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RUSI VI

*To promote national defence and security issues
through discussion and engagement*

**Newsletter of the Royal United Services Institute
of Vancouver Island**

The Royal United Services Institute of Vancouver Island is a member of the Conference of Defence Associations. The CDA is the oldest and most influential advocacy group in Canada's defence community, consisting of associations from all parts of the country.

The CDA expresses its ideas and opinions with a view to influencing government security and defence policy. It is a non-partisan, independent, and non-profit organization.



Mark Your Calendar!

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The views expressed by the authors of articles in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the Views of RUSI-VI.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Merry Christmas!

As promised, we did things differently this Fall by hosting two Special Events. The first, was on 25 September, with presentations from four local federal candidates, on their respective party's national defence policy. Our second Special Event was in November with Phil Gurski speaking on domestic terrorism, which complimented last May's presentation from RCMP Staff Sgt Dave Strachan.

For those interested in Phil's additional thoughts on terrorism, I direct your attention to his article in our previous newsletter, Volume 51, Number 3, on the repatriation of foreign fighters. We will continue to look for additional opportunities to present occasional Special Events with speakers on interesting topics.

This is the last reminder for 2019 that a few people still owe annual dues- \$40.00 for single, or \$50.00 or family memberships. Please pay at the registration desk at the next RUSI-VI event, or via regular mail:

Royal United Services Institute of Vancouver Island (RUSI-VI)
c/o 5 (BC) Field Artillery Regiment Orderly Room
715 Bay Street
The Bay Street Armoury
Victoria, BC V8T 1R1

Finally, we will be holding our regular Christmas Reception on 15 December with details to follow shortly. Hope to see you there!

Scott H. Usborne
President Royal United Services Institute of Vancouver Island

Last Post

Joseph (Joe) Edward Slater - November 13, 2019

Peter Reader (RCN ret'd) – November 25, 2019

New Members

BGen (R) Gregory Matte	3 September
Lt(R) Robert Craig	11 September
Valerie Ruhe	11 September
Chandar Sundaram	11 September
Leigh Shankland	9 October
OCdt David Cox	4 November
Bill Roach	20 November

Analysis: Defence issues could be on the back burner as minority Liberal government focuses on survival

Premium content

David Pugliese, Ottawa Citizen, Postmedia News (dpugliese@ottawacitizen.com)

Published: Oct 23 at 7:35 p.m.

Updated: Oct 23 at 10:20 p.m.



Simulated opposing forces attack a defensive position occupied by members of the Canadian Army Reserve, 4th Canadian Division, during Exercise STALWART GUARDIAN on August 26, 2015 at Garrison Petawawa, Ontario.

As the Trudeau government focuses on its survival and seeking political support from potential allies like the NDP or the Greens, key defence issues could be put on the back burner or become part of any backroom quid pro quo.

Dealing with health care, affordable housing, pipelines, the environment and healing rifts with Alberta and Saskatchewan are expected to be just some of the top issues facing the minority Liberal government.

Chief of the Defence Staff Gen. Jon Vance has been telling headquarters staff in Ottawa that with the world becoming more dangerous he expects a steady flow of funding for the Canadian Forces to continue.

That, however, isn't a given. Some of the Liberal's election promises come with a steep cost, including the \$6 billion needed to be set aside for the first four years of a pharmacare program and a plan to improve access to medical services.

Defence and security issues were barely mentioned during the federal election campaign, even though billions of dollars in equipment purchases will need to be approved by the government in the coming years.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau backed away Wednesday from forming a coalition with one of the opposition parties, but he did emphasize collaborating with the other party leaders on various issues. That could open the potential to work together on certain defence files.

The Liberals have talked about using more Canadian military resources to deal with climate-related disasters and to provide help to poorer nations dealing with the effects of climate change. Those are initiatives both the Greens and the NDP could get behind as they mirror proposals from those parties.

The NDP has also stated it wants a fair competition for new fighter jets and to keep the multi-billion dollar shipbuilding procurement on schedule. The Green Party more generally has supported a well-equipped Canadian military but hasn't gone into details.

Bloc leader Yves François Blanchet has said his priority is not sovereignty but to promote Quebec interests. That includes a push to see Davie Shipbuilding in Levis, Que., named as the third yard under the federal shipbuilding strategy. The Bloc's wishes coincide with the Liberal's efforts to steer more shipbuilding work toward Davie.

The politics of a minority government could also come into play on the project to acquire a future fighter jet. Although the Lockheed Martin F-35 stealth fighter is now seen as the leading candidate, an aerospace union is raising warnings that the selection of that plane could mean large-scale job losses in Quebec.

In early September the Machinists Union complained that the Liberal government bowed to pressure from the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump to change rules to keep the F-35 in the procurement race but at the expense of other firms offering guaranteed work for Canada's aerospace sector.

The union is worried that if Canada were to purchase the F-35 then most of the long-term maintenance would be done in the U.S. That, noted the labour organization, would put in jeopardy the 600 jobs at L-3 Harris in Montreal that are linked to maintaining the Royal Canadian Air Force's current CF-18 fleet. "We will follow the situation closely and demand that manufacturing and maintenance activities of the next fighter aircraft take place in Quebec," said David Chartrand, the Quebec co-ordinator of the Machinists Union.

Any loss of 600 jobs in Quebec is bound to get the attention of the Bloc Québécois and cause problems for the Liberals.

Trudeau also said Wednesday he would swear in a new gender-balanced cabinet on Nov. 20. Trudeau will be in need of experienced ministers in various high-profile cabinet positions, so there is a strong possibility Harjit Sajjan, who served as defence minister, and Carla Qualtrough, the procurement minister, might end up in new portfolios.

There have been suggestions at National Defence headquarters that Liberal MP Karen McCrimmon, a retired air force officer who won re-election in Kanata-Carleton, could be a potential candidate for the defence portfolio. McCrimmon, a former lieutenant colonel, was the first woman in Canada to qualify as an air navigator and the first to command an air force squadron.

Such a choice would meet Trudeau's needs for a female cabinet member with experience in the portfolio.

The Real Obstacle for Reforming Military Spending

It isn't in the defence ministry. It's the Treasury Board.

Ken Hansen - The Globe and Mail

For people inside the Department of National Defence, a minority Parliament – coupled with election promises for increased social spending and tax cuts – represents an uneasy calculus. Defence spending is always on the chopping block because it represents the largest pool of discretionary spending in the federal budget, and every party spent the recent federal election campaign being vague about military policy – offering some kind of oversight-body reform or scrutiny over the billions of dollars that have been earmarked, even as they lent their support to ensuring the military has the equipment it needs. In particular, the single largest program in Canadian defence history – the Canadian Combat Ship plan for 15 warships – will be a tantalizing target for politicians looking to get rid of perceived fat. Such cuts to shipbuilding programs have even already become normalized: The order for Halifax-class frigates were trimmed to 12 from 18 in 1983 and the Iroquois-class destroyers to four from six in 1964, to name just two.

The political leaders weren't wrong when they said the military procurement system is broken. But regardless of which party had won this past election, and no matter what tweaks at the edges that the Liberal minority government and its potential supporters pursue, the reality is that the core issue remains unaddressed: Treasury Board's bulk approach to purchasing the country's military kit. Treasury Board policy states that bulk buys are how military procurement should be done, to ensure the lowest per-unit cost. But this forces tough decisions about what to buy, since the larger the order, the longer it will take to produce them all – not to mention the problems involved with trying to predict the future of warfare. Information systems become outdated in five years; weapons and sensors in 10. With a planned operating life of 25 years, any ships ordered today will be out-of-date by the time the first are delivered, and fully obsolete by the time the last one arrives. Block purchasing leads to block obsolescence.

Traditionally, when technological change threatens to render military systems obsolete, the best way to hedge was to order in batches of the smallest number acceptable. In the years before the world wars, for instance, countries working to build competent naval forces put less emphasis on fleet numbers and more on technology and industrial capacity until the last moments before conflict. Technological competence was as important as numbers for fleet commanders.

