subject to the approval of Parliament'.²⁷

In the immediate post-war world Canada, some analysts claim, found itself in a new strategic situation. In delivering the Gray Lecture at University of Toronto in 1947, Prime Minister St. Laurent articulated the principles underlying Canada's post-war policy. He stated that Canadian policy would be built on national unity, political liberty, the rule of law, values of a Christian civilization and acceptance of international responsibilities, particularly a commitment to participate in constructive international action through the UN.²⁸ In the same year the Minister of National Defence presented to Parliament the document 'Canada's Defence: Information on Canada's Defence Achievements and Organizations'. The document was intended to provide information about the wartime achievements of Canada and her defence needs and objectives. The

document stated that Canadian defence needs were: to defend Canada against aggression, to supply aid to the civil power, and to carry out undertakings by *our own voluntary act* we may assume in cooperation with friendly nations or under collective action under the UN.²⁹ It should come as no surprise to see national unity as the primary concern articulated by both the political leadership and the operational document for the military. For one reason Canadian political and strategic decision-makers tend to be the same people. More importantly, however, is the understanding that Canadian political culture going back to pre-Confederation period has always been sensitive to the ethnic and regional cleavages that compose Canada. With this as the primary concern of political leadership everything else becomes subordinate to domestic politics, including strategic politics. Thus intervention, as pursued by Pearson and his other contemporaries could continue only in so far as it continued to serve domestic political needs. The domestic/internationalist dichotomy was very much a balancing act based on perception. The Canadian population had to perceive stability and security, the international community had to perceive adequate commitment, and the Canadian government had to perceive itself as a substantial and informed actor.

It is necessary at this point to take a step back and examine two important points from the theoretical framework. Strategic culture suggests that there is continuation of strategic behaviour over a significant period of time, slightly dynamic but certainly not static. A cultural perspective equally suggests a pattern of behaviour, in this case strategic behaviour, is path dependent on an understanding of, or the ideas of, past experience. Applying this perspective to the Korean War and the decisions made by Canadian political and foreign policy leaders, it is easy to explain their policy choices, particularly in regards to issues of autonomy and domestic constraint.

From 1867 onward the primary objective of intervention policy was to express Canadian autonomy, understanding of course that until 1931 Canada did not legally have that right and that after 1931 tradition was a significant force in decision-making. Examining the behaviour of Canadian decision-makers in 1950 there is clear evidence of a continuation of similar behaviour, that is, intervention as a means of expressing Canadian autonomy. The analogies of course are not exact but there are a significant number of similarities. In the period prior to 1950 Canadian decision-makers were consumed with the need to have Canada seen as an independent nation -- i.e. as a nation that made contributions as significant proportionally and functionally as any other nation, thus deserving equal representation on international decision-making bodies, not as a component of the British Empire, but as a state with its own interests to promote. One of the ways Canada could assert sovereign equality was by promoting intervention through multilateral institutions such as the United Nations. Within the framework of the United Nations all countries were given, in theory, an equal voice. For Canadians this meant that they could continue to be interventionist, while at the same time achieving something they had battled for since confederation, the ability to be interventionist outside the control of a more powerful state.

In 1950, as in 1918 and 1939 we see the diplomatic wrangling of a Canada trying to assert autonomy. However, the difference is that by 1950 the British Empire had been replaced by the United States and by the United Nations. The United Nations provided the mechanism for autonomous behaviour. Thus in keeping with the Berger thesis referred to earlier, the United Nations provided for Canada the ability to have a 'sense of power'. The United States, on the other hand, provided the means, through vast military resources, for smaller nations to have a role in articulating an aggressive foreign policy,

provided of course that the smaller states accepted American leadership. For Canada the potential existed for history to repeat itself. Seventy-five years of struggling for foreign policy autonomy within the confines of the Empire could potentially be lost if the United Nations could not maintain the perception of legitimate authority, and the membership could not contain American unilateralism. Alternatively Canada would revert to having a foreign policy at best void of international responsibility or at worst part and parcel of American objectives.

The second issue to deal with is the idea of domestic constraint. As I noted earlier there was not a great deal of political opposition to the involvement in the Korean War. The lack of interest on the part of the Canadian population was likely more a result of the cautious approach taken to material and manpower commitments by the Canadian government. The Canadian government was cautious not to raise 'red flags' about Canadian involvement in a war in some unknown land. Moreover, the capacity for the Canadian government to provide military manpower on short notice was limited by the simple fact that Canada did not have the military manpower necessary to send an army to Korea. For the Canadian government the only option available, given the aversion to maintaining a large standing army, was to make token contributions, in hope that it would be enough to give the moral position necessary to speak from a position of leadership.³⁰ Without a standing army to send to the Korean peninsula the Canadian government was left with four options: do nothing, recruit and send a volunteer force, conscript and send a force, or draw a force from the standing ranks depleting homeland defence capabilities at a time of fear over communist expansionism. Of the four options presented the public would never have stood quiet for conscription or the depletion of homeland defence; history had taught that lesson. The political leadership was not prepared to let the

potential of international leadership slip through their hands by doing nothing. Moreover, the contribution of three destroyers and an air transport squadron was not highly thought of in Washington.³¹ Thus Canadian policy-makers schooled in the tradition of international involvement as a means of expressing foreign policy autonomy were left with one choice, that being to raise a volunteer force. A volunteer army would satisfy the demands of the international community for a greater contribution, would put Canadian diplomats on a higher moral pedestal, and restrain domestic outrage related to the costs associated with a war in a country outside Canadian area of interest.

This examination of the Korean War has made two broad assumptions. First, I maintain that ideas are one of the major variables informing the construction of political and strategic cultures. As such there is a need to find and examine the dominant ideas informing foreign policy. The second assumption contends that cultures change slowly; having a degree of permanence. The result is that the policy that led to Canadian intervention in the Korean War and the manner by which Canada chose to intervene were inspired by the same variables that inspired other interventions in the pre-Cold War period. That is intervention as a means of demonstrating the existence of an autonomous sovereign state, constrained by the ethnic and regional cleavages that determine Canadian domestic politics.

Looking at the Korean War through the lens of dominant ideas we observe that the involvement in the Korean War was not a watershed in the history of Canadian foreign policy. Rather the Korean War was a continued effort on the part of Canadian politicians and diplomats to express an autonomous foreign policy while at the same time maintaining the domestic support and stability necessary to continue to govern.

Notes

- ¹ See for example; Kim Nossal, The Politics of Canadian Foreign Policy 3rd ed. (Toronto: Prentice Hall Canada Inc., 1996), pp.154-59. Also James Eayrs, In Defence of Canada: Peacemaking and Deterrence (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), pp.3-74.
- ² Tom Keating, Canada and World Order: The Multilateralist Tradition in Canadian Foreign Policy (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc., 1993), p.40.
- ³ Desmond Morton, Canada and War (Toronto: Butterworth and Co. Ltd., 1981), p.160.
- ⁴ Norman Hillmer and Jack Granatstein, Empire to Umpire: Canada and the World to the 1990s (Toronto: Copp Clark Longman Ltd., 1994), p.212.
- ⁵ Denis Stairs, 'Confronting Uncle Sam in Korea' in Jack Granatstein, editor, Canadian Foreign Policy since 1945: Middle Power or Satellite? 2nd ed. (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing Co., 1969), pp.60-63.
- ⁶ The story of Canada's official position, as well as the conflicts between King and St. Laurent with regards to UNTCOK is told at length in Denis Stairs, The Diplomacy of Constraint: Canada, the Korean War and the United States (Toronto: Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), pp.3-28.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, p.55.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, p.57.
- ⁹ Denis Stairs notes: "...the range of choices that they [decision-makers] actually consider, and the manner in which they derive their estimates of the probable consequences of the various possible alternatives, are viewed as being limited and defined by the precepts of their political philosophy and their preference for particular methods of political action. The individuals involved may be self-consciously aware of these underlying ingredients of their behaviour, or they may not. In the latter event, of course, the ingredients themselves can be identified only if they are consistently implied by what the decision-makers say and do." p.307-8.
- ¹⁰ Jeffrey Grey, The Commonwealth Armies and the Korean War: An Alliance Study (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988) p.92.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.93.
- ¹² Stairs, Diplomacy of Constraint, p.17.
- ¹³ Geoffery Pearson, Seize the Day: Lester B. Pearson and Crisis Diplomacy (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1993), p.66.
- ¹⁴ John Whitney Pickersgill, My Years with Louis St. Laurent: A Political Memoir (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975) p.128.
- ¹⁵ John Munro and Alex Inglis, editors Mike: The Memoirs of the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson Volume 2: 1948-1957 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973) pp.148-53.
- ¹⁶ Stairs, Diplomacy of Constraint, p.53.
- ¹⁷ Munro and Inglis, Mike, p.181.
- ¹⁸ Stairs, Diplomacy of Constraint, p.67.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.25.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.93.
- ²¹ Munro and Inglis, Mike, p.158.
- ²² Pearson, Seize the Day, p.67.
- ²³ Stairs, Diplomacy of Constraint, p.58.
- ²⁴ Pickersgill, My Years with Louis St. Laurent, p.131.
- ²⁵ Stairs, Diplomacy of Constraint, p.87.
- ²⁶ Paul Buteux defines relational power as being the capacity to bargain successfully for outcomes that in the absence of relational power would not be forthcoming. See Buteux, P. 'Sutherland revisited: Canada's long-term strategic situation' Canadian Defence Quarterly 24, 1 September 1994 p.6.
- ²⁷ Carl Rennie, 'Mobilization for War: Canadian army recruiting and the Korean conflict' Canadian Defence Quarterly 15, 1 Summer 1985 p.48.
- ²⁸ John Hilliker and Donald Barry 'Choice and strategy in Canadian foreign policy: Lessons from the postwar years' Canadian Foreign Policy 3, 2 Fall 1995 p.74.
- ²⁹ Douglas Bland, editor, Canada's National Defence Volume 1: Defence Policy (Kingston: Queen's University School of Policy Studies, 1997), p.20.
- ³⁰ Stairs, Diplomacy of Constraint, p.65.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, p.74.

