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**THE DEFENCE OF CANADA AND
NORTH AMERICA:
A REVIEW OF THE NEW
CANADIAN DEFENCE POLICY
"STRONG, SECURE AND
ENGAGED"**

A Focused Analysis by
Andrea Charron PhD

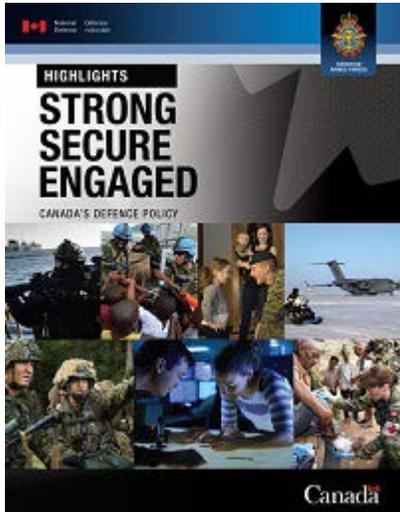
July | juillet 2017

This article summarises my remarks made recently at a Defence Policy Review panel held at Carleton University on 20 June 2017, where I commented on the new Defence Policy "Strong, Secure, Engaged" as it relates to the Defence of Canada and North America. This summary is broken into two parts: the first provides overarching comments about the defence policy vis-à-vis Canada and North America and the second outlines comments with respect to three, specific areas: NORAD, the Arctic and aid of the civil authorities/search and rescue (SAR).

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The Defence of Canada and North America: A Review of the new Canadian Defence Policy: Strong Secure and Engaged.

By Andrea Charron, PhD

Canada and North America – Overarching Comments

Considering this new government's pronouncements that "Canada is back in the world" coupled with the need to support missions overseas, especially a UN mission in Africa, the defence of Canada has been the big winner in this new defence policy. This is surprising given that Liberal governments traditionally tend to focus on the "away" game in defence policies and defence budgets have often been cut to solve federal budget deficits. This government is unique

for a) promising to run a deficit and b) focusing on the defence of Canada and North America in considerable detail.

Related to the focus on the home-front is a lot of attention and detail to the "connective tissue" elements of the Canadian Armed Forces which are often forgotten and marginalized; for instance, attention to communication systems, cryptography, as well as intelligence and domain awareness. These are deep- in-the-weeds issues, which, if done well, have a force multiplying effect, but if ignored can affect operations adversely.

The third general comment is that, in many ways, we are returning to Cold War language and philosophies in this new policy. This **does not** mean we are in a Cold War nor will there be a Cold War. Rather, I am suggesting that this policy has a lot more in common with the [1964 Defence White Paper](#) than it does with the latest issued in 2008 [the Canada First Defence Strategy](#) when it comes to the defence of Canada and North America because of the return to and focus on anti-submarine warfare, deterrence and questions about the world order.

Finally, there is nothing vis-à-vis NORAD, the Arctic and aid of the civil power/SAR that doesn't predate the election of President Trump. For example, the need to replace the North Warning system, the purchase of Arctic Offshore Patrol Vessels and the need to consider new command and control constructs were all discussed, considered, exercised and in some cases, costed before Trump. There are some new announcements to be sure, for example, that Canada will adapt offensive as well as defensive cyber capabilities, but even this is not created out of (virtual) thin air; it was discussed among allied military partners long before the release of the new defence policy.

Now to the three, specific domestic defence areas/issues.

NORAD – "Modernizing and Evolving"

One of the few assets that NORAD has is the North Warning System (NWS) which is a series of short- and long- range radar stretching from Alaska to Greenland. The short range radars in Canada are coming to their end of serviceable life and need to be replaced. At the same time, the NWS positioning within

Canada and its capabilities (to detect air breathing threats, presumably of a long-range bomber variant) need to be considered and evaluated. Today, Canada faces new threats, especially cruise missiles and “drones” which the NWS is not designed to detect. Furthermore, the NWS is located deep into Canadian territory which means it cannot give the type of advanced warning it was once designed to provide given the new threats Canada faces.

There is also the promise of 88 new fighter jets of which some will be earmarked for NORAD – indeed ensuring Canada can meet its NORAD commitments is one of the impetuses for the replacement of the aged CF-18s.

