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**Stability and Flexibility: The Rush-Bagot Agreement and the Progressive
Modernization of Canadian-American Security Relations**

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements
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Faculty of Social Science
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the historical progression of the Rush-Bagot Agreement through the fundamental change versus transitory modernization debate that has emerged in North America as a result of the reorganization of continental security and defence since 2001. The Agreement, which was signed by Britain and the United States in 1817 and subsequently embraced by Canada upon its independence, has acted as a stable measure of the security and defence relationship on the continent throughout its entire history. It has persisted through nearly two centuries of industrialization, expansionism, war, and modernization, and remains relevant in governing security and defence relations on the Great Lakes. By tracing the development of this Agreement and relations on the Lakes through previous periods of continental and international discord, this paper suggests that the changes to continental security and defence since 2001 represent little more than the refurbishing of relations to address a new threat, and thus are consistent with past defence modernizations during periods of continental vulnerability.

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This paper is dedicated to you both, even though Laura, I know you will never read it.

Introduction

Signed by Britain and the United States in April of 1817, the Rush-Bagot Agreement was a bilateral accord designed to diplomatically and cooperatively demilitarize the North American Great Lakes and foster improved trade relations between the two states following the costly War of 1812.¹ In the succeeding decades and centuries, the Agreement has proved to be highly flexible. Embraced by Canada upon its independence and then maintained throughout its entire history, the pact achieved a degree of arms control on the Great Lakes and has come to epitomize the Canadian-American cooperative security relationship. Rather than being a relic of a former era, adaptability has come to define this Agreement and continental link. Because accommodation has proven so crucial for the Canada-United States

¹ This was a conflict fought on both Canadian and American territory between Britain and the United States over strategic influence in North America, as well as for perceived UK violation of US maritime rights (naval blockade) and personal liberties (imprisonment of U.S. citizens into the Royal navy).

security relationship, the Rush-Bagot Agreement has had to adapt to varying circumstances and evolutions in the North American security environment. The terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001, and the subsequent changing context of North American security, has tested this flexibility to its utmost. This is illustrated in the emerging debate in both academia and government policy circles on both sides of the border, asking the following question: has the security relationship between Canada and the United States fundamentally changed since 2001, and if so, what does this mean for the continued viability of the Rush-Bagot Agreement?

For almost two hundred years these two states have developed alongside each other in relative peace and stability, relying on the construction of joint continental norms, conciliation, diplomacy, and institution building to resolve conflicts and expand functional relations. From a distance the Canadian-American relationship appears virtually utopian, with roughly 9000 kilometres of common "undefended" borderlands, a regionalized economy, and shared continental security and defence interests. However, political scientist Stéphane Roussel comments, "...the establishment of norms in the Canadian-American relationship was anything but linear, and it was marked by violations, impasses, dead-ends, and even temporary regressions – in short, with all the baggage of the typical evolutionary dynamic."² And this is what proves to be so intriguing about this relationship, because popular misconceptions about the existence of a "special friendship" aside, the success and peaceful progression of its security relationship through industrialization, expansionism, international wars, and modernization has been no small feat. The result has been the

² Stéphane Roussel, *The North American Democratic Peace: Absence of War and Security Institution-Building in Canada-US Relations, 1867-1958* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), 137.

construction of one of the most durable and secure international links in the world today, guided by the principles of disarmament, cooperation, and consultation.

This thesis aims to examine the evolution of this continental security link from within the fundamental change versus transitory modernization debate, using the Rush-Bagot Agreement as a measure of the bilateral security and defence relationship. To achieve this, I will examine from the origins of the Agreement in 1817 until the years following the terrorist attacks against the United States in September of 2001 from a broad perspective. The objective of this evaluation is to measure how this Agreement has been previously affected during periods of stress in the continental and global security environment, and how past reactions to these stresses relate to current responses. This inclusive outlook will help me to understand how the security relationship in North America has evolved and why this Agreement has played a notable role in this development.

With the Agreement now approaching its bi-centennial it is relative to look back and try to figure out what can be learned from the scope of its experience. Changes to the Agreement over the past two centuries have been incremental, but very much consistent in their response to changing contexts in the security environment. The Agreement has changed, but not so much so that it is unrecognizable to its original product, having always preserved the fundamental principles and spirit set out in 1817. In this opening chapter, I will outline the theoretical framework for this paper to clearly define the progression of my argument. I will then look at the "fundamental change versus transitory modernization" debate and the Rush-Bagot Agreement's place within this debate. Finally, I will explore the literature on the Rush-Bagot Agreement to develop an understanding of where the current scholarship is situated on this issue.

Organizational Framework

In order to help evaluate whether there has been a fundamental shift or merely a progression in the Canadian-American security relationship, one must go back to fundamental theories of international relations. An examination of the Rush-Bagot Agreement from a theoretical perspective, tracing through its history from the origins of the Canadian-American defence experience to the present, will provide a greater context for the standalone reorganization of security since 9/11 within the larger narrative of the Canadian-American relationship. My goal, in this respect, is to understand the changing contexts in the security relationship over the long-term, and how these trends manifest themselves in a concrete agreement. Introducing this theoretical element will therefore elucidate how the relationship has developed and how changes to the security relationship over the past decade compare to previous periods strategic change on the continent.

Accounting for why this relationship has progressed so successfully, despite differing world views and a vast power asymmetry that has persistently grown between the two states, continues to be a disputed issue. Relations between these two North American states have been skilfully managed within the bounds of the international system that governs all other bilateral security and defence relationships, but there is no consensus on why this relationship has thrived from a theoretical standpoint. The United States often promulgates a popular image of realism in its foreign policy. Political administrations (notably under the leadership of James Monroe, James Polk, William McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and George W. Bush) and academics alike (including Walter Lippman, Henry Kissinger, Samuel Huntington, Kenneth Waltz, Stephen Walt, John Mearsheimer, and Robert Gilpin) have historically shaped and conveyed American involvement in the international theatre around a realist worldview; guided by the

principles of strength in military supremacy, the promotion of its national interests abroad, and investing heavily in national security. Conversely, the Canadian approach to international involvement often appears to be driven by idealism and a search for egalitarianism. Guided by the principles of "soft-power" and multilateralism, Canada has been called the "stern daughter of the voice of God," often trying to represent itself as the moral voice of the West.³ Despite these seemingly conflicting ideological attitudes, the Canadian-American relationship, in particular its bilateral security relationship, represents one of the oldest and most stable international links in the world. And debate on the subject continues, because notwithstanding the perpetual need to balance defence and sovereignty interests, the progression of cooperation, mutual disarmament, and coordination preside over this asymmetric relationship.

Realism

There are a great many scholars on both sides of the border who regard realism as the prevailing ideology governing the North American defence relationship.⁴ In a timeless and revered explanation of realist dogma, British philosopher Thomas Hobbes observes in the *Leviathan*, "...it is manifest that during the time that men live without a common power to keep them in awe, they are in that condition which is called war; and such a war as is of every man against ever man... the nature of war consisteth not in actual fighting, but in the known disposition thereto during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary."⁵ More generally, realism may be understood as the school of thought that identifies and understands

³ Dean Acheson, "Canada, 'Stern Daughter of the Voice of God,'" in *Neighbours Taken for Granted: Canada and the United States*, (ed.) Livingston Merchant (New York: Praeger, 1966), 114.

⁴ Some of these scholars include: Billington; Drezner; Granatstein; Jockel; Lagassé; Kissinger; Krauthammer; Kristol; Rice; Sokolsky.

⁵ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan, or, The matter, forme, & power of a common-wealth ecclesiasticall and civill – Chapter XIII* [electronic resource] (London: Printed for Andrew Cooke, 1651), [University of Virginia Library, <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/toccernew2?id=HobLev2.sgm&images=images/modeng&data=/texts/english/modeng/parsed&tag=public&part=13&division=div2>](http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/toccernew2?id=HobLev2.sgm&images=images/modeng&data=/texts/english/modeng/parsed&tag=public&part=13&division=div2) Accessed 03 September 2009.

the international system first and foremost in terms of state security and defence. It considers the sovereign state as the principal actor in an anarchic international system where the central concern is to manage its own insecurities in the global theatre by continually expanding power and self-interest. Political scientist Karen Mingst argues that it is this self-interest that "...provides a powerful incentive for one state to take advantage of another. The awareness that such incentive's exist, combined with states' rational desire to protect their own interests, tends to preclude cooperation among states."⁶ Consequently from the realist worldview, there is an unremitting draw towards unilateral strategy in the international theatre.

The realist-school maintains a prominent voice in both Canadian and American defence circles, particularly following the 9/11 terrorist attacks which served to significantly renew global military tension. International relations scholar Michael Doyle explains that under such a precarious international security climate, states are drawn inwards and bolster their defence capacities to protect their own interests. This, in turn, encourages competing states to follow suit which generates further military tension and instability.⁷ Realist thinkers contend that meaningful trust between states is irrational, if not impossible, because the use of force will remain a usable and effective instrument of policy in this type of international setting as long as states remain the predominant international actors.⁸ Competition for power will therefore continue to define the international environment since the stronger and more powerful states will always have their interests prevail through either collaborative or coercive measures.⁹

⁶ Karen Mingst, *Essentials of International Relations – 4th edition* (New York: WW Norton and Co., 2008), 67.

⁷ Michael Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace: Realism, Liberalism, and Socialism*, (London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997), 41-204.

⁸ Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, fifth edition (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), 4-15.

⁹ Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 30-31.

The Canadian-American relationship challenges this theoretical perspective though, since the much weaker Canada has greatly benefitted from its bilateral security relationship with the United States. This relationship, in fact, represents a sticking point for realist theory. Many opinions have been offered in explanation, the most prominent of which being the "balance of power theory." This concept claims that Canada's effective use of counterweights to American influence, first with the British Empire and then through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance and the United Nations, explains its innate ability to continually safeguard its own interests against the more predominant American concerns.¹⁰ However the influence of any state or international body in North American affairs after 1871 has been nominal at best, especially since the end of the Second World War. Roussel points out that in the context of the Canadian-American defence relationship, "the balance of power hypothesis, however superficially convincing and elegant it may be, in the end comes up short, because it simply does not rest upon a very solid empirical foundation."¹¹ The overwhelming influence of the United States in North America has simply served to 'crowd out' any other meaningful influence that a peripheral power may hope to have on the continent.

Others have tried to explain the circumstances of this relationship in simpler terms. For instance, Canadian defence scholars Joseph Jockel and Joel Sokolsky argue "geography, not the good will of the United States nor Canadian-U.S. friendship nor even common interests, has placed Canada under the protection of the U.S...."¹² This perspective does hold some traction when assessing the value of Canadian geography during the World War II and

¹⁰ Roy Rempel, *Counterweights: The Failure of Canada's German and European Policy, 1955-1995*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996); Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, (New York: Random House, 1979).

¹¹ Roussel, *The North American Democratic Peace*, 5.

¹² Joseph Jockel and Joel Sokolsky, *Canada and Collective Security: Odd Man Out* (Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1986), 32.

Cold War eras, though it holds much less weight in the post-Cold War and period preceding World War I when Canadian geography was not as valuable and defence relations were accommodating, but not indispensable.

There is an inherent weakness in employing realist theory to analyze the Canadian-American defence relationship. Realism holds considerable influence in the construction of American foreign and defence policies and yet its principles of self-interest and expansionism simply do not hold in the Canadian-American context. Canadian input into continental defence decision-making remains significant, despite the extreme power differential that exists between the two states and without another noteworthy ally to act as an equitable counterweight on the continent. Relations with the United States afford Canada capabilities in defence of its territory that go well beyond its independent means. Roussel considers that the weakness of the realist theory "...leads to the conclusion that it must not have been the only factor at play" in the development of Canadian-American security and defence relations.¹³ Ultimately, notwithstanding its influence in American policy development beyond North American borders, realism is simply not a suitable theoretical perspective for understanding the development of the Canadian-American security and defence relationship.

Complex Interdependence

The lack of a sound rationalization to explain the stable progression of Canadian-American security and defence relations from the realist school has invited a spirited debate from other theoretical viewpoints. In their seminal work *Power and Interdependence*, Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye suggest that under a realist worldview

¹³ Roussel, *The North American Democratic Peace*, 117.

political integration among states is slight and lasts only as long as it serves the national interests of the most powerful states. Transnational actors either do not exist or are politically unimportant. Only the adept exercise of force or the threat of force permits states to survive, and only while statesmen succeed in adjusting their interests, as in a well-functioning balance of power, is the system stable.¹⁴

This bleak and solitary outlook, however, largely ignores the profundity of economic linkages between states in the expanding global economy. To account for the influence of "low politics" Keohane and Nye developed the complex interdependence theory, arguing that a state's well-being is inextricably tied to its trading partners. Employing the Canadian-American relationship as its central case study, they identify the expansion of economic interdependence of the two states as the primary driver influencing political and military decision-making on the continent.

From this theoretical perspective it is argued that Canada and the United States have become so engaged economically that it is in their common interest to cooperate on issues of continental security and defence. If either feels threatened and chooses to tighten border controls, slowing the flow of cross-border commercial traffic, the other will be negatively affected as a result. Structuring relations according to the tenets of alliance, constant consultation, and the prohibition of overt linkages of issues consequently provides an open and transparent medium for maintaining strong relations and avoiding lasting conflict.¹⁵ In an effort to move beyond the chaos and armed struggle that characterizes the realist universe, complex interdependence offers an alternative view of the international environment, with economic issues, rather than security and defence, reigning supreme.

In terms of evaluating Canada-U.S. security and defence relations though, complex interdependence has significant flaws, as it evaluates these relations almost exclusively in a

¹⁴ Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1989), 24.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 170.

post-World War II context. Roussel criticizes this theory for not properly accounting for the arduous and protracted historical development, plagued by armed hostility along the common border, which lasted for more than a century before meaningful economic ties were established.¹⁶ Some scholars, such as political scientist Stanley Hoffman, have argued that "... common values and a broad range of mutual transactions... are the determinants of... *interstate* relations[in North America]," but this seems to be more applicable to *intrastate* relations only.¹⁷ As such, there is an inherent weakness in evaluating long-term strategic defence relations from within the bounds of this theoretical perspective. Despite its significant contributions to understanding the modern Canada-U.S. relational dynamic, its tools for analysing the security and defence relationship is limited to the post-World War II period and, thus, is too limited in scope for this study.

Constructivism

While realism and complex interdependence have much to add to the understanding of Canadian and American foreign relations writ large, their capacities for dissecting the finer points of the bilateral security relationship remains limited. The progressive and accommodating nature of these continental relations largely avoids the typical realist trappings of maximizing state power and interests, despite the presence of a vast power asymmetry between the two states. Similarly, this relationship was cultivated many decades before the formation of a significant trading relationship, crucial to the foundation of the complex interdependence theory. The Rush-Bagot Agreement underscores the weaknesses of both of these theoretical perspectives, having contributed to minimizing armaments along the common border and surviving for more than a century of political and social upheaval, in the

¹⁶ Roussel, *The North American Democratic Peace*, 51.

¹⁷ Stanley Hoffman, *Gulliver's Troubles, or the Setting of American foreign Policy*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), 387-388.

nineteenth and early twentieth century, before a significant trading relationship was developed.¹⁸

Alternatively, constructivism lends itself particularly well to evaluating the particulars of this relationship. At its core, this school of thought recognizes the establishment of common norms between states as forming and defining the super-structural base for interaction in the international environment.¹⁹ From this perspective, the Rush-Bagot Agreement has played a purposeful role in the configuration of Canadian-American security relations, given its position as the oldest arms limitation agreement on the continent. This is significant because constructivists understand sovereignty "...not as an absolute, but as a contested concept. They point out that states have never had exclusive control over territory but that state sovereignty has always been challenged and is being challenged continuously by new institutional forms and new national needs."²⁰ Accordingly, the development and maintenance of an agreement that established the norms of disarmament, consultation, and to a lesser extent the protection of territorial sovereignty on the Lakes, was important to create an environment where stability and cooperation could subsequently flourish and form the structural basis for security interaction in North America.

Ted Hopf suggests that determining the trajectory of bilateral relations "...requires knowing more about the situation than about the distribution of power or the structure of authority. One will need to know about the culture, norms, institutions, procedures, rules and

¹⁸ In its first century, the Rush-Bagot Agreement was challenged by several potentially calamitous disruptions; including, but not exclusive to, armed uprisings in Canada in 1837 and 1847, the American Civil War from 1861-1865, the cross-border Fenian raids from 1866-1871, the Venezuelan Boundary dispute in 1895-1896, and World War I from 1914-1918. Each of these conflicts preceded any substantial economic relationship.

¹⁹ Jeffrey Checkel, "Review: The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory," *World Politics* 50, no.2 (January 1998): 327-328.

²⁰ Mingst, 73.

social practices that constitute the actors and the structures alike."²¹ Unlike its counterparts, the constructivist school invests a great degree of importance in considering the presence of common interests and experiences in the maintenance of stability and security in bilateral relations.²² Accordingly, I will employ a constructivist viewpoint in this study as it offers the best theoretical perspective to evaluate and assess the Rush-Bagot Agreement and the evolution of the Canada-U.S. security relationship. More specifically, I will draw on the theoretical framework proposed by Stephane Roussel in his book *The North American Democratic Peace: Absence of War and Security Institution-Building in Canada-US Relations, 1867-1958* in order to evaluate how the most recent changes to Canada-U.S. cooperative security relations compare to past reforms during periods of domestic and international hostilities from the lens of the Rush-Bagot Agreement.

Roussel's Model

The basis of Roussel's argument rests on the idea that cooperative North American defence relations are constructed on a foundation of bilateral agreements and institutions, notably the Permanent Joint Board on Defence (PJBD) and the North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD), which serve as the building blocks for all subsequent continental defence policy. He indicates that the history of Canada-U.S. security and defence relations may in fact be attributed to a mounting legacy that represents "...the end product of an evolution dictated not only by strategic consideration but also by the actors' assimilation and formalization of a set of norms."²³ From this common structural foundation, Roussel contends that each state has been able to develop a "...sense of belonging at the same time...

²¹ Ted Hopf, "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory," *International Security* 23, no. 1 (Summer 1989): 172.

²² Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of it: the Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46, no.2 (Spring, 1992): 394.

²³ Roussel, 238.

[as] maintaining differentiable identities, founded upon culture and economic particularities..."²⁴ By conducting relations on the principles of equality, reciprocity, and consultation, Canada and the U.S. have been able to safeguard their sovereign security and defence interests, while concurrently avoiding the typical grounds for conflict between states.²⁵

Identifying the importance of the Rush-Bagot Agreement as one of the founding norms helping to create an environment more conducive to security cooperation will serve to identify its past, present, and future relevance in the strategic defence of North America. This viewpoint will offer a distinct look at its involvement in continental defence relations since 2001. I will separate this study into five distinct historical periods, following Roussel's phases of cooperation between Canada and the United States, as follows:

- (1815-1867) – Relations develop away from Anglo-American hostilities following the War of 1812, and towards a peaceful continental coexistence.
- (1867-1914) – Canadian independence enhances peaceful coexistence towards the resolution of conflicts through diplomacy.
- (1914-1945) – Progression of relations from diplomacy to cooperative continental defence strategy.
- (1945-2001) – Deepening of continental defence networks throughout the Cold War, with cross-border institutions extending and intensifying continental defence.
- (2001-Present) – moving from cooperative defence to a North American security

²⁴ *Ibid*, 99.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 10.

perimeter.²⁶

From this framework, I will examine Canada-U.S. security policies, practices, and perceptions as they relate to cooperative regional security and defence of the Great Lakes. This will provide a strong historical framework to then properly organize and develop a clear analysis of the context of each period, and what the current reforms represent in terms of Canada-U.S. cooperative security and the continuing relevance of the Rush-Bagot Agreement. For this reason, constructivism offers the most capable theory for explaining the evolution of Canadian-American security relationship.

Fundamental Change vs. Transitory Modernization

The restructuring of continental defences following the 9/11 attacks has brought about a debate in the study of Canadian-American relations, centred on what these reforms represent in the larger history of continental security and defence. Understanding how Canada and the United States have historically responded to emerging threats is central to the development of this thesis, as constructing a clear and concise context of past reforms will provide perspective on the impact of the present restructuring.

There are two primary schools of thought on this issue. The first considers these reforms as representative of a fundamental shift away from the historic principles of cooperation and placation, and towards a unilateral American control over continental defence decision-making.²⁷ The other identifies these reforms as a transitory reaction to a changing international security climate, made to properly address new and emerging threats

²⁶ *Ibid*, 238-239.

²⁷ For example: Byers, 2002; Drache, 2004; Keeble, 2005; Staples, 2007

to the continent, but remaining in-line with past revisions made to Canada-U.S. defence relations.²⁸

From the representative-of-a-fundamental-shift school, political scientist Patrick Lennox argues that Canada has been coerced into doing:

...all it could to keep terrorist traffic from crossing the border from Canada en route to destruction in America, or Washington would either step in and fill the void or unilaterally harden the border; in the former case causing irreparable harm to Canadian sovereignty, in the latter to the Canadian economy and either way fundamentally altering the terms of the continental relationship.²⁹

This argument was quite prevalent in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, as even those sceptical of this viewpoint, such as prominent Canadian historians J.L. Granatstein and Norman Hillmer, were agreeing with the idea that "Canada was [being] dragged along in the American wake [following September 11th], imposing its own security measures, allocating large sums for the purpose, and pressing hard for a 'risk-based' approach to security...."³⁰

The pervasiveness of American unilateral "hard-power" on the continent seemed to give credence to the "fundamental-shift" argument. Insecurity and suspicion were increasing along the border and there was a propensity for both sides to become more close-minded in their defence outlook to ensure, first and foremost, the protection of their own interests.³¹ This digression of sorts from the previous sixty years of closely coordinated joint defence had the "fundamental-shift" school arguing that the manifesting security and defence

²⁸ For example: Sokolsky, 2002; Gaddis, 2004; Salter, 2004; Tasikas, 2006; Clarkson, 2007; Jockel, 2007

²⁹ Patrick Lennox, "From Golden Straitjacket to Kevlar Vest: Canada's Transformation to a Security State," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 40, no. 4 (2007): 1030.

³⁰ Norman Hillmer and J.L. Granatstein, *For Better or For Worse: Canada and the United States into the Twenty-first Century* (Toronto: Thomson Nelson, 2007), 311.

³¹ Deborah Waller Meyers, "Does Smarter Lead to Safer? An Assessment of the US Border Accords with Canada and Mexico," *International Migration* 41, no. 4 (2003): 6.

strategies were fundamentally changing the make-up of the Canadian-American defence relationship.³²

Yet political scientist Stephen Clarkson refutes these claims, believing that the actions taken were more a pragmatic response to the first major foreign attack on the continental mainland since the War of 1812. He avers, "as in the Cold War, Ottawa found itself on the familiar terrain of having to coordinate, if not harmonize, its policies with an enemy-obsessed Washington. With the disappearance of the Soviet Union, the threat, the players, the ideologies, and the theatre of war had all changed, but the old patterns of asymmetrical cooperation reappeared..."³³

There are significant instances in the past where cooperative continental defence has been overwhelmed by American unilateral action. In the months leading up to Canada's entry into the Second World War until its conclusion, as well as during the Cuban Missile Crisis two decades later, North America was at considerable risk of attack. This vulnerability encouraged the United States to utilize its enormous defence resources to protect its own interests, and as a corollary defend Canada. In both instances American unilateralism proved to be fleeting, indicative of its inclination towards increasing defence preparedness when threats to its security are imminent. Similarly on each occasion, Canada responded by modernizing its defence outlook to moderate American defence anxieties and to safeguard its own sovereignty, a policy known as "defence against help."³⁴

³² Edna Keeble, "Immigration, Civil Liberties, and National/Homeland Security," *International Journal* 60, no. 2 (Spring 2005): 359-373.

³³ Stephen Clarkson and Marion Banda, *Whose Canada? Continental Integration, Fortress North America, and the Corporate Agenda*, (eds.) Ricardo Grinspun and Yasmine Shamsie, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007), 113.

³⁴ For more on this concept refer to Galen Perras, *Franklin Roosevelt and the Origins of the Canadian-American Security Alliance, 1933-1945*, (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1998); Nils Orvik, "Canadian Security and 'Defence Against Help,'" *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 26, no. 1 (1984): 26-31.

In the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, while the U.S. response was forceful, it was comparable to its past actions in similar instances. The Canadian reaction was also in keeping with tradition, as anxieties were provoked, prompting reminders of the need "...to do what [it] must do to make the Americans feel secure on their northern border."³⁵ Similar to their joint actions in the past, Canada and the United States worked to harmonize security, defence, and immigration initiatives to immediately address this new threat and secure areas of continental vulnerability. Anything less would have been damaging to the relationship, as one Canadian scholar points out: "...Canadian reluctance to join American efforts only squanders what little influence Canada may have over joint operations with the United States. If Canadian cooperation is inevitable, it is best to try to get in on the ground floor."³⁶ Thus, to appease American security concerns *and* to safeguard its own interests, Canada worked with the U.S. to incorporate security policies which would create a more secure North American. It is argued, often very convincingly, that these joint actions are simply incremental steps towards American continental domination. Edna Keeble indicates that groups such as the Council for Canadians and the Canadian Labour Congress believe that "...increased border cooperation generates greater pressure to harmonize policies between the two countries, thus undermining Canada's ability to decide issues on its own."³⁷ Nevertheless, this line of reasoning plays more on popular fears than on solid historical foundation.

³⁵ Desmond Morton, "Partial text of a speech by Desmond Morton, McGill University, Montreal to the opening banquet of a Canadian conference of the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society," Toronto, 01 October 2004.

³⁶ Kent Roach, *September 11th: Consequences for Canada*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), 158.

³⁷ Edna Keeble, "Immigration, Civil Liberties, and National/Homeland Security," *International Journal* 60, no.2 (Spring 2005): 361.

The "transitory modernization" school resists the allure of evaluating the long-term effects of provisional American defence initiatives which have been taking place since the institution of the Monroe Doctrine³⁸ in 1823. Instead, modernizing continental defences is recognized as necessary on occasion to meet American security concerns. The post-9/11 reforms have responded to a changing strategic environment where terrorism represents the most likely form of attack against the continent; the reforms are therefore preventative measures to protect the continent from any further unconventional attacks. Defence scholar Philippe Lagassé points out that "...since before the Second World War, Canada has continually chosen to forego a vulnerable pure sovereignty in favour of a truncated, but better secured, sovereignty by cooperating with the United States."³⁹ Canada simply does not have the necessary resources to defend its territory, and as a result, has consistently relied on bi- and multilateral defence arrangements, which come at the cost of an attenuation of its sovereign decision-making. Stéphane Roussel indicates that:

the ad hoc committees of equal representation created for the resolution of territorial quarrels incarcerated, almost from the outset, those international norms that seem directly inspired by the hard-core liberal values of equality, peaceful resolution of difference, de-politicization of conflicts, and respect for the law... As several commentators have noted, these international procedures aimed at levelling power differences reflected the two states' internal methods of dealing with conflicts, and thus testified... to the shared international norms... [with] the other state.⁴⁰

So rather than fundamentally altering its security and defence policy, Canada has followed its traditional cooperative course and reformed its practices to harmonize with the American outlook. By instituting its own security policies while consulting the United States to ensure that common continental objectives were attended to, Canada preserved its means

³⁸ The Monroe Doctrine asserts that no colonial power could colonize or interfere with any of the newly independent states in the Western Hemisphere. The region was effectively claimed as solely belonging to the American sphere of influence. For more information please refer to "Monroe Doctrine, 1823," United States Department of State. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/jd/16321.htm>. Accessed 12 February 2009.

³⁹ Philippe Lagassé, "Northern Command and the Evolution of Canada-U.S. Defence Relations," *Canadian Military Journal* 4, no.1 (Spring 2003): 16.

⁴⁰ Roussel, 233-234.

to independently govern the defence of its territory. Scholars from the "transitory" school argue that because Canadian and American security and defence interests are intrinsically tied, appeasing the more profuse American concerns will always take priority in continental defence. As R.J. Sutherland, a member of the Canada's Defence Research Board, famously stated: "if the United States is bound to defend Canada, it is also true that Canada can never, consistent with her own interests, ignore the requirements of American security; because, in the final analysis, the security of the United States is the security of Canada."⁴¹

The "transitory modernization" school also points to historical precedent to validate its position. During the transformation of the continental security and defence environment during in the Great War, Canadian finance minister Thomas White commented to his American counterpart:

We have in your time and mine always been good neighbours. Occasionally a verbal brickbat has been thrown across the fence but we have always sympathized with each other when brickbats have come from any foreign source. In our attitude towards constitutional liberty and all social problems our people are very much alike and understand each other better I think than any other two peoples in the world today. The struggle in a common cause will I am sure greatly cement our friendship and respect for each other.⁴²

This shows that apprehension and nationalistic concerns have long been a part of the Canadian-American relationship and seem to represent a natural response to change, particularly when it happens unexpectedly and in haste. But over the long-term cooperation in such matters has proved extremely beneficial to both sides despite short-term anxieties. When it was deemed necessary at the beginning of the Cold War to construct a series of radar stations to detect Soviet bombers approaching northern Canada, there was great hesitation and concern amongst Canadian government officials to proceed in the face of an

⁴¹ R.J. Sutherland, "Canada's Long-term Strategic Situation," *International Journal* 17, no.3 (Summer 1962): 203.

⁴² Thomas White to U.S. Treasury Secretary William Gibbs McAdoo, 21 June 1917; quoted in J.L. Granatstein, *Yankee Go Home? Canadians and Anti-Americanism*, (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1996): 70.

expanding American presence on Canadian soil. Similarly, during the Second World War an expanded American presence on the Great Lakes and in the Canadian Northwest animated Canadian sovereignty concerns. But history demonstrates that solidarity in facing new threats is deeply rooted in Canada-U.S. cooperative defence and has historically resulted in the *preservation* of Canadian sovereign interests.

When evaluating the Canadian-American security and defence relationship over the long-term, the "transitory modernization" argument gains considerable traction. Political scientist Edna Keeble avers that:

...there has been a great deal of consistency between Canadian and American security policies despite nationalistic pronouncements of an 'independent' foreign policy through the years. The consistency was evident during the Cold War when communism... was the common threat, and it is evident in the post-September 11 environment when terrorism is the common threat. It was even evident in the short-lived post-Cold War era...when there was no immediate threat.⁴³

The "transitory modernization" argument demonstrates a long-standing existence of coherence of national interests and a continuity of cooperation despite repeated changes in the continental and global threat environment. The construction of a joint security and defence infrastructure has been institutionalized over-time, ensuring that the much smaller Canada has its voice heard in matters of mutual concern on the continent. Emanuel Adler argues that Canadian-American defence relations are defined by two common standards: "First, they have a 'mutual aid' society in which they construct collective system arrangements. Second, they possess a system of rule that lies somewhere between a sovereign state and a regional, centralized government; that is, it is something of a post-sovereign system, endowed with common supranational, transnational, and national institutions and

⁴³ Edna Keeble, "Defining Canadian Security: Continuities and Discontinuities," *The American Review of Canadian Studies* 35, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 3.

some form of collective security system."⁴⁴ Recognizing this deeply embedded common system makes the "fundamental change" argument much more difficult to defend. It also brings a much greater degree of credibility and pragmatism to the idea that the changes to continental security and defence since the 9/11 attacks represent little more than a modernization of defences to address a changing strategic environment on the continent. The long history of security and defence cooperation, institution building, and common threats demonstrates the stability of the relationship that shared interests are protected, and cooperation is consistently maintained in times of relative peace or conflict.

Historical Rush-Bagot literature

Literature directly engaging the Rush-Bagot Agreement is sparse, being limited to only a handful of noteworthy works,⁴⁵ despite its success and longevity in coordinating defence consultation and maintaining a degree of arms control on the Great Lakes. Its proclivity for accommodation has proved to be its most important attribute, permitting it to survive and remain relevant through numerous changes to the continental security and defence environment, even as it approaches its bicentennial. Yet little has been written about the Rush-Bagot Agreement amidst the significant changes being made to continental security since 9/11.

Literature favouring the Canadian viewpoint tends to view the Rush-Bagot Agreement through a lens of exceptionality, lauding it as "...unique in diplomatic history..."⁴⁶ and having "...helped to work out the accomplishment of an epoch..." by establishing the

⁴⁴ Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett, "Governing Anarchy: A Research Agenda for the Study of Security Communities," *Ethics and International Affairs* 10, no. 1 (11 April 2006): 73.