Chapter 5

The Gulf War

Canada did not go to war again after Korea for almost forty years. During that time the world changed a great deal. A full generation of politicians and diplomats came and went without knowing much about Canadian involvement in 'hot' wars. During that same period changing technology and the end of global bipolarity challenged defence planners and strategists. For Canada, however, the changes in technology and global alignment had little to no effect on Canadian strategic culture. Canadian military power existed only partially for the purpose of directly protecting Canadian interests and Canadian assets. As any White Paper on Defence will illustrate, military power was projected to satisfy collective security and collective defence commitments, based on agreements forged between sovereign nations. Thus changes in the global landscape and military technology did not alter Canadian strategic culture. The Canadian military still provided the same homeland functions, while at the same time the application of force abroad continued to be the test of an autonomous foreign policy. The Gulf War, which started shortly after the end of the Cold War was essentially the first test case of strategic cultural stability, on the heels of what was viewed by many as a paradigm shift in global security.

On August 1, 1990 Iraqi troops invaded the emirate of Kuwait, rapidly overrunning the limited Kuwaiti resistance. Within a day, Iraqi troops occupied the entire country¹. The international response and condemnation was immediate, led predominantly by the United States and the United Nations. Within days of the invasion, Prime Minister Mulroney agreed to participate in a United Nations backed naval

blockade in the Gulf. The first Canadian contribution was announced on August 11, consisting of two destroyers and one supply ship. The Canadian contribution was further enhanced on September 14 with the dispatch of eighteen CF-18 fighter jets, tasked with providing air cover for the Canadian naval task force and the ships of allied partners. The Canadian force was subsequently further enhanced with the deployment of a command, communication and security unit in late October, and an additional six CF-18 fighters and a KC-135 aerial tanker on January 11, 1991.² In sum, Canada contributed approximately 3,700 troops, none of which were ground combat forces, for an eight-month operation. The total coalition force consisted of approximately 500,000 troops, amassed from some thirty-five countries.

Of the host of questions that could be posed given this brief introduction, the most crucial question asks why Canada chose to participate in the Gulf conflict in the first place. There seems to be a great deal of debate on this issue, the most fundamental of which concerns the ability of Canadian political and strategic leaders to project an autonomous foreign policy. In other words, was Canadian participation in the Gulf coalition the result of independent foreign policy thinking, or was it, as some have suggested, simply a function of Canada's eagerness to please the United States?³ Yet a third position proposes that Canada was pulled into the conflict, unable to avoid participation in the war without suffering an unacceptable cost to the Canadian international reputation.⁴ A fourth position, which cannot be easily dismissed out of hand, argues that Canadian participation in the Gulf War was motivated by a desire to protect Canadian strategic interests.

Martin Rudner points out that historically cultural and social contact between Canada and the Arab Gulf had been relatively nonexistent. Short of a fairly lucrative grain deal, there was little Canadian investment in the Gulf countries, nor did Canada depend a great deal on the Gulf as a source of oil or for commercial markets,⁵ although, this position has been disputed by others.⁶ Thus, this position would assert that as was the case in Korea, Canadian strategic interest in the Gulf was not substantial. Indirectly of course, as was the argument also made about conflict on the Korean peninsula, Canada had an interest in maintaining regional peace, since a larger conflict could potentially impinge on Canadian strategic interests. The 1994 Defence White Paper reiterates this position stating that as a trading nation Canada is interested in maintaining a stable international system. Rudner also identifies this concern, noting that although Canada's direct interests in the Gulf were not substantial, energy security for both industrialized and developing countries was of importance to Canadian policy.⁷ To the contrary however, Canada has not been active in resolving certain other conflicts that threaten the strategic stability of trading nations. There are undoubtedly other regional conflicts in the world where Canada has had an interest in maintaining stability and containing conflict so as not to disrupt the international system, but at the same time has chosen not to intervene. At the top of this list one could start with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Indian-Pakistani conflict. Thus although Canada could claim with some degree of sincerity that security in the Gulf region was indirectly tied to Canada's interest in a stable global society, it does not follow that military intervention should have been the response to resolving the Gulf crisis.

Although strategic interests, in the form of global trade stability and world oil prices, may have influenced to some degree the decision to exercise the participation option, strategic interests cannot be seen as the sole motivation. It has also been suggested that the purpose of Canadian participation in the Gulf War was to appease American demands. Cooper, Higgott and Nossal address this issue in their article on leadership and followership during the Gulf conflict. They assert that the assumption that nations entered the Gulf Conflict for reasons of American leadership is not completely accurate.⁸ They state that most countries, including Canada, initially were enthusiastic about providing support to an American led effort to impose sanctions on Iraq. Support was provided as a means of coercing a withdrawal from Kuwait and to deter an Iraqi attack on Saudi Arabia. Supporting this type of multilateral exercise was relatively simple, requiring a small naval contribution to enforce the sanctions. The problem arises from the fact that the initial objective, under which countries signed onto the coalition in August, changed at least five times by the war's end, always at American insistence or by unilateral American decision.⁹ Thus as the war progressed, objectives changed, but the ability of coalition members to maneuver fell dramatically. Canada may indeed have followed the American lead in August of 1990 to enforce a naval blockade on Iraq, but the question of following becomes clearer as the mandate for coalition forces changed in the fall and winter of 1990. Canada's initial naval contribution, as already noted, was further enhanced with the deployment of CF-18 fighters; however it was not until near the end of the war that Ottawa actually gave approval for Canadians to participate in combat missions. Thus even as it became evident in the fall of 1990 that the American

posture was turning from one of defense to offense Canada chose to follow, asserting it could still project an autonomous foreign policy.

Although we see evidence of foreign policy autonomy during the latter part of the conflict, that being the period that actually corresponds to war, why Canada chose initially to participate in the Persian Gulf has not yet been clarified. Cooper, Higgott and Nossal suggest that Canada, like most of the other countries, was prepared to follow American leadership in the enforcement of UN sanctions against Iraq. In other words, Canada was prepared to follow so long as the operation met three criteria; namely, that it a) was sanctioned by the United Nations, b) consisted of a relatively painless contribution, and, c) was not generally considered to be war. In fact, however, the willingness of Canada to follow the United States had as much to do with the development of a symmetrical strategic partnership as seeking to please the United States.

In their book Operation Friction: The Canadian Forces in the Persian Gulf, Jean Morin and Richard Gimblett illustrate the integral nature of Canadian planes within the coalition air force. Following a chronological development of the war, they explain the changes that were made to Canadian fighters committed to the conflict in order to make them interoperable with other coalition fighters. Changes included the capacity for Canadian fighters to take on fuel from allied tankers and installation of the Link-4 digital data receiver.¹⁰ Samuel Walker's analysis of the Gulf Operation moves one step further, citing a list of unresolved interoperability issues,¹¹ and tracing out the efforts made between 1992 and 1998 to resolve those interoperability issues.