Another outcome of bulk buys is that the volume means that they happen only every two to three decades (or longer, in the worst cases). With such lengthy dry spells between purchases, it is impossible to retain corporate knowledge in either the defence or civilian branches of government. More frequent purchasing keeps the process alive in both practice and concept, with lessons learned that can be implemented by the same people who made the mistakes in the first place. Such irregularly timed purchases have created desperation among defence planners whose vision of the future consists of short golden days of competence and pride, followed by long years of rust-out and irrelevance. Unwittingly, the dark decades were in large part of the military's own making because of its desperate desire to acquire the absolute best model available – a practice known as “gold-plating” – instead of working steadily to build capacity and skill that would address long-range fleet needs.

This is a collision of interests. The Treasury Board looks only at capital-acquisition decisions from the perspective of the buyer. It's left to the military to worry about how long they may have to operate obsolescent or obsolete equipment and systems, and to do the necessary midlife upgrading, which is partly why costs balloon spectacularly. Life-cycle cost data is actually far more important than the initial sticker shock of the newest and shiniest model advocated by the military's leadership. The mindset needs to change. Politicians who implement bureaucratic change will probably see some improvements in decision-making. But the biggest obstacle to defence procurement is that bulk purchasing is our lone approach, and that it happens only every few decades. Regular, planned capital acquisition is the best path forward, but all paths to the future must first run through the Treasury Board. No amount of political policy adjustment can change that.

Ken Hansen is an independent defence and security analyst and owner of Hansen Maritime Horizons. Retired from the Royal Canadian Navy in 2009 in the rank of commander.

Erratic flight path: Canada's fighter procurement plan

Posted on [October 4, 2019](#) by [Alan Stephenson](#)

On Skiesmag.com web site

The path towards procuring a replacement fighter for the CF-188 Hornet has been one with many twists and turns due to political gamesmanship and strategic business marketing, causing much public misunderstanding. This short article aims to put a few things into perspective as the competitors complete their analysis and response to the government's request for proposal (RFP) issued July 23, 2019, for the Future Fighter Capability Project (FFCP).

Eligible suppliers

Of the original five qualifying suppliers, only the Boeing F/A-18 Super Hornet Block III, Lockheed Martin F-35A Lightning II, and Saab Gripen E fighters remain in the competition.

The Dassault Rafale and Airbus Eurofighter Typhoon were both pulled from consideration, with company officials citing “that NORAD [North American Aerospace Defense Command] security requirements continue to place too significant of a cost on platforms whose manufacture and repair chains sit outside the United States-Canada 2-EYES community.”

Given that the Canadian government identified the first two principal roles of the Canadian Armed Forces as ensuring Canadian sovereignty and the defence of North America, the requirement to be fully functional and integral within NORAD is mandatory.

The reality today is that fighters are not simply weapons platforms, but flying computers that also function as airborne sensors that are designed to be integrated into command and control computer networks. Thus, the challenge for non-American manufacturers is to overcome both sensitive commercial and U.S. national security concerns when they are required to integrate and support U.S. information-sharing equipment in their platforms.

A second reason given for Airbus’s departure was the eleventh-hour modification to the RFP that relaxed the expected industrial technological benefits (ITB) obligations. To attract more than three suppliers and ensure a competition, the government originally stuck to its standing ITB policy of “requiring the winning supplier to make investments in Canada equal to the value of the contract.” However, this effectively eliminated the F-35 due to the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) Program agreement – signed by Canada – that forbade such a demand. To provide latitude to all bidders, the final RFP was modified into a two-phased proposal to allow non-American companies to address 2/5-EYES challenges up front, while also applying rated criteria for economic offset potential of stated ITB requirements, to keep the F-35 within the bidding process. Additionally, five per cent was shifted from cost to economic criteria to compensate for changes in the original draft ITB policy. The proposals will now be assessed on 60 per cent technical merit, 20 per cent cost and 20 per cent economic benefits.

Current bidders

In recent years, the Saab Group expanded globally by offering industrial partnerships that combined local production and capital-heavy ventures with national customer partners.

As the only fifth generation fighter in the competition, Lockheed Martin’s F-35 Lightning II contains technological advances that are designed into the aircraft and cannot be replicated in fourth generation platforms. The jet acts as a forward sensor that is integrated into the operational command and control system.

Saab’s approach with the Gripen E bid in Canada follows this successful formula of maximizing national economic benefits with an economical product; however, Saab also faces the challenges that Airbus determined to be too difficult to overcome. Additionally, the Gripen E is still in development; its first production flight occurred on Aug. 26, 2019, meaning issues of proven performance and systems maturation need to be factored in during bid evaluation. According to the firm, this first fighter will be used as a test aircraft in a joint Swedish/Brazilian test program, the only two customers for the Gripen E to date.

Given that the Eurofighter bid was sponsored by the U.K. government, a member of the 5-EYES community that decided it could not meet the information-sharing requirements, Saab will need to be innovative and cost-conscious in its proposal if it is to surmount this mission-critical criteria.

As for the Super Hornet, Boeing promised to invest \$18 billion in ITBs under the failed 2017 purchase agreement for 18 fighters, and it is anticipated that the company will follow its established approach to investing in Canada as per previous ITB commitments.

Concern over the so-called Boeing Clause, “to allow only companies that it deems ‘trusted partners’ to bid on major capital programs,” has faded away and Boeing is confident that it can mount a competitive bid, particularly now that the U.S. Navy’s (USN) commitment to future purchases will keep the production line open until 2033.

By incorporating leading-edge technology into the Block III to meet adversarial advances, Boeing has ensured the Super Hornet will meet Canadian requirements. Although still in development as well, a major question for government decision-makers has to do with sustainability. At present, only the USN and Kuwait will operate the Super Hornet Block III, while Australia has plans to upgrade their Block II version. As Australia expects to retire its fleet in the early 2040s and the USN in 2045, the challenge for Boeing will be in meeting the stated lifecycle expectancy of Canada’s future fighter in a cost-effective manner.

Since 2015, the much-maligned F-35 has proven itself in combat and counts Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Israel, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, South Korea, the United Kingdom, and the three U.S. services as customers. As the only fifth generation fighter, it contains technological advances that are designed into the aircraft and cannot be replicated in fourth generation platforms.

The overall architectural concept regards the F-35 as more than just a weapons platform, but also as a forward sensor that is fully integrated into the developing multi-domain command and control system. Initial airframe costs have been significantly reduced and early sustainment issues are being resolved; however, the F-35 remains the most costly platform to own and operate at the moment.

With a projected lifetime production run of over 4,000 fighters, lifecycle support is guaranteed, and Canadian industry stands to gain substantially from Canada’s early investment in the co-operative JSF Program. However, according to reports, manufacturers will lose points in the ITB element formula scoring system if they do not make a 100 per cent commitment to the contract value, which Lockheed-Martin is prohibited from doing by JSF contractual agreement.



Saab’s approach with the Gripen E bid in Canada will likely follow its previously successful formula of maximizing national economic benefits with an economical product.

Arctic

Interestingly, all remaining competitors can lay claim to being Arctic platforms. Canada has already proven the F/A-18's credentials in the high North, the U.S. will base two combat F-35 squadrons in Alaska, and Sweden has developed the Gripen with Arctic operations in mind.

The issue of one versus two engines has never been a significant issue for Arctic operations except in Canada. Originally, 'two engines' was one of the many discriminators used in choosing the F/A-18 over the F-16 in 1979. Recently, the Standing Committee on National Defence's shaping of the narrative in 2016 to promote the sole-source purchase of the Super Hornet reintroduced the idea that operations in the Arctic demanded two engines.

As with commercial aviation where transatlantic flight once required four-engine passenger planes, the advancements in engine technology have led to standard two-engine models today. Engine reliability is not a concern with any of the competing fighters. However, operations in Canada's Arctic are unique and risky in an inhospitable region that is 11 times the size of Sweden. Other discriminators, such as continuous communications and tracking, become equally or more important to survival.



