

Canada's Defence Policies, 1987-1993: NATO, Operational Viability, and the Good Ally

by

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## **Abstract**

This thesis uses documents from the Department of Defence and the Department of External Affairs to analyze the defence policies introduced in the 1987 White Paper on Defence and the changes in defence priorities in the period 1987-1993. The paper announced that the navy would acquire a fleet of nuclear-powered submarines to defend Canada's North, and Canada's two land forces commitments to Europe were consolidated into a new division in West Germany. The purpose of the White Paper was to improve the functionality of Canada's military, offer a full commitment to NATO, and portray Canada as a good ally in the alliance. The end of the Cold War in 1989-1991 and a deep recession from 1989-1992 forced the government to reduce the military budget, and the White Paper policies never reached fruition. Canada's NATO allies valued Canada's forces in Europe, and the government was initially willing to fund a Task Force in Europe. The decision in 1992 to cancel the Task Force and focus on the core capabilities of the military damaged Canada-NATO relations, but Canada continued to be a contributing member of the alliance and a player in European security.

## **Acknowledgements**

I have to first and foremost thank my supervisor, Dr. Norman Hillmer, who patiently waded through several drafts of my ramblings on defensive neorealism and the overall defensive capabilities of NATO. I first met him in 2012 when I was trying to figure out what to do with my life, and he has helped me develop as a researcher and writer beyond what I thought I was capable of.

I am hesitant to name other professors that have helped me develop as a scholar lest I miss some, so I will instead simply state that the Carleton History Department and its faculty are indisputably the best history department in Canada. Any student that wants to learn how to do history (the discipline lacks a good verb) should seriously consider Carleton.

Many thanks to my family, I would name you all, but the thesis is long enough already. I am clearly related to you all, even if you occasionally doubt it. Thanks to my parents and my church for my good childhood, it was safe and peaceful.

I must also thank the many crazy little kids in my life; you guys have done a good job of keeping me sane. Don't ask me how kids keep me sane, I can't explain it. Perhaps kids are more enjoyable when they are someone else's children.

There are some people who I should probably not name here, but many thanks for your help, support, and friendship.

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## **Introduction**

Brian Mulroney's time as prime minister began during an escalating Cold War and ended as the world entered "the new world order" of the 1990s. His government's plans to re-equip and restructure Canada's armed forces as a Cold War military were announced in the 1987 White Paper on Defence. Two key elements of the paper were the acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines and the consolidation of Canada's European land force commitments into a new division in West Germany, with the CAST Brigade commitment to Norway redirected to serve as the third brigade of the division. These augmentations to the military's role in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), coupled with steady budget increases and the continuation of all ongoing equipment acquisitions, were meant to create a Canadian military that was capable of being a functional member of NATO's deterrence strategy. By creating an "operationally viable" military that offered a "full commitment" to NATO, the government intended to restore Canada's image as a good ally. The collapse of the Warsaw Pact and dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 formally ended the Cold War, rendering much of the White Paper obsolete. By 1993 the White Paper seemed to have been consigned to history, with the nuclear-powered submarine acquisition ended and Canada's forces in Europe withdrawn to Canada.

Throughout the period 1987-1993, much of Canada's defence policies stayed the same, and the basic defence strategy from the White Paper, cooperation with allies to ensure peace, was adapted to the new Europe. The paradigm shift of 1989-1991 and the conventional and nuclear parity agreements did not fully eliminate the threats to Canada. The possibility of Soviet intervention in Eastern Europe and the union's internal instability were a threat to European security. Yugoslavia's descent into civil war demonstrated that peace was not guaranteed. The

decision to withdraw all of Canada's stationed forces from Europe did not reduce the importance of Europe in Canada's defence policies. Canada continued to maintain troops in Canada earmarked for European defence, defended the North Atlantic, and financially supported NATO. Above all else, Canada's large peacekeeping contingent in Yugoslavia demonstrated that Canada would risk its troops to ensure peace in Europe.

This thesis follows the two themes of the good ally and operational viability in NATO from the publication of the White Paper in 1987 until the 1993 election. By using government documents that have, until now, been inaccessible the thesis can identify how those themes diverged, and what their separation did to Canada-NATO relations. From 1987 until 1990 the two themes were supportive of each other, but the pressure to reduce the federal deficit became more important than preserving a good image within the alliance. Starting in 1990, the Department of Defence prioritized the "core capabilities" of the military over stationing forces in Europe, an expense they thought no longer necessary. For two years the Department of External Affairs worked to keep a Canadian foothold on the continent, but ultimately the government decided that deficit-reduction took priority over Canada's relationship with NATO. Ironically, the decision to have no permanent forces in Europe was to an extent made to preserve the military's ability to defend Europe, albeit at a lower cost. The documents demonstrate that, from a purely military perspective, Canada did indeed continue to fulfill its alliance commitments. The fact that NATO is not a purely military alliance, but also a highly political organization, complicates the matter, but Canada's allegiance to the alliance and European security remained strong, even as the relationship deteriorated.

## Literature Review

The unexpectedly rapid transition from a bipolar world that was militarily focused on the Central European Front (the border between West Germany, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia) to a multipolar world characterized by low-level conflicts on multiple continents has created a clear division between Canada's Cold War policies and the military activities of the 1990s. The year 1992 is the watershed year: Canada's forces in Germany began withdrawing to Canada, marking the end of Canada's Cold War European role, and Canadian forces began their decade-long involvement in the disintegrating Yugoslavia. 1992 is also the year that scholars ceased to write about the White Paper defence policies as current events, but, as of 2017, the paper has not yet fully entered the realm of history. The historical works that do mention it are either "broad-sweep" works that address a topic or theme across decades or collections of essays on a particular topic. These works under-address the White Paper and its defence policies after its publication, and do not contain close to the same amount of analytical thought and consideration that "current event" writings from the years 1987-1992 provide.

British military historian Sir Michael Howard defines military history as the study of armed forces and the conduct of war. However, he acknowledges that those two areas of study alone cannot explain defence policy, and he allows for the inclusion of "economic, technological, logistical, social, and moral" factors into military history to present a fuller view of conflict.<sup>1</sup> *Understanding Canadian Defence*, by Desmond Morton, is one of the few works to address Canada's military history through a defence perspective that incorporates Howard's full range of considerations. Morton makes two arguments in the book. For all the criticism of Canada's military affairs, Canada has had a very successful defence policy and Canada's post-1945

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Howard, "What is Military History?" *History Today*, Volume 34, Issue 12, December 1984.

success comes from its alliances with more powerful nations, particularly NATO and the United States.<sup>2</sup> The attention that Morton gives to non-military affairs may seem out of place for a book about defence, but that highlights the influence of politics in defence history.<sup>3</sup> Canada's defence policies have always been a delicate balance between meeting the expectations of Canada's allies and not spending more than the public is willing to allow, a balance between a formal defence agreement and a social contract. Since Canada has never been able to provide its own defence, but has always relied upon its larger allies, Canadian defence is not only a negotiation between the Canadian electorate and the government but also between the government and other nations.<sup>4</sup> Morton's claim that Canadian defence policy has been successful is not based on Canadian military supremacy or victory in warfare, but on the fact that Canada has gone two centuries without being invaded, and has always been on the winning side in war.<sup>5</sup> Successful defence policy therefore does not equip Canada to win a war, but instead places Canada on the side that will win. That is a diplomatic act, a negotiation that uses Canada's military capabilities, as well as its geographic location and economy, as bargaining chips.

A good starting point for writing about the White Paper is Sean Maloney's essay "Better Late than Never: Defence during the Mulroney Years." The title reflects the general attitude of the White Paper itself, and Maloney lays out two relevant challenges of writing about defence policy in the Mulroney years in the context of their time: the scarcity of publicly available defence records and the difficulty of placing oneself in the Cold-War context of the White

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<sup>2</sup> Desmond Morton, *Understanding Canadian Defence*, (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2003). Xii and 13

<sup>3</sup> The Table of Contents shows that approximately half the book is about military affairs, while the other half is about Canadian society and politics.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, xii

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, xiii. The claim that Canada was always on the winning side is debatable, but Canada has certainly avoided catastrophic defeats or wars that ended in the humiliation of Canada and its allies.

Paper.<sup>6</sup> Maloney writes that the knowledge of the collapse of the communist bloc and the Soviet Union leads many scholars to dismiss defence policy in the Mulroney years as irrelevant. He reminds current scholars that the creators of the White Paper were not aware that in two years Canada's primary enemy would lose its ability to launch a surprise attack on Western Europe, and in two more years' time cease to exist. Morton makes the same point in *Understanding Canadian Defence*, stating that virtually no one expected the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Maloney's position as an outsider in military history could make him a valuable source on the inner workings of Canadian defence history. He self-identifies as "A Rogue Historian," and on his website he proudly displays his outsider status on a page called "Provocations."<sup>7</sup> The page contains several works that he claims were not published when he wrote them, often for "not conforming to the ideological slant of the publication in question." He writes that a senior member of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade warned him that, if he continued to write things in the media that were unfavourable to the department, he would not be eligible for research funding from them. He created his own website so he can "put everything up in one area of the site so the 'soft' censors in the media and the bureaucracy could go to hell." His research into Canadian military history is thorough and impressive, and he has factual support for arguments that is absent from many other works. The challenge of using any of his work is that he seems to take delight in displaying his outsider status, and one can wonder if this affects his research and writings. However, he should not be disregarded because of this: his works and his critique of Canadian defence history provide a solid starting point for original

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<sup>6</sup> Sean Maloney, "Better Late than Never: Defence during the Maloney Years," *Transforming the Nation: Canada and Brian Mulroney*, ed. Raymond B. Blake, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007). 132-163. Maloney also claims that government tampering with documents creates a problem when studying the White Paper. The Somali Inquiry investigated such claims concerning the Somalia Affair, but I have seen no evidence or allegations of such tampering with documents pertaining to Canada-NATO relations.

<sup>7</sup> "Provocations," *seanmmaloney.com*. Personal Website of Dr. Maloney, with much more content than his profile page on the Royal Military College of Canada website. Accessed July 27, 2017. <http://www.seanmmaloney.com/provocations/>.

research into the White Paper and defence policies under Mulroney. Two of his works provide a helpful background on Canada's land forces commitments to Europe, the CAST Brigade for Norway and Canadian Forces Europe in West Germany. *War Without Battles: Canada's NATO Brigade in Germany, 1951-1993* is a detailed history of the entirety of Canada's forces in West Germany, and unique to it is a description of how the new, consolidated Canadian division in Germany functioned for the short time that it existed.<sup>8</sup> "Purple Haze: Joint Planning in the Canadian Forces from Mobile Command to J-Staff, 1975-1991" is a brief history of the Department of National Defence and National Defence Headquarters, and offers insight into how defence policies were developed, including Canada's role in Norway.<sup>9</sup>

Scholars who have written about the White Paper since 1992 fall into three broad categories: military historians, political historians, and political scientists. In addition to Sean Maloney, three other historians have written about defence policies under Mulroney: J.L. Granatstein, Norman Hillmer, and Desmond Morton.<sup>10</sup> Of the four, Sean Maloney is the only one who writes strictly about military affairs, and his close relationship with the army has helped him blend writing military histories with writing about current military affairs. Granatstein has also written about both current military affairs and military history; he was a foreign affairs critic who gravitated to military history in the 1990s.<sup>11</sup> Norman Hillmer is a professor of history and international affairs, and the Canadian Encyclopedia lists him as an author of military and political histories.<sup>12</sup> He has written about defence policies under Mulroney both

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<sup>8</sup> Sean Maloney, *War Without Battles: Canada's NATO Brigade in Germany, 1951-1993*, (Whitby: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1997). 442-447

<sup>9</sup> Sean Maloney, "Purple Haze: Joint Planning in the Canadian Forces from Mobile Command to J-Staff, 1975-1991," *The Army Doctrine and Training Bulletin: Canada's Professional Journal on Army Issues*, Vol. 5, No. 4, Winter 2002-2003. Published by National Defence. 57-73

<sup>10</sup> Many authors have written works that touch on the White Paper, but these four authors have written sections that cover the period of 1984-1993 to a greater extent than referencing the White Paper.

<sup>11</sup> Stephen Azzi, "Jack Granatstein," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, October 13, 2009.

<sup>12</sup> Stephen Azzi, "George Norman Hillmer," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, September 3, 2009.

from a historical and international affairs perspective, and the latter is far more detailed than the former. Perhaps the best description of Hillmer is by Morton in *A Military History of Canada*, as a “diplomatic historian.”<sup>13</sup> McGill University’s website describes Morton as specializing in military, social, and industrial history.<sup>14</sup> These historians blend multiple disciplines in their writings, which can give multiple views of the same subject.

These authors have written broad-sweep books that briefly address the White Paper, and the similarities between the sections on defence in the Mulroney years are far more than the differences. Morton, in *A Military History of Canada*, is the only one author to address the peace movements and the viewpoints of other parties (the New Democratic Party and the Liberal Party) in the 1984 election campaign, and he addresses patronage in military procurement under Mulroney.<sup>15</sup> This may be his social historian side making its way into his military history. Morton spends a total of four pages on defence under Mulroney, the most of any of the works. Granatstein’s three pages in *Canada’s Army: Waging War and Keeping the Peace* adds little, but he acknowledges that the end of the Cold War did not bring peace to the world and that Canada’s military continued to operate in combat situations, such as Oka, the Gulf War, and the many operations in the former Yugoslavia.<sup>16</sup> The section entitled “Cold Warring” in Norman Hillmer and J.L. Granatstein’s book *Empire to Umpire: Canada and the World into the Twenty-*

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“Profile: Norman Hillmer,” *Department of History, Carleton University*, Accessed on the Carleton University website on December 30, 2015.

<sup>13</sup> Desmond Morton, *A Military History of Canada: from Champlain to Kosovo (Fourth Edition)*, (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1999). 271

<sup>14</sup> “Desmond Morton,” *McGill University, History and Classical Studies*, Accessed on the McGill University website on December 30, 2015.

<sup>15</sup> Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, 265-266

<sup>16</sup> J.L. Granatstein, *Canada’s Army: Waging War and Keeping The Peace (Second Edition)*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011). 377-379

*First Century* is the shortest section in the three works, and they address the role that improving relations with the United States played in Mulroney's "good ally" stance.<sup>17</sup>

These three works each contain one strong similarity: they barely address the White Paper's defence policies after 1989. Morton does not even mention the changes to defence policy, but leaves it assumed as he addresses the collapse of the communist bloc.<sup>18</sup> However, he considers the withdrawal of Canada's forces from Europe to be a separate issue, and spends two pages on that topic.<sup>19</sup> Hillmer and Granatstein write that the nuclear submarines became "a victim of budget cuts and the end of the Cold War," a very brief summary of how the White Paper policies unravelled.<sup>20</sup> The authors are correct that the drive to balance the budget and the breakup of Canada's primary enemy spelled the end of the White Paper policies, which is correct as far as it goes. However, none of them reflect the complexity of the five years after the White Paper, in which National Defence and External Affairs struggled to align Canada's defence policies with the rapidly changing world.

These authors each face the challenges listed by Maloney, particularly the lack of government documents created by the standard publication restrictions. Their books also cover large time periods (Morton begins before Europeans settled in Canada, Granatstein with New France, Hillmer and Granatstein with Wilfrid Laurier), which limits the amount of attention they can give to five years of defence policy. However, the authors could have better addressed the complexity rebuilding the military during a period of rapid change and Canada's role in NATO. Even Morton's two pages on the withdrawal barely addresses Canada's defence needs and

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<sup>17</sup> Norman Hillmer, J.L. Granatstein, *Empire to Umpire: Canada and the World into the Twenty-First Century (Second Edition)*, (Toronto; Thomas Nelson, 2008). 274-277

<sup>18</sup> Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, 266

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 275-277

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, 277

relationship with NATO. These scholars have often collaborated with each other to write books, and in books that are not co-authored they often name each other in the Acknowledgements section. Co-authorship and cooperation do not guarantee that they will agree with each other; they frequently and respectfully disagree with each other. However, the parallels in their writings concerning the White Paper suggests that they have approached the topic in similar ways, despite their scholarly differences.

A fourth historical work, *A National Force: The Evolution of Canada's Army, 1950-2000*, by former civil servant Peter Kasurak, contains a more thorough description of the White Paper and its costs, but his focus is on the land forces. It adds a valuable analysis of the planned expansion and integration of the reserves into the total force, which is barely addressed by other works. He notes that the White Paper pleased those who wished Canada to focus on the Central Front, but the plan to form a division fell short of the army's desire to have a corps in West Germany. Kasurak uses, among other sources, government and military sources from the Directorate of Heritage and History in his book. Like most other authors, Kasurak barely goes beyond 1989 when examining the paper, although he does assess how the 1989 budget affected the Paper's policies.<sup>21</sup> *A National Force* and Maloney's book *War Without Battles* are the two best sources on the White Paper programs between 1987 and 1989, and would serve as a good starting point for a study of how successful the government was in implementing the Paper's policies before ending them.<sup>22</sup>

Stephen Azzi states in *Reconcilable Differences: A History of Canada-US Relations* that "there is still much research to be done on Canadian-American relations in the Mulroney

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<sup>21</sup> Peter Kasurak, *A National Force: The Evolution of Canada's Army, 1950-2000*, (University of British Columbia Press, 2013). 203-207

<sup>22</sup> This thesis focusses on the commitment side of the commitment-capability gap since it is less addressed in the literature than the capability side.

years.”<sup>23</sup> While the White Paper was not, strictly speaking, a Canadian-American issue (although the United States is the largest and most influential member of NATO and Canada’s main ally), the same can be said about defence issues in the same period. Azzi recommends the book *Diplomatic Departures: The Conservative Era in Canadian Foreign Policy, 1984-93* as a starting point. The book contains two essays about defence issues, by political scientists Nelson Michaud and Norrin M. Ripsman. By examining the White Paper through a political science lens, they add important analytical perspectives. Ripsman divides the government’s defence policies into two periods: the “Big Eyes” period of promising expansions and the “Empty Pockets” period of rapidly scaling down Canada’s defence policies.<sup>24</sup> According to Ripsman, the “real problem” that the government created was not that they ended policies that were no longer necessary, but that they failed to create a clear blueprint for post-Cold War Canadian defence.<sup>25</sup> Ripsman devotes a whole paragraph to the two-stage withdrawal of Canada’s forces in Europe, which no other author did. Ripsman considers the withdrawal to be the most damaging of all the alterations to Canada’s defence policies, and the one that was in most need of being replaced with a new role in NATO. The conclusion he draws from the second phase is that formulating appropriate defence policies in a rapidly changing external environment is difficult and that the government may have, in hindsight, missed an opportunity to develop a new Canadian defence policy for a post-Cold War world. Nelson Michaud examines how the bureaucracy influenced the development of the paper, and argues that the increasing exercise of political control (instead

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<sup>23</sup> Stephen Azzi, *Reconcilable Differences: A History of Canada-US Relations*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). 226

<sup>24</sup> Norrin M. Ripsman, “Big Eyes and Empty Pockets: The Two Phases of Conservative Defence Policy,” *Diplomatic Departures: The Conservative Era in Canadian Foreign Policy, 1984-93*, ed. Nelson Michaud and Kim Richard Nossal, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2001). 100

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, 108

of departmental control) over Canada's defence policies ended the White Paper.<sup>26</sup> He also divides defence issues into two phases, one determined by the policy-making process within the Department of Defence, and the next determined by the exercise of Cabinet control over defence policy. Ripsman and Michaud do something that the historians overlook: they start their second phases, in which defence policies were altered, before the end of the Cold War.<sup>27</sup>

*Canada and NATO: The Forgotten Ally?* identifies 1992 as the dividing year between current events and history. Two of the four essays in it put Canada's post-Cold War defence policies into their historical context and two of them consider the role that Canada may play in the 1990s. In one of the essays, Kim Richard Nossal discusses the nuclear submarine acquisition program and the alterations to Canada's forces in Europe. Like Ripsman and Michaud, he correlates the changes to White Paper's defence policy to the global context, instead of simply stating that budget cuts and the end of the Cold War terminated the White Paper.<sup>28</sup>

The scholarly works that were published between the publication of the White Paper in 1987 and 1992 fall into the current affairs or strategic studies fields. The primary purpose of these works was to identify the threats that Canada faces and analyze Canadian policies to see how well they met Canada's defence needs. Since Canada has never been able to defend itself by itself but has relied upon its allies, the greater challenge that these scholars face is identifying how Canadian defence policy meshes with NATO's strategic situation. These works are valuable not only for their rich level of detail, but for dealing with the challenge of placing oneself in the

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<sup>26</sup> Nelson Michaud, "Bureaucratic Politics and the Making of the 1987 Defence White Paper," *Diplomatic Departures: The Conservative Era in Canadian Foreign Policy, 1984-93*, ed. Nelson Michaud and Kim Richard Nossal, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2001). 260

<sup>27</sup> Canadian federal budgets are announced in the late winter and the Communist Bloc in Eastern Europe collapsed in the late fall/early winter of 1989. Canadian policy makers in the Department of Defence began to discuss in earnest what the collapse meant for Canada in the spring of 1990. The first major cancellation, the nuclear submarines, was made almost six months before the collapse began.

<sup>28</sup> Kim Richard Nossal, "Succumbing to the Dumbbell: Canadian Perspectives on NATO in the 1990s," *Canada and NATO: The Forgotten Ally*, "A Special Report of the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis Inc., (Cambridge: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992). 26-30

Cold-War mentality of the White Paper. Joel J. Sokolsky is the preeminent author in this period, with three works concerning the White Paper. His *Defending Canada: U.S.-Canadian Defense Policies* places the White Paper in the perspective of North American defence, considering how the new policies will alter Canada's interactions with the United States in defence matters.<sup>29</sup> He concludes that the White Paper was intended to increase Canada's control over its waters and reduce Canada's dependence upon the United States, which was an increasing concern in the 1980s.

Sokolsky's second work that addresses the 1987 White Paper is *The U.S.-Canada Security Relationship*, which is a collection of essays (edited by him) concerning Canada's role in North American and European defence. Notable among them is an essay by S. Mathwin Davis that analyzes the strategic use of the proposed nuclear-powered submarines.<sup>30</sup> Unlike many political commentators in Canada, Davis considers how the submarines fit into both Canada's defence policies and into NATO's overall strategies. He includes the military's preferred defence options in his analysis to help understand how the submarines would be used defensively. He concludes that the submarines could have benefited NATO by increasing the overall ability to defend the Arctic, although the American navy was already planning to fill that role. The third book from Sokolsky (co-authored with Dan W. Middlemiss) is *Canadian Defence: Decisions and Determinants*, which takes a broader view of Canadian defence and situates the White Paper in its historical context.<sup>31</sup> Their approach is similar to Morton's in *Understanding Canadian Defence*. The purpose of the book is to first establish Canada's defence needs and how Canada

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<sup>29</sup> Joel J. Sokolsky, *Defending Canada: U.S.-Canada Defense Policies*, (New York: Priority Press Publications, 1989). v-vi.