Interoperability as it pertains to Canadian strategic culture is a double-edged sword. On the one side, striving to be interoperable with the most powerful military in the world could potentially threaten Canadian autonomy. On the flip side of the coin interoperability would allow Canada greater breadth of choice in conflict management. Canadian strategic culture rests on two pillars, commitment, in which the perception of an autonomous foreign policy is crucial, and constraint, whereby attention to domestic demands is essential. Does the move to develop a military that is interoperable with our allies necessarily degrade the first pillar of Canadian strategic culture? It is difficult to predict what may happen in the future but in the case of the Gulf War, it appears that the move towards developing an interoperable air force did nothing to lessen the appearance of an autonomous Canadian foreign policy. Even as the Canadian Air Force rapidly installed hardware so as operate safely and effectively in the Gulf region, political leaders remained cautious in their approach to participation in war.

Analysts who assert or assume that Canada was entering a war or prepared to go to war in the summer and fall of 1990 are completely mistaken. John Kirton, for example, claims that what sets the Canadian contribution apart from most other nations is the fact that Ottawa had decided early on in the crisis that Canada was prepared to use force if necessary. By making such a decision Canada was placed in an exclusive club, comprising only the United States, Britain, France and Italy.¹² These claims are contrary to both Canadian military posture during the early part of the conflict as well as what was being said by Canadian political leaders. For example, Morin and Gimblett assert that although the policy was unclear, that which was clear was that Canadian forces were intended to monitor, not to enforce, the implementation of sanctions from a vantage point

in the Gulf of Oman. The rules of engagement were defensive. Moreover, the Canadian commander was directed not to assign Canadian ships to a foreign commander.¹³ Equally true is that had Canada embraced military commitments on the same level as for example Britain, on a per capita basis the Canadian contribution would have had to amount to 20,000 ground, naval and air personnel.¹⁴ Even Canadian political leaders were not prepared to accept that war was the inevitable conclusion to the crisis rising in the Gulf region. In mid-August Prime Minister Mulroney stated that Canada's contribution was intended to show disapproval of the invasion, but 'not in an aggressive manner.'¹⁵ Thus Canada did not enter into the conflict with the intention of entering into a war; rather the approach was cautious support of the United Nations.

As it became evident to Canadian political leaders that the posture of the coalition force was changing from a defensive to an offensive one the Canadian government became less comfortable with the role it began to inherit. What had started out as an operation to coerce Iraq to restore the status quo and to deter further Iraqi aggression had become a coalition poised forcibly to restore Kuwait to sovereignty. From the outset Canadian political leaders were comfortable with having the coalition acting under the direction of the United Nations. Prime Minister Mulroney had made it clear to President Bush, during a dinner meeting on August 4th, that the price of Canadian participation would be UN, rather than American leadership,¹⁶ although the reality is that US leadership within the UN was enough for Canada. Regardless, Canada continued to seek solutions through the collective security apparatus of the United Nations. As a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, Canada supported every resolution concerning the Gulf crisis, including Resolution 678, authorizing the use of force.

Martin Rudner claims that Canada preferred to have responsibility for the Gulf crisis assumed by the United Nations for a variety of reasons.¹⁷ First, Canada had little domestic interest in the Gulf region; the interest that Canada did have was in maintaining global stability. The only way for Canada to play a role in such a regional crisis was to use Canadian influence and reputation in an international institution, such as the UN, established for the purpose of maintaining collective security. In other words, the UN provided the vehicle for Canada through which it could be interventionist, while at the same time upholding Canadian autonomy in foreign policy.

Bernard Wood states that Canada was very conscious of the need to avoid turning over the UN's work to any one power.¹⁸ What Wood fails to make clear, however, is why Canada was so 'conscious' of maintaining a clear UN mandate. As in Korea, Canadians were insistent on a UN mandate during the Gulf crisis, since it was only through an international institution, where all states are in theory equal, that Canada could maintain a guise of having an autonomous foreign policy. Despite the reality that the UN led operation to enforce sanctions evolved into an American led war against Iraq, the United Nations provided the domestic cover necessary for the Canadian government to counter a variety of accusations.

A United Nations mandate made it possible to counter domestic criticisms that Canada was following the United States in an effort to be 'stroked by the superpower'. It gave Canada an opportunity to assert interventionism through its role in the United Nations. It allowed Canadian politicians to avoid using the word 'war', thus maintaining a greater level of public support for the ensuing operation. Finally as Denis Stairs asserts, during the Korean War Canada had a role in containing American adventurism. The UN

mandate during the Gulf war served a similar purpose, (if only politically) by providing an international forum to address coalition concerns. As an example, Morin and Gimblett insist that although Canada favoured a naval embargo under United Nations auspices, it was clear by November that the United States was stealing the initiative from the United Nations. If indeed the United Nations wished to maintain its status as leader it would have to adopt the tougher American line. The reaction from the Canadian side was to encourage the Canadian ambassador to the United Nations to persuade other members of the Security Council to adopt a tougher position without initially espousing American policy as a whole.¹⁹

Despite the reality of the coalition being directed and maneuvered by unilateral American decisions, the existence of a UN directive allowed smaller states, like Canada, to exercise some self-direction, especially in terms of domestic justification by presenting themselves to their public as having an independent role in Gulf crisis diplomacy. Recall that the appearance of an autonomous foreign policy is only one part of the Canadian strategic culture; the other is domestic political constraint. At this point I should like to turn my attention to the domestic concerns, either real or perceived, that constrained or directed the actions of the Canadian government throughout the Gulf crisis.

At the time of the Iraqi incursion into Kuwait, Canadian parliamentarians were away from Ottawa on summer recess. The Minister of National Defence and the Chief of Defence Staff were out of the country. The Canadian Ambassador to Iraq had been recalled for normal rotation, and the incoming Ambassador was not scheduled to arrive in Baghdad until September 19th.²⁰ Meanwhile, the attention of the Canadian population was being held by the standoff between Mohawk warriors and the Canadian Army at the

Kanesatake and Kahnawake Reserves in Quebec. The result of this existing dynamic was twofold. First, in the early stages of policy response, public input, either through direct consultation or through parliament, was excluded from the policy making process. This does not mean that the public was ignored; in fact the evidence suggests that the government had a preconceived perception of what would be acceptable to the public at large. Second, in the latter stages of the conflict public input became more significant, to the point where the war was already underway and the Canadian Parliament was still debating an appropriate response. The evidence thus suggests that both the perceived domestic response as well as the actual domestic response constrained the response of the government by limiting the Canadian military resources put at risk during the Gulf crisis.

As noted above, when the conflict erupted Canadian parliamentarians were away in their home ridings for summer recess. Prime Minister Mulroney had the option to recall the Parliament to discuss an appropriate response to the conflict, but he chose not to do so. Cooper, Higgott and Nossal suggest that one of the reasons why Prime Minister Mulroney chose not to recall parliament was because the use of military forces against the domestic population at Oka was a contentious political issue. The fear was that the government would reconvene to discuss the Gulf crisis and in the end find itself embroiled in a debate over Oka.²¹ In other words, the Mulroney government was conscious of potential domestic opposition, in this case to the Oka standoff, and not overly anxious to address the issues in an open forum.

From the start of the Gulf War the central decision-makers were aware of the possible implications, politically and otherwise, should they tread too far beyond what they perceived as being publicly acceptable. For example, during the initial push to

impose economic sanctions on Iraq, Canada did not move too quickly for fear of harming the country's grain trade with Iraq. By the end of the August 4th weekend Canada had imposed the following sanctions on Iraq: oil imports were banned, controls on exports were strengthened, most-favored-nation status was terminated, academic, cultural and trade promotions activities were suspended. Absent, however, from Canada's list was a ban on Canadian grain exports.²² These exports were finally added to the list of sanctions on August 6th. On that day the UN passed Resolution 661, invoking Chapter VII enforcement provisions, and establishing a comprehensive ban on all but humanitarian economic dealings with Iraq and occupied Kuwait.²³ Canada, having agreed to abide by any UN decision, modified the sanction list accordingly.

In a further effort designed to avoid having to deal with public debate on Canada's potential role in the Gulf crisis, the government chose to send a naval task force into the Gulf region. Under the National Defence Act, if forces are put on 'active service' or 'combat status', Parliament must be recalled within ten days of a status change. Parliament, however, was not scheduled to begin sitting until September 24th; thus the earliest the force status could change to 'active' status in order to avoid having to recall Parliament was September 14th. Therefore to avoid having a recall the government stated that the status of the naval task force would not change until they reached the Gulf region.²⁴ On September 15th the Canadian task force was put on active service.