⁴⁵ For example: Morton Callahan, 1898; Boutell, 1901; Falk, 1961; McInnis, 1970; Fay, 1974; Gluek, 1979; Barry, 1980; Purver, 1993.

⁴⁶ Terrence James Fay, *Rush-Bagot Agreement: A Reflection of the Anglo-American Detente, 1815-1818*, (PHD dissertation for the Department of History, Georgetown University, 1974), 9-10.

undefended border.⁴⁷ With this Agreement in place, Canada was able to develop its central economic and political hub in the heart of the Great Lakes region without fear of encroachment on its sovereignty by the Americans, without an overreliance on the British military to protect the integrity of its border, and without being forced into extravagant spending on its own state defences. The Agreement, therefore, holds a particular appeal in Canadian history, having contributed to the establishment of a stable, free-flowing border with a global superpower. Historian Terrence James Fay asserts that:

the Rush-Bagot Agreement was a remarkable diplomatic achievement. Remarkable because along with the military reduction, the restoration of commerce, the resolution of irritants, the settlement of border, trade, and fishing problems, the naval disarmament agreement provided for a radical rearrangement of the Anglo-Canadian-American relationship. From this time forward, these nations had a basis of a relationship that was unshaken by differences, irritants or firebrands⁴⁸

Other historians deduce that the Agreement "...became the basis for all other peaceful resolution of major boundary disputes between Britain (later Canada) and the United States."⁴⁹ Ultimately, it represents a founding pillar of the Canadian-American defence relationship, one which helped to progress joint-continental defence relations and helped to construct common norms on the Great Lakes which continue to persist, illustrating its considerable value.

American-focussed literature tends to reflect upon Rush-Bagot with less enthusiasm, as the Agreement holds a lesser significance for the United States. The Agreement is regarded as a gift of goodwill to "...the irritating British-Canadian....,"⁵⁰ by historian Gordon Stewart. Others, notably historian A.L. Burt, claim that "Canadians owe a debt of gratitude to

⁴⁷ William Lyon Mackenzie King quoted in Norman Hillmer and J.L. Granatstein, *For Better or For Worse: Canada and the United States into the Twenty-first Century*, xi.

⁴⁸ Terrence James Fay, 284.

⁴⁹ David Bercuson, "The World's Longest Undefended Border: A Return to the Days of Militarisation," *International Boundaries and Research Unit: Boundary and Security Bulletin*, (Winter 2001-2002): 109-110.

⁵⁰ Gordon Stewart, *The American Response to Canada since 1776* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1992), 35.

American restraint in the later years [after British withdrawal]."⁵¹ These accounts depict a much different perspective held by the United States on the importance of this Agreement. It is worth noting, however, that Rush-Bagot is understood appreciated. Former American Secretary of State Dean Acheson identifying it as "...a symbol of the friendship between our two countries...,"⁵² while former US President Lyndon Johnson characterizing it as "...a symbol to the rest of the world of the harmony and understanding which can be reached by two sovereign governments..."⁵³

The recognition and importance of this Agreement – the oldest arms limitation accord in the world⁵⁴ – faded in the age of long-range bombers, nuclear missiles, and an increasing focus on the continental perimeter. By the Cold War's end, the Agreement appeared to be entering its twilight years, remaining in place merely as a keepsake-reminder of how far Canadian-American defence relations had progressed. This resulted in a declining scholarship on the topic and in consequence, much of what has been written on the topic dates back more than two decades, long before the constructivist school gained popularity and received strong academic backing. Therefore, to date, the Rush-Bagot Agreement has been studied primarily through a realist lens.

This study will fit into this particular body of literature by identifying the changing historical contexts that surround the progression of the Rush-Bagot Agreement, and tracing its progression through the post-9/11 security reforms from a constructivist standpoint.

⁵¹ He was referring to American restraint in not invading Canada. A.L. Burt, *The United States, Great Britain and British North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), 394.

⁵² Dean Acheson, "The Acting Secretary of State of the United States to the Canadian Ambassador of the United States," *Department of State*, 5 December 1946, [Archives and Collections Society](http://www.aandc.org/research/rush-bagot_agreement.html), 2003. http://www.aandc.org/research/rush-bagot_agreement.html. Accessed 10 February 2009.

⁵³ "United States Information Service, *Canadian-American Relations* (Ottawa, U.S. Embassy, 1967). Quoted in Janet Morchain, *Sharing a Continent: An Introduction Canadian-American Relations* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1973), 92.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

Throughout its history, it has been recognized in academia and political circles on both sides of the border as holding an important historical niche in guiding Canadian-American relations on the Great Lakes. The changing strategic environment following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, therefore, necessitates a reassessment of its continuing significance and relevance as an accord limiting arms on the Great Lakes.

1812-1866

At the turn of the nineteenth century there was little to speak of in terms of Canadian-American relations. Canada would not become a quasi-independent confederation until the latter half of the century, whereas the United States was locked in competition with European imperial powers and the Native Americans for control of the vast western continental territories. By the end of the first decade the United States had vastly expanded its geographic authority following the incorporation of the Indiana territory in 1800, including a considerable area on the southern shores of the three western Great Lakes, and the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. These territorial claims expanded American influence while concurrently eradicating much of the remaining European influence on the eastern half of the continent. Unlike other European powers though, Great Britain remained steadfast in holding on to, and expanding, its North American territories in Canada, arguably the most valuable piece of the

Empire. Both states were thus at loggerheads, competing to expand their influence on the continent, with their paths inescapably crossing on the Great Lakes.

The War of 1812, whether considered America's "second War of Independence"⁵⁵ or the conflict that "...transformed the Great Lakes borderlands into a boundary between emerging nation-states,"⁵⁶ starkly illustrated the futility of armed conflict in North America. It has been described in disheartening fashion, as being characterized by "...counter-thrusts, raids, and reprisals on neighbouring...territory..." along with "...dangers of guerrilla attacks or fears of treason and conspiracy..."⁵⁷ In his assessment, historian John Fortescue alleges that the conflict "...revealed the military and economic vulnerability of both [the United States and Britain]..."⁵⁸ However, when considering this conflict through a constructivist lens, the War of 1812 marks the beginning of a great transformation in continental relations.

The failure of military power to determine a victor in the war encouraged the two states to employ diplomatic measures to resolve the conflict, resulting in the Treaty of Ghent in 1814. This was followed shortly thereafter with the Rush-Bagot Agreement in 1817, which removed existing naval armaments from the Lakes in order to terminate a burgeoning arms race and to rely thereafter on diplomatic measures to resolve future conflict. This was a significant achievement, for the Lakes had become a consistent flashpoint for military conflict between Britain and the United States. Each side was maintaining a sufficient degree

⁵⁵ Harry Coles, *The War of 1812* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965); Wesley Turner, *The War of 1812: The War that Both Sides Won* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1990); A.J. Langguth, *Union 1812: The Americans Who Fought the Second War of Independence* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 2006); R.L. Hatzenbuehler and R.L. Ivie, *Congress Declares War: Rhetoric, Leadership, and Partisanship in the Early Republic* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1983); Donald Hickey, *The War of 1812: A Short History* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995).

⁵⁶ Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, "Forum Essay: From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the People in Between in North American History," *American Historical Review* 104, no. 3 (June, 1999): 818.

⁵⁷ J. M. S. Careless, "Introduction," *The Defended Border: Upper Canada and the War of 1812*, (ed.) Morris Zaslow, (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada, 1964), 1-2.

⁵⁸ John Fortescue, *A History of the British Army; Volume X*, (London: Naval and Military Press, 2004), 181.

of naval power on the shared waters to allow for a quick and forceful strike against the other; but this was debilitating use of the Lakes as a resource for regional development. According to Roussel, in the years following the Agreement the dynamic of Anglo-American relations on the continent started to transform, characterized by a “...period of peaceful coexistence, during which efforts to improve relations alternated with times of tension and rumours of war. Considered as a whole, it was a time when the actors defined, assimilated, and refined norms that forbade the resort to force, and offered alternative methods to settle differences.”⁵⁹ And with the Canadian colonies, Britain, and the U.S. all having important domestic or foreign affairs to attend to, this Agreement allowed for political, economic, and military resources to be redirected away from border security to more constructive undertakings.

On the northern side of the Lakes, the Agreement marked the beginning of a gradual decline in British naval presence in the continental interior. Having previously spurned proposals to mutually disarm the Great Lakes, Britain agreed to this tender in 1817 after two decades of near continuous conflict was resulting in military and financial fatigue.⁶⁰ The Agreement did concede significant benefits to Britain, providing assurances for Canadian territorial security without the need for a British naval deterrent and permitting a reduction in British spending on Canadian defence. However, historian Terrence James Fay, writing from a more hard-nosed perspective, indicates that:

...the Rush-Bagot Agreement of 1817 was instrumental to coerce the British government to remove its powerful navy from the American heartland. With the removal of the British troops from the Northwest posts in 1796 and the British

⁵⁹ Roussel, *The North American Democratic Peace: Absence of War and Security Institution-Building in Canada-U.S. Relations, 1867-1958*, 142.

⁶⁰ Kenneth Ross Nelson, "Socio-Economic Effects of the War of 1812 on Britain," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Georgia, 1972), 129-44.

naval units from the Lakes in 1817, the British dagger was gradually withdrawn once and for all from the American back.⁶¹

Ultimately, the British accepted diplomacy over continued armed conflict as means to maintain its territorial hold in North America. Accordingly, the Rush-Bagot Agreement provided the Empire with a way to protect its interests in the burgeoning Canadian territory while vastly reducing its military resources on the continent.

In the United States this was the era of Manifest Destiny,⁶² characterized nationally by westward expansion and internationally by the Monroe Doctrine.⁶³ American thinkers proclaimed the U.S. as "...the country of the Future;" one that would come to epitomize the "...sublime and friendly Destiny by which the human race is guided..." and as "...for the vast area betwixt two oceans, between the snows and the tropics, somewhat of the gravity and grandeur of nature will infuse itself into the [American] code."⁶⁴ Settling and consolidating political control over its rapidly expanding territory required an extensive dedication of time and resources though, and as such, necessitated the avoidance of continued hostilities along its northern border. International relations scholar Robert Endicott Osgood suggests that by signing on to the Rush-Bagot Agreement, the United States, with quiet regard, was indicating that its "...true course lay not in embracing Old World doctrine[s of violence] but rather in leading the day to a new era in which men would be free from the scourge of armaments and

⁶¹ Terrence James Fay, 281.

⁶² This term comes from columnist John L. O'Sullivan, writing that it was the "manifest destiny of the United States to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions." Although the quote was not made until 1845, it epitomized this era of American idealism and expansionism throughout the nineteenth century. John L. O'Sullivan, "Annexation," *United States Magazine and Democratic Review* 17, no. 85 (July–August, 1845): 5

⁶³ The Monroe Doctrine is a hemispheric foreign policy introduced by President James Monroe in his 1823 State of the Union address to Congress. The basic premise of this policy indicates that if efforts are undertaken by any foreign government (although at the time directed at the Governments of Europe) to interfere or further colonize land in the Western Hemisphere, this would be viewed as an act of aggression against the United States and would require American intervention.

⁶⁴ Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Young American," *Essays and Lectures* (New York: Viking Press, 1983), 217.

organized violence.”⁶⁵ As this restriction of arms on the Great Lakes constrained the strongest remaining arm of the British military in North America from operating in the continental interior, it subsequently allowed the U.S. to focus its financial, political, and military resources on domestic expansion projects rather than border defence. The Anglo-Canadian-American relationship continued to be marked by tension but the basis of a cautious and diplomatic cross-border security and defence relationship was formed.

The importance of the Rush-Bagot Agreement in this era of continental development was quite palpable on both sides of the border. This chapter will explore the context of Anglo-Canadian-American relations that surrounded the Agreement's foundation, including its role in encouraging a greater use of diplomacy in cross-border relations by removing the tools of war from the principal arena of conflict. There was a demonstrable movement towards peaceful coexistence during this period despite minor flare-ups of violence on the Lakes and the surrounding borderlands region, with the Rush-Bagot Agreement playing a role in redefining security and defence relations at this critical juncture in continental development.

The War of 1812

Armed conflict and unstable relations were neither isolated nor uncommon in the Great Lakes region at the outset of the War of 1812. Wars involving the French and British Empires, as well as the landed Native American tribes and American "Patriots," had been raging for decades, while Anglo-American relations, specifically, had been tenuous since before the American Revolutionary War. Expanding American regional influence had begun to infringe on British interests, with the Great Lakes emerging as the focal point for

⁶⁵ Robert Endicott Osgood, *Ideals and Self-Interest in America's Foreign Relations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Phoenix Books, 1965), 337.

disagreement because of their considerable value to both sides, where competing interests served to exacerbate existing antagonisms.

On the British side, expanding American power was identified as an imminent threat to its interests in Canada. Control over maritime shipping routes into the heartland of the burgeoning North American market was a profitable enterprise and it was dependent upon control of the Great Lakes. Canada's security and defence was also reliant upon the presence of the British Royal Navy (RN) to act as a deterrent against American expansion northwards, as sparse settlements along the northern Lakes frontier rendered a stalwart ground deterrence difficult. Maintaining naval superiority on the Lakes was therefore deemed critical to preserving a British hand in continental development. British diplomat Lord Castlereagh (Robert Stewart) explained that "as a weaker power on the North American continent, the least capable of acting offensively and the most exposed to sudden invasions, Great Britain considers itself entitled to claim the use of those Great Lakes as a military barrier."⁶⁶

By contrast, the U.S. believed that its naval superiority on the Great Lakes was crucial to control a restive Native American population and to pacify the Northwest for settlement by commanding the domestic supply routes and the resources offered by the Lakes. From this standpoint, expanding British defences on the Great Lakes needed to be contained to ensure the U.S. could continue extending its own continental influence.⁶⁷ This created a situation where the U.S. was required to exercise "defensive expansionism,"⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Lord Castlereagh, quoted in James Morton Callahan, *The Neutrality of the American lakes and Anglo-American relations [microform]*, (Baltimore: Hohn Hopkins Press, 1898), 63.

⁶⁷ James Madison, *The Writings of James Madison – Volume VIII*, (ed.) Gaillard Hunt (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1908), 344-345.

⁶⁸ Defensive expansionism occurs when a hostile regime develops in close proximity to a state's border, encouraging the state to expand its hold over common geographic strongholds and critical raw materials, while concurrently expanding its strategic depth in order to sure-up its own security and defence. Homeland security drives the state to become an aggressor and foreign intervener. The state also opposes the others' expansion more intensely, making conflict more obstinate. Stephen van Evera, "Offense, Defence, and the Causes of

increasing its military capacities against Britain in areas of common interest on the continent, most notably on the Great Lakes. American officials, foreseeing the potential problem of an arms race on the Great Lakes, had proposed twice reducing, or altogether eliminating, armed vessels on the Lakes; first during John Adams' negotiations during the Peace of Paris in 1783, and then by John Jay in the negotiations for the Treaty of London in 1794. But discussions failed to produce any accords.⁶⁹ A build-up of arms was, therefore, the only assurance against the disruption of territorial sovereignty and continuing economic expansion. This, in due course, greatly strained relations on the Lakes as each state invested progressively more into its maritime defence capacities to counter the other's growing capabilities.

By 1812, this vying for influence and control erupted into conflict. In a joint address to the Senate and House of Representatives, U.S. President James Madison appealed to American nationalism by maligning British intentions on their borders:

We behold, in fine, on the side of Great Britain, a state of war against the United States, and on the side of the United States a state of peace toward Great Britain. Whether the United States shall continue passive under these progressive usurpations and these accumulating wrongs, or, opposing force to force in defence of their national rights... is a solemn question which the Constitution wisely confides to the legislative department of the Government. In recommending it to their early deliberations I am happy in the assurance that the decision will be worthy of the enlightened and patriotic councils of a virtuous, a free, and a powerful nation.⁷⁰

This type of political rhetoric and appeal to popular opinion became commonplace during this conflict, particularly as costs spiralled on both sides. The conflict, in a sense, developed

War," *International Security* 22, no. 4 (Spring 1998): 5-43. Reginald Stuart, "Canada, Indians, and Defensive Expansionism," *Major Problems in American Foreign Relations – Volume I: to 1920*, (eds.) Dennis Merrill and Thomas Patterson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000), 158-164.

⁶⁹ Terrence James Fay, 18-19; Kenneth Bourne, *Britain and the Balance of Power in North America* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1967), 12.

⁷⁰ James Madison, "To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States: Washington, June 01, 1812," [The Online Library of Liberty](http://oll.libertyfund.org/), 11 November 2008.

http://oll.libertyfund.org/?option=com_staticxt&staticfile=show.php%3Ftitle=1939&chapter=119128&layout=html&Itemid=27. Accessed 27 March 2009.

into a war of attrition. Resources were monopolized by both Britain and the U.S. to protract the conflict at the cost of westward expansion and political and economic development with little to no progress being made on either side.

After more than a year, the conflict was reaching a virtual stalemate. British naval commander Sir Edward Owen predicted that the financial and military burden of the conflict would drag the Empire to a watery grave, with the battle on the "...the Lakes [being] a millstone around our necks and indeed the [Canadian] colony is scarcely worth the expense."⁷¹ The high costs incurred on both sides during the conflict proved to be redundant, as Roussel contends that in 1814 "...American land power could [still] easily devastate much or all of Canada, while British sea power could easily inflict great harm upon American shipping and American seaports;" thus, the continuance of "...war became unattractive because it promised to be both devastating and indecisive..."⁷²

The conflict's continuing cost became the primary factor in bringing it to an end. The expense to the U.K. has been estimated in the area of £25 million, although it is difficult to be precise due to the fact that Britain was fighting simultaneous conflicts in Europe and North America.⁷³ And after having been at a state of war almost continuously for two decades, Britain now harboured a funded debt in excess of £600 million. By 1814 the Royal Treasury holdings were depleted, forcing the cost of continuing the North American conflict onto British taxpayers, which engendered a near state of revolt in England.⁷⁴ Recognizing the dire straits of British finances, Prime Minister Robert Banks Jenkinson emphasized the need to allow economic interests to supersede military pride in the North America, because "of all

⁷¹ Sir Edward Owen, quoted in Bourne, 23.

⁷² Roussel, *The North American Democratic Peace*, 115.

⁷³ Kenneth Ross Nelson, 129-44.

⁷⁴ John Mahon, *The War of 1812* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1972), 10; 380.

the powers on earth, America is the one whose increasing population and immense territory furnish the best prospects for British produce and manufacture. Every man, therefore, who wishes prosperity to England, must wish prosperity to America."⁷⁵

The financial situation in the United States was comparable, where the cost of the War was an estimated \$158 million dollars to the upstart nation.⁷⁶ Moreover, the conflict crippled U.S. trade, with exports dropping from in excess of \$61 dollars in 1811 to a low of less than \$7 million dollars in 1814 thanks to the RN blockade of the American coastline.⁷⁷ Historian Harry Coles indicates that by 1814, U.S. Congress was forced to authorize the circulation of \$20 million in short-term Treasury Notes and \$28 million in long-term stock, an amount which surpassed the cumulative amount on loan from the previous two years and represented five times the annual peacetime expenditures of the federal government.⁷⁸ Similar to Britain, economic interests were creating unrest amongst the American people, as demonstrated by the Hartford Convention (1814-1815), signed by several states in opposition to the government's economic policies and continuing support for the war.⁷⁹ Unsurprisingly, both sides faced strident domestic pressure to promptly conclude the conflict.

The Treaty of Ghent, signed in December of 1814, brought a shaky peace to the Great Lakes region. During negotiations British Under-Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, Henry Goulburn, wrote to American Senator Henry Clay drawing similarities between the conditions that each state now faced:

⁷⁵ British Prime Minister Robert Banks Jenkinson, quoted in Bourne, 6.

⁷⁶ US Department of the Treasury, *Report of the Secretary of the Treasury for 1866*, 304; reprinted in Donald Hickey, 303.

⁷⁷ Donald Hickey, 215.

⁷⁸ Harry Coles, *The War of 1812* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965), 238.

⁷⁹ For more on this pact, refer to Theodore Dwight, *History of the Hartford Convention: With a Review of the Policy of the United States Government, which led to the War of 1812* (Boston: Russell, Odiorne & Company, 1833).

You are fighting the same battle in America as we are, i.e., ousting peace establishments on a footing not unbecoming the growth of population and empire in which they are to be maintained. It is not impossible that either country should feel jealous of the other so long as the augmentation [of armaments on the Great Lakes] does not exceed the necessity of the case...⁸⁰

Yet despite shared circumstance and opinion that common ground was needed to preserve regional peace, suspicions continued to govern interstate relations. A substantial naval expansion program on both sides of the Great Lakes continued into the post-War period, even with a peace agreement in place and both states being laden by post-War debt. Bringing an end to this arms race therefore became necessary to create a stable peace moving forward.

In November 1815, U.S. President James Madison sent John Quincy Adams, his chief negotiator of the Treaty of Ghent, to the U.K. "to propose... such an arrangement respecting the naval forces to be kept on the [Great] Lakes by both governments, as will demonstrate their pacific policy and secure their peace."⁸¹ As both sides agreed that avoiding future military confrontation of the Lakes was of supreme importance, the result was an elaborate negotiation process aimed at constructing a more durable common border.

Diplomatic notes began circulating between London and Washington in 1816 with British diplomat Charles Bagot writing to Secretary of State James Monroe that removing naval armaments from the common waters "...while it tended to diminish the expenses of each country, might diminish also the chances of collision, and prevent any feelings of jealousy..."⁸² The U.S. agreed, with Monroe replying that:

the President, being satisfied, that if each nation should maintain on the Lakes a large naval force, it would expose both to considerable and useless expense, while it would multiply the risks of collision between them, instructed Mr Adams, shortly after the peace, to make the proposal which you mention, in the hope, from the

⁸⁰ Callahan, 70.

⁸¹ Bradford Perkins *Castlereagh and Adams: England and the United States 1812-1823* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1964), 3.

⁸² Charles Bagot, "Bagot to Monroe: Washington – July 26, 1816," [Yale Law School: Lillian Goldman Law Library – The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/br181711.asp), 2008. http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/br181711.asp. Accessed 10 February 2009.

amicable spirit in which it was conceived, and the advantage, which it was believed, both parties would derive from it, that it might be carried into immediate effect. It is very satisfactory, to the President, to find that your government, approves the principle, on which the proposal is [founded]...⁸³

In what is one of the shortest disarmament agreements ever written, Britain and the United States subsequently agreed that:

The naval force to be maintained upon the American Lakes by His Majesty and the Government of the United States shall henceforth be confined to the following vessels on each side, that is, -- On Lake Ontario, to one vessel not exceeding one hundred tons burden, and armed with one eighteen pound cannon; On the upper lakes, to two vessels, not exceeding like burden each, and armed with like force; On the waters of Lake Champlain, to one vessel not exceeding like burden, and armed with like force.⁸⁴

Each state had its own motives for seeking such an arrangement, as armed conflict had proved inconclusive in establishing a more favourable position for either side on the Lakes. As a result, a new approach was instituted with the signing of the Rush-Bagot Agreement in 1817, serving to alter the military environment on the Great Lakes and in North America. By developing a diplomatic arms-reduction agreement, Anglo-Canadian-American relations were able to move away from the hostilities that had historically governed their interactions on the Great Lakes and towards a more peaceful coexistence.

The Agreement provided some immediate dividends. Britain was able to pare down its military presence in the continental interior as the threat of American expansion northwards had subsided momentarily. On the other side, with the strongest remaining arm of the British military slowly being removed from the northern maritime border, the United States Department of War was able to reduce its expenditures by fifty percent, to \$8 million

⁸³James Monroe, "Monroe to Bagot: Department of State – August 02, 1816," Yale Law School: Lillian Goldman Law Library – The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy, 2008. http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/br1817n.asp. Accessed 10 February 2009.

⁸⁴ United States, "By the President of the United States of America: A Proclamation," *American State Papers: Foreign Relations – Volume IV*, (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1834), 207.

by 1817 and to \$2.5 million by 1820.⁸⁵ Beyond the reduction in defence costs, the decreasing focus on defending the Great Lakes allowed both the Canadian colonies and the United States to focus capital resources on more constructive continental measures, namely political and economic development. Historian Jack Bauer claims that this reduction of arms in the post-War era led to "...a period of rapid physical expansion. The frontier pushed inexorably westward as the largely waterborne transportation web developed..."⁸⁶ This is not to say that tensions were completely relieved on the expanding continental border. Suspensions remained, but an environment more conducive to growth and development was established.

The true significance of this Agreement is found more in its long-term importance. Its provisions for arms reduction and consultation created stable foundational norms for a conciliatory defence relationship in North America. It marked a changing attitude on the continent where peace, or at least coexistence, was determined to be more constructive than maintaining a constant state of military preparedness along the common continental border.

Historian Edgar McInnis explains:

[the Rush-Bagot Agreement] was the real guarantee for security of either Canada or the United States against invasion. Neither could see the other supreme so long as there was any danger of possible attack. Yet an armaments race would increase the tension and keep alive the fear if not the actual danger of the very thing against which these armaments were designed. On the other hand, a reduction of armed forces... diminish[ed] the possibility of aggression from either side... [making] a powerful contribution to mutual confidence and tranquility.⁸⁷

From this point forward, conflict in the Great Lakes borderland region was addressed in a more coordinated manner, indicating a changing disposition. Diplomatic relations were expanded to account for the growing coordination of borderlands management of the two

⁸⁵ Russell Frank Weigley, *History of the United States Army* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1984), 560; Terrence Fay James, 32.

⁸⁶ K. Jack Bauer, *A Maritime History of the United States: The Role of America's Seas and Waterways* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), 71.

⁸⁷ Edgar McInnis, *The Unguarded Frontier: A History of Canadian-American Relations* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1970), 144-145.

states which is demonstrative of a movement towards peaceful coexistence. This approach became significant in succeeding decades when the flexibility of the Rush-Bagot Agreement, and movement towards peaceful coexistence, was tested by successive outbreaks of violence in the precarious Great Lakes region.

The Evolving Relationship: Violence on the Canadian Side

After twenty years of maintaining an uneasy peace on the Great Lakes, the resilience of the Rush-Bagot Agreement was tested in a succession of conflicts on the Lakes and in the common borderlands region, beginning with the outbreak of rebellion in Upper and Lower Canada (parts of modern day Ontario and Quebec respectively) in 1837. The causes of the uprising are disputed by Canadian historians, having been construed as a struggle for commerce and agriculture, an ethnic conflict, and a battle for sovereign democratic governing rights, amongst others.⁸⁸ Regardless of the cause though, the result was unambiguous as large groups of armed men, including American citizens (the Hunters' Lodges⁸⁹), were violently challenging British rule within very close proximity to the inter-state boundary, raising concerns over border security.⁹⁰

In order to subdue the unrest and to prevent the insurgents from launching cross-border attacks, Britain procured a number of armed steamers and schooners to operate on the Great Lakes. Historian Ron Purver reports that in "attempting to delay American reaction

⁸⁸ For an account relating to the commerce and agriculture theory, refer to Donald Creighton, *The Empire of the St. Lawrence* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1956). For an account relating to the ethnic conflict theory, refer to Joseph Schull, *Rebellion: the Rising in French Canada, 1837* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1971). For accounts relating to political reforms and sovereignty rights refer to Allan Greer, "1837-38: Rebellion Reconsidered," *Canadian Historical Review* 76, no. 1 (1995): 1-18; and Chester New, "The Rebellion of 1837 in its Larger Setting: Presidential Address," *Report of the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association* 16, no.1 (1937): 5-17.

⁸⁹ The Hunters' Lodges were an American filibuster organization in the 19th century, dedicated to eradicating the influence of the British Empire on the North American continent. For more information on this topic, refer to Orrin Edward Tiffany, *The Relations of the United States to the Canadian Rebellion of 1837-1838* (Toronto: Coles, 1972).

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 32-41.

[the British] tried diplomatically to assure that the ships were for the purpose of defence only. [Though] at the time, British naval forces on Lake Ontario alone were two armed steamers and 3 armed schooners."⁹¹ This direct contravention of the Rush-Bagot Agreement concerned the American's, who worried that this naval buildup could easily be turned against credulous American shores. Nevertheless, American President Martin Van Buren chose to preserve a strict American neutrality along the frontier,⁹² for it was assumed, as Senator John C. Calhoun expressed, that "[another] war with Great Britain would indeed be a calamity, the end of which no one could see."⁹³ Thus, despite the increasing presence of arms and violence along the border, the United States demonstrated restraint.

Recruitment and support for the revolt was being conducted on the American side of the border. Kenneth Bourne reports that "secret societies, like the 'Sons of Liberty' and the 'Hunters Lodges', were formed with the avowed object of revolutionizing Canada... and with their aid several attacks were staged from across the border into Canada during 1838."⁹⁴ Rebels were able to utilize the border to their advantage, taking refuge on the American side to avoid the British military and Canadian law enforcement. Eventually a Canadian government force crossed the Niagara River in response, setting fire to the American steamboat *SS Caroline*, which was acting as a supply ship for Canadian rebels. In the melee, an American citizen was killed and a Canadian was arrested, leading to calls on both sides of the border for a heavy-handed response. With armaments increasing on the Great Lakes and cross-border attacks becoming more common, a return to full-scale armed conflict seemed

⁹¹ Ron Purver, "The Rush-Bagot Agreement: Demilitarizing the Great Lakes, 1817 to the Present," *Encyclopedia of Arms Control and Disarmament – Volume II*, (ed.) Richard Dean Burns (Toronto: Maxwell and MacMillan, 1993), 584.

⁹² John Niven, *Martin Van Buren: The Romantic Age of American Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 436.

⁹³ John C. Calhoun, "Letter to James Edward Calhoun: January 8th 1838," *The Papers of James C. Calhoun – Volume XIV, 1837-1839*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1981), 70.

⁹⁴ Bourne, 75.

imminent. But in spite of this war mongering, a diplomatic compromise was sought between the two governments.

Therefore, in 1838 President Van Buren informed Charles Grey, a politician of the Canadian colonies and member of the Executive Council of Lower Canada, "*in the strongest manner*", of his sincere desire to do all in his power to keep up a good understanding between the [United States and Great Britain on the continent]...⁹⁵ The President's forthrightness left a strong impression on Grey. Upon returning to Canada, he explained to his peers that:

...the American Government has for the first time exerted itself with apparent sincerity to preserve the peace of the frontier and this, together with the improvement which has certainly taken place in the feelings of the People on the other side towards us, leads me to think there is little further danger to be apprehended at present from the Sympathizers in the States.⁹⁶

This attempt to diplomatically curb hostilities illustrates a general change in attitude towards cross-border relations. Despite the immense pressure for a resort to arms, both sides chose instead to employ diplomatic consultation to resolve their conflicts. Heated political rhetoric was exchanged between the two governments, but a relatively peaceful resolution was ultimately agreed upon, setting an oft repeated trend in the resolution of Canadian-American disputes.

Subsequent events in the aftermath of the rebellion continued this expansion and reinforcement of diplomatic linkages. The Aroostook War in 1838-1839 witnessed scores of armed men lining up on either side of the border preparing to fight over a boundary dispute between Maine and New Brunswick. The "war" proved to be a bloodless conflict, though, with little more than heated words being exchanged across the border. Each side, in the end,

⁹⁵ Honourable Charles Grey, "June 15, 1838" *Crisis in the Canadas: 1838-1839: The Grey Journals and Letters*, (ed.) William Ormsby, (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1964), 37.

⁹⁶ Honourable Charles Grey, "August 11, 1838," *Crisis in the Canadas*, 98.

agreed to settle their dispute through diplomatic measures, forming a joint commission to survey and determine the frontier.⁹⁷ But in the conflict's wake, the United States instituted a comprehensive border security program, including the construction and renovation of several forts along the northern boundary, a program that was hastily curtailed once peace returned to the borderlands region.⁹⁸ This was demonstrative of another emerging and revisited trend in continental defence relations, where American border security waxes and wanes based upon the proximity of a given threat to its security.