<sup>30</sup> S. Mathwin Davis, "Parting of the Waves? The Strategy and Politics of the SSN Decision," *The U.S.-Canada Security Relationship*, ed. Joel J. Sokolsky, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989). 267

<sup>31</sup> Dan W. Middlemiss, Joel J. Sokolsky, *Canadian Defence: Decisions and Determinants*, (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989). Chapters 1 and 2 address Canadian defence, and Chapters 3, 6, and 7 address, among other policies, the White Paper.

has traditionally met those, and then to place the White Paper into its historical context. In doing so, they take a similar approach to the four historians who wrote their works after 1992, but they do not have the knowledge that the Cold War will end in 1989-1991. Sokolsky's methods of analyzing Canadian defence in the 1987-1989 period provides a rich source of information, analytic thought, and contemporary context for the White Paper, something that is needed if new works on the White Paper are to break the post-1992 mold.

*Changing of the Guard: Canada's Defence in a World of Transition* was written in 1990, after the cancellation of the nuclear submarine acquisition, but at the time of publication the government had not yet begun to publicly discuss withdrawing Canada's forces from Europe. The author, Howard Peter Langille, he questions the strategic necessity of Canadian Forces Europe, but without the knowledge that the government would soon decide that Canada no longer needed forces in Europe.<sup>32</sup> His twenty-one pages on the subject of withdrawal are the most detailed analysis of Canada's role in Europe, before or after 1992.<sup>33</sup> He concludes that they no longer have a strategic role to play, but that the politics of NATO make it difficult for Canada to alter its commitments to the alliance.<sup>34</sup> Both Sokolsky and Langille note that Canada's defence policies are entirely dependent upon membership in NATO and that maintaining good relations with allies trumps the creation of a logical defence plan for Canadian territory. Langille also devotes several pages to writing about the proposal to withdraw Canada's forces from West Germany and reorient Canada's NATO commitment to Norway. Made in 1985 by Defence Minister Erik Nielsen, the proposal never made it past the concept stage. The only other scholar to examine that proposal was Adolf Carlson of the United States Army War College, who argued

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<sup>32</sup> Howard Peter Langille, *Changing the Guard: Canada's Defence in a World of Transition*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990). 59

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 58-79.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 78.

in a 1990 paper that Canada should have followed through with the realignment towards Norway.<sup>35</sup>

The one book that does not neatly fit the pattern of post-1992 works lacking detail (although Kasurak's book is detailed concerning the land forces aspect of the paper) is *Canada's International Policies: Agendas, Alternatives, and Politics* by Brian W. Tomlin, Norman Hillmer, and Fen Osler Hampson, published in 2008.<sup>36</sup> It is one of the few pieces that places the paper into the context of an escalating Cold War and NATO's deterrence strategy. The authors examine both the NATO and sovereignty aspects of the paper, and focus on its development and the role of the military and civil servants at the Department of National Defence in its creation. They identify a policy window for a larger military that opened with the election of a pro-defence government in 1984, and closed after the 1988 election as domestic opposition to the paper and deficits forced the government to abandon higher defence expenditures.<sup>37</sup> Like Ripsman and Michaud, they place the start of the end of the White Paper before the end of the Cold War, not in response to the revolutions in Eastern Europe. Many of the omissions of post-1992 historical works on the White Paper are addressed, including the strategic context, the relationship between the civil service and the elected government, and the military's role in formulating defence policy. The book was written before classified documents were available, so the authors interviewed persons involved with the development of Canada's defence policies, including the creators of the White Paper.<sup>38</sup> Their aim with the chapters is to explain how defence policy is developed, so there is little written about the government's defence policies after 1987, which are the years that this thesis covers.

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<sup>35</sup> Adolf Carlson, *Who Will Stand the Nordic Guard?* (US Army War College, 1990).

<sup>36</sup> Brian W. Tomlin, Norman Hillmer, and Fen Osler Hampson, *Canada's International Policies: Agendas, Alternatives, and Politics*, (Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, 143

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, 366

## Sources

Documents from External Affairs and National Defence received from Library Archives Canada through Access to Information form the basis of this thesis, and scholarly works are used to situate the documents and provide context. These documents have only become accessible recently, and have not yet been used in scholarly works. The main series of fonds is entitled *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe*, which consists of working papers from National Defence and External Affairs. It includes correspondence between the two departments and communications between Ottawa and Canadian diplomatic posts from the years 1986-1993. The correspondence with diplomatic posts offers an insight into the concerns and strategies of NATO allies, which to a large extent formed External Affairs's preferences concerning Canada's defence policies. The divergence between National Defence and External Affairs concerning Canada's in Europe, the decreasing interest in Canadian sovereignty, and the shift from departmental control to more political control are central themes in the documents. They confirm that the changes to defence policy began before 1989 and that domestic affairs took a higher priority than defence. Two concepts highly evident in the documents are that the Cold War did not fully end until 1991 and that Canada continued to believe its defence policies were supportive of NATO, even as the relationship soured.

One fond, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Norway*, gives similar insight into Canada's defence relationship with Norway after the publication of the White Paper, but it is lighter on correspondence and working papers. The majority of the documents are translations of Norwegian media publications or scholarly works concerning the CAST Brigade, which are helpful for understanding Norwegian views of NATO and Canada, but not so helpful for understanding post-1987 Canadian defence policies. West Germany always ranked higher in

Canada's priorities, and after the decision was made to redirect the CAST Brigade there was even less attention given to Norway. However, the documents reveal that NATO took the defence of its flanks seriously, even if West Germany had the highest priority. The decision to use the troops earmarked for Norway for West Germany was questioned by allies, but Canada's augmentation of its role in West Germany also won Canada praise, which Canada highly valued. Both the documents concerning Europe and Norway demonstrate that NATO allies valued Canada's role in the alliance, both for political and military reasons. After 1990, when Canada began reevaluating its involvement in European security, the documents show increasing concern in Europe that Canada was losing interest in NATO. National Defence and External Affairs disagreed with that claim and argued that Canada could be a member of NATO without troops stationed in Europe. According to them, forces stationed in Canada (where they were cheaper to maintain) earmarked for Europe were sufficient.

In the literature concerning Canada's defence policy in the 1990s, the cuts in the defence budget in the Mulroney years are often lumped together with the defence budget cuts made by the Liberal government. That is fair to an extent, because the military had high hopes from the White Paper that were dashed repeatedly in the decade after, but the budget cuts and changes to defence policy done by the Liberal government are of a different degree than those pre-1993. By basing the thesis on documents from before 1994, made by people who had no knowledge of the impending Liberal policies, the Progressive Conservative government's policies can be analysed on their own.

## **Chapter 1: The 1987 White Paper on Defence and a “Full Commitment” to NATO**

The 1987 White Paper on Defence had two overarching goals concerning Canada’s defence. The Prime Minister’s introduction stated that the first priority of the paper was the protection and furtherance of Canada’s sovereignty as a nation.<sup>39</sup> The second goal was the “upgrading and consolidating” of Canada’s commitments to NATO, which would create a “full commitment” to the alliance. The paper can be divided into two parts. The first part laid out the international environment on which the policies were based: a bipolar world in which the peace was kept through military power and deterrence, in which Canada had to be able to defend two continents if it was to be a serious defence player. The second part explained how Canada’s military would meet the threats, both in North America and in Europe.

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<sup>39</sup> “Challenge and Commitment: A Defence Policy for Canada,” (National Defence, 1987). ii

The paper made it clear that the policies of the Progressive Conservative government were different than the preceding Liberal government's policies. The introduction described the White Paper of 1971 and the defence policies of 1968-1971 that had reduced the military budget and Canada's role in Europe. The Liberal government anticipated that emergence of China, Japan, and Western Europe as economic powers would create a multipolar world in which the superpowers had less significant roles. Their policies were based on the belief that military force was less relevant because the approximate parity in nuclear weapons between the superpowers was sufficient deterrence. By 1987, the hopes of détente had not been realized, and nuclear arms control negotiations had made "virtually no progress."<sup>40</sup> Military force was the preferred method of achieving political objectives. Canadians still hoped for the promises of peace that détente had offered, but a more sober approach to defence was needed. War was not inevitable, and Canada continued to work towards eventual disarmament, but until there was concrete progress in East-West relations, NATO had to maintain a credible conventional deterrent.

The Soviet Union was the primary opponent of Canada, the White Paper contended, both in Europe and in North America. Nuclear-armed submarines and long-distance bombers threatened North America, and, although Canada was unlikely to face a land invasion, it did have to plan for "limited incursions" into Canadian territory. Canada's three coasts each faced a Soviet fleet, and the Soviets had superiority in every ocean. The Soviet and Warsaw Pact forces in Europe held numerical superiority over NATO in manpower and equipment. NATO lacked strategic depth and suffered from a need for resupply and reinforcement across the Atlantic. The

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 1

paper acknowledged that the Soviet Union fully recognized the dangers of attacking NATO, but it still sought to translate military power into political gain, a dangerous act.<sup>41</sup>

To meet these threats, Canada would continue to rely on the nuclear deterrent of Canada's allies, which had thus far preserved the peace with the threat of Mutually Assured Destruction. However, "both superpowers understand the potentially apocalyptic consequences of a nuclear exchange. If hostilities were to occur, they would thus be more likely to begin at the conventional level, where the Soviet Union has the greatest advantage."<sup>42</sup> The prospect of conventional war was most evident in Central Europe, but Canada also faced it at sea in all three oceans. The most effective counter to a conventional threat was to prevent an aggressor from quickly achieving its objectives, which required adequate and sustainable forces positioned in their operating theatre. But if deterrence did fail, it would fail everywhere.<sup>43</sup> If Canada took the Soviet threat to Europe seriously, then it also had to address the Soviet threat to North America. The Paper clearly linked nuclear weapons and conventional forces: Canada's forces in Europe and naval forces had a role in the prevention of nuclear war through deterrence, even though the alliance was still reliant upon nuclear weapons as a last resort.

The scope of the threat to Canada, which ranged from Vancouver to Alert to Berlin, meant that, even if the Canadian forces were fully manned and equipped, fulfilling all commitments would be a daunting challenge. The White Paper used the term "commitment-capability gap" to describe the inability of the military to fulfill all the roles that were expected of it. The gap was created by manpower shortages, aging equipment, and a lack of logistical and

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 10-11

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 19

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 20

operational support.<sup>44</sup> The obsolescence of much of Canada's equipment and small size of the military meant that bringing the forces up to full speed was too expensive. Instead of significantly increasing defence spending to bring the forces up to full capability, and instead of reducing commitments to meet the current capabilities, the government took the middle approach. The NATO European commitments were consolidated to bring them in line with resources and increase their effectiveness, and steady increases in funding would ensure that the military was equipped to carry out its new roles.<sup>45</sup> The defence budget would increase annually by two percent each year (after inflation) for a fifteen year period, with possible larger annual increases if needed.<sup>46</sup>

One of the subheadings in the paper was entitled "Three Oceans," which elevated the Arctic Ocean to a defence interest in its own right. The advent of nuclear-powered submarines made the deep channels between the Arctic islands, and the Northwest Passage between Atlantic and Pacific, a new defence concern for Canada that had not been as prominent in the past.<sup>47</sup> Canada needed to exert control over all of its waters, and if necessary deny their use to an enemy. According to the paper, laying mines at the perimeter of the sea ice was not a sufficient defence. The military lacked the infrastructure and expertise to maintain a network of mines, which would pose an unacceptable risk to civilian vessels.<sup>48</sup> Given the importance of the Arctic, the government decided to acquire a fleet of nuclear-powered submarines to enable the navy to defend the entirety of Canadian waters. Through "their mere presence," they could deny an opponent the use of Canadian waters, and they were the only vessel proven to have under-ice

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 43

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 47

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 67

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 49

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 52

capability. The paper claimed that they were comparable in cost to purchasing a mixed fleet of diesel submarines, surface ships, and helicopters, which would not have under-ice capability. The paper noted that they were nuclear-powered, not nuclear-armed. They were considered safe, were not a change in Canada's stance on nuclear weapons, and did not alter the nuclear balance. The submarines would also add to the collective maritime strength of NATO.<sup>49</sup>

The submarines presence in the Arctic Ocean would help to assert Canada's sovereignty over the Northwest Passage. The United States considered the passage to be an international strait, while Canada contended that it was internal Canadian waters. The paper argued that sovereignty required that Canada be able to fully participate in all collective security arrangements involving its defence, be able to monitor its territory, and respond with force against any incursions. In addition to the submarines for the navy, the Coast Guard would receive an icebreaker that was capable of operating in the North, to assist civil authorities and enforce Canadian law.<sup>50</sup> The Paper's emphasis on sovereignty-assertion in the North was in part driven by the increased strategic importance of the Arctic, but it was also a response to foreign interests in Canada's Arctic. The American Coast Guard icebreaker *Polar Sea* had transited the Northwest Passage from Greenland to Alaska in August 1985, and the voyage was made without the American government seeking permission from Canada. The Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, Joe Clark, rejected claims that the American Coast Guard had violated Canada's sovereignty since the Canadian government had granted permission for the voyage, despite not being asked . He did acknowledge that there was increased interest in Canada's North, often from Canadian allies and partners, including the United States, West Germany, and Japan. The voyage highlighted the scarcity of military resources in Canada's North, and in

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 54-55

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 23

September 1985 the government issued a policy statement for increased military surveillance in the North and “urgent considerations” of other means of exercising more control over the Arctic.<sup>51</sup> The nuclear submarines were partially the result of these urgent considerations.

The White Paper consolidated Canada’s two main roles in Europe, the CAST Brigade to Norway and Canada’s brigade in West Germany, into a new division in West Germany. Canada lacked the airlift equipment and manpower to support both roles in the event of hostilities, and the division of Canada’s forces between two theatres of war diluted valuable combat resources. The forces could not perform an opposed landing in Norway, and the weeks that it took to deploy the CAST Brigade its defence value questionable. The deficiencies were expensive to correct, and they were evident to the Soviet Union, so the CAST Brigade contributed little to deterrence. Redirecting the brigade to West Germany was the most cost-effective method of creating a credible, effective and sustainable contribution to the defence of Western Europe.<sup>52</sup> More equipment would be prepositioned in West Germany, and new tanks, medical and logistical equipment, and airlift aircraft would be acquired to reduce the division’s reliance on allies for in-theatre support. Canada’s forces in West Germany would, for the foreseeable future, use the existing facilities, and the government would not accept responsibility for the cost of moving Canada’s forces elsewhere if that happened in the future. By increasing the Canadian contribution to forces in Europe, the government hoped to raise the nuclear threshold.<sup>53</sup>

The White Paper introduced two concepts into official Canadian defence policy: an attack on Europe would almost certainly entail an attack on North America, and the Canadian military

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<sup>51</sup> Martin Shadwick, “Military and Security Issues,” *Canadian Annual Review of Politics and Public Affairs, 1985*, ed. R.B. Byers, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988). 228

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, 61

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, 62-65

could be called on to fulfill all of its defence commitments simultaneously. These realizations improved the rationality of Canada's defence policies, but the White Paper's incorporation of them into official policy occurred several years after they were first raised by the Senate. Two Senate Reports, one on manpower in 1982 and one on Maritime Command in 1983, had recommended reconsidering the CAST Brigade, augmenting Canada's forces in West Germany, and acquiring a defensive fleet for the Arctic. The increased value of conventional deterrence, and the possibility that a war would be decided by conventional forces, had been identified by 1983 by several scholars. The only policy that was original to the Progressive Conservative government was the decision to acquire nuclear-powered submarines instead of a mixed fleet, but the nuclear option had already been examined by the Senate sub-committee on National Defence.

The delay in developing a new defence policy for Canada that incorporated the continued bipolarity of the world and the need for conventional deterrence was, in part, a result of the government's intent to create a viable long-term defence plan and a willingness to experiment and consider unorthodox ideas.<sup>54</sup> Between 1984 and 1987 the government explored a wide range of Canada's options and did not appear to be in a hurry to publish their much-anticipated White Paper. The original timeline had been a green "discussion" paper by February 1985 and a White Paper in the fall of 1985.<sup>55</sup> The first step by the Progressive Conservative government to alter Canada's NATO commitments came soon after the election, from Defence Minister Erik Nielsen.<sup>56</sup> On March 11, 1985, Nielsen and Clark announced a 1200 service personnel increase to Canada's forces in West Germany, from 5000 to 6200. They described this as a "first, early

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<sup>54</sup> There was also a high turnover in defence ministers during this government, which likely delayed the creation of the White Paper.

<sup>55</sup> Shadwick, "Military and Security Issues," *Canadian Annual Review of Politics and Public Affairs, 1985*, 200

<sup>56</sup> Joseph T. Jockel, Joel J. Sokolsky, *Canada and Collective Security: Odd Man Out*, (New York: Praeger, 1986). 14

step towards meeting our commitments in Europe to our NATO allies”.<sup>57</sup> At the cost of approximately \$100 million a year, this increase demonstrated to NATO that Canada was willing to spend more, but it did not solve the problem of Canada having to support two European forces in war. The increase was an augmentation to existing policy, not a new policy. The forces that were moved the West Germany were already earmarked for Europe, but had been kept in Canada to reduce operating costs.

In the early 1980s, several scholars examined the role of conventional forces and deterrence in that decade. In 1983 John Mearsheimer, an American political scientist from the University of Chicago, published a paper, “Prospects for Conventional Deterrence in Europe,” in which he argued that NATO’s defensive abilities prevented an easy victory by the Soviet Union in Europe, which reduced the chance of a Soviet attack. If an aggressor had the ability to launch a blitzkrieg and decisively win a quick victory, then it was very likely to attack: the possibility of a drawn out war that leads to eventual victory was almost as undesirable as defeat. A rapid penetration of the enemy’s front line, and then an in-depth campaign to destroy their supply lines and prevent reinforcements to the front line, was the best plan for success, as witnessed in 1940 in France and 1967 in Israel. In such a scenario, the only way to improve conventional deterrence is to increase the number of troops that are rapidly available, particularly to prevent the deep penetration or to improve the “second-strike” ability to push back the initial offensive. Stationed on the French border, almost as far away from the Soviet forces as possible without leaving West Germany, Canada’s forces were a part of NATO’s second-strike force. Mearsheimer offered several unrealistic (in his opinion) solutions for NATO’s overreliance upon the front-line capabilities: better technology, allowing the Soviet forces to penetrate German territory and

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<sup>57</sup> “Canada adds 1200 troops to military strength in Europe,” *The Globe and Mail*, March 12, 1985. 5

overextend themselves, and increasing NATO's offensive capabilities. Each of those options would be expensive, and intentionally yielding the territory of a democratic ally to the Soviet advance was politically impossible.<sup>58</sup>

As a lesser power in a world dominated by two superpowers, Canada could not seriously influence the strategic balance. However, an increase in Canada's ability to help push back the Soviet advance helped NATO's deterrence strategy. Mearsheimer wrote that "NATO needs powerful operational reserves that can prevent the [Warsaw] Pact forces from effecting a deep strategic penetration. NATO must have units at the rear that can be moved forward to contain those attacking forces that pierce the forward defensive positions. Today, NATO has only small operational reserves; these must be augmented if the prospects of halting a blitzkrieg are to be improved."<sup>59</sup> Canadas' forces in Germany were few and could seem insignificant compared to the American and British forces in Germany (and even smaller still when the French army is included), but they were stationed in a weak area of NATO's defence, making any augmentations valuable to the entire alliance.

The contemporary solution to the overreliance on NATO's strong but thin front line was nuclear weapons. Many European states maintained that the best way to preserve peace in Europe was the nuclear shield, the threat of total world destruction the moment the Soviet military crossed the inner German border. The European states that faced the prospect of Soviet invasion feared a situation in which the primary deterrent was a war on their territory, a concern that Canada and the United States could understand but not share. If Western Europe's ability to deter Soviet aggression became too strong, then the United States could be tempted to withdraw

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<sup>58</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, "Prospects for Conventional Deterrence in Europe," *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol. 41, No. 7, August 1985. 158-161

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, 159

its protection of the continent. Creating a weakness that the Americans had to fill was a dangerous gamble on the Europeans part, but it kept the American nuclear shield over Europe. Mearsheimer concluded that the nuclear deterrent was the only politically acceptable deterrent for Europe, despite the fact that it in part subjugated European states to American hegemony.<sup>60</sup>

The problem of relying on the nuclear deterrent was that it only functioned independently of the conventional deterrent if nuclear weapons were deployed the moment that the Soviet forces crossed into NATO territory. The longer that the nuclear powers waited to launch a strike, the more important conventional forces became. In 1983, Samuel Huntington, a political scientist at Harvard's Center for International Affairs, identified that weakness in the nuclear shield. He argued that NATO's strategy had increasingly become based on conventional deterrence to the point where it might be the only deterrent.<sup>61</sup> The official NATO policy, announced in 1967, relied on a "forward defence" of West Germany, and nuclear weapons would only be used if that defence failed. The decision not to fully rely upon nuclear weapons was a part of détente, which helped Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau justify his defence budget cuts in the 1970s. Ironically, he cut the forces that were supposed to prevent nuclear war.