The Canadian government was also sensitive to the image that would have been presented in the press, and a naval contribution offered a number of advantages that were not available had the decision been made to use other elements of the service. For example, the navy had traditionally never been recognized as a peacekeeping force. In

playing to the image of Canada the peacekeeping nation, it seemed only right that the navy should have an opportunity to partake in international glory. Moreover, because the navy operated from international waters there was less concern over territorial violation and occupation.²⁵

It appears that the government's cautious approach at the outset of the Gulf Crisis maintained the confidence of the Canadian public. In September 1990, an Angus Reid poll showed that 69% of all Canadians favored the government's decision to send forces into the Gulf in support of sanction enforcement.²⁶ It is however important to remember that by September the Canadian government had still only committed a naval task force to help enforce the UN economic sanctions.

As the fall of 1990 progressed and it became more evident to the public that the Gulf crisis was moving from one of defensive action to one of offensive action the attitudes amongst the population also changed. A poll published in the Toronto Star on December 27, 1990 asked the respondents if they favored or opposed the Canadian Armed Forces going to war against Iraq. The poll found that during the latter part of the build up period only 36% of respondents were in favor, while 55% opposed and 8% did not know.²⁷ Recall that it was during this period, the Fall of 1990, that the United Nations authorized member states to 'use all necessary means' to force Iraq out of Kuwait by January 15, 1991, and the Canadian government committed more forces to the region.

A Winnipeg Free Press/Angus Reid poll released on January 23, 1991 came to two conclusions based on two separate questions. When respondents were asked if they supported sending Canadian troops to the Gulf region 75% of responses were positive.

However, when asked if Canada should take an offensive or defensive role, 53% believed Canada should only have a defensive role, while 36% supported an offensive role.²⁸

Similarly Hibbard and Keenleyside found that immediately after the outbreak of the war 73% of Canadian respondents supported the decision to take military action against Iraq. However, they also found that Canadians were opposed to direct participation in the conflict, with 62% rejecting the idea and only 36% offering support.²⁹ The conclusion, drawn by both the Free Press and Hibbard and Keenleyside, is that Canadians were eager for a presence but less enthused about the prospect of having to fight a war.

By late February 1991 Canadian support for the Canadian Armed Forces going to war against Iraq was back on the rise. A poll published in the February 22nd edition of the Toronto Star stated that 58% of respondents were in favor of going to war against Iraq, while only 38% opposed.³⁰

It is worthwhile to note that until the third week of February the Gulf War had been conducted almost entirely through an extended bombing campaign. Only on January 17th, 1991, a day after the air war started, did Prime Minister Mulroney announce that Canadian CF-18s would be allowed to carry out sweep and escort missions over Kuwait and Iraq. Moreover, not until the 24th of February did Canadian planes participate in bombing missions, and then only from high altitudes.³¹ Finally, in an effort to keep the public from being informed too early about the possibility of Canadian planes participating in bombing missions, and thus suffer the potential backlash of public discontent, the military kept the work of planning for a bombing campaign a secret. At the same time as the planning was taking place, the military launched a public relations

campaign on behalf of the government to explain and defend what had the potential to be an unpopular decision.³²

In spite of the attention paid to Canada's participation in the air war it is important to clarify the core mission for the CF-18s, which remained unchanged throughout the course of the Gulf War. The primary mission for which the CF-18s was the air defence of the fleet, charged with aiding in the enforcement of UN economic sanctions.

The polling information presented so far represents a national average. If one examines the polling information on a more regional level an interesting pattern of support and opposition becomes apparent. In terms of support for the Gulf War the national averaged fluctuated from high points at the beginning and end, to low levels shortly before and at the start of the conflict. In Quebec however, support, or rather the lack of it, remained at constant levels. In December 1990, 21% of Quebec respondents were in favor of going to war against Iraq.³³ By January of 1991 only 18% of respondents favored participation in a war against Iraq.³⁴ Finally, in February of 1991, a point at which support in English Canada had climbed significantly, support in Quebec was still only at 33%.³⁵ Moreover, a content survey of six Canadian daily newspapers found that over a fifteen-day period between mid-November, 1990 and mid-January, 1991 the national average for items related to the Gulf crisis appearing in the paper was 5.8 articles per paper per day. An exception to this average was Le Devoir, which averaged only 2.8 Gulf related items per issue.³⁶ It would be easy to explain away this difference in opinion between Quebec and the rest of Canada by claiming that the strong presence of separatist forces in the federal and provincial governments made support for federally mandated decisions unlikely. However, it seems more reasonable to accept that

the difference in opinion was illustrative of the Quebecois penchant for isolation. The existence of separatist political leadership served as a means of confidence to express a cultural preference.

Polls may provide an interesting view on the thoughts of the Canadian public at large and in general, but the value of polling results can only be truly comprehended if a connection exists between the behaviour of political leaders and poll results. This problem raises the fundamental concern of trying to determine if public opinion influences the behaviour of political leaders, or if political leaders shape public opinion.³⁷ Without moving away on a tangent in an effort to address this problem, it is probably safe to assume that the answer is a little of both. Thus it is impossible to discount the influence of a cautious public, especially in Quebec, given the composition of the electoral map and the traditional 'block' voting pattern of Quebec. Moreover, according to Charlotte Gray, an official in External Affairs acknowledged to her that 'public opinion polls had a significant impact' on ministers and the shaping of policy.³⁸ Therefore given the cautious attitude of the public, especially with regards to an offensive role rather than a strictly defensive one, prudence was the best course for Ottawa to steer. This translated into a modest presence in the Gulf and limited liability.

The Gulf War took place forty years after the Korean War. A cultural analysis assumes that culture will have some degree of continuity, although change would not be out of place, especially given the difference in the global order from 1950 to 1990. There are a number of obvious similarities between the Canadian response in 1990 and that of 1950. To state some of these: an initial naval response, the use of the United Nations as the key diplomatic network, a limited and cautious military response and finally,

participation in a conflict outside the area of direct Canadian interest. There are also some obvious differences. For example, the Prime Minister and the cabinet made initial contributions to the Gulf conflict almost unilaterally. By contrast, during the Korean War the government had full parliamentary support. Although the show of support, in terms of manpower and equipment, was limited in both cases, the contribution to the Gulf Conflict paled in comparison to Korea. However, if the goal of the Canadian government was to return from the Gulf with Canadian assets and manpower intact and with no losses, then the government's cautious approach can be considered a success. Without a doubt however, the most significant shift was the willingness of the Canadian government to allow Canadian strategic assets to be commanded by other nations, and vice versa. In one sense there appears to be a similarity between the present and Canadian intervention behaviour at the beginning of the last century, when Canadian military assets were commanded by British generals. However in another sense, it appears that Canada has accepted another role, no longer being commanded, by also participating in the command process.

What does this mean in terms of Canadian strategic culture? Canadian strategic culture, when analyzed through interventions identified as war, has not significantly changed over the course of forty years. The Canadian government remains committed to being perceived as possessing, both internationally and nationally, an autonomous foreign policy. At the same time however, the Canadian government prefers to err on the side of caution when dealing with the domestic political body, and potential opposition to international responses. Although there appear to be various nuances between the

Korean and the Gulf wars in terms of government action, the overall approach remained the same.

