



Canadian National Security and Canada's Loss of Relevance

By David Redman

Every Country has an Army; Thiers or Someone Else's – Anonymous

Background

A teenager in 1967, Canada's Centenary, could look on their country with both hope for the future and pride in the past. Hosting Expo 67 at the same time as Canada's centenary, the future of Canada as a middle power looked bright; socially, economically, in the Arts, on the fields of sports, and even in showcasing its military with a coast to-coast Military Tattoo¹. Canada had truly come of age and the world took note.

At that time, Canada took its responsibilities seriously for its own national security as well as its role in support of friends and allies.

Having fielded a military of over 600,000 in the First World War² when Canada had a population of just over 8 million³, Canada had proven its position as a country in support of freedom. In World War 2, Canada once again answered the call, on land, sea, and air, owning one out of the five landing beaches on D Day⁴, and ending the war with the third largest Navy in the World⁵.

With the birth of the United Nations at the end of World War 2, Canada continued to stand with its allies for freedom and human rights. In the Korean War, of the 16 countries who deployed troops in support of the UN call, Canada sent the third largest contingent⁶, behind only the USA and Great Britain.⁷ In the next Decade,

¹ *Canada's Centenary* - <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/1967-centennial-celebrations-emc>

² *Canada and the First World War* - <https://www.warmuseum.ca/learn/canada-and-the-first-world-war/>

³ *Population of Canada* - <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1066836/population-canada-since-1800/>

⁴ *Canada on D Day – Juno Beach* <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/juno-beach>

⁵ *Canada's War at Sea* - https://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/exhibitions/chrono/1931war_at_sea_e.html

⁶ *Canada in Korean War* - <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/korean-war>

⁷ *United Nations Forces in Korean War* - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Forces_in_the_Korean_War#Canada

Canada became the mainstay force for UN peacekeeping operations worldwide.⁸

Then, in the late 1960's, Canada started to place far less importance in its own national security, in its role in international stability operations, and in security support of its allies.

The integration of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) in February 1968, while supposedly to increase efficiency, was in fact a cost cutting exercise, reducing the Army, Navy, and Air Force strengths from over 105,000 to 70,000. Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau wanted to remove Canada from NATO but was ultimately stopped by clear messages that such an action would have severe consequences in trade with both the USA and Europe.⁹

The Canadian Encyclopedia explains the changes in these words:

The cut in military strength contributed to a decline in Canadian [diplomatic](#) influence; though this was already in progress due to the postwar recovery of France and West Germany. In 1970, a series of government pamphlets entitled Foreign Policy for Canadians defined Canada's goals; they were to "foster economic growth, safeguard sovereignty and independence, work for peace and security, promote social justice, enhance the quality of life, [and] ensure a harmonious natural environment." These high-sounding phrases struck traditional diplomatists as hardly a practical basis for foreign policy. Some feared they were signs of a new isolationism; especially taken with the measures of 1969.¹⁰

The 1980s saw an increase in concern for national security and for the Canadian Military, recognizing the link between security actions with our allies and the economic sustainability of our economy, and thereby the social programs Canadians had come to rely upon. The total strength for the regular force was increased to 85,000 along with commitments to NATO being enlarged.¹¹

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, starting in 1989, Canada's interest in its own national security dwindled. The mistaken belief that the Cold War was the only threat to Canada, led to the demand for a "Peace Dividend". Canada however, as the second lowest contributor to NATO based on percentage of GDP in 1989, had never in fact paid the premiums. Yet cuts were demanded, and the Regular Forces were subject to a SECRET level process and document called Critical Review 1990, (CR90). The aim was to reduce the CAF to 60,000. By September 2001 this had been "overachieved" and the CAF were down to about 47,000 trained members.¹²

Then the short-lived awakening for our National Security happened, caused by the Terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. In a desperate attempt to show our allies that we took the "new threats" seriously, recruiting was increased and a force level of 80,000 was announced. For ten years Canadians felt pride and sorrow, as the Canadian participation in the war in Afghanistan occurred. What Canadians did not know was that equipment purchases for the war in Afghanistan were short term, limited and very small. The Army did not have Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) so just enough was bought for the deployed troops, not the

⁸ *Canada and UN Peacekeeping* - <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/peacekeeping>

⁹ *Canadas Armed Forces – Post Korea, Unification, Post Unification and the late Cold War*
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Canadian_Army

¹⁰ *The Canadian Encyclopedia – External Relations* - <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/external-relations>

¹¹ *The Canadian Encyclopedia – External Relations* - <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/external-relations>

¹² *The Canadian Encyclopedia – External Relations* - <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/external-relations>

entire Army. The existing Leopard 1 tanks were unserviceable so just enough Leopard 2s were bought for the deployment, not a full inventory. Existing Armored Personal Carriers (APCs) were out of date for the threats and so just enough for the mission in Afghanistan were bought. Likewise for Artillery and many other pieces of equipment. Our Allies lent us equipment and capabilities, so our forces could survive in Afghanistan.