Next year, NORAD will celebrate its 60th anniversary and this represents an opportune time to consider the command and control (C2) structures within NORAD. NORAD, via its annual fall exercise called Vigilant Shield, has been testing different C2 arrangements including a separate theatre commander responding to the NORAD commander in order to have “one belly button” to push for all NORAD air tasking orders for all NORAD-assigned Canadian and US aircraft to stream-line air tasking battle management. Canada needs to think through the ramification of this potential change for its forces and operations before moving ahead with any changes.

The other issue is Canada’s lack of cruise missile defences. The Defence Policy has stated that it will not open the discussion on Ballistic Missile defence with the US at this time which clarifies the non-decision of 2005. However, the purchase of cruise missile defence apparatus is a possibility in the future (at least as I read between the lines). This could entail something like a Boeing Avenger –a ground-based, self-propelled surface-to-air missile systems designed to defeat short range cruise missiles, fixed wing aircraft, drones and helicopter threats. This system, deployed to North Bay from the US as part of NORAD’s 2016 Exercise Vigilant Shield activities (or some other competitor) might be a potential purchase in the future

Arctic – All Domain Awareness

The Arctic remains a consideration in this defence policy by virtue of the fact that it represents 40% of Canada’s land mass and 75% of its coast line. Much of the defence policy is focused on next generation air surveillance aircraft, global satellite communication, remotely piloted systems (for air and sea) and a new satellites in a constellation configuration for better surveillance, all of which will create a system-of-system for better all domain awareness.

The other surprising but overdue change is to Canada’s Air Defence Identification Zone (CADIZ) which will move to match the boundaries of Canada’s sovereign airspace – before the CADIZ extended as far as the reach of the NWS. This will mean a change of rules of engagement/procedures for Transport Canada, NAVCANADA, the Canadian Armed Forces and of course pilots around the world, but Canadians are not likely to notice.

The policy also focuses on the need to improve and expand joint intelligence and surveillance in the Arctic. The Rangers have a role to play in this regard and are set to expand their numbers. As well,

[Canadian Forces Station Alert](#) – a signals interception base located at the top of Ellesmere Island - will receive some upgrades.

These enhancements will improve domain awareness. Note too that the infrastructure in the Arctic promised under the 2008 CFDS (the Arctic Offshore Patrol Vessels, the refuelling depot at Nanisivik, upgrades to Iqaluit airport etc.), will likely come to fruition under the Trudeau government. There has also been a wording change – while “sovereignty” was overused in the CFDS, it is used sparingly in the new policy. The new focus is on expanding capabilities and working with allies – **most notably with NATO in the Arctic** – which is a significant change from the 2008 CFDS.

Duties in Aid of the Civil Power – Search and Rescue

The CAF’s role in aid of the civil powers is probably one of its most important but is often overlooked. The CAF have been called upon to assist civil authorities with Canada’s 4 horsemen: floods, fire, freezing rain and formidable events (Olympics, G20 etc.) There are no major changes expected in this regard except perhaps an increasing expectation of Canadians for the military to be called in sooner rather than later when these events occur. Communicating how and under what circumstances the military may assist civilian authorities needs to happen more often and the process needs to be understood by ALL levels of government.

For search and rescue, the CAF mandate remains the same. Their primary SAR responsibility is the provision of aeronautical SAR and the coordination of the aeronautical and maritime SAR system. CAF resources may also assist in ground SAR efforts, medical evacuations and other humanitarian incidents if requested by the responsible provincial/territorial or municipal authority. The Canadian Rangers, Reserve Force members of the CAF, regularly aid in ground SAR operations upon request in sparsely settled regions of the country.

This defence policy will define for many in uniform, current civil servants and veterans, the next 20 years of their lives, assuming that the Liberals stay in power and that the plan is implementable. What is very different about this policy is the dedication of the first chapter to people rather than threats; all past defence policies have said that people are extremely important but this is usually limited to a sentence or two, not a chapter of proposed programs. Whether or not all of the plans outlined in the policy translate into action is another matter. What most will be tracking, including me, is whether or not the tires of the car that is this defence policy can actually be changed while it is still running. In other words, given this ambitious policy, can the CAF and DND meet the targets proposed given current staffing shortages (because of attrition and difficulty recruiting), procurement polavas and capacity deficits? Let’s hope so.

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