Free Riding for Punching?
Canadian Peacebuilding in the Balkans in the 1990s

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Introduction

The issue of Atlantic burden sharing has been prominent throughout NATO's history. Since its inception in 1949 NATO's defence ministers have regularly—and often times vociferously, uncompromisingly, and publically—disagreed about how to reach distributional fairness in running and maintaining an alliance. Indeed, the heavy disagreement about how to achieve distributive justice in the alliance has been a constant theme of transatlantic security practice since 1949.

Robert Gates's last speech as US Secretary of Defence in June 2011 is no exception in this regard[2], and nicely joins that long history of grumbling about NATO's burden sharing regime.[3] What is at stake, Gates laments, is no less than the future of the Atlantic alliance sliding into irrelevance unless the Europeans increase their willingness and ability to share more of the collective burden. The inequality stems from those countries, he notes, that are "willing and able to pay the price and bear the burdens of alliance commitments, and those who enjoy the benefits of NATO membership – be they security guarantees or headquarters billets – but don't want to share the risks and costs." In short, he detects a lack of political will and military capabilities on the European side, which "are simply note there."

Above all, Gates's speech has reinvigorated the myth that the Europeans are the laggards in transatlantica and the US is the martial warrior[4], and triggered a great deal of responses from prominent analysts of transatlantic affairs.[5] Indeed, this belief seems to have become conventional wisdom among American policy makers and analysts of today. To be sure, however, it is not new and to a large extent echoes

assumptions held by public choice theorist nearly fifty years ago who charged that in an alliance there exists a natural imbalance in the equitable distribution of benefits and burdens among allies, and that especially small- and middle powers are prone to free-ride on the contributions made by major powers.[6] In other words, while major powers pay for the lion's share of the NATO burden, small and middle powers show a strong tendency to enjoy the collective benefit of the pubic good without contributing much to it (free ride).

Canada is one of those middle powers, and this article analyzes how Canada contributed to the UN and NATO's peacebuilding operations in the Balkans in the 1990s. More specifically, it examines Canada's role in European security, particularly NATO's first out-of-area operation and the conflicts in the Balkans. While these discussions about the role and identity of NATO as international security actor preoccupied the debate of the future of the transatlantic alliance in the 1990s, it appears that one of the consistencies of that debate is a lack of Canada therein. In other words, what is interesting about NATO's post-Cold War search for its prospects, soul, identity, and destiny is that that debate is missing Canada.[7] In a way this is puzzling given the fact that Canada is a founding member of NATO and one of the few countries that stationed forces Germany in the first line of defence against the Soviet Union for nearly fifty years.[8] Thus, one might ask what difference did Canada make in the transatlantic alliance in the 1990s given NATO's new operating security environment, Canada's experience and reputation as an effective crisis manager, and the transformation of NATO into a crisis management organization? And more importantly, why does it matter?

All these are pressing questions, because one cannot explain or understand Canada's current commitments to international crisis management operations in Afghanistan without examining its commitment to NATO in the 1990s. Indeed, in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on 9/11, Canada was one of the first NATO allies that supported the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Like in the early 1990s, the ISAF mission has become a test case for NATO's durability and adaptability as an international crisis management organization in a security environment that is highly determined by the threat of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. For Canada, which is one of the few countries that voluntarily deployed into the province of Kandahar, the ISAF mission has become the most salient dimension of its continued commitment to the success of the transatlantic alliance.

Assuming that the 1990s were indeed a test case for NATO's durability and adaptability, the argument here is that contrary to accepted wisdom, Canada was not a laggard in the transatlantic alliance but a committed, capable, and dedicated ally that shouldered a significant burden of the alliance. More specifically, measured in relative terms Canada punched above its weight in Europe in the 1990s, and continued to do so in Afghanistan, which was recognized by then NATO's spokesperson James Apathurai who noted: "Let there be no ambiguity. Canada is playing a key role in this mission. We would like to see that role continue. We think Canada has accomplished a lot in Kandahar."[9]

NATO and the 'new world order' in the 1990s: some pointers

While using the armed forces extensively as a tool and sign of statecraft during the

Cold War, Western governments have done so less in a post-Cold War security environment. This was partly because the size of NATO's armed forces was scaled back and especially because NATO's former enemies in the East had become friends of the West. While Canada happened to be the first country in 1994 to close its bases in Germany, other NATO allies followed suit shortly thereafter and withdrew its forwardly deployed forces from Germany.