By the early 1980s Europe had begun to collectively realize that the United States might not use nuclear weapons to defend European territory if a nuclear strike against the Soviet Union would entail an attack on North America. In 1979, former American Secretary of State and National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger said that it was "absurd to base the strategy of the West on the credibility of the threat of mutual suicide," confirming French President de Gaulle's suspicion that the United States would prioritize itself over its European allies. Public opinion in

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 162

<sup>61</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, "Conventional Deterrence and Conventional Retaliation in Europe," *International Security*, Vol. 8, No. 3, Winter 1983-1984. 32-46

Western Europe was turning against nuclear weapons, which created another weakness in NATO's strategy. In the major NATO powers, the majority of the public believed that the alliance should not be the first to use nuclear weapons, but only use them as a tit-for-tat response. The public also seemed unwilling to pay for their defence, despite the requirement for more conventional forces to reduce reliance upon nuclear weapons. In 1978, the alliance committed itself to the Long Term Defense Program, which required an annual increase in defence spending of 3 percent from members, but only the United States met the goal.<sup>62</sup>

If a multi-national conventional deterrent is to equal the sum of its parts, each military commitment that makes up the deterrent must be viable. A 1982 Senate Report by the Subcommittee on National Defence of the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Manpower in Canada's Armed Forces*, had recommended that military viability, "the capacity to execute competently the military tasks which are demanded of them," be the essential criterion for judging the armed forces' operational capabilities. The report anticipated the later White Paper by recommending that Canada's forces in West Germany be increased, while the CAST Brigade ought to be reconsidered in conjunction with the Supreme Allied Commander (Europe) and NATO allies to determine "whether this constitutes the best possible use of Canada's limited military manpower and resources."<sup>63</sup> The tasks and roles assigned to the military should correspond to the manpower and equipment, since the armed forces could be required to carry out all the wartime tasks assigned to them. The Senators believed that the government had allowed non-military considerations to determine military policy (Trudeau's détente policies)

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 35

<sup>63</sup> *Report of the Sub-Committee on National Defence of the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs: Manpower in Canada's Armed Forces*, January 1982, Chaired by The Honourable Paul C. Lafond, published by the Subcommittee, ix

instead of formulating defence policy according to the threats that Canada faced.<sup>64</sup> Détente was over, and the hopes for rapprochement, while still present, seemed to be further in the future. The 1980s required strength of armed forces to provide stability, and Canada should play a full part in the process.<sup>65</sup>

The Senators identified several issues in Canada's European strategy. The military was unable to support both the CAST Brigade and Canada's forces in West Germany simultaneously, and the forces in West Germany were not large enough to be immediately deployable as a self-sustaining force without reinforcements being flown over from Canada. While the forces in Canada were ready to deploy, the speed of warfare in Europe could end the war before they arrived, making the forces in Germany unable to play an effective role. If they were deployed in response to a crisis that had not yet broken out in open warfare, the deployment could aggravate a delicate situation by serving as an escalation. One possible scenario that the committee gave was the Soviet Union's use of military force in Eastern Europe to suppress an uprising, forcing dissident units from Warsaw Pact nations to take refuge in NATO territory. Even if the Soviets did not pursue the dissidents across the border, the increased Soviet presence in Eastern Europe would be a destabilization. If Canada sent reinforcements, it would exacerbate the situation. An increase in the permanent number of forces stationed in West Germany, to a recommended level of 10 000, would increase the deterrent without the risk of worsening a delicate situation. With modern equipment, Canada's 10 000 troops would be "a strong, balanced military

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 6-8

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, 15

formation...allied military commanders would almost certainly not view such a change as a negligible development.”<sup>66</sup>

The troops earmarked for Norway were also included in the forces committed to defending Canada. As allied nations with the same enemy, Canada and Norway faced the same threat: if Norway needed reinforcements, Canada almost certainly required defence. The forces would be triple-booked if they were also needed to aid civil authorities during a war: 10 000 soldiers were deployed during the FLQ crisis, and civil unrest was a real possibility during a war.<sup>67</sup> The Senators recommended that Canada have sufficient forces to carry out all domestic and international tasks at the same time. The Senators questioned whether the CAST Brigade was worth investing in, since it was not viable in its present form. They noted, however, that the commitment was politically valuable as a sign of Canada’s commitment to aiding all NATO allies, and that Norway would almost certainly object to Canada ending the CAST Brigade commitment.<sup>68</sup>

Another major issue with the CAST Brigade was that it had never been fully tested. After the government created the CAST Brigade commitment in 1968, National Defence barely made plans for its deployment. The focus in the 1970s was on supporting United Nations peacekeeping forces and the forces already stationed in Europe, not on wartime contingency plans. The CAST Brigade commitment had been made with minimal input from the military, and there was little effort to figure out the details of its deployment. There had been one partial deployment of the brigade on Canadian soil in the early 1970s, but until 1986 it had never been fully tested.

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 15

<sup>67</sup> Ibid,14- 17

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 19

In the summer of 1983, the Trudeau government decided to conduct a full deployment of the brigade to Norway, called Operation Brave Lion.<sup>69</sup> The exercise took place in 1986 and revealed serious deficiencies. The fact that it took two years to plan the operation, despite the forces mandate to deploy within thirty days, demonstrated that it was a “paper commitment.” The logistics units used for the deployment had been taken from military units tasked with other roles. The operation was a deployment of the initial troop commitment, and did not test the reserves’ ability to support the forces over a period of several months, or test the military’s ability to move the reservists to Norway. Maritime Command was hesitant to divert ships from operations in the North Atlantic to protect support convoys going to Norway. If the CAST Brigade had to be deployed, the Soviet navy would presumably be active in the Atlantic, which required the full attention of Maritime Command. Once in Norway, the land forces and air support performed military exercises with their usual professionalism, the one bright point in the deployment. The Chief of Defence Staff, General Gérard Thériault, concluded from the exercise that Canadian defence policy was “too random” and that the consolidation of Canada’s NATO commitments would create a more rational strategy.<sup>70</sup>

The first attempt to consolidate Canada’s European commitments had happened before Operation Brave Lion. In 1985, as we have seen, Defence Minister Nielsen proposed the withdrawal of Canada’s forces in West Germany to augment the CAST Brigade commitment to Norway, which would result in major savings for Canada.<sup>71</sup> The equipment for the brigade would be kept in Norway, and an increased number of troops would be deployed when needed. This

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<sup>69</sup> Sean Maloney, “Purple Haze: Joint Planning in the Canadian Forces from Mobile Command to J-Staff, 1975-1991,” *The Army Doctrine and Training Bulletin: Canada’s Professional Journal on Army Issues*, Vol. 5, No. 4, Winter 2002-2003, (Ottawa: National Defence), 61-62

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 62-63

<sup>71</sup> Ken Calder, Interview by Ian Weatherall, Audio-recorded, April 1, 2014.

plan had the full support of General Thériault. Immediate and negative allied reactions quickly led to the end of that idea. Norway did not want to be seen as stealing forces from Germany, and Germany did not want Canada to start a domino-action withdrawal of other nations. The United States and Britain agreed with this analysis, so Canada withdrew the proposal.<sup>72</sup> Ending any commitment to Europe, even if to improve another commitment to Europe, was a political minefield that had to be carefully navigated.

When the White Paper announced the end of the CAST Brigade commitment, NATO was put in the unfortunate position of having to replace Canada's role in Northern Norway. A memorandum from Canada's Joint Delegation to NATO in March 1988 stated that the alliance urgently needed European allies to state their preparedness to contribute forces to the defence of Northern Norway, even before they had finished studies on the matter. The Canadian commitment terminated in June 1988, and the alliance stressed that NATO's flanks must be well-defended to maintain comprehensive deterrence.<sup>73</sup> The redirection of the CAST Brigade was a strategic concern for NATO, but Canada's inability to deploy and support those forces was also a serious concern that had not been properly addressed. Having a nation on another continent supply troops, when nations close by could also do so, was a military illogicality.

Adolf Carlson, from Queen's University, argued that Canada's decision to end its role in Norway created an unacceptable hole in NATO's northern defences, one that was not worth the marginal increase to NATO's deterrent from Canada's augmentation of its forces in Germany. He proposed that Canada reverse its increases in the West Germany forces and, with the aid of the United States, focus on creating an operationally viable force for Northern Norway. Canadian

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<sup>72</sup> Tomlin, Hillmer, and Hampson, *Canada's International Policies*. 107

<sup>73</sup> "Memo from BNATO to EXTOTT: Canadian Contribution of Land and Air Forces to the Integrated Military Structure," March 7, 1988, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe*; 27-1-1, vol. 1, 96-102

forces and American light infantry units could be trained together for northern warfare. These forces would be airlifted to Norway by the United States air force, not Canada's air force.

Carlson based his argument on the fact that the loss of Norway would put the Soviet navy within easy striking distance of North American supply lines to West Germany, endangering the ability of the United States and Canada to support their forces. He pointed out that the same reliance on reinforcements as a second line of defence existed in Norway, but that the frontline troops were far fewer and the reinforcements would take longer to arrive. Brave Lion demonstrated the combat capability of the Canadian Forces, and American support would compensate for the Canadian military's logistical deficiencies.<sup>74</sup>

Carlson blamed the lack of interest in Norway more on the United States than on Canada: in his opinion, the United States equated NATO with land and air forces in West Germany, not with the entirety of the NATO area. The fact that the war would start in West Germany did not mean it would be decided there. He agreed that expecting Canada to support two land commitments in Europe was foolhardy, but the United States could have made it possible with airlift assistance.<sup>75</sup> Carlson's argument was sound in its military aspects, but the political problem for Canada of withdrawing forces from Germany meant more to Canada than the potential strategic problem created by redirecting the CAST Brigade to West Germany. Forcing allies to scramble to fill the gap was inconsiderate, but Canada was already facing pressure from those same allies to increase its forces in West Germany. If Canada had fully withdrawn its forces from West Germany, it would have faced a serious diplomatic problem and helped create the perception of division within NATO (something that the Soviet Union loved to exploit), but

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<sup>74</sup> Adolf Carlson, *Who Will Stand the Nordic Guard?* (Carlisle: United States Army War College, 1990). 1-2

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, v-vi

by reaffirming its commitment to NATO while still ending the CAST commitment, Canada minimized allied criticism.

The original intent of the CAST Brigade was to station Canadian forces in Norway by beginning deployments which would escalate into regular rotations and the repositioning of equipment. Norway's refusal to allow the permanent deployment of foreign forces meant that a permanent presence never happened and the CAST Brigade remained dependent upon wartime deployment. Had the original planners known that the commitment would never involve permanent forces, it most likely would not have happened, according to one of them. The hope was that a Canadian presence would be less controversial for the Norwegian public than an American or British presence. Norway believed that permanent foreign forces could lead to an Arctic arms race that would destabilize the North even more, regardless of the nationality of the forces, thus Canada was unable to develop a foothold in Norway.<sup>76</sup>

Norway, like all other NATO members, was dealing with the issue of the increasing importance of conventional forces. The Norwegian 1987 Storting Report on Security Policy Issues suggested that NATO increase its conventional forces and continue arms reductions talks to reduce the reliance upon nuclear weapons.<sup>77</sup> The government envisaged the eventual creation of a nuclear-free Nordic zone that would be a part of a broader European security framework, with Norway playing an active role in European security. Canada's decision to cancel the CAST Brigade commitment did not help Norway reduce its dependence upon the nuclear deterrent. An article in the newspaper *Aftenposten* pointed out that, as nuclear arms on the continent were

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<sup>76</sup>“The Early Beginnings of the CAST Brigade: Excerpts from Nils Øvik's book, *Alternatives for Security*,” *Defence-Policy and Plans-Norway*; 27-1-2, vol. 4, 226. Translated excerpts sent to Ottawa on April 14, 1987, from a book published in 1970 by one of the men involved in the creation of the CAST Brigade commitment.

<sup>77</sup>“Communication from the Norwegian Embassy to the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs: Storting Report No. 58 (1986-1987),” May 21, 1987, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Norway*; 27-1-2, vol. 4, 164

reduced, sea-borne weapons in the Arctic would gain more importance in the Soviet strategy, increasing the importance of the North and the Arctic.<sup>78</sup> The CAST Brigade was a land commitment that would not directly combat submarines off Norwegian waters, but maintaining control of Norwegian territory would prevent nuclear-armed submarines from using Norway as a base for operation in the North Atlantic. The concern expressed by allies over Canada's decision to end the Norwegian commitment demonstrated that Canada had the perceived ability to play a strategic role, despite being a smaller member of the alliance.

As northern members of the alliance, Canada and Norway had a shared interest in the Arctic and NATO's northern flank. However, shared interests did not necessarily entail similar capabilities or make two nations logical partners. When Canada first deployed forces to West Germany in the 1950s, the Canadian military had recent experience in fighting an infantry and tank war on the European plains and a record of cooperation with the American and British forces. Placing Canadian forces in West Germany alongside other Anglophone forces was returning Canada to a familiar role. Canada's army had never specialized in northern and mountain warfare, even when the sparse and under-equipped Canadian Rangers were considered. The CAST Brigade commitment was based on the perception of commonalities between the two nations, not on the capabilities of the Canadian military or interoperability of the two militaries.

The 1987 White Paper announced the formation of the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division in West Germany, which was an upgrade to the existing command Canadian Forces Europe.<sup>79</sup> The number of service personnel permanently stationed in West Germany was doubled from 5000 to

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 147

<sup>79</sup> A military division consists of several brigades under a unified command. In NATO nations a division is usually the smallest force capable of independent operations. Canadian Forces Europe was a brigade-level command that coordinated two brigades, while the new division consisted three brigades.

10 000 (this number included the 1985 increase of 1200 troops) by stationing the reinforcement brigade in West Germany instead of in Canada. The 5000 soldiers that had formed the CAST Brigade would fly over in wartime to operate as the third brigade in the new division.<sup>80</sup> The reserves would reinforce the division (instead of regular forces) to reduce the pressure on regular forces units tasked with North American defence. This new policy would be implemented over a ten-year period. But the division never had time to come to fruition: at its peak manpower in 1989, it had 7700 soldiers. The increases halted in 1989, and from that point on Canada's forces in Europe were only reduced. If the scheduled increases had continued, the division would have been at its full operational capacity by 1991.<sup>81</sup>

In 1989, the Director-General of Land Doctrine and Operations, Brigadier General P.L. Spencer, said that the division in Europe would eventually need new tanks, helicopters, and large infrastructure increases to become fully operational. This included training facilities in Canada that resembled European terrain to train the reserve forces that would support the division.<sup>82</sup> Nearly all the equipment in Germany was already obsolete or nearing obsolescence, and a large investment was required to maintain the division's capabilities. The number one priority was main battle tanks, which would enable them to play a front-line role in NATO's reinforcements. The air force needed more Hercules and other transport aircraft to fly the reserves to Europe.<sup>83</sup> General Paul D. Manson, Chief of the Defence Staff, said that "the ultimate result will be a solid, militarily viable commitment to NATO's deterrent forces in Europe of which Canadians can be

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<sup>80</sup> The operational structure of the brigade barely changed, but the name "CAST Brigade" appears to be only be applied to it in the Norwegian context.

<sup>81</sup> David Mutimer, "External Affairs and Defence," *Canadian Annual Review of Politics and Public Affairs, 1990*, ed. David Leyton-Brown, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 116

<sup>82</sup> Martin Shadwick, "Military and Security Issues," *Canadian annual review of Politics and Public Affairs, 1988*, ed. David Leyton-Brown, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 138

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*, 142

proud.”<sup>84</sup> The division in West Germany filled both Canada’s military and political needs: Canada could be operationally viable in a defensive war against the Soviet Union, and Canadian allies saw a tangible political commitment to Western Europe.

Like the land force policies introduced in the White Paper, the paper’s naval policies had also been examined earlier by the Senate the Sub-committee on National Defence. In May 1983, the committee released the second of its reports, *Canada’s Maritime Defence*, which found that there was a need for Canada to be able to perform a sea-denial role in territory over which it claimed jurisdiction. The Senators recommended that Canada offer a “full contribution” to NATO, which would require development of the capability to defend simultaneously Canadian territory and aid European allies. The increasing imbalance in the North between Canada’s nearly non-existent Arctic defences and the Soviet Union’s northern fleet was, as any imbalance is, a potential destabilizer. Under Article III of the North Atlantic Treaty, Canada had agreed to defend its territory, and the Senate Report found that the navy was unable to meet that commitment.<sup>85</sup> The report highlighted the inconsistency of Canada “running down” its forces while espousing an anti-nuclear attitude. If Canada wanted to reduce the chances of nuclear weapons being used, it should do everything possible to minimize the need for the early use of nuclear weapons by building up its conventional forces.<sup>86</sup>

Any equipment for Maritime Command should be acquired with “specific wartime tasks” in mind. The report recommended that diesel submarines be acquired.<sup>87</sup> Submarines were “formidable weapons,” and surface ships were increasingly targetable by submarines, aircraft,

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<sup>84</sup> Adolf Carlson, *Who Will Stand the Nordic Guard?* 2

<sup>85</sup> *Report of the Sub-Committee on National Defence of the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs: Canada’s Maritime Defence*, May 1983, Chaired by The Honourable Paul C. Lafond, published by the Subcommittee, 1

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*, xiii.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid*, xi-xii

and missiles.<sup>88</sup> Rear-Admiral J.C. Wood, Chief of Maritime Doctrine and Operations, believed that conventional submarines were capable of providing defence against nuclear-powered submarines, even if those were the highest level of vessel. Canada's territorial waters were, according to the Senate Report, best defended by a mixed fleet of surface ships, submarines, and aircraft, because each system had its own benefits and weaknesses that together were better than a solely sub-surface fleet. Nuclear-powered submarines had the capability to go under the sea ice, and the only way to hunt them there was with another submarine that had under-ice capability, but the Senators believed that Canada could sufficiently defend the borders of Canadian sea ice with conventional forces to deny enemy submarines access.<sup>89</sup> According to them, the Canadian acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines would have been ideal if the cost was not prohibitive, which would limit the Navy's ability to augment its other roles.<sup>90</sup>

Nuclear-powered submarines were thus not a new idea brought in by the Progressive Conservative government, but the Senate Report had recommended a mixed fleet for the North, not nuclear-powered submarines. The new government seemed more willing to explore the "nuclear option," and in 1985 Defence Minister Erik Nielsen called for a review of what kind of submarines Canada wanted. In a committee meeting, Vice-Admiral Nigel Brodeur argued that conventional submarines could play a very useful role at choke points and that there was not a direct need for under-ice capabilities. Upon becoming Defence Minister in 1986, Perrin Beatty embraced the nuclear-powered option and made it his own, despite the Defence Committee's conclusion that Soviet nuclear launch submarines had sufficient range to attack North America without entering Canadian waters and that there was no evidence of Soviet submarines going

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 15-16

<sup>89</sup> Nuclear-powered submarines can operate for months under sea-ice, while diesel-powered submarines can only go under ice for several hours before they must surface to vent their exhaust and acquire fresh air for the engine.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, 46-51

under Canadian ice in peacetime.<sup>91</sup> The threat to Canada was from the Soviet attack submarines, which could use Canadian waters to attack British or French targets during a war. By purchasing nuclear-powered submarines, Canada would demonstrate that it took its defence seriously and did not need to rely upon allies. More importantly, the government showed that the possibility of war was great enough to spend billions of dollars on submarines that were intended for wartime roles. Surface ships can have other uses (humanitarian, logistics, enhanced coast guard duties) and infantry are adaptable: submarines cannot be used for peacekeeping or filling sandbags the same way infantry can. In peacetime, the submarines would serve a sovereignty-assertion role, particularly giving notice American ships and submarines, but a surface fleet would also have been a sign of Canadian national self-respect.

The submarine acquisition, more than the other defence policies, showed that in 1987 the Canadian government considered war a real possibility for which Canada had to prepare. The main strategic critique of the nuclear-powered submarines was that Canada could be forced into the United States Forward Maritime Strategy, a concern first raised by Liberal defence critic Douglas Firth.<sup>92</sup> The American strategy was based on an aggressive early deployment of naval force in the North Pacific and North Atlantic to counter the Soviet navy, tipping the seaborne conventional forces balance in the United States favour. Far more aggressive than NATO's European strategy of in-depth defence on West Germany's territory, the American naval strategy was meant to help compensate for the perceived weakness of the European strategy. Like the land forces in West Germany, the intent of the American strategy was to deter a Soviet attack through the threat of defence, albeit a more aggressive. Canada's northern waters lay in-between

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<sup>91</sup> S. Mathwin Davis, "Parting of the Waves? The Strategy and Politics of the SSN Decision," *The U.S.-Canada Security Relationship*, ed. Joel J. Sokolsky, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989), 221

<sup>92</sup> Martin Shadwick, "Military and Security Issues," *Canadian Annual Review of Politics and Public Affairs, 1987*, ed. R.B. Byers, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 200

the major theatres of the American deployment. Critics argued that Canada's possession of nuclear-powered submarines would be exploited by the American and British navies to free up more naval forces for offensive purposes, indirectly improving offensive capability through defensive means. This implied that there were American and British forces tasked with defending Canada, which could turn into a serious sovereignty issue in a war.<sup>93</sup>

The shift from a combined fleet to nuclear-powered submarines was supported by officials in the Department of Defence, particularly from the assistant deputy minister for policy, Robert Fowler, who had a "determination to rebuild the forces."<sup>94</sup> He believed that the submarines would provide a strong deterrent against Soviet incursions; the decision to portray them in sovereignty terms came from Minister Perrin Beatty as a part of the government's considerations for greater sovereignty-assertion in the North. Fowler and Beatty allowed the military to have a critical part in determining the forces' structure in the White Paper, and actively consulted the services during the drafting. The consultation with the forces was much greater than happened in 1964 and 1971, and although the services did not get everything they needed they were allowed to give input into what capabilities were needed to fulfill their roles. Fowler and the Chief of Defence Staff, General Manson, skillfully used the government's perception of a military in distress to advance their agenda of a more capable military. Manson did not share Beatty's focus on sovereignty, but he thought that the submarines would be able fill both a sovereignty assertion role and add to NATO's deterrence. S. Mathwin Davis concluded

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<sup>93</sup> Nicholas Tracy, "Why does Canada want Nuclear Submarines?" *International Journal*, vol. 43, no. 3, Summer 1988, (Toronto: Sage Publications Ltd), 505-506

<sup>94</sup> Tomlin, Hillmer, and Hampson, *Canada's International Policies*, 140-141

the same in his strategic analysis of the submarines. The Soviet Union was the primary threat to Canada and the Western Europe, and any increase of forces added to the deterrent.<sup>95</sup>

The criticisms of the nuclear-powered submarine acquisition tended to involve their cost, Canada's defence needs in the North, and the use of nuclear engines instead of diesel engines. Douglas Firth considered the submarines to be an expensive mistake, since they were a "military solution to a legal problem (sovereignty)." The New Democratic Party's defence critic thought that the government was spending ten billion dollars to defend Canada against its closest ally; he downplayed the Soviet threat to the Arctic.<sup>96</sup> The government's decision to include sovereignty as a reason for the submarines was in response to concerns over increased foreign interest in the North, but National Defence wanted the submarines to serve as an anti-Soviet measure. The Canadian Council of Churches thought the money was better spent on social problems, and the Canadian Peace Pledge Campaign thought that possessing nuclear-powered submarines put Canada's "finger on the nuclear trigger."<sup>97</sup> Martin Shadwick, author of the "Military and Security Issues" section of the *Canadian Annual Review of Politics and Public Affairs, 1987*, considered the best-informed critic to be the Canadian Centre for Arms Control and Disarmament, which argued that the submarine program's sustainability, both financially and politically, was likely not strong enough to bring it through to fruition. There were cheaper, and therefore more sustainable, options which had been too quickly dismissed.<sup>98</sup> The submarines were the most controversial announcement in the White Paper, and the new policy most linked to

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<sup>95</sup> Davis, "Parting of the Waves?" *The U.S.-Canada Security Relationship*, 267

<sup>96</sup> Martin Shadwick, "Military and Security Issues," *Canadian Annual Review of Politics and Public Affairs, 1987*, 200-203

<sup>97</sup> Martin Shadwick, "Military and Security Issues," *Canadian Annual Review of Politics and Public Affairs, 1988*, 150

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid*, 151

a hawkish world view, but the entire paper was criticized by some for overplaying the Soviet threat.<sup>99</sup>

The White Paper was late in aligning Canada's defence policies with the new strategic outlook, and by 1987 the escalating tensions that characterized the first half of the decade were leveling off. The Soviet Union still existed as an existential threat to Western Europe, but negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States to limit nuclear stockpiles offered new hopes for peace. The October 1986 Reykjavik Summit between American President Ronald Reagan and Soviet Secretary-General Mikhail Gorbachev restarted negotiations to limit nuclear weapons, which had stalled in the 1970s. The leaders were unable to reach an agreement at the summit because Reagan insisted that the United States be allowed to continue testing its anti-nuclear missile defence system, but the offers made at the summit served as a starting point for negotiations between the two superpowers to limit their nuclear arsenals. Reagan was willing to eliminate all intermediate-range weapons (land-based missiles with ranges from five hundred to five thousand kilometres) and enact a fifty percent reduction in strategic weapons, and Gorbachev went as far as offering to eventually eliminate all nuclear weapons.<sup>100</sup>

In February 1987, the Soviet Union announced that it was willing to negotiate an agreement concerning only the elimination of intermediate-range weapons. By July the two sides had agreed in principle to verification of elimination processes and weapons site inspections, but the Soviet Union wanted to include the elimination of German-owned Pershing IA missiles that were armed with American-owned nuclear warheads. The United States refused to get West

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<sup>99</sup> Martin Shadwick, "Military and Security Issues," *Canadian Annual Review of Politics and Public Affairs, 1987*, 204-205

<sup>100</sup> James E. Goodby, "Looking Back: The 1986 Reykjavik Summit," *Arms Control Today*, Vol. 46, No. 8, (Arms Control Association, 2016), 49-51

Germany involved and insisted that the treaty remain bilateral. In August, the Chancellor of West Germany, Helmut Kohl, announced that West Germany would dismantle its Pershing missiles and not replace them if the treaty was signed. This was a unilateral declaration by West Germany that was not part of the treaty, but it prevented the German-American ownership issue from stopping the negotiations. The treaty was finalized and signed in December 1987, inspections of weapons facilities began in June 1988, and the verified destruction of the weapons was completed by 1991. British and French nuclear forces were not included in the treaty since it was a bilateral treaty between the United States and the Soviet Union, and sea-based missiles were not included.<sup>101</sup>

A study done by External Affairs Defence Relations Division on arms negotiations, published in May 15, 1987, was similar to the White Paper in how it related Canadian conventional forces to nuclear arms controls. The study predicted no major war between the two blocs in the next quarter century since nuclear arms acted as a sufficient deterrent to war. The reductions that were under negotiation would still leave enough nuclear weapons to act as a powerful deterrent.<sup>102</sup> The Europeans continued to value the American forces in Europe and Canadian forces there served as a reminder of Canada's commitment to NATO, which gave Canada added weight in military and trade negotiations.<sup>103</sup> Canada needed to combat the perception of a "widening Atlantic" among the Canadian public, and the authors of the study suggested that Canada work together with the "less-Euro Centric" nations in Europe, like the Netherlands and Denmark, to maintain transatlantic links. The two superpowers should be

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<sup>101</sup> "Treaty Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty)," Published by the Bureau of Arms Control, Verification, and Compliance at the United States Department of State.  
<https://www.state.gov/t/avc/trty/102360.htm>. Accessed August 10, 2017.

<sup>102</sup> "Study on Arms Control and the Canadian Role in European Security," May 15, 1987, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe*; 27-1-1, vol. 1, 129

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid*, 131

encouraged to continue reducing nuclear stockpiles, but Canada should “remain cool” to any attempts to eliminate American strategic nuclear weapons. By ensuring that the Atlantic was not widened, through a continued Canadian presence in Europe, the authors of the study believed that Canada could help keep the American nuclear umbrella over Europe.<sup>104</sup> The White Paper had argued that Canada’s forces in Europe helped prevent nuclear war through deterrence, and the study saw a continued role for Canada’s forces in keeping the peace, albeit through political cohesion, not military deterrence.

The nuclear reduction talks (for which the study was prepared) were to be followed by conventional arms reduction talks. The authors recommended that Canada support these, while continuing to preposition equipment in Europe for rapid reinforcement. Canada, they argued, would possibly be exempt from force reductions because its troop levels were already very low.<sup>105</sup> The forces in Germany could be augmented with the CAST Brigade, and if necessary forces from the peacekeeping mission in Cyprus could be moved to Canadian Forces Base Lahr in West Germany.<sup>106</sup> The authors did not see nuclear arms reductions as a sign that the Cold War was ending or that Canada could withdraw its forces from Europe.<sup>107</sup>

The study noted that Gorbachev, while he appeared genuine in his offers to reduce the Soviet nuclear stockpile, faced strong opposition from the Communist Party and the Soviet military. Former Soviet Secretary-General Nikita Khrushchev (1953-1964) had made similar beginnings, but he was removed and replaced by a traditional hardliner. The authors of the study did not think that Gorbachev’s reforms would be automatically opposed by hardliners in the military. His economic reforms, if successful, would improve the military budget, and his arms

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<sup>104</sup> *Ibid*, 136

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid*, 137

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid*, 140

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid*, 140

reductions could free up money for other military uses. Gorbachev seemed willing to allow moderate reform in the Warsaw Pact nations, but he risked losing control by reducing Soviet forces stationed in them. NATO nations were hesitant to make a final judgement on his reforms because of the possibility that they would fail, but they were cautiously optimistic that a new era of détente was approaching.<sup>108</sup> The prediction of peace was based on the continued existence of the two superpowers and their complementary militaries, not on the collapse of one of them.

The study did not automatically equate nuclear arms reductions with higher chances for peace: Reagan's drive to achieve nuclear arms reductions as a legacy achievement indeed risked increasing the chance of conventional war by upsetting the strategic balance, and European nations were concerned that they would be required to bear a greater tax burden if they were required to increase their conventional militaries for deterrence purposes. In this atmosphere, Canada's forces took on a greater importance, and Canada stood to reap political benefits by increasing its European presence.<sup>109</sup> The paper concluded that a balance of nuclear and conventional deterrence could prevent war in the foreseeable future, and that Canada needed to continue countering Soviet attempts to separate Europe from North America.<sup>110</sup> In the 1988 Defence Update, Perrin Beatty claimed that NATO's two-track defence policy, the negotiation of arms reductions and improving conventional defence, had succeeded and was the right way to proceed.<sup>111</sup> There was no indication that successful arms negotiations meant Canada could reduce its conventional forces, or that the Cold War was near its end.

In the spring of 1988, Ken Calder, the Director of Strategic Analysis at National Defence and the drafter of the White Paper, wrote a memorandum to the Deputy Minister of Defence and

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid, 149-153

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, 157

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, 184

<sup>111</sup> *Defence Update, 1988-1989, Presented to the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence*, (National Defence, 1988), 1

the Chief of Defence Staff which suggested that, due to the changes in the strategic balance, Canada could withdraw its land and air forces from West Germany. The Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, Jack Vance, requested that every copy of the memo be destroyed since it suggested an outright reversal of the White Paper only one year after it was issued. Calder had been instructed to write the memorandum by Robert Fowler, the Assistant Deputy Minister of Policy at National Defence. In an interview, Calder recalled that, after the White Paper had been published, members of the military thought that the issue of withdrawing Canada's forces from West Germany was settled. The order to destroy copies of the Calder memorandum shows that the military was not receptive to the idea at the time.<sup>112</sup>

The 1988-1989 Defence Update contained no major changes to the White Paper. The update did not deviate from the paper's Cold War worldview and language. Beatty's introduction declared that "Canada is not a neutral nation" that would not "simply sit on the sidelines."<sup>113</sup> The White Paper had rededicated Canada to NATO, and Canada had to shoulder the responsibilities that came with independence, including defence. The Update was based on the Cold War division of the world, where Europe was Canada's front line.<sup>114</sup> The recent changes in the world, particularly the internal economic and social reforms in the Soviet Union enacted by Gorbachev and the nuclear arms agreement, meant that there could be a gradual, but genuine, improvement in the strategic environment. The Soviets remained, in the Update's view, convinced of their own superiority. Canada's defence continued to rely on strategic deterrence and conventional defence as the two main means of defence.<sup>115</sup> The government would continue to make Canada's forces

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<sup>112</sup> Ken Calder, Interview by Ian Weatherall, Audio-recorded, April 1, 2014.

<sup>113</sup> *Defence Update, 1988-1989*, 1

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid*, 4-5

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid*, 7

more “operationally effective and responsive.”<sup>116</sup> The majority of the defence update concerned ongoing acquisitions, including the frigates, helicopters, submarines, patrol aircraft, fighter jets, equipment for the Rangers, northern infrastructure, heavy trucks, and weapons for the reserves.

The 1987 White Paper on Defence promised that Canada would offer a full commitment to NATO and defend its sovereignty. Ambitiously comprehensive, it contained defence policies that spanned two continents and three oceans and required fifteen years of increases to the defence budget to be feasible. The government was late in updating Canada’s defences for the 1980s and the increased need for conventional deterrence, but it succeeded in creating a plan that, if it had been implemented, would have rebuilt and restructured the Canadian military into a real Cold War military. Canada’s two main commitments to NATO, the CAST Brigade and Canada’s forces in West Germany, were not supportable in war, and their consolidation into a division in West Germany would create a viable military force that would strengthen NATO’s rapid reinforcement capabilities. The nuclear-powered submarines would serve a dual purpose of sovereignty assertion and anti-Soviet submarine warfare.

The Senate Reports of 1982 and 1983 formed a foundation of what was considered a full military and alliance commitment for Canada, and White Paper incorporated the majority of the Senate’s recommendations, with the intent of portraying Canada as a “good ally” in NATO. Maintaining that image was a factor in defence policy formation before and after the publication of the White Paper. Canada did not enhance the CAST Brigade at the expense of forces in West Germany because of allied disapproval, and Calder and Fowler’s 1988 suggestion that Canada could withdraw from West Germany provoked a strong reaction from the military leadership because of what allies might think. The White Paper contained a comprehensive defence plan for

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid, 21

Canada which would improve the operational viability of Canada's forces in Europe and the defence of Canada's territory. The weakness of the defence plan was that it was based on increases to the military budget, which made its long-term political viability questionable.

## **Chapter 2: The Conventional Forces Treaty and the New Europe**

In 1989 and 1990, Canada's NATO policy was defined by the need to maintain a functional deterrent in Europe, the negotiations that led to the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty, and the emerging concept of a European defence identity. The revolutions in Eastern Europe, "The Autumn of Nations," did not initially create peace in Europe, and they paradoxically increased the chances of conflict between East and West. The situation that the Senate reports foresaw in *Manpower in Canada's Armed Forces*, Soviet military interventions in Eastern European revolutions, became a distinct possibility. Canada continued to maintain Cold War policies and capabilities in Europe after the war was, according to many, on its way into history. Maureen Appel Molot and Fen Osler Hampson summarize this sentiment in their

introduction to the 1989 edition of *Canada Among Nations*: “these changes required policy responses from the Mulroney government, responses which, in the eyes of many observers, were all too slow in coming.”<sup>117</sup> Yet, had Canada altered its European policies before the completion of the conventional forces parity negotiations, it would have reduced the bargaining power of NATO. External Affairs wanted to wait until the treaty was signed so that the government could develop a new European policy in conjunction with allies, instead of taking unilateral action that could cause diplomatic problems. The combined effect of the negotiations and the continued need for deterrence gave the impression that Canada was barely paying attention to the paradigm shift happening in Eastern Europe. Calls for Canada to reap a “peace dividend” and acknowledge the new European situation (a new, neutral zone between the Soviet Union and NATO) by reducing or removing its presence from Europe seemed to fall on deaf ears. The fact that new policies were not formulated immediately does not mean the government was slow or falling out of step with the world.

A deep recession that lasted from 1989 until 1992 put strong pressure on the government to reduce government spending, and the defence budget was a source of easy savings. Nelson Michaud described the second phase of defence policy in the Mulroney years as a shift from departmental processes to Cabinet control over the department, to bring defence spending in line with the government’s deficit-reduction goals.<sup>118</sup> The authors of *Canada’s International Policies* identified a pro-military policy window that opened with the election of a government sympathetic to the military in 1984, and closed in 1988. During the drafting of the White Paper,

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<sup>117</sup> Maureen Appel Molot and Fen Osler Hampson, “The Challenge of Change,” *Canada Among Nations, 1989: The Challenge of Change*, ed. Maureen Appel Molot and Fen Osler Hampson, (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1990), 2. The fonds received through ATIP contain several news clippings from 1989 with similar sentiments.

<sup>118</sup> Nelson Michaud, “Bureaucratic Politics and the Making of the 1987 Defence White Paper,” *Diplomatic Departures: The Conservative Era in Canadian Foreign Policy, 1984-93*, ed. Nelson Michaud and Kim Richard Nossal, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2001), 260

Mulroney had personally backed the enterprise in Cabinet against opposition from Secretary of State for External Affairs Joe Clark and Finance Minister Michael Wilson. After the November 1988 election, won by Brian Mulroney but with a smaller majority, the need for further deficit reductions became more important than defence policy.<sup>119</sup>

In December 1988, the Department of Finance advised Mulroney that Canada was heading into a mild recession. The government was hard-pressed to respond since all the easy budget cuts had made in the first mandate.<sup>120</sup> Economic downturns are expected, but the recession of 1989-1992 was more severe than expected, and it was deeper in Canada than in the United States and Western Europe.<sup>121</sup> The large federal debt and high interest rates were already an issue for the government, but in the prosperous period of 1983-1988 the government was able to reduce the debt and the percentage of government spending used to finance the debt. When the economy contracted and stayed in recession for three years, the government was unable to reduce the deficit further, and the new goal became holding the deficit steady without new taxes.<sup>122</sup> Canadian businesses suffered from several years of little or no growth, and many had to downsize to keep in business. Wages and salaries barely grew during the recession, even in sectors that were not restructuring or downsizing. The Bank of Canada's anti-inflationary monetary policy, which would eventually benefit the government and the economy by lowering interest rates, had the short-term effect of extending the recession.<sup>123</sup> With the entire economy in

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<sup>119</sup> Brian W. Tomlin, Norman Hillmer, and Fen Osler Hampson, *Canada's International Policies: Agendas, Alternatives, and Politics*, (Oxford University Press, 2008), 143

<sup>120</sup> Brian Mulroney, *Memoirs: 1939-1993*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 2007), 647

<sup>121</sup> Thomas Wilson, Peter Dungan, and Steve Murphy, "The Sources of the Recession in Canada: 1989-1992," *Canadian Business Economics*, Winter 1994, 2-8

<sup>122</sup> Robert Everett, "Parliament and Politics," *Canadian Annual Review of Politics and Public Affairs, 1992*, Edited by David Leyton-Brown, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 30-31

<sup>123</sup> Gordon Thiessen, "Canada's Economic Future: What Have We Learned from the 1990s?" Speech given to the Canadian Club of Toronto, January 22, 2001, <http://www.bankofcanada.ca/2001/01/canada-economic-future-what-have-we-learned/> Accessed August 10, 2017.

dire straits and the electorate suffering from the recession, the government did not have much time or energy to devote to defence matters. A report by NATO's Defence Planning Committee, published in December 1988, said that Canada had "generally achieved" the goals of increasing NATO funding between 1983 and 1988. Canada's percentage of Gross Domestic Product spent on defence had risen in that period more than the NATO average.<sup>124</sup> This was a success, and a sign of Canada's commitment to the alliance, but spending increases during a period of economic growth is easier than expanding, or even just maintaining, spending during a recession.

Michael Wilson had the task of announcing the first major change to the White Paper's defence policies in the annual 1989 Budget speech. He said that the "basic parameters" of the White Paper remained the defence policy of the government, but the policies would be implemented more slowly. The government had decided not to proceed with the acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines, but would instead "examine alternatives for the continued rebuilding of an effective navy."<sup>125</sup> Other cost-saving measures were the closure of fourteen bases and a slight reduction in the civilian workforce at National Defence. Several acquisition programs were put on hold or delayed, including battle tanks for Europe. The Budget Papers laid out a revised funding plan for the military that would reduce the growth rate of its budget.<sup>126</sup> The new plan seems optimistic in hindsight, but it showed that the government did not foresee a major shift in the strategic balance that would enable large reductions in spending. Defence spending, while temporarily capped to a real increase of 1.2 percent over 1988-1989, would

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<sup>124</sup> Alex Morrison, "Canadian Defence Policy and Burden-Sharing in NATO," *Canada and NATO: The Forgotten Ally?* A Special Report of the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis Inc., (Cambridge: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), 40

<sup>125</sup> "The Budget Speech," Delivered in the House of Commons by the Honourable Michael H. Wilson, Minister of Finance, April 27, 1989, 6

<sup>126</sup> Budget speech, 1989, 23-24

increase by about five percent annually until 1993-1994, when it would be able to increase more as the fiscal situation was brought under control.

By announcing the cancellation of the submarine acquisition in the budget speech, the government made it clear that it was a cost-saving measure. However, it happened before it was evident to Canada that the changes in the Warsaw Pact nations would irrevocably change Europe and reduce the chances of a surprise Soviet blitzkrieg against NATO. The only clear change in the balance between the two blocs was the signing of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty between the United States and the Soviet Union in December 1987, and the hope it gave for the success of the ongoing negotiations to create conventional forces parity in Europe. As a part of its analysis of the failure of détente, The White Paper had made the claim that arms negotiations had made “virtually no progress.” The success of the treaty was the first change to the strategic situation upon which the White Paper was based. The submarines were not canceled because of the end of the Cold War, nor were they canceled as part of the “peace dividend” after the Cold War. They were canceled while the Cold War was underway, albeit after a slight drop in East-West tensions. The budget papers stated that the government would “undertake an immediate examination of alternatives for the continued rebuilding of an effective navy,” but there was no replacement program for the submarines.<sup>127</sup> The Budget Papers used the term “effective navy,” avoiding the government’s previous term “three-ocean navy.” The prominence given to Canada’s North by the White Paper, and the Senate report on Maritime Command, ended with the 1989 budget.

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<sup>127</sup> The documents from National Defence about the nuclear submarine acquisition program have not yet been received, so a thorough explanation of how the government made the decision to end the program, and what considerations for a replacement were made, is not possible here.

The White Paper's two focusses, sovereignty and NATO, were supportive of each other, but their divergent purposes were highlighted when the government had to choose between the two. Canada and Western Europe faced the same enemy, and improvements in Canada's naval capabilities in the North increased NATO's total deterrent across the entirety of its area. The submarines defended a distant flank of NATO and were not a part of the NATO military structure. The defence needs of the North had been highlighted by the Senate report before sovereignty-assertion had become politicized and the Department of National Defence wanted the submarines for defensive purposes, but the government's decision to emphasize Canada's northern defences was partially driven by the political need to assert Canadian ownership over the North. However, Canada retained full control of its territorial defence policies whereas Canada's role in Europe was highly integrated with allied forces. Canada's division in West Germany was a visible sign of Canada's commitment to NATO, and Canada had previously experienced how strongly European allies valued Canada's forces in West Germany. Canceling the submarine acquisition program, which had not progressed far, was politically safer and would not require consultation with allies. When fiscal pressure forced the government to find ways to save money, it chose NATO over sovereignty. Had the government chosen to reduce the military budget by purchasing fewer submarines and reducing Canada's forces in Europe, it would have reduced the operational viability of the military. By cancelling the entirety of the submarine acquisition, the government ensured that the division in West Germany would continue to receive sufficient funding to preserve its functionality, thus preserving Canada's good ally status.

The negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States to eliminate intermediate-range nuclear weapons did not directly involve NATO, but the Canadian

government claimed that allied acquiescence in the reductions was essential to the success of the negotiations. Mulroney noted that the nuclear-arms reductions did not affect the nuclear weapons that threatened Canada, as all intercontinental missiles were excluded from the treaty.<sup>128</sup> The next round of negotiations did involve allies: talks for limitations on conventional forces in Europe informally began in February 1987, and NATO published a preliminary draft mandate in June 1987, the month that the White Paper was published. At the Warsaw Pact's Political Coordination Council Meeting in July 1988, the Pact issued a joint declaration that they, in principle, supported arms reductions to create parity, with verification processes similar to the nuclear forces treaty. NATO initially wanted to create parity by reducing forces in the Warsaw Pact, without corresponding reductions in Western Europe, but by early 1989 the alliance had accepted that it too would have to reduce its forces. Formal negotiations began in March 1989 in Vienna and were successfully concluded in Paris in November 1990. The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe set equal limits for each bloc on the number of forces and equipment they could have in Europe, from the Atlantic to the Ural Mountains. No one country could have more than one-third of the total amount for its bloc, and no sea-based forces were included. The signatories to the treaty had five years to implement the treaty.<sup>129</sup>

Under the reduction provision of the treaty, military equipment above the specified limits had to be destroyed, not moved out of the area covered by the treaty (to east of the Urals or to North America) or put in storage. The destruction of equipment was in NATO's favour since the Soviet Union had numerical superiority over the NATO forces in every category of land-based weaponry. The Soviet Union had to destroy 44 000 pieces of equipment to reach the treaty limits,

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<sup>128</sup> Martin Shadwick, "Military and Security Issues," *Canadian Annual Review of Politics and Public Affairs, 1987*, ed. R.B. Byers, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 230-231

<sup>129</sup> Anatoly Anin and Rodion Ayumov, "Conventional Forces in Europe: Yesterday, Today...Tomorrow?..." *A Russian Journal on International Security*, Vol. 17, No. 3, September 1, 2001, (Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group). 18-22

even though they had moved 57 000 pieces out of the treaty area before the treaty was signed, while NATO only had to destroy 2000 pieces.<sup>130</sup> There were two exceptions to the destruction provision. Military equipment could be converted to civilian use, or transferred (the term used was “cascaded”) to an ally who would then destroy older equipment before the five-year implementation limit was over.<sup>131</sup> The United States transferred 2000 pieces to allies and did not destroy any equipment, which helped maintain NATO’s capabilities at near-current levels.<sup>132</sup> The conversion of military equipment to civilian use was proposed by the Soviet Union, which wanted to reduce its bottom line. By the time the treaty was signed (November 1990) the Warsaw Pact nations were nominally independent of the Soviet Union, even though the Pact was not formally dissolved until February 1991. The Soviet Union was unwilling to transfer large amounts of equipment to its former protectorates, which was not an issue between the United States and its allies.<sup>133</sup>

The treaty did not cover North America, so Canadian and American forces stationed at home acted as a strategic reserve for NATO, and Soviet troops east of the Ural Mountains had a similar reserve role. Like the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, the Conventional Forces Treaty included inspection and verification processes to ensure compliance. The signatories to the treaty had the right to on-site inspections of weapons sites, unlimited supervision of the destruction of equipment, and satellite monitoring was allowed to ensure that equipment was not transferred off-site before inspectors arrived.<sup>134</sup> *The Canadian Annual Review of Politics and Public Affairs 1990* claimed too soon that the treaty formally ended the Cold

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<sup>130</sup> Richard A. Falkenrath, *Shaping Europe’s Military Order: The Origins and Consequences of the CFE Treaty*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995), 115

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid*, 101-102

<sup>132</sup> George H.W. Bush, “Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe,” Speech given on November 19, 1990, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=19073>, Accessed August 11, 2017.