Stealth

One of the unfortunate aspects of American F-35 global marketing efforts with respect to the FFCP is the issue of stealth technology. Although the idea of penetrating, first strike operations sells well in the U.S., stealth is a much maligned and misappropriated concept in Canada.

Stealth technology is all about maximizing self-protection and increasing survivability by disrupting the 'kill-chain' through low observability. This concept is no different from the tactical advantages that I used while flying the CF-104 in Germany during the Cold War. The Starfighter had a one-square-metre cross-section nose-on, making the adversary's initial radar detection difficult and target acquisition and identification questionable, delaying force commitment to the target. This complicated the decision and order to attack the target, and finally upon weapons release, the low radar cross-section shrunk the available radar weapons envelope needed for destruction of the fighter. The CF-104's speed significantly exacerbated the adversary's kill-chain difficulties.

The CF-188 Hornet I flew later required a Defensive Electronic Countermeasures suite that masked the larger aircraft radar cross-section, and electronically intervened and complicated a more advanced kill-chain.

The advent of artificial intelligence (AI) will significantly decrease ambiguity and decision-making time in the near future. Whether built into the design or strapped on later, some form of self-protection is required to protect the pilot and the fighter asset that will either be defending Canadian territory or operate in foreign contested airspace when the government commits its fighter force.

The question is one of application and the cost effectiveness of self-protection measures used by each platform and how they are expressed in the bid proposal.

Costs

Costing is a nebulous exercise outside evaluation of the final bids due to the many variables. Although airframe costs are most often thrown around, the government must consider the airframe, operating, infrastructure, sustainment and other related costs as a package, balanced against the capability being purchased.

A good example of the intricacies involves the way the fighter fleet is bought. The Super Hornet must be purchased through the U.S. Foreign Military Sales (FMS) process, where the U.S. government acts as the broker. Generally, a 30 per cent mark-up is charged for research and development (R&D) and administrative fees.

In the case of the F-35, as a JSF partner, these costs are reduced for Canada through common funding. The costs for R&D have already been shared by the membership pool, and partners pay the same price for the weapons system as the U.S. services.

Future upgrades become additional FMS expenses for the Super Hornet, whereas upgrade developments are shared by JSF members.

Each of the competitors is being asked to provide 88 fighter aircraft within the \$19 billion funding envelope and the old adage of “you get what you pay for” is very applicable.

Each of these platforms brings a different level of current and future combat capability that needs to be judiciously weighed. If the fighter is to reach the government’s goal of flying until 2060, each needs to be flexible and adaptative to evolving technology. More significantly, 70 per cent of lifecycle costs are in sustainment and therefore the fighter chosen must be cost-effectively supported for the next 40 years.

The Next Leg

In the lead-up to the RFP, it has been evident that national security factors have been competing with economic benefit interests. With the election this fall, the next government (whatever form this takes) will no doubt want to review the project and put its own stamp of approval on the process that it has inherited.

Hopefully this will not further delay the decision on the replacement of the CF-188 fleet and the Royal Canadian Air Force will finally be able to move ahead with the best fighter aircraft Canadians can provide to the women and men who are putting their lives in harm’s way.

Alan Stephenson (Col ret’d) holds a PhD from Carleton University and is a former CF-188 pilot with 3,600 hours flying fighters. He is currently an aviation consultant and a Fellow at the Canadian Global Affairs Institute. This article is adapted from a paper for the CGAI you can see [here](#).

5 thoughts on “Erratic flight path: Canada’s fighter procurement plan”

1. **Abbott Martin** says: [October 4, 2019 at 10:52 pm](#)

The article misses the core issue of fighter procurement facing the RCAF. Trudeau does not believe Canada needs a military capable of kill operations. He withdrew our CF-18 force in Afghanistan, stating “This is not Canada”. Fighter procurement only interests him to the extent he can use it to get elected. He terminated the previous government’s F-35 commitment, and said the aircraft “Does not work”, setting a trap for himself. He scrambled to concoct a capability gap to justify buying the Super Hornet, but Boeing embarrassed him with its attack on Trudeau favourite, Bombardier. Now, the F-35 is the only choice. But he cannot swallow that outcome, because he vowed to kill the F-35 to get elected. Just like pipelines, new fighters for the RCAF will never happen while Trudeau and his puppet master Butts are running the country.

2. **John Bradshaw** says: [October 16, 2019 at 5:56 pm](#)

It would appear to me, the best face saving option is the Saab Gripen E/F. It is the least costly to purchase and operate, is politically more tolerable to Canadian politicians and the industrial offsets to Canada can be achieved by building the fleet in a Canadian facility such as Canadair Montreal. Moreover, it is the only true multi-role aircraft and has the separate software for upgrading tactical, weapon and communication technology. This feature alone will easily extend it’s life to 2060. While the Super Hornet will have difficulty maintaining its capability beyond 2045, the F35 is basically a first strike BVR weapons platform and incapable of multirole activity.

3. **oobilly** says: [November 9, 2019 at 3:16 pm](#)

The choice is between the F-18 and Gripen, the F-35 is still 5+ yrs from being complete.

4. **Tom Hawk** says: [November 14, 2019 at 3:54 am](#)

Even when it is complete, it will be so hungry for money and maintenance hours that it would be useless in war. In war, money and hours are NEVER in great supply.

As for the F/A-18E, it isn’t the same kind of plane as the F/A-18A-D (CF-18). It was redesigned for its carrier role as an anti-ship and coastal assault aircraft. Two missions that it does extremely well. However, it is no longer a good A2A fighter because the USN realised (and quite rightly) that there were no opposition carriers that could threaten theirs.

No enemy aircraft can get through the massive shield of AEGIS ships that make up a good portion of a USN carrier group. Therefore, A2A combat efficacy became less of a priority than payload.

The planes never stray far from their carriers so range also stopped being a priority. These planes are phenomenal at what they do but they have become a niche aircraft, a heavy striker. The F/A-18E is not nearly as well-suited to the primary mission of the RCAF as the JAS-39E would be.

The RCAF's primary mission is called "Defensive Counter-Air" and it means defending sovereign airspace. For that mission, a plane must be primarily an A2A combatant, not a heavy strike aircraft like the Super Hornet or for that matter, a light strike aircraft like the Lightning II.

Canada has no disputed land border so striking invading forces is not really a priority for us. If we were invaded, the JAS-39E is still a great attack aircraft with the ability to use powerful A2G missiles like the RBS.15 and several cruise missile variants.

5. **Tom Hawk** says: [November 12, 2019 at 10:36 am](#)

It is clear that this author is biased towards the F-35 by making misleading statements such as "In the case of the F-35, as a JSF partner, these costs are reduced for Canada through common funding." while ignoring how expensive the F-35 is to operate (more than 4x the cost of the Gripen power hour) and not commenting on the Gripen AT ALL in the cost analysis section of this article.

I know these aircraft. I have studied and researched them for years and have been a military aviation enthusiast for three decades. This author is a retired colonel so why is he fudging the facts?

Turkey closes in on Su-35 deal after being booted from F-35 program

DEFENCECONNECT.COM.AU

29 OCTOBER 2019

By: Louis Dillon

Just months after Turkey was removed from the F-35 program by the United States, the country is close to reaching a deal with Russia to purchase nearly 40 Sukhoi Su-35 fighter jets.

In a move that is set to further tensions between the two nations, particularly between country heads President Donald Trump and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, it's being reported that "a deal does not appear too distant" for Turkey to purchase the Russian-built jets.

Turkey turned to the Su-35 following the US' decision to kick the country out of the F-35 program due to their purchasing of a Russian-built S-400 air defence system, which the White House said rendered Turkey's "continued involvement with the F-35 impossible".