Notes

- ¹ Canada's Military Legacy: The Gulf War (1990-91) www.dnd.ca/menu/legacy/gulf_e.htm 4/9/01.
- ² John Kirton and Donald Munton, Canadian Foreign Policy: Selected Cases (Toronto: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 1992) p.382.
- ³ Andrew Cooper, Richard Higgott and Kim Richard Nossal, Relocating Middle Powers: Australia and Canada in a Changing World Order (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1993) p.138.
- ⁴ Andrew Cooper, Richard Higgott and Kim Richard Nossal, 'Bound to follow? Leadership and followership in the Gulf conflict' Political Science Quarterly 106, 3 Fall 1991 p.402.
- ⁵ Fen Hampson and Christopher Maule eds. Canada among Nations 1990-91: After the Cold War (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, Inc., 1991) p.268.
- ⁶ David Haglund, 'Canada and the international politics of oil: Latin American source of supply and import vulnerability in the 1980s' Canadian Journal of Political Science 25, 2 June 1982 pp.259-298.
- ⁷ Hampson and Maule, Canada Among Nations 1090-91, p.269.
- ⁸ Cooper, Higgott and Nossal, 'Bound to follow?' p.399.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, p.402.
- ¹⁰ Jean Morin and Richard Gimblett, Operation Friction: The Canadian Forces in the Persian Gulf 1990-91 (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1997) pg.158-59; and Samuel Walker 'Interoperability at the speed of sound: Modernizing the CF-18 Hornet' in David Haglund ed. Over Here and Over There: Canada-US Defence Cooperation in an Era of Interoperability (Kingston: Conference of Defence Associations Institute, 2001) pp.259-61.
- ¹¹ Walker, 'Interoperability at the speed of sound', p.263.
- ¹² Munton and Kirton, Canadian Foreign Policy, p.383.
- ¹³ Morin and Gimblett, Operation Friction, p.38.
- ¹⁴ Cooper, Higgott and Nossal, Relocating Middle Powers, p.140.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.129.
- ¹⁶ Morin and Gimblett, Operation Friction, p.24.
- ¹⁷ Hampson and Maule, Canada among Nations 1990-9, p.268-69.
- ¹⁸ Bernard Wood, 'The Gulf crisis and the future of world order' Canadian Defence Quarterly 20, 5 April 1991 p.23.
- ¹⁹ Morin and Gimblett, Operation Friction, p.127. See also Cooper, Higgott and Nossal, Relocating Middle Powers, p.137-38.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.14.
- ²¹ Cooper, Higgott and Nossal, Relocating Middle Powers, p.130.
- ²² *Ibid.* p.122.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, p.124.
- ²⁴ Morin and Gimblett, Operation Friction, p.27.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.28.
- ²⁶ Ann Hibbard and T.A. Keenleyside, 'The press and the Persian Gulf Crisis: The Canadian angle' Canadian Journal of Communication 20,2 Spring 1995 p.256.
- ²⁷ 'Most oppose involvement in Gulf War' Toronto Star December 27, 1990 p.A27.
- ²⁸ 'Canadians back war, lack thirst for blood' Winnipeg Free Press January 23, 1991 p.1,4.
- ²⁹ Hibbard and Keenleyside 'The press and the Persian Gulf crisis' p.257.
- ³⁰ 'Support for Gulf War climbs sharply' Toronto Star February 22, 1991 p.A23.
- ³¹ Morin and Gimblett Operation Friction p.171-75.
- ³² *Ibid.*, p.172.
- ³³ Toronto Star December 27, 1990 p.A23.
- ³⁴ Winnipeg Free Press January 23, 1991 p.1,4.
- ³⁵ Toronto Star February 22, 1991 p.A23.
- ³⁶ Hibbard and Keenleyside 'The press and the Persian Gulf crisis' p.257-58.

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- ³⁷ For a discussion of societal influences on foreign policy development and execution see: Kim Richard Nossal, Politics of Canadian Foreign Policy 3rd ed. (Toronto: Prentice Hall Canada, Inc, 1997) pp.117-130.
- ³⁸ Charlotte Gray, 'Home grown skirmishes: Canada and the war' Peace and Security 6(3) Autumn 1991 p.8.

Chapter 6:

The Kosovo War

It has been said that what one sees, depends on where one stands. This observation rings true when one looks at the diversity of analysis that has entered the public press pertaining to the war in Kosovo. In the aftermath of the Kosovo crisis the seventy-eight day air war prosecuted by NATO jets has given rise to a wide variety of issues and perspectives. Canadian political leaders have spoken of the success of using the military instrument in the context of human security and humanitarian intervention.¹ Those more inclined towards an operational analysis have repeatedly sung the praises of Canadian airmen and the capacity of Canadian F-18 fighter jets to rise above and beyond the challenges of modern warfare, all while carrying a disproportional share of duty.² Still others have opted to see the Canadian and the NATO roles in the Kosovo air campaign as leaving a less than positive reflection on NATO and the nations involved in the air war.³ Some analysts have even taken the opportunity to use the crisis in Kosovo as a test of NATO adaptability and resilience in post-Cold War Europe.⁴ What has yet to appear, however, is an analysis of the Canadian role in the Kosovo crisis using the lens of strategic culture as the scope from which to view Canadian participation. In other words, was Canadian participation in the Kosovo air war consistent with what one would expect given the characteristics of Canadian strategic culture?

The claim has been made to this point that Canadian strategic culture is informed by two central characteristics. The first is that Canadian intervention has been undertaken as a means of strengthening Canadian sovereignty both on the international and national levels. However, as the point was raised in the previous chapter,

interoperability does pose some challenge to the sovereignty/intervention concept. Second, military intervention initiated by the Canadian government is subject to the restraint implied or perceived to be implied by the domestic population. Primary to both of these characteristics is the constructivist understanding that the ideas animating the actual events form the key focus of analysis. Therefore it is not enough to examine the Canadian material contribution to the Kosovo War, although it is necessary to be aware of the level of involvement. Rather the focus is to uncover the ideas that played a pivotal role in determining the Canadian political and military role in the Kosovo War.

From the outset of involvement in the Kosovo War the Canadian government made it clear that its forces were intended to remain under the control, although not necessarily the command, of Canadian leadership. Art Eggleton reiterated this belief during a speech given a few months after the bombing campaign had ceased. In his speech Eggleton stressed that no responsible government involved in the NATO alliance would be willing to put its military assets and personnel in peril without being fully involved in the decision-making process.⁵ This belief was carried into the operational theatre in the form of a review and validation process for assigned bombing targets. For every mission flown and every bomb dropped by Canadian planes and Canadian pilots, a Canadian Forces legal officer examined the assigned target with regards to the latter's legitimacy and relevance to Canadian and international legal standards. In cases where the relevance of the target was questionable, the final decision to engage or not to engage was made by a Canadian Task Force Commander.⁶

Although the appearance of a sovereign foreign policy was put forward by the Canadian government and the Minister of National Defence there appears to have existed

questions in the minds of, in particular, political leaders as to the need to assert a sovereign Canadian stance. The idea of declaring autonomy on the world stage may have stemmed from the perception that Canada played only a small role in trying to solve the Balkan crisis. Dashwood notes that Canada played an active role in trying to bring about a diplomatic solution in Kosovo, but at the same time one has to keep in mind that there were many players and Canada was not amongst the most important.⁷ The fact that Canada was excluded from being a national participant in the Contact Group⁸ speaks to the belief that other international players saw Canada as a small player. The Contact Group, which had been formed to resolve the Bosnian conflict, consisted of members from the United States, Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, the UN Security Council and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and NATO. Moreover, as Dashwood notes, the exclusion from the Contact Group proved to be a sore point for the Canadian government.⁹

During the First World War Prime Minister Borden was beset with discontent concerning the level of influence Canada had been accorded in the war effort. He believed that through making a significant contribution to the war, Canada should have a status equal to other sovereign nations to direct the war. His response was to augment the number of Canadian soldiers in the hope that a substantial material effort would enhance Canadian influence in the direction of the war. Eighty-five years later Canadian decision-makers were faced with a similar problem.

Canada had been active in the former Yugoslavia since 1991 in a variety of capacities. The activities included the European Monitoring Mission in Yugoslavia, UN Committee of Experts, UN Protection Force in Yugoslavia, Sarajevo airlift, Operation

Deny Flight, enforcement of the embargo of the former Yugoslavia, UN Mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina, IFOR and SFOR.¹⁰ Irrespective of this history or involvement in Balkan crises, Canada was excluded from having nation status on the Contact Group, mandated with resolving the Balkan conflict. The Canadian response was to seek influence through the augmentation of force levels, the consolidation of forces already present in the former Yugoslavia, as well as the use of international bodies on which Canada did have representation, including the United Nations and NATO.

Repeatedly throughout and after the conflict had come to an end Canadian political leaders expressed strong support for not only the actions undertaken by the leadership of the UN, but also those actions undertaken by NATO. That the Canadian government should seek international solutions through the UN is nothing new. However choosing an intervention route through a collective defence institution such as NATO offers a challenge to interpreting Canadian strategic culture. From the time of involvement in the Korean War, Canada had stood firmly supportive of collective security action undertaken by the UN. This is not to say that Canada did not support commitments to NATO, rather to the contrary: Canada had always been supportive of NATO, forward deploying a large proportion of military assets in Europe between the early 1950s and the early 1990s, in support of NATO. However, the UN fit the need for Canadian interventionism; it provided a means of collective security. By contrast NATO had always been an organization for the purpose of collective defence. Indeed, Canadian leaders made it no secret that the United Nations was the preferred institution in which Canada wished to pursue intervention.¹¹ However, with the ever increasing role of NATO in global security issues and Canada already feeling inadequate next to other

global players, the preferred option was to lend increased support to NATO in both political and military terms. Commitment, understood as limited liability, being one half of Canadian strategic culture, made the likelihood of Canadian support for NATO all the more predictable.

