



Soldiers hold Canadian and U.S. flags at a reception hosted by the White House. Source: Prime Minister's Office/Adam Scotti.

The Incentive of Alliance: U.S.-Canadian Security Cooperation in the 21st Century

Thinking Canada Volume I, Issue III
June 2022
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**Wilson
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**Canada
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Introduction

During a 1953 address to Canada's Parliament, U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower remarked that "each [country] is a better and stronger and more influential nation because we can rely upon every resource of the other in days of crisis."¹ Those comments in the early stages of the Cold War were prescient in describing a U.S.-Canadian security relationship that has endured to this day through the Cold War, the War on Terror, and the contemporary re-emergence of Great Power rivalry.

U.S.-Canadian security cooperation is underpinned by institutions through which the two governments can engage and collaborate as sovereign equals. U.S. treatment of Canada as a partner, rather than a subordinate colony or protectorate, has allowed for bilateral security cooperation to expand and adapt over time as new threats have emerged. Canada and the United States are founding members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Five Eyes intelligence-sharing consortium,^{2,3} which played a significant role in containing the Soviet Union during the latter half of the twentieth century. As foreign terrorism became the driving priority for national security policy in the early aughts, the two countries again collaborated to adapt old institutions and build new architecture to address the threat.

The emergence of novel threats at home and abroad necessitates a reexamination of existing institutions. Reliance on organizations and joint structures from the Cold War and War on Terror alone will not suffice in the age of new geopolitical adversaries such as China and the evolving challenges posed by cyberattacks and pandemics. The United States and Canada must continue to adapt their security partnership as new threats to national security emerge.

Institutions and Alliances

In the early twentieth century, Canada sought to secure the United States as an ally for the British Empire despite the anti-imperialism of many U.S. leaders and the anti-Americanism of some British leaders. Canada was home to U.S.-owned manufacturing facilities that produced goods for export to the British Empire, and when war erupted in Europe, those factories shifted to produce equipment for the British military. As a result, when the United States entered the First World War in 1917 and the Second World War in 1941, it was already integrated into the defense plans of Britain and its allies.

As Canada moved towards independence in the mid-twentieth century, it pushed for a new security arrangement with the United States building on wartime cooperation. The 1938 Ogdensburg Declaration made by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King formed the basis for bilateral cooperation in defense of North America,⁴ leading to the establishment of

1 "Address Before a Joint Session of the Parliament of Canada." Dwight D. Eisenhower. November 14, 1953. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. Available at: <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-before-joint-session-the-parliament-canada>

2 "Reading Canada: Canada in NATO, 1949-2019." Webcast Event. Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. March 25, 2022. Available at: <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/reading-canada-canada-nato-1949-2019>

3 "Five Eyes Intelligence Oversight and Review Council." Office of the Director of National Intelligence. Available at: <https://www.dni.gov/index.php/ncsc-how-we-work/217-about/organization/icig-pages/2660-icig-fiorc>

4 "Ogdensburg Declaration: United States-Canadian History." Britannica.com. Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Ogdensburg-Declaration>

a Permanent Joint Board on Defense in 1940 to institutionalize the partnership.⁵ The two countries then established a bilateral Military Cooperation Committee in 1946 to provide formal linkage between military leadership.⁶ In 1949, Canada became a founding member of NATO and joined the United Nations sanctioned action in Korea that became the Korean War in 1950.⁷ Then, in 1957, the threat posed by the Soviet Union's long-range aircraft prompted the establishment of the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD),⁸ which was later updated to cover nuclear-armed intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and cruise missiles.

These institutions and involvements made explicit what the United States expected from Canada, and what the United States would provide in return. For the United States, Canada's agreement to defend shared interests in bilateral and multilateral institutions was an example of the American approach to its Great Power role. Even with a smaller power, the United States could negotiate security partnerships that treated allies as sovereign equals; in doing so, it sought to institutionalize mutual and reciprocal obligations for defense.

Adaptation to New Threats

Geopolitical developments in two theaters, Europe and the Indo-Pacific, warrant a review of the institutions underpinning U.S.-Canadian security cooperation. Russia faces credible accusations of war crimes, including the use of illegal weapons and targeting of civilian populations,^{9,10} in its ongoing invasion of Ukraine. China has declared support for Russia while increasing its military presence in the Taiwan Strait,^{11,12} threatening its smaller neighbors in the South China Sea,¹³ and violating its 1997 agreement with Britain that Hong Kong's democratic freedoms would be preserved.¹⁴ These developments pose a grave challenge to the U.S.-led international system, of which Canada is a stalwart supporter.