"The F-35 cannot coexist with a Russian intelligence collection platform that will be used to learn about its advanced capabilities. The United States has been actively working with Turkey to provide air defence solutions to meet its legitimate air defence needs, and this administration has made multiple offers to move Turkey to the front of the line to receive the US PATRIOT air defence system," a release from the White House said in July.

“Turkey has been a longstanding and trusted partner and NATO ally for over 65 years but accepting the S-400 undermines the commitments all NATO allies made to each other to move away from Russian systems. This will have detrimental impacts on Turkish interoperability with the alliance.”

Turkey received the air defence system in August and was originally committed to purchase 100 F-35s before they were removed from the program.

It’s being reported that Turkey is now eyeing up purchasing close to a squadron (48 units) of Su-35s, although that figure could indeed double, considering their intention to buy 100 F-35s.



How does the Su-35 stack up with the F-35?

The Su-35 is an advanced fourth-generation fighter jet (noting that the F-35 is fifth generation) and is considered one of the premier fighter aircraft in the world due to its manoeuvrability. However, it had issues early in its life cycle in an attempt to match up to its US counterparts.

The single seat, twin-engine fighter technically first flew in 2008, but is a variant of the Su-27 and can have its roots traced back to the 80s.

A year after its first flight, the Russian Air Force officially purchased 48 of the aircraft during the MAKS Air Show in Moscow, with first delivery coming in May 2011 to Russia’s Defence Ministry.

However, the jet needed over two years of tweaking after Russia’s Air Force chief at the time, Alexander Zelin, said that the Su-35’s “avionics and integrated defence system is inferior to American fighters of the same type”.

Following years of testing, the Su-35s were handed over to Russia’s Air Force in December 2013 for operational service.

The Su-35’s strength lies in its “supermaneuverability”, including its ability to sustain supersonic speed without using afterburners, a feature known as “supercruise”.

The supercruise allows the aircraft to engage hostile jets at greater speeds and altitudes as well as increase the range of its long-range missiles by between an estimated 30-40 per cent.

Carlo Kopp in 2010 stated his belief that the supercruise ability, as well as a mature airframe and combination of advanced technology, would allow the Su-35 to achieve a “favourable exchange rate against the F-35”.

However, as this is based off information available before both aircraft even achieved full operational capability, it has to be taken with a grain of salt.

Recent tensions between Turkey and the United States

Turkey’s impending decision to purchase the Su-35 is set to further fuel the recent tensions between themselves and the United States.

While general friction between the two nations isn't anything new, President Trump and President Erdogan have been sniping at each other for weeks since Turkey's decision to invade north-eastern Syria, after the US withdrew troops from the region.

The latest disagreement between Trump and Erdogan comes as the latter has demanded the handing over of a Kurdish military leader, Mazloum Abdi, whom Turkey considers a terrorist.

However, Trump tweeted out on the same day: "I really enjoyed my conversation with General @MazloumAbdi. He appreciates what we have done, and I appreciate what the Kurds have done. Perhaps it is time for the Kurds to start heading to the Oil Region!"

Abdi is the leader of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, who were instrumental in supporting the US in defeating ISIS in northern Syria.

Working like dogs: Canadian special forces quietly build up canine units

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Updated: October 31, 2019

Lee Berthiaume



OTTAWA — The only publicly acknowledged hero of the U.S. military operation that took down Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi has become an internet sensation after suffering injuries in the underground blast that killed the shadowy Islamic State leader.

And he or she isn't even an American soldier — at least not in the traditional sense. It's a military dog, just one of many used by U.S. forces for patrols, guard duty, intimidation and sniffing out threats.

U.S. President Donald Trump tweeted out a picture of a dog receiving a medal captioned "AMERICAN HERO!" and later referenced that the actual dog in the raid, named Conan, will be leaving the Middle East next week and heading to the White House.

Canada's special forces, too, have been quietly building up their canine units in recent years. They just they don't like to talk about it.

Canada, like many countries, has a long history of using dogs, horses and even carrier pigeons in war. That includes the use of sniffer dogs in Afghanistan to find improvised explosive devices, which were responsible for the majority of Canadian deaths during the decade-long mission.

As integral as those dogs were considered to the Canadian war effort in Afghanistan, they were owned and handled by contractors hired by the military specifically for the task — contracts that expired when the mission ended.

The military's experience with dogs wasn't over, however. In fact, it was just beginning, said Capt. Jamie Donovan of Canadian Special Forces Command.

"Canadian special forces gleaned much from allies in Afghanistan in the employment of canines in support of special-operations forces and were themselves using canines on operations by the end of that mission," Donovan said in an email this week.

"Following Afghanistan and since 2012, we've aimed to further develop and sustain a canine capability within the command."

While he would not provide further information on the number of dogs or canine units in the ranks of Canada's special forces or where else they have been used, Donovan did reveal they are divided into two groups.

One group is trained exclusively for sniffing out threats such as bombs while the other is also used to conduct patrols with Canadian special forces soldiers and track and apprehend enemy fighters.

The military would not provide further details about its canine units, but some clues can be found in a public notice published last year in which the Department of National Defence revealed it was looking to buy a number of dogs.

"DND has a requirement for canines that demonstrate the characteristics and capabilities to successfully complete a demanding training program followed by working in a challenging operational environment," reads the notice, published in December 2018.

In particular, the Forces were in search of untrained Belgian malinois, German shepherds and Dutch shepherds between the ages of 10 months and three years.

At the same time, the selected dogs needed to show a "sound temperament and a bold and confident attitude with no signs of either shyness or over-aggression," the ability to work with people and learn, a strong drive to hunt and retrieve and an "implicit ability" to fight if required.

They were also forbidden from showing any fear of water, any propensity to bite their handler during stressful moments, and needed to "show no fear and not be distracted by unsure footing, tight and/or dark enclosed spaces, moving vehicles and loud noises including gunfire."

Lest any dog lovers out there worry the Canadian military has been secretly sending dogs into battle without the proper equipment, public records show the government has bought tens of thousands of dollars worth of protective vests for its canine units over the past few years.

The government has also quietly spent around \$500,000 on more than a dozen custom-fitted vests for the military's canine units that include video cameras and receivers that let handlers see and hear what their dogs are experiencing in the field.

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Three Troubling Trends at the UN Security Council

Crisis Group Article

COMMENTARY / GLOBAL 6 NOVEMBER 2019

Richard Gowan

China and the West are increasingly at loggerheads in Turtle Bay. So are European capitals and Washington. The handling of African crises is contentious as well. Amid these frictions, it is the job of UN diplomats to keep channels for quiet communication up and running.

Security Council diplomats have a chance to engage in some self-criticism this week. On Thursday and Friday, representatives of the Council's current members will attend a workshop with their counterparts from the five elected members joining it in 2020 (Estonia, Niger, Tunisia, Vietnam, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines). This event, convened by Finland, is one of two annual opportunities for Council insiders to discuss their collective efforts – the other, a retreat with the Secretary-General, took place in May – and their talks can be quite frank.

According to a [detailed summary](#) of last year's workshop, "a participant lamented that there was a prevailing image of the Security Council as an organ that was becoming less effective and less influential over time".

Similar laments are likely to be heard this year. As Crisis Group noted in [a late April briefing](#) – published on the eve of the Secretary-General's retreat – the Council stumbled badly in the first months of 2019. Its members "spared bitterly over Venezuela, struggled to sustain the Yemeni peace process, and failed to come to common positions on events in Sudan and Libya". A good six months later, this diagnosis largely holds. The Council has not discussed Venezuela at all since May (even members that want it to do more think the crisis is too polarising) and found it hard to respond to fresh outbreaks of violence in Yemen. It has done little to stop the ongoing fighting in Libya and – other than agreeing to keep UN peacekeepers in Darfur – made a scant contribution to Sudan's political transition. It has responded indecisively to other challenges, including the Kashmir crisis and Turkey's incursion into Syria.

Many commentators only notice the Council when diplomacy breaks down and one or more permanent members resort to a veto. By this metric, 2019 has not been especially dramatic so far. China and Russia jointly vetoed two Western-backed resolutions – one in February calling for new elections in Venezuela and another in September demanding a ceasefire in north-western Syria – which is roughly in line with the numbers from recent years. But it is a mistake to focus on vetoes as the sole, or even the most telling, indicator of Council dysfunction.

Analysing the UN at close quarters, three subtle but troubling trends are noticeable since April. The first is a gradual but significant souring of relations between China and the Council's Western members. The second is the deepening of divisions between the U.S. and its European allies about the forum's role in responding to trouble spots such as Syria and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). The third is the growth of disputes over how the Council deals with crises in Africa – which have created divisions both between African and non-African diplomats and also among African officials themselves – which Crisis Group covered in a report in June. As senior diplomats gather for this week's workshop, it is worth assessing these three trends.

Worsening Western Tensions with China

The potentially most significant of these shifts concerns the West's relationship with China. While Beijing has been gaining influence across the UN system in recent years, causing concern in U.S. policy circles, China has usually been more cautious in the Security Council than in other multilateral forums. Western members have generally reciprocated by steering clear of friction with the Chinese in all but a handful of matters. Even on a divisive Asian issue such as the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar, the Europeans and U.S. have refrained from forcing China into vetoing resolutions attacking the government in Naypyidaw, in contrast to their recurrent public fights with Russia over Syria. In [our April briefing](#) we characterised Western diplomats' attitude toward China in the Council as "mutual accommodation".

This year, however, Western diplomats have edged toward a harder line with China in the Council – and the Chinese have in turn become more assertive. This trend is symptomatic of a broader deterioration in relations between China, on the one hand, and the U.S. and most Europeans, on the other, driven by differences over trade, technological competition and the balance of power in the Asia-Pacific. The Security Council is, at most, tangentially relevant to most of these tensions. But it is a platform for each side to take relatively low-risk potshots at the other's policies.

The situations in China's Xinjiang region and Kashmir have been the main points of Sino-Western friction in the Council. From early in the year, senior Western diplomats in New York have worried about how to broach the subject of Beijing's incarceration of one million Uighurs in Xinjiang. In July, the U.S. and Germany raised the issue in a "heated" [closed Council session](#). Shortly afterward, 22 nations – including all the Western European members of the Security Council – signed a [letter](#) to the president of the Geneva-based Human Rights Council delineating their concerns. The U.S., having pulled out of the Human Rights Council in 2018, was not a signatory, but it backed a similar declaration at the General Assembly last month. This campaign of criticism through the UN has inevitably riled the Chinese, who mustered 37 supporters to sign a [counter-letter](#) to the Human Rights Council endorsing China's response to "the grave challenges of terrorism and extremism" in Xinjiang.

Talks on Afghanistan have also highlighted Western tensions with China, which threatened to veto a routine resolution renewing the mandate of the long-running UN Assistance Mission (UNAMA) in Kabul this September. The immediate reason was that the text did not include positive language on the regional impact of Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative. Earlier UNAMA mandates included such language, but the U.S. insisted that it be removed during negotiations in March of this year. While China stepped back from using its veto – accepting a compromise formula praising "connectivity" in Central Asia – many diplomats were surprised that Beijing would engage in such a public spat over a textual issue like this.

China showed its assertive side again in the Council in August by demanding a closed meeting on India's decision to strip Kashmir of statehood and launch a major security operation there. This discussion – the Council's first on Kashmir since 1971 – set the Chinese, who strongly backed Pakistani criticisms of Indian policy, against both the U.S. and Russia, which staunchly supported New Delhi. That the meeting took place at all was widely interpreted as a win for Pakistan, but it did India no real harm, as most participants including the Europeans and U.S. signalled opposition to pursuing the topic. Perhaps of more lasting significance was China's willingness to push for the meeting, signalling that it may be willing to risk more public fights at the UN in the future, in contrast to its previous cautious posture.

Limited diplomatic sparring is hardly unusual in UN diplomacy. But this year's frictions could well foreshadow more fundamental clashes to come. Some Western diplomats have long nurtured a hope that they can persuade China to establish a closer partnership in the Security Council, and in particular to break with Russia in UN debates on crises like Syria. It now seems possible that growing geopolitical rifts with Beijing could severely complicate relations at the UN in the future, independent of Russia.

Diverging American and European Strategies

If U.S. and European diplomats may be broadly united in their growing suspicion of China, their UN strategies have diverged markedly on other major challenges. In our April briefing, we warned that "the Western group is splintering in the Security Council", citing examples including Washington's refusal to back a British resolution calling for a ceasefire in Libya in April and Franco-American differences over whether the UN should fund African-led counter-terrorist operations in the Sahel. U.S. and European diplomats managed to limit the fallout – Washington and Paris have buried their differences over the Sahel in a series of delicately worded resolutions – but their attitudes to the Council continue to drift apart.

One indicator of this trend has been a tendency of European Security Council members, and in particular the E3 of Britain, France and two-year member Germany (which will be on the Council until the end of 2020), to take strong public stances in cases where the U.S. is unconvinced of the value of UN action.

This trend has been most notable with regard to the Korean peninsula, a trouble spot where the E3 have generally deferred to the Americans and Chinese. That changed this summer, however, after Pyongyang launched a series of missile tests breaching UN resolutions. The U.S., hoping to keep bilateral diplomacy with the DPRK alive despite the failure of the Hanoi summit between President Donald Trump and Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un, has refrained from calling Council meetings on these provocations. By contrast, the E3 have insisted on calling meetings after missile launches in both August and October as a way of reiterating the UN's relevance. The U.S. has not tried to block these discussions, but has signalled its lack of enthusiasm for them. The new U.S. Permanent Representative Kelly Craft, who has won credit for attending an unusually high number of routine meetings for a U.S. ambassador, skipped October's closed consultations on the DPRK.

European diplomats posit that their perseverance with such meetings may help Washington, as the U.S. can tell Pyongyang that it is protecting it from Security Council pressure, and in return ask for more cooperation in bilateral diplomacy. From a U.S. perspective, however, these discussions appear largely superfluous as China and Russia are firmly opposed to any new UN sanctions or even firmly worded statements on the topic. The E3 and U.S. differences in approach are in some respects largely tactical in nature. Both agree on the continued importance of UN sanctions on the DPRK (although some E3 diplomats fret that Washington could trade these away for limited North Korean nuclear concessions in the year ahead). Yet they also reflect a more basic divide over the value – or inutility – of high-profile Security Council engagement in crisis diplomacy.

Events in Syria have more acutely highlighted the Trump administration's differences with its European allies on when and how to harness the Council. Although the U.S. and European allies jointly backed a resolution calling for a ceasefire in the rebel-held enclave of Idlib this September – leading to the second joint Sino-Russian veto of the year – Turkey's incursion into the Kurdish-held north east left them divided. When the E3, Belgium and Poland jointly tabled a statement in

mid-October calling for a ceasefire, the U.S. struggled over how to respond – likely reflecting policy confusion in Washington, which shifted from greenlighting the incursion to applying sanctions in protest. Unusually, the U.S. joined Russia in refusing to back the European text. (Security Council statements, unlike resolutions, require consensus support.) Although the Council managed to put out a two-line statement expressing concern over the situation – and Ambassador Craft unilaterally called for a ceasefire after public criticism for apparently siding with Moscow against U.S. allies – the lack of Western unity was striking.

While European officials continue to see the Council as the premier global forum for resolving peace and security issues, senior Trump administration officials, including President Trump and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, take a far more jaundiced view. That scepticism has not diminished even after the departure of former National Security Advisor and long-time UN critic John Bolton. Although the U.S. has used the Council as a forum for calling out Iran –Pompeo visited Turtle Bay in August to protest Tehran’s behaviour in the Gulf – this tends to come off chiefly as posturing and ultimately accentuates the divide between Washington and Europe over the Iran nuclear deal. Indeed, European ambassadors responded to Pompeo’s August presentation by unanimously asserting the need to save the accord.