<sup>133</sup> Falkenrath, *Shaping Europe’s Military Order*, 102-103

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid*, 104-105

War.<sup>135</sup> The treaty reduced East-West tensions and limited the ability of the Soviet Union to launch a surprise attack, which had been a key element of the Soviet strategy, but the Soviet Union still existed as a military threat to NATO.

Movements for political reform in Warsaw Pact countries had begun to grow stronger in the spring of 1988, and by the winter of 1989 reformers in Poland and Hungary were negotiating with their governments to allow free elections. The revolutions of 1989 in the Warsaw Pact began in earnest with the election of the Polish Solidarity government in June 1989 and the appointment of a Solidarity President in August. Hungary began loosening its border-controls in May by dismantling its border-fence with Austria, and in September a new, democratic constitution was adopted. Protests broke out in East Germany in September, and in March 1990 free elections were held, after which the East German Christian Democratic Union formed the government. Czechoslovakia had its “Velvet Revolution” in November 1989, when mass peaceful protests forced the Communist government to resign. Bulgaria also transitioned peacefully away from communism in December 1989, when the Bulgarian Communist Party announced it would allow free elections. In Romania, the protests reached a height of violence not seen in the other Warsaw Pact nations when, in December, the army was used against protestors, before it rebelled and joined the protestors. The Communist dictator, Nicolae Ceausescu, was executed by a mob on December 25, 1989.<sup>136</sup> In five short months, the rule of communism in Eastern Europe unexpectedly collapsed, and the Soviet Union did nothing to stop

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<sup>135</sup> David Mutimer, “External Affairs and National Defence,” *Canadian Annual Review of Politics and Public Affairs 1990*, ed. David Leyton-Brown, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 75

<sup>136</sup> “1989: The Year of Revolutions—a Look Back 20 Years On,” *European Parliament Website*, Published August 27, 2009, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+IM-PRESS+20090826STO59792+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>. Accessed July 31, 2017.

it. By the end of 1989 the political cohesion and Soviet domination of Eastern Europe was in tatters, creating an unstable neutral zone between NATO and the Soviet Union.

The beginning of 1989 saw NATO seeking to strike a balance between nuclear and conventional deterrence, while also mapping out the relationship between NATO and the emerging “European security identity.” The first attempted formation of a coordinated Western European defence/security arrangement was in 1952, when France, Italy, West Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Belgium signed a treaty to form the European Defence Community (EDC). The new organisation would have a unified army under a single command with a common budget and shared military installations. The West German forces would be under the command of the EDC, while the other nations would retain national control of their forces. The treaty was rejected by the French Parliament, which was concerned over the potential loss of sovereignty, the remilitarization of West Germany, and the absence of the United Kingdom in the organization.<sup>137</sup> In 1961 French President Charles de Gaulle proposed defence coordination among the six members of the European Economic Community. President de Gaulle wanted to preserve France’s control of its foreign and defence policies, which he believed were under threat from increased economic integration. His plan promoted coordination between the nations without their yielding control of their militaries, but in 1962 it was rejected by the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and Belgium because it conflicted with NATO’s integrated defence structure. They believed that NATO was beneficial to the smaller European nations because it joined the United States to Europe and diluted France’s influence in Europe. After the failure of

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<sup>137</sup> Kevin Ruane, *The Rise and Fall of the European Defence Community: Anglo-American Relations and the Crisis of European Defense, 1950-1955*, (Palgrave, 2000), 4-15

his plan, de Gaulle withdrew France from NATO's integrated military structure in order to retain full control over French foreign and defence policy.<sup>138</sup>

From 1962 until 1986, the concept of a European security organization remained dormant. The 1986 Reykjavik Summit between the Soviet Union and the United States “sparked concern” that the superpowers would discuss and determine European defence issues without consulting their European allies. Several European nations identified the need to “delineate” Europe's specific security concerns (only those pertaining to the continent, excluding the North Atlantic and North America) and enhance Europe's capability to ensure that security without depending upon the United States. This coordinated capability was referred to as a “European pillar” within NATO and was not thought to replace NATO in Europe. France and West Germany had established a joint brigade together, and several other nations expressed interest in joining it to create a pan-European military unit. France saw the joint brigade as a way to gain influence over West German defence policy, while West Germany wanted to ensure that their powerful neighbour would always defend them.<sup>139</sup>

Canada was put in an odd situation concerning European defence identity, since it was a small power also concerned by unilateral actions taken by the United States, but also a North American member of NATO that fell outside of the European identity. Canada used NATO as a means of maintaining autonomy from the United States while still benefitting from American military power; an eventual division of the alliance into two pillars would reduce Canadian influence. Maintaining Canada's foothold in Europe to ensure that such a division did not happen

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<sup>138</sup> Anthony Teasdale, “The Fouchet Plan: De Gaulle's Intergovernmental Design for Europe,” *LSE 'Europe in Question' Discussion Paper Series*, No. 117, October 2016, (The London School of Economics and Political Science), 1-6

<sup>139</sup> “European Defence,” May 1989, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe*; 27-1-1, vol. 2, 296-297

became a possible *raison d'être* for Canada's forces in Europe. Canada supported European efforts to coordinate its own defence, but was concerned about the need to preserve NATO as the "primary forum" for Western defence, one that allowed the transatlantic connection to continue.<sup>140</sup>

A memorandum sent on June 22, 1989, from Canada's ambassador to NATO Gordon Smith, described Canada's options as the two blocs negotiated parity in major equipment categories and National Defence absorbed the effect of budget cuts.<sup>141</sup> He recommended no unilateral cuts in Canadian personnel in or committed to Europe until the treaty was signed. If Canada's forces in Europe did not receive new equipment in the future (the tank acquisition had been put on hold), then Canada's role in West Germany would have to be renegotiated. Battle tanks were the most needed equipment for Canada's forces in Europe, and politically the most sensitive because of their high cost. Smith thought that Canada's forces in Europe would, under the treaty, be reduced to a point where they were again operationally unviable. If Canada's allies reduced their forces, they could potentially transfer (either at a reduced price or as rentals) some of their equipment to Canada, reducing capital acquisition costs and preserving Canada's operational viability.<sup>142</sup>

Smith was concerned that, in several documents he had seen, Canadian forces in Europe were ranked last out of five national defence priorities, underneath Canadian territorial defence and peacekeeping. He did not believe that had happened before in thirty-five years. He acknowledged that budgetary pressures and international political realities were changing the

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<sup>140</sup> *Ibid*, 297

<sup>141</sup> Many of the documents do not indicate a recipient other than "External Affairs Ottawa," and some of the documents have no author identified. The recipients and authors are included when possible.

<sup>142</sup> "Communication from BNATO to EXTOTT: Arms Control and Defence Planning," June 22, 1989, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe; 27-1-1, vol. 2, 291-294*

situation, but he thought that Canada should remain in Europe until overall allied reductions had reached fifty percent. Canada should not be the first to benefit from the treaty, but should also not be the last. He finished the memorandum by stressing that, even if conventional parity was reached and force levels were reduced, only the threat of nuclear weapons could guarantee the peace.

Five days later, on June 27, 1989, External Affairs prepared parliamentary responses to Liberal defence critic William Rompkey's suggestion that Canada withdraw its forces from Europe. Rompkey had said that, in light of ongoing arms negotiations and the change in the international atmosphere, Canada could withdraw its forces from Europe and concentrate on building a stronger maritime force. The government's response was that only through NATO could Canada deter an attack on its allies and that Canada could not make any changes to its European strategy until the negotiations were finished. The response stressed that "it is inconsistent to advocate withdrawal from Europe and the build-up of maritime defences, since the threat to Canadian security comes from the same source."<sup>143</sup> Canada still needed to participate in collective deterrence, and there was still a threat to Canada, despite the arms negotiations.

By August 1989, the fact that unexpected and rapid change was happening in Eastern Europe was clear. The Operational Research and Analysis Establishment produced an information paper entitled "Gorbachev, l'Europe de l'est et la doctrine de Brejnev: entre l'ambiguïté et le laisser-faire," which argued that Gorbachev's recent declarations concerning the Brezhnev doctrine (that the Soviet Union would use military force to maintain its dominance

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<sup>143</sup> "House of Commons Book-Briefing Note: Liberal defence critic, William Rompkey, advocates that Canada should consider withdrawing land forces from Europe and putting more effort into maritime defence," June 27, 1989, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe; 27-1-1, vol. 2*, 289

over Eastern Europe) were ambiguous.<sup>144</sup> His ambiguity posed a problem for Western policy makers, who were accustomed to expecting Soviet repression of political reform in Eastern Europe. As part of his reforms, Gorbachev seemed to be distancing himself from the Brezhnev doctrine, but his loosening of his centralized grip on power risked allowing the communist system to devolve into “political chaos,” which would then put pressure on him to use the military to restore order. Gorbachev was not critical of the Soviet military interventions in the Hungarian and Czechoslovakian revolutions, and it was not clear whether he would consider similar moves. Allowing political reforms and multi-party democracy in Poland and Hungary could very likely inspire similar desires in Soviet citizens, a serious risk.<sup>145</sup> The paper concluded with the warning that the fragility of the relationship between the Soviet Union and its satellites was a source of real danger.<sup>146</sup> The hope that Gorbachev’s reforms would bring peace, or at least a higher chance of avoiding war, was tempered by the concern that the loosening of the central fist would create instability.

As the strategic balance shifted, and budgetary pressures began forcing National Defence to prioritize, North America and Europe vied for top spot as Canada’s most important military role. The majority of documents from 1989-1991 show that Canada was committed to maintaining a viable presence in Europe, often at the expense of the navy or Canadian defence, but there are some documents that show that there were elements in National Defence that wished to change the focus to more resources for the navy, as Rompkey suggested. On June 28, 1989, John J. Noble, of External Affairs, wrote a memorandum in which he forwarded concern

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<sup>144</sup> Centre D’Analyse et de Recherche Opérationnelle Direction de L’Analyse Stratégique, “Note de Recherche: Gorbatchev, l’Europe de l’est et la doctrine de Brejnev: entre l’ambiguïté et le laisser-faire,” August 11, 1989, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe; 27-1-1, vol. 2, 270*

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid*, Pg. 175

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid*, Pg. 282

from Gordon Smith that National Defence had placed Europe lowest in priorities and stated that Canada's ambassador to Germany, Tom Delworth, was also concerned about National Defence's penchant for getting out of Europe to focus on North America.<sup>147</sup> In November 1989, a memorandum from Canada's Joint Delegation to NATO informed External Affairs that it had met with SACEUR (Supreme Allied Commander Europe) and Major-General Robert Chelberg (chief of NATO's policy and programs branch) to lay out the financial problems facing National Defence. The delegation reconfirmed Canada's adherence to European commitments and levels of forces stationed in Europe up to the conventional forces agreement and beyond.<sup>148</sup>

In November and December 1989, the Prime Minister, Defence Minister, and Secretary of State for External Affairs all visited Europe. A list of answers for potential questions was prepared for them to ensure that they presented a united front in Europe. If asked about Canadian defence policy, they would respond that Canada was waiting to see how events in Eastern Europe played out before making final decisions, so as not to limit the flexibility of the military. The government was reviewing defence policy in light of the 1989 budget, but the 1987 White Paper was not being "scrapped" by the review, and the pillars of Canadian security policy identified in it were unchanged. Canada would cooperate with allies to defend itself, and the world was still divided into two blocs. The decision to freeze purchases of equipment for Europe was part of this waiting period: Canada and its allies had to see the results of the revolutions and the conventional forces negotiations before making final decisions. The revolutions had the potential to change the military threat to Europe, and even alter the "whole spectrum of the East-West military balance." If asked about the cancellation of the nuclear-powered submarines, the

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<sup>147</sup> "Defence Planning: Whither our NATO Commitments?" June 28, 1989, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe; 27-1-1*, vol. 2, 284

<sup>148</sup> "Memo from BNATO to EXTOTT: Future of Canadian Forces in Europe," November 17, 1989, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe; 27-1-1*, vol. 2, 265

answer would be that the threat to Canada's water and to Europe comes from the same source: deterrence and arms control in Europe negated the need for nuclear submarines. There were no plans to include more budget cuts in the review: the forces needed to maintain their current capabilities.<sup>149</sup> The responses stressed continuity, and as usual they gave away little of Canada's future policies.

A memorandum in December 1989 from Canada's Joint Delegation to NATO advocated for a continued Canadian presence in Europe. By that time, it was clear that the revolutions in Eastern Europe were irreversible, but Canada should only reduce its force levels after consulting with allies. The cuts to the forces in the 1970s had reduced the military's operational viability to bare bones, so there remained a need not to cut force levels drastically. At the time, the concept of cascading equipment from one nation to another was under negotiation. The memorandum argued that, if cascading was allowed, Canada should be a recipient of some equipment to help keep Canadian forces at full operational capabilities. If the equipment was modernized, then Canadian troop levels could potentially be reduced without affecting operational capability, but Canada already had low levels of forces. The memorandum concluded that any reductions must "allow CDN forces to remain operationally viable."<sup>150</sup>

A briefing note for Gordon Smith, entitled "East-West Security Relations," from December 21, 1989, described the changed balance of power in Europe. Soviet ideological hostility against the West had nearly disappeared, there was little reason to believe that the Soviet Union would, in its present state, use military force against the West, and there would

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<sup>149</sup> "Letter from Louis Delvoie to J.H. Taylor regarding upcoming visits to Europe," November 17, 1989, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe*; 27-1-1, vol. 2, 259-263

<sup>150</sup> "Memo from BNATO to EXTOTT: Future of CDN Forces in Europe," December 11, 1989, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Norway*; 27-1-1, vol. 2, 251-254

likely be no help from the Warsaw Pact if it did so. The Soviet Union maintained numerical superiority in Europe, but the revolutions in Eastern Europe meant that it was unlikely to be able to launch a surprise attack. The Soviet Union seemed to have lost its will to intervene in Warsaw Pact nations, leading to the public perception that there was no longer any threat to the West.<sup>151</sup>

However, according to the briefing note, Soviet Union remained a military superpower, albeit a reduced superpower that was increasingly limited by the nuclear and conventional forces treaties. The possibility of Gorbachev losing the leadership, especially if he was blamed for the revolutions in Eastern Europe, and a subsequent change of direction concerning the West, was a real possibility that had to be anticipated. The author pointed out that Gorbachev's ouster would not necessarily mean a full reversal of his policies concerning the West, but the elements within the Communist Party who could replace him would most likely be more hardline. If the Soviets did intervene in Eastern Europe (which was considered unlikely), there would be "spillover" into NATO countries, even if only with the flight of refugees. The briefing note pointed out that NATO was formed in 1949 and the Warsaw Pact in 1955. NATO was not formed in response to the Warsaw Pact, but as a defence against the Soviet Union, and could continue existing as such after the Warsaw Pact ended. The collapse of the Pact did not mean that NATO had succeeded or had become obsolete.<sup>152</sup>

The documents received through ATIP from the Department of National Defence and External Affairs tend to be consistent concerning Canada's NATO policies, and only gradually display evolution. Occasionally, documents will stand out in how they go against the current, and several of these instances involve Robert Fowler and his belief that Canada did not need to

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<sup>151</sup> "Meeting Notes: East-West Security Relations," November 21, 1989, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe; 27-1-1*, vol. 2, 239

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid*, 240

station forces in Europe. John J. Noble wrote to Canada's ambassador to the United States, Derek Burney, to inform him about European views on Canada's forces in Europe. He wrote that the idea of leaving Europe would be "music to ears of Fowler," if not to the Americans. Barring major reversals in East/West relations, Canada would "inevitably" leave Europe, but most likely not do more in North America. Noble noted that European allies placed a high value on Canadian forces to help prevent a decline into chaos, but that role was unrealistic for Canada to assume.<sup>153</sup>

By the spring of 1990, the Western allies had moved on to the task of figuring out the future of European security. A letter from the Dutch ambassador to Canada gave some insight into why the Dutch still valued NATO and Canada. By joining Western Europe with Germany and North America, NATO had solved both the German problem and the Russian problem. The two mistakes made after the First World War were not made again: Germany was not isolated, and foreign troops remained on German soil. The Dutch government believed it was necessary not to make old mistakes again, but to continue the presence of foreign forces in Germany after 1990.

If Europe were to move towards having a pan-European security system, including a reunified Germany, it would most likely involve Germany taking on a greater military role in Europe, something the Dutch were not too keen to see. Continuing NATO, in its present form with new goals, ensured European security and kept Germany bound to Western Europe and North America. The Dutch ambassador believed that, as long as NATO existed, the United States Congress would allow American forces to stay in Germany, but if NATO ended they

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<sup>153</sup> Memo from EXTOTT to WSHDC: CDA and Europe: View from WSHDC," February 5, 1990, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe; 27-1-1, vol. 2*, 211

would be withdrawn. Whether European security was ensured by NATO or by a European security organization, Europe would still face the same threats: ethnic conflicts in Eastern and southern Europe, a possible return of the Soviet Union to its past behaviour, possible threats in the Middle East and Africa (where many NATO nations had residual colonial interests) and the admittedly unlikely possibility of “German adventures.” The Dutch did not wish to have NATO fully supplanted by a new structure, although the ambassador believed that the Europeans could take on more of their own defence within NATO. The ambassador believed that, if Europe did develop a cooperative security structure that included Eastern Europe but excluded North America, it should be made compatible with NATO. He did not speculate on how the two would coexist, but concluded by stating that the Netherlands would work towards creating a “network of diverse Pan-European security arrangements that would form the basis of a complementary architecture.”<sup>154</sup>

By June 1990, External Affairs was discussing the future of Canadian forces in Europe with allies, although the question was the form of Canada’s forces for the 1990s, not whether they should remain in Europe or not. Jeremy Kinsman, the Assistant Deputy Minister for Political and International Security Affairs at External Affairs, wrote to Louis Delvoie, the Assistant Deputy Minister for Policy at National Defence, that Canada should be giving more attention to the idea of participating in a multinational unit, potentially with the Netherlands. Delvoie had not believed it was a good idea, but Kinsman thought the prospect was becoming prominent enough in NATO that Canada should include it as a possibility in the departments’ upcoming Security Policy (External Affairs) and Defence Policy (National Defence) papers. One of the reasons behind the CAST Brigade was that Canada and Norway were middle powers with

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<sup>154</sup> “Some Netherlands Thoughts on a European Security Structure,” May 11, 1990, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe*; 27-1-1, vol. 2, 158-160

a similar view about using NATO to moderate major powers, and the Netherlands was in a similar position. These nations saw NATO as a way of ensuring contact between middle and major powers. From a Norwegian and Canadian perspective, the possibility that the European Economic Community (EEC, the predecessor to the European Union which existed from 1957 until 1993, of which Norway was not a member) could take on a defence role threatened to reduce their ability to influence European defence matters. In a lunchtime conversation with Canadian High Commissioner Donald S. Macdonald, Peter Carrington (a former Secretary-General of NATO) opined that the role Canada wished to play was entirely up to Canada. The existence of a defence structure within the EEC was not necessarily a threat to Canada's influence. There would be the possibility of cooperation with non-EEC European nations like Norway, and an increased defence role for the EEC would not necessarily supplant NATO.<sup>155</sup>

As conversations about the future of Canada's forces in Europe progressed, further disagreements between National Defence and External Affairs began to emerge. Kinsman thought that Canada should give more thought to taking part in a multinational battalion with other members of NATO, like the Netherlands, as a way of keeping a Canadian presence in Europe at a lower cost.<sup>156</sup> At ministerial NATO meetings, the idea gained traction, and the Dutch and Belgian foreign ministers planned to raise the idea with Canada's foreign minister, Joe Clark. External Affairs prepared a discussion paper, "Multinational Forces in Europe," to make the argument for multi-national forces as a cost-effective way to continue Canada's military commitment to NATO. Multi-national forces were "political symbols of cohesion, solidarity, and interdependence of allies," that still served the military purpose of flexible response. The

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<sup>155</sup> "LDN to EXTOTT: Lord Carrington's Views on New Security Order in Europe," June 21, 1990, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe; 27-1-1, vol. 2*, 143

<sup>156</sup> Jeremy Kinsman. "Letter to Louis Delvoie," June 27, 1990, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe; 27-1-1, vol. 2*, 135-136

constituent parts of the battalion would be divided into rapid response units able to “demonstrate deterrence or to maintain stability” and other units would be stationed in their home countries until needed to reduce operating costs. If Germany were to provide troops for multinational forces in other countries, it would help reduce the current “occupation” model of troop stationing in Europe, in which only Germany was host to permanent foreign troops.<sup>157</sup> Whether other nations would be comfortable having German troops on their territory was not discussed, but the Dutch concern about future German adventures may have been shared by other nations with long memories.

As was usual practice, the paper offered three options for Canada’s future role in Europe. The options were based, as the White Paper was, on a Canadian commitment to a functional NATO deterrent with a viable Canadian European presence. The reduced threat level (the longer warning time of an attack) allowed for an altered deterrent, but a “residual threat” remained and would most likely remain in the medium-term. Canada’s fiscal issues, and budget cuts to defence, necessitated a smaller role in Europe, but the discussion paper did not entertain the thought of a full withdrawal. European political and military leaders had expressed a desire for a continued land presence, even if a land and air presence was not possible. The three options involved a complete end of Canada’s air role in Europe, although Canada could return its air force to Europe in the future if needed.<sup>158</sup> The German government was beginning to restrict low level flying to only over 1000 feet, which would create training difficulties for Canada if it maintained a ground attack air role.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> “Discussion Paper: Multinational Forces in NATO,” November 17, 1989, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe; -1-1*, vol. 2, 137

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid*, 139

<sup>159</sup> “Memo from BONN to EXTOTT: Defence in the New Europe,” August 29, 1990, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe; 27-1-1*, vol. 2, 113-114

The options also included the alteration of CFB Baden (one of Canada's two military bases in West Germany) into a combined military/civilian establishment. If the cost of any of the options was too high for National Defence to bear, Canadian participation in peacekeeping in Cyprus could be eventually ended to help fund the European role.<sup>160</sup> The length that External Affairs went to support a military role for Canada in Europe shows the importance it placed on defence questions and illustrates the often contentious interface between the two departments in the working out of defence policy.

Option One was the commitment of a brigade (5000 soldiers) to Europe, with one battle group of 1000 soldiers and their dependents living in Europe. The remainder of the brigade would be stationed in Canada, with training procedures in place to ensure full readiness. Option Two would be a battle group rotating in and out of Europe on a regular basis with their dependents in Canada. Option Three was the most distinct, with a facility in Germany being maintained by Canada as a launching pad for the full commitment, but with only a few hundred maintenance and security forces stationed there. Periodic exercises with NATO members would help maintain operational readiness.<sup>161</sup> The paper recommended Option Two for the first half of the 1990s. The third option might be desirable in the second half of the decade. The issue of soldiers' families rarely came up in policy discussions, but the cost of moving families to Europe was pertinent when discussing the affordability of potential roles.

The first concrete step towards creating a different Canadian force in Europe for the 1990s came in September 1990 when Bill McKnight, who replaced Perrin Beatty as Defence Minister in January 1989, informed the Secretary-General of NATO that Canada's forces in

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<sup>160</sup> *Ibid*, 139

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid*, 140

Europe would be reduced by 1406 troops in 1991/1992, which would still keep them above the 1985 level.<sup>162</sup> The fly-over capabilities would be augmented to ensure that a larger number of troops could be flown over if needed. In the press release announcing the reduction, McKnight stated that Canada's role in NATO had not changed; the reduction of forces in West Germany was being accomplished by transferring them to Canada, where they remained earmarked for Europe and ready to fly over when needed. The government also announced a reduction in the number of forces for the defence of Canada, bringing the total military personnel down to 83 500 from 86 000.<sup>163</sup> A communication from External Affairs to the Canadian Joint Delegation to NATO stressed that information concerning reductions to Canada's forces in Europe had to be released properly. It detailed who would inform whom (Canadian delegation to NATO informs Secretary-General, ambassadors inform foreign governments, Chief of Defence Staff informs NATO CDSs), and it stated that posts not listed should not inform their hosts until further notice was given. When the decision was made public, it should be done in a "low key manner."<sup>164</sup> External Affairs may have just been reminding the delegation of proper diplomatic protocol, but does show that the Canadian government was sensitive to allied perceptions. By informing allies before the public announcement, Canada ensured they had time to prepare for it and demonstrated openness and alliance solidarity.

The years 1989 and 1990 were a turning point for the world when the order of the Cold War began to crumble. The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe had negotiated parity between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, greatly reducing the threat of a Soviet blitzkrieg.

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<sup>162</sup> "Letter from Bill McKnight to Manfred Wörner," September 1990, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe; 27-1-1, vol. 2*, 96

<sup>163</sup> "Questions and Answers: Canadian Forces Europe Military Personnel Reductions," September 1990, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe; 27-1-1, vol. 2*, 100-102

<sup>164</sup> "Memo from EXTOTT to BNATO: Personnel Reductions in CDN Forces Europe," September 14, 1990, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe; 27-1-1, vol. 2*, 85

Canada's defence policies were adjusted to the new strategic situation with the cancellation of the nuclear-powered submarines and the decision to stop increasing the number of forces in the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division, but Canada's basic European policy was unchanged. Canadian forces in Europe had to remain operationally viable, and future changes to the force structure had to maintain Canada's visibility in Europe. The concept of a new European security structure was in its early stages and not yet clearly defined, but External Affairs did not want Canada to be excluded. The government's deficit reduction measures, which first bit into the defence budget in 1989, had the potential to damage the military's viability and Canada's relations with NATO. The options for a new European force that External Affairs presented to National Defence met both departments' needs, visibility and viability. The "full commitment" to NATO ended in the 1989 budget, but the Canadian government continued to focus on maintaining a functional military and Canada's good ally status. External Affairs directly linked Canada's forces in Europe to Canada's status in the alliance, and it did not want Canada to lose its influence because of budgetary issues.

### **Chapter 3: Core Capabilities and the Good Ally**

In his book *How We Lead: Canada in a Century of Change*, Joe Clark stated that he was proud to have played a leading role in Brian Mulroney's activist agenda of the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>165</sup> In a speech at McLaughlin College in Scarborough, Ontario, he referred to the government's principled foreign policy.<sup>166</sup> With these two words, activist and principled, he aptly summarized the underlying beliefs that drove his foreign policy during his time as Secretary of State for External Affairs. Canada should be heard on the international stage, and Canada had something positive to contribute in international affairs. Canada's influence came at a price: permanently maintaining troops in Europe, contributing peacekeepers to nearly every

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<sup>165</sup> Joe Clark, *How We Lead: Canada in a Century of Change*, (Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2013). 195

<sup>166</sup> Joe Clark, "Restoring a Broadly-based Canadian Foreign Policy," Speech given at McLaughlin College, Scarborough, Ontario, on November 15, 2007.

United Nations peacekeeping mission, providing aid to developing countries, and taking an active role in several international organizations cost Canada billions of dollars a year. A common term for spending large amounts of money to ensure that Canada was heard was “buying a seat at the table.” From the election in 1984 until 1991, the activities in National Defence to remedy the commitment-capability gap were mostly supportive of Clark’s activist foreign policy, and congruent with buying a seat at the table. Erik Nielsen abandoned his plan to shift the Canadian focus from West Germany to Norway because of opposition within NATO. Perrin Beatty’s White Paper was intended to restore Canada as a good ally by improving the functionality of Canada’s commitment to NATO. Having Canadian forces stationed in Germany was a visible reminder of Canada’s commitment to European security, which was particularly valued by External Affairs.

In 1991, with Bill McKnight as Minister of National Defence, the department altered its method of support for NATO in a way that undermined External Affairs’ use of Canada’s forces in Europe as political leverage. McKnight was explicitly tasked with ordering the department’s finances and creating a financially viable political agenda, instead of making promises without consideration of their cost. Harry Swain, who was Deputy Minister under McKnight, described him as a “straight-shooter” who was unwilling to promise what could not be delivered quickly.<sup>167</sup> Under McKnight, National Defence shifted towards a defence strategy that emphasized Canada’s “core capabilities” by reducing active commitments to save money. The core capabilities were the defence of Canadian territory (including territorial waters), defence and surveillance in the North Atlantic, and the ability to defend Europe if needed. He did not consider it necessary for

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<sup>167</sup> Harry Swain, *Oka: A Political Crisis and its Legacy*, (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2010), 34

Canada to station forces in Europe; keeping forces in Canada earmarked for Europe filled Canada's NATO commitment.

The Senate Report on Maritime Command had based its analysis of Canada's territorial naval defence on Article III of the North Atlantic Treaty, which requires NATO members to maintain the capability to defend its own territory and to aid an attacked ally. The treaty does not stipulate where the forces for aiding allies are stationed in peacetime. According to McKnight, stationing a brigade in Canada that could go to Europe's aid fulfilled Canada's NATO requirement, and the money saved would be used to maintain Canada's territorial defences. Europe was well defended by the United States and the European members of the alliance, but Canada had half a continent to defend by itself. Howard Peter Langille had argued that by 1990 Canadian forces in Europe no longer had a strategic purpose, but that withdrawing them would be difficult because of their political significance.<sup>168</sup> When National Defence decided that Canada no longer needed forces in Europe it encountered resistance from allies, but also from the Department of External Affairs.

Bill McKnight first recommended a full withdrawal from Europe on November 6, 1990, in a letter to Mulroney to brief him on Canadian defence policy in preparation for the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) Summit that month. At that summit, the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty would be signed, resulting in major reductions of conventional armaments and equipment in Europe to create parity between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. The Soviet Union was in the process of withdrawing its forces from Germany,

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<sup>168</sup> Howard Peter Langille, *Changing the Guard: Canada's Defence in a World of Transition*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990). 59

Norman Hillmer, "Canada, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Boundaries of Alignment," *Activism and (Non)Alignment: The Relationship Between Foreign Policy and Security Doctrine*, ed. Ann-Sofie Dahl and Norman Hillmer, (Stockholm: The Swedish Institute of International Affairs, 2002). Hillmer makes a similar argument; after 1990 Canada saw NATO as a primarily political organization, not a military alliance.

Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, and was contemplating withdrawal from Poland. McKnight predicted that by 1995 all Soviet forces would have withdrawn from “Soviet frontiers.” NATO members were following suit: Belgium, France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States were all reducing force numbers in Germany, and France was considering a full withdrawal of its forces from Germany. McKnight informed Mulroney that, in light of the other countries’ reductions and the Soviet withdrawals, he would recommend in the upcoming defence review that by 1995 Canada’s major combat units, both land and air, be withdrawn from Europe to Canada. Canada would continue its other active NATO roles (airborne early warning and standing naval force in the Atlantic) as well as participate in the verification of the CFE treaty.

The proposal had not yet been examined by the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Defence Policy, and McKnight thought that it would not be supported by Joe Clark. During National Defence’s consultation with External Affairs, officials there had accepted that reductions to Canada’s forces in Europe were in order, but preferred to maintain “something more on the ground in Europe than we in National Defence consider militarily justifiable or financially affordable.” Because no Canadian decision had been made yet, McKnight recommended that Mulroney inform allies that Canada remained committed to NATO, that a defence review was under way, and that, if present trends continued, Canada’s troops in Europe would be reduced further.<sup>169</sup>

As External Affairs and National Defence began discussions on the future role for Canada in Europe, two key questions emerged. The first was the question of whether allies, particularly Germany, had a stake in Canadian defence and ought to have some role in

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<sup>169</sup> “Letter from Bill McKnight to Brian Mulroney,” November 6, 1990, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe*; 27-1-1, vol. 2, 54

determining Canada's European policy. Several External Affairs memoranda argued that the opinion of allies needed to be taken into account, especially Germany's as they were host to Canadian forces.<sup>170</sup> The second was how to keep Canadian forces in Europe viable as they were reduced in size. The same memoranda expressed the need that Canada's European forces remain "credible to both CDN cabinet and public." They noted that a full withdrawal of troops and equipment would still leave Canada with two bases in Germany, which could potentially be maintained as forward operating bases for Canada's NATO exercises and peacekeeping.<sup>171</sup>

While the European governments wanted Canada to continue to station forces in Europe, not all citizens of those nations were so eager to have that happen. The Canadian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Donald Macdonald, pointed out that many Germans wanted a large reduction of foreign forces in their country, which served as a reminder of their defeat in the Second World War. They may have been more opposed to American and British forces, but Canadians were also foreigners, despite the warm relationship.<sup>172</sup> McKnight was of the opinion that Canada did not need to consult with NATO allies at all. Canada should be in control of its priorities and allocation of resources: once Canada had decided those, it could then consult with allies over the details.<sup>173</sup> McKnight told Clark that National Defence officials had never informed NATO allies that an immediate withdrawal of Canadian forces from Europe was desirable or imminent. Instead, they "mooted" the idea that Canada and NATO should seriously consider the wisdom of the stationing of militarily unnecessary forces in Europe as the Soviet threat diminished and Canadian budgetary pressures increased. Those resources (the cost of

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<sup>170</sup> "BONN to EXTOTT: CDN Forces in Europe," November 23, 1990, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe*; 27-1-1, vol. 2, 42

<sup>171</sup> "LDN to EXTOTT: CDN Forces in Europe," November 23, 1990, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe*; 27-1-1, vol. 2, 36

<sup>172</sup> "House of Commons Briefing Note: Future of Canadian Forces in Germany," December 17, 1990, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe*; 27-1-1, vol. 2, 25

<sup>173</sup> "Letter from Joe Clark to Bill McKnight," December 6, 1990, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe*; 27-1-1, vol. 2, 31

stationing forces in Europe, not the cost of the forces themselves) could be redirected to making Canada a more effective military partner, capable of responding to the wider range of threats created in the now more unpredictable geo-strategic environment.<sup>174</sup> His intent behind a full withdrawal was to make the military more responsive to changes, not to save money at the expense of capability.

McKnight reminded Clark that the long-term viability of Canada's forces in Europe had been seriously damaged by the 1989-1990 decision to halt acquisitions of equipment for Europe, and that peacekeeping and other military commitments made those acquisitions almost impossible. The citizens of Germany near the Canadian bases liked the Canadian money flowing into their economies, but that was being done at the expense of military bases in Canada, many of which were now being closed. McKnight therefore saw no point in Ambassador to Germany Thomas Delworth's suggestion that Canada consult with allies to determine Canada's defence policies. Canada already had a clear idea of what allies wanted and could factor that into the policy without giving them the "false idea" that they had a role to play in determining Canadian policy, a clear rejection of External Affairs belief that allies ought to have a say. McKnight suggested that "interested" ministers, including the Minister of Finance Don Mazankowski and the President of the Treasury Board, Gilles Loiselle, meet to discuss the upcoming defence review.<sup>175</sup> The inclusion of the economic ministers was not surprising, given the need for the defence review to reduce spending. Money and savings would be a major theme in the review. Canada's defence policy would be determined by Cabinet, not Canada's allies.

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<sup>174</sup> *ibid*, 31

<sup>175</sup> *ibid*, 34

On March 11, 1991, McKnight, wrote to the Prime Minister to list changes in Canada's defence policies. By the end of 1991, Canadian Forces Europe would be reduced to the level of 1985, to 5600 service personnel from a peak of 7700 in 1989. The 1989 budget had reduced defence spending for 1989-1994 by \$2.74 billion, which required the closure of fourteen Canadian bases, the freezing of capital acquisitions for Europe, and the cancellation of the nuclear-powered submarine program. The 1990 budget reduced spending by another \$658 million, bringing the total reduction by 1994 to \$3.4 billion. The changes to defence policy in 1989 were not sufficient to meet the new budgetary imperatives, and the only defence program that could be reduced for more savings was Canada's forces in Europe. McKnight recommended further reductions, down to 2500 or 3000 personnel by the end of 1993. He proposed that Canada not announce the full reduction in one "attention-getting announcement," but instead reveal it in two stages to minimize controversy. National Defence would begin consultation with the Finance Department and External Affairs to determine the course of action if the Prime Minister authorized the plan.<sup>176</sup>

The defence review was released (but not published) on March 26, 1991. It was entitled "A New Defence Policy for Canada." It stated that the end of the Cold War necessitated a thorough review of Canada's defence policies since events in Europe had made parts (but not all) of the 1987 Defence White Paper obsolete. Canada's focus on Europe had neglected requirements in Canada, and the new fiscal situation required that military planning conform to what the nation could afford. The government considered the funding requirements in the White Paper and the 1989 budget excessive in light of the ongoing recession, and over the next five years \$3.398 billion of forecast spending would be cut from the defence budget. Every NATO

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<sup>176</sup> "Letter from Bill McKnight to Brian Mulroney," March 11, 1991, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe*; 27-1-1, vol. 4, 266-270

ally, the nations of Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Union were cutting their military budgets in response to the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and the CFE Treaty.<sup>177</sup> Expecting Canada to maintain its defence budget would be unreasonable. The difference between forecast spending and actual spending is crucial to understanding this review. The White Paper forecast increases to the defence budget. In the review, those were cancelled, but the review did not reduce the budget below the amount already being spent. In the period from 1988-1991, when defence spending remained steady, references to cuts in the military budget referred to proposed increases being axed.

The term used in the defence review to summarize Canada's new main policy elements was "continuity, but changes in emphasis." Canada would ensure its security through collaboration with NATO allies, but with more attention given to the defence of Canada and Canadian waters. National Defence argued that Canada could support NATO through North American defence and naval operations in the North Atlantic. It wanted to create a new long-term defence plan for Canada that would still ensure the purchase of new equipment, and that would avoid policy decisions based solely on fiscal priorities. The expected funding level was constant funding until 2006, which would result in forty-six billion dollars of savings for the government in that period. The reductions in Europe would phase out Canada's high-intensity armoured combat tanks, and the air force would lose three squadrons. Forty CF-18s would be mothballed to make the existing fleet last longer; only naval capabilities would be left near existing levels. The Defence Review stated that Canadian forces in Europe were no longer justified, and they were the only program that the department could eliminate without adversely

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<sup>177</sup> "A New Defence Policy for Canada," March 26, 1991, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe*; 27-1-1, vol. 4, 297

affecting Canada's defence.<sup>178</sup> The review did not explicitly call for the withdrawal of Canadian forces from Europe, and although McKnight had recommended a full withdrawal he was willing to keep 2500 personnel in Europe under the new funding structure. External Affairs declared the defence review largely in harmony with their outlook on Canadian security, with the exception of the claim that Canadian forces in Europe were no longer justified. It wanted Canada to retain "an appropriate military presence" in Europe, because of Canada's vital interests in European security.<sup>179</sup>

On March 28, 1991, Joe Clark wrote to Mulroney to express his general agreement with McKnight's assessment of the European security situation. He cautioned the prime minister not to overlook the instability in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, nor the unwillingness of the Soviet Union to take on certain arms reductions agreements. Clark welcomed the proposal by McKnight to maintain a reduced commitment to Europe after 1993, but recommended that Canada clearly state its intentions before making any changes to force levels in Europe, to reassure allies that Canada was still committed to NATO. Clark wanted the Canadian presence to be a viable part of NATO's defence capabilities and not just a rump force. He suggested that a small team of officials from External Affairs and National Defence examine some of the options with NATO to determine the best ongoing role for Canada.<sup>180</sup>

On April 10, 1991 the Cabinet Committee on Foreign and Defence Policy asked National Defence and External Affairs to prepare a document with options for a continuing military presence in Europe after 1995. Approved on May 10, 1991, the document, entitled "Canadian Stationed Forces in Europe," had four sections. Section One was prepared by External Affairs to

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid, 298

<sup>179</sup> Ibid, 299-300

<sup>180</sup> "Letter from Joe Clark to Brian Mulroney," March 28, 1991, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe; 27-1-1, vol. 4*, 261-262

set out the case for a continued military presence in Europe. It argued that the geopolitical balance had changed, but there continued to be a valid security requirement for security forces in Europe. The United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, Italy, and Germany had all urged Canada to continue to field a military force in Europe because of security concerns. External Affairs believed that a Canadian presence in Europe gave Canada “enhanced weight” in discussions concerning the future of Europe’s security architecture. All other NATO allies were reducing their deployments to Germany and accepted that Canada would do so as well, but External Affairs considered a complete withdrawal of forces from Europe by 1995 an unacceptable option. NATO was revising its military strategy, and available information indicated that Canada could make a credible contribution with a force of 1200 soldiers, organized in a combat group within a multinational Immediate Reaction Force. This would require Canada to bear costs slightly above those proposed in the defence review, but some of these costs could be reduced by sharing bases and infrastructure with allies.<sup>181</sup>

Section Two of the document was written by National Defence and made a case for withdrawing Canadian forces from Europe.<sup>182</sup> It started with a comparison of the early years of NATO to the post-Cold War Europe that the paper was addressing. At the time of the Korean War, the Soviet Union’s military presence in Eastern Europe greatly outnumbered NATO forces in the region. Several of the NATO nations were at war with a Soviet satellite state, North Korea. By 1991, the Soviet conventional military threat to Europe was reduced, the Warsaw Pact no longer existed, and NATO allies were cutting their defence budgets. National Defence proposed that the Canadian combat units could be withdrawn by 1995 in a way that maximized the utility of the economic resources available to National Defence. The department stressed that Canada

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<sup>181</sup> “Canadian Stationed Forces in Europe,” May 10, 1991, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe; 27-1-1, vol. 4*, 145

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid*, 146

contributed to general security through the North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD), peacekeeping, participation in multinational forces in the Gulf, and Canada's naval presence in the Pacific and Atlantic.

The authors of Section Two also argued that Canada's forces in Europe had to "train as you intend to fight."<sup>183</sup> The training for European combat included low-level flying, air combat maneuvering, live firing, and operation of land forces over open terrain. The Canadian Forces were allowed to do live training exercises across any German terrain and would often damage crops and dirt roads. They had to pay for damage that they caused and were tolerated by neighbouring German citizens during the Cold War. But once the imminent threat of invasion from Czechoslovakia ceased to exist, citizens were not willing to deal with damages from training. John de Chastelain, Chief of the Defence Staff from 1989 to 1993, stressed in an interview with the author the importance of the training issue in National Defence's argument for withdrawal. If the forces could not train in Europe, then it would have to cycle forces back to a training base in Canada that was designed to mimic Europe. The troops in Europe would be confined to the base, unable to train in the terrain in which they were expected to operate. The inability to train troops in Europe would either require increased costs to cycle troops more often or a reduction in their combat-readiness.<sup>184</sup> Canadian forces stationed in Canada continued to participate in the defence of NATO's area, which included North America. National Defence argued that Canada's best role was to defend Canada and its oceans, while leaving the immediate defence of Europe to the Europeans and Americans.

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<sup>183</sup> Ibid, 145

<sup>184</sup> John de Chastelain, Interview by Ian Weatherall, Audio-recorded, April 8, 2014.

National Defence was, however, willing to continue stationing troops in Europe, and proposed three options they considered viable residual military presences.<sup>185</sup> Sections Three and Four gave the possible new force structures and their costs. Option One was to provide airfield defence for NATO's early warning force. Option Two was a small battle group or brigade group stationed at an American base, the vanguard of a brigade group stationed in Canada. The group would have a manpower level of 1100, 667 of whom would be infantrymen, and one armoured squadron. Option Three was a small standalone battle group, composed of 601 infantrymen, three armour squadrons, and engineer support, for a total of 1496 soldiers. Option One was the cheapest, at \$47 million a year. Option Two would cost one \$114 millions a year. Option Three cost \$157 million a year, including \$8 million for the maintenance of tanks in Canada. Option Two and Option Three required a future replacement of Canada's main battle tank, in addition to the annual costs.