In October of 1998 the Minister of National Defence, Art Eggleton, justified Canadian support to the Kosovo air campaign in terms of tradition and history. Minister Eggleton stated: 'Canadian participation with our allies in Kosovo is in every way consistent with our traditional approach to international security threats and the protection of human rights. We have always been ready to join the international community in opposing threats to stability and peace'.¹² Whether or not Canadian participation in Kosovo is consistent with the Canadian approach to protecting human rights is arguable. What is less contentious is the statement about Canada being 'ready to join the international community'. In the early years after confederation until the end of the Second World War Canada relied on joining the international community understood at that time to be the Empire. During the Cold War and into the post-Cold War period the United Nations, as well as NATO, replaced the Empire as the choice of partner for Canadian participation in war. Even in light of the current anti-terrorist war, it is too early to say, with any certainty, if NATO will become the dominant basis for participation in future wars. There is, however, a consistent pattern of Canada believing in the need to have a more powerful military sponsor before committing to any intervention.¹³

Although Canada had been committed on the ground in terms of peacekeeping, legal advisors and monitors since 1991, the allocation of military assets pertinent to the

Kosovo bombing campaign was consistent with past interventions. The first of the military hardware allocated to the NATO strike force was committed on October 12th, 1998. This commitment consisted of six CF-18 fighter aircraft, one KC-130 tanker aircraft and approximately 180 military personnel. Moreover, the news release announcing the deployment of Canadian forces to the NATO campaign stressed the fact that the decision had been supported by Parliament.¹⁴ The commitment was subsequently increased, first to twelve fighters and then to eighteen fighters. Each increase in planes was matched with appropriate increases in pilots and ground crew. There are three important characteristics of the Canadian deployment to Kosovo, each of which is consistent with military interventions since 1945; they are support of Parliament, gradual increase of military commitment, and deployment into relatively secure positions.

What is critically important about the three characteristics identified above is that they are dictated by the idea of domestic constraint. As with past interventions the Canadian government was quick to seek legitimacy for action through the approval of Parliament. This idea seems to stem from the past idea, illustrated in Chapter 3, that one method to illustrate Canadian autonomy was to seek legitimacy from the Canadian Parliament rather than the British Parliament. In more contemporary situations Canada has had to present her decisions as being autonomous of American demands and decisions, as illustrated by certain criticism directed at the government during the Gulf War. During the House of Commons debate on April 27, 1999, Prime Minister Chretien assured the House that should NATO request Canadian ground forces for combat the House would be consulted before any decision was made.¹⁵ The emphasis in this

statement is found in a NATO request for forces rather than an American request, as in the case of the Gulf and the assurance that Parliament would have the final input.

Despite the efforts to present an autonomous foreign policy image the Canadian government continued to come under attack for following the American foreign policy lead. Indeed, in some instances, even politicians admit that they followed rather than led. In the words of Art Eggleton: 'So let there be no doubt: in going to Kosovo, we followed our instincts as well as our allies'.¹⁶ Nossal and Roussel have suggested that Canada was happy to follow a leader into the Kosovo War. Canada was happy that the international community was taking human security seriously. Canada was happy that Washington was in charge and was willing to use force to end the humanitarian crisis in Kosovo. Finally, the Canadian government was happy because Canada could participate without having to commit a great deal of material or human resources to the conflict.¹⁷

The second characteristic consistent with previous Canadian interventions is the gradual build up of military personnel and equipment. In the post-World War Two period this pattern has been faithfully adhered to during all three wars in which Canada participated. Canadian political leaders have consistently demonstrated a pattern of limited commitment. The slow build up to arms in any given Canadian war effort is informed by ideas cast during Canada's first seventy-five years, ideas equally evident in the actions of Laurier, King and even Borden¹⁸. Moreover they are ideas that reflect an awareness of domestic will. During the Korean War and the Gulf War Canadian political leaders made efforts to gauge public opinion and to act accordingly. During the Gulf War public opinion polls were tools to which the political leadership was sensitive.

Interestingly the Canadian public was fully supportive of participating in the Kosovo War. On April 10th a National Post public opinion poll indicated that 79% of all respondents approved of NATO air strikes, and that 57% were in favor of using ground forces in Kosovo. Moreover even in Quebec 73% approved of NATO air strikes, while 52% approved of using ground forces.¹⁹ Does the support for NATO air operations from the Canadian public illustrate a shift in Canadian strategic culture, whereby Canadians are more inclined to support participation in war, or are there alternative explanations?

One of the possible explanations for explaining the enthusiasm with which the Canadian public supported the war in Kosovo is to explain how the public perceived the war. It is possible that the Canadian public felt so strongly about the humanitarian goals in Kosovo that they were willing to enter into a war to promote those beliefs. From the outset the Canadian government promoted the campaign in Kosovo as being in line with Canadian humanitarian goals. Moreover, Canadian daily newspapers rarely referred to Kosovo as a war or potential war. A survey of the Toronto Star and the Globe and Mail found that during the period January 1st until March 24th, 121 articles were published about the build up to conflict in Kosovo. However, only in one article was the word 'war' used in the title.²⁰ This is in contrast to a period of similar duration before the Gulf War (November 1 – January 16), where I found 284 articles on the Persian Gulf, in which the word 'war' was used in 51 titles.²¹ Although the evidence is not conclusive, it does suggest that the media were presenting the war in Kosovo as something other than a war, leading the public to be more supportive of an offensive military role, or not fully clear of the implications stemming from involvement.

Dashwood argues that the willingness of the Canadian government to use force in Kosovo created a significant dilemma. Participation in a bombing campaign that was without UN endorsement was ground breaking behaviour for Canadian foreign policy.²² Dashwood goes on to argue that Canada was willing to act without the authorization of the United Nations for reasons of human security. The question that arises from Dashwood's claim is: why did the Canadian government feel Kosovo was worthy of aggressive military intervention, when many other violent conflicts are not?²³ Dashwood may be correct in identifying human tragedy as one of the factors influencing the Canadian decision to participate in the Kosovo bombing campaign; however it was far from the only factor. More important to the Canadian government was the fact that there was broad political support across the entire House of Commons for Canadian action in Kosovo. In other words, the Canadian government was in the clear politically to engage in an air war over Kosovo. Mindful of the potential for political fallout, the Canadian government augmented the force slowly, punctuating the air campaign with humanitarian aid and the acceptance of 5,000 refugees from Kosovo, and relying heavily on the media to shape not only public opinion²⁴ but the perspective of domestic political actors as well.

The third characteristic consistent with previous Canadian interventions is the deployment of Canadian military forces to relatively secure positions. There appears to be a certain amount of pride taken within some circles that the Canadian military emerged from the Kosovo bombing campaign with no losses of men or equipment. Indeed the 'success' of the Kosovo mission has been turned into an argument advocating the maintenance of a credible air force.²⁵ From another perspective Paul Robinson questions the ethical nature of fighting a war using what he identifies as immoral

methods. Robinson states that those who present themselves as humanitarian crusaders 'may be blinded by the righteousness of their cause and the immorality of their methods.'²⁶ Robinson's article stresses that Western leaders have become increasingly sensitive to negative political consequences that are associated with high levels of casualties within their own ranks. The result has been a dominant western military concept known as force protection.²⁷

The idea of force protection is particularly applicable to the Canadian case and ideas that were developed during the First and Second World Wars. During the first two world wars Canada struggled to have control over Canadian troops in terms of command and also, particularly during the Second World War, to limit Canadian involvement in wars beyond areas of Canadian interests. The result was that during the Korean War Canada committed naval forces and, towards the end of the operation, combat troops. During the Gulf War, again the commitment was naval forces augmented by aircraft, involved predominately in the enforcement of economic sanctions. It should therefore come as no surprise that Canada was prepared to support an operation that kept equipment and manpower out of harm's way, or as King may have suggested, that limited Canadian liability.