The current E3 will not necessarily remain a united front at the UN. Many European diplomats suspect that Britain will drift away from France and Germany if and when Brexit eventually happens. And Berlin’s voice in New York will shrink once its Council term ends. But even so, the differences that separate European Council members will likely remain minor compared to those that separate Europe from the U.S. As such, Washington and its European allies’ diverging views on how to use the Council are liable to be a recurring source of frustration at least as long as the Trump administration is in office, as the Europeans insist on the continuing relevance of the UN and the U.S. goes its own way.

Tensions over African Crises and UN-AU Relations

While the European members of the Security Council have coordinated closely in 2019, the three African members of the body (Côte d’Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea and South Africa, or the A3) have also seemed keen to stake out stronger common positions on behalf of their continent. South Africa, in particular, has worked hard to ensure A3 unity and promote positions of the African Union’s (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) in New York. As we noted [in a report in June](#), however, this has created complications in both the UN and AU, as the Security Council has resisted the A3’s efforts to assert itself with respect to crisis management on the continent, and the A3 have struggled to coordinate with the PSC in Addis Ababa.

Both these problems were clearly illustrated in the last six months. The limits of A3 influence were especially obvious over Sudan. After Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir’s ouster in the spring, the A3 urged the Security Council to back firm AU calls for a transition to civilian rule. Russia and China, which have close ties to the Sudanese armed forces, objected. Angered by this posture, and seemingly surprised by China’s lack of deference to the continent’s views, the A3 issued joint statements backing the AU position and implicitly criticising the Security Council’s inaction. These are an innovation, and a step toward more coordinated African diplomacy in the Council, even though they have not changed China’s and Russia’s stances.

South Africa has also found itself in an unexpected dispute with the AU PSC, ironically over an initiative to strengthen AU peace operations. For over a decade, AU members have argued that

the UN should fund African-led military operations in addition to UN-led forces. Ethiopia, South Africa's predecessor in the A3, attempted to push through a resolution affirming this goal in late 2018, but the U.S. objected for a mix of financial and technical reasons. This episode led to widespread ill-feeling among American and A3 officials. South Africa sought to resolve the problem this summer by holding quiet A3-U.S. talks on how to find a way forward.

Both sides felt that, although far from decisive, these discussions were constructive and held in good faith. South Africa tabled a new resolution on the topic in early September. Yet while Western diplomats felt that the draft was a fair basis for negotiations, PSC members complained that they had not been sufficiently consulted on the text, and warned that it could place unacceptable constraints on AU decision-making in future peace operations. On 19 September, to the extreme frustration of the South Africans, the PSC sent a letter to the A3 demanding that negotiations on the text cease. (Crisis Group will publish a fuller briefing on the practical and political obstacles to UN financing for AU operations in the near future.)

These have not been the only sources of AU-UN tensions in the last six months. The Security Council has, for example, rejected PSC calls for the appointment of a joint AU-UN envoy to Libya. In many crisis situations, such frictions raise the day-to-day transaction costs of crisis management in Africa, as the two organisations bicker over their mandates and strategies in the absence of top-level coherence. And, while it is hard for the AU to launch any large-scale peace operations without direct or indirect UN support, African leaders and mediators are increasingly liable to find ways to work around the Security Council in situations – like the political transition in Khartoum – where there is no need for peacekeepers to create stability.

Quiet Diplomacy to De-escalate Council Tensions?

The evolving tensions described above have contributed to an overall decline in the quality of Security Council diplomacy. As Council members increasingly struggle to find common ground on how to handle crises, they resort to public statements and symbolic meetings to publicise their differences. Diplomats who have returned to Turtle Bay after serving in the Council earlier in the post-Cold War period frequently comment on how there are fewer substantive negotiations than in their prior postings. Even representatives of countries outside the Council – who have traditionally argued that the body should be more transparent – fret that the Council is devoting too much time to public meetings and too little to genuine exchanges of views in closed consultations.

At the Council's May retreat with the Secretary-General, British Permanent Representative Karen Pierce suggested that she and her fellow ambassadors hold more informal meetings – without set agendas or records – to discuss how to manage their differences. This proposal was well received, and there have been at least three "Pierce formula" meetings over the last six months.

But even if these off-the-record conversations are doing some good – and it seems too soon to tell – the sheer number of disputes that continue to emerge around the Council underline that its problems are not merely a matter of diplomatic process or craft. They are more fundamentally, as we argued in April, symptoms of a broader downward trend in international cooperation. Western diplomats' confrontations with their Chinese counterparts in New York are products of deeper frictions with Beijing, European-American differences reflect widening transatlantic differences over the worth of multilateralism, and AU-UN tensions reflect African powers' longstanding desire to gain a greater say over their regional security.

If Council members can consult and solve problems quietly, they may mitigate some of the consequences of these overarching tensions. They cannot, however, remove the sources of those tensions from Turtle Bay. The incoming members of the Security Council should prepare for a rough ride. As we have argued elsewhere, there are still occasional opportunities for the UN to help resolve conflicts despite its strategic torpor. It is the job of New York-based diplomats to keep channels for communication on those opportunities alive during long periods of diplomatic frustration.

Canada needs to start seeing Russia and China as 'adversaries,' says ex-CSIS chief

[Richard Fadden said Ottawa needs to acknowledge the United States is withdrawing from global leadership](#)

[Murray Brewster](#) · CBC News · Posted: Nov 12, 2019 6:04 PM ET

Canada needs to be "clear-eyed" about the threat posed by Russia and China — and the power vacuum at the global level left by the United States' growing isolationism — a former national security adviser to prime ministers told an audience of military and defence officials Friday.

"The risks posed by these two countries are certainly different, but they are generally based on advancing all their interests to the detriment of the West," Richard Fadden, former national security adviser to both Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his predecessor, Stephen Harper, said in a speech to the Conference of Defence Associations Institute (CDAI) Friday. "Their activities span the political, military and economic spheres."

Fadden, who also served as the head of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and as deputy defence minister, made the remarks at the CDAI's annual Vimy Dinner in Ottawa.

He said his criticism was not political or aimed at any particular government but was meant to prompt public debate about security and defence policies — a subject that was virtually ignored during the recently concluded federal election.

Both China and Russia have demonstrated they are prepared to "use virtually any means to attain their goals," while the U.S. has effectively withdrawn from the world stage, Fadden said.

That emerging vacuum means Canada will have to work harder with other allies to address global crises at times when the Americans are unable, or unwilling, to lead.

'Clear limits to what we will accept'

But to do that, Fadden said, Canada will have to be "clear-eyed" about the way the world has changed over the last decade or more.

Canada should "recognize our adversaries for what they are, recognize we have to deal with them, but draw clear limits to what we will accept," he said.

Ottawa also has to recognize, he said, that the old post-Cold War world order "with comprehensive U.S. leadership is gone and is not coming back in the form we knew."

In some respects, Fadden's remarks are a more blunt and urgent assessment of the geopolitical landscape than the one Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland delivered in a landmark speech in June 2017, when she warned Canada could no longer depend upon U.S. protection and leadership.

The comments by the former top security official came just as French President Emmanuel Macron also was lamenting the loss of American leadership, saying NATO is facing "brain death" without Washington's full involvement.

When he was director of CSIS a number of years ago, Fadden warned about increasing Chinese influence over Canadian municipal and provincial politics.

He said during his speech Friday that "the West does not have its act together as much as it could and should" and its response to emerging threats has been dysfunctional.

Meanwhile, Fadden said, the rise in violent radicalism in the West is no longer being confined to Islamist extremism.

"Right-wing terrorism is growing and, like its cousin jihadist terrorism, it is a globalized threat," he said. "We will ignore it at our peril."

His speech also touched on emerging threats in cyber warfare.

Many western democracies have not felt threatened in the globalized world of the last three decades — but that era is ending now, said Fadden, and Canadians have to face new sources of risk.