Second, since NATO's former adversaries had become its friends, this new friendship reduced the reliance on military (or hard) power.[10] It also gave NATO a new political role in the transatlantic alliance where diplomacy and international engagement were the new keywords in town rather than building large-scale conventional forces.[11] To be sure, the new political NATO was a long-term interest of Canada. Back in 1949, the government of Prime Minister St. Laurent had pushed its allies for Article 2 of the Washington Treaty, the so-called Canadian article, which emphasizes NATO's role as a political organization. In that sense, the post-1989 NATO had become that of Canada's dreams.[12]

Third, the significance and meaning of the national interest changed with the fall of the Berlin Wall. While advancing a country's national interest was the primary foreign policy goal during the Cold War, other security concerns such as environmental, human security, and others gained importance on the geopolitical agenda. They also required different kinds of resources and capabilities to deal with.[13] In short, soft power tools, such as diplomacy, negotiation, and others became the new accepted principles of foreign policy practices.

Canadian internationalism in Europe during the 1990s

In addition to the military deployments of armed forces personnel, Canada committed diplomatic and development resources to an evolving pan-European security environment.[14] Indeed, one might argue that the government's 3D approach, which was the cornerstone of the much later de-

veloped defence White Paper in 2005, was certainly not new to analysts of Canadian foreign policy. How Canadians contributed to managing the ethnic wars in the Balkans in the 1990s actually resonates well with what NATO now calls the 'comprehensive approach' or the '3D concept', which denotes a whole of government approach to evolving international crisis by combining elements of a country's foreign, defence, and development policies and resources.

On the military level, one might argue that Canada's 1994 Defence White Paper provided the correct strategic guidance for its armed forces in a post-Cold War environment.[15] The government of Prime Minister Jean Chrétien made the right decision by retaining combat capable expeditionary forces that provided the country with options in a highly volatile security environment.[16] It also allowed Canada's armed forces to be ready when the call came to deploy to the Balkans to contain a humanitarian crisis.

No doubt, while Canadian forces were in rough shape, they were, nonetheless, roughly similar in nature, although certainly not scale, to those of the U.S. Indeed, the reduced level of defence budgets of Western countries and the internal restructuring process that came with it is a consistency of all NATO forces in the post-Cold War era. As official NATO data shows, in the case of the United States, for example, which globally has the largest military power,[17] the defence budget measured in relation to the gross domestic product shrunk from 6% (on average) between 1985-1989 to 4% (on average) between 1990-1994 and subsequently to 3.3% (on average) between 1994-1999.[18] In actual dollar signs, the US defence budget was reduced from US $ 306170 million (more than US $306 billion) in the fiscal year 1990 to $278856 million (more than SU $ 278 billion) in 1995.

Politically, one needs to be reminded that while defence budgets shrunk across the alliance, NATO transformed itself from a collective defence alliance to a political one whose primary objective is to bring

peace and stability to, for example, Central and Eastern Europe by exporting its values of democracy, the rule of law, freedom, and transparency.[19] While the currency of diplomacy in international affairs during the Cold War was measured in terms of a country's military might, the size of its fleet, army, and air force, it became less important in the post-Cold War era[20], because the Alliance was in less need of large conventional capabilities in a post-Cold War order. NATO itself reaffirmed this at its London Summit in 1990 in which allies explicitly offered their 'hand of friendship' to its former enemies, especially Russia and states from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE).[21] In other words, NATO offered the former East to become friends of the West and to overcome their mutual adversarial thinking. To be sure, this did not mean that the East and West would engage into a 'love affair.' What it meant was that NATO started a process of reaching out to Central and Eastern Europe and to help aspiring and evolving democracies to successfully transition from authoritarianism to democracy. NATO, for example, assisted CEE through the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, and later the so-called Partnership for Peace (PfP) program, which was based on three mutually enforcing pillars: dialogue, transparency, and cooperation.[22] The PfP program provided an institutional dialogue of PfP member states. PfP's primary aim was to build trust and a form of openness among its members, and provided mutual transparency by allowing insights into defence management issues. PfP also allowed for mutual cooperation among its members. For example, NATO helped in drafting defence legislation, assisted in planning civil-military relations of putting the armed forces under the supervision of civilians, and gave guidance in the general management of security and defence issues. In short, PfP was a confidence-building tool of NATO.