It seems almost frivolous to call a seventy-eight day bombing campaign prosecuted by one side with little to no resistance a war, but it is consistent with the definition of war presented in the first chapter. In terms of strategic culture, however, was the intervention in Kosovo consistent with what one would expect from Canada? The short answer is yes. During the build up to the crisis and the war itself Canada repeatedly made efforts to enhance the appearance of executing an autonomous foreign

policy. This autonomous behaviour was illustrated by the retention of control over bombing targets, especially the need for targets to be cleared by Canadian military lawyers. Furthermore, the fact that deployment was debated as an issue in the House before the fact, exemplifies the desire to present an image of a nation deciding for itself whether or not to engage in a coalition conflict.

Aside from the desire to present the image of an autonomous foreign policy, Canadian decision-makers were restrained by the ideas of domestic constraint. The fact that the government had near total consent within the House of Commons to participate in the Kosovo air campaign should have cleared the way for full engagement from the start. However, consistent with past behaviours the government opted for deployment slowly, ever conscious of possible domestic repercussions. Moreover the deployment of Canadian troops, as well as the operational standards under which the conflict took place ensured the almost total security of the combatants, to the point where after the fact Canada was able to claim success with no losses of personnel or platforms. Finally, participation in the Kosovo campaign was given the air of political and therefore domestic legitimacy through open debate in the House of Commons. The opportunity to voice political opposition to Canadian actions in Kosovo was never restricted. However, it is fair to say that the confusing nature of conflict in the Balkans, magnified by the manner in which the conflict was presented in the media, in all likelihood left most Canadians perplexed as to the true intricacies of the conflict.

The intervention in Kosovo leaves behind some interesting questions with regards to the dynamic nature of strategic culture. If indeed strategic culture is a combination of commitment and constraint, does the shift in one part of the formula automatically signify

a shift in the other? Canadian military forces went to war in Kosovo with almost unanimous support of Canadian political leaders and citizens. Under similar conditions will the commitment levels also increase or will government decision-makers continue to be restrained by a preconceived idea of Canadian domestic will? Or was Kosovo simply an anomaly, perceived by the public as a humanitarian operation, yet understood by decision-makers, preferring to err on the side of caution, as war? For Canadian political leaders the primary goal is the continuation and maintenance of political power. In simplest terms that means keeping the electorate content. It is possible, therefore, to argue that since the people wanted the government to do more during the Kosovo crisis, then the wisest action, on behalf of the government, would have been to comply with public demands. However, no Canadian government wants to explain to their domestic population why the young men and women of its military are dying for a 'humanitarian' cause. Moreover, no Canadian government that has an interest in continuing to hold political power will gamble with public support by sending the military into a situation of potential disaster.

Kosovo was, for the Canadian government, a blueprint on how to prosecute a war, maintain public support, and assure the maintenance of political power. First, join an international coalition. Second, do not call it a war. Finally, do everything in your power to assure that all platforms and personnel return in the same state they departed.

Notes

¹ "Canadian lessons from Kosovo" Speaking notes for the Honourable Art Eggleton Minister of National Defence September 30, 1999 Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
www.dnd.ca/eng/archive/speeches/30septharvard_s_e.htm 4/4/01

- ² David Bashow, et.al. 'Mission ready: Canada's role in the Kosovo air campaign' Canadian Military Journal 1, 1 Spring 2000
- ³ Paul Robinson, 'Ready to kill but not to die: NATO strategy in Kosovo' International Journal 54, 4 Autumn 1999 pp.671-82. Also Shane Taylor INAT: Images of Serbia and the Kosovo Conflict (Ottawa: Esprit de Corps Books, 2000).
- ⁴ See for example William Peters, 'Beyond Kosovo: Will Canada's army fight for the Western alliance?' in D. Haglund ed., New NATO, New Century: Canada, the United States and the Future of the Atlantic Alliance (Kingston: Centre for International Relations, 2000) pp.187-212.
- ⁵ 'Canadian lessons from the Kosovo crisis' p.4.
- ⁶ Bashow, et.al. 'Mission ready: Canada's role in the Kosovo air campaign' www.journal.dnd.ca/vol1/no1_e/balkans_ebalk3_e.html pp.11/16.
- ⁷ Hevina Dashwood, 'Canada's participation in the NATO-led intervention in Kosovo' in Maureen Molot and Fen Hampson ed., Canada Among Nations 2000: Vanishing Borders (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2000) p.288.
- ⁸ Although not having nation status on the Contact Group, Canada did have access through NATO and other international organizations.
- ⁹ Dashwood, 'Canada's participation in Kosovo', p.288.
- ¹⁰ See Joseph Jockel, The Canadian Forces: Hard Choices, Soft Power (Toronto: Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, 1999) pp.18-22.
- ¹¹ 'Canadian lessons from the Kosovo Crisis' p.1. also 'House of Commons debate on Kosovo' www.dnd.ca/eng/archive/speeches/mndhc_s_e.htm 4/10/01 p.2.
- ¹² 'House of Commons debate on Kosovo' October 1, 1998 www.dnd.ca/eng/archive/speeches/kosovo_s_e.htm 4/10/01 p.1.
- ¹³ Joel Sokolsky 'Over there with Uncle Sam: Peacekeeping, the 'Trans-European bargain.' And the Canadian Forces' in David Haglund ed., What NATO for Canada? (Kingston: Queen's University, Centre for International Relations, 2000) pp.15-36.
- ¹⁴ 'Canada to participate in NATO military enforcement action in Kosovo' DFAIT news release no.242 October 12, 1998 www.dnd.ca/eng/archive/1998/oct98/kosovo_n_e.htm 4/10/01.
- ¹⁵ House of Commons debate April 27, 1999 www.dnd.ca/eng/archive/speeches/pmkosovo_s_e.htm 4/10/01
- ¹⁶ 'Canadian lessons from the Kosovo crisis' p.5.
- ¹⁷ Kim Nossal and Stephane Roussel 'Canada and the Kosovo War: The Happy Follower' in Pierre Martin and Mark Brawley eds., Alliance Politics, Kosovo, and NATO's War: Allied Force or Forced Allies? (New York, Palgrave, 2001) p.195.
- ¹⁸ This is not to claim that the build up to arms during the First World War was slow. Quite the opposite is true. However, the Canadian experience between 1914-18, directed largely by Borden, laid the foundation for the practice of restraint in war participation.
- ¹⁹ Nossal and Rousell, 'Canada and the Kosovo War', p.191.
- ²⁰ That article was written on Feb. 1 by Lewis Mackenzie 'Kosovo: Canada's next war?' Globe and Mail
- ²¹ This survey examined articles published in the Globe and Mail and the Toronto Star for a period of approximately three months before the commencement of allied military offensives. The articles are catalogued in the CBCA Index. The search words were 'Kosovo' and 'Persian Gulf'.
- ²² Molot and Hampson ed., Canada among Nations 2000: Vanishing Borders p.294.
- ²³ Dashwood also raises this question, commenting that while there is a certain measure of public tolerance for loss of life in humanitarian missions in Europe, this tolerance is likely much lower for other parts of the world where Canada's historic ties are weaker. *Ibid.*, p.298.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.296.
- ²⁵ Bashow, 'Mission ready: Canada's role in the Kosovo air campaign' p.
- ²⁶ Robinson, 'Ready to kill but not to die', p.671.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.674.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

During a recent discussion a professor suggested that perhaps the ‘commitment/capability gap’ was Canadian strategic culture.¹ At the outset there appears to be a good deal of truth to this observation, but deeper analysis hints that commitment/capability gap is really only one half of Canadian strategic culture. The other half of Canadian strategic culture is closer to an observation made by Joel Sokolsky. Professor Sokolsky notes that, when it comes to overseas deployments, Canada has a tradition of asking not “how much is enough?” but rather, “how much is just enough?” Or, as he states ‘what is the minimal level of forces that need to be maintained so as to enable Canada to participate in multilateral operations overseas?’² Within these two observations is the dilemma that is Canadian strategic culture, an impasse I call the ‘commitment/constraint dilemma’.

The ‘commitment/capability gap’, as it was coined by Rod Byers many years ago, starts with an assumption of power capabilities. In his 1985 study for the Macdonald Royal Commission on the economy, Byers concluded that ‘Canadian commitments to NATO and Western security are excessive and unrealistic given the current size and capabilities of the Canadian Forces’.³ Byers’ analysis offers two observations that are quite distinct from each other. First, he notes Canadian commitments. In recognizing the number of commitments towards NATO and western security, Byers touches on the first half of Canadian strategic culture, the need to be seen and perceived as an autonomous international actor. However, his realist perspective becomes clear with the assumption that capability is the means or the requirement to maintain commitment. In other words, commitment to NATO and western security requires the capacity to project a (objective)

level of power. Canadian commitment, however, is not uniquely about the projection of power; thus the subjective level of force projection is less than a determining factor.