NATO members were aware that Canada was considering reductions to its forces in Europe, but few details were revealed to them during the review period. A letter from British Prime Minister John Major to Mulroney urged Canada to continue its commitment in Europe, saying it was vital that Canada have a continued role in Europe's security.<sup>186</sup> The American Secretary of State James Baker wrote to Barbara McDougall, who had replaced Joe Clark as Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs in April 1991, urging Canada to maintain current levels of forces in Europe. Concerned that the North American influence in NATO was waning, Baker wanted to ensure that NATO remained truly transatlantic. He said that the U.S. valued Canada's presence in Europe and hoped that Canada would maintain troop levels despite

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<sup>185</sup> "Canadian Stationed Forces in Europe," May 10, 1991, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe; 27-1-1, vol. 4*, 147-148

<sup>186</sup> "Prime Minister Major Letter to Prime Minister Mulroney Concerning Troops in Europe," May 15, 1991, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe; 27-1-1, vol. 4*, 128

other allies' cuts. Warning that Canada could suffer a loss to its ability to influence European affairs, he requested that Canada continue consulting allies. If Canada were to reduce force levels, it should do so as part of a NATO strategic review.<sup>187</sup>

A message from External Affairs in Ottawa to the Canadian Ambassador in Washington, Derek Burney, said that Canadian officials in Ottawa were being bombarded with questions and blunt statements of American views, some of them wandering into realms of “outrageous hyperbole.”<sup>188</sup> The message said that Baker took the same “regrettable” approach at a meeting with McDougall at a meeting in Copenhagen. According to the message, Baker implied that Canada would lose its seat on the NATO Defence Planning Committee if it withdrew all forces from Europe. External Affairs found this suggestion a possible threat and called it “particularly objectionable” and “nonsense,” since all members of NATO had a seat regardless of whether they stationed troops outside their borders. The message concluded by saying that Canada should advise senior State Department Officials that they were doing “no good by bandying about such distortions of reality.”

On May 30, 1991, Minister of National Defence Marcel Masse, who had replaced Bill McKnight in April, discussed the issue of finding a place to station troops in Europe with Ambassador Delworth, who suggested that the Germans take ownership of Canadian Forces Base Lahr while a reduced Canadian contingent remained there. This arrangement would allow Canada to continue to operate in familiar territory without being demoted in status by being

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<sup>187</sup> “Letter from James A. Baker to The Honorable Barbara McDougall,” May 23, 1991, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe; 27-1-1, vol. 4*, 117

<sup>188</sup> “Canadian Forces in Europe: View of Sec State Baker,” June 10, 1991, *Defence Policies-Europe; 27-1-1, vol. 4*, 39. There appears to be at least two letters from James Baker to Barbara MacDougall, one of which was included with the stack of documents obtained through The Access to Information Act. The one that External Affairs found particularly objectionable was redacted, but some of the contents can be obtained through references in other documents.

moved to a subordinate position under American troops.<sup>189</sup> A June 2, 1991, External Affairs memorandum, written by the Assistant Director of the Defence Relations Division at External Affairs, Michael Dawson, discussed the proposal that Canada provide specialist troops that would round out a larger military formation drawn from several nations. Dawson saw two problems with this idea. First, it was not compatible with Canada's current capabilities. Secondly, and more importantly, such a role would be considered subordinate and would not be sufficiently high profile.<sup>190</sup> He listed several possible support roles that Canada was unable to fill, and two that Canada could do. These two were combat engineers and air defence troops, which, although valuable, had little profile. This would prevent Canadian officers from rising in NATO ranks, and he doubted National Defence would willingly take on such a low-profile role. Most importantly, he stressed, Canada's greatest strength lay in infantry, artillery supported by combat engineers, and light armour. Based on these strengths, he recommended a land forces role for the Canadian military, not an air defence role.<sup>191</sup>

The official announcement of the reduced Canadian force in Europe, on September 17, 1991, gave the number of troops to remain in Europe as 1100.<sup>192</sup> Masse did not mention which option from the "Stationed Forces in Europe" document was chosen, but the number of troops announced by the defence minister almost exactly matched Option Two— a small brigade group that would be stationed in a leased base.<sup>193</sup> The announcement said the unit would serve as a vanguard for a brigade stationed in Canada ready to deploy anywhere in the world, which could be put at NATO's disposal if needed in Europe. Both Option Two and the announcement

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<sup>189</sup> "PM Visit: CDN Military Presence," June 4, 1991, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe; 27-1-1, vol. 4, 87*

<sup>190</sup> "Request for Canadian Troops In Europe," July 2, 1991, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe; 27-1-1, vol. 4, 88*

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid*, 91

<sup>192</sup> Marcel Masse, "Statement by the Honourable Marcel Masse at the National Press Theatre: September 17, 1991), *National Defence, 4*

<sup>193</sup> "Canadian Stationed Forces in Europe," May 10, 1991, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe; 27-1-1, vol. 4, 148*

stipulated that the exact role of the brigade group would be negotiated with NATO to fit it into the alliance's collective defence units that were at the time being restructured. The new formation was called a Task Force since it was below brigade size.<sup>194</sup> Canada's two bases in Germany, CFB Baden-Soellingen and CFB Lahr, would be closed by 1995 (they were closed by 1993 thanks to the forces efficiency). Masse said that Canada remained fully committed to NATO and that Canadian forces stationed in Europe continued to contribute to NATO's defence. He gave three reasons for the troop reduction: a changing international situation, increased need for Canadian forces in Canada to aid civil authorities, and budgetary constraints.<sup>195</sup> The announcement of the new force structure was done publicly like Clark wanted, not in a series of annual reductions like McKnight had recommended.

In the announcement, the Oka Crisis was singled out as an example of how the government could need the military as a last resort when a situation in Canada escalated beyond what the police forces could manage. The Oka Crisis was a three-week standoff in August 1990 between 2500 soldiers and armed indigenous protestors at the Mohawk community of Oka outside of Montreal over a proposed golf course at the Mohawk cemetery. The crisis was resolved with one death and minimal use of force, but for three weeks ten percent of Canada's army was tied up.<sup>196</sup> Support for civil authorities was an issue that had to be considered in the making of defence policy. The Senate Report on manpower used the FLQ Crisis, in which 10 000 soldiers were deployed across Quebec in response to terrorist activity in Quebec in 1970, as an example of how the forces that were earmarked for Europe could be needed in Canada.

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<sup>194</sup> Joint Task Force 2 was created during the short time that the European Task Force existed, but has retained the numeral 2 in its name despite being the only task force for the majority of its history.

<sup>195</sup> Masse, "Statement", 3-5

<sup>196</sup> Robert Everett, "Parliament and Politics," *The Canadian Annual Review of Politics and Public Affairs 1990*, ed. David Leyton-Brown, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 40-42

Quebec's relationship with Canada was worsening in the early 1990s. The 1990 death of the Meech Lake Accord, a proposed amendment to the constitution to recognize Quebec as a distinct society within Canada, and the formation of the Bloc Québécois soon after gave the separatist movement a surge in support.<sup>197</sup> Another deployment of Canadian forces in Quebec was a possibility. Canada's allies were aware of its constitutional difficulties and the Oka Crisis, and the government's increased focus on domestic affairs to the detriment of foreign affairs strengthened the perception that Canada's interest in NATO was waning.<sup>198</sup>

Canada did not consult with the NATO allies when deciding the new role of the Canadian Forces in Europe, but allied opinion was, to an extent, taken into consideration. The allies, especially Germany, were relieved that Canada would continue to station some forces in Europe, and they accepted the Task Force. Canada's Embassy in Germany wrote to External Affairs that the German defence ministry was pleased that Canada was keeping some forces in Germany, but they would have preferred some warning or consultation about the base closures, and expressed concern over Canada closing its airfield. The German ministry was, however, willing to work together with Canada to establish its new role and wanted to begin finding a new location for Canada's Task Force as soon as possible.<sup>199</sup>

Canada's two bases in Germany were on the French border, a portion of Germany that would soon be defended by the new Franco-German brigade. The German defence ministry recommended that the Task Force be stationed with German troops to help maintain their visibility. The German Central Staff thought that, if they were put with British or American

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<sup>197</sup> Ibid, 12-16

<sup>198</sup> "Memo from BNATO to EXTOTT: INNATL Perceptions of CDA," October 19, 1990, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe*; 27-1-1, vol. 2, 70.

<sup>199</sup> "BONN to EXTOTT: Canadian Forces Structure-Europe," September 23, 1991, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe*; 27-1-1, vol. 5, 242

forces, they would be lost in an “Anglo-Saxon haze.”<sup>200</sup> Base closures and withdrawals by other NATO allies in Germany were freeing up potential locations for the Task Force. A memorandum to External Affairs in Ottawa from Canada’s delegation to the CSCE doctrine conference in Vienna reported that the “German overture is genuine and based in part on the precedents set in Goose Bay and Shilo,” where the German military (and other European militaries) had trained since the 1970s.<sup>201</sup>

By November, National Defence had settled on the idea of the Task Force as part of a 4000 soldier multinational brigade, along with British, German, and possibly Italian troops. Canada preferred rotational leadership, but was willing to accept permanent British or German leadership. The brigade would be on a base near an American base, close enough to share resources but far enough away to be distinct. Mark J. Moher, the Director General of International Security, Arms Control, and CSCE Affairs Bureau at External Affairs, wrote that NATO and the United States would likely support the proposal. The Dutch would be disappointed that they were not included, since they had hoped to have a partnership with Canada’s remaining forces.<sup>202</sup> The proposal satisfied all the necessary requirements for the role: it was visible and multinational, militarily credible, and offered Canada a potential leadership (on a rotational basis) role. Moher recommended that flyover exercises happen regularly, and that Canada’s air force continue to train in Germany to maintain interoperability.<sup>203</sup> Tom King, from the British Ministry of Defence policy division, wrote to Marcel Masse and recommended that Canada instead consider using its forces as combat reconnaissance for the Allied Command

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<sup>200</sup> “BONN to EXTOTT: Canadian Forces Europe,” September 25, 1991, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe; 27-1-1, vol. 5, 235*

<sup>201</sup> “VIENN to EXTOTT: Role/Locations CDN Task Force,” October 9, 1991, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe; 27-1-1, vol. 5, 216*

<sup>202</sup> “Mark Moher: Canadian Stationed Forces in Europe Situation Report,” November 8, 1991, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe; 27-1-1, vol. 5, 181*

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid*, 182

Europe Rapid Reaction Corps in northern Germany, alongside British forces. The role would still be high-profile, and he believed that Canada's soldiers were well-suited for the role.<sup>204</sup>

After announcing the Task Force, Masse mentioned that Canada had to preserve the capacity of its forces to participate "in support of our diplomacy, as it did in the Gulf."<sup>205</sup> The Gulf War had represented a new form of military operations for Canada that offered a cheaper way to participate in allied military action. The United States government and Congress had given Iraq a deadline of January 15, 1991 to withdraw all of its forces from Kuwait. When the deadline passed, a multinational force, consisting of thirty-seven nations led by the United States, entered Kuwait to drive Iraqi forces out.<sup>206</sup> Canada's contribution consisted of three ships, twenty-four aircraft, and a field hospital, for a total of 2400 personnel deployed.<sup>207</sup> The cost of Canada's participation in the Gulf was six hundred million dollars, which led to a slight increase in the Canadian budget deficit that year, instead of the slight decrease that was originally predicted.<sup>208</sup> The cost of that operation was, however, much less than the annual costs of maintaining forces in Europe throughout the Cold War, and it was a one-time cost. Prime Minister Mulroney stated that the United Nations should have the ability to intervene rapidly in conflicts and that Canada would support that role. The Gulf War demonstrated that a rapidly assembled multinational force could be effective. Permanently stationing forces in Europe,

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<sup>204</sup> "Letter from Tom King to Marcel Masse," November 11, 1991, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe; 27-1-1, vol. 5*, 180

<sup>205</sup> Masse, "Statement", 5

<sup>206</sup> Andrew Ritcher, "External Affairs and Defence," *Canadian Annual Review of Politics and Public Affairs, 1991*. ed. David Leyton-Brown, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992),115

<sup>207</sup> Ibid, 76

<sup>208</sup> Michael Wilson, *The Budget Speech, 1991*, Given in Parliament on February 26, 1991, Accessed through the Treasury Board Library website, <http://www.budget.gc.ca/pdfarch/1991-sd-eng.pdf>

especially after Soviet forces began disengaging from Eastern Europe, was no longer a military necessity, and was instead becoming an unnecessary economic burden.<sup>209</sup>

In 1991, the government declared (prematurely) that the recession that had begun in 1988 was over, although unemployment was still rising, and job creation was slow.<sup>210</sup> The Department of National Defence received a five percent increase in its budget for 1991, plus \$600 million to cover the cost of the war in the Persian Gulf. In the 1991 edition of the *Canadian Annual Review of Politics and Public Affairs*, political scientist Andrew Richter wrote that some observers expressed surprise that the National Defence had escaped budget cuts. Twenty percent of the military budget was allocated for capital expenditures, and forty percent of the navy's budget was for capital expenditures. The Chief of Defence Staff, John de Chastelain was quoted in the *Canadian Annual Review*, saying that the military had accepted reduced levels of funding (cuts to proposed spending) and was planning its equipment acquisitions under the new funding levels. According to him, the navy had been "clearly protected" in the budget, since it received the highest amount for capital acquisition.<sup>211</sup> In the author's interview with him, de Chastelain said that the navy played a more important role in NATO's defence plan than Canada's forces in Europe.<sup>212</sup> The 1991 military budget was quite reasonable: it had no promises that required increases to the budget, nor any cuts that required further reductions in operating capabilities. The funding plan in the Defence Review was supposed to be constant until 2006, so the military was able to begin making long-term plans under the new budget.

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<sup>209</sup> With the exception of the short reference to Iraq by Masse, there is no reference to the multinational force in Iraq as an example of how Canada could operate within NATO. In an interview with the author, former Chief of Defence Staff John de Chastelain said that the Gulf War had proved that NATO nations could rapidly assemble an effective military force, reducing the need for permanent stationing of forces in Europe.

<sup>210</sup> Robert Everett, "Parliament and Politics," *Canadian Annual Review of Politics and Public Affairs, 1991*, 30

<sup>211</sup> Andrew Richter, "External Affairs and Defence," *Canadian Annual Review of Politics and Public Affairs, 1991*, 121-122

<sup>212</sup> John de Chastelain, Interview by Ian Weatherall, Audio-recorded, April 8, 2014.

External Affairs had argued that unrest in Eastern Europe required Canada to demonstrate its commitment to Europe. It sought to reassure NATO and Europe that Canada continued to be interested in European security, and the Task Force was a key part of the reassurance package. One particularly dangerous issue was control over the Soviet nuclear weapons if the central authority dissolved, or the western republics broke away.<sup>213</sup> The Western nations' fears came to the surface in August of 1991, when hardliners in the Communist Party and the KGB (the Soviet intelligence and security organization) attempted to overthrow Mikhail Gorbachev in a coup d'état. The coup failed, but for several days the nuclear arsenal of nearly fifty thousand weapons was partially under the control of a barely-known group of radicals.<sup>214</sup> During the August coup, Ukraine declared independence from the Soviet Union, placing over one thousand nuclear weapons in the possession (but with no operational control) of a new and unpredictable government. Canada was the first country to recognize Ukraine as an independent nation. Supposedly done as a show of support for democracy, the recognition may have also been done out of concern for what could happen if the Soviet Union refused to recognize Ukrainian independence and reversed Gorbachev's promise of non-intervention.<sup>215</sup> Canada's rapid recognition of Ukrainian independence was a turnabout from its non-recognition of Lithuania's declaration of independence in 1990. The purpose of these different approaches, however, was the same: preventing conflict within the disintegrating Soviet Union.

The other eleven republics (that had not yet declared independence) of the Soviet Union soon followed Ukraine's example, and the Soviet Union was forced to allow them to secede,

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<sup>213</sup> John Halstead, "A New Order in Europe: Evolving Security System," *Canada Among Nations 1990-1991: After the Cold War*, ed. Fen Osler Hampson and Christopher J. Maule, (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1991), 149

<sup>214</sup> *NATO Summit Rome 1991: Background Briefing Book*, (External Affairs and International Trade), File 27-4-NATO-1. MF15034, 85

<sup>215</sup> *NATO Summit Rome 1991: Background Briefing Book*, 67

dissolving the union. Gorbachev resigned as the General Secretary, declared his office extinct, and gave control of the Soviet nuclear missile codes to the President of the newly independent Russia, Boris Yeltsin. The Soviet Union ceased to exist on December 26, 1991.<sup>216</sup> Neither the coup nor the dissolution of the Soviet Union started a civil war or widespread civil unrest as NATO feared might happen. However, such possibilities demonstrated why NATO continued to be concerned with events in Eastern Europe. Even though Soviet forces were no longer stationed on NATO's border, unrest in states armed with nuclear weapons was a threat to Europe, and NATO wanted the assurance that Canada still supported European security.<sup>217</sup>

There were thus still concerns over stability and security in Europe after the dissolution of the Soviet Union: adding nine new nations to Europe overnight did not help. However, the peaceful dissolution of the Soviet Union gave National Defence increased leverage in their disagreements with External Affairs over Canada's forces in Europe, which had continued, even after the announcement of the Task Force. On February 10, 1992, Michael Brock, the Director of the Defence Relations Division at External Affairs, wrote that "External Affairs cannot win the argument for maintaining a stationed force in Europe on defence grounds only." Their best arguments were political. Brock listed five potential arguments that External Affairs could use for keeping Canada's forces in Europe. Canada had informed allies that they would remain and the decision was well received. The situation in Europe was even more unstable than predicted, and a mobile, rapid reaction force in Europe could be used for peacekeeping and humanitarian aid. Troop reductions by the American military made Canada's contribution more valuable to

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<sup>216</sup> Francis X. Clines, "Gorbachev, Last Soviet Leader, Resigns; U.S. Recognizes Republics' Independence," *New York Times*, December 26, 1991, <http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/big/1225.html#article>. Accessed August 11, 2017

<sup>217</sup> It was not until 1994 that control over the Soviet nuclear missile arsenal was finalized between Russia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan.

Germany, and ending the role could create political difficulties with several NATO allies. The North Atlantic community's trade, security, and political interests were coming increasingly interconnected, and a lack of commitment in one area affected Canada's weight in other areas. Finally, Canada had ended its peacekeeping role in Cyprus, where Canadian forces had served NATO's interests, to focus on Germany. Ending the German role was dangerous, as it was the role that mattered most to allies.<sup>218</sup>

A memorandum to External Affairs on February 20, 1992, from Canada's delegation to a ministerial meeting in Prague, described the new security situation in Europe created by the newly independent Soviet republics. The threats to Western Europe were largely non-military in nature; Europe had more security but less stability. NATO provided a source of stability, and further cuts to its standing forces would reduce its stabilizing effect. NATO faced no serious military threat, but internal conflicts in bordering regions could spill over the border. Slovakian, Romanian, Hungarian, Ukrainian, and Serbian nationalism were potential sources of regional instability. An economic collapse in Ukraine or Russia, or a new release of radiation at Chernobyl, could trigger a wave of refugees fleeing westward.<sup>219</sup> Europe was still in a period of transition, and there was a genuine fear that it would go in the wrong direction. North American forces in Europe were a safeguard against that happening. Canada's forces in Europe gave Canada leverage in discussions concerning European security, and members of the CSCE preferred to have Canada involved along with the United States because it was a middle power,

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<sup>218</sup> "Memo and Talking Points: Canadian Forces in Europe," February 10, 1992, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe; 27-1-1, vol. 5*, 153

<sup>219</sup> The Chernobyl nuclear power plant, on the Belarus-Ukraine border, suffered a catastrophic nuclear meltdown in 1986, which released radiation across a large portion of Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia and forced the permanent evacuation of 120 000 people. A fire at the site in 1991 created concern that, if a larger fire or damage to the containment structure occurred, radiation would be released again and force more people from their homes.

not a superpower.<sup>220</sup> Even with the Soviet Union gone, there continued to be a military use for Canada's forces in Europe, even if only as a stabilizing presence.

The hoped-for economic recovery did not happen in 1992. Slow growth rates meant that the federal budget deficit would be \$31.5 billion, roughly what it was in 1988 when the recession started. Throughout the recession the government had continued to reduce government spending, but the contracting economy meant that the budget deficit did not shrink as a percentage of government spending, despite the spending cuts. No new taxes were introduced in 1992 to deal with the deficit: the government would shrink the deficit with spending cuts.<sup>221</sup> To reduce the deficit by \$4 billion, the government cut the Department of National Defence's budget significantly for the first time since 1985. These cuts were on actual spending; forecast spending had already been eliminated. To accommodate these cuts, the Task Force for Europe was cancelled.

When he announced the Task Force, Defence Minister Masse gave the changing circumstances in Europe and budgetary constraints as the reasons for the reduced presence in Europe. The tenuous international situation in 1991 contained one major threat to NATO: a rapidly dissolving Soviet Union and uncertainty over the control of its nuclear arms. In 1992, with the dissolution of the USSR peacefully carried out, budgetary constraints became more important than maintaining a token force in Europe. The 1987 White Paper expenditure forecasts had stated that only a fiscal emergency would warrant reductions, and National Defence said in the defence review that it hoped to avoid making defence policy solely for fiscal reasons. But by 1992 that time had arrived.

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<sup>220</sup> "PRGUE to EXTOTT: Call on FMA," February 20, 1992, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe; 27-1-1, vol. 5*, 140-146

<sup>221</sup> Robert Everett, "Parliament and Politics," *Canadian Annual Review of Politics and Public Affairs, 1992*, ed. Leyton-Brown, David, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 30-31

In his budget speech, given on February 25, 1992, Finance Minister Don Mazankowski announced substantial “peace dividends” for Canadians. The changes in the world (he did not specify which changes) allowed Canada to “reduce our longstanding presence in Europe without lessening our commitment to NATO solidarity.”<sup>222</sup> He declared the Task Force no longer necessary. In a National Defence backgrounder, entitled “Impact of 1992 Federal Budget on Defence Policies and Programs,” the department argued that care had been taken to protect the core capabilities of the military.<sup>223</sup> Apparently maintaining a force in Europe ceased to be a core capability when the Soviet Union dissolved.

When the defence review was released and the Task Force was announced, Canada’s allies were informed in advance. The abruptness of hearing about the new policy in the budget speech, instead of through the usual diplomatic channels, created unnecessary problems for Canada. In five sentences, the finance minister created a minor diplomatic crisis for Canada. The government faced little domestic opposition to the cancellation: the New Democratic Party approved of it, and the Liberal Opposition backed a “reorientation” of Canada’s NATO role.<sup>224</sup> The adverse reactions mainly came from Canada’s allies.