The launch of the *USS Michigan*, America's first iron-hulled warship, on the Great Lakes in 1842 similarly threatened the peace between the two states. At 582 tons, the *Michigan* was a colossus, far exceeding the tonnage limit for naval ships allowed on the Lakes according to the Rush-Bagot Agreement.⁹⁹ It represented a leap forward in naval technology and the future of ships on the Great Lakes. Rather than being a relic of a passing era, though, the Agreement proved remarkably flexible. Recognizing that wooden-hulled ships were becoming obsolete, each side found it agreeable to uphold the Agreement by placing a greater emphasis on the armaments restrictions than the tonnage confines. This altering of the Agreement's outlook, in effect, recognized the transformative nature of technology and sought to methodically address the issue by modernizing the limitations of the Agreement. This proved to be an efficient exercise in forward thinking, as it set the precedent of flexibility in interpreting the limitations of the Agreement, by allowing it to modernize alongside improving technology. This was the first modernization of the Rush-Bagot Agreement and was seen as keeping with the spirit of the Agreement because both sides agreed on its modification.

⁹⁷ Bourne, 84.

⁹⁸ C.P. Stacey, "The Myth of the Unguarded Frontier, 1815-1871," 16.

⁹⁹ Bourne, 126.

The increasing significance of the Rush-Bagot Agreement's provisions for disarmament and diplomacy was quite apparent with this flurry of threatening activity on the Great Lakes and its surrounding borderlands region. Cross-border relations remained unpredictable, but this new approach to conflict resolution was proving useful in constructing a more passive boundary between the two states. C.P. Stacey indicates that "a relationship of genuine confidence... developed only slowly. It would not be hard to show that the continuance of fortification activity along the American seaboard... was connected with the apprehension of Anglo-American difficulties as well as with other anxieties; but that apprehension lessened as time passed."¹⁰⁰ With an increasing proclivity for diplomacy instead of armed conflict, the Anglo-Canadian-American relationship began constructing common norms of continental security and defence around the terms of the Rush-Bagot Agreement. Its success at discouraging a resort to arms after successive border controversies substantiated its importance in the burgeoning cross-border relationship and its resilience in withstanding significant and sustained strife in the continental relationship.

The Evolving Relationship: Violence on the American Side

By the early 1840s, Britain had begun to begrudgingly accept its role as a subordinate power in North America, especially given its concerns elsewhere (Europe, Russia, India, etc). Acknowledging the emergent strength of the U.S. Navy (USN) on the Great Lakes, British Secretary of State for War and the Colonies Edward Smith-Stanley admitted to his colleagues that "...in the event of a war, it would be hopeless to maintain a naval superiority of the Lakes, with the local advantages possessed by the United States..."¹⁰¹ Queen Victoria had even come to appreciate the rapid ascent of American power and the "...impossibility

¹⁰⁰ C.P. Stacey, "The Myth of the Unguarded Frontier, 1815-1871," 18.

¹⁰¹ Lord Stanley, quoted in Paul Knaplund, "The Armaments on the Great Lakes 1844," *The American Historical Review* 40, no. 3 (April 1935): 476.

of our being able to hold Canada...”¹⁰² in the event of another armed conflict. Accordingly, by mid-century Britain had resigned itself to a policy of conciliation on contentious continental issues. The instigation of the American Civil War in 1861, however, presented a risky opportunity to furtively disrupt American growth, and the British, eager to maintain their continental influence, attempted to capitalize on this fleeting prospect of American weakness.

The outbreak of the Civil War disturbed the increasingly tranquil border relations and called attention to lingering Anglo-American animosities. Allegations of surreptitious British support for the Confederacy were confirmed during the Trent Affair in 1861 when the Union navy stopped the British mail-carrier *Trent* during its Atlantic transit and found Confederate diplomats James Mason and Jon Slidell on board. Outraged at the Union's arrogance but hoping to avoid an incident, British Prime Minister Lord Palmerston (Henry John Temple) conceded that:

...a belligerent has a right to stop and search any neutral not being a ship of war, and being found on the high seas and being suspected of carrying enemy despatches; and that consequently this American cruiser might, by our own principles of international law, stop the...packet, search her, and if the Southern men and their despatches and credentials were found on board, either taken them out, or seize the packet and carry her back to New York for trial.¹⁰³

By 1864 though, the situation had grown direr when Confederate sympathizers, organizing on Canadian soil, exploited a weakly guarded border to launch cross-border attacks on U.S. ports and northern States. Specifically, the attack on the town of St. Albans, Vermont,

¹⁰² Queen Victoria, “Diary 12 February 1865,” reprinted in *The Letters of Queen Victoria – volume I*, (ed.) George Buckle (New York: John Murray, 1926), 250.

¹⁰³ Lord Palmerston, quoted in Ephraim Douglass Adams, *Great Britain and the American Civil War*, [Historion.net](http://historion.net/great-britain-and-american-civil-war/chapter-vii-trent?page=3). <http://historion.net/great-britain-and-american-civil-war/chapter-vii-trent?page=3>. Accessed 31 July 2009.

brought the situation to a head, when Confederate agents killed and wounded several townspeople before retreating across the border to avoid American law enforcement.¹⁰⁴

In response to these attacks, American Secretary of State William Henry Seward called for swift action, telling American diplomat Charles Francis Adams that “the policy of neutrality which her Majesty has proclaimed has failed... as asylum is allowed [in Canada] to active agents of the enemies of the United States, and they are in any way able... to use British ports and British borders as a base for felonious depredations against the citizens of the United States.” An immediate response was deemed necessary to counter these hostile actions and to demonstrate continuing American strength during this period of civil war. Seward, therefore, instructed Adams to inform the British that “at the expiration of six months... the United States will deem themselves at liberty to increase naval armaments upon the [Great Lakes], if, in their judgement, the condition of affairs shall then require it.”¹⁰⁵ But others wanted even tougher measures, notably Secretary of War Simon Cameron’s who demanded a full-scale land and maritime invasion of Canada territory to demonstrate to the world that the U.S could fight off foreign attackers while concurrently controlling its domestic conflict.¹⁰⁶

In the immediate-term, the U.S. government approved the decision to repeal the Rush-Bagot Agreement in order to expand its naval forces on the Lakes to suppress the expanding cross-border violence. The Act of Congress read:

...the peace of our frontier is now endangered by hostile expeditions against the commerce of the lakes and by other acts of lawless persons, which the naval force

¹⁰⁴ Edward Sowles, *History of the St. Albans Raid: Annual Address Before the Vermont Historical Society, October 17, 1876* (St. Albans: Messenger Printing Works, 1876), 41.

¹⁰⁵ Seward to Adams, 24 October 1864, in Russell to Lyons, 26 November 1864, “Papers relating to Foreign Affairs Accompanying the Annual Message of the President,” *Foreign Relations of the United States – 65: Volume II*, December 1861 to December 1872 (Reprint: New York, 1965), 18.

¹⁰⁶ Secretary of War Simon Cameron, quote in Robin Winks, *Canada and the United States: The Civil War Years* (Montreal: Harvest House, 1971), 75.

of the two countries, allowed by the existing treaty, may be insufficient to prevent; and [as such] the President of the United States has proceeded to give the notice required for the termination of the [Rush-Bagot Agreement]...¹⁰⁷

The British, thus, were ensnared in a problem partly of their own making, without the will or available resources to any longer compete against the United States in an arms race on the Great Lakes. The British Minister to the United States responded by indicating that Britain would view this abrogation "with great regret and no little alarm;"¹⁰⁸ and yet its subsequent actions were once again conciliatory and aimed at avoiding war with the United States. Rather than opening up another military front, American President Abraham Lincoln recognized the American position of strength on the Lakes and chose peaceable means to address the mounting tensions along the northern border. He chose to avoid expanding American naval presence on the Great Lakes, despite the call for the Agreement's abrogation, and instead relied on diplomatic pressure to pursue recompense from London. This move substantiated the idea that the U.S. would press ahead with a policy of diplomacy free from the scourge of incessant armed conflict.¹⁰⁹

British support for the Confederacy was a badly calculated strategic decision beyond simply supporting the losing side in the American Civil War. It exposed the continuing attempts by the British to staunch the development of American power and progress, despite decades of relative peace between the two states in North America. After the conclusion of the Civil War, Britain agreed to pay considerable reparations fees to the U.S. (primarily for damages caused by the British-built Confederate naval ship *CSS Alabama*¹¹⁰) and subsequently removed its remaining naval forces from the continental interior. As a result,

¹⁰⁷ Act of Congress, February 9, 1865; reprinted in Henry Sherman Boutell, "Is the Rush-Bagot Conventional Immortal?" *North American Review* 173, no. 3 (Sept. 1901), 340-341.

¹⁰⁸ Henry Sherman Boutell, 340.

¹⁰⁹ Robert Endicott Osgood, 337.

¹¹⁰ For more information on the reparations claims surrounding the *CSS Alabama* refer to Tom Bingham, "The Alabama Claims Arbitration," *International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (January 2005): 1-25.

the U.S. rescinded its call for abolish the Agreement. And as the last vestiges of British military power were being removed from the continental interior in the post-Civil War era, a new-strategic environment was forming around the new security and defence realities on the Great Lakes, one based on coordination and coexistence.

Relations on the Lakes Moving Forward

The Rush-Bagot Agreement played an important role in moving Anglo-Canadian-American relations on the Great Lakes away from historical hostilities. From 1817 onwards, British military power in North American was gradually but methodically reduced, with its *coup de grace* coming through diplomatic negotiation at the end of the American Civil War. Although it took many years for the physical reduction in armaments to take place, the Agreement marked the end of armed competition on the Great Lakes. Henceforth, relations were more concerned with matters relating to economic development and the expansion of peaceful coexistence.

In its first fifty years the Agreement was tested by war, economic disruption, and political strife, so its survival demonstrates a marked shift in the Anglo-Canadian-American security and defence relations on the Great Lakes. Diplomacy and arms limitation became the basis for Canadian-American maritime security and defence coordination and cross-border consultation on common issues on the Great Lakes became a norm of the relationship, providing a strong foundation for developing further relations. The Agreement did not completely reform relations and immediately mend the decades of acrimony, as hostilities did continue to occur but in a markedly different way. Ultimately, both sides recognized the benefits of peaceful, diplomatic relations and with the catalyst provided by the Rush-Bagot Agreement, the relationship was allowed to flourish.

1867-1913

The period from the end of the American Civil War to the Great War was an era of intense transformation along the Canadian-American border, marked by an expanded role for diplomacy and the formation of norms in support of tranquil cross-border relations on the Great Lakes. Relations along the common continental border were undergoing swift changes. The withdrawal of British forces by 1871 prompted a restructuring of the security environment, leaving Canada with a responsibility to defend itself for the first time, while concurrently leaving the United States as the uncontested military power on the Great Lakes. The swiftness of these changes resulted in considerable growing pains throughout the modernization process, illustrated in the changing Canadian-American relationship on the Great Lakes. Historian Alvin Gluek notes that “history did not allow the [Rush-Bagot Agreement] to age gracefully. Several times during the nineteenth century both parties –

though always acting independently – overstepped its bounds."¹¹¹ This triggered concerns on both sides over motives and vulnerabilities on the Lakes amidst warming cross-border relations. Nevertheless, Roussel contends that this era of transition oversaw the movement from peaceful coexistence to a more involved diplomatic relationship, characterized by peaceful conflict resolution and joint institution building.¹¹² And in spite of the all-embracing reorganization of continental security and defence to address the changing strategic conditions, the Rush-Bagot Agreement continued to manage security and defence relations on the Great Lakes.

Three strings of events have since come to epitomize this era of relations from the lens of the Rush-Bagot Agreement. The first begins with Canadian Confederation and the subsequent withdrawal of the British military leading to the Treaty of Washington in 1871. The newly founded Canadian government was left with the immediate and difficult decision about how to defend itself against its much larger and more militarily capable neighbour. They were faced with the choice of instituting a major arms build-up on the Great Lakes to counter the growing American military strength or to avoid an arms race altogether with diplomatic engagement, deepening economic ties, and a non-aggressive defence disposition along its shared maritime border.

The second sequence of events revolved around the Venezuelan boundary dispute in 1895. This Anglo-American contretemps emphasized a growing divide between Canada and Britain on substantive issues relating to North American security and defence. Canada sought a progressively more independent voice from Britain in continental matters. And with the

¹¹¹ Alvin Gluek, "The Invisible Revision of the Rush-Bagot Agreement 1898-1914," *The Canadian Historical Review* LX, no.4 (December 1979): 468.

¹¹² Roussel, *The North American Democratic Peace*, 109-148.

British navy limited to the Ocean coasts, there was more room for diplomatic dialogue as a means of resolving cross-border issues between.

The "Great Rapprochement" of 1905 to 1914 and the "slate cleaning years" characterize the third and final period of this era of transformation.¹¹³ A greater understanding of motives and respect for spheres of influence developed in Anglo-American relations during this period. In North America, Canada and the United States worked to resolve their outstanding differences by jointly constructing norms to further define and manage their relations on the volatile Great Lakes. The long-term significance of the Rush-Bagot Agreement was coming into focus as its entrenched foundation of disarmament on the Lakes provided a receptive environment to expand diplomatic consultation and joint institution-building. The maintenance of the Rush-Bagot Agreement throughout this era of comprehensive transformation is a testament to its ability to remain significant amidst major reforms to the security and defence environment.

Independence and the Treaty of Washington (1871)

The birth of the Canadian Dominion in 1867 initiated an important transition in the history of North America, marked by the closing stages of the great Anglo-American struggle for control over North America and the gradual withdrawal of British forces from the continental interior. With the Empire's finances and military stretched thin, Britain began to acknowledge that it could no longer compete against the vastly expanding American power on the continent. The removal British forces thus shifted the balance of power in the region to the United States' favour; but there was a growing movement on the continent to avoid future armed conflict despite this growing asymmetry in economic and military power.

¹¹³ Bradford Perkins, *The Great Rapprochement: England and the United States, 1895-1914* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968); Norman Hillmer and J.L. Granatstein, *For Better or Worse: Canada and the United States to the 1990s* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pittman, 1991).

In the lead up to its departure, Britain began assessing Canada's military capabilities and developing contingency plans for Canadian defence in the event of an American attack. The assessment made clear two things: that Canada would be at the mercy of American strategic objectives in the region; and that the central theatre for future conflict would be on the Great Lakes.¹¹⁴ British naval Captain Lindesay Brine also delivered a discouraging evaluation of Canadian defences on the Lakes, believing that it was "unreasonable to suppose that... Canada, however supported by Great Britain, could long maintain a war with America; and therefore she has only to study how far it is in her power to menace the lake ports as to make an invasion inexpedient."¹¹⁵ Conservative political critic William Coffin concurred, suggesting that "...if preparations for defence and an early offence were not made [on the Lakes], future Canadian policy would have to focus on peaceful cooperation with the United States."¹¹⁶ The uncertain future course of Canadian-American relations on the Lakes was thus a cause for concern in the shared borderlands region. In spite of the grave fears revolving around Canadian physical security and American motives on the common waters, historian Richard Preston notes that the U.K. was forced to "...cut the umbilical cord and leave Canada to fend for herself" as a result of its transgressions committed during the American Civil War, even though "many were dismayed because the withdrawal would leave Canada exposed to an American threat that might develop precisely because it was part of the empire..."¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Captain Lindesay Brine, RN, "Memorandum upon the Attacking and Defensive Resources of the United States, 12 April 1871," *Admiralty, and Ministry of Defence, Navy Department: Correspondence and Papers: In-letters and papers: 1870-1879 – Volume 11* (London: Kevin and Hughes, 1966), 2248.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ William Coffin, *Thoughts on Defence, From a Canadian Point of View [microform]* (Montreal: John Lovell, 1870), 49.

¹¹⁷ Richard Preston, *The Defence of the Undefended Border: Planning for War in North America, 1867-1939* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1977), 47.

The enduring Anglo-American enmity was a principle cause for uncertainty in Canadian-American relations. Negotiations attempting to resolve diplomatically a reparations settlement for damage caused during the Civil War by the British-built *CSS Alabama* were proving difficult. The manner of approach from both sides remained laden with hostility, even though the U.K. "... was anxious to settle the Civil War account and be done with North America."¹¹⁸ This desperation was recognized on both sides of the border, with President Ulysses S. Grant's annual message to Congress in 1870 predicting that "the time is not probably far distant when, in the natural course of events, the European political connection with this continent will cease;"¹¹⁹ while on the Canadian side, Prime Minister John A. Macdonald indicated that the British had "only one thing on their minds – that is, to go home to England with a treaty in their pockets, settling everything..."¹²⁰ The Treaty of Washington, signed in 1871, provided the groundwork for such a withdrawal by effectively eliminating, among other things, the British military presence in the heartland of the continent.

The initial American negotiating position was to insist that the British "...cede all her interests in Canada in settlement of the *Alabama* claims..."¹²¹ However, a more moderate settlement was agreed upon as a result of the British military withdrawal. Goldwyn Smith writes that U.S. President Grant proved conciliatory in his subsequent approach towards Canada, believing "it was not necessary for the United States to adopt a definitive position on the problem of Canada... Slowly but inevitably Canada would come to the United States by

¹¹⁸ Hillmer and Granatstein, *For Better or Worse: Canada and the United States to the 1990s*, 4.

¹¹⁹ Ulysses S. Grant, "Annual Message to Congress, 1870," quoted in C.P. Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict – Volume 1: 1867-1921* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 20.

¹²⁰ Sir John A. Macdonald, quoted in Hillmer and Granatstein, *For Better or Worse: Canada and the United States to the 1990s*, 9

¹²¹ Senator Zachariah Chandler, quoted in Goldwin Smith, *The Treaty of Washington, 1871: A Study in Imperial History* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1971), 16-17.

natural gravitation... [thus] it was wiser to establish friendly relations with... Canada and leave it to the future to witness the fulfilment of expansionist ambition."¹²² The Treaty resolved the *Alabama* claims as well as many other outstanding issues in the Anglo-American relationship, leading Smith to comment that "...the vexing and dangerous disputes between the United States and Canada no longer remained to cloud the [continental] scene with hostility and distrust."¹²³ There continued to be unfriendliness between Canada and the United States, perpetuated by the cross-border Fenian raids launched against Canada in 1866, but these problems proved to be short-lived as a clear and present transformation was occurring in the North American security and defence environment.

In an effort to establish peaceable relations moving forward, Prime Minister (PM) John A. Macdonald chose not to institute a military build-up as the British withdrew, believing "the Americans, from their immense power and superiority, could go where they liked and do what they pleased in the country," no matter what the circumstance of the Canadian military.¹²⁴ This was a risk to both Macdonald's political legacy and the security of Canadian sovereignty, but he understood the trajectory of Canadian-American relations in light of the removal of the British military. Macdonald chose instead to rely on the undefined strength of existing agreements and norms to engage the United States. Preston explains that "[MacDonald] thought of military preparations in Canada almost solely in terms of the need for defence against the United States; and he believed that nothing need be done when relations were harmonious."¹²⁵ Thus, rather than adopting the lingering hostilities of the

¹²² *Ibid*, 19.

¹²³ *Ibid*, xii.

¹²⁴ "The Royal Commission on the Defence of British Possessions and Commerce Abroad, 29 July, 1880," reprinted in Alice Stewart, "Sir John A. MacDonal and the Imperial Defence Commission of 1879," *Canadian Historical Review* 35, no.2 (June 1954): 123.

¹²⁵ Preston, *Defence of the Undefended Border*, 60.

Anglo-American relationship, Macdonald preferred to construct a new and more friendly relationship based on disarmament and diplomacy.

Developing a passive defence policy on the shared Canada-U.S. border illustrated this reformed approach and can be attributed to the desire for peaceful coexistence; but the Rush-Bagot Agreement must also be credited to some extent. As Edgar McInnis writes, the peaceful coexistence that developed during this era:

...was largely the creation of the Rush-Bagot agreement. And although Canada was debarred by circumstances from... laying this foundation, it represented a clear interest of her own and a policy from which she had no incentive to depart. The agreement was a legacy which she accepted without qualification as her subordinate colonial status gave away to a fuller measure of national independence.¹²⁶

Canada lay truly exposed following the British withdrawal, particular in its central economic hub in the Great Lakes region, but the U.S. shared Canada's desire for a peaceful border and preserved the Rush-Bagot Agreement on the Lakes with its newly independent neighbour. Roussel comments that both Canada and the U.S. "...showed themselves ready to trust their neighbours."¹²⁷

Preston contends that "...a gradual strategic evolution had occurred. Fear of an Anglo-American military clash, and therefore of a possible invasion of Canada, declined after the British withdrew their military forces from the interior of the continent..."¹²⁸ And as diplomacy came to increasingly characterize relations on the Great Lakes, there was a discernible movement away from aggressive, militarily-driven relations towards a relationship built upon mutual development, cooperation, and joint institution building. One of the most significant legacies of this era was the formation of an increasingly large and modernized industrial base in the Great Lakes region. With both Canada and the United

¹²⁶ Edgar McInnis, 146.

¹²⁷ Roussel, *The North American Democratic Peace*, 130.

¹²⁸ Preston, *Defence of the undefended Border*, 4.

States concentrating much of their heavy industries in areas with access to the Lakes, stable relations on the waters became necessary to ensure that strong regional economic development continued.¹²⁹ American regional industrial development was particularly dependent upon on maintaining tranquil relations with Canada because U.S. shipping from Lake ports has to pass through Canadian waters to access the Atlantic Ocean. Further armed conflict would only serve to disrupt this developing economic centre and would prove to be damaging to both sides. Thus, even though the security and defence of the Canadian side of the Lakes was placed increasingly in the hands of an ill-equipped and ill-prepared militia, the growing military power differential proved of little consequence in subsequent Canadian-American relations along the maritime boundary.

The Venezuelan Crisis and the Changing Face of Defence Relations

The period following the Treaty of Washington in 1871 until the turn of the century was an era of warming relations in North America. Building upon the existing foundation of disarmament, Canadian-American relations set out in the direction of peaceful coexistence. Historian James Morton Callahan writes that this new outlook was emerging while a "...bloody war was being waged in Europe [and] the wish in America was that we might long be able to settle our strifes with no deadlier ordnance than diplomacy and negotiations."¹³⁰ It was a period of national expansion and consolidation in both North American states, and discord, although intermittently appearing on the Lakes, was largely subsiding. Disputes over administration, transportation and fishing rights, as well as issues surrounding the ship-building industry during this time were largely resolved through diplomatic channels.¹³¹ Yet

¹²⁹ Alvin Gluek, 468.

¹³⁰ Callahan, 174

¹³¹ A Canadian Liberal, "Work of the Joint High Commission," *The North American Review* 168, no. 510 (May 1899): 615.

efforts to maintain the peaceful status quo on the Great Lakes were complicated due to the changes that were occurring as a result of the modernization of political and military relations.

Naval modernization in the form steel-hulled, steam-powered ships were replacing the wooden-hulled sail ships of the previous century, moving strategic realities beyond the contextually constructed limits set in the Rush-Bagot Agreement. Following the Civil War, Secretary of the American Senate Lafayette Foster expressed the consequent need to modernize the disarmament limits on the Great Lakes because:

...in view of the long lapse of time and the vast changes wrought in these and other no less important regards... the [Rush-Bagot] agreement now grown obsolete in practice, and surviving in the letter only as a declared guaranty of international peace, should be modified to fit the new order of things, and with such adaptation to the exigencies of the future as prudence may forecast.¹³²

This desire for reform was also gaining support in American security and defence circles. Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles advocated for deepening the Agreement to create a total disarmament, believing "...it is best not to allow any war ships into the lakes during times of peace..."¹³³ The economic and military vulnerabilities of the Lakes were increasingly recognized by the U.S., who determined that peace and diplomacy along the northern border was the most practical way to manage common interests in post-Britain North America. The newly independent Canada supported this approach, demonstrating a departure from previous strategy employed by Britain to contain American growth on the Lakes. An informal adherence to this methodology of relations continued into the 1890s, reflecting a more accommodating tone on matters of common continental security and defence on the Lakes. British influence on Canadian-American development had not yet

¹³² Senator Lafayette Foster, quoted in Callahan, 181-182.

¹³³ Gideon Welles, quoted in Callahan, 183.

fully diminished though, as an Anglo-American border dispute in Venezuela in the late-century almost unravelled the diplomatic progress made between the North American states.

By the late-nineteenth century, the United States was amongst the foremost global economic powers; however, its military strength had gone untested since its Civil War. This period of incubation afforded the United States time to strengthen its influence in domestic and continental affairs, providing a strong foundation to expand upon its influence. American continental, foreign, and defence policy had been in place since the Monroe Doctrine of 1823 which claimed hemispheric hegemony for the U.S., but this policy, and American resolve to enforce it, was unproven until the British became involved in a boundary dispute between Venezuela and British Guiana in 1895. What began as a minor disagreement over an insignificant border in South America very quickly escalated into a full-blown international crisis when President Grover Cleveland threatened war against the U.K. if it did not respect American regional authority over the matter.¹³⁴ Canada, as the most likely target of American aggression against the British, was forced into immediate defensive posturing on the Great Lakes. After almost three decades of relatively peaceful relations and a relaxed state of border security, however, its available defence resources were minimal, since there had been no general rearmament of the Canadian militia since the Fenian raids of the 1860s.¹³⁵

The threat to Canada appeared very real when the President of the Board of New York City Police Commissioners and future President, Theodore Roosevelt, proclaimed "let the fight come if it must, I don't care whether our sea coast cities are bombarded or not; we

¹³⁴ Grover Cleveland, *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the President – Volume 9*, (ed.) James D. Richardson (Washington, 1898), 655-658.

¹³⁵ C.P. Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict – Volume 1*, 50.

would take Canada,"¹³⁶ and the U.S. Navy began organizing its available ships and armaments on the Great Lakes for "warlike purposes."¹³⁷ The Canadian government was particularly shaken by the prospect of armed conflict, substantiated by their subsequent rearmament measures. As C.P. Stacey reports, a procurement contract for forty thousand long rifles, twenty-three hundred carbines for the cavalry, as well as field guns and Maxim guns were issued; "by Canadian standards... was a very large measure of rearmament."¹³⁸ Richard Preston argues that the build-up for war in North America was little more than a precautionary measure, in line with reactions in past Anglo-American squabbles, since "...Canadian-American relations with a defence or military connotation... proceeded as if there was no cloud in the sky. At the height of the crisis Canada and the United States were negotiating deepening the St. Lawrence canals... for commercial purposes."¹³⁹ Regardless of the sincerity of the actual military threat, a clear message came out of this conflict: Canada's ongoing association with Britain as a dominion of the Empire was detrimental to the expanding Canadian-American diplomatic relationship.

Ultimately, the conflict was resolved without a resort to arms when Britain agreed to the American demand of settling the border claims through an impartial arbitration panel. This scare, in due course, encouraged all three countries to deepen economic relations and develop greater diplomatic linkages to open up channels of communication and establish common ground in order to avoid such conflicts in the future. Stacey notes that this incident

¹³⁶ Theodore Roosevelt, quoted in Hillmer and Granatstein, *For Better or Worse: Canada and the United States to the 1990s*, 30.

¹³⁷ Bourne, 322-323.

¹³⁸ C.P. Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict – Volume 1*, 50-51.

¹³⁹ Preston, *Defence of the Undefended Border*, 131.

was ultimately "...the last occasion when active military preparations were made in Canada for defence against the United States."¹⁴⁰

The expansion of diplomatic relations following the end of this conflict was almost immediate, demonstrative of the changing attitudes on the continent. Following a conference attempting to settle an Anglo-American dispute over sealing rights in the Bering Sea, Canadian Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier recommended that it would be in the best interests of all three states to diplomatically settle all remaining matters of dispute in North America. After a lengthy diplomatic correspondence, all sides agreed on the formation of an international commission and to hold its inaugural meeting at Québec in August of 1898.¹⁴¹

The inclusion of Canada at the inaugural meeting of the Joint High Commission (JHC) in 1898 was a measure of this effort to expand diplomatic ties. The JHC endeavoured to become a supranational institution with the objective of diplomatically resolving outstanding issues in Anglo-Canadian-American relations. One of the first proposals tabled by the U.S. at the introductory meeting concerned revising the Rush-Bagot Agreement to effect a more comprehensive disarmament of the Great Lakes. The proposition came with considerable preconditions though, notably that the U.S. be authorized to maintain armed warships on the Great Lakes for naval training purposes beyond the Agreement's stipulated limits.¹⁴² While Canada was unprepared to accept the U.S. terms because of a continuing suspicion of American motives, it was increasingly accepted following the Venezuela crisis that war between Canada and the United States was both unpalatable and

¹⁴⁰ C.P. Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict – Volume 1*, 50-51.

¹⁴¹ Lawrence Burpee, "Canada and the Joint High Commission," *The North American Review* 181, no. 4 (October 1905): 556-557.

¹⁴² Alvin Gluek, 471-473.

unlikely.¹⁴³ The construction and development of the "...basic conditions...for the demilitarization of their common border and the emergence of a pluralistic security community" channelled the progress of continental security and defence towards greater coordination and established an effective deterrent against a resort to armed violence in the future.¹⁴⁴ The Joint High Commission collapsed in 1899 when Canada refused to proceed with Commission activities until the Alaskan boundary dispute was settled. Any progress on the proposed revision of the Rush-Bagot Agreement was lost in consequence, but the precedent for joint diplomatic institution-building had been established.

The formation of the JHC illustrated an evolution in the security and defence relations on the Lakes. Built upon the foundation of disarmament created by the Rush-Bagot Agreement, it demonstrates the progression of common defence norms between the two states, creating a more coordinated governing regime on the Lakes. As the century turned, the movement from peaceful coexistence to the peaceful resolution of conflicts was becoming more prominent in continental security and defence relations.

The Slate Cleaning Years and the International Joint Commission

By the end of the century the security and defence climate in North America began to settle into a more tranquil peace. Nevertheless, armed forces were expanding globally and conflicts over resources, trading routes, and imperialist ambitions were becoming common place in the international theatre, to which Britain, Canada, and the United States were not immune. Britain was attempting to expand its vast territorial Empire by interceding in various African states, including a particularly costly war against the South African Boers

¹⁴³ Paul Knaplund, "The Armaments on the Great Lakes 1844," *The American Historical Review* 40, no. 3 (April 1935).

¹⁴⁴ Karl Deutsch, *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area: International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 115.

that involved the Canadian armed forces for the first time in an overseas military campaign.¹⁴⁵ The United States was also playing an expanded interventionist role, becoming involved in the Far East and Central America, notably in a bloody clash with Spain in Cuba and the Philippines.¹⁴⁶ With diplomatic and military relations improving in North America, military resources were shifted away from former flashpoints along the Canadian-American border in order to address defence issues in other more volatile areas.

The movement of strategic resources away from the Great Lakes encouraged for a deepening of diplomatic links since the absence of arms encouraged both sides to construct new channels to resolve conflict. The "Great Rapprochement" in Anglo-American relations was a result of many concomitant forces, some of which include the relative decline of British power, the increasing British understanding that they could not afford a war with the United States, the readiness to give way in policy disputes in the Western Hemisphere, and a more general sharing of objectives in the international theatre. The result was a movement towards regulating their disagreements and acting in concert where both state's interests were involved.¹⁴⁷ It helped to further reduce the geo-political tension on the Lakes, with a greater respect and like-mindedness developing between the Britain and the United States. This translated in to a more amicable Canadian-American relationship. Roussel considers this period as the era that "...would set the tone for future conflict-resolution between the two neighbours..." with relations moving progressively towards the "depoliticization of problems, pragmatism, and a search for compromise..."¹⁴⁸ As an adjunct to the "Great Rapprochement," historians have defined this era as the "slate cleaning years" in Canadian-

¹⁴⁵ Piers Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire, 1781-1997* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2007), 214-248.

¹⁴⁶ *American Expansionism; the Critical Issues*, (ed.) Marilyn Blatt Young (Boston: Little Brown, 1973).

¹⁴⁷ Bradford Perkins, *The Great Rapprochement: England and the United States, 1895-1914*.

¹⁴⁸ Roussel, *The North American Democratic Peace*, 134.

American relations, where historical animosities were resolved and diplomatic conflict resolution prevailed,¹⁴⁹ ultimately leading towards a more transparent and coordinated approach to continental defence preparation on the Lakes.

The importance and vulnerability of the Great Lakes remained high on both sides of the border, necessitating an entrenched and reliable means of diplomacy and defence management in order to preserve improving relations on the Lakes. The Rush-Bagot Agreement continued to anchor a peaceable approach to security and defence on the common waters, but its provisions were proving to be increasingly obsolete due to rapidly changing naval technology. Thus, a conciliatory and modernized approach to security and defence relations was imperative in order to account for the changing strategic realities on the continent.