While this exogenous process of transformation took place, NATO's armed forces underwent a process of transformation on their own. Receiving strategic guidance from the 1991 Strategic document, NATO forces were ordered to become lighter,

more mobile, more flexible, and rapidly deployable. Canada understood the nature of this transformation and adjusted its forces accordingly. In the 1994 White Paper the government argued that Canada needs general-purpose and combat capable armed forces that are ready to deploy anywhere in the world on short notice. In addition, the nature of the Canadian forces was also quite unlike those of most other NATO allies, which were postured to defend their own European homelands and highly immobile, inflexible, and incapable of deploying forces abroad. With the Defence White Paper of 1994, Canadian forces were postured for expeditionary deployments outside of North America. They were thus ready to deploy when the UN and NATO called asking for a Canadian contribution to manage and prevent violent conflicts in the Balkans. Indeed, Canada was one of the first countries to contribute to the UN peacekeeping mission in the Balkans. It did so initially though the European Community Monitoring Mission (ECMM) in Bosnia, and later on through UNPROFOR. In the case of the ECMM, a classical peacekeeping operation,[23] UN peacekeepers were invited into the country only after Canada and the United States agreed to send peacekeepers. This underlined Canada's reputation as an effective and respected peacekeeper.

The mandate of the Canadian contingent to UNPROFOR was to monitor UN Protected Areas in Croatia, demilitarize them, and monitor cease-fire agreements.[24] While doing so, Canadians encountered some of the most difficult operational situations of the entire UNPROFOR mission. For example, Canadian soldiers witnessed the massacres in Screbrenica in 1993, they were also taken hostage in Sarajavo in 1994, helped liberate Sarajevo airport, and were confronted with direct combat in the Medak Pocket.[25] Indeed, one of the most difficult tasks of the UN operation was the challenge to enforce a peace where there was no peace to keep. The Mulroney government had realized this weakness as well as those of UNPROFOR I (1992-93) early on.[26] It pushed its NATO allies in the UN Security Council to authorize a Chapter

VII mission, which would allow an armed peace-enforcement operation.[27] In any case, compared to its international allies and partners, Canada sent a total of 2,151 troops (or 5,44% of the total UN force) to UNPROFOR and ranked 5th overall. It was not free-riding on its allies.

When the UN left the Balkans in 1995, Canada did not duck and remained committed to the duty of global conflict prevention. It shifted its commitment from the UN to NATO with the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords, which established a NATO-led *Implementation Force (IFOR)* with a total of 60,000 troops and replaced the unsuccessful UNPROFOR. IFOR was endorsed by UN Security Council Resolution 1031 of 15 December 1995, and was also a peace-enforcement mission.[28] IFOR troops were heavily armed and authorized under international law to use force if necessary. Canada sent 1,047 troops[29] and was the 4th largest force contributor to *Operation Air Bridg*e, which supported the city of Sarajevo with humanitarian supplies.

When IFOR was replaced with the *Stabilization Force (SFOR)* in December 1996, Canada continued to forwardly deploy 1,327 soldiers to bring peace to the Balkans.[30] It was the 8th largest contributing NATO country to SFOR, out of 18 countries in total. All of Canada's army units rotated through this operation, which is a significant relative commitment, especially given the dire domestic fiscal situation (the country was on the verge of being bankrupt) and the looming referendum that threatened to separate the province of Quebec from Canada.

In 1999, when ethnic Albanians and a Serb minority engaged in practices of ethnic cleansing in the province of Kosovo, Canada once again did not shy from its international responsibilities and answered NATO's call for peacekeepers. It became the 7th largest force contributor (out of 18 nations in total), and deployed 1,450 troops[31], and also shouldered a disproportionate burden of *Operation Allied Force*. Taken the ground and air campaign combined, Canada ranked as the 3rd

largest contributing nation. This, again, was a significant contribution (in relative terms) of one of the smallest NATO countries measured according to the size of the population. It can be seen as an indicator of Canadian international commitment rather than an indicator of decline, free-riding or even irrelevance.

Conclusion

By putting Canadian commitments and contributions to allied security in the situational context, that is the changing security environment in Europe and the nature of NATO's missions in the Balkans, I argued that Canada was not in decline or vanishing from world politics. It was there and punched its weight in the transatlantic alliance. Indeed, by looking back at the 1990s, one could see a trajectory of commitment rather than free riding. Canadian forces members experienced the full spectrum of crisis management. Those tasks ranged from classical peacekeeping to peace-enforcement operations and, to a large degree, had the protection of humans as their main objective. This significant shift in the formulation and execution of national security policies in the post-Cold War era required different capabilities and policies. Canadians were there when NATO needed them the most and sent their troops into harms way. The best examples are the Sarajevo airport incidence or the Medak Pocket. Furthermore, Canadian peacebuilding efforts did not take place in a vacuum. They speak to Canada's predisposition towards a multilateral foreign and defence policy. Unlike the United States, Canada does not deploy its forces unilaterally but in concert with others and with the endorsement of the UN or NATO. In turn, this provides legitimacy for Canadian actions abroad and with some kind of an 'insurance policy'.