Commitment is simply about a desire that grew from the experiences of Canada's first seventy-five years, to project the image of an autonomous nation.

Canadian strategic culture rests on two pillars, commitment and constraint.

However, there is nothing that suggests these two pillars need to be, or indeed are, in any way compatible. In fact, it is the incompatibility between these two ideas that has set, and will continue to influence, the pattern for intervention policy. Moreover, the origins and logic for the development of these two images can be traced to specific factors in Canada's pre-Cold War period. Yet despite a multitude of changes during the Cold War and post-Cold War periods, Canada has continued to opt for a similar pattern of intervention. This suggests that Canadian intervention behaviour depends less upon power and position and more on custom and convention.

The evidence reviewed suggests that from the point of Confederation onward Canada was searching for a means through which it would become an internationally recognized autonomous state. It seemed only natural that Canadian political leaders would look to Canada's closest ally and also to Canada's closest neighbor for an understanding of how an autonomous state should behave. Both the United States and Great Britain, understood as being autonomous states, presented images of states that used the projection of power as a means to achieve their foreign policy goals. It followed, therefore, that Canada, in order to present the image of an autonomous state, also had to participate in the international community through the projection of power, or, as this study examines, through participation in war.

One of the key questions that arises asks that if Canada were intent on presenting the image of an autonomous nation through the use of force why did it not develop and maintain a significant force structure during the inter-war period? There are two reasons why it did not. First, as Sir John A. Macdonald explained years earlier, Canadian political and business leaders were already too deeply involved in building a country. Canada did not have the resources to field significant military forces and to also build a national infrastructure. In a period of scarce resources, the choice was made to concentrate on the development of a national infrastructure, particularly transportation. Although this reason seems to suggest a realist perspective, making decisions based on material capabilities, it was actually a decision based on domestic considerations, informed by resource pressures. The key consideration for Macdonald, and reiterated by King, was the idea that Canada could not be maintained as a sovereign nation without linking the regions with a national infrastructure. By directing resources towards the development of national infrastructure the government was directly addressing the domestic needs of national unity. In other words the image of domestic unity and cohesion was dominant over the image of international actor.

The second reason is that traditionally Great Britain provided for direct Canadian defences. The image of Canada as part of a greater whole, the Empire, continued to play a role in the minds of many political leaders as well as a large proportion of the domestic population, especially where issues of external affairs were concerned. This, coupled with the priority given to resource distribution, made the development of a standing military force less than top priority. Therefore, for two reasons Canadian political leaders were not more inclined towards the development of a military force for the purpose of power projection. First, the cost in terms of material resources and the potential cost to

Canadian domestic cohesion tempered military spending. Second, the belief that Canada could achieve, in the words of Carl Berger, a 'sense of power' through participation in the Empire without the associated costs of maintaining standing military forces, motivated Canadian political leaders not to develop large standing military forces in Canada for the purpose of force projection.

Although the image of the 'autonomous state' was shaped by the observed roles exemplified by other states, the more powerful determinant of Canada's autonomous image was in fact domestic in nature. Indeed the ethnic and regional cleavages that characterize the Canadian cultural and geographic landscape, initially French-English and later on Western discontent, did more to shape the image of Canadian autonomy and Canada's role in military intervention than the more traditional material and economic considerations. Had Canada been a mono-ethnic society the role it played in the international community would likely have been much different. A dominant British domestic population would certainly have become more involved in the Empire's foreign excursions, whereas, a dominant Canadien(ne) population would likely have been more isolationist. As it was, having two dominant cultural groups, and later a regional force of Western discontent, Canadian national leaders were forced into a position of compromise. As it turned out, perhaps compromise was the best path to the development of Canadian autonomy.

Canadian strategic culture, as it pertains to participation in war, responds to the real and perceived demands of the Canadian domestic population, over and above the perceived and real demands of the international community. Moreover, having traditionally sought participation within the parameters of the Empire and the collective action it entailed, Canada continues to be a broad supporter of collective intervention. To

a certain extent these two ideas are non-complementary. The political leadership seeks to participate in collective intervention, while at the same time understanding the constraints of the domestic population. The net effect is a cautious Canadian participation.

Fortunately or not, the reluctance of the international community to commit to interventions that may have human (and therefore political) costs has had the net effect of allowing Canada to maintain a credible, although less than vanguard, international position. A change in the position of the international community, accepting the cost associated with the loss of human life, may leave Canada on the sidelines.

If as I have claimed, domestic pressure, either perceived or real, has constrained the actions of the Canadian government when it comes to being involved in war, are there variables that exist with the capacity to shift domestic pressure in support of greater participation in war? The Kosovo War gives us some evidence that Canadians will be supportive of war given the appropriate circumstances. Early evidence suggests that technology and the concept of 'human security' are important variables in developing a permissive public opinion. As was illustrated in the previous chapter the Kosovo War deviated slightly from Korea and the Gulf in the sense that Canadians were fully supportive of participation, yet the government approach was cautious engagement. Remember, however, that participation was motivated by a desire to avoid a humanitarian disaster, not by a desire to prosecute a war. Moreover, the terms of engagement almost ensured complete safety of Canadian military personnel. Does Kosovo, then, represent a potential shift in Canadian strategic culture, as the second half of the commitment/constraint dilemma becomes the commitment/consent agreement? Without going into detail, it seems that there is one golden rule that applies to all governments whether they rule legitimately or illegitimately, democratically or not. All governments

have at their root an interest in maintaining power. No Canadian government has ever gone down to defeat because of a cautious approach to participating in 'other people's wars'. However, the potential political backlash that could result from the loss of life and equipment in 'other people's wars' is significant. Since governments continue to be slow to change and public opinion is malleable, caution in actions remains the best strategy for governments.

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks against the World Trade towers and the Pentagon, the world has been called to support the US led coalition to wage a war against terrorism.⁴ Canadian Prime Minister Chretien was amongst the first to offer up support for the American effort. However, support came, as noted by Toronto Sun columnist Rosie DiManno, in the form of kind words but not deeds.⁵ DiManno's article carries a note of surprise and bewilderment that the Canadian Prime Minister would be quick to offer up advice but not so fast to offer a more 'significant contribution'. The suggestion is that a more 'significant contribution' would come in the form of a material commitment to fighting what Minister Manley has called Canada's war against terrorism⁶.

Almost a full month after the terrorist attacks on the United States, Canada offered up a support package.⁷ This package included, as the most significant contribution, naval forces, for a conflict that is taking place in a land locked, under developed nation.⁸ I suggest, however, that Prime Minister Chretien's cautious actions are in keeping with what is to be expected given the defining features of Canadian strategic culture. The Prime Minister is continuing a long tradition of wanting to be part of the international community, while at the same time exercising restraint and caution so as to not 'perk the interest' of the domestic population.

Notes

¹ Thanks to Dr. Charles Pentland for making this suggestion.

² Joel Sokolsky, 'Over there with Uncle Sam: Peacekeeping, the "Trans-European bargain," and the Canadian Forces' in David Haglund editor, What NATO for Canada (Kingston: Centre for International Relations, Queen's University, 2000) pp.31-32.

³ D. Middlemiss and J. Sokolsky, Canadian Defence: Decisions and Determinants (Toronto: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1989) p.44.

⁴ 'America's ready, so is Britain. But is the rest of the world prepared to join the war on terror?' Maclean's 114 (40) October 1, 2001 pp.15-22.

⁵ Rosie DiManno 'Kind words but no deeds from our PM' The Toronto Star September 26, 2001 p.A2.

⁶ John Geddes 'Ottawa's point man: John Manley appears to be becoming Canada's informal minister of war' Maclean's 114(40) October 1, 2001 pp.38-42.

⁷ The Canadian contribution was announced on October 8, 2001. See 'Speaking notes for the Honourable Art Eggleton Minister of National Defence Press Conference: Canadian military contributions' www.dnd.ca/eng/archive/speeches/2001/08oct01contrib_s_e.htm 10/31/01.

⁸ A current list of Canada's contribution to the coalition can be found at www.dnd.ca/menu/operations/apollo/index_e.htm 10/31/01.

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