By 1905 a number of U.S. ships had traversed the Canadian canal system for service in state militias on the Great Lakes. Alvin Gluek reports that the U.S. had developed a formidable fleet of:

...five training vessels whose combined weight exceeded 4000 tons and of which three were strongly armed; four revenue cutters, all surpassing the limits of 1817; and the *Michigan*, very old but bristling with six-pounders, one-pounders, and machine guns. By this time, it was obvious that the balance of naval power in the Great Lakes has shifted to the United States.¹⁵⁰

Canadian Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier, much like John A. Macdonald, recognized the need to occasionally assuage American unease when its economic and physical security was threatened. In this instance, moderating American concerns entailed granting concessions relating to the number of ships allowed on the Lakes, but this was developing into a long-term issue because naval modernization was continuing to challenge the limits of the Rush-Bagot Agreement. As an anonymous Canadian External relations document noted, by 1906,

¹⁴⁹ Hillmer and Granatstein, *For Better or Worse: Canada and the United States to the 1990s*, 36-59.

¹⁵⁰ Alvin Gluek, 473; 474.

“...[although] its spirit remains unchanged... the United States... departed from the strict terms of the [Rush-Bagot] Agreement. Conditions have changed since 1817. Then, revenues and police services had alone to be considered; now, the issue is complicated by questions connected with shipbuilding and naval training.”¹⁵¹ Consequently, there was a mounting need to modernize the Agreement's limits to fit the changing political and military relations on the Lakes.

Upon entering office as Secretary of State in 1905, Elihu Root ordered a comprehensive evaluation to assess the continuing relevance of the Rush-Bagot Agreement in the rapidly modernizing military context. The subsequent report recommended that the limits on tonnage and number of ship on the Lakes be expanded on the condition that "...both parties keep limited and equal naval forces suited to modern conditions and not to be increased... unless national security [was] threatened."¹⁵² An adjustment was informally negotiated in 1906 to update the Agreement in a discussion between Secretary of War William Howard Taft and British Ambassador to the United States James Bryce. The main tenets of this concord, known as the Taft-Bryce understanding, allowed for the number of ships on the Great Lakes to increase beyond the original limits set out in the Rush-Bagot Agreement on two conditions: that these ships maintain[ed] minimal armaments; and that their entry onto the Lakes remain at the behest of the Canadian Government in times of peace.¹⁵³ Improving political and expanding economic relations were at the core of this amendment. As Laurier explained “it was always with some hesitation that we agreed to have these frequent requests [for ships to enter the Lakes]... granted. In every case we agreed

¹⁵¹ Government of Canada, “A Note on the Agreement of 1817,” *Documents on Canadian External Relations (DCER) – Volume 1: 1909-1918* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1967), 830.

¹⁵² Reprinted in Alvin Gluek, 474.

¹⁵³ Alvin Gluek, 474-477.

however, knowing the pressure which was brought upon men from the Lakes States...”¹⁵⁴

Recognizing that accommodation plays an important role in diplomacy, each side negotiated new terms for the Rush-Bagot Agreement to meet modern security and defence contexts while ensuring that the fundamental tenets of disarmament and consultation remained intact. It was thus renewed to fit the changing international environment and the warming continental relations.

The successful modernization of the Rush-Bagot Agreement led to a greater appreciation for what was possible in Canada-U.S. relationship through diplomatic consultation. The signing of the Boundary Waters Treaty (BWT) in 1909 was evidence of this. The BWT created a joint diplomatic oversight regime over all shared waterways on the Canada-U.S. border through the formation of the International Joint Commission (IJC). The IJC institutionalized the deepening diplomatic relations on the Great Lakes and provided a stable and reliable diplomatic body for the resolution of disputes on issues relating to common waters. Historians Norman Hillmer and J.L. Granatstein laud the IJC as “...an important innovation in Canadian-American relations," one which erected "an agreement to institutionalize cooperation, consult regularly, and try to find ways of diminishing conflict, current and future.”¹⁵⁵ Others, notably historian John Holmes, believe that the BWT “...signified the triumph of the tradition of restraint, which had always been in quiet contradiction to the nosier thrust of manifest destiny." For Holmes, "the pattern of the [Canadian-American] relationship was permanently changed," as the "[IJC] promised equity without interfering in national sovereignty... [and] ways and means of dealing with contrary

¹⁵⁴ Sir Wilfrid Laurier, “Laurier to Bryce, 23 January 1911,” *DCER – Volume I*, 838.

¹⁵⁵ Hillmer and Granatstein, *For Better or Worse: Canada and the United States to the 1990s*, 41.

interests more often than for finding solutions."¹⁵⁶ Its development helped to amend the outlook of the Canada-U.S. relationship over the long-term. The Rush-Bagot Agreement, for almost one-hundred years, played a significant role in maintaining peaceful coexistence on the Great Lakes. The creation of the IJC now provided a complementary impediment to armed conflict, helping to further entrench disarmament on the Great Lakes and epitomizing the burgeoning Canadian-American defence relationship. Conflicts continued to arise, though the approach to resolving these conflicts was itself transformed, demonstrating the substantial reform of Canadian-American interaction in continental defence matters.

With relations on the Lakes relaxing, American compliance with the Taft-Bryce amendment to the Rush-Bagot Agreement was similarly eased. Controversy erupted in late 1909 when the heavily armed but aged *USS Nashville* was sent through the St. Lawrence Seaway and onto the Lakes without Canadian consent. The U.S., having grown complacent about securing the approval of the Canadian government before sending warships onto the Great Lakes, failed to realize the sensitive political balancing act that it was undoing as a result these actions. Despite warming relations and the long-term maintenance of relative peace, American armaments along the Canadian border, whether for training purposes or otherwise, remained a volatile political issue in Canada. It remained extremely important for the Canadian government to maintain the facade of total control over the admission of armed American ship onto the Lakes. Diplomacy quickly prevailed in the incident though, as British Ambassador James Bryce ensured PM Laurier that President James Howard Taft:

...perfectly understood the attitude of the Dominion Government and appreciated their wish that nothing should happen which could create any sentiment of disquiet or suspicion in the minds of any section of the people in Canada. He valued the arrangement of 1817 and heartily desired to see it maintained, recognising the

¹⁵⁶ John Holmes, "Introduction: The IJC and Canada-United States Relations," *The International Joint Commission Seventy Years On* (eds.) Robert Spencer, John Kirton, Kim Richard Nossal (Toronto: T.H. Best Printing Company, 1981), 4.

enormous benefit to both countries of the sense of perfect peace and tranquility which the absence of any naval forces helped to create.¹⁵⁷

This sentiment was shared amongst most of the Canadian political elite. Historian Roger Sarty writes, “even the most rabidly anti-American imperialists in Ontario did not take seriously the danger of war with the United States...”¹⁵⁸ With cooperation on the Great Lakes finally receiving a more consistent and balanced diplomatic backing from across the political spectrum on both sides of the border, the Canadian-American relationship began a demonstrable shift from a relative peaceful coexistence to the avoidance of conflict through joint diplomacy.

After 100 Years

Roussel comments that the century following the War of 1812 “...witnessed an increase in the economic and military power differentials between the United States and Canada. Yet... despite their numerous disputes, and in light of the profound asymmetry in America's favour, the two countries never [resorted to arms]...”¹⁵⁹ The approaching centennial of peace, therefore, was not “...some little trumpery affair...,”¹⁶⁰ in the words of future Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King. With agreements and provisions in place encouraging cooperation on security and defence issues and a greater degree of trust existing between the two neighbours, the North American democratic peace was developing with a clean slate on the Great Lakes. Built upon the foundation laid by the Rush-Bagot Agreement, the IJC exemplified the changing era of security and defence on the Lakes and the desire for the

¹⁵⁷ James Bryce, “Ambassador in the United States to Foreign Secretary - 17 November 1909,” *DCER – Volume 1*, 825.

¹⁵⁸ Roger Sarty, “Canada and the Great Rapprochement,” *The North Atlantic Triangle in a Changing World: Anglo-American-Canadian Relations, 1902-1956*, (eds.) B.J.C. McKercher and Lawrence Aronsen (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 35.

¹⁵⁹ Roussel, *The North American Democratic Peace*, 109.

¹⁶⁰ William Lyon Mackenzie King, quoted in Hillmer and Granatstein, *For Better or Worse: Canada and the United States to the 1990s*, xi.

maintenance of peace and tranquility by diplomatically governing continental disputes.

Roussel comments that "the success of their dispute-resolution methods... owed something to the flexibility that was a by-product of their confidence in the process adopted."¹⁶¹ And with violence about to engulf Europe on an unprecedented scale, relations in North America continued to progress peacefully, as disarmament was joined with diplomatic conflict resolution in creating a stable foundation for movement towards greater coordination and cooperation in shared matters of continental defence.

¹⁶¹ Roussel, *The North American Democratic Peace*, 139-140.

1914-1945

Maturing Canadian-American relations in the decade preceding the Great War proved to be an important development in ensuring continental security and defence. The peaceful resolution of outstanding issues left in the wake of the British military withdrawal had helped to establish a strong diplomatic rapport between the two states and construct a more favourable environment to resolve issues of common concern. And by 1914, concerns were becoming increasingly shared. The tremendous demands placed on North American security and defence over the succeeding three decades compelled Canada and the United States, if somewhat reluctantly, to construct a coordinated approach to protecting their common continental interests. On the Great Lakes, this meant developing a greater flexibility and equity in decision-making in the face of the growing asymmetry in political and military power. According to Stephane Roussel, the period from the onset of the Great War until the end of the Second World War is defined by a rapid progression of defence relations,

demonstrating that "...North American security was... [exiting] the age of conflict management, and [entering] that of the common defence."¹⁶²

Defending the Great Lakes remained of paramount importance to both states throughout this period thanks to their strategic military importance and significance in regional economic development. The Lakes were rich with natural economic and military advantages; however, utilization of these resources was restricted by the Rush-Bagot Agreement. The World Wars encouraged a more progressive relationship in areas of common interest though, generating a cooperative modernization of continental defence, particularly on the Lakes. Richard Preston contends that "a strategic revolution had been completed... [when] both Canada and the United States had developed their military forces because of increasing tensions in Europe. [And] close similarities in their point of view on the developments abroad helped to assuage their fears of friction nearer home."¹⁶³ Consequently, what had been an area of great contention between the two states over the previous century began to develop into an area characterized by a burgeoning partnership.

Interaction on the Great Lakes, which had been painstakingly established on the principles of disarmament and diplomacy, facilitated an effective transition from coexistence to cooperation by 1945. From the viewpoint of the Rush-Bagot Agreement, this conversion had three distinct phases, beginning with the Great War. During this brief era from 1914-1918, the Agreement celebrated its centennial the same year the United States entered the war to fight alongside Canada and Britain. But while this milestone and the developing sense of continental camaraderie translated into successful defence collaborations during the war, it failed to wholly extinguish suspicion along the Canadian-American maritime boundary.

¹⁶² Roussel, *The North American Democratic Peace*, 149.

¹⁶³ Preston, *Defence of the Undefended Border*, 210.

Nevertheless, diplomatic inroads were expanded and naval relations on the Lakes grew more flexible.

The interwar years saw both Canada and the U.S. retreat from European affairs in order to avoid being dragged into any further Euro-centric conflicts. The government of Canada had grown increasingly frustrated with British mismanagement of Canadian interests and was particularly affronted by the lack of recognition it had received for its part in defending both Europe and the Empire in the War. Consequently, Canada began to scale back its participation in the labours of the Empire. Historians Gregory Johnson and David Lenarcic explain that "Canada's interwar withdrawal from Imperial and international commitments and concomitant preoccupation with North American affairs mirrored a more lasting reconfiguration of the North Atlantic triangle: the general shift in power away from Britain and towards the United States."¹⁶⁴

The period from 1935-1945 is the final and most significant phase in the development of common continental defence relations during this era, driven by strong personal ties between Canadian Prime Minister W.L. Mackenzie King and American President Franklin Roosevelt. This was a decade of rapid transformation on the continent, as the two formerly distrustful neighbours entered into a permanent cooperative defence alliance. Flare-ups of armed conflict in Europe in 1936 and Asia in 1937 encouraged for a more alert continental security and induced Canada and the United States to, once again, augment continental defences through a coordinated approach. Roussel notes that this was an era of Canadian "...apprenticeship; difficult to be sure but also necessary, a training period for two states

¹⁶⁴ Gregory Johnson and David Lenarcic, "The Decade of Transition: The North Atlantic Triangle during the 1920s," *The North Atlantic Triangle in a Changing World: Anglo-American-Canadian Relations, 1902-1956*, 81.

learning how to develop norms and institutions that would later come to govern their bilateral security and defence relations."¹⁶⁵

The Rush-Bagot Agreement played an contributing role in the coordination of Canadian-American continental defence throughout this explosive period. Canada and the United States were able to negotiate the relaxation and modification of the Agreement in order to expand common continental defence during the two World Wars. The subsequent utilization of the Lakes for naval training, ship construction and maintenance, and then war industries in the Second World War provided a boon to the Allied War effort. These shared experiences also helped to better balance relations on the Lakes despite the vast power asymmetry that continued to grow between the two states. The progressively more cooperative defence relations on the Great Lakes, anchored by the Rush-Bagot Agreement, coupled with the unpredictability of the international security environment, ensured that from the onset of the Great War until the end of the Second World War, the much smaller "Canada [was] neither a hostage nor a pawn [on the continent], but a potential ally."¹⁶⁶ Importantly, amidst all of these far-reaching changes to continental defence, the Rush-Bagot Agreement was preserved as a governing tool on the Great Lakes, maintaining the fundamental structure of cross-border security and defence relations on the common waters.

The Great War

A Step Backwards

Deepening cooperation on the Great Lakes, pushed forward by the Taft-Bryce understanding in 1906 and the creation of the IJC in 1912, was hindered by the onset of the Great War in 1914. The rapidly changing international climate forced both states to reassess

¹⁶⁵ Roussel, *The North American Democratic Peace*, 151.

¹⁶⁶ Preston, *Defence of the Undefended Border*, 211.

their national interests in light of the worsening global security situation, which resulted in each side holding a much different outlook leading into the war. Just days before Britain's declaration of war on Germany in August 1914, the Canadian Governor General pledged to Britain "...the firm assurance that if unhappily war should ensue the Canadian people will be united in a common resolve to pit forth every effort and to make every sacrifice necessary to ensure the integrity and maintain the honour of our Empire..."¹⁶⁷ The United States opted to remain neutral, taking solace in its geographic seclusion from the European conflict. With Canada a belligerent and the U.S. a neutral, cooperative defence relations had to be put on hold. The bifurcated approach to continental defence that emerged during the War highlighted some of the lingering reservations that existed between the two states which had to be addressed before a more formal cooperation could be constructed.

During his years as prime minister, Wilfrid Laurier had consistently "...shied away from any military measures directed against the United States and... had begun to tackle the problem of dealing with Americans by peaceful means without the backing of military strength of British military aid."¹⁶⁸ Canadian-American relations on the Great Lakes thus had noticeably improved by 1914. Laurier's successor Robert Borden almost immediately tested the resolve of these improved relations, though, as he was forced into large-scale rearmament which re-enlivened cross-border anxieties. In spite of the strengthened diplomatic relations and near-century of relative peace along the maritime border, the pressures of the deteriorating international environment sparked concern over use of the Lakes for the Allied War effort. The potential for ship-building and naval training on the Lakes was a strategic advantage for Canada, but such activities were greatly limited by the Rush-Bagot

¹⁶⁷ Robert Borden, "Robert Borden Diary, August 1, 1914," *DCER – Volume 1*, 137.

¹⁶⁸ Preston, *Defence of the undefended border*, 208.

Agreement. The Taft-Bryce understanding of 1906 allowed for a temporary reprieve from these restrictions in the event of war, but the U.S. was a neutral power and could not be seen as collaborating with Canada by providing it favourable conditions to expand its military resources on the Lakes. Furthermore, the trust and flexibility needed to allow the belligerent Canada to increase its military presence on the Lakes without a corresponding American expansion was not yet present in continental relations. A compromise was, thus, necessary to address the rapidly changing security and defence environment.

Shifting Allegiance

The scale of the Canadian war effort was enormous, amounting to approximately six hundred thousand troops from a total population of approximately eight million,¹⁶⁹ which left few resources for homeland defence. In this manner, Canada was left largely exposed to an attack from the south during the three years of American neutrality from 1914-1917. But this prospect of Canadian weakness did *not* give rise to an American desire to advance its own continental interest; instead there was a great admiration for the Canadian War effort in the United States. Samuel Flagg Bemis contends that, even with Canadian public opinion irritated by American neutrality, there was "...an inveterate admiration by the people of the United States for the gallant qualities of Canadians [displayed in the War]...."¹⁷⁰ This developing reverence helped to not only preserve strong diplomatic relations throughout American neutrality, but also ensured that, when the United States did enter the war in 1917, a strong foundation for negotiating a more coordinated defence of the continent was already in place.

¹⁶⁹ "From Colony to Country: A Reader's Guide to Canadian Military History," Library and Archives Canada, January 17, 2006. <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/military/025002-6000-e.html>. 25 Accessed April 2009.

¹⁷⁰ Samuel Flagg Bemis, *A Diplomatic History of the United States*, 5th ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1965), 802.

This expanding deference in the continental relationship was occurring as Canadian confidence in Britain was beginning to fade. Its rapidly increasing engagement and incurred costs – in both treasure and blood – was not being met with a corresponding voice in the Empire's war effort. Nor was Canada's effort winning the Canadian government any augmented recognition in Britain, as epitomized in the ship-building controversy of 1915. The maritime battle of the North Atlantic was a central front in the war and was coming at a great cost to the Imperial Fleet. With the waters of Europe in peril, the Allied maritime defence effort was increasingly dependent upon the North American ship-building industry to keep the Fleet afloat. Without informing the Canadian government, British authorities conspired with American companies in early 1915 "... to evade American neutrality laws by having components for ten submarines secretly imported to the Vickers shipyards in Montreal. There, under the guidance of expert U.S. workers who had illegally entered Canada, the vessels were assembled, finished, and dispatched to European waters..." According to Hillmer and Granatstein, "...hundreds of fast U.S. coastal motorboats were being built for the British in Canadian yards through a similar subterfuge."¹⁷¹ When this compact was exposed, the Canadian government was infuriated by Britain's outright exploitation of Canada's dominion status. In the immediate term, this did not alter Canada's support for Britain in its war effort, but it did encourage a change in its long-term foreign policy outlook. American appreciation for Canadian labours, coupled with the apparent impudence conferred by Britain during the war created a push and pull effect, where Canada began to gravitate its outlook away from the Empire and towards the continent.

Canadian-American linkages consequently expanded and grew more transparent as the War progressed. Previously held suspicions over continental intentions were being

¹⁷¹ Hillmer and Granatstein, *For Better or Worse: Canada and the United States to the 1990s*, 65.

replaced by norms of defence and diplomatic collaboration. With this growing coordination and trust in continental defence came a greater utilization of the Lakes, breaching the letter of the Rush-Bagot Agreement but only through joint concord. In a letter written to Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs Joseph Pope in 1916, Deputy Minister of the Naval Service George Desbarats wrote that "...the terms of the Rush-Bagot Convention, signed in 1817, can hardly be applied to modern vessels and modern armament and that it might possibly be of advantage to reach an interpretation of this Convention which would better meet the requirements of these days." He continued that:

...the Rush-Bagot Convention is a very wise one and should be kept alive; that it is an advantage to both Canada and the United States to have an agreement by which there is a limit placed to the employment of armed vessels on the Great Lakes and that it would be better to reach a definite understanding as to the number of vessels to be allowed and the armament to be employed. Such a course would be preferable to allowing a continuance of the present infringement of the Convention by the United States and would allow of a satisfactory settlement of a very delicate situation.¹⁷²

With Canadian and American defence interests being largely shared by 1916, the foundation for cooperative continental defence was being developed on the Great Lakes with the Rush-Bagot Agreement continuing to play an important role. However, in order to realize a more common approach to defence, a stronger political relationship between Canada and the United States was necessary to reconcile the gap in between political and military relations.

Political Impediments to the Shift

In 1896 the "American issue" played a important role in bringing Wilfrid Laurier to power in the aftermath of the Venezuela boundary dispute. Laurier proposed the construction of a Canadian militia to decrease its dependency on the Empire and allow for a greater autonomy in the continental security relationship. In 1911, the "American issue" once

¹⁷² George J. Desbarats, "Deputy Minister of Naval Service to Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs: Ottawa, May 19, 1916," *DCER – Volume 1*, 837-838.

again influenced Canadian elections, although this time Laurier was defeated largely due to his support for reciprocity with the U.S. and spending on naval defence. Preston argues that Laurier "...agreed with [former prime minister] Macdonald that geographical isolation from the world's trouble spots and friendship with the United States guaranteed Canadian security;"¹⁷³ but the issue was a paradox, as national sentiment outweighed security issues due to Canadian geographic isolation. Deepening continental defence cooperation was a prudent decision from a military standpoint, but remained an explosive political issue in Canada. The hostility and ill-will that had characterized Canada-U.S. relations for the better part of the previous century proved difficult to shake for the electorate, who had "...inherited antipathies [from the British] that still persisted because the United States loomed ever larger in Canadian eyes."¹⁷⁴

Robert Borden defeated Laurier in the 1911 election by appealing to the pro-Empire electorate on the issue of free-trade with the U.S. and promising to reign in "extravagant" defence spending despite his previously declared support for expanding relations with the U.S.¹⁷⁵ Without a significant catalyst, Canadians were simply unprepared to shift loyalties away from the Empire in favour of a more continentalist outlook. Economic development and political stability were the primary concerns of the pre-War Canadian public, which believed that increasing Canada's involvement in the international theatre by expanding diplomatic and military relations would disrupt national progress on these fronts. Historian Roger Sarty indicates that "...logic [in this paradoxical approach] must be found in Canada's colonial status and the fact that the country was, in strategic terms, secure. Under the

¹⁷³ Richard Preston, *Canada and 'Imperial Defense': A Study of the Origins of British Commonwealth's Defense Organization, 1898-1903* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), 115.

¹⁷⁴ Richard Preston, *Defence of the Undefended Border*, 196.

¹⁷⁵ Robert Bothwell, *Canada and the United States: the Politics of Partnership* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 9.

Imperial system, Canada lacked the powers, information, and mechanisms to make comprehensive foreign and defence policy. In the absence of serious external threats, there was no imperative to acquire these means.¹⁷⁶ World War I gradually modified these preconceptions about involvement in the international theatre though, as it was Canada's exclusive relationship with the Empire that drew it into the costly conflict. Still, Canadian-American rapprochement progressed cautiously throughout the war.

A Growing Continental Cooperation

By 1917 the British Treasury was nearly bankrupt and the pre-war arrangement it had made to assume Canada's costs for food and war supplies in Britain and France was reneged, forcing Canada to fight fully at its own expense in support of the Empire.¹⁷⁷ At this stage of the conflict, though, Canada was also running short of liquid assets. With limited options and faced with an enormous fiscal deficit, Prime Minister Borden met with American President Woodrow Wilson to request economic assistance to sustain the Canadian war effort. The result of this meeting was the Ordnance Department-IMB Agreement, which allowed for American munitions contracts to be awarded to Canadian companies.¹⁷⁸ This convention proved beneficial to both sides as it expanded American munitions production potential and increased the inflow of capital into the Canadian economy. C.P. Stacey argues that this small American concession resulted in "...a considerable military and economic rapprochement...", and enormous amounts of Canadian goodwill.¹⁷⁹ It demonstrated a maturing cross-border relationship, building upon the existing foundation of disarmament and diplomacy, and

¹⁷⁶ Roger Sarty, 41-42.

¹⁷⁷ J.L. Granatstein, *How Britain's Weakness Forced Canada in the Arms of the United States: 1988 Joanna Goodman Lectures* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 9.

¹⁷⁸ J.L. Granatstein, *How Britain's Weakness Forced Canada into the arms of the United States*, 15.

¹⁷⁹ C.P. Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict - Volume 1*, 208.

helping to establish a more stable continental trust. This was illustrated in the short-lived but significant joint naval operation on the East Coast in 1918.

In the final year of the war, seven American ships, as well as USN planes situated in Nova Scotia, served in the Atlantic Coastal Patrol under command of the Royal Canadian Navy to help protect Canadian coastal waters, and to protect the American merchant marine entering and exiting Canadian ports on the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence Seaway. The two states also began sharing defence intelligence on the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts in order to provide a more effective and comprehensive defence of the continent.¹⁸⁰ These defence undertakings lasted only a matter of months, but were significant in the fact that they joined these once hostile neighbours in a cooperative defence of common interests. Hillmer and Granatstein point out that as "friendly as cooperation had been between [Canada and the United States] in 1918, this first North American joint defence initiative was short lived, designed solely to meet the specific emergency. The Americans had appeared to give grudgingly; the Canadians accepted the help, but cautiously."¹⁸¹ The vigilance of each side in this approach demonstrated that trust was still ephemeral and driven by circumstance; however, this approach was also indicative of a willingness to share the burden of continental defence in the event that mutual interests on the continent were threatened.

Results of the Great War

At the war's outset, Canadian loyalty to the Empire was evidenced by the immediacy and scale of its contribution to defend Britain. However by the Armistice, there was evidence continental defence was undergoing a shifting outlook. The excessive costs endured by Canada for the survival of Britain and its allies was not met with an equivalent recognition in

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 233.

¹⁸¹ Hillmer and Granatstein, *For Better or Worse: Canada and the United States to the 1990s*, 69.

the post-War negotiations, strengthening the Canadian desire to avoid European conflicts in the future. Historian James Eayrs comments that "the Great War brought Canadians to Europe, but left Europe remote to Canadians."¹⁸² The United States emerged from the war as a significant global player economically, politically, and militarily. American neutrality until 1917 left the U.S. in a much stronger position in the post-war period, relative to its pre-war status against the European powers, and served to greatly expand its industrial production base. This expanding American power and influence subsequently encouraged Canada to diversify its international relations away from strictly the Empire since the U.S. was developing into a more practical partner.

Post-WWI Years

Changing Fortunes

One of the war's more significant outcomes was the shift in global economic power. American neutrality in the first three years of the war while Britain shouldered the costs for the entire Empire was, in and of itself, enough to shift global fortunes; but American loans had also kept the Allied war effort afloat. By late-1917, British Prime Minister David Lloyd George, on a financial mission to Washington, made clear the extent of the shifting fortunes, appealing to members of the Cabinet to "...understand that our attitude towards the United States Government is that of beggars."¹⁸³ Inter-Allied loans from the United States totalled \$4.3 billion, eighty-eight percent of which was held by Great Britain, who had virtually bankrupted its Treasury to maintain the Allied war effort.¹⁸⁴ Even after the conflict's conclusion, the United States held a strong economic upper-hand as its geographic isolation

¹⁸² James Eayrs, *In Defence of Canada: From the Great War to the Great Depression* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), 3.

¹⁸³ PM David Lloyd George, quoted in J.L. Granatstein, *How Britain's Weakness forced Canada into the Arms of the United States*, 12.

¹⁸⁴ Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York: Random House, 1987), 265-270.

from the conflict had left it without reconstruction costs. Canada was influenced by these shifting fortunes as a result of its proximity to the U.S. and because of its changing attitudes towards the Empire.

Shifting Political Loyalties

The election of a minority government headed by W.L.M. King in December 1921 marked the beginning of a new era in Canadian external relations. King had skilfully captured the public mood in the post-war era by proposing to put distance between Canada and the Empire, and focussing on matters of continental development.¹⁸⁵ Johnson and Lenarcic suggest that "...even more than its triangle allies, Canadian attitudes towards the postwar era were moulded by the charnel house of the Great War which had maimed and slaughtered the flower of Canadian youth."¹⁸⁶ A desire to pull back from the uncertainty of involvement in the international theatre took root, encouraging a greater seclusion from the international theatre to focus on national and continental interests in the stable and "fireproof" North America.¹⁸⁷ In addition to this changing mood, British reconstruction and stability operations in post-war Europe consumed its principal military interests and resources, effectively diminishing any remaining British contributions to Canadian continental defence.

At the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 Canada's fidelity to Europe was delivered a blow when its martial contributions were not recognized as independent from the larger

¹⁸⁵ C.P. Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict – Volume II: The Mackenzie King Era* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 3.

¹⁸⁶ Johnson and Lenarcic, "The Decade of Transition: The North Atlantic Triangle during the 1920s," 85.

¹⁸⁷ This is in reference to Canadian Senator Raoul Dandurand stating that "Canadians live in a fire-proof house, far from inflammable materials," in speaking to the geographic isolation from the flashpoints of armed conflict at a meeting of the League of Nations in 1924. League of Nations, *Official Journal*, Special Supplement no. 23: *Records of the Fifth Assembly* (Geneva, 1924), 222; quoted in Joseph Jockel and Joel Sokolsky, "Dandurand Revisited: Rethinking Canada's Defence Policy in an Unstable World," *International Journal* 48, no.2 (Spring 1993): 380-401.

British war effort. Canada believed that its significant efforts to defend its European allies were undervalued as a result of this categorization under the Empire, even though, as Desmond Morton points out, "by the summer of 1918 the Canadian Corps had become, in many respects, an allied army, fully responsive to the administration and political authority of its own government."¹⁸⁸ In a speech to the House of Commons in 1919, war veteran and the future Minister of National Defence for Air in World War II, Charles Power, expressed this changing national sentiment:

We as Canadians have our destiny before us not in Continental Europe but here on the free soil of America. Our policy for the next hundred years should be that laid down by George Washington in the United States for the guidance of his countrymen – absolute renunciation of interference in European affairs – and that laid down by the other great father of his country in Canada, Sir Wilfrid Laurier – 'freedom from the vortex of European militarism...' – let Europe be the arbiter of its own destiny while we in Canada, turning our energies to our own affairs, undertake our own peaceful development.¹⁸⁹

The unconcealed linkages to the United States here outlined the desire for Canadian isolation from European affairs in the post-war world. Foreign policy scholar and future advisor to the prime minister, O.D. Skelton put it more bluntly, indicating that Canada would no longer be the willing "...catspaw of European imperialism."¹⁹⁰ European instability in the war's aftermath only intensified this desire for seclusion, as typified by Britain's six different governments holding power in the post-war decade, including three general elections from 1922-1923.¹⁹¹ Canada sought to disconnect itself from the "...legacy of warfare, hate and

¹⁸⁸ Desmond Morton, "Exerting Control: the Development of Canadian Authority over the Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1914-1919," *Men at War: Politics, Technology, and Innovation in the Twentieth Century* (eds.) Tim Travers and Christopher Archer (Chicago: Precedent, 1982), 16.

¹⁸⁹ Government of Canada, *House of Commons Debate* 11 September 1919, reprinted in Gregory Johnson and David Lenarcic, "The Decade of Transition: the North Atlantic Triangle during the 1920s," 87.

¹⁹⁰ O.D. Skelton, "Current Events: Canada and the Making of War and Peace," *Queen's Quarterly* 28 (July 1920): 105.

¹⁹¹ Gregory Johnson and David Lenarcic, "The Decade of Transition: the North Atlantic Triangle during the 1920s," 83.

bloodshed which makes Europe a shambles,"¹⁹² and in its attempts to avoid Anglo-American and European disputes, Canada began to construct a more autonomous national identity within the Empire.

At the first Assembly of the League of Nations in 1920, the new Canadian outlook emerged publicly when Canadian representative Newton Rowell lashed out at his European counterparts, testifying that "it was European policy, European statesmanship, European ambition, that drenched this world with blood and from which we are still suffering and will suffer for generations." He further stated that "fifty thousand Canadians under the soil of France and Flanders is what Canada has paid for European statesmanship trying to settle European problems. I place responsibility on a few; I would not distribute it over many; but nevertheless it is European."¹⁹³ Such a bold public criticism exposed Canada's frustration towards European political excesses and illustrated its shifting focus away from European politics and towards North America.

Continental Defence Maturation and Modernization

The demonstration of American naval power during the War posed a direct challenge to the predominance of the RN. During the post-war years, the U.S. set out to equal or surpass British naval strength, necessitating a fleet modernization and expansion as a sign of its growing military power and capability.¹⁹⁴ There were impediments to this expansion though, with an escalating threat posed by the Empire of Japan and a deepening engagement in Latin America requiring a substantial dedication of political and military resources. There

¹⁹² John Wesley Dafoe, *Dafoe-Sifton Correspondence, 1919-1927* (ed.) Ramsay Cook (Altona, Manitoba: Manitoba Record Society, 1966), 122.