It is because of this history of commitment in the 1990s that Canada was able to offer troops to NATO's operation in Afghanistan when the call to arms came in the aftermath of 9/11. Yet again, Canada did not shy away from shouldering some of the ISAF responsibility. Canada was there

when NATO needed Canada and punched above its weight to help make NATO's efforts effective and successful.

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Notes

1) This paper was written while I was a Visiting Scholar at the European Forum, Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, Stanford University, 2008. A much expanded and more elaborate argument of NATO's middle power and NATO burden sharing can be found in Benjamin Zyla, Sharing the Burden? NATO and its second-tier powers (Toronto, New York: University of Toronto Press, 2014).

2) To be found at Robert M. Gates, „The Security and Defense Agenda (Future of NATO). A speech delivered by Secretary of Defense, Brussels, Belgium, Friday, June 10, 2011," U.S. Department of Defense, http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1581.

3) To be fair, it is not only the US that has complained about the practice of Atlantic burden sharing; other countries have joined force and equally held their shares of complaint.

4) Robert Kagan, Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order (New York: Vintage Books, 2004).

5) For a selection see „On target: Robert Gates's parting shot exposes Europe's military failings," The Economist 2011; James M. Goldgeier, „We Need New Partners," 14 June 2011; Robert Haddick, „This Week at War: Moral Hazard at NATO," Foreign Policy (2011); Josef Joffe, „Alliance of the Unwilling," The New Zork Times, 29 June 2011; Kori Shake, „Europe's Waning Influence," The New York Times, 14 June 2011; Constanze Stelzenmüller, „Gates was far too nice about NATO's failings," The Financial Times, June 15 2011; Michael Stürmer, „Goodbye Nato," Die Welt Online, 15 June 2011.

6) Mancur Olson, The Logic of Collective Action (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965); Mancur Olson and Richard Zeckhauser, „An Economic Theory of Alliances," Review of Economics and Statistics 48, no. 3 (1966).

7) For a provokative account of the nature of the transatlantic alliance see for example Robert Kagan, „Power and Weakness," Policy Review 113 (2002); Kagan, Of Paradise and Power. For somewhat of a counter argument see Jeffrey Anderson, G. John Ikenberry, and Thomas Risse, eds., The end of the West?: crisis and change in the Atlantic order (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).

8) In 1992, according to the IISS Canada's mechanized brigade consisted of 4,400 troops in addition to a 2,600 men strong air division. See International Institute for Strategic Studies, The Military Balance - 1991/92 (London: Institute for Strategic Studies and Oxford University Press, 1992), 53.

9) http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20080130/wl_canada_afp/canadaafghanistanusnatopolitics_080130223558

10) On the distinction between soft and hard power see Joseph S. Nye, Power in the global information age: from realism to globalization (London; New York: Routledge, 2005); Joseph S. Nye, Soft power: the means to success in world politics, 1st ed. (New York: Public Affairs, 2004). For a 'classical' definition of power see Ray S. Cline, World power assessment: a calculus of strategic drift (Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies Georgetown University, 1975); Robert A. Dahl, „The concept of power," in Political Power: A Reader in Theory and Research, ed. Roderick Bell, David V. Edwards, and R. Harrison (New York: Free Press, 1969); Robert A. Dahl, „The Concept of Power," Behavioural Science 2 (July 1957).

11) On the notion that NATO had become more of a political alliance see for example Stanley R. Sloan, NATO, the European Union, and the Atlantic community: the transatlantic bargain

challenged, 2nd ed. (Lanham [Md.]: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005).

12) David G. Haglund, „The NATO of Its Dreams? Canada and the Co-operative Security Alliance," International Journal 52 (Summer 1997).

13) The literature on the evolution of the concept of security is extensive. For a good overview see David A. Baldwin „The Concept of Security," Review of International Studies 32 (1997); Ken Booth, „Security and emancipation," ibid.17, no. 4 (1991); Helga Haftendorn, „The Security Puzzle: Theory-Building and Discipline Building in International Security," International Studies Quarterly 35, no. 1 (March 1991).

14) For reasons of restraints of space, I will only focus mostly on the military aspects of the argument. I have discussed the other two elsewhere. See Benjamin Zyla, A Bridge Not Too far.

15) Department of National Defence Canada, „1994 Defence White Paper," (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1994).

16) See for example Joel J. Sokolsky, Canada, getting it right this time: the 1994 Defence White Paper ([Carlisle Barracks, Pa.]: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 1995).