"This issue is especially visible in Canada," he said. "We are surrounded by three oceans and the U.S., so we don't really feel threatened when, in a totally globalized world, that is unrealistic."

Brewing battle over future of NATO creates minefield for Canada

Lee Berthiaume : Ottawa -The Canadian Press

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A brewing battle over the future of NATO could have major implications for Canada, which for decades has relied on the military alliance as a cornerstone of its security, protection and influence in the world.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is expected to travel to London next month where recent comments by French President Emmanuel Macron questioning the viability of the alliance threaten to overshadow a celebration of NATO's 70th birthday.

Macron, in an interview published in the Economist magazine, warned that NATO, which was established at the start of the Cold War to protect the democracies of North America and Western Europe from the Soviet Union, was suffering from "brain death."

The French president specifically cited the recent U.S. military withdrawal from northeast Syria and Turkey's subsequent invasion of the area – both without any consultation with fellow NATO members – as examples of a breakdown in the alliance.

The stark comments came as Macron warned that Europe must stop relying exclusively on NATO – which has been historically backed by American guarantees of protection – and prepare to defend itself.

Even before Macron's comments, there were questions over whether the U.S. under President Donald Trump would honour its historic promise to help defend another member that comes under attack given his "America First" philosophy.

Speaking to reporters Tuesday, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said he planned to speak to Macron about his comments ahead of next month's leaders' summit even as Stoltenberg touted the importance of the transatlantic alliance and defended its record.

"NATO is the only forum that brings nations from Europe and North America together to address strategic security challenges," he said.

"NATO remains the only guarantor of European and transatlantic security. And it is the responsibility of each of us to maintain and strengthen our unity in order to ensure credible deterrence and defence for all of us."

Robert Baines, president of the NATO Association of Canada, credited the alliance with having maintained decades of relative peace and security in North America and Europe since the Second World War.

It is also through NATO that Canada is most active militarily today, with hundreds of Forces' members deployed on NATO operations in Iraq, Latvia, Romania, and the Mediterranean, as well as hundreds more scattered throughout the alliance's command structures.

Baines, whose organization's mandate is to raise awareness of NATO among Canadians, said he was genuinely concerned about the alliance's future – and the possible implications for Canada.

"I am hopeful, but very worried at the same time," he said. "We could be in this really awkward situation where we've got Macron's vision of a strengthened Europe worrying about itself, the U.S. increasingly worrying about itself ... and Canada left behind as America's hat."

Not that NATO's dissolution would leave Canada completely unprotected; the United States is Canada's most important military ally, with the two countries working hand-in-hand to defend North America from attacks by land, sea, air and even space.

But NATO represents an important "counterweight" to what would otherwise be an extremely lopsided Canada-U.S. defence relationship, said defence analyst David Perry of the Canadian Global Affairs Institute, because the alliance works on a consensus basis.

It also solidifies Canada's ties with most other western democracies, particularly at a time when the principles and values espoused by such countries appear to be under increasing threat. Together, NATO's 29 members spend more than \$1 trillion on defence each year.

"NATO is a fundamental guarantor of western democracies' security, freedom and defence," said Perry. "It's a linchpin of both our – and our allies' – security, prosperity and defence in the world."

Canada has been criticized over the years for being among those allies not spending enough on defence, which has been a bone of contention for Trump, who wants all members to pay their fair share for collective security.

All NATO members agreed in 2014 to work towards spending two per cent of their gross domestic product on their militaries within a decade, but the federal Liberals planned to only spend 1.4 per cent of GDP by 2024-25.

While this could hurt Canada's efforts to champion the alliance, Baines suggested it is nonetheless well-placed to bring Washington and Europe together – and that saving the organization should be a priority.

"In some ways, I think Mr. Trudeau, if he could, should try to be that ideal Canadian archetype of the peacemaker and the bridge-builder," said Baines. "These are not things that we can allow to break NATO, these disagreements. We've got to find a way."

NATO may be on the rocks, but Macron's breakup note is no answer

The Globe and Mail - 22 Nov 2019

Doug Saunders, The Globe and Mail's international-affairs columnist

At some point in the foreseeable future, Europe is likely to end its seven-decade-old protective relationship with the United States, possibly supplementing or breaking up NATO in the process and creating an independent continental defence network.

The question is when that point will be. Emmanuel Macron, the President of France, has shocked other European leaders, North Atlantic Treaty Organization allies and many of his French colleagues by suggesting it ought to be now.

The Dec. 3 NATO summit in London was going to be a fraught event anyway. U.S. President Donald Trump's disdain for the 29-country military alliance has already made a mess of the last couple of summits, and Turkey, a 67-year member, has been testing the limits of NATO's values and constitution with attacks on Kurdish forces in Syria.

But Mr. Macron has turned these stress lines into an existential crisis. In an explosive interview last week, he declared that "what we are currently experiencing is the brain death of NATO," adding: "The instability of our American partner and rising tensions have meant that the idea of European defence is gradually taking hold. ... In my opinion, Europe has the capacity to defend itself."

He questioned whether NATO's Article 5, which requires all members to come to the defence of anyone that is attacked, has practical value any more. He spent this past week stressing that he wants to turn the coming London summit into a debate about the existence and meaning of NATO and to get the European Union to strengthen its own mutual-defence clause, presumably in preparation for a break with the alliance – a prospect that alarms non-European NATO members, notably Canada.

Taken in isolation, none of this is new or surprising. That NATO is “brain dead” – in the sense of being devoid of co-ordinated thinking or agreement on priorities – has been apparent for years. It’s an open question whether Article 5 is still useful (if Turkey were to invoke it in response to a Kurdish action, many predict it would not hold up). And Mr. Trump has shown that the U.S. can no longer be trusted as the sole guarantor of a continent’s defence.

Mr. Macron is not the first French president to call for the creation of a NATO-free European military alliance. In fact, almost every president of the republic from Charles de Gaulle onward has made some gesture along those lines. I personally watched Jacques Chirac and Nicolas Sarkozy, on occasions a decade apart, call for a European defence force.

But if European unity was Mr. Macron’s goal, his gestures dramatically – and perhaps deliberately – failed.

On Thursday, at a congress of centre-right politicians in Zagreb, Croatia, German Chancellor Angela Merkel struck back. “We don’t need to turn the order of the past on its head,” she said – even though she too has suggested, as recently as 2017, that Europe should develop its own defence alliance. “For me, NATO remains the transatlantic alliance. It is right to also have a European pillar of defence policy, but inside NATO.”

And Jens Stoltenberg, the NATO secretary-general, has been pointing out that, assuming Brexit occurs, about 80 per cent of NATO’s military spending will come from non-EU members – a tough gap to fill.

At root is a dispute not over the future of NATO – the French and Germans are not far apart on that – but the organization of Europe. As such, if Mr. Macron’s observations and aims are sound, his methods are downright baffling.

As he was demanding European independence from NATO, he was simultaneously calling for a reconciliation with Vladimir Putin’s Russia – France will play host to a summit to this effect in December, convened with the friendly assistance of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban.

Suffice to say that many European countries see Mr. Putin and Mr. Orban as exactly the sort of threats Europe needs to defend itself against. Add to this the fact Mr. Macron has been boasting of his “excellent” talks about NATO with Mr. Trump, and the French President has managed to divide Europeans against themselves with rare efficiency.

Mr. Macron is an intensely strategic political player who tends to overcalculate every gesture and statement. And he has been clear that his goal is a smaller, more unified Europe – one that would place France, soon to be the EU’s only nuclear-armed country, at the forefront. Perhaps this is his clever, roundabout way toward that goal. If so, it could end up unifying Europe, but more likely in support of a renewed NATO than any French-led alternative.