¹⁹³ Canadian delegation at the First Assembly of the League of Nations, 1920, quoted in Margaret Prang, *N.W. Rowell: Ontario Nationalist* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 361.

¹⁹⁴ C.P. Parrini, *Heir to Empire: The United States Economic Diplomacy, 1916-1923* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1969).

were also domestic complications that hindered the full utilization of America ship-building capacities, namely the Rush-Bagot Agreement.

A naval modernization on the scale proposed meant that enormous federal contract money was available for ship-builders. And the American Ship Building Company had nine plants on the Great Lakes, providing hundreds of jobs in West Superior, Milwaukee, Chicago, Bay City, Detroit, Wyandotte, Buffalo, Cleveland, and Lorraine; and this is not to speak of other ship-building centres in Port Huron and Toledo.¹⁹⁵ But this heartland of American industrial production was restricted from bidding on these naval contracts due to the limits Rush-Bagot placed on ship-building on the Lakes. Recognizing the importance of conciliation and goodwill in expanding continental relations however, Canada moved to placate the budding issue by undertaking to modernize the Rush-Bagot Agreement to fit the changing military and economic contexts.

In late 1920, Joseph Pope advised the Prime Minister that "while we may not be able to hold the United States to the letter of the old agreement, it would... be desirable that there should be a clear understanding as to the nature and extent of the modification to which we are prepared to agree."¹⁹⁶ Canada thus reviewed the Agreement to determine its continuing relevance in the face of perpetually improving Canadian-American defence relations. A precise assessment of its continuing relevance proved difficult in light of the international uncertainties in the post-War world; but its importance in the progression of coordinated continental defence relations was clear in light of the growing power asymmetries between the two states. Despite its dated provisions, the Agreement was an important reminder that

¹⁹⁵ Henry Sherman Boutell, 346.

¹⁹⁶ Joseph Pope, "Memorandum from Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs to Prime Minister," Ottawa, September 25, 1920, RE: Naval Vessels on the Great Lakes," *DCER – Volume 3* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1970), 899.

while hostilities had once dominated their cross-border relations, through conciliation, vigilance, and disarmament, the two states had constructed an increasingly cooperative and equal approach to continental defence.

In a letter to Pope in 1921, the British Ambassador to Washington, Sir Auckland Geddes, revealed that the United States was growing disenchanted with the arrangement on the Great Lakes because "...the restrictions as to the displacement and armament contained in the Rush-Bagot Agreement of 1817 are not applicable to modern requirements and would, for this reason, be somewhat difficult to comply with... [as a result, Canada] may be met with a suggestion that the agreement should be revised so as to bring it into accord with modern conditions."¹⁹⁷ As Ottawa, by this point, was well attuned to the security and defence questions on the Lakes it welcomed the opportunity to negotiate changes to appease American concerns and advance Canadian interests.

On his first of many visits to the American capital, newly-elected Prime Minister King proved anxious to put distance between Canada and the Empire by striking a closer relationship with Washington. He set out to address American concerns on the Great Lakes by proposing to modernize the Rush-Bagot Agreement. Arguing that the "...Agreement in name is being quoted and held up to the world as an example, and to a large extent the spirit of the agreement is kept...," King felt it needed to be amended in order to "...meet the necessities of the new situations that have arisen."¹⁹⁸ The U.S. agreed with the need to renegotiate the Agreement, with Secretary of State Charles Hughes responding that "...the Government and the people of the United States have been profoundly impressed by the

¹⁹⁷ "Ambassador in the United States to Foreign Secretary, Washington, May 23, 1921," *DCER – Volume 3*, 901.

¹⁹⁸ Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, "Statement by the Prime Minister: Revision of Rush-Bagot Agreement, October 3, 1923," *DCER – Volume 3*, 234.

practical value of the Rush-Bagot Agreement which despite its terms long since unresponsive to actual conditions has, through liberal and friendly interpretations on both sides of the boundary, served the real purpose for which it was concluded."¹⁹⁹ In an effort to secure goodwill and satisfy emerging interests, both sides agreed to work in partnership to revise the Agreement to address the changing continental security contexts on the Great Lakes.

After four years of negotiating, however, efforts to modernize the Agreement stalled, notwithstanding the optimism driving this dialogue. The historic significance of the Rush-Bagot Agreement proved too great. In the end King held that developing a replacement for "one of the most far-sighted international actions to which either Great Britain or the United States has ever been a party," one which had "...unquestionably contributed greatly to the prevention of a competition in armament, and to the maintenance of a 3000-mile frontier without a fort," had the potential to compromise the continued expansion of Canadian-American goodwill on the Lakes, a point largely agreed with by the U.S.²⁰⁰ Although the discourse failed to develop new terms and definitions for the Lakes, it demonstrated that Canada, under King, "...had struck out in the direction of a more independent external policy. He had let Washington know that a fresh breeze... was blowing in Canada,"²⁰¹ which would prove to be significant in an age when hostilities were continuing their slow boil in Europe. In 1926 U.S. Commerce Secretary and future President Herbert Hoover indicated that

¹⁹⁹ Charles E. Hughes, "Secretary of State of the United States to Ambassador in United States: Washington, May 12, 1923," *DCER – Volume 3*, 910

²⁰⁰ Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, "Statement by the Prime Minister: Revision of Rush-Bagot Agreement, October 3, 1923," *DCER – Volume 3*, 233.

²⁰¹ Hillmer and Granatstein, *For Better or Worse: Canada and the United States to the 1990s*, 80-81.

"...[North America] had developed something new in a way of life..." one that transcended the "boiling social and economic cauldron of Europe..."²⁰²

The subsequent Canadian-American defence rapprochement progressed rapidly during the inter-war years, particularly so after 1935. Canada's representative to the League of Nations, Raoul Dandurand, praised the flexibility and understanding that existed between the two states, describing the era as one governed by peaceful relations in North America while Europe remained an "armed camp."²⁰³ A relative isolation gripped North America during this era, drawing Canada away from its roots in the Empire and towards a "neighbourhood" outlook for its security and defence policy.²⁰⁴ And the United States greatly aided in this shift by providing Canada with a comparatively equal voice in continental security and defence decision-making, which expanded cordial relations throughout the interwar era.

1935-1945

King, Roosevelt, and the Development of Canadian-American Cooperative Defence

The Great War greatly damaged the ability of Britain to rule directly over its vast Empire. The inter-war years therefore saw the dismantling of much of London's centralized control, marked by the Statute of Westminster in 1931 granting legislative equality to the Empire's self-governing dominions. By this point, British influence in North America had already been in a staggered decline for decades, with the United States moving to replace

²⁰² Herbert Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover: The Cabinet and the Presidency, 1920-1933* (New York: MacMillan and Company, 1951), v.

²⁰³ League of Nations, *Official Journal*, Special Supplement no. 23: *Records of the Fifth Assembly* (Geneva, 1924), 222; quoted in Joseph Jockel and Joel Sokolsky, "Dandurand Revisited: Rethinking Canada's Defence Policy in an Unstable World," 380-401.

²⁰⁴ A relative isolation because both countries were involved in military operations in eastern Russia from 1920-1922, and the United States had forces in China in the 1920s and 1930s.

Britain's abating authority.²⁰⁵ King's election in 1921 accelerated this process for King preferred the convenience of American geographic proximity for defence relations and, more importantly, the deference the Americans bestowed upon him as Prime Minister of Canada. As a Harvard-educated labour negotiator, King was well attuned to the political culture of the United States where he maintained relationships with many political elites, including the Rockefeller family of New York. King tended to lean towards American views in North Atlantic affairs and campaigned for ownership over Canadian external relations policy in the 1920s, in order to better develop Canadian-American relations without British interference. It was not until his re-election in 1935 however, that Canada had the capacity to harness this greater autonomy to build a more definitive continental link.

The election of Franklin Roosevelt as President in 1932, coupled with King's re-election in 1935, initiated a sea change in Canadian-American defence relations. The rapport between the two leaders was quite amicable which, in due course, bolstered trust in the cross-border relationship. Canadian historians Hillmer and Granatstein explain that "the years between the war were... an age of good neighbourhood, entirely removed from the long decades of mistrust and suspicion..."²⁰⁶ Nevertheless by the late 1930s, with the international environment rapidly destabilizing at the hands of major disputes simmering in Europe, Asia, and North Africa, cross-border unease re-emerged over continental security issues.

Advances in military technology since 1918 had made North America more vulnerable to extra-hemispheric attack, and the languishing state of Canadian defences worried some American military planners. The prospect of a hostile power overwhelming Canada's nonchalant defence capabilities and occupying territory along the difficult-to-

²⁰⁵ Gordon Stewart, 128.

²⁰⁶ Hillmer and Granatstein, *For Better or Worse: Canada and the United States to the 1990s*, 104.

defend northern border was viewed as a genuine threat. Roosevelt's comments during a speech in Kingston in 1938 alluded to these American concerns, when he remarked that "if there are remote nations that wish us not good but ill, they know that we are strong; and they know that we can and will defend ourselves and defend our neighbourhood."²⁰⁷ Although this overture appeared to guarantee Canada's security in the event of an attack, it also gave the impression that the U.S. was prepared to defend the continent unilaterally if need be. Under pressure to react to this suggestion, King crafted a carefully calculated response so as to preserve the burgeoning relations and accept American goodwill, while underwriting Canadian political and territorial sovereignty. He indicated that Canada has its own:

...obligations as a good and friendly neighbour, and one of them is to see that... our own country is made as immune from attack or possible invasion as we can reasonably be expected to make it, and that should the occasion ever arise, enemy forces should not be able to pursue their way either by land, sea, or air to the United States from Canadian territory.²⁰⁸

These public statements were shrewd and effective in establishing an informal understanding on the continent that national defence planning had to be considered in a continental context. King was wisely jealous of Canadian sovereignty, having just achieved a greater degree of autonomy from Britain in 1931, though much like his predecessors he understood that the asymmetry of power required Canada to appease American continental security and defence interests in order to preserve its "seat at the table."²⁰⁹

The outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939 served as a medium for expanding and formalizing cooperative continental defence, especially given that by 1940, Britain appeared on the verge of collapse. With American neutrality restricting its naval

²⁰⁷ Franklin D. Roosevelt quoted in Colonel Stanley Dziuban, *Military Relations between the United States and Canada, 1939-1945* (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1959), 3.

²⁰⁸ James Eayrs, *In Defence of Canada – Volume II* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959), 177-193.

²⁰⁹ Joel Sokolsky, "A Seat at the Table: Canada and its Alliances," *Armed Forces and Society* 16, no. 1 (1989): 11-35.

reach, Canadian Assistant Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs Hugh Keenleyside wrote that if:

...the United States... will be prepared to continue indefinitely to protect Canada without demanding a measure of active cooperation in return. It is a reasonable assumption that the United States will expect, and if necessary demand, Canadian assistance in the defence of this continent and this Hemisphere.... thus the negotiation of a specific offensive-defensive alliance is likely to become inevitable.²¹⁰

By developing a stable and friendly relationship and agreeing to address each other's security and defence concerns, King and Roosevelt outlined the makings of a broad defence alliance that would serve to reorganize continental defence during this era of intense international conflict. The result was a more coordinated continental effort and a more united North American defence outlook.

Ogdensburg and Continental Defence Cooperation

Regular meetings at the executive level, cross-border munitions and aircraft purchases, and the Basic Defence Plan of 1940 created more comprehensive defence linkages between the Canada and the U.S. But as the conflict continued to spread in Europe and Asia, and the threat to continental security grew progressively more ominous, Canada and the United States, or more specifically King and Roosevelt, sought to formalize their cooperative continental defence link. Their discussions led to the Ogdensburg Agreement of 1940, which unified continental defence under a regional bloc, allowing the U.S. to become more deeply involved in defending the continent while maintaining its official neutrality in the war. From this standpoint, Preston argues that "long before the United States entered the war, there was virtually a state of alliance with belligerent Canada."²¹¹

²¹⁰ Hugh Keenleyside, quoted in J.L. Granatstein, *The Politics of the Mackenzie King Government, 1939-1945*, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1975), 127.

²¹¹ Richard Preston, *Defence of the Undefended Border*, 229.

The Ogdensburg Agreement was a product of the strong relations between the President and Prime Minister. C.P. Stacey notes that King did not "...consult any of his own cabinet colleagues, let alone the Canadian Chiefs of Staff. Roosevelt himself seems to have taken no military advice whatever before making this defence arrangement with Canada. This was strictly the Franklin-Mackenzie axis at work."²¹² The Agreement, developed informally between the two leaders over a weekend visit, produced the Permanent Joint Board on Defence (PJBD) which acted as both a civilian and military forum to discuss matters of common defence. King noted that "in the face of the European menace it was obviously desirable to give expression to the needs of joint defence... [and] between the president and myself, [there was a] complete confidence in each other's purpose and motives..."²¹³ The construction of this joint committee proved crucial for Canadian-American defence relations throughout the war by ensuring a harmonious and egalitarian approach to continental defence.

The decision to permanently link Canadian-American defences came at a low point for the Empire. British economist John Maynard Keynes estimated that total UK reserves, approximately \$4.2 billion in September 1938, had decreased to just \$12 million by early 1941,²¹⁴ leaving Britain teetering on the edge of bankruptcy and total military collapse.²¹⁵ Prime Minister Winston Churchill reacted poorly to Ogdensburg, assuring King acidly that "...all these transactions will be judged in a mood different to that prevailing while the issue

²¹² C.P. Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict – Volume II*, 311-312.

²¹³ Mackenzie King, "Speech 12 November 1940," quoted in *The Road to Ogdensburg: The Queen's/St. Lawrence Conferences on Canadian-American Affairs, 1935-1941*, (eds.) Frederick Gibson and Jonathan Rossie (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1993), 235.

²¹⁴ "British Requirements for the first year of Stage II," quoted in J.L. Granatstein and R.D. Cuff, "The Hyde Park Declaration 1941: Origins and Significance," *The Canadian Historical Review* 55, no. 1 (1974): 60, note 3.

²¹⁵ It has been suggested that after the fall of Dunkirk, the outlook was so bleak that Britain had in fact "...[fallen] under a Canadian shield." Gerard Vano, *Canada: The Strategic and Military Pawn* (New York: Praeger, 1988), 87.

still hangs in the balance."²¹⁶ He accused Canada of abandoning the Empire to save itself, though some Canadian historians charge that he simply "...failed to realize that with its security now guaranteed by the United States, Canada could send every man and weapon possible to defend Britain, something it dutifully and willingly did."²¹⁷ Nevertheless, it was likely the permanence of the convention that drew Churchill's ire, as this deal marked a major shift in the North Atlantic triangle relations.

For Canada, this Agreement proved to be exceptionally important. It set formal limits to American involvement on Canadian territory and established norms to guide continental defence at a time when the United States was markedly concerned for its own security. As historian Galen Perras explains:

given the realization that Roosevelt would have organized continental defence with or without Canadian approval, King gained Canada at least a voice, and possibly an important one, in the formulation of hemispheric defence, no small achievement for a nation only one-tenth as large as its neighbour... Fortunately for Canadians, the Americans have possessed for some time 'a strong conscience that restrains them from forcing their will on us.' Many other people bordering great powers – the Finns, the Poles, or the Latin Americans for example – have not been so fortunate.²¹⁸

This point is largely shared amongst Canadian analysts, with Roussel similarly noting that "Canada could have fared much worse, especially in the view of the... American desire to take... measures it deemed necessary for its own defence. The PJBDA played a signal role as an 'equalizer' of sorts between Canada and its powerful neighbour, reducing the pressure that the latter would otherwise have been able to apply to Canada."²¹⁹ The Ogdensburg Agreement, much in the spirit of the Rush-Bagot Agreement, created a more equal military

²¹⁶ Winston Churchill, "Churchill to King, 22 August 1940," *Cabinet War Committee Records*, quoted in J.L. Granatstein, "Staring into the Abyss," *Towards a New World: Readings in the History of Canadian Foreign Policy* (ed.) J.L. Granatstein (Toronto: Copp Clark Pittman, 1992), 53.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁸ Galen Perras, *Franklin Roosevelt and the Origins of the Canadian-American Security Alliance, 1933-1945* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1998), 121. The source of the quote regarding a "strong conscience" is John Holmes.

²¹⁹ Roussel, *The North American Democratic Peace*, 182.

relationship and ensured that the existing power asymmetry between the two states did not completely obscure Canadian interests in the face American security concerns.

The institution of this Agreement represents a major shift in the defence outlook for the continent. Roosevelt noted that "the adoption of... joint defence efforts is another proof of the solidarity existing among the [North] American Republics, which has been even more closely cemented by the danger and threat which loom up from the swift movement of events in Europe and in the Far East."²²⁰ The steady construction and preservation of norms in the Canada-U.S. defence relationship over the previous century-and-a-quarter created a barrier to cross-border antagonisms in the face of international crises, allowing diplomacy and cooperation to form a more durable and effective defence of the continent.

The reorganization of continental defence was immediately evident with a significant number of joint projects undertaken in haste. The construction of the Alcan Highway and the Northwest Staging Route of airfields in Northwest Canada and the formation of the First Special Service Force in 1942, comprised of jointly trained and equipped soldiers for special operations, demonstrated the immediate utility of the 1940 convention. Efforts to improve the accessibility and loosen armament restrictions on the Great Lakes were also explored, actions which President Roosevelt described as "...a question of great public necessity, in the light of war requirements... for the defence needs [and] for navigation and power..."²²¹ The evolving strategic realities of the war demanded change on the Lakes, once again thrusting them into the centre of Canadian-American cooperative defence development and exemplifying their continuing importance in the security and defence of the continent.

²²⁰ Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Joint Canada-U.S. Defence Board: Note," *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt: With a Special Introduction and Explanatory Notes by President Roosevelt – Volume 9* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1941), 331.

²²¹ Franklin D. Roosevelt, "St. Lawrence Power Project: Executive Order No. 8568," *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 479.

Modernization of the Rush-Bagot Agreement

The expansion of Canada-U.S. defence ties during the Second World War changed the strategic composition of North American security and defence. The broad scope of these changes included amendments to the Rush-Bagot Agreement which had largely escaped previous modernization attempts during periods of continental distress. By 1941, cooperation was well established with agreements regulating continental defence cooperation and linking war industries, and joint institutional forums in place to address security concerns and common interests on the continent. The pronounced movement towards defence cooperation, coupled with progressively stronger diplomatic linkages and relations at the executive level, diminished the need for a strict obedience to the arms limitations on the Great Lakes. Still, the Rush-Bagot Agreement continued to hold a strong practical utility in addressing new challenges and ensuring national interests on both sides were addressed.

As the military utility of the Lakes once again proved critical to the Allied efforts in the North Atlantic, a common outlook emerged for the St. Lawrence Seaway and the Great Lakes. Much the same as in the First World War, the United States applied diplomatic pressure to press Canada to allow for increased ship-building and naval training on the Lakes. In June of 1939, U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull proposed modifying the Rush-Bagot Agreement to allow both sides to augment naval forces as a precautionary measure, as he believed that

it would be entirely in harmony with the intent of the negotiators and the spirit of the Agreement for each country to permit naval vessels, unquestionably intended for tidewater seas only, to be constructed in shipyards on the Great Lakes. [In order to carefully]... preserve the intent of the Agreement, however, it is believed that prior to the commencement of construction each Government should provide the other with full information concerning any naval vessels to be constructed at Great Lakes ports; that such vessels should immediately be removed from the lakes upon

their completion; and that no armaments whatever should be installed until the vessels reach the seaboard.²²²

Hull recognized that there was a continuing value in this Agreement, but that this value was found in its message rather than in strict adherence to its out of date conditions. American Ambassador Daniel Roper relayed this message to Canadian Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs O.D. Skelton, offering that "it was perhaps inevitable that an agreement, the technical provisions of which became obsolete more than half a century ago, should from time to time have been subjected to what may have been considered technical violations by both parties, and of such instances there is a clear record."²²³

Previous attempts at modernizing the Agreement had failed because each side found it difficult to reconcile with the other's defence interests on the Great Lakes. Neither could accept the other's proposed changes for want of maintaining the provisions and precedents that the historic Agreement afforded them. The bleak international outlook in the summer of 1939 and the spread of cooperation and goodwill between the two states in the years since the Great War had helped to alleviate the distrust between the two states though. Thus, Canada agreed to the American proposal, with Skelton replying that the government of Canada

...concur fully in the desirability of preserving this long-standing Agreement... It is... recognized that the great changes in technical, industrial, water transport and population conditions which have occurred..., while in no sense altering the desire of both peoples to maintain the underlying spirit and objective of the Agreement, have rendered its technical scheme and definitions somewhat out of date....

He continued, "...there are certain measures which are mutually considered to be practically necessary or desirable and, at the same time, to be consistent with the underlying objective of

²²² Daniel C. Roper, "United States Minister to Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs: Ottawa, June 9, 1939," *DCER – Volume 6* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1972), 501-502.

²²³ Daniel Roper, "United States Minister to Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, Ottawa, June 9, 1939," *DCER – Volume 6*, 498.

the Agreement though not strictly consistent with its technical scheme or definitions." And while violations have repeatedly occurred on these grounds, "...the two Governments have consulted and made appropriate dispositions by means of correspondence."²²⁴ This inter-governmental consultation precluding any violations of the Agreement had become a norm of defence relations on the Lakes. Adopting it formally modernized the conditions of the Agreement without having to fundamentally transform the relationship and, at the same time, preserved the condition of arms control in the shared borderlands region.

The modification to the Agreement did not go far enough, though, as the rising intensity of the maritime battles in the North Atlantic, including an increase in the number of German U-boat attacks in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, made for a further liberalizing of the Agreement.²²⁵ A need to arm Canadian and American ships before they left the Great Lakes was becoming a necessity. By the time of the U.S. entry into the war, arrangements had first been made to allow warships to arm on the Lakes on the condition that they immediately departed for blue-water. But as even this condition proved to be too strict, by mid-1942 an agreement was struck allowing for combat ready ships to stage in the Great Lakes for the duration of hostilities in the North Atlantic.²²⁶ With international hostilities reaching the shores of the continent, both states proved to be flexible in their interpretation of the Agreement in order to maintain a high level of defensive preparedness over the short-term. The flexibility and resilience of the Rush-Bagot Agreement therefore proved important during the defence of the continent. It allowed for the greater utilization of the advantages offered by the Lakes over the short-term, while preserving a long-term outlook of

²²⁴ O.D. Skelton, "Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs to United States Minister, Ottawa, June 10, 1939," *DCER – Volume 6*, 502-503.

²²⁵ M.L. Hadley, *U-boats against Canada: German Submarines in Canadian Waters* (Kingston:McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985), 53.

²²⁶ Colonel Stanley Dziuban, 279-280.

disarmament on the common maritime region. The resultant changes on the Lakes over the course of the war demonstrated the growing Canada-U.S. cooperation, coordination, and equality in continental defence organization.

Consultation to Cooperation

From the onset of the Great War until the end of the Second World War, there was a demonstrable shift in continental security and defence relations from one being characterized by a relatively nominal diplomacy to being guided by a comprehensive wartime cooperation. Roussel argues that during this era, "...the normative-institutional foundation of bilateral cooperation would be established, appearances to the contrary notwithstanding. And it would be upon this foundation that a healthier structure of cooperation would get built..."²²⁷ This was quite evident during the three decades of international discord from 1914 until 1945. The much smaller Canada, despite its reservations over partnership with the United States, grew increasingly accommodating in continental defence measures and altered the conditions of disarmament on the Great Lakes. On the other side of the border, the United States proved equally obliging in navigating around Canadian War-time belligerence in spite of its own neutrality, helping to bolster continental defence while remaining supportive of Canadian efforts in the World Wars.

On the Great Lakes, improving relations and rapidly changing strategic contexts led to the incremental modernization of the Rush-Bagot Agreement, changing its provisions to allow for a greater utilization of the Lakes for ship-building and naval training. And despite the extent of the changes to the continental, and global, security environment, the Agreement continued to govern relations on the Lakes in 1945 much the same as it did in 1914.

Notwithstanding its successes, the Canadian Secretary of the PJBD, R.M. Macdonnell, in the

²²⁷ Roussel, *The North American Democratic Peace*, 151.

closing days of the Second World War, suggested that a new Agreement be developed for the Lakes to account for the changing continental dynamic. He reasoned that "the [Rush-Bagot] Agreement was, despite its undoubted value, based on mutual suspicion and the need to keep a watchful eye on naval armaments. A new agreement could be based on the complete confidence that exists between the two countries which eliminates the need for that watchful eye. It would be based on mutual trust, not on mutual suspicion."²²⁸ But in 1945, mutual suspicion was one of the primary utilities of the Agreement. It assured that in both times of war and peace, military power along the common maritime border would be kept in check. The suspicion embedded in the Agreement also served as a reminder that the Lakes were, at one time, the central point of discord on the continent and a flashpoint for armed conflict in the not-too-distant past. Previous efforts to rewrite or replace the Agreement had failed as both sides feared losing the spirit contained within this convention. Its success in maintaining peace on the Great Lakes throughout the tumult of the two World Wars was a testament to its continuing significance and to the resilience of the Canadian-American defence relationship in the face of a quickly transforming threat environment.

²²⁸ R.M. Macdonnell, "Memorandum by Secretary, PJBD: Ottawa, September 11, 1945," *DCER - Volume 11: Part I* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1990), 1531-1532.

1946-2000

The scourge of the two World Wars had produced an apprehensive international mood. Long range bombers coupled with the introduction of atomic weapons²²⁹ at the end of World War II vastly intensified the destructive potential for future conflict and, as Roussel notes, "...made it easy to imagine that North America itself could be vulnerable to direct attack."²³⁰ The uncertainty of this strategic environment encouraged Canada and the United States to continue with a joint defence of the continent, though taking a markedly different approach to account for the changing nature of the threat. Defence cooperation moved away from a conventional defence of the continental coasts and towards developing a nuclear weapons deterrent in the northern hinterlands of Canada, in time, relegating maritime defence on the Great Lakes far down the list of priorities.

²²⁹ It was not until the 1952 American detonation of a hydrogen bomb that a wider range of thermonuclear energy was weaponized. Joseph Cirincione, *Bomb Scare: the History and Future of Nuclear Weapons* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

²³⁰ Roussel, *The North American Democratic Peace*, 199.

A nuclear arms race proceeded to engulf the globe, dividing most of the world into two armed camps led by the United States and the Soviet Union. The geostrategic struggle pitting East against West dominated North American foreign, security, and defence policy-making for most of the remainder of the twentieth century. Historian John Lewis Gaddis explains that "the U.S., formerly working on a foreign policy principle based on isolationism and the Monroe doctrine, realized the necessity of military alliances as a means of promoting security. As a means of "containing" the communist threat, Washington began granting economic and military support abroad."²³¹ In North America, this policy approach involved investment in an early air-warning and air-defence intercept system in the Arctic, resulting in the installation of vast amounts of American military assistance on Canadian soil.

The government of Canada recognized the severity of the Soviet threat and the advantages of expanding joint-continental defence. However, there were considerable sovereignty risks for the much smaller Canada that had to be addressed. John Herd Thompson and Stephen Randall contend that:

...cooperation with the United States was desirable and inevitable, but the United States should be granted no long-term rights of occupation to defence sites. Facilities should be joint enterprises under Canadian command whenever possible, and the presence of American troops on Canadian soil should be avoided when feasible and phased out quickly when it was not.²³²

The depth of war-time cooperation and policy alignment aside, Canada remained anxious of American activity on Canadian soil but understood the necessity for defence cooperation; a disposition long ago adopted on the Great Lakes.

This chapter will trace through the waxing and waning of Canadian-American political and defence relations throughout the Cold War to delineate the changing context of

²³¹ John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American Foreign Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 36-37.

²³² John Herd Thompson and Stephen Randall, *Canada and the United States: Ambivalent Allies* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 197.

continental defence relations by the end of the twentieth century. Aside from the immediate post-war era, the Rush-Bagot Agreement and the Great Lakes became much less of a defence priority during this period. But understanding the changing political and strategic contexts of continental defence is necessary to grasp how this period affected the long-term development of the Agreement. The expanding asymmetry in military and economic power continued to complicate political relations; however, the shared Soviet threat forced the two states to remain united. From this perspective, Roussel observes that the expanding post-war “...military institutions, although sometimes the object of polemical criticism in Canada, reflected the legacy of their predecessors. They represented the end product of an evolution dictated not only by strategic considerations but also by the actors’ assimilation and formalization of a set of norms.”²³³ The result was a stable and interdependent defence relationship with a progressive outlook, coupled with an increasing political divergence by the end of the Cold War. And despite a comprehensive strategic shift away from conventional defences throughout this era, the sudden collapse of the Soviet threat by 1991 brought about a conventional defence renaissance and demonstrated the Rush-Bagot Agreement's penchant for remaining relevant amid broad reforms to continental security and defence.

Formalizing and Modernizing in the Post-War Era

By 1949, Canada found itself in the precarious position of being stuck geographically between nuclear weapons-armed enemies. But in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, the United States held a monopoly over atomic weapons and a Soviet long-range

²³³ Roussel, *The North American Democratic Peace*, 238.

bomber fleet would not come into service until the end of the decade.²³⁴ During the brief interim period conventional strategies, particularly in the maritime domain, remained critical to the defence of the continent.

The proclivity of Prime Minister King during his twenty-one years in office to align Canadian security and defence interests with the United States left an indelible imprint on Canada's post-war defence development, where the intensity of the Canada-U.S. war-time partnership proved too significant to dissipate.

With the end of the War approaching in 1945, the PJBD began studying the potential for expanding and formalizing Canadian-American defence cooperation in the post-war world. In delivering its assessment, Canadian PJBD Secretary Macdonnell indicated that "it seems probable that after the war both Canada and the United States will wish to have naval vessels on the Great Lakes for training purposes... [and] to construct naval vessels and there seems no reason why they should not. Even in the unthinkable event of tension between the two countries..." the potential for an armed conflict between the two states was now effectively non-existent.²³⁵ Each side had long-ago conceded full sovereignty on the Lakes in favour of a truncated but more secure cooperative defence, and despite a history of violence and an expanding power asymmetry, relations had progressed amicably along the common maritime boundary throughout both wars. By interpreting the vague provisions of the Rush-Bagot Agreement with contextual flexibility and concurrently maintaining a strict transparency of military objectives, the defence relationship on the Lakes maintained common norms amidst a rapidly changing strategic environment.

²³⁴ Refer to David Holloway, "Stalin and the Bomb," *Origins of the Cold War: An International History*, (eds.) Melvin Leffler and David Painter (London: Routledge, 2005), 72-90.

²³⁵ R. M. Macdonnell, "Memorandum by Secretary, PJBD: Ottawa, September 11, 1945," *DCER – Volume 11: Part II* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1990), 1531.

In 1945, this type of cooperation on a previously contested borderland was a significant achievement. Canadian Ambassador to the United States Lester Pearson praised the Agreement's aptitude for alleviating border hostilities and preserving peace on the continent even during the height of international hostility. He stated "the fact that there has been an international agreement of this kind in force for 128 years would be a good one to publicize at the present time," because the world needed to understand that post-conflict peace and cooperation was possible in the presence of agreed-upon arms-reduction measures.²³⁶ This point was further substantiated by the signing of the Canada-United States Basic Security Plan (ABC-22) in 1941, the subsequent creation of the Military Cooperation Committee in 1946, and then the Joint Canada-U.S. Defence Public Statement in 1947, which collectively "...set forth in broad terms the tasks to be undertaken jointly by the armed forces of Canada and the United States in the event of emergency."²³⁷ This formalization of peace-time defence cooperation ensured that a robust and cooperative continental defence would remain in place at an economically efficient price tag, entering into an uncertain post-war era.

Defence scholar Philippe Lagassé points out that "...since before the Second World War, Canada had continually chosen to forego a vulnerable pure sovereignty in favour of a truncated, but better secured, sovereignty by cooperating with the United States."²³⁸ This made the process of formalization a simple progression of defence relations and less open to political criticism than in previous eras. And these new arrangements, borrowing from the success of the Rush-Bagot Agreement, were made informal so that "each country [would]

²³⁶ Lester B. Pearson, "Ambassador in United States to Secretary, PJBD: Washington, December 12, 1945," *DCER: Volume 11: Part II*, 1533.