17) The literature on American military hegemony is vast. For an introductory reading see for example White House, The National Security Strategy of the United States of America (Washington, D.C.: White House, 2002); Niall Ferguson, Colossus: the rise and fall of the American empire (New York: Penguin Books, 2005); A. J. Bacevich, The imperial tense: prospects and problems of American empire (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2003); Fareed Zakaria, From wealth to power: the unusual origins of America's world role (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998).

18) Official NATO Data on Defence Spending, 2002.

19) See for example M-NACC-1(91)111 North Atlantic Council, North Atlantic Cooperation Council Statement on Dialogue, Partnership and Cooperation, Article 2. See also North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Study on NATO Enlargement," Chapter 5, Section A, Article 70.

20) This change of the notion of security was affirmed by NATO officials. See Press Point of Mr. Javier Solana, NATO Secretary General, and Minister Igor Rodionov, Russian Defence Minister, Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Defence Ministers Session, NATO Headquarters, Brussels, 18 December 1996.

21) The London summit was preceeded by a Ministerial Meeting at Turnberry at which the future role of NATO was debated. Opening Remarks at the Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council, Speech by NATO Secretary General Manfred Woerner, Turnberry, 7-8 June 1990. On the London Summit see London Declaration on A Transformed North Atlantic Alliance, issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council, London 5-6 July 1990.

22) For references on PfP see Martin A. Smith, Russia and NATO since 1991: from Cold War through cold peace to partnership? (London, New York: Routledge, 2006); Jeffrey Simon, Partnership for peace: charting a course for a new era (Washington, D.C.: Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, 2004): Wolf Bell, Security in a changed world: - Partnership for Peace from Vancouver to Vladivostok" (Bonn: Inter Nationes Press, 1996).

23) Peacekeeping operations can roughly be divided into three generations. The first generation, also called the 'classic' or 'traditional' peacekeeping originated after the end of WWII in 1948 and lasted until the end of the Cold War in 1989. For example, the UN Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO) established in 1948 to oversee the armistice between Israel and the Arab States and can be considered the starting point for UN peacekeeping. The role of peacekeepers in the first generation of peacekeeping was largely to act as neutral party or buffers on the ground. In the second generation of peacekeeping, peacekeepers were not limited to simply observing or supervising a cease fire. This type of peacekeeping largely took place after the Cold War where the UN involved itself in intra-state conflicts. operations largely took place outside of the UN system, for example in the Sinai, Beirut, or Sri Lanka. Since 1994, a third generation of peacekeeping has evolved with a much broader mandate that includes functions such as military disengagement, demobilization, policing, human rights monitoring, observation and others. The fourth-generation of peacekeeping is the equivalent of a peace-enforcement operation. For a greater discussion see Ramesh Thakur, The United Nations, peace and security: from collective

security to the responsibility to protect (Cambridge, UK, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

24) For a detailed account of Canadian troops in the Balkans see Lewis MacKenzie, Peacekeeper: Road to Sarajevo (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1993).

25) See Carol Off, The Ghosts of Medak Pocket: the story of Canada's secret war (Toronto: Random House Canada, 2004).

26) S/RES 743 (1992). UNPROFOR I was limited to Croatia. It was followed by UNPROFOR II for Bosnia and Herzegovina (1993-94), and UNPROFOR III for the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Herzegovina (1993-95).

27) See Nicholas Gammer, From peacekeeping to peacemaking: Canada's response to the Yugoslav crisis (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001).

28) S/RES 1031 (1995).

29) Bland and Maloney, Campaigns for International Security: Canada's Defence Policy at the Turn of the Century, 233. Lenard Cohen counted a different number of Canadian troops and came to 1,035 in total. See Lenard J. Cohen, "Blue Helmets, Green Helmets, Red Tunics: Canada's Adaptation to the Security Crisis in Southeastern Europe," in NATO and European Security: Alliance Politics from the End of the Cold War to the Age of Terrorism, ed. Alexander Moens, Lenard J. Cohen, and Alan G. Sens (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2003), 127. The official DND number is 1,029 collected from an interview with DND official, June 2007. In any case, the number of Canadian troops is well beyond a thousand troops.

30) Bland and Maloney, Campaigns for International Security: Canada's Defence Policy at the Turn of the Century, 234. The numbers provided in this monograph are, however, not identical with numbers available from other publications or official government documents. Lenard Cohen, for example, counted 1,800 troops as Canada's contribution to SFOR; see Cohen, "Blue Helmets, Green Helmets, Red Tunics: Canada's Adaptation to the Security Crisis in Southeastern Europe," 127. The Department of National Defence lists 1,641 as the official number. See Interview with Senior Officer of the Department of National Defence, Finance Section, 2007.

31) The numbers are identical in Bland and Maloney, Cohen and from DND.