



Briefing Note on Canada-U.S. Security Issues

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August 11, 2004.**

Background/ Introduction:

Civil society brings a somewhat different perspective to the discussion of security issues between Canada and the New American Empire. Civil society is a term to describe groups such as non-governmental organisations (NGO's) and advocacy groups, but also includes major categories such as women, children and youth, indigenous peoples, trade unions, and faith-based organisations. The perspective of civil society on security is important because it is based on values that may conflict with the interests of government or the private sector. While no one can speak on behalf of all the diverse interests of civil society, the majority of civil society organisations advocate for a common set of values which I will outline. These include respect

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erations of national governments and the United Nations. The numbers of NGOs associated with the UN has grown to more than 30,000. The dramatic growth in civil society involvement in social issues is in part a result of increasing public dissatisfaction with elected officials and their general lack of accountability to the public, and in part a result of more people wanting to participate in decisions that affect them. Although NGOs do not have official power in decision-making, they have the power to convince by argument, research, and example.

Civil society represents the long view in a world where decision makers operate on a four year political cycle. Civil society organisations do not stand to benefit financially from the work they

do and are not competing for power with governments, but are trying to influence the direction of governments toward a world that is just, peaceful and protective of the planet.

Key Issues

Even Americans now refer to the U.S. as an Empire. Recognizing the excesses of empires throughout history, we must place those insights into the contemporary setting of a fragile planet at the limits of its capacity to cope. As we face global warming, overpopulation, resource depletion, pollution, and the effects of HIV/AIDS, we should experience deep anxiety about what possibilities actually ex.42e49 aej/TT0 1 Tf0 Tcr.2 359.65402 598.6802 o0ex.42e49 aej/T92 612.42026 Tm

B. Military risks to security

1. Nuclear Weapons

For Canada there are risks inherent in being a close ally of the U.S. Our proximity means that an attack on the U.S. using nuclear, chemical or biological weapons could have devastating effects on Canadian territory. The greatest danger we face is not that North Korea will launch a nuclear missile against Los Angeles, it is the danger posed by 30,000 nuclear weapons held by the other eight nuclear weapons states. Despite the “unequivocal commitment to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons” made by the nuclear weapons states in 2000, (and withdrawn by President George W. Bush) some 4000 nuclear weapons are still kept on high alert (launch on warning) between the U.S. and Russia. Today the risk of accidental or inadvertent launch of a missile is much more likely than a deliberate attack, but the risk of a terrorist attack has brought a new factor into the equation. The consequences of an unauthorized launch could be catastrophic. Gen Lee Butler (U.S. ret.) told the Canadian Parliament that when he was head of U.S. Strategic Command, if a missile appeared to be coming toward the U.S., the response would be the retaliatory launch of 10,000 missiles against Russia. Bruce Blair, Director of the U.S. Center for Defence Information stat

full spectrum military dominance of the planet from outer space ⁽¹⁾. Such a blatantly aggressive mission statement would raise enormous hostility if it were on a Chinese or Russian website. Furthermore, a land and sea based system has been discredited by the majority of scientists in the U.S. and Canada. Both the Canadian and American professional associations of physicists have issued statements that BMD is scientifically unsound ⁽²⁾. In addition to outlining the scientific reasons that BMD will not be effective in preventing a missile attack, the report indicates that

An ICBM which did not have its munition incapacitated by an interceptor hit would continue on a ballistic trajectory and impact earth short of the target. For both North Korea and Iran, the likely area of impact includes Canada. This risk is inherent to boost-phase missile defence.

The Canadian Pugwash Group has raised the serious question of the threat that an intercept vehicle would pose to commercial aircraft and to communication satellites ⁽³⁾. There have been a series of accidents in which commercial aircraft have been downed by missiles because of errors in interpreting radar signals. How could aviation safety be guaranteed when the Pentagon admits that radar is the weakest link in the development of BMD?

Canadian involvement in BMD would mean Canada becoming a target. Even more significantly, joining the U.S. BMD would mean adopting a different world view. It would mean agreeing that security is best ensured by massive military technology. The Canadian public certainly does not believe this. Polls indicate that 69% of Canadians reject any involvement in BMD. Civil society is convinced that increased cooperation between nations, support for the UN and the use of police actions to stop terrorism are better responses than an increased reliance on milita12 0 0 12 473.069 Tm(. T

constructed to withstand a 747 crashing into them. Specific measures must be taken immediately to protect nuclear power plants and nuclear materials from terrorists.

On the other hand, we must note that compared

Recommendations for the Canadian Government:

1. Use diplomacy to encourage U.S. to rejoin the community of nations. We must have good relations with our powerful neighbour, and it is not necessary to act as if we are morally superior. It is possible, nonetheless, to stand for high principles and refuse to collaborate with actions that undermine the UN and international law.
2. Support efforts to increase understanding between Americans and Canadians through media, the arts, academic exchanges and dialogue. These efforts are often pursued by civil society organisations and their impact can be greatly facilitated by governments.
3. Increase support for the implementation of Responsibility to Protect and reject attempts to use the Report to justify military intervention instead of non-violent alternatives.
4. Do not join the U.S. Ballistic Missile Defence program.
5. Insist that NATO remove nuclear weapons from its defence policies and that it support the elimination of nuclear weapons.
6. Maintain Canadian military as separate from U.S., with specialised training in peacekeeping, and nation building. This would complement the U.S. military rather incorporate Canadian armed forces in U.S. offensive actions.
7. Reject the U.S. plans for domination of world from outer space.
8. Lead UN reform to make the Security Council more democratic.
9. Advance the implementation S.C. Resolution 1325 to involve women in all phases of peace processes.
10. Increase the involvement of civil society in security issues: continue to include NGO representatives on UN delegations; support conferences to increase public understanding of security issues and alternatives to war; support NGO work on security issues; revise Canadian charity laws to permit greater advocacy by charitable organisations, in line with other countries. The present limit of 10% of budget hinders the ability of charities to advocate for solutions to social problems ⁽⁷⁾.
11. Support international law.
12. Develop a National Emergency Response Corps under the Department of National Defence to respond to environmental disasters in Canada. This unarmed service would be highly trained and well equipped to deal with earthquakes, radiation or chemical accidents, ice storms, hurricanes, floods and forest fires, in support of local authorities ⁽⁸⁾.
13. Develop a tool kit for assisting countries at risk - nation building, justice system, economic development, elections, role of women, peace capacity i.e the “Responsibility to Protect” agenda.