²³⁷ Chief of the Air Staff, "Minutes of Meeting of Cabinet Defence Committee – 16 August 1947," *DCER – Volume 13* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1993), 1506.

²³⁸ Philippe Lagassé, "Northern Command and the Evolution of Canada-US Defence Relations," *Canadian Military Journal* 4, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 16.

determine the extent of its practical collaboration... [and] either country may at any time discontinue collaboration...."²³⁹ The uncertainty of the period played a particularly important role in the development of joint defence, as the advent of atomic weapons amplified the threat to the continent significantly. This approach proved to be beneficial to both sides, providing the U.S. with access to strategically important Canadian geography and a buffer state between the Soviet Union, while, as historian John Holmes points out, preserving "...a Canadian role and an appropriate degree of sovereignty in a situation in which, if there were no rules, the Americans would simply take over the defence of the continent."²⁴⁰

The post-1945 period on the Great Lakes proved to be a time of transition away from continental defence priority, yet this shift presented an interesting opportunity for modernizing relations in the absence of conflict, or even relative strategic importance. The issue of training vessels and ship-building was once again tabled at the PJBD in 1946. Both states sought to formalize the provisional war-time measures of allowing the unlimited stationing of training vessels on the Lakes and ship-building beyond the limits of the Rush-Bagot Agreement. During the negotiations, Hume Wrong, the Canadian Ambassador to the United States, conceded that "...the detailed provisions of the Rush-Bagot Agreement are not applicable to present day conditions, but... the Agreement possesses great historic importance... [and as such] the spirit of the Agreement rather than its detailed provisions... guides our governments in matters relating to naval forces on the Great Lakes."²⁴¹ U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson agreed with Wrong's assessment, lauding the "...historic

²³⁹ Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, "Statement made by the Prime Minister of Canada in the House of Commons, 12 February 1947," [Lexum](http://www.lexum.umontreal.ca/ca_us/en/cts.1947.43.en.html#NOTE_1). http://www.lexum.umontreal.ca/ca_us/en/cts.1947.43.en.html#NOTE_1. Accessed 16 April 2009.

²⁴⁰ John Holmes, *Shaping of the Peace, Volume 2: Canada and the Search for World Order, 1943-1957* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 291.

²⁴¹ "The Canadian Ambassador to the United States to the Secretary of State of the United States, 18 November 1946," [Lexum](http://www.lexum.com/ca_us/en/cts.1946.40.en.html). http://www.lexum.com/ca_us/en/cts.1946.40.en.html. Accessed 07 June 2009.

importance of this Agreement as a symbol of the friendship between our two countries..." and its spirit of flexibility and progressiveness in defending the Great Lakes.²⁴² Both sides subsequently agreed that the building and stationing of naval vessels on the Lakes for training purposes was consistent with the spirit of the Agreement, provided that full disclosure and transparency was maintained. As historian Vasilios Tasikas clarifies, "in sum, Canada and the United States saw no rational reason to limit tonnage or armaments of naval vessels on the lakes. More important, both countries agreed to notify, inform, and seek concurrence on the specifics of its Great Lakes naval ships, including the number, location, and function of vessels and armaments."²⁴³ Ambiguities in the Agreement remained, such as its failure to speak to non-military but armed government vessels.²⁴⁴ But this accord was effective in accounting for future changes by limiting naval activity to what could be agreed upon between the two states. The immediate importance of this arrangement was overshadowed by the refocusing of defence cooperation to the northern hinterlands of the continent, though its long-term strategic importance would prove to be imperative to the preservation of defence norms on the Great Lakes.

This modernization of defence relations on the Great Lakes was the last formal revision made to the Rush-Bagot Agreement. By 1949, the Soviet Union had exploded its own nuclear device and developed a long-range bomber fleet capable of attacking North America over the North Pole.²⁴⁵ This shifted the focus of joint defence to the continental perimeter, as Secretary Acheson informed President Harry Truman that "the planning and

²⁴² Dean Acheson, "The Acting Secretary of State of the United States to the Canadian Ambassador to the United States," Department of State, Washington 5 December 1946.

²⁴³ Vasilios Tasikas, "Rush-Bagot: An Old Treaty gets Dusted Off," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* 132, no.3 (March 2006): 1.

²⁴⁴ The lack of language on this matter would prove to be of significant consequence in later years, as the capabilities and mandate of the U.S. Coast Guard were vastly expanded.

²⁴⁵ David Holloway, "Stalin and the Bomb," *Origins of the Cold War: An International History*, (eds.) Melvin Leffler and David Painter (London: Routledge, 2005).

application of joint defence measures remains the most active of our current relations with Canada. Our military authorities are naturally insistent on closing the gap between Alaska and Greenland."²⁴⁶ Defence cooperation, thus, shifted to the continental Arctic, effectively sending the common defence issues on the Great Lakes into hibernation for the duration of the Cold War.

The transforming global security environment led to a more global outlook for the defence of North America. The continental early air-warning and intercept system in the Arctic was enhanced by the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance in 1949, which formed a multi-national perimeter across Western Europe to collectively defend against Soviet aggression. The combination of the Canada-U.S. bilateral defence relationship and NATO alliance secured the continent from any threat posed by the use of conventional military tactics, and thus changed the focus of continental defence to developing a nuclear deterrent. Defence against conventional threats therefore diminished in favour of counteracting the Soviet nuclear threat for the remainder of the Cold War.

Cold War Political Divergence

It is important to note here the significance of political relations in the development of continental security and defence during the Cold War. Much as the Roosevelt-King relationship had influenced defence policy-making in the Second World War, relations between leaders in Ottawa and Washington during the Cold War era dictated the degree and pace of security and defence convergence. And this was an era fraught with politically divisive issues surrounding continental defence and foreign policy. The persistent threat of nuclear engagement created a consistently high level of tension between Canada and the U.S.

²⁴⁶ Dean Acheson, "Memorandum Acting Secretary of State to President Truman, October 1946," *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946 – Volume 5* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1969), 55.

characterized by differences of opinion on the management of issues such as the CIA's failed Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961, the Cuban Missile Crisis of late 1962, the Vietnam War, as well as the handling of sensitive continental defence matters such as the deployment of nuclear weapons in Canada and Ballistic Missile Defence. Divergent political outlooks as the Cold War evolved slowed the progression of joint security and defence. Both states signed on to the multilateral NATO alliance, and later, to the bilateral North American Air Defence Command (NORAD)²⁴⁷ arrangement, which unified continental air-defences. But the differing degrees of engagement in the international theatre as a result of the asymmetry in power resulted in, at times, incompatible stances on continental security and defence issues.

For the much smaller Canada, the scale of military preparedness proposed by the United States sparked concerns. Canadian Minister of National Defence Brooke Claxton cautioned that with joint defence "it may be very difficult... for the Canadian Government to reject any major defence proposal which the United States Government presents with conviction as essential for the defence of North America," vocalizing Canada's continuing territorial sovereignty concerns in the face of an increasingly weighted American influence in North America defence policy-making.²⁴⁸ There was little in the way of alternative though, and all things considered, the shared nuclear threat made defence cooperation and coordination with the United States both attractive and unavoidable, setting the tone for a "...partnership [that] was destined to be a stormy one."²⁴⁹

²⁴⁷ The arrangement was renamed the North American Aerospace Defence Command following the 1981 renewal to account for the militarization of space.

²⁴⁸ Brooke Claxton, quoted in David Bercuson, *True Patriot: the Life of Brooke Claxton, 1898-1960* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 288.

²⁴⁹ J.L. Granatstein, *Yankee Go Home*, 100.

One of the most immediate and important developments was the standardization of various security and defence practices in areas such as military staff procedures, operating methods, training techniques, equipment across the services, and research and development. In each of these cases, the objective was to increase efficiency by reducing duplicative efforts and assigning specific tasks to one country to carry out on behalf of both.²⁵⁰ But political meddling in these military and defence matters reduced the pace and effectiveness of integration throughout this era, whilst several decades of close "neighbourly" relations began to wane as the strategic roles for each state, once again, started to transform.

The rebirth of Canadian nationalism complicated the defence relationship from a political standpoint, particularly following the signing of NORAD in 1957. After more than fifty years of accommodation, political relations between the two states showed signs of fatigue as attitudes to the Cold War engagement began to diverge in the 1960s. A U.S. State Department brief from 1961 captures the issue, indicating that, where relations with Canada played a role of comparative insignificance in the United States, "a complicating factor in dealing with the Canadian Government is that relations with the United States inevitably play an important role in Canadian domestic politics...."²⁵¹ This became increasingly evident as American international engagements increased and was epitomized by the poor relations between President John F. Kennedy and Prime Minister John Diefenbaker.

The Canada-U.S. relationship during the Kennedy-Diefenbaker years seemed to harken back to the early twentieth century when relations were "...best described as an asymmetrical partnership dominated by ambivalence and periods of convergence and

²⁵⁰ "Memorandum from Military Secretary to Cabinet Defence Committee, Ottawa 9 August 1949," *DCER – Volume 15* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1995), 1540.

²⁵¹ Quoted in J.L. Granatstein, *Yankee Go Home*, 126-127.

divergence,"²⁵² rather than the maturing and cooperative link that had developed since 1935. Diefenbaker, it was said, despised Kennedy and utilized a growing wave of anti-Americanism in Canada to diminish the tempo of cross-border cooperation, especially in defence policy.²⁵³ And this contempt was largely mutual. Kennedy's briefing materials representing the Canadian Prime Minister as "...anti-American, extremely nationalistic, and afraid to make hard decisions;"²⁵⁴ while his own opinion was that Diefenbaker was "wilfully oblivious" to the severity of the Soviet threat.²⁵⁵

Mutual dislike aside, the real difficulties in Canadian-American relations were based on substantive defence issues; such as the attempts to place nuclear weapons in Canadian territory as an added deterrent against a Soviet attack from the north. Canada's involvement in the NATO alliance entailed its acceptance of the use of nuclear weapons, as did its involvement in NORAD; but Diefenbaker's Cabinet was divided on the issue of stationing these weapons on Canadian soil. Defence scholar Jon McLin argues the stalemate was largely due to Secretary of State for External Affairs Howard Green, a close confidant of Diefenbaker, who "...was apparently motivated more by a concern for the purity of Canadian soil than by a desire to reduce the risks of war." Green seemed to attach "...more importance to keeping nuclear weapons... out of Canada, where they could only be used defensively, than in refusing such weapons for Canadian forces in Europe, where their function could be called offensive and even provocative."²⁵⁶ This Canadian politicking infuriated the

²⁵² Galen Perras, "Who Will Defend British Columbia?: Unity of Command on the West Coast, 1934-42," *Parallel Destinies: Canadian-American Relations West of the Rockies* (eds.) John Findlay and Ken Coates (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 181.

²⁵³ Norman Hillmer and J.L. Granatstein, "Those Damn Yankees: the Hardy Perennial of Canadian anti-Americanism is Back in Full Flower," *Maclean's* 114, no. 43 (October 22, 2001): 59.

²⁵⁴ Norman Hillmer and J.L. Granatstein, *For Better or For Worse: Canada and the United States to the 1990s*, 201.

²⁵⁵ John Herd Thompson and Stephen Randall, *Canada and the United States: Ambivalent Allies*, 217.

²⁵⁶ Jon McLin, *Canada's Changing Defense Policy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), 236-237.

Americans who believed that Canadian delays increased the risks posed to the continent. But Diefenbaker, a staunch nationalist, concerned for Canadian sovereignty rights, initially tried to refuse taking the missiles and ultimately chose to delay actions until the details of the arrangement could be worked out.

Other issues also provoked cross-border antipathies. The Cuban Missile Crisis, for instance, aggravated the Kennedy-Diefenbaker disdain when the U.S. failed to consult Canada on its plans for a naval blockade of Cuba until "....a stage when [Diefenbaker] could do little more than acknowledge their receipt,"²⁵⁷ violating the tenet of consultation set out in the NORAD agreement. The issues reached a boiling point between the two states when Diefenbaker subsequently publicly suggested that the issue be put to the UN to determine the validity of the Cuban nuclear missile claims, seemingly questioning Kennedy's proof that Soviet missiles were present on the island.²⁵⁸ This lack of unity on the issue, particularly one so imminent and in close proximity revealed the expanding gulf in cross-border relations and demonstrated a changing continental mood in the face of the expanding Cold War.

Political deterioration during these years affected the continental defence relationship, as relations at the leadership level cooled through successive administrations after the Kennedy-Diefenbaker divide. Gradually more divergent foreign policy outlooks also played a role, with the U.S. preferring the more aggressive and unilateral military approach embodied in the Cuban Missile Crisis and Vietnam War, while Canada favoured a more peaceable means, demonstrated by its injection of peacekeeping as a viable tool to avoid conflict beginning with the 1956 Suez Crisis.²⁵⁹ There was a clear attempt by Canada

²⁵⁷ Basil Robinson, *Diefenbaker's World: A Populist in Foreign Affairs* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 285.

²⁵⁸ Hillmer and Granatstein, *For Better or For Worse: Canada and the United States to the 1990s*, 205.

²⁵⁹ Gordon Stewart, 158-165.

to distinguish itself as the world fell deeper into the nuclear standoff. In consequence, each proposed development to continental defence was loaded with political baggage, constraining the expansion of joint defence.

Ultimately, continental security and defence took precedence over political squabbling when the circumstances dictated the necessity of cooperation. And despite the overwhelming military strength of the United States and its oft heralded ability to defend the continent alone, there proved to be a clear value in cooperation and conciliation. Defence planners on either side of the border understood the importance of putting up a common front against the Soviet threat; as such, the vast capabilities gap between each state's military was tolerated for the purpose of partnership. In a 1960 memo to the Defence Minister, Canadian Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff F.R. Miller explained that Washington "...recognized the limitations of Canadian ability to provide complete defence and... have also recognized that anything [Canada can] do lessens the efforts that they have to make for the defence of the United States."²⁶⁰ In similar sentiment more than a decade later, U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger went further, commenting that "...the Canadian defence contribution to [common military and defence activities] would be marginal compared with that of the major European powers or the United States. Canada's ties, therefore, above all [have] a strong symbolic character."²⁶¹ Notwithstanding the capability gap, the strategic value of Canadian territory to American security and defence ensured that Canada was able to have its interests heard. Defence scholars Joseph Jockel and Joel Sokolsky argue that "...the United States [could not] threaten to reduce its commitments to Canadian security in the hope of eliciting a

²⁶⁰ Department of National Defence, Library and Archives Canada, RG12 note 964-6-3 [microfiche], "Air Marshall F.R. Miller, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to Douglas Harkness, Minister of National Defence, 'The Air Problem,'" 22 December, 1960.

²⁶¹ Henry Kissinger, *The White House Years* (Boston: Little Brown, 1979), 383.

greater effort. 'Uncoupling' [was] not a possibility. Geography, not the good will of the United States, nor Canadian-U.S. Friendship, nor even common interests, has placed Canada under the protection of the U.S...."²⁶² In this manner, the two countries essentially agreed to disagree on politically charged issues. The necessity of the partnership required that each side accept some manner of discord, while the threat of nuclear war hung over the continent.

Mulroney, Reagan, and the end of the Cold War

By the late 1970s, cooling political relations and divergent foreign policy objectives had come to characterize the relations between the two states. Where once President Roosevelt had praised Canada's Prime Minister as one of his "...oldest personal friends,"²⁶³ State Department officials referred to Prime Minister Trudeau as "a leftist high on pot."²⁶⁴ The "special friendship" of the Second World War had unmistakably lost its lustre in the gloom of the international suspicion and quiet hostility of the Cold War.²⁶⁵ Consequently, Canada and the U.S. idled on close military and defence relations with a comparatively divergent approach to external political affairs. Security and defence relations were growing fatigued by the cross-border political bickering and the constant strain of international tensions, and they too began to digress. Under Trudeau, Canada pursued a foreign policy "Third Option" in the 1970s, with the objective to "...pursue a comprehensive long-term strategy to develop and strengthen the Canadian economy and other aspects of its national

²⁶² Joseph Jockel and Joel Sokolsky, *Canada and Collective Security: Odd Man Out* (Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1986), 32.

²⁶³ Quoted in Conrad Black, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt: Champion of Freedom* (New York: Public Affairs, 2003), 842.

²⁶⁴ Quoted in J.L. Granatstein and Robert Bothwell, *Pirouette: Pierre Trudeau and Canadian Foreign Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 372.

²⁶⁵ The "special relationship" was, for all intents and purpose, terminated by the early 1970s. Bruce Muirhead, "From Special Relationship to Third Option: Canada, the U.S., and the Nixon Shock," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 34, no. 3 (Autumn 2004): 439-462.

life and...reduce...Canadian vulnerability.”²⁶⁶ In effect, this approach sought to moderate the perpetually deepening Canadian dependency on the United States by improving economic ties with Japan and its European allies in NATO. Historian Fred Schneider explains that "Canada sought deliberately... to carve out a more distinctly Canadian economic, cultural, military, and foreign affairs 'identity...," but the lack of an accompanying industrial strategy to help Canadian manufacturers gain traction in these markets proved to be a significant oversight.²⁶⁷ In the end, the “Third Option” proved to be impractical, with the Japanese and European economic centres proving no match for the allure and proximity of the American market. By the early 1980s, Canadian and American political, security, and defence relations once again started to converge.

Following his final re-election in 1980, Trudeau set out to quietly repair relations with the United States by improving cross-border security and defence linkages. His decision to allow the United States to test cruise missiles over Canadian territory in 1982 demonstrated this change of tack in response to heightening Cold War tensions, where former U.K. Secretary of State for Defence Denis Healey indicated that "the prospects for world peace seemed worse than at any time since 1945.”²⁶⁸ This defence rapprochement initiated a change in the course of continental defence relations, but it was the election of Brian Mulroney in 1984 that acted as a true catalyst to hastening the rebuild of Canadian-American goodwill. As Prime Minister Mulroney campaigned on an aggressive agenda to "refurbish" security and defence ties as the Cold War was reaching its final climax.

²⁶⁶ Mitchell Sharp, quoted in Hillmer and Granatstein, *For Better or For Worse: Canada and the United States to the 1990s*, 252.

²⁶⁷ Fred Schneider, "Exploring the Third Option: Canadian Foreign Policy and Defence," *Current History* 79, no. 460 (November 1980): 122-123.

²⁶⁸ Denis Healey, quoted in Jeremy Kinsman, "Who is My Neighbour? Trudeau and Foreign Policy," *London Journal of Canadian Studies* 18, (2002/2003): 114.

The Canadian anti-Americanism of the 1960s and 1970s was slowly dissipating in the face of more grievous concerns, notably the reinvigorated Soviet threat and a stagnating economy. The developing amity between American President Ronald Reagan and Mulroney seemed to harken back to the "special friendship" of the Roosevelt- King era, exemplified at the "Shamrock Summit" in 1985. One of the primary objectives of this high-level meeting was to demonstrate the strength of Canadian-American relations after years of cross-border antagonisms. In terms of substantive issues, the Summit led to the signing of treaties resolving a long-standing West Coast fisheries dispute and another to modernize the continent's aerospace defences in the Canadian Arctic. But it was the symbolic character of the Summit that proved most endearing. As Reagan commented, "we are more than neighbors or friends or allies, we are kin who together have built the most productive relationship between any two countries in the world today... For the United States there is no more important relationship."²⁶⁹ Agreements to modernize continental air defence, protect Arctic sovereignty, and jointly combat the flow of drugs into North America subsequently followed, lessening the negative consequences of Canada's decision to defer a formal role in the American Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI). International relations scholar Kim Nossal judges that "what was different about the Mulroney years is how conflicts in the relationship tended to be managed. Policy disagreements were always conducted with the shadow of the future very much in mind, and always with a recognition that the Canadian-American relationship was paradoxically hugely complex but at the same time fragile and easy to damage."²⁷⁰ What Mulroney was able to demonstrate from this reformed approach was that

²⁶⁹ Ronald Reagan, quoted in Adam Bromke and Kim Nossal, "A Turning Point in U.S.-Canadian Relations," *Foreign Affairs* 66, no. 1 (Fall 1987): 153.

²⁷⁰ Kim Nossal, "The Mulroney Years: Transformation and Tumult," *Policy Options* 24, no.6 (June-July 2003): 81.

making an effort to contribute to, and cooperate on, continental defence issues important to the United States was worth a great deal of goodwill in Washington and preserved a Canadian voice in continental defence matters, as exhibited in the Arctic Cooperation Agreement of 1988.²⁷¹

Defence scholar James Kurth explains that the rapid modernization of global armaments significantly changed the nature of the strategic threat to the continent. By the mid-1980s, "...North America was facing new and more complex threats that would increase the priority of continental defence for the United States," necessitating a renewed Canadian participation in constructing "... a credible capability to fight and win a global, non-nuclear war against the Soviet Union."²⁷² And similar to previous periods of heightened international tensions, the Canadian government recognized the need to assuage American unease over its homeland defence by harmonizing defence policy and outlook for the continent.

The 1987 White Paper on defence reveals this "refurbished" Canadian attitude towards continental defence, proposing to reconstruct Canadian conventional defences in order to meet present and future threats. As the Prime Minister's forward noted:

The world has changed dramatically since the last review of Canadian defence policy. But certain truths endure. As we now seek ways to put East-West relations on a more stable footing, we must remind ourselves that stability cannot be achieved through idle dreams. Peace and stability must be earned, and earned constantly. For Canada, this quest continues to be best pursued through cooperation with our allies. This is a recognition of our common history, our shared interests and our community of values. This unity of purpose is the very foundation of our Alliance, as important to our security as the concrete efforts we undertake to keep the peace. Our commitments reflect a sober recognition that Canada's survival and prosperity depend not only on what we do at home but on the well-being and security of the West as a whole.²⁷³

²⁷¹ Refer to Rob Huebert, "A Northern Foreign Policy: The Politics of Ad Hocery," *Diplomatic Departures: The Conservative Era in Canadian Foreign Policy, 1984-93* (eds.) Nelson Michaud and Kim Nossal (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2001): 84-99.

²⁷² James Kurth, "The New Maritime Strategy: Confronting Peer Competitors, Rogue States, and Transnational Insurgents," *Orbis* 51, no.4 (Fall 2007): 588.

²⁷³ Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, Department of National Defence, *Challenge and Commitment: A Defence Policy for Canada* (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1987), II.

This admission of the necessity of cooperation illustrates that even after two decades of cooling relations, when the strategic environment dictated the need for deeper cooperation and coordination, Canada would meet American appeals for a greater defence support.

The modernization of continental defence systems and strategy during this era should not be recognized as a fundamental shift in continental defence policy, though, but rather as a needed upgrade to the existing defences to meet an evolving threat. Historian Desmond Morton notes that by the early 1980s, the capability of the Canadian Forces threatened to collapse due to years of neglect. Under Trudeau, "...Canada's navy lost its only aircraft carrier, its army said goodbye to a number of proud regiments, and its air force was forced to wait another decade to receive new aircraft."²⁷⁴ Recognizing this "rust-out" in the final years of his government, Trudeau initiated the modernization of the Canadian Forces by expanding the defence budget from \$4.3 billion in 1980 to \$7.9 billion.²⁷⁵ The Mulroney defence revitalization strategy extended this defence expansion and received most of the commendation for rebuilding Canadian defence capabilities even though the renewal was largely accomplished under the Trudeau's leadership. This initiative included the procurement of \$200 million worth of German-made tanks, as well as \$3.8 billion in patrol and interceptor aircraft.²⁷⁶ Regardless, the historical strategy of the Canadian defence outlook remained, with state sovereignty, diplomatic consultation, and a disarmed common border representing the foundational framework of the policy, with the added precept of acknowledging the unavoidable role of cooperating with American defence requirements.

Before this defence policy truly took hold however, the Warsaw Pact collapsed, as did the Soviet Union shortly thereafter, diminishing (although not eradicating) the threat to

²⁷⁴ Desmond Morton, *Understanding Canadian Defence* (Toronto: Penguin/McGill Institute, 2003), 80.

²⁷⁵ Hillmer and Granatstein, *For Better or For Worse: Canada and the United States to the 1990s*, 282-283

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

North America. This unforeseen collapse radically changed the nature of the security environment by 1991, rendering even a conventional arms build-up (politically) excessive. The central threat to continental security over the previous four decades dissipated so suddenly that preparation for the post-Cold War environment, for the most part, was non-existent and the sudden absence of a threat became a threat in and of itself. The conclusion of the Cold War led to a reassessment of continental security and defence on both sides of the border, as both governments tried to construct a viable defence policy for the continent in the absence of an enemy. Yet, for the purposes of this study, what was important about the closing years of the Cold War in North America was the return to cordial and cooperative defence relations, ensuring that as a new security and defence era emerged, both sides were committed to continuing cooperation and coordination. Contentious issues remained in the relationship but there appeared to be a greater candour in discussing and resolving difficult common issues between the two states.

The Post-Cold War World and the Rush-Bagot Agreement

The immediate defence challenge in the post-Cold War environment was how to take advantage of an absence of a threat to the continent for the first time since the early twentieth century. Paring down the level of defence preparation was the immediate focus, raising the question of how the reduced security and defence resources should be used to meet emerging threats while continuing to address the declining but still potent Russian threat. Jockel suggests that in the wake of the abrupt collapse and the general lack of preparedness, "for the moment... doing nothing new was the most sensible thing to do..."²⁷⁷ Entering into the 1990s, Canadian-American continental defence relations remained interdependent but the need for

²⁷⁷ Joseph Jockel, *Canada in NORAD, 1957-2007: A History* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007), 140.

such an approach appeared to be diminishing. It was commonly believed in security and defence circles that should another threat to continental security arise, its ascent would be gradual and apparent, providing ample opportunity to "...reconstitute a large military establishment." Thus, a strategy was constructed around the idea that the post-Cold War world would be a "unipolar" world dominated by the United States and there was no longer an explicit threat to the security of North America.²⁷⁸

By the early 1990s North American defence cooperation underwent a crisis of character, with resources and personnel available but no enemy to direct their efforts towards. Douglas Bland and Sean Maloney write that "...the ending of the cold war left an odd silence, a strategic vacuum, unlike anything experienced at the intersection of previous strategic shifts."²⁷⁹ Attempts to maintain strong linkages continued, with Canada and the U.S. looking outwards, collaborating in a number of multilateral military operations including peace enforcement in the Gulf War of 1991 and Kosovo in 1999, as well as peacekeeping operations in Somalia, Haiti, and East Timor.²⁸⁰ At home, the NORAD mandate was expanded to accommodate the U.S.-led War on Drugs, but this was short lived as Jockel indicates that "...US counter-drug strategy shifted in 1993 away from interdiction of shipments in transit to interdiction within the countries of origin."²⁸¹ This was followed by a more focussed involvement of NORAD resources in military space operations after the Agreement's renewal in 1996. Yet, in spite of all this, demobilization, reduced defence

²⁷⁸ Joel Sokolsky, "The Bilateral Defence Relationship with the United States," *Canada's International Security Policy* (eds.) David Dewitt and David Leyton-Brown (Toronto: Prentice Hall Canada Inc., 1995), 185.

²⁷⁹ Douglas Bland and Sean Maloney, *Campaigns for International Security: Canada's Defence Policy at the Turn of the Century* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), 102.

²⁸⁰ Joseph Jockel and Joel Sokolsky, *The End of the Canada-U.S. Defence Relationship* (Kingston: Centre for International Relations, Queen's University, 1996), 10.

²⁸¹ Joseph Jockel, *Canada in NORAD*, 147.

spending, and a diminution of force levels and capacities were what truly came to define the post-Cold War era in continental security and defence.

The diminishing Russian threat meant a return to a more economical, conventional defence of the continent, rekindling a long quiescent approach to continental security. And since trading geography for protection was no longer a viable defence policy due to the decreasing importance of Canadian territory, the Rush-Bagot Agreement and its specifications for conventional arms was reawakened from its long hibernation during the Cold War. Roussel reminds us that without the sharing of a common threat, "the defining characteristic of Canadian-American relations is power imbalance, and the disparity is such that it affects all interactions between the two countries."²⁸² As such, revitalizing the Great Lakes armament convention provided a way to reassert a peacetime cooperative approach to defence. It also assured a drawdown in the size and expenditure of the maritime fleets of both states by re-establishing disarmament as a principal norm in the North American continental interior.

In the 1990s, the Rush-Bagot Agreement began to once again play a noteworthy role in continental defence. Described during this period as the "longest lasting and most successful disarmament treaty in international history,"²⁸³ this historic convention experienced a renaissance in post-Cold War security and defence development. In 1993 America defence scholar James Tritten reported that the national security strategy of the George H.W. Bush administration, the regionally focussed national military strategy sponsored by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the new NATO strategic concept were "...all licenses to revisit conventional wisdom on naval arms control" because of their focus on

²⁸² Roussel, *The North American Democratic Peace*, 235.

²⁸³ Graham Evans and Jeffery Newnham, *Dictionary of International Relations* (New York: Penguin Publishing, 1998), 483-484.

rebuilding an inclusive deterrent against future threats.²⁸⁴ This reinvigorated the Rush-Bagot Agreement and the importance of the Great Lakes, as the focus of strategic defence once again shifted, returning to a more conventional focus on borders and continental approaches.

This is not to say that the substance of the Agreement went unrecognized during the Cold War, but rather that its strategic importance was more symbolic than practical. Celebrating its 150th anniversary in 1967, the Rush-Bagot Agreement appeared to be fading into the twilight years of its relevance, its technical provisions long-since obsolete and more general conditions of disarmament and consultation having long since been entrenched as part of the greater foundation of continental defence cooperation. The value of the Agreement was still recognized, with U.S. President Lyndon Johnson commenting that it stature as the oldest arms limitation agreement in the world is a piece of history that helps to define how far Canadian-American relations have progressed. He believed "for that reason alone it deserves wide recognition...[because] the unfortified boundary between our two countries is a symbol to the rest of the world of the harmony and understanding which can be reached by two sovereign governments..."²⁸⁵ However the strategic direction of continental defence at the time had relegated the defence of the Great Lakes into a secondary role, leaving the Agreement to decline.

Its renaissance in the post-Cold War era, therefore, is a testament to its incredible resiliency in maintaining relevance through almost two centuries of military development. Its ability to promote independence and interdependence at the same time was crucial to its success, as diplomat Henry Sherman Boutell comments, "it conferred no power on either

²⁸⁴ James Tritten, "A New Look at Naval Arms Control," *Security Dialogue* 24, no.3 (1993): 337; 341.

²⁸⁵ Lyndon Johnson, quoted in Janet Morchain, *Sharing a Continent: An Introduction Canadian-American Relations* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1973), 92.

party, and it imposed equal restraints on them both."²⁸⁶ Now, without an enemy threatening, continental defence cooperation fell back on the only real common ground it had shared during peace-time. Tritten points out that the Agreement was one of the few norms between the two states that had been tested during a period of international peace, and served as a reminder that an independent political atmosphere in peace resulted in a more relaxed and accommodating approach to security and defence.²⁸⁷ Having the opportunity to follow independent foreign policies in the post-Cold War was therefore attractive and led to a more perceptible divergence in Canadian and American international policies, which in turn helped to preserve stable defence cooperation at home. The success of the Reagan-Mulroney model of expanding joint defence programs on compulsory activities such as search and rescue, combating piracy, and stemming the flow of illegal narcotics proved to be an agreeable approach to defence cooperation moving forward in the post-Cold War environment.²⁸⁸ In the absence of an imminent, or even significant, threat though, this cooperation had to be limited scope to be politically acceptable in Canada, something which would be difficult to cultivate because of the inexperience of both states in a peace-time setting.

A Continuing Need in a Changing World?

North America had adopted the custom of forming ad hoc committees to resolve conflicts peacefully by the very early twentieth century. Rousset contends that

this recurrent method of conflict resolution and its evolution reveal the existence of a process whereby the actors recognized and integrated certain norms... including equal representation, non-recourse to violence, depoliticization of problems, and...

²⁸⁶ Henry Sherman Boutell, 344-345.

²⁸⁷ James Tritten, *A New Case for Naval Arms Control*, Naval Post-Graduate School Monterey, California, December 1992, 25.

²⁸⁸ James Tritten, "A New Look at Naval Arms Control," 337; 341.

permanent commissions that, in turn, would adopt, elaborate, and formalize the practices...²⁸⁹

And these joint institutions and norms expanded security and defence interdependence from the onset of the Great War through to the end of the Cold War, while Canada and the United States faced a common enemy and shared common security and defence interests. This was a very significant continental development, providing the much smaller Canada with the capacity "...to define the terms of an American military presence that, in a crisis, might have been much more onerous than they turned out to be."²⁹⁰ Defence commentator Dwight Mason marvels over the construction of joint defence during such tense periods in the international theatre, writing that "the fact that [joint defence] was established and that it has worked so well despite the asymmetrical power relationship between the two countries is a tribute to the strength, quality, and creativity of the defence relationship..."²⁹¹

The collapse of the Soviet Union tested this quality and creativity to its utmost, thanks to a rapid and unexpected change to the continental threat environment. An American defence review in 1991 noted that "the major changes that have occurred in the strategic environment and the changes resulting from emerging Canadian and US policies and strategies indicate a very uncertain future... in the absence of a coherent and compelling strategy that fully takes into account the new strategic environment."²⁹² Yet defence relations continued, remaining cooperative leading into the twenty-first century, but with an unclear direction moving forward. The diminishing nuclear threat brought about a renaissance of conventional defences on the continent, typified a shifting focus for air defence to the

²⁸⁹ Roussel, *The North American Democratic Peace*, 237.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 221.

²⁹¹ Dwight Mason, "The Canadian-American North American Defence Alliance in 2005," *International Journal* 60, no.2 (Spring 2005): 387-388.

²⁹² Analytic Services (ANSER), "White Paper on NORAD Defence Policy and Strategy Review," 23 October 1991. Reprinted in Jockel, *Canada in NORAD*, 145.

Atlantic and Pacific coasts and a greater focus on, and utilization of, maritime assets, including a growing interoperability between the U.S. and Canadian navies in both blue and brown water.²⁹³ However, with no predictable threats to the continent in the short and medium-term, it was difficult to plan contingencies. So as a new century turned over, continental security and defence sat back and waited for a new challenger. The result of this approach proved to be calamitous, as this lackadaisical approach left the continent unprepared for dealing with the arrival of a new threat.

²⁹³ A blue water navy refers to a naval force capable of sustained overseas deployment, typically supported by an air-craft carrier; a brown water navy refers to a force with the capacity to carry out military operations in littoral environments in coastal and regional areas, often equipped with much smaller boats such as cutters. Refer to Joseph Jockel, *Canada in NORAD, 1957-2007: A History*; Rob Huebert, "Continental Defence at Sea: The Canadian Challenge, *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 9, no. 2 (Winter 2006/07): 1-9.

Post-9/11

The grievous attacks launched against the United States on 11 September 2001 (9/11) ended the decade-long interlude of tranquility in North America, bringing new purpose and direction to continental defence. The emergence of Islamic terrorism as the primary threat to the continent quickly resurrected fears of imminent attack, necessitating a reimagining of continental defences to address this asymmetric and unconventional menace. But subsequent reforms were not unfamiliar. Stephen Clarkson writes that as with "...the Cold War, Ottawa found itself on the familiar terrain of having to coordinate, if not harmonize, its policies with an enemy-obsessed Washington. With the disappearance of the Soviet Union the threat, the players, the ideologies, and the theatre of war had all changed, but the old patterns of asymmetrical cooperation reappeared."²⁹⁴ Unlike the Cold War, though, a successful attack

²⁹⁴ Stephen Clarkson and Maria Banda, "Paradigm Shift or Paradigm Twist: the Impact of the Bush Doctrine on Canada's International Position," *Whose Canada: Continental Integration, Fortress North America, and the*

was launched against the mainland United States for the first time since the British assault on Washington in 1814. The 9/11 attacks therefore shocked security and defence planners, calling into question the competence of continental defences in addressing emerging threats.

Terrorism was not unheard of in North America previous to 9/11. As Jockel notes, "...the 1993 attempted bombing of the World Trade Center in New York and the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing had demonstrated that the U.S. was not invulnerable to terrorist attack..."²⁹⁵ Yet continental defences remained ill-equipped to address such unconventional threats. The resulting fear of further attacks dictated the need for a more comprehensive approach to protecting the continent. And similar to previous periods of amplified international hostilities, Canada found itself facing increasing American requests to bolster its security and defence capabilities. The challenge, though, was trying to effectively utilize conventional forces against an unconventional threat.

Long ignored as a point of interest in continental defence, the Great Lakes experienced a revival following 9/11. The porous "backdoor" to America was identified as a likely target for terrorism due to the difficulties of defending the extensive coastlines and recreational boating population on the Lakes. U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Commander Vasilios Tasikas explains that "...for the first time in more than a century, the United States..., acknowledging a significant threat along its northern maritime border,... is consequently moving full-throttle in arming its Great Lakes fleet... justif[ying] this armament by asserting to Canada that [the threat of terrorism] is necessitating such heightened security

Corporate Agenda (eds.) Ricardo Grinspun and Yasmine Shamsie (Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007), 116.

²⁹⁵ Joseph Jockel, *Canada in NORAD*, 160.

measures."²⁹⁶ The attacks changed American thinking on continental security, which in turn affected the Canadian outlook. As David Bercuson explains:

...the defence of the continental United States... once again... [topped] the US priority list, ahead of virtually every other American foreign policy concern... In many respects, then, Canada today is in virtually the same position it was during the 10 years immediately after World War II; due to geography alone, Canada is once again vital for the defence of the United States itself, whether Canadians are aware of that reality, whether they like it, or even whether they are prepared to pay for it.²⁹⁷

Security and defence were thus revitalized as *the* central component of the Canadian-American relationship, and the Great Lakes became an integral constituent of this refocused defence for the first time since the aftermath of the Second World War.

There has been opposition to revisiting the possibility of an extensive joint defence relationship on both sides of the border since 2001. In the peaceful post-Cold War period both nations pursued a more independent policy, with each looking to trim domestic defence costs. Canada favoured an economical defence policy and spending on civilian security agencies rather than the military. On the other side, the U.S. preferred a more unilateralist approach to its homeland security. Nevertheless, former Canadian Ambassador to the United States Alan Gotlieb avers that "the most important requirement [in the Canadian-American defence relationship] is the recognition that our destiny... is inescapably tied to our geography."²⁹⁸ This chapter will explore how the emergence of new threats to the continent has served to revitalize the joint defence relationship on the Great Lakes and the role of the Rush-Bagot Agreement in governing Canadian-American armaments in the common maritime borderlands region. This maritime defence renaissance will be evaluated to identify

²⁹⁶ Vasilios Tasikas, 1.

²⁹⁷ David Bercuson, "Canada-US Defence Relations Post-11 September," *Canada Among Nations, 2003: Coping with the American Colossus*, (eds.) David Carment, Fen Osler Hampson and Norman Hillmer (Toronto: University of Oxford Press, 2003), 123.

²⁹⁸ Alan Gotlieb, "Romanticism and Realism in Canada's Foreign Policy," *Policy Options Politiques* 26, no.2 (February 2005): 26.

how the expanding defences on the Great Lakes since 9/11 continue to maintain the historic spirit of the Agreement, simply representing a defence modernization to address a prevailing asymmetric threat.

The Political Squeeze

The brief post-Cold War period afforded a much needed respite for both Canada and the United States. In the absence of an urgent need to put forth a common continental facade, Canada was able to strike out from under the American foreign policy wing and forge its own "soft power" agenda in its international affairs, characterized by an increasing number of peace operations as well as international policies independent of the United States, notably 1997's Land Mine Ban Treaty. The immediate consequences of this divide were minimal due to the relatively like-minded Clinton Administration in power in the United States; however, following the election of the hard-line conservative government of George W. Bush in 2000, political antagonisms over divergent foreign and defence policies were exacerbated. Defence scholar Joseph Nunez notes that the Canadian-American defence relationship at the turn of the twenty-first century was:

...an example of how values and interests can converge so pervasively that each side takes the other for granted, akin to a long-married couple. Nevertheless, important political differences are highlighted when administrations emerge from very different political viewpoints, as was the case between Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and President George [W.] Bush.²⁹⁹

These two North American leaders held much different international and ideological outlooks. Chrétien objected to Bush's "cowboy-style demeanour" in the promotion of American foreign policy objectives, while Bush viewed the decrepit state of the Canadian

²⁹⁹ Joseph Nunez, "Canada's Global Role: A Strategic Assessment of its Military Power," *Parameters* 34, no. 3 (Autumn 2004): 75.

Forces as a danger to U.S. security.³⁰⁰ The result was a drifting political relationship, akin to the antagonisms of the 1960s and 1970s, without a common threat holding the two states together.

The 9/11 attacks intensified these political differences, exposing a deep rift in the Canadian-American relationship. Nunez explains that the declining continental defence relationship had "...been strained for well over a decade, although the cracks in this partnership did not rise to public attention until... 11 September 2001." The intense scrutiny of American security arrangements following the attacks led to major critiques of the undefended northern border, and a general disdain for Canadian defence capabilities.³⁰¹ With its lenient immigration and abated border-security policies, Canada was accused in the American political media as being a haven for terrorists, creating a myth that the 9/11 attackers had entered into the United States surreptitiously across a porous Canadian border.³⁰² The political backlash from these accusations and public lambasting deepened the divide between the two states at a moment when continental defence relations should have been drawing closer together. As Philippe Lagassé indicates:

...the foundations for an effective defence of the continent [were] present. The CF [had] the capabilities and the backing to work with the US to enhance North American security. The problem [was] that a poor understanding of the politics of continental defence in the age of terror... undermine[d] the CF's role as an effective and appreciated player in continental defence.³⁰³

³⁰⁰ Tim Harper, "Canadian Prime Minister Lets Loose on 'Cowboy' Bush: Complains U.S. leader 'naive,' ignorant of Canada," *Toronto Star* 5 April, 2001. <http://www.commondreams.org/headlines01/0405-03.htm>. Accessed 15 July 2009.

³⁰¹ Joseph Nunez, 76.

³⁰² This theory was immediately disproven in 2001, however it persists as a popular belief in the United States. See Peter Andreas, "Redrawing the Line: Borders and Security in the Twenty-first Century," *International Security* 28, no. 2 (Fall 2003): 92; Sheldon Alberts, "Envoy Rebukes U.S. for linking 9/11 Terrorists to Canada," *National Post*, 21 April 2009. <http://www.nationalpost.com/m/story.html?id=1519587>. Accessed 02 June 2009.

³⁰³ Philippe Lagassé, "Credit, Fault and Caution: The Canadian Forces and Continental Defence," in *The 'New Security Environment': Is the Canadian Military up to the Challenge?* Edited by David Rudd and David S. McDonough (Toronto: The Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, 2004): 80.

Thus, in spite of a desire to expand security and defence cooperation amongst leading figures in both state's armed forces, joint action was delayed as a result of political wrangling and mutual misunderstanding.³⁰⁴ And with an increasing movement towards American unilateralism in matters of foreign and defence policy, this discord was occurring at precisely the wrong moment in time.

It has long been a Canadian policy to assuage American unease in matters of continental security and defence during times of international crises, and this attack on the American mainland diminished confidence in continental defence. Lagassé states that, at the time, Ottawa needed to realize "...that the politics of continental defence [had] evolved. Defence of the homeland [became] the United States' top national security priority." He adds that, because of the nature of the continental security breach, "when the stakes are this high, when the United States is this resolute, Ottawa cannot afford to vacillate. Demonstrating to our largest trading partner and closest ally that Canada is serious about the defence of North America [would] garner respect and ensure our credibility."³⁰⁵ The problem was that the nature of the attack was virtually unprecedented and the existing political antagonisms encouraged each side to maintain a very narrow view of the resulting circumstances. Political problems therefore grew out of fear, a realistic and not incomparable reaction under such circumstance. In the only analogous episode on the continental mainland, reactions were similar, with each side becoming insular and determined to protect its own interests first and foremost, though over the long-term political conciliation and defence cooperation proved to be the more reasoned approach.

³⁰⁴ J.L. Granatstein, "A Friendly Agreement in Advance: Canada-U.S. Defence Relations Past, Present, and Future," *C.D. Howe Institute Commentary: The Border Papers* 166 (June, 2002) quoted in Clarkson, "The View from the Attic: Toward a Gated Continental Community," in *The Rebordering of North America: Integration and Exclusion in a New Security Context*, edited by Peter Andreas and Thomas Biersteker (New York: Routledge, 2003): 74.

³⁰⁵ Philippe Lagassé, 90.

The British burning of the White House and destruction of American government buildings in Washington during the War of 1812 was the last time that a foreign attack was effectively launched on the American mainland. The threat to American homeland security then was arguably far greater than in the post-9/11 era, and although it temporarily became security obsessed, the United States chose a conciliatory route to ensure its future defence against such attacks. Political scientist David Hendrickson argues that "the general conclusion Americans drew from the war of 1812 was that the United States had passed through a harrowing crisis that almost broke up the union."³⁰⁶ And to resolve the issues of contention on the continent, the Rush-Bagot Agreement was constructed to reduce armaments and coordinate security measures in the central theatre for conflict, consequently leading to improved political relations. Historian John Lewis Gaddis draws similarities between this early attack on the U.S. and 9/11, claiming that "the pattern set by this now barely remembered violation of homeland security is one that has persisted ever since: that for the United States, safety comes from enlarging, rather than from contracting, its sphere of responsibilities."³⁰⁷ And this is a reaction that Canada should have recognized and responded to accordingly, understanding from its comprehensive history of defence cooperation with the U.S. that security takes top billing when the continent is threatened. Leading into World War II, Prime Minister King promised his American counterpart that "...enemy forces should not be able to pursue their way either by land, sea, or air to the United States across Canadian territory,"³⁰⁸ and this came to loosely define Canadian-American defence cooperation. In

³⁰⁶ David Hendrickson, "Pre-emption, Unilateralism, and Hegemony: The American Tradition?," *Orbis* 50, no. 2 (Spring 2006): 275.

³⁰⁷ John Lewis Gaddis, *Surprise Security and the American Experience* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), 12-13.

³⁰⁸ Quoted in Joel Sokolsky, "Sailing in Concert: The Politics and Strategy of Canada-US Naval Interoperability," *Geopolitical Integrity*. Edited by Hugh Segal. Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 2005: 199.

times of peril, as experienced in 2001, a conciliatory political response to assure the United States that it understood the gravity of the threat was not only necessary, but expected.

Desmond Morton underscores the need for quick and coordinated action by indicating that it was well within the norms of Canadian defence policy "...to do what [it] must do to make the Americans feel secure on their northern border. Americans may remember 9/11; [Canadians] must remember 9/12, when American panic closed the border and shook our prosperity to its very core."³⁰⁹ Coordination with the United States, therefore, was more necessary following the attacks than it had ever been previously, requiring Canada to comprehensively evaluate and rethink its border security.

Maritime Defence Revival on the Great Lakes

An evaluation of border security was undertaken in the aftermath of the attacks to help assess the existing vulnerabilities and the potential for further attacks along the common boundary. The use of commercial airliners as weapons on 9/11 encouraged defence planners to consider all potential risks no matter the degree of peculiarity, leading to a particularly grim appraisal of the defence infrastructure on the Great Lakes with one defence analyst proclaiming that "our border is Swiss cheese and the policies we have in place smell."³¹⁰ Both sides agreed that the porous and difficult to guard maritime border presented a security risk to both states; thus, reconstructing border security on the Great Lakes became a priority in the security reorganization on both sides of the border. Canadian Captain (N) Peter Avis explains that there was an emerging fear in security and defence planning circles of "...vulnerabilities emerging from benign, everyday practices. This brings us to the questions

³⁰⁹ Desmond Morton, "Partial text of a speech by Desmond Morton, McGill University, Montreal to the opening banquet of a Canadian conference of the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society," Toronto, 1 October, 2004.

³¹⁰ Lubomyr Luciuk quoted in Julian Beltrame, Tom Fennell, Ken Macqueen, William Lowther, and Eric Silver, "Fortress North America," *Maclean's* 114, no.42 (October 15, 2001): 25.

most likely to keep maritime security planners awake at night: how many other societal processes can be exploited in this manner, and how does our overt commitment to continuity in the flow of goods and persons across our borders affect our overall vulnerability?"³¹¹ Roussel speaks more directly, believing that "while commercial aviation remains a possible target, terrorists may turn their attention to other modes. Opportunity to do harm is as great, or greater, in maritime... transportation."³¹² The prospect of terrorists utilizing the vast openness of the Lakes was deemed to be one of the most critical threats to North American security, once again placing the Lakes near the centre of the Canadian-American defence relationship.

Numerous studies subsequent labelled the Lakes as "...the most lawless place in the United States"³¹³ and "...a prime target for exploitation by terrorist cells."³¹⁴ From a strategic standpoint, developing a comprehensive defence plan for the Lakes was fraught with complications. The region was not a defence priority during the Cold War despite maintaining an expanse of critical infrastructure, including international bridges, rail lines, and power plants, as well as a large bloc of the continental population located within 150 kilometres of the waters. The result was a poorly developed defence and administrative infrastructure that lacked proper surveillance capabilities for the level of maritime traffic. American defence scholar Stephen Flynn notes the particular concern centred around the estimated 18 million recreational boats on the common waters, which he notes is "...an estimate because no one in Washington really keeps track of boats. There is no national

³¹¹ Captain Peter Avis and Iain Grant, "Canadian Maritime Security and the Culture of Prevention," *Canadian Military Journal* 5, no.4 (Winter 2004-2005): 59.

³¹² Roussel, *The North American Democratic Peace*, 391.

³¹³ Katherine Peters & Michael Yamoshita, "Troubled Waters," *Government Executive* 37, no.1 (01 January 2005): 56.

³¹⁴ Joseph Dizenzo III, "A Multivariable technique for Analyzing U.S. Regional Maritime Risk," *Northcentral University*, Dissertation in candidacy for Doctorate of Philosophy. Prescott, Arizona, February 2007, 109.

registry or national system for licensing operators for recreational vessels... at present anyone who has the cash can own and operate one in U.S. waters."³¹⁵ In this case, both countries were guilty of dedicating little in the way of resources to survey, let alone defend, the Great Lakes.³¹⁶ And with the sea lanes and ports on the Great Lakes handling upwards of 200 million tons of maritime cargo in a given year,³¹⁷ this was quite obviously an inadequate approach in dealing with such an economically important and unique borderlands region. Some, such as Peter Andreas, argue that responding to these vulnerabilities by inflating the presence of naval and Coast Guard ships is "...likely to have little more than a placebo effect (however important that may be for domestic political consumption)."³¹⁸ But generally speaking, the prevailing line of reasoning notes that "...preparing for the worst makes the worst less likely to happen." Flynn, in fact, contends that "identifying and embracing pragmatic measures that reduce the consequences of unexpected events is not the defeatist position. It is the smartest thing to do."³¹⁹ From this standpoint it was resolved, in due course, that a return to a broad and joint conventional defence was necessary to bolster security along the common maritime border, though how to advance this strategy continued to be a point of contention.

By December 2001 Canada and the United States had jointly instituted a number of border security initiatives, beginning with the Smart Border Declaration and Action Plan,

³¹⁵ Stephen Flynn, *The Edge of Disaster: Rebuilding a Resilient Nation* (New York: Random House, 2007), 103.

³¹⁶ "Who's Guarding our Coasts? Here's a hint: It isn't the Navy. But we could develop an effective Canadian Coast Guard: Excerpts from the 17th Report, Senate Committee on National Security and Defence Chaired by the Honourable Colin Kenny," *Canadian-American Strategic Review*, July, 2004. <http://www.casr.ca/ft-senate2.htm>. Accessed 12 February 2009.

³¹⁷ Vasilios Tasikas, 1.

³¹⁸ Peter Andreas, "A Tale of Two Border: The U.S.-Mexico and U.S.-Canada Lines After 9-11," *The Center for Comparative Immigration Studies* (University of California, San Diego), 77 (2003): 7.

³¹⁹ Stephen Flynn, 154.

with the objective of bringing a greater degree of security to the Canada-U.S. border.

Reginald Stuart contends that this joint strategy:

...unleashed a flood of reform in Upper North American border management. A maritime liaison shared instruction teams and training, and exchange agreements put U.S. Coast Guard and Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers on each other's patrol boats on the Great Lakes. North American Aerospace Defence became a maritime as well as an air security agreement. At two-thirds of the 147 one-person designated land stations and marinas, U.S. And Canadian officers worked together in liaison. The Conservative Government elected in 2006 in Ottawa moved to arm Canadian border agents; and by then joint training occurred at large ports, so U.S. and Canadian officers understood one another's procedures better and built personal relationship.³²⁰

Maritime security scholar John Frittelli notes that there was significant concern that "...the maritime transportation system could be used by terrorists to smuggle personnel, weapons of mass destruction, or other dangerous materials into the United States," and also "...that ships in U.S. Ports, particularly large cargo or cruise ships, could be attacked by terrorists."³²¹ In order to neutralize this unease, steps were taken to expand the size and mandate of the USCG over the short-term, to increase its surveillance of the Canadian maritime border, to escort all gas and oil tankers during transit on the American side of the Lakes, and to stop all commercial vessels crossing the Great Lakes border.³²² This expansion was later supplemented with the *National Plan to Achieve Maritime Domain Awareness* (MDA) with the aim of being the frontline defence strategy for the entire American coastline, blue and brown water. The MDA project blurred the lines between the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard by providing the USCG with access to naval intelligence. This did not necessarily circumvent

³²⁰ Reginald Stuart, *Dispersed Relations: Americans and Canadians in Upper North America*, 263.

³²¹ J.F. Frittelli, "Port Security and Maritime Security issues for Congress," *Federation of American Scientists*, 5 December, 2003. <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/RL31733.pdf>. Accessed 18 October 2008.

³²² Peter Andreas, "Redrawing the Line: Borders and Security in the Twenty-first Century," 93.

the Rush-Bagot Agreement on the Great Lakes or the Posse Comitatus Act.³²³ However, it did enter into a grey-area of continental defence legislation.

The limits were pushed further in 2006 when a proposed expansion of the USCG mandate included the designation of 34 areas on the Great Lakes as permanent safety zones for live-fire machine gun practice. This proposal, to effectively arm the shared maritime border, went well beyond the limits of accepted practice on the Lakes, though it evaded the limits set by the Rush-Bagot Agreement because it was a Coast Guard initiative. Pressure from several interest groups, including recreational boaters, tourism operators, commercial fisherman, and environmental groups voiced their various concerns on this issue, with Toronto Mayor David Miller referring to the initiative as "...totally contrary to the long history of peaceful relations and environmental cooperation between the United States and Canada on the Great Lakes."³²⁴ Amidst this heavy protest the proposal was cancelled in December of 2006, though its effect was not lost in the expansion of security and defence measures on the Lakes.

This situation illustrated three important details of the post-9/11 security environment on the Great Lakes. For one, it demonstrated the lengths that the U.S. government was willing to go to ensure its homeland security, notably threatening to unilaterally arm the Great Lakes border for the first time since the late nineteenth century. It also illustrated the resilience and continuing relevance of the Rush-Bagot Agreement in this modernized security context, as the spirit of the Agreement managed to override this plan despite being outside its technical limits of naval arms control. Finally, as Lagassé indicates, it

³²³ The Posse Comitatus Act is a U.S. federal law passed in 1878, with the objective of substantially limiting the ability of the Government to use the military inside American borders on non-federal property. The Coast Guard is exempted from this Act during peacetime.

³²⁴ Peter Slevin, "Great Lakes Area Tries to Dodge a Bullet: Coast Guard Is Urged to Drop Its Plan for Live-Fire Target Practice," *Washington Post* (December 10, 2006), <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/12/09/AR2006120900354.html>> Accessed August 12, 2009.

demonstrated that "if the Canadian government appears to be stalling on continental defence co-operation, Washington can strip Canada of its status as an equal player in North American defence."³²⁵ These developments do not represent a fundamental change in the security and defence relationship, but rather exhibit a modernized response to increasing international pressures. Stephen Clarkson points out that "... the measures taken by the Canadian government to beef up security were used primarily to reassure the U.S. Government that Canada was not in fact a terrorist mecca..."³²⁶ Yet this remains consistent with its past efforts to secure the northern hinterlands during the Cold War and secure the maritime approaches to the continent during the Second World War and at the end of the Great War. In fact, appeasement of American security concerns is the stance that Canada has taken to continental defence since before the Second World War, and *avoiding* an expansion of defences on the Lakes would have represented a fundamental change to the continental security and defence relationship.

Focussing a greater amount of attention on the Great Lakes is a pragmatic approach to improving continental security, particularly from a political standpoint. It is a highly visible area loaded with critical infrastructure, and maritime shipping continues to be an important area for both the Canadian and American economies. In this respect, strictly from an emblematic standpoint, there is a strong value in boosting cooperative engagement on the Lakes, the area of the longest enduring Canada-U.S. cooperative security and defence engagement. Canadian naval Captain K.E. Williams, echoing the views of Prime Minister King prior to the Second World War, stressed the importance of upgrading Canada's defence capabilities to ensure "...that Canada is not used as a staging area for an attack on the U.S.

³²⁵ Philippe Lagassé, "Credit, Fault and Caution: the Canadian Forces and Continental Defence," 89.

³²⁶ Stephen Clarkson, 80.

which would be disastrous for the Canadian economy and Canada's relations with its most important ally."³²⁷ Ultimately, in the period following the 2001 attacks, the progression of the Canadian-American relationship once again hinged on their cooperation on matters of continental security and defence, much as it had during previous eras of security vulnerability on the continent. And once again, the Rush-Bagot Agreement proved to be an important asset in governing Canadian-American security relations on the Great Lakes.

The Rush-Bagot Revival

Since its origins, the Rush-Bagot Agreement has helped to reinforce strong security and defence relations while satisfying political necessities on a critical piece of shared continental geography. C.P. Stacey writes that, back "...when another Anglo-American war was possible and at sometimes even probable, the Rush-Bagot Agreement, by preventing large-scale naval competition... reduce[d] tensions along the border... [and] helped to bring us through that dangerous era."³²⁸ And this Agreement has consistently led Canada and the United States through eras of high international tension by avoiding the build-up of arms to address short-term conflicts and threats. This was repeatedly demonstrated during the rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada, the American Civil War, the Venezuelan Border Crisis, World War I and II, and the Cold War. Provisional expansions of continental defences to pre-empt emerging threats has been a common trend throughout the Canadian-American defence experience. In the post-9/11 world this is no different. American security requirements following the attacks dictated the need to modernize continental security to address new and emerging threats for which the continent was previously underprepared. In

³²⁷ Captain K.E. Williams, "The Canadian Navy: In the Vanguard of Canadian Foreign and Defence Policy," *The Canadian Navy and the New Security Agenda: Proceedings of the Maritime Security and Defence Seminar: Toronto, 26-27 April 2004* (ed.) Ann L. Griffiths (Halifax: Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, Dalhousie University, 2004).

³²⁸ C.P. Stacey *quoted in* Ron Purver, 591.

his assessment, USCG Captain Tasikas reveals that despite the political difficulties and international pressures that have plagued defence cooperation since 2001, it remains clear:

that both governments value the spirit of the 1817 agreement, which established a lasting principle of transparency and consultation. With this acknowledgment, both countries exchanged traditional diplomatic notes in April 2003 following consultations on arming cutters on the lakes. In practice, specific provisions of the accord limiting naval vessels to 'one hundred tons burden and armed with one eighteen-pound cannon' have long been surpassed. The guiding legacy of openness and candor, however, endures. The 1817 Rush-Bagot Agreement instituted a long spirit of border transparency between two neighboring countries and still symbolizes peaceful and cooperative U.S.-Canadian maritime relations.³²⁹

In commenting about Canadian-American relations along the border following the 9/11 attacks, Peter Andreas asserts that "statecraft is about power politics and deploying material resources, but it is also about perceptual politics and deploying symbolic resources... [especially] in times of high societal insecurity."³³⁰ In this manner, the Rush-Bagot Agreement has an role to play in post-9/11 continental defence relations. With the United States urging for an expansion of defences on the Lakes, it is important for Canada to respond, even nominally expanding its defence capacities to demonstrate its solidarity with the United States. Nevertheless, it is also necessary to ensure that the attacks and resulting short-term defence expansion is not used as a pretext to alter the long-term defence relationship. The history of the Rush-Bagot Agreement has frequently demonstrated that threats to the continent diminish as defences are modernized in response. And its maintenance through the defence modernization on the Great Lakes since 2001 reveals that despite political difficulties and divergent views on defence and foreign policy, there is an inherent importance and strength in maintaining traditional norms in the continental defence relationship.

³²⁹ Vasilios Tasikas, 1.

³³⁰ Peter Andreas, "Redrawing the Line: Borders and Security in the Twenty-first Century," 110-111.

Conclusion

The terrorist attacks against the United States on 11 September 2001 transformed the security and defence outlook on the North American continent. In the aftermath of the Cold War, the frequency of joint defence exercises and the high state of defence preparedness between Canada and the United States had declined, as did the consensus about the necessity to defend the continent in a binational manner. During this brief interlude of relative international peace, Canada and the United States developed more independent foreign and military policies, evidenced in the scarce mentioning of North American cooperation in the Clinton Administration's 1994 *A National Security Strategy of Enlargement and Engagement*.³³¹ In Canada, the Chrétien government moved explicitly towards a greater utilization of "soft power" in what defence scholars had branded the "Axworthy doctrine," named after then-Minister of Foreign Affairs Lloyd Axworthy, who set out the principal

³³¹ Joseph Jockel and Joel Sokolsky, *The End of the Canada-U.S. Defence Relationship* (Kingston: Centre for International Relations, Queen's University, 1996), 2.

goals of Canadian international engagement around human security, peace-building, and international human rights.³³² The 9/11 attacks nullified this split in relations, though, as

Dwight Mason explains that:

the events of September 11, 2001 showed that we needed to improve our defence structure and capabilities. The threat to North America looked more complicated and diverse. Now... our countries must pay far more attention to coastal, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River surveillance, warning and control. Further, consideration of the new threat situation led to the conclusion that events could now move very quickly in all domains...³³³

Security and defence preparation once again trumped all other issues in the Canadian-American relationship, with a greater focus for continental security returning to the Great Lakes.

There was considerable political and public discord between the two states in the immediate aftermath of the attacks, with harsh criticisms and blame being passed back and forth across the border, leading some to charge that the relationship between the two states had fundamentally changed. But cross-border defence relations remained firmly rooted in historic norms, falling back into the familiar practice of cooperatively modernizing continental security and defence to account for new threats. In fact, Philippé Lagasse argues that "...the Canadian government has been unambiguous in its expression of continental solidarity with the United States."³³⁴ The long-term defence outlook on the continent had not changed nor had the basic principles of the relationship on the ground, despite the immediate shock of the attack resulting in an expansion of border security measures. Stéphane Roussel contends that "if [Canadian-American] History has taught us anything, it is surely that the

³³² Fen Osler Hampson and Dean Oliver, "Pulpit Diplomacy: A Critical Assessment of the Axworthy Doctrine," *International Journal* 53, no. 3 (Summer 1998): 380.

³³³ Dwight Mason, "NORAD and the Maritime Defence of North America," *Centre for Strategic and International Studies*, 16 June 2006. http://csis.org/files/media/isis/pubs/060616_Mason.pdf. Accessed 01 September 2009, 2.

³³⁴ Philippe Lagasse, "Northern Command and the Evolution of Canada-US Defence Relations," 20.

problems and tensions of the past couple of years are neither new nor insoluble. We simply have not had the chance to realize this, yet."³³⁵

The gradual development of a stable foundation of norms and institutions to govern Canadian-American security and defence relations ensured that the stress of new threats and political discord over the short-term would not fundamentally transform defence relations. The origins of this cooperative framework on the Great Lakes came as a result of the 1817 Rush-Bagot Agreement. Historian Ron Purver notes the impressive trend that:

despite a history of repeated technical violations of the agreement, it is remarkable, given the long passage of time, the extent to which the agreement has nevertheless been upheld, in spirit if not in letter. The U.S. representative on the Permanent Joint Board on Defence, J. Graham Parsons, may have put it best when he said, that 'both the United States and Canada have worked on the basis that the spirit of the agreement was observed when any deviation from its terms was made by mutual consent.'³³⁶

From this starting point of mutual accord, Canada and the United States have come to share an understanding that each has a duty to the other to protect the continent and respect common security concerns. Dwight Mason argues that "the strength of our defence relationship is based on this history, which reflects shared values and experiences. These factors have created strong mutual confidence and trust."³³⁷ Two hundred years of precedent and common struggle lay behind continental security and defence, with relations waxing and waning quite regularly. Perhaps there has been a shift in public opinion from the post-Cold War era, but even in this case there is some degree of continuity of behaviour, as Roussel points out that "...current attitudes of Canadians resemble those held in the nineteenth

³³⁵ Roussel, 241.