US Foreign Policy: Chaos and Contradiction



United World International

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US foreign policy can almost be summarized in the fact that the country has 600 military bases around the world and Washington's astronomical annual funding for both warfare and "soft power" efforts. Despite how incredibly concerned their leadership evidently is with the issue, Americans, for the most part, have little interest in foreign policy. If anything, there is a penchant toward self-isolation or the "Monroe Doctrine," which accompanies the slogan "America is for Americans," relegating the entire world outside beyond the border as hardly worth the attention. This has particularly been the case since Donald Trump became president, after which even traditionally anti-war sections of US society (such as students) have become increasingly concerned with domestic issues.

Trump's presidency has been severely criticized both by opponents and many of the president's Republican colleagues, primarily because Washington's reach into the international arena seem almost absolute, while at the same time remaining remarkably limited. How is this possible? This problem has been exacerbated by Congress' hostility toward the administration, a situation which became far more acute after the opposition Democrats won the majority of seats earlier in the year. It's important to keep in mind the fact that, in the State Department itself, many Democratic officials are still present in leading posts, having been appointed by Trump's predecessor Barack Obama.

As a result, US foreign policy has developed an orientation that is as paradoxical as it is unprecedented. On the one hand, the conductor of the country's "realpolitik" in the international arena is still officially the president. However, hostile Congress regularly blocks key foreign policy decisions. Since Congress is responsible for managing the state budget, the president is held back from many "significant gestures," unable to win approval from lawmakers on Capitol Hill. The house is undoubtedly divided, but will it fall?

Who really decides US foreign policy?

Some argue that true architects of US foreign policy are the chair of the House's Foreign Relations Committees, Eliot Angel, and the Senate's James Riech. It is not surprising that their influence at the moment is far more significant than the opinion of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo or the former Assistant to the President for National Security John Bolton when it comes to important

and fundamental issues. As the ambassadors of several countries have pointed out, it is much more important for them to meet with congressmen to find out exactly what America has in mind, rather than wait for the next Tweet from the White House. This is particularly the case given that the president's policies can change dramatically within a couple of hours.

The State Department also has its own foreign policy angle. It has been particularly energetic advancing its idiosyncratic interests since the neocon Pompeo took office. Pompeo is a hubristic and obstinate politician who is not averse to "pulling the blanket of foreign policy" solely over himself. His gusto for foreign intervention makes the state department a more critical actor than it was designed to be (Pompeo's intense personal desire to overthrow the government of Venezuela is a good example).

While not quite as overtly influential as it once was, the Pentagon is also pushing its line and vision for US foreign policy. It is the military that determines how to present a particular military operation to the president, as well as what is already being carried out and what is still being planned. Since Trump loves the army and green lights essentially everything they propose, the military elite of America has begun to be included in most important foreign policy decisions.

On the other hand there is the CIA, the National Security Council (formerly under the leadership of the hawkish Bolton) and finally, ex-Vice President Michael Pence, who has a unique vision for a whole range of US foreign policy guidelines (for example, in terms of US relations with Russia, Iran and the former Soviet republics). The CIA and the president don't always see eye to eye when it comes to international relations, leading to a number of situations where the CIA does what it thinks is best for the country of its own accord. It is hardly accidental that it was a CIA officer who "turned in" Trump regarding his conversation with the Ukrainian president, resulting in the Democrats opening an impeachment investigation.

Despite these internal divisions, it is crucial to note that this "multi-stationed" American foreign policy nonetheless remains united in pressing toward globalism and opposing its competitors' efforts to achieve multipolarism.

An absence of strategy?

Two very important components of US foreign policy in the past have disappeared in recent times. The first is strategic planning, i.e., a vision of problems in the long term... as opposed to only looking a few months out. The second is systematic coordination between the departments and structures that work outside America's borders.

"We do not know what we want, but they do not know what to expect from us," complained one American diplomat regarding Trump's meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. "And this means that during the second summit, both leaders will at best agree on a third meeting... but no more than that. Moreover, no matter what our president thinks and promises at such a meeting, he will still be forced to obtain permission from Congress for any of his actions. And there today he is not particularly welcome. Therefore, the North Korean leader is likely to offer nothing to the US president. Because he knows that not everything depends on that."

Over the past two years, numerous departments and organizations working abroad have noted more "inconsistencies" in the foreign policy arena. Everyone is trying to win a certain "local battle", to complete short-term tasks in order to justify the allocation of a higher budget for themselves.

How long will the multi-vector nature of American foreign policy last? Apparently, at least until the end of the mandate of the current White House administration. At the same time, it remains impossible to predict whose foreign policy strategy will actually be implemented and which ones end up playing an auxiliary role or simply distracting attention from the most important and essential moves the country is making. At moments two strategies are both implemented which directly seem to contradict one another, such as when Washington was simultaneously arming and bombing the same radical Islamic groups in Syria. Looking at the chaos of that situation, it appears the left hand often knows not what the right hand is doing.

From another point of view, the neoconservative strategy of widening US military reach to spread “democracy” is still in effect: the Sudanese revolution was supported by American diplomats and Soros-linked structures, the protests in Lebanon are signal-boosted in the globalist media, American special forces are bound to continue to maintain strategic instability in Iraq. In general, soft power outlets seem to remain untouched by the chaos, whereas extra-military economic attacks such as sanctions are dramatically increasing.

Trump: indecision or inability?

Despite that Trump’s promise to lean toward isolationism in his foreign policy proved popular with voters, his time an office has indicated that he is either unable or unwilling to make any dramatic gestures in that direction. Much like Obama’s empty promises of removing American troops from Afghanistan, Trump has been doing little more than shuffling the deck when it comes to US interference in the Middle East. While Trump suggests he is going to allow foreign leaders to decide their own affairs in one breath, in the next he often suggests that full-scale invasion is still on the table (such as in relation to Venezuela or Iran). The president’s efforts to ride the fence on foreign policy have proven confusing to voters at home and political leaders abroad.

While it is unclear to what degree Trump is simply unable to realize his vision due to the pressure from other offices, gestures such as firing Bolton seem to suggest he is at least attempting to foster a more tempered approach. At the same time, it is all too evident that those with a vested interest in war still have the president’s ear.

One example of pro-war forces profoundly affecting the US’ decision-making process is foreign government lobbying, and in particular, the Israeli lobby. Organizations like AIPAC spend millions of dollars, far more than any other interest group, pushing US lawmakers to advance Israeli interests in the international sphere. Israel has been particularly interested in getting the US to help in its fight against regional competitor Iran. Looking at the US’ punishing sanctions regime and proximity to all-out conflict with Tehran in the Persian Gulf over the last year, it is clear these lobbyists are getting their money’s worth.

The intersection of all of these interests on the largest army in the world has led to a considerable degree of chaos and inefficiency, yet, at the same time, it seems that no force can fundamentally shift the country away from its imperialist and interventionist orientation. Unfortunately, it seems that the predominantly isolationist population of the US has the least amount of influence when it comes to their country’s foreign policy decisions.

Mark Your Calendar

Sunday 15 December 2019 - 14:00hrs

RUSI Vancouver Island Christmas Reception - Festive Season bring your Good Will



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Location - 5th (BC) Regt Officers - Mess Bay Street Armoury

Cash Bar – Heavy Appetizers served – Bottle Draw

Cost: \$15.00 per person (pay at door) includes tickets for draw

8 January, 2020

Topic: Reflections on “Claws of the Panda”

Claws of the Panda tells the story of Canada’s failure to construct a workable policy towards the People’s Republic of China. In particular the book tells of Ottawa’s failure to recognize and confront the efforts by the Chinese Communist Party to infiltrate and influence Canadian politics, academia, and media, and to exert control over Canadians of Chinese heritage.

Speaker: - Jonathan Manthorpe (foreign correspondent, books for sale)

12 February, 2020

Topic: Introduction to the Chinese Navy

Speaker: Dr. Jim Boutilier (former special advisor to the RCN)

11 March, 2020

Topic: River Battles: Canada’s Final Campaign in World War Two Italy

Speaker: Mark Zuehlke (author, books for sale)

8 April, 2020

Topic: Oka - A Political Crisis and its Legacy

Speaker: Dr. Harry Swain (Professor UVic, book for sale)