With the withdrawal from Afghanistan, all interest in national security again disappeared, by politicians and a majority of the Canadian public. The CAF was again cut to 68,000, on paper, but in fact the numbers are far lower.¹³

Canada Today

The threats to our National Security have not disappeared. In fact, there may be greater threats than in the past.

The increase in actions from cyber incursions, terrorist groups, nation states, and asymmetric threats has undoubtedly increased the threats. From the mid-2010s to the present, these threats have, unfortunately, been largely ignored. The actions of ISIS, China, and Russia in Canada are but a small sample of domestic threats, allowed by foreign entities, on our soil.¹⁴

At the same time, Canada has been frequently called out by our allies, because our commitments to NATO, NORAD and international stability operations have dwindled.¹⁵ For example, groups like the American British Canadian Australian (ABCA) alliance have ignored Canada and have left Canada out of recently held international meetings and joint actions.¹⁶

China has directly conducted operations inside Canada. A number of Chinese Police Stations have been discovered operating on our soil.¹⁷

In addition, other diaspora groups use Canada as a place to raise money, recruit supporters, and act for their interests both inside and outside of Canada,¹⁸ while making Canada a threat to intelligence sharing with our allies. Gangland fights on our streets have occurred in a number of Canadian cities with few if any arrests. A recent and obvious case was the planned actions by Eritreans across Canada.¹⁹

The impact that this has had on Canada and its National Interests are obvious. These actions have impacted on our trade with many countries. Canada is, at present, seen as an unreliable and unstable place for allies and for industry and business. Consequently, the GDP of Canada has stalled.²⁰

¹³ *The Canadian Armed Forces – Not Enough Soldiers to Stand on Guard for Thee* -

<https://mackenzieinstitute.com/2023/09/slobodian-not-enough-soldiers-to-stand-on-guard-for-thee-or-anybody-else/>

¹⁴ *ISIS Canadians* - <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/isis-documents-canadians-1.3486552>

¹⁵ *NATO Calls Out Canada on Spending* - <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/nato-canada-defence-spending-1.6804733>

¹⁶ *ABCA not C Agreement* - <https://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/military-concerned-by-canada-s-absence-from-american-british-australian-security-pact-1.6231547>

¹⁷ *Chinese Police Stations in Canada* - <https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/two-more-police-centres-run-by-chinese-authorities-found-in-canada-report-1.6181515>

¹⁸ *Terrorism Financing in Canada* - <https://globalnews.ca/news/9350437/terrorism-financing-fintrac-review/>

¹⁹ *Calgary Eritrean Conflict* - <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/calgary-eritrean-conflict-2023-1.6965564>

²⁰ *Canada's GDP Stalls* - <https://tradingeconomics.com/canada/gdp-growth>

Paul Cellucci stated repeatedly following September 11, 2001, as the American Ambassador to Canada, “Security trumps Trade.”²¹ NATO told Pierre Trudeau the same thing in 1969.²² Canada’s governments never seemed to be listening.

National Interests

A teenager in 2023, now looks on Canada’s future much differently that their grandparents did, at the same age, in 1967. Their hope for their future is greatly diminished and significantly their pride in their past intentionally destroyed by their governments.

What is National Security?

National Security is NOT the CAF. But the size and condition of the CAF can be like the canary in the coal mine, showing that our state of National Security has collapsed to a dangerous level.

National Security is but one part of a full definition of National Interests, developed by a country, establishing a vision for citizens for their future of both the country and them.

Unfortunately, this country has given up even trying to define Canada’s National Interests. It has been decades since Canadian governments even tried to define them. It is no wonder it seems that Canada is rudderless on the world stage, and internally provincial and federal governments are focused on divisive short-term issues.

From defined National Interests, Canadians have, in the past clearly articulated long-term (25 year) National Objectives, which was then followed by White Papers on each objective that outlined exactly the what, how, and when, to achieve them.

A White Paper is:

*The term originated when government papers were coded by color to indicate distribution, **with white designated for public access**. Thus, white papers are used in politics and business, as well as in technical fields, to educate readers and help people make decisions.*²³

In the past, White Papers were used for any major federal government decisions. Policy decision then fell from the White Paper “Vision” or “Doctrinal Statements” with a description of what the vision was and what was the of evidence and logic for the policies.

Many other democratic countries still publish White Papers that define their National Interests and the Objectives that are set for enhancing their interests.

Undoubtably, every country, regardless of its form of government, has political, social, and economic interests, with defined objectives to achieve development, prosperity, progress, and national/international recognition. To reach such objectives there are, of course, a certain number of pre-requisites, essentials like:

²¹ *Security Trumps Trade* - <https://macleans.ca/news/world/security-trumps-trade-at-the-border/>

²² *Canadas Armed Forces – Post Korea, Unification, Post Unification and the late Cold War*
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Canadian_Army

²³ *White Paper* - <https://affiliatedove.com/what-is-white-paper-writing>

- Sovereignty. The foremost interest of the nation is to be autonomous and independent.
- Integrity. The nation needs to be culturally distinctive, indivisible and have well established borders.
- Unity. Unity of values, purpose, institutions, and objectives that are understood by all citizens.
- Security. The nation must ensure safety, territorial integrity, and protection of the state and her citizens against external threat or subversion from within.

Recent governments of Canada have, so it seems, failed to focus on these four perquisites in the interests of Canadians, or even in the interests of provinces and territories.

For citizens who are concerned about the viability of their country, it is time for Canada and the provinces/territories to conduct a self-evaluation. In fact, “Canadian Leaders” in the past have often lead discussions with citizens where they helped defined Canada and its place in the world, on a number of important National Interests like:

- National Security
- Good Governance
- Protection Domestically of Rights and Freedoms
- Economic Prosperity and Growth
- Health and Wellness
- Unity

For a leader of any federal party not to lead and demand this type of fulsome definition, for their Party and Canada, shows an ethical and moral deficiency. These National Interests need to be:

- clearly defined,
- not filled with side issues or issues of a year, but on issues of a decade and more,
- defined based on **unity** not division, and
- built with involvement of Canadians, Academia, Public and Private sector, Unions, and non-Union groups.

Without them, every action is groundless and built of sand.

A straw person should be built by leadership, with vigorous debate, but then it must be kicked to life, equally vigorously, **in public debate**.

National Security

As stated in the very first line, in the last White Paper on Defence, written in 1994, nearly 30 years ago:

*In the final analysis, a nation not worth defending is a nation not worth preserving.*²⁴

With National Interests defined and having them act as the anchor, a fulsome discussion on National Security can be undertaken. The straw person below then can be completely flushed out.

²⁴ *Canada White Paper on Defence* - https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2012/dn-nd/D3-6-1994-eng.pdf

- Security capabilities to counter external threats to Canadian Sovereignty.
- Security capabilities to counter domestic threats to Canadians and Sovereignty.
- Security Alliances based on shared needs and values.
- Security requirements to establish Canada as a middle power.
- Security linked to Trade – with realistic and sustainable action.
- Security of the essentials for life – definition of critical infrastructure and systems and its assurance.
- Security requirements to define the role of Canada in International stability, in a realistic and sustainable manner, linked with allies.

In order to define the role, structure, and resources for National Security, each of the bullets above to be broken into requirements, through an analysis process. This analysis process is used to define all the requirements or “whats” that are required to encompass all areas of our security. The process is linked with all National Interests.

Requirements for individual security, collective community security, border security, intelligence measures and counter measures, critical infrastructure security, civil and criminal law enforcement, domestic stability capability, international stability capability, all need to be defined.

Then each requirement needs a process to develop the options on how to achieve the requirement, with measurable performance outcomes. Resources need to be scoped.

Many of the security objectives list above will require federal, provincial, municipal, citizen, and private sector elements for complete implementation. This implies that representation from these groups must be involved in the process.

It could be said that these objectives already exist, but looking at any of them today, it is obvious that they do not have proper mandates or resources. Our citizens and allies know this, why don't the governments? National Objectives drive the definition and resourcing of National Interest. It appears our current government leaders ignore this fundamental.

An example is immigration. Needs in Canada and ability to accommodate and integrate new potential Canadians should drive immigration numbers. Instead, success is defined by achieving new annual records of numbers of immigrants, not tied to accommodation availability, work availability, or social inclusion for Unity. Our immigration systems appear to no longer be able to stop or remove illegal or unsubstantiated immigration. This has damaged Canada's “National interests”, impacting National Security, Good Governance, Protection Domestically of Rights and Freedoms, Economic Prosperity and Growth, Health and Wellness, and Unity.

Canadian leaders and Canadians need to be reengaged in the definition of a vision for Canada, the definition of National Interests, and then White Papers must be produced based on the options proposed, for each agency, with full public access and transparency, to engage Canadians. Until this occurs, Canada's National Security will be in peril.

Why is this process both vital and urgently required?

Because without it, Canada will continue to see breaches in our National Security routinely, causing Canadians to lose confidence in their governments. Our country's place in the world affairs will be negatively impacted, directly affecting Canada and Canadians. As well, without this process, there will be no coordinated and logical way ahead. We see this every day in our media. Obvious recent examples?

- Obvious collapse of even an attempt to maintain a credible military force.
 - For our own sovereignty
 - For North America
 - For Alliances
 - For domestic operations
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- Ignoring or taking years to act against foreign interference in Canadian politics and rule of law.
- Break of integrity to our allies
 - Due to failure to meet current alliance commitments.
 - Due to inability to meet logical future commitments to allies.
- Breakdown of internal unity and social order through inaction or actions not in accordance with national interest.
- Obvious uses of fear rather than confidence, to divide Canadians into groups and pit them against each other.
- Record immigration with:
 - no checks to actual needs of the economy/structure of Canada
 - no assurance of resources to support them.
 - consequent overwhelming of support systems to current immigrants and Canadians.
 - no timely action against illegal immigrants.
 - break downs in civil unity/policing as these new unsupported immigrants become disillusioned.
 - no confirmation that they wish to be Canadians, not just here to support causes back in their homeland, and then action when it becomes clear that this is occurring.
- Loss of non permanent status immigration to over 1.1 million:
 - with the above concerns
 - with lack of accountability to those who permitted them to disappear.
- Intentional actions to cause division between provinces.
- No consequence for acts of violence on non-Canadian issues in Canada
 - recent diaspora incidents in many communities
 - causes internal unity breakdown.
- No consequence for people raising money and supporting foreign wars against allies/democracies.
 - with foreign countries of origin becoming untrusting of Canada.
 - causing illegal activities in Canada to raise the funds.
- Initial reluctance to be fully engaged in the Transpacific Trade Partnership (TPP) with an obvious breakdown in trust with allies (Japan)
- Using foreign issues to prop up short term internal political goals.

National Security must be the first topic on every national political leader's mind. In this author's opinion, the very fabric of Canada depends on it.

Concluding Remarks

To the teenagers of the 1960's, in his inspirational Inaugural Address, January 20, 1961, John F. Kennedy said, "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country".²⁵ The teenagers responded with action.

At a recent Summit between President Biden (USA) and President Putin (Russia), the President of Russia was heard to say, "There is no happiness in life. There is only a mirage on the horizon. So, cherish that".²⁶ Teenagers seem to have responded with belief.

For teenagers in 1967, Canada was a place of great hope and prosperity.

For our teenagers in 2023, isn't that what we want again in Canada?

If the Canadian military can be used as one indicator of the state of our National Security, then it is obvious that Canada has ignored or even destroyed its National Security. A country that had cut its Armed Forces to an unacceptable 70,000 in 1968, with a population of 20 million citizens, now with a population of 40 million has an authorized force structure of 68,000 which is under strength by at least 25,000. Canadians should be greatly concerned and embarrassed. It explains why Canada is shunned and disrespected by our allies.

Domestic security has seen a rise in attacks on our critical infrastructure and an increase community violence. Foreign entities work routinely inside our country, both with threats to our democracy and with threats to other countries, using Canada as a base of operations. Private sector investment in Canada has dropped due to security and stability concerns. There have been direct results on trade, as Canada is no longer seen as a reliable and secure trading partner. Rhetoric does not fool our citizens or allies.

It is time for our current political leaders, and all those who aspire to be our leaders, to define clearly to Canadians what their 25-year vision for Canada is, what their definition of National Interests are, and how they will meet Canada's requirements for National Security. Then Canadians can choose a leader who best meets their expectations for a Canada of hope, with a secure vision for the future.

Without a commitment to National Security, Canada as a country, as stated in the 1994 White Paper, is a nation not worth preserving.²⁷

It is time for Canadians to demand it.

Every Country has an Army; Theirs or Someone Else's.

Whose Army do Canadians want? – Redman

²⁵ Inaugural Address, January 20, 1961, John F. Kennedy <https://www.ushistory.org/documents/ask-not.htm>

²⁶ Putin quote - <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9694027/Vladimir-Putin-channels-inner-Bond-villain-saying-no-happiness-life-mirage.html>

²⁷ Canada White Paper on Defence - https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2012/dn-nd/D3-6-1994-eng.pdf

About the Author

David Redman was an officer in the Canadian Army for 27 years, retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel in 1999. He was posted for a total of 6 years in Germany during the Cold War, with a total of 19 postings to operations in Germany, Egypt, the Former Republic of Yugoslavia, the USA and across Canada. In 2000 he became a part of what is now called the Alberta Emergency Management Agency. Following September 11, 2001, he led the development and implementation of the Alberta Crisis Management Counter-Terrorism Plan. He retired as the head of EMA in December 2005, continuing to work as an expert in Emergency Management provincially, nationally and internationally until 2013 when he fully retired.