³³⁶ Ron Purver, 592.

³³⁷ Dwight Mason, "US-Canada Defence Relations: A View From Washington," *Canada Among Nations 2003: Coping with the American Colossus* (eds.) David Carment, Fen Osler Hampson, and Norman Hillmer (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 135.

century, to the extent suspicions of American policy are based on assumptions of a degenerating American democracy."³³⁸

By evaluating the development of Canadian-American relations on the Great Lakes and the progression of the Rush-Bagot Agreement, an arrangement that has been in place throughout the entire history of cross-border security and defence relationship, it becomes clear that the current changes being made to the defence relationship are consistent with past reactions when the continent has come under threat. The nature of this threat is new, particularly as it is not represented overtly by a state government. However, the pattern of a rapid and heavy-handed American response coupled with an anxious and hesitant Canadian reaction is quite consistent with past continental defence modernizations during periods of high international tension. In 1812 continental relations were characterized by armed hostilities, particularly focussed on the Great Lakes, but with the institution of the Rush-Bagot Agreement and the removal of armaments from the primary theatre for cross-border conflict, relations were able to progress. Canada-U.S. defence relations were thereafter able to gradually improve upon this foundation of disarmament and cooperation, establishing norms and institutions to deepen joint security and defence interaction on the continent. Over the course of two centuries the two states were able to form a durable and interdependent defence relationship on the continent.

1812-1866

The period from 1812-1867, though preceding Canadian confederation, was a definitive era for continental security and defence relations, establishing an apprehensive but peaceful coexistence on the Great Lakes. The War of 1812 served as a major catalyst for improving relations. Violence in the maritime borderlands region was not uncommon at the

³³⁸ Roussel, 240.

turn of the nineteenth century, but after a costly war, both Britain and the United States came to understand that protracting hostilities would serve no other purpose than to intensify reciprocal losses.³³⁹ Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron argue that this change in attitude "...shattered the balance of forces and transformed the Great Lakes borderlands into a boundary between emerging nation-states."³⁴⁰ During peace negotiations to end the conflict, each side came to agree that armaments on the Great Lakes "...beyond what is necessary to guard against smuggling is calculated only to produce mischief."³⁴¹ As such, the Rush-Bagot Agreement of 1817 was instituted in order to limit the presence of naval armaments on the shared inland waters. Regional disarmament did not resolve, by any means, the problems in the cross-border relationship, but it did provide a temporary reprieve from the threat of conflict on the Great Lakes. Purver indicates that "...the American overture... was prompted by... the [idea of] saving... money on what could otherwise be an expensive naval arms race and the desire to improve political relations (and avoid a recurrence of armed conflict) by removing potential irritants in the bilateral relationship."³⁴² Beyond the military provisions, it demonstrated that the two states were capable of utilizing diplomatic relations to address conflicting interests instead of resorting to violence.

In the decades immediately following the Agreement, American power underwent a rapid expansion on the continent, while the British influence correspondingly shrank. Terrence Fay points out that ninety percent of the naval tonnage and ninety-nine percent of the armaments were removed from the Great Lakes in the decades following the 1817 Agreement, which eliminated the strongest arm of British imperial power left in the

³³⁹ Terry McDonald "It is Impossible for His Majesty's Government to Withdraw from these Dominions: Britain and the Defence of Canada, 1813-1834" *Journal of Canadian Studies* 39, no.3 (Fall 2005): 40-59.

³⁴⁰ Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, 818.

³⁴¹ John Quincy Adams, *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams, comprising portions of his diary from 1795 to 1848 – Volume III* (ed.) Charles Francis Adams (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1969), 285-286.

³⁴² Ron Purver, 591.

continental interior.³⁴³ But rather than capitalizing on this shrinking British military presence the United States chose to coexist with the emerging Canadian state. There continued to be military tension, but ultimately with the absence of threatening armaments in the volatile borderlands region, the two states were able to peacefully coexist amidst a rapidly changing strategic environment. With the British military presence diminishing, especially after the American Civil War, a new strategic reality was emerging on the continent, marking an end of armed competition on the Lakes.

The Rush-Bagot Agreement introduced the norms of disarmament and consultation on the Great Lakes in 1817, though it took more than fifty years for the conditions of the Agreement to be even moderately realized. In the interim period, relations progressed slowly amidst war, rebellion, and repeated violations of the technical provisions of the Agreement. Historian A.L. Burt argues that "the wonder was not that hostilities occurred during the nineteenth century, but that these sharp differences, when they broke out, were resolved without a major break in the relationship."³⁴⁴ The tremendous resilience and flexibility of the Agreement during these formational years on the continent came to characterize the burgeoning continental security and defence relationship on the Lakes and allowed relations to steadily improve despite continuing suspicions and shared latent antagonisms.

1867-1913

The period beginning with Canadian independence in 1867 and ending in the lead-up to the Great War in 1914 saw relations in North America vastly improve, where decades of peaceful coexistence along the border generated a desire for safeguarding this peace on both sides of the boundary. The result was the construction of deeper diplomatic linkages,

³⁴³ Terrence James Fay, 25.

³⁴⁴ A.L. Burt, 426.

particularly on the Great Lakes, increasing the avenues for the peaceful resolution of conflict. The removal of the British navy from the continental interior during this period played an important role in improving Canadian-American relations. As Roussel notes, "most of the disputes that threatened to develop into armed conflict during the several decades following 1814 involved Britain and the United States; the risk of war between the latter and Canada during this period was little more than an extension of the highs and lows of the British-American relationship."³⁴⁵ The British departure therefore provided room to expand economic exploitation of the Lakes and improve cross-border relations in the process. This era is characterized by three strings of events which thoroughly influenced the direction of Canadian American relations on the Great Lakes, beginning with the post-Civil War period.

The end of the American Civil War, Canada's creation, and the Treaty of Washington (1871) collectively encouraged Britain, the Canadian Dominion, and the United States to start relations anew and endeavour to resolve conflicts peacefully. The British naval withdrawal from the Great Lakes served to drastically change the balance of power along the border, necessitating a new approach to relations. Kenneth Bourne notes that "...American expansion seemed... inevitable and unwelcome" since the removal of British forces effectively left the U.S. as the uncontested hegemon of the continent.³⁴⁶ This was particularly evident on the Lakes, where "...the ascent of the United States to the position of a great naval power was in no sense an unexpected event."³⁴⁷ Rather than imposing its own interests though, the U.S chose to maintain the principles of disarmament and consultation with the much smaller and weaker Canada in order to preserve the peaceful progression of relations along the Lakes.

³⁴⁵ Roussel, 110.

³⁴⁶ Kenneth Bourne, 344.

³⁴⁷ Kenneth Bourne, 339.

For almost three decades continental relations continued on this path of suspicious yet peaceful coexistence, though the British influence continued to linger on the continent, obstructing any potential deepening of Canada-U.S. relations. This was substantiated by the Venezuela boundary dispute in 1895 when Britain tested the American resolve to uphold the Monroe Doctrine. This situation endangered Canadian security and sovereignty and was the impetus for rearmament of the Great Lakes border. The threat of an armed Anglo-American clash was very real, with the Great Lakes being a likely theatre of war due to Canada's connection to the Empire. The threat proved short-lived, but it highlighted the vulnerability of Canada-U.S. relations to international shocks despite almost eighty years of relative peace between the two states on the Lakes.

The Venezuelan dispute compelled Canada to seek a more independent foreign policy from Britain in order to separate Canada and the Empire in the eyes of the U.S. The inclusion of Canada at the Joint High Commission meeting in 1898 was the first step in this process, allowing Canada to input its own interests and concerns, independent of the Empire, in Anglo-American continental policy discussions. This proved to be a significant development despite the fact that the Commission was soon-after dissolved. Roussel indicates that "...from the nineteenth century on... the regulation of border disputes was more often done via negotiation, while commissions dealt with matters considered to be less controversial..." He continues that "it was through commissions that [Canada] took its first steps as an autonomous entity. Moreover, it was the commissions that would set the pattern for the future..."³⁴⁸ This dispute also demonstrated two developing norms of the Canada-U.S. relationship on the Great Lakes, with each side instituting a rearmament policy in preparation for conflict when their physical security was threatened, and each demonstrating an

³⁴⁸ Roussel, 134.

increasing reliance on diplomacy and disarmament to maintain a composed disposition on the continent.

An Anglo-American rapprochement at the turn of the century coupled with a growing divide in Anglo-Canadian relations continued to build more favourable conditions for expanding Canadian-American defence ties. The development of joint institutions, such as the International Joint Commission in 1909 to manage relations more diplomatically, illustrated a growing trust between the two states and resulted in changing conditions along the border. On the Great Lakes this led to a modernization of the Rush-Bagot Agreement, updating its provisions to account for modern naval developments. Improving naval technology and an increasing American desire to utilize the Lakes for naval training were challenging the relevance of the Agreement. Its provisions for minimizing arms on the Lakes were therefore reviewed and consequently modified by the Committee of Imperial Defence. The spirit of the Agreement was maintained, but its dated stipulations for arms control were modernized to allow for any warship to enter into the Lakes, on the condition that "it was left up to Canada to decide, in each case, whether to grant permission [to American ships] to enter the lakes..."³⁴⁹ This did come with a considerable responsibility and Canada was reminded that the U.S. could cancel the Agreement at any point if they disagreed with Canadian rulings. But it also protected the interests of the much smaller Canada without having to greatly expand its own military resources on the Lakes, while satisfying American interests by allowing for a greater utilization of the Lakes for training purposes. This modernization once again demonstrated flexibility on both sides and a willingness to modify security and defence norms in order to maintain a modernized defence outlook on the continent when the strategic realities called for it.

³⁴⁹ Alvin Gluek, 477.

1914-1945

The onset of the Great War until the end of the Second World War was the most active period of reform in Canadian-American defence relations during the twentieth century. There were three distinct eras of development during this stretch of time, beginning with the Great War. During this brief era from 1914-1918, when "the possibility of conflict with the United States was receding more and more into the limbo of forgotten things,"³⁵⁰ a cooperative approach to continental defence was *not* instituted, but the diplomatic groundwork and increasing trust necessary for a more cooperative defence was forged. It was during this stage that the Rush-Bagot Agreement celebrated its centennial at the apogee of the war in 1917, the same year the United States entered into the conflict. Despite this now shared vulnerability and state of alliance, it was not enough to unify continental defences, nor even enough to allow for a fuller utilization of the Great Lakes for naval training and ship construction. There continued to be a significant uneasiness over deepening continental defence cooperation. Historian Robert Bothwell reveals that "...any talk of the building up of American naval strength in... 'the bowels of Canada' invariably provided ammunition... against the government. Furthermore... Canadians were 'strangely touchy' about American maritime forces on the lakes..."³⁵¹ Still, diplomatic inroads were forged which in turn encouraged naval relations on the Lakes to become more flexible. What had happened to the Rush-Bagot Agreement over the previous century had served to lend formal approval to the accepted naval practices on the Lakes, but changing conditions in Canadian-American relations by the end of the Great War required a reassessment of these common approaches. Roussel explains, "cooperation between the two states was not exactly new... but it was

³⁵⁰ Kenneth Bourne, 402.

³⁵¹ Robert Bothwell, 186.

taking on a different aspect as the 20th century progressed,"³⁵² as diplomatic interaction encouraged a more coordinated approach to reflect the shifting dynamic of continental relations.

The progression of continental defence relations during the interwar years represents the second phase of this transformative era. The heavy cost of the Great War encouraged Canada to experiment with a more continentalist foreign policy to separate itself from the affairs of the Empire. But the deepening Canadian-American ties during the War meant that "Canada could scarcely do more than react to the border's pull..." during the inter-war years.³⁵³ Historians Gregory Johnson and David Lenarcic explain that "Canada's interwar withdrawal from Imperial and international commitments and concomitant preoccupation with North American affairs mirrored a more lasting reconfiguration of the North Atlantic triangle: the general shift in power away from Britain and towards the United States."³⁵⁴ This changing attitude was illustrated in Canada's refusal to contribute naval resources to the Imperial Fleet following the war. As Prime Minister Robert Borden stated quite candidly, "it seemed obvious that the acceptance of such a proposal would offend the newly awakened sense of nationhood which pervaded the people of Canada."³⁵⁵

This new attitude became particularly prevalent following King's election to the office of Prime Minister in 1921, under him, Canada began exercising a greater autonomy over its external relations. King set out to improve Canadian-American relations, as exemplified in his proposal to modernize the Rush-Bagot Agreement almost immediately upon taking office. The Agreement's value in maintaining stable defence relations on the

³⁵² Roussel, 162.

³⁵³ Norman Hillmer, "Reflections on the Unequal Border," *International Journal* 60, no. 2 (Spring 2005): 332.

³⁵⁴ Gregory Johnson and David Lenarcic, 81.

³⁵⁵ Sir Robert Borden, *Robert Laird Borden: His Memoirs – Volume II* (ed.) Henry Borden (London: MacMillan, 1938), 841.

Great Lakes for more than a century was an important factor contributing to continental growth and wellbeing, and thus, its proposed modernization held great symbolic value in the development of Canadian-American defence cooperation, epitomizing the growing accommodation between the two states. American Secretary of State Charles Hughes testified

...the Government and the people of the United States have been profoundly impressed by the practical value of the Rush-Bagot Agreement which despite its terms long since unresponsive to actual conditions has, through liberal and friendly interpretations on both sides of the boundary, served to perpetuate the spirit of the Agreement... which by the reasonableness and flexibility of its own terms may in no way weaken the common purpose of the two Governments...³⁵⁶

In the end efforts to amend the Agreement failed, despite determined efforts on both sides of the border. The process did, however, push forward cooperation and accommodation, improving the political relations on Great Lakes issues.

The decade following the re-election of King in 1935 serves as the third, and most definitive, period for Canadian-American defence relations in the twentieth century. Rising geo-political tension in Europe and Asia and a rapid global rearmament leading up to 1939 compelled Canada and the United States to construct a more cooperative continental defence front, pushed forward by the strong relationship between King and President Franklin Roosevelt. Strong relations between the two leaders proved to be the catalyst for progressing Canadian-American cooperation during this era, as embodied in the eighteen bilateral meetings between the two leaders from 1935 to 1945.³⁵⁷ The result was a significant and lasting impact on continental defence cooperation, which utilized the diplomatic groundwork laid during the Great War and inter-war years to institute a more formalized shift towards defence cooperation on the continent.

³⁵⁶ Charles E. Hughes, "Secretary of State of the United States to Ambassador in United States, Washington, May 12 1923," *DCER – Volume 3*, 910.

³⁵⁷ Hillmer and Granatstein, *For Better or For Worse: Canada and the United States to the 1990s*, 188.

The onset of the Second World War initiated deepening defence cooperation on the Great Lakes, as they were cautiously opened for increased ship-building and naval training in order to expand continental and Allied defence resources in the North Atlantic. Such compromise tested the flexibility of the Rush-Bagot Agreement and continental defence relations, as American pressure to more fully develop the advantages offered by the Great Lakes progressed throughout the War. The international conflict pushed Canada to make concessions to its much larger neighbour to assuage its security and continental defence anxieties, though the results were largely positive, with the formation of cooperative defence relations based on a relative equality and a joint governing regime to manage continental defence relations moving forward.

During the closing stages of the Second World War, Canada and the U.S. began to jointly study the practicality of protracting their cooperative continental defence relations into the post-War period. Canadian Secretary of the Permanent Joint Board on Defence R.M. Macdonnell suggested that because of the progression of relations on the Great Lakes during the previous three decades, the two states may wish to evaluate the continuing necessity of the Rush-Bagot Agreement. He reasoned that "...despite its undoubted value, [the Agreement was] based on mutual suspicion and the need to keep a watchful eye on naval armaments. A new agreement could be based on the complete confidence that exists between the two countries which eliminates the need for that watchful eye. It would be based on mutual trust, not on mutual suspicion."³⁵⁸ However, it may well be argued that suspicion was one of the lasting utilities of the Agreement. Although by the Second World War's end acrimony between the two states had largely subsided, the vast power asymmetry between the two

³⁵⁸ R.M. Macdonnell, "Memorandum by Secretary, PJBD: Ottawa, September 11, 1945," *DCER - Volume 11: Part I*, 1531-1532.

states remained and thus so too did the utility of the Agreement. There was a mutual recognition that the limitation of naval activity on the Lakes had to be relaxed during periods of international tension to ensure the security and defence of the continent, but the maintenance of suspicion at its most rudimentary level was also recognized as important. This had served as the survival mechanism for the Rush-Bagot Agreement, and also served to maintain a peaceful and cooperative relationship on the Great Lakes despite the vast power asymmetry that has come to define Canada-U.S. relations.

1946-2000

The evolution of relations on the Great Lakes from being defined by hostilities, to coexistence and peaceful conflict resolution following the British withdrawal, to a deepening defence cooperation throughout the War-time era, illustrates the stability and progressive nature of Canadian-American relations. On the Great Lakes, this progression resulted in the development of stronger norms to prevent conflict between the two states, as each side learned to truly cooperate and respect each other's continental interests. In the immediate post-World War II period Canada began to reorient its military away from the Empire, aligning itself more formally with the United States. For instance, Marc Milner notes that in 1946 "...the [Royal Canadian Navy] took significant steps to adopt [United States Navy] systems, both procedural and equipment."³⁵⁹ This deepening security and defence interoperability began to shift its focal point away from the conventional areas of continental defence though, in favour of developing an early warning system and nuclear deterrent in the continental Arctic. Thompson and Randall declare that "increasing bipolarism between the Soviet Union and the United States, anxiety about communism, the economic reconstruction

³⁵⁹ Marc Milner, "A Canadian Perspective on Canadian and American Naval Relations Since 1945," *Fifty Years of Canada-United States Defence Cooperation: The Road from Ogdensburg* (eds.) Joel Sokolsky and Joseph Jockel (Lewiston, New York: E. Mellen Press, 1992), 149.

of Europe, and concern over nuclear weapons were the contexts for the U.S.-Canadian relationship during the transition from war to early cold war."³⁶⁰ And for more than four decades subsequent, Canadian and American foreign and defence policies were locked into a shared geopolitical struggle against this communist threat. The external pressures of this conflict often strained continental relations, but the necessity of putting forward a common continental front forced cooperation on the two states. It was a period when each state's national defence outlook became intrinsically tied to continental defence, with the strategic importance of Canadian territory making the much smaller state an equal partner in defending the continent.

The development of the multilateral NATO alliance and the bilateral NORAD agreement served to further entrench Canadian-American defence cooperation during this era, with the adoption of common doctrine, tactics, communications and operational procedures.³⁶¹ Even amidst strained political relations following a resurgent Canadian nationalism in the 1960s, security and defence relations remained firmly linked. In an address to an American audience in 1965, former Canadian Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent addressed this issue, indicating that "you in the United States obviously have the power and the strength to dominate our country. But you also have the wisdom and the respect for freedom to refrain from exercising that power and that strength. The fact that you respect our freedom, makes our country a far more potent ally than any satellite could ever be."³⁶² Although politicking and personal distrust often came between the leaders of the two

³⁶⁰ John Herd Thompson and Stephen Randall, 167.

³⁶¹ Marc Milner, 152.

³⁶² Louis St. Laurent, 28 June 1965, quoted in United States Information Service, Ottawa, *Canadian-American Relations, 1867-1967: A Compilation of Selected Documents Concerning the Relations Between Canada and the United States During the First Century of Canada's Confederation – Volume 2* (Ottawa: S.n., 1967), ii.

countries, cooperative security and defence relations progressed, if somewhat begrudgingly by the two states' governments. Granatstein notes that:

...Canadians... were sometimes very critical of American policy, not least in Vietnam, and no Canadian prime minister could afford to say 'ready, aye ready' to every policy and military initiative from Washington. The result was a tension in Canadian-American relations that took form very quickly... A new feeling of mistrust resulted on both sides of the border.³⁶³

The late stages of the Cold War saw a Canadian-American political rapprochement, particularly during the Mulroney-Reagan years, along with a shifting continental defence strategy. The new strategic approach theorized that "it is only by maintaining adequate conventional forces, together with the capability to reinforce them rapidly and effectively when the need arises, that an adversary can be convinced that it would not be advantageous to initiate conventional conflict."³⁶⁴ The outcome was a conventional defence renaissance that re-energized relations on the Great Lakes. The importance of the Rush-Bagot Agreement began to recuperate despite its strategic dormancy for better part of the previous four decades, demonstrating its propensity for remaining relevant amid broad reforms to continental security and defence.

The abrupt end of the Cold War in the late 1980s and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union shortly thereafter diminished the imminent nuclear threat and subsequent need to maintain an expansive defence network on the continent. The post-Cold War period allowed each side to take a much needed respite from putting forth a common continental facade in order to practice more independent foreign policies. Defence cooperation fell back on compulsory activities and familiar peace-time defence frameworks, of which there were

³⁶³ J.L. Granatstein, "The Course of Canadian-American relations since 1945," *Canada and the United States: Enduring Friendship, Persistent Stress* (eds.) Charles Doran and John Singler (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, inc., 1985), 45-68. 60.

³⁶⁴ Albert Legault, "Canada and the United States: The Defence Dimension," *Canada and the United States: Enduring Friendship, Persistent Stress* (eds.) Charles Doran and John Singler (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, inc., 1985), 181.

few. Disarmament and consultation on the Lakes was therefore strengthened because of its stability and experience in peace. Jockel noted that into the 1990s "...a good deal of Canada's defence [was still being] undertaken by U.S. Forces that routinely enter Canadian airspace and waters... from bases in the United States. The Canadian strategy is to maintain forces that... can be postured to cooperate with those of the United States."³⁶⁵ As a result, the Rush-Bagot Agreement played an increased role in restraining the extent of American military presence in Canada in peace, after four decades of joint-continental defence in an unstable international environment.

2001-Present

After the tranquility of the post-Cold War years, 11 September 2001 marked a shift away from the brief period of peace on the continent. These violent attacks were the first successful large-scale attacks launched against the U.S. mainland since the War of 1812, and posed a significant challenge to Canadian-American defence cooperation. The new threat to the continent was less visible and much more unpredictable than any previous threat faced on the continent, requiring a large-scale reorganization of continent security and defence. The United States took immediate action by bolstering border security, including on the Great Lakes frontier. This proved to be a very politically sensitive issue despite the urgency of the situation, because of the deep and complex history that surrounded this border relationship. However, David Bercuson points out that "from the very beginning of the war on terror, the Canadian government was an active and willing partner with the US in tightening border controls and increasing border security. Tough new internal security measures were adopted and billions in new resources were directed to perimeter and national security in the

³⁶⁵ Joseph Jockel, "Canada-U.S. Defence Relations in the 1990s," *Fifty Years of Canada-United States Defence Cooperation: The Road from Ogdensburg* (eds.) Joel Sokolsky and Joseph Jockel (Lewiston, New York: E. Mellen Press, 1992), 385.

December 2001 budget."³⁶⁶ This cooperation was comparable to previous periods of heightened international tension, when Prime Ministers such as Macdonald, Laurier, King, and Mulroney had recognized the need to ease American unease over its security and defence interests. Entrenched norms remained in place, epitomized by the Rush-Bagot Agreement on the Great Lakes, and ultimately the continental defence relationship remained fundamentally the same, simply more prepared to meet new and asymmetric threats.

The intensity and haste at which this defence reorganization took place is remarkable in that each side was able to maintain a degree of sovereignty over decision-making on their respective territories while harmonizing defence outlooks to such an extent. Sokolsky notes that "...not since the early nineteenth century... has America had to think in terms of border security against major threats. Great rivals were [, historically,] far away... protected by the vast oceans east and west, and facing weak neighbours north and south..."³⁶⁷ The nature of this new asymmetric threat proved to be difficult to adjust to and prepare for. This has become particularly noteworthy on the Great Lakes.

An intensive evaluation of common defences in the aftermath of the attacks revealed that one of the most vulnerable spots on the continent was the Great Lakes, home to an enormous and largely unchecked recreational boating population, thousands of miles of coastline, and numerous pieces of critical infrastructure on either side of the border with minimal defences. Dwight Mason notes that:

...the attacks point out the vulnerabilities of North American infrastructure to small, terrorist attacks. The attacks also led the US and Canada to view the vulnerabilities of the North American infrastructure in a new way – as subject to attacks

³⁶⁶ David Bercuson, "Canada-US Defence Relations Post-9/11," *Canada Among Nations 2003: Coping with the American Colossus* (eds.) David Carment, Fen Osler Hampson, and Norman Hillmer (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2003), 132.

³⁶⁷ Joel Sokolsky, "Guarding the Continental Coasts: United States Maritime Homeland Security and Canada," *IRPP Policy Matters* 6, no. 1 (March 2005): 11.

originating within the US or Canada with little or no warning – and demanded new thinking and new planning on how that infrastructure should now be defended.³⁶⁸

Defence of the Great Lakes had been low on the list of priorities since the end of the Second World War leaving it ripe for terrorist exploitation. The subsequent expansion of defence preparation after 9/11, including an expansion of armed vessels on the common waters, created tension between the two states but revitalized the Rush-Bagot Agreement as a means of governing these relations during a period of high cross-border stress.

American security requirements following the attacks dictated the need to modernize continental security to address new and emerging threats, but before defence resources were expanded on the Lakes there was wide consultation between the two states, in keeping with traditional defence norms. Even some American initiatives, such as preparing permanent live-fire zones on the Great Lakes, were abandoned thanks to Canadian pressures. The maintenance of the Rush-Bagot Agreement throughout this reorganization of defence is a testament to its continuing role in Canadian-American defence relations. In the face of an imminent threat, amidst political hostilities and divergent world-views, the Agreement was able to preserve the historic norms developed between the two states while modernizing its outlook to address new threats to the continent. Canadian cooperation in the post-9/11 reforms was obligatory in order to preserve sovereign control over its territory. But as the 2005 *Defence Policy Statement* indicates, "Canada has benefitted immensely from its defence partnership with the United States over the years. Our bilateral cooperation continues to provide us with a degree of security that we could never achieve on our own."³⁶⁹ The United States remains Canada's most important ally and security and defence relations are long-standing, well entrenched, and as extensive as any in the world. Both Canada and

³⁶⁸ Dwight Mason, 144.

³⁶⁹ Canada, Department of National Defence, *Defence Policy Statement* (Ottawa: 2005), 21.

the United States share the understanding, growing out of their almost two hundred years of relations, that North America's security is indivisible.

Conclusions

The Rush-Bagot Agreement is now less than a decade away from its two-hundredth anniversary and its significance remains as one of the founding agreements of continental defence. Terrence Fay argues that "...the Agreement carries a timely message to our tattered and war torn contemporary world, a message demonstrating that peaceful negotiation can trim armaments into ploughshares."³⁷⁰ A periodically shifting strategic climate on the continent has required responsive defence modernizations on the Lakes and has forced the two states into maintaining constant consultation as a means of resolving conflicts peacefully and pre-emptively. The Agreement has lasted throughout these changes, preserving a degree of continuity in Canadian-American defence relations throughout their entire shared history on the continent.

Following the shock of the 9/11 attacks, continental defence was hastily reorganized to address an immediate threat-at-hand. The increased political tension during this period as a result of these changes caused the much smaller Canada to hesitate in the face of deepening defence ties, concerned about its territorial sovereignty in the long-term. Former Canadian Deputy-Prime Minister John Manley explains that "much of the almost 135-year history of [Canada] has been about how we establish and exercise our sovereignty within a shared North American space – almost always accompanied by ritual fear and anxiety over how a greater North America might mean a diminished Canada."³⁷¹ While Canadians struggled

³⁷⁰ Terrence James Fay, *Rush-Bagot Agreement*, ii.

³⁷¹ John Manley, "Notes for an Address by the Honourable John Manley, Deputy Prime Minister of Canada and Minister of Infrastructure and Crown Corporations: To the Canadian Club," *The Canadian Club of Toronto*, 11 February 2002. <http://www.canadianclub.org/static/speeches/43.pdf>. Accessed 12 July 2009.

with this thought, the United States seemed to misunderstand this hesitation as Canada abandoning the U.S. in a desperate time. Political tension and a rising anti-American sentiment in Canada followed, despite the cooperative and far-reaching reforms that were subsequently instituted by both sides. In the 1960s, John Holmes argued that "those in control of policy on both sides should recognize that there will always be sour patches in the relationship which must be taken for granted and not confused and aggravated by charges of anti-Americanism on the one hand and arrogance on the other."³⁷² This continued to be the case four decades later.

The incredible stress put on the relationship during this brief period of security and defence reorganization on the continent led some to believe that the cross-border security and defence relationship had fundamentally changed. But the former Director of U.S. Homeland Security Tom Ridge indicated that "[the United States] have a long tradition with our friends to the north... We're very fortunate that we've never had to assign military to our borders and we're not going to start now... We don't militarize our borders with friends."³⁷³ Canada's response was to suggest that "given our common defence and security requirements, it is in Canada's strategic interest to remain a reliable partner in the defence of the continent."³⁷⁴ Similar to previous periods of international tension, there was apprehension along the Canada-U.S. border, but as defences were modernized to address this new and unconventional threat, hostilities were relaxed and tolerance started to return.

In the 1960s, political scientist James Eayrs wrote that:

³⁷² John Holmes, "The Relationship in Alliance and in World Affairs," *The United States and Canada* (ed.) John Dickey (Englewood, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1964), 131.

³⁷³ Associated Press, "US won't militarize its borders, Ridge says," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, 28 September 2004. http://www.signonsandiego.com/uniontrib/20040928/news_1n28border.html. Accessed 27 March 2009.

³⁷⁴ Canada, Department of National Defence, "Defending North America – A Strong and Reliable Partner," *Canadian First Defence Strategy*, 03 April 2009. <http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/focus/first-premier/defstra/role-eng.asp>. Accessed 31 August, 2009.

If the Canadian-American relationship is to flourish to the mutual benefit of its partners, it will be because both countries resist the temptation, to which they have yielded in the past, of believing their politics to be neighbourly rather than international. They must realize that the two nations of North America are of the states-system, not beyond and above it, and shape their foreign policies accordingly.³⁷⁵

Eayrs' account continues to ring true today. The public perception of the "special friendship" between the two states seems to occasionally skew opinions on the continent. Relations were arduously constructed over two centuries and have, more often than not, been characterized by hostilities and suspicion along their common border. Nevertheless, this is a healthy approach to ensuring that sovereignty is respected and that each side does not take the other's partnership in vain. This is why the Rush-Bagot Agreement has been maintained for the length of the Canadian-American defence experience, as it has preserved a certain degree of vigilance over security and defence developments, despite the progressively more cooperative relations. It serves as an important reminder of where Canada and the U.S. have been and what they have developed into. John Holmes comments:

...that during any international debate on tactics, there will be editors and politicians on both sides who will insist that vital national interests are at stake and passions will be roused. This kind of row must be accepted as inevitable even while we endeavour to reduce the heat by increasing understanding of the nature of the relationship and its implications. There is no easy formula to reduce friction in our world policies... What is required is a greater readiness to listen to each other's explanations before roaring to conclusions, more awareness on the American side, and more tolerance on the Canadian side, qualities which are not easily achieved in a far too busy world.³⁷⁶

In such chaotic times it is necessary to rely on strong and stable norms of the relationship to ensure that short-term complications do not fundamentally change the long-term outlook of the relationship. The security and defence reorganization since 2001 must therefore be understood as a process of modernization to respond to an emerging unconventional threat to the security of both states and therefore must be addressed as such.

³⁷⁵ James Eayrs, "Sharing a Continent: the Hard Issues," *The United States and Canada* (ed.) John Dickey (Englewood, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1964), 93.

³⁷⁶ John Holmes, "The Relationship in Alliance and in World Affairs," 131.

This process has required an exhaustive assessment of the continental defence constructs and the shuffling of resources to sure-up points of weakness in the defence infrastructure, but fundamentally the Canada-U.S. security and defence relationship remains rooted in its history and defined, not by the poor relations of the previous decade, but by the norms constructed over two centuries of cross-border coordination and cooperation.

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