A memorandum from Canada’s Joint Delegation to NATO to External Affairs had recommended that Canada “take the high road” in defending the decision to minimize the loss of political credibility. The “Atlantacist” members of the alliance were particularly worried that the United States was becoming inward looking, and a Canadian withdrawal announcement in an election year could give the new American Congress an excuse to withdraw more American

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<sup>222</sup> Don Mazankowski, “Action to restrain expenditures,” *The Budget Speech, 1992*, Tabled in the House of Commons on February 25, 1992, 5 <http://www.budget.gc.ca/pdfarch/1992-sd-eng.pdf>

<sup>223</sup> Dean Oliver, “External Affairs and Defence,” *Canadian Annual Review of Politics and Public Affairs, 1992*, 115

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid*, 121

forces.<sup>225</sup> On February 25, 1992, the day of the budget, Secretary of State for External Affairs Barbara McDougall informed her allied counterparts of the decision, and stressed that Canada continued its commitment to NATO and to peace and security in Europe through peacekeeping.<sup>226</sup> When the Joint Delegation to NATO informed NATO headquarters of the decision to cancel the Task Force, it claimed that, because the decision was made in the “budget context” by Cabinet it could not be discussed with allies. According to the delegation, the North American economic situation was worse than the European situation, but Canada would still contribute \$200 million a year to the alliance’s infrastructure and civilian budget.<sup>227</sup>

In private discussions with Canadian officials on February 25 and 26, NATO’s Secretary General Manfred Wörner expressed deep personal misgivings over Canada’s decision. He felt that the alliance was badly damaged, and that Canada may have started its disintegration. He could not understand why Canada did not consult with allies over a matter of such importance. Given the stakes, why could Canada not keep a small force in Europe? The argument that Canada needed to fully withdraw from Europe to continue playing a major role in peacekeeping was “frankly just so much window-dressing.” However, he would not let his personal views influence what he said in the NATO Council or in public; the goal now was to contain the damage.<sup>228</sup> In his press release, Wörner acknowledged the considerable budgetary pressure that Canada was under, but expressed regret over the decision, given the importance of Canada’s forces in Europe. He stressed that Canada would continue its other commitments to NATO,

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<sup>225</sup> “BNATO to EXTOTT: Canadian Forces in Europe,” February 24, 1992, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe*; 27-1-1, vol. 5, 124-125

<sup>226</sup> “Letters from Barbara McDougall to allied Foreign Ministers,” February 25, 1992, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe*; 27-1-1, vol. 5, 97-111. The fond contains nearly identical letters to the American, British, French, and German ministers.

<sup>227</sup> “Joint Canadian Delegation to NATO: Talking Points,” February 26 1992, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe*; 27-1-1, vol. 5, 43

<sup>228</sup> “BNATO to EXTOTT: CDN Stationed Forces in Europe: Sec Gen Reaction.” February 26, 1992, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe*; 27-1-1, vol. 5, 56

including maritime forces, participation in the Composite Force, the ACE Mobile Force, and the early warning system and surveillance. Canada would still maintain a brigade group and two CF-18 squadrons in Canada for use in Europe, which demonstrated Canada's commitment to NATO and Europe.<sup>229</sup>

Michael Brock prepared a list of suggested replies to questions in Parliament concerning the full withdrawal announcement. Among them was a reply that, with the new security environment, the Cold War was finally over, and Canada no longer needed to station forces in Europe.<sup>230</sup> Brock's date for the end of the Cold War, the end of 1991, was over a year after the date given by the 1990 *Canadian Annual Review*, which declared that the CFE Treaty in November 1990 had ended the Cold War, and two years after the revolutions in Eastern Europe replaced the communist governments. Brock's use of the dissolution of the Soviet Union as the end date of the Cold War might show that External Affairs defined the Cold War by the existence of the Soviet Union, not the existence of the Warsaw Pact. Up until the end of the Cold War, Canada worked on having functional and visible forces in Europe, but that policy ended with the war.

The relief that was expressed at Canada's decision to field the Task Force turned into quiet disappointment. A memorandum from Ottawa to Canada's Embassy in The Hague said that the Dutch viewed the cancellation with disappointment, expressed regret over the lack of prior consultation, and that they were concerned over the decision in light of recent Canadian assurances that Canadian forces would remain in Europe. The Dutch worried that the decision would set an unfortunate trend, leading to the erosion of Transatlantic ties, and perhaps the

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<sup>229</sup> "NATO Press Release: Statement by the Secretary-General." February 26, 1992, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe*; 27-1-1, vol. 5, 38

<sup>230</sup> "House of Commons Briefing Note- Canadian Forces in Europe: Budget Announcement of Phased Withdrawal," *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe*; 27-1-1, vol. 5, 28

dissolution of NATO.<sup>231</sup> They did, however, later acknowledge that Canada deserved its share of peace dividends.<sup>232</sup> The Danes were more understanding: the Danish Chief of Defence Staff wrote that the significance of the Canadian withdrawal should not be exaggerated, although the loss of that symbol of transatlantic commitment was unfortunate. He asked if Canada could leave even fifty or one hundred men in an advance guard role. The Canadian withdrawal could set an unfortunate precedent for the Americans, but they doubted that Canadian decisions weighed heavily in Washington.<sup>233</sup>

An *International Herald Tribune* article quoted a spokesperson from the State Department who said that the United States was “very disappointed,” and would have “preferred a continuing Canadian presence within the NATO force structure in Europe.”<sup>234</sup> The article’s author, Clyde Farnsworth, considered the withdrawal potential ammunition for members of Congress who wished to reduce American contributions to NATO. The British High Commissioner in Ottawa delivered a formal request to the Canadian government, and the Canadian High Commissioner in London was summoned to the Foreign Office to hear the British objections.<sup>235</sup>

Spain reminded External Affairs that it had also cut its military budget, and considered itself to be supportive of NATO, despite not stationing forces outside of its borders.<sup>236</sup> The

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<sup>231</sup> “External Affairs Ottawa to The Hague: Budget and Canadian Forces in Europe,” March 3, 1992, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe*; 27-1-1, vol. 6, 296

<sup>232</sup> “The Hague to External Affairs Ottawa: Withdrawal of Canadian Forces from Europe, Dutch Views,” March 12, 1992, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe*; 27-1-1, vol. 6, 243

<sup>233</sup> “Copenhagen to External Affairs Ottawa: Danish Views on Canadian Forces Withdrawal,” March 3, 1991, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe*; 27-1-1, vol. 6, 291

<sup>234</sup> Clyde Farnsworth, “International Herald Tribune: Canada to Pull Out all Forces in Europe,” March 4, 1992, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe*; 27-1-1, vol. 6, 277

<sup>235</sup> Peter Almond, “Canada’s Troop Cut May Start NATO Slide,” February 29, 1992, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe*; 27-1-1, vol. 6, 275

<sup>236</sup> “Madrid to External Affairs Ottawa: Canadian Forces in Europe,” February 29, 1992, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe*; 27-1-1, vol. 6, 295

Germans did not like the lack of consultation, but appreciated Canada's forty years of defending them, as well as Canada's current commitment to send troops to Yugoslavia.<sup>237</sup> Chancellor Helmut Kohl said that during the Cold War Canada had done more than its share in defending Germany.<sup>238</sup> An article in the Norwegian paper *Aftenposten* said that, although Norway considered Canadian forces in Europe "extremely important visible evidence" of the transatlantic ties, it understood that Europe would have to assume a larger share of its defence costs.<sup>239</sup> Turkey also expressed unhappiness with the lack of consultation, but reassured External Affairs that it understood that Canada's commitment to NATO was as strong as ever.<sup>240</sup>

While Britain accepted Canada's decision to reduce its defence spending, it proposed at the 1992 meeting of the North Atlantic Assembly in Banff that Canada leave 300 troops in Europe, as part of a multinational contingent.<sup>241</sup> Sir Philip Goodhart, the British representative at the meeting, wrote to the British Secretary of State for Defence to give him details of the proposed contingent. Three small Canadian infantry groups would serve with British, American, and French battalions in Europe, and be regularly rotated with other companies in Canada. The purpose of these groups was to keep Canadian soldiers on the continent at a minimal cost to Canada, since it was important to keep Canadian troops in Europe to prevent NATO from

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<sup>237</sup> "Bonn to External Affairs Ottawa: Canadian Military Withdrawal from Europe: German Position," March 4, 1992. *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe; 27-1-1, vol. 6, 271*

<sup>238</sup> "External Affairs Ottawa to Paris: Canadian Commitment to Europe," March 16, 1992, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe; 27-1-1, vol. 6, 233*. Communication included a transcription of a part of the interview.

<sup>239</sup> Fynn Horten, "What is to Become of NATO? Article in *Aftenposten*," March 3, 1992, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe; 27-1-1, vol. 6, 267*

<sup>240</sup> "Ankara to External Affairs Ottawa: Canadian Forces in Europe: Minimal Turkish Reaction, March 16, 1992, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe; 27-1-1, vol. 6, 242*

<sup>241</sup> Andrew Cohen, "Security and NATO," *Canada Among Nations, 1993-1994: Global Jeopardy*, ed. Christopher Maule and Fen Osler Hampson, (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1994), 253

unravelling. Goodhart was unable to discuss the proposal with Canadian officials: he suspected that Canadian officials were avoiding him to minimize criticism from allies.<sup>242</sup>

On May 25, 1992, Brian Mulroney wrote to NATO Secretary-General Wörner to inform him that Canada would not reconsider its decision to cancel the Task Force. The need to focus on defence requirements in Canada, and to maintain a “combat-capable force,” meant that Canada could no longer station forces in Europe. Mulroney reminded Wörner of Canada’s other NATO commitments, including reconnaissance forces in Europe, immediate reaction forces for Europe and Norway, defence of North America, and an infantry brigade in Canada capable of being deployed to Europe. In the letter to Wörner, Mulroney said that the entire alliance had the opportunity for a “reevaluation of the best use and deployment of our collective forces,” because the demise of the Soviet Union had lowered the threat to Western Europe.<sup>243</sup> On July 1, 1992, the Canadian Joint Delegation to NATO in Brussels forwarded a letter from Wörner to External Affairs, in which Wörner declared that, in view of Mulroney’s letter, the consultation process with Canada was considered completed.<sup>244</sup> NATO and Canada’s allies were disappointed by Canada’s decision and the lack of consultation, but they eventually accepted Canada’s cost-reducing measure.

With the announcement of the cancellation of the Task Force, Finance Minister Mazankowski brought a final end to the White Paper’s European policy, although the pillars and defence strategy outlined in the Paper remained in effect, and equipment acquisitions for the remaining defence programs were kept in view. Canada’s peacekeepers in Yugoslavia were the

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<sup>242</sup> Philip Goodhart, “Letter to Secretary of State for Defence,” May 26, 1992, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe*; 27-1-1, vol. 6, 80

<sup>243</sup> “Brian Mulroney: Letter to Manfred Wörner,” March 25, 1992, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe*; 27-1-1, vol. 6, 87-88

<sup>244</sup> “BNATO to EXTOTT: Withdrawal from Europe – Consultation Complete,” July 1, 1992, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe*; 27-1-1, vol. 6, 51

most visible sign that Canada remained vitally interested in Europe. In February of 1992, the month that the Task Force was cancelled, Canada announced that 1200 peacekeepers would be sent to Croatia from Canada's forces in Germany, as a part of the United Nations Protection Force. Sending Canadian troops into a conflict zone to prevent an escalation of violence in Europe's most sensitive area was a better use of Canada's limited budget than stationing forces in the idyllic Black Forest. The peacekeeping mission was extended in July to include securing the Sarajevo airport in Bosnia for humanitarian flights, facing artillery and sniper fire almost daily as the ceasefire was rarely followed.<sup>245</sup> By July, sixteen Canadian personnel had been wounded, casualties that could have been avoided by keeping the forces in Germany. Canada's willingness to put its forces in harm's way clearly demonstrated a commitment to European security. In August, Canada announced another 1200 soldiers were heading to Bosnia, raising the total to 2400.<sup>246</sup> The new forces would protect the delivery of relief and enforce ceasefires in northern Bosnia. By October, the military considered itself nearing the limits of its ability to support peacekeeping operations, with 4300 peacekeepers stationed outside of Canada.<sup>247</sup>

The government stressed that it was still committed to NATO, but it had to deal with the perception that it was becoming less committed to Europe, a criticism that persisted.<sup>248</sup>

According to Daniel Livermore, Director of Policy Planning at External Affairs, to many European allies the issue was not whether Canada had a moral duty to defend Europe if needed, but whether Canada had a physical presence on the continent. To these allies, Canada's

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<sup>245</sup> Dean Oliver, "External Affairs and Defence," *Canadian Annual Review of Politics and Public Affairs*, 1992, 102-104

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid*, 126

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid*, 127

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid*, 259

assurance of commitment to NATO sounded hollow without forces in Europe to back it up.<sup>249</sup> He recommended that Canada maintain a logistics base in Europe for Canadian participation in NATO exercises and as a transit base for humanitarian and peacekeeping operations. He thought that, at the bare minimum, Canada should have a military facility in Europe flying the Canadian flag. Canada's role in the Yugoslav operation had "given us the profile needed to recover some of our lost lustre," but he thought Canada still needed a permanence that would come with a base. Fred Cleverly, of the *Winnipeg Free Press*, wondered why the military so quickly walked away from CFB Baden-Soellingen, a well-designed base that had received three hundred and fifty million dollars of investment over the years. He described it as a superb, immobile battleship. He pointed out that, while the base had annual operating costs, which would be eliminated by closing it, the proximity to Canada's peacekeeping missions meant it could reduce the costs of those missions by being one Hercules flight away. Canada could have blended peacekeeping and NATO costs, which would have truly suited the new era of frugality and doing more with less.<sup>250</sup>

As concerns about Eastern Europe waned (although the control of Soviet nuclear weapons in Belarus, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan remained a security concern for Canada), peacekeeping and Yugoslavia took on a higher prominence. The Yugoslavian peacekeeping missions were not NATO missions, but to some NATO countries the alliance and European security were synonymous, and the American refusal to commit ground forces to the

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<sup>249</sup> "Daniel Livermore: Canadian Forces in Europe," September 30, 1992, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe*; 27-1-1, vol. 7, 231

<sup>250</sup> Fred Cleverly, "Questions Hover over German Base Closings," *Winnipeg Free Press*. CFB Baden-Soellingen/4 Fighter Wing Annual Historical Report, File 0115 Vol. 3, 1992, Directorate of History and Heritage, Ottawa. No date given on clipping, only a portion of the page was included.

peacekeeping missions in Yugoslavia damaged NATO.<sup>251</sup> Europe had become used to American leadership, perhaps too used to it. Canada's Embassy in Germany wrote that Canada's participation in Yugoslavia was receiving positive media coverage in Europe, and that helped strengthen Canada's hand in discussions concerning European security. Several reporters had written that Canadian and American policies were opposite to each other: Canada had no permanent forces but a large role in Yugoslavia, while the United States claimed a European presence was vital, while declining to help in Yugoslavia.<sup>252</sup>

The author of a Dutch report on the future of NATO wrote that Canada was losing interest in Europe, as evidenced by the withdrawal. Canada's diplomatic team countered that claim by saying that Canada's participation in Yugoslavia was a clear indicator of Canada's interest in Europe. The Dutch author replied that the Yugoslavian mission was temporary and part of Canada's commitment to the United Nations, not to Europe and NATO. The perception, in the Netherlands and other countries, that Canada was not interested in Europe came from a fundamentally different perception of what European security was, according to Canada's Joint Delegation to NATO. While those nations downplayed Canada's role in Yugoslavia, they praised the United States for maintaining forces in Germany. The delegation recommended that Canada be "aggressive" about advancing Canada's argument that it still cared about Europe. The decision to withdraw forces to focus more on peacekeeping should be portrayed as innovative, not as a continuation of previous policy. The Dutch public appeared to care more about Western

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<sup>251</sup> "BNATO to EXTOTT: European Security in Crisis," September 29, 1992, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe*; 27-1-1, vol. 7, 245

<sup>252</sup> "PRGUE to EXTOTT: Call on FMA," February 20, 1992, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe*; 27-1-1, vol. 7, 226

Europe and defined NATO's security as European security, while Canadians were just as likely to care about Ukraine or Poland as they cared about the Netherlands or Portugal.<sup>253</sup>

From the White Paper in 1987 until the budget in 1992, External Affairs and National Defence were able to find a satisfactory compromise between their policies and priorities. External Affairs wanted to keep Canadian forces in Europe to enhance Canada's influence on the continent, and agreed that the remnant force had to be militarily viable. National Defence worked to find a useful new role for Canada in Europe, despite their clear preference for ending the permanent presence. The Cabinet decision to cancel the Task Force damaged Canada's relationship with NATO, as External Affairs had argued it would, and prioritized preserving Canada's core military capabilities over maintaining the good ally image. There were legitimate military reasons for the Task Force, but it was primarily a political statement. External Affairs was not opposed to the military's focus on viability and core capabilities. Indeed, it was supportive of it, as evidenced by their correspondence with National Defence on how the Task Force could be both viable and visible. The department's disagreement lay in whether a European presence was a core capability. Some allies acknowledged that Canada still remained committed to the alliance, but the general perception was that Canada's interest in NATO was waning. The Yugoslavian peacekeeping mission kept Canada's forces on the continent, but it was a United Nations mission. The deep, and unexpectedly long, recession was the factor that forced the government's hand, and it led the government to choose the military's functionality over Canada's relationship with NATO.

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<sup>253</sup> "BNATO to EXTOTT: Canada and the Transatlantic Relationship, July 12, 1993, *Defence-Policy and Plans-Europe; 27-1-1, vol. 7, 75-77*

### **Conclusion: Canada's Commitment to a Functional Military**

The 1987 White Paper on Defence promised a functional military capable of defending Canada in cooperation with NATO. The government delivered on that promise, albeit at a much lower level of spending and with fewer active commitments. The North Atlantic Treaty does not require member states to station forces in Europe, but Article III requires that all members have

the ability to defend themselves and aid an attacked ally. The full commitment to NATO promised in the White Paper was based on the escalating Cold War of the 1980s, the reasonable expectation that the Cold War would continue long into the future, and the possibility that Canada would face the Soviet military in multiple theatres of war. When, only two years later, the Warsaw Pact collapsed and the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty almost eliminated the Soviet Union's ability to launch a blitzkrieg against NATO, the focus on the North and sovereignty disappeared and government shifted to a focus on operational viability within NATO. The core capabilities of the military were protected, including the defence of Canada, the defence of the North Atlantic, and a brigade in Canada ready to deploy to Europe.

The White Paper was intended to portray Canada as a good ally and improve the Canada-NATO relationship. The government was unsuccessful in that aspect, particularly after the abrupt cancellation of the Task Force. The Department of External Affairs clearly associated Canada's status in Europe with Canada's military presence on the continent. There remained a military role for Canadian forces in Europe as a source of stability, but the decision to field the Task Force was a political decision to please allies. The fallout from its end was considerable, but NATO did acknowledge that, even with no permanent presence on the continent, Canada remained a participating member of the alliance. The 2400-strong peacekeeping contingent in Yugoslavia demonstrated commitment to European security and might have helped preserve Canada's influence in Europe.

The end of the Cold War coincided with a deep recession, which forced the government to prioritize domestic matters over foreign and defence policy. The nuclear-powered submarines were the first victim of the military budget crunch. When he announced the cancellation of the submarines, Finance Minister Michael Wilson said that the government would examine

alternatives for the North's defence, but the end of the Cold War soon after reduced the strategic value of the Arctic, and the replacement fleet never happened. By 1992 the government was basing defence policy on fiscal priorities, a situation it had hoped to avoid. The military's core capabilities were protected from the economic problems, but at the cost of the full commitment to NATO and Canada's status in the alliance. The majority of acquisition programs continued, and the military was able to begin long-term planning for its future. The Navy was singled out by the Chief of Defence Staff as Canada's most important military role in NATO, and he claimed that the 1991 budget had protected the Navy's operating capacity. When National Defence decided that it no longer needed forces in Europe External Affairs strongly advocated for a residual military role in Europe, and was initially successful in arguing their case. The departments agreed that Canada's role should serve a military purpose and be as visible as possible, which served both departments' needs.

NATO has always been a highly political organization, and the appearance of solidarity mattered. The 1<sup>st</sup> Division in West Germany, and the consolidation of the supply lines and reinforcements, demonstrated that Canada was willing to defend Europe. The political nature of NATO can, however, force Canada into roles for which the military is unsuited. Spreading Canada's small military across three oceans and two continents created a daunting challenge for a small country, and the defence of Canada's territory was for years underfunded to keep Canadian forces in Europe. The fact Canada kept a sizeable contingent of land forces in Europe for forty years demonstrates commitment to alliance solidarity. When Canada finally yielded to fiscal pressure, it withdrew its forces from Europe to preserve the core capabilities of the military. The Progressive Conservative government had been critical of the supposedly unviable

military commitments made by its Liberal predecessors, and it did not want to make the same mistake.

The documents used for the thesis cover Canada-NATO relations in the years 1986-1993. The documents concerning the nuclear-powered submarine cancellation have not yet been received, so there could not be a more in-depth analysis of the submarines.<sup>254</sup> However, the documents that were used showed that Canada's most valued role in NATO was its division in Germany, which took precedence over other NATO roles. The Canada-NATO relationship has been analyzed in this thesis, but there still remains much of defence policy under Mulroney that has not been closely studied, particularly the submarines and CAST Brigade.

In the Cold War, the perception of unity mattered: NATO's willingness to cooperate in war mattered almost as much as its military might. The White Paper clearly aligned Canada with the alliance and portrayed Canada as a Cold Warrior. When the Cold War ended and the Soviet Union began crumbling, drawing the attention of its leadership inward and away from the West, allied solidarity mattered less. NATO's deterrent still mattered, as evidenced by the documents, and the European allies wished to preserve the transatlantic connection, but the need for Canada to demonstrate its willingness and ability to rapidly reinforce Europe disappeared with the Soviet Union.

The Canadian government made the right decision by prioritizing Canadian and North Atlantic defence over European defence, but it handled the Task Force decision poorly. The decision to fully withdraw from Europe should have been announced in the Defence Review in March 1991, or the government should have proceeded with the Task Force. Canada's

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<sup>254</sup> The requests for the nuclear-powered submarine documents were made in the summer of 2016.

reputation, and trustworthiness, was damaged by the about-face. NATO knew that Canada was considering its European role in the defence review, and, if the full withdrawal had been announced then, it would have appeared far more considered and rational. A military that cannot carry out the roles expected of it is a large waste of money, so there was nothing wrong with the military prioritizing the maintenance of existing capabilities.

The Brian Mulroney government prioritized good relations with NATO, perhaps to a fault until the cancellation of the Task Force. It was critical of its predecessor for choosing politicized military commitments over military functionality. When it formed the government in 1984, The CAST Brigade had never been fully tested, Canada's brigade in West Germany was undersized, and the military could not support both brigades. When the government was put in a similar fiscal situation as the Trudeau government, it chose to prioritize maintaining the functionality of the military. The White Paper policies were dead by 1992, and Canada's relations with NATO had soured, but by protecting the core capabilities of the military the government had partially delivered on its promise to improve the functionality of the military. The differences between the White Paper and the policies in 1993 are large, but so are the strategic differences between 1987 and 1993. Defence policies should be based on existing and predictable future threats, not political considerations.

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