In the opening days of Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine, Ottawa and Washington worked with Euro-

5 "Canada-United States Joint Board on Defence." Archives Association of Ontario. Available at: <https://www.archeion.ca/canada-united-states-permanent-joint-board-on-defence>

6 "Series 12 – Canada-United States Military Cooperation Committee." Archives Association of Ontario. Available at: <https://www.archeion.ca/canada-united-states-military-cooperation-committee-3>

7 "Canada and the Korean War: A Forgotten Ally in a Forgotten War." Webcast Event. Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. April 22, 2021. Available at: <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/canada-and-korean-war-forgotten-ally-forgotten-war>

8 Jockel, Joseph T. "Canada in NORAD, 1957-2007." Kingston, ON: Queen's Center for International Relations. 2007. <https://www.mqup.ca/canada-in-norad--1957-2007-products-9781553391357.php>

9 "Ukraine: Cluster Munitions Launched into Kharkiv Neighborhoods." Human Rights Watch. March 4, 2022. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/03/04/ukraine-cluster-munitions-launched-kharkiv-neighborhoods>

10 "Russian attacks on civilian targets in Ukraine could be a war crime: UN rights office." UN News. United Nations. March 11, 2022. Available at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1113782>

11 Kendall-Taylor, Andrew and David O. Shullman. "Best and Bosom Friends: Why China-Russia Ties Will Deepen after Russia's War on Ukraine." Center for Strategic & International Studies. June 22, 2022. Available at: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/best-and-bosom-friends-why-china-russia-ties-will-deepen-after-russias-war-ukraine>

12 Goldenziel, Jill. "China Claims To Own the Taiwan Strait. That's Illegal." Forbes Online. June 28, 2022. Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jillgoldenziel/2022/06/28/china-claims-to-own-the-taiwan-strait-thats-illegal/?sh=205944c39ba2>

13 "Territorial Disputes in the South China Sea." Center for Preventative Action. Council on Foreign Relations. May 4, 2022. Available at: <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/territorial-disputes-south-china-sea>

14 Wintour, Patrick. "China is breaking Hong Kong treaty with UK, says Boris Johnson." The Guardian Online. July 1, 2020. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/jul/01/china-is-breaking-hong-kong-treaty-with-uk-says-boris-johnson?msclkid=8b2c9d8baf6411eca55502097c8a1618>

pean allies to impose sanctions against the Russian economy,¹⁵ expel major Russian banks from SWIFT,¹⁶ and target the assets of oligarchs in Putin's inner circle.¹⁷ Canada cited Russian threats as it invested \$3.8 billion (USD) in capabilities to support NORAD air defense modernization,¹⁸ sent more troops to a NATO mission in Latvia,¹⁹ contributed to NATO's rapid reaction force,²⁰ and joined NATO naval efforts in the Baltic Sea.²¹ The Canadian government also reselected the Lockheed Martin F-35 to replace its CF-18 fighter jet fleet, with an order for 88 new planes.²² These new commitments by Ottawa come from a shared perception of Russian aggression, but also of the importance of institutionalized security commitments: NORAD and NATO. Historically, the United States has sought to translate the tacit Canadian support for U.S. national security alliance structures and encouraged Canada to spend more on its own defense capabilities. U.S. Ambassador to Canada David Cohen expressed in May that Canada is still not making an adequate investment in its own defense;²³ however, without formal security institutions that establish target levels of capability and prompt specific commitments, would Canadian investment be lower?

This is a question worth considering in the emerging Indo-Pacific threat environment, where the United States and Canada have fewer institutional structures for security cooperation. The United States has been developing a security architecture with regional allies through the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue and the more recent AUKUS security pact.^{24,25} Canada has not been a founding partner for these defense institutions, and though its absence can be attributed to limited Canadian military involvement in the region, its exclusion from new economic institutions such as the Partners of the Blue Pacific and the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework is a worrying sign of the extent to which the country is being left out.^{26,27} Without

15 "Canadian Sanctions Related to Russia." Government of Canada. 2022. Available at: https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/international_relations-relations_internationales/sanctions/russia-russie.aspx?lang=eng

16 "An update to our message for the SWIFT community." Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication. 2022. Available at: <https://www.swift.com/news-events/news/message-swift-community>

17 "Treasury Sanctions Kremlin Elites, Leaders, Oligarchs, and Family for Enabling Putin's War Against Ukraine." U.S. Department of Treasury. March 11, 2022. Available at: <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0650>

18 "Canada Investing Billions to Modernize North America Defense." Military.com. June 21, 2022. Available at: <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2022/06/21/canada-investing-billions-modernize-north-america-defense.html>

19 Stewart, Briar. "As Canada sends more troops to Latvia, some locals fear country may be dragged into larger war." CBC Online. April 13, 2022. Available at: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/nato-canadian-troops-latvia-1.6417411>

20 "NATO to boost its rapid reaction force to 300,000 troops." CBC Online. June 27, 2022. Available at: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/nato-nrf-troops-expansion-1.6502680>

21 Benjamin, Graeme. "Ships depart Halifax on NATO missions to demine North Atlantic, Baltic Sea." Global News Online. June 26, 2022. Available at: <https://globalnews.ca/news/8948766/nato-operation-reassurance-canada-ships-halifax/>

22 Blatchford, Andy. "Canada circled back to Lockheed for F-35s." Politico. March 28, 2022. Available at: <https://www.politico.com/news/2022/03/28/canada-lockheed-air-force-upgrade-00020974>

23 Tumilty, Ryan. "U.S. Ambassador says Canada didn't live up to its own hype on defence spending." National Post. May 26, 2022. Available at: <https://nationalpost.com/news/politics/u-s-ambassador-says-canada-didnt-live-up-to-its-own-hype-on-defence-spending>

24 Smith, Sheila A. "The Quad in the Indo-Pacific: What to Know." Council on Foreign Relations. May 27, 2021. Available at: <https://nationalpost.com/news/politics/u-s-ambassador-says-canada-didnt-live-up-to-its-own-hype-on-defence-spending>

25 "Joint Leaders Statement on AUKUS." The White House. September 15, 2021. Available at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/09/15/joint-leaders-statement-on-aukus/>

26 "Statement by Australia, Japan, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States on the Establishment of the Partners in the Blue Pacific (PBP)." The White House. June 24, 2022. Available at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/06/24/statement-by-australia-japan-new-zealand-the-united-kingdom-and-the-united-states-on-the-establishment-of-the-partners-in-the-blue-pacific-pbp/>

27 "FACT SHEET: In Asia, President Biden and a Dozen Indo-Pacific Partners Launch the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity." The White House. May 23, 2022. Available at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/brief->

a seat at the table in forums for both economic and military dialogue, Canada is vulnerable in moments of crisis like the arrest and arbitrary detention of two Canadian nationals in 2018.²⁸ China's treatment of Canada and Canadian nationals has made it important for Canada to participate in the Indo-Pacific security architecture being assembled by the United States.

U.S.-Canadian security cooperation extends to countering domestic threats. When the United States' security outlook shifted in the aftermath of September 11, the U.S.-Canadian border, the longest shared land border in the world, became a security risk in the eyes of the U.S. public. In response, Ottawa and Washington worked together to build institutions and implement policies that facilitated better bilateral coordination on counterterrorism. Within a year of the attacks, both governments signed the Smart Border Declaration to enhance information sharing and secure the flow of goods and people across the border.²⁹ Canada was also made a liaison to the U.S. Foreign Terrorist Tracking Task Force,³⁰ a multi-agency task force created with the goal of identifying, removing, monitoring, or prosecuting foreign terrorists on U.S. territory.³¹ These steps not only mitigated the immediate threat of foreign terrorist attacks on domestic soil, but also provided channels for both countries to communicate on homeland security matters.

The domestic threat environment has evolved over the past two decades, and institutions built to deter terrorism are no longer sufficient for dealing with novel threats like cyberattacks, pandemics, and disinformation. Disinformation on social media, for example, is consumed by both Canadian and U.S. users; extended exposure to disinformation can push users to radicalization and,³² in extreme cases, instances of ideologically motivated violent extremism.³³ The Canadian Security Intelligence Service, the Department of Homeland Security, and local law enforcement departments monitor digital spaces, but ultimately rely on social media platforms to police themselves and take down dangerous content. Both countries are also frequent targets of cyberattacks, such as the incursion on Canada's foreign ministry in January 2022 that was linked to Russia.^{34,35}

In areas where Canada and the United States have invested in ways to collaboratively deal with domes-

[ing-room/statements-releases/2022/05/23/fact-sheet-in-asia-president-biden-and-a-dozen-indo-pacific-partners-launch-the-indo-pacific-economic-framework-for-prosperity/](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/05/23/fact-sheet-in-asia-president-biden-and-a-dozen-indo-pacific-partners-launch-the-indo-pacific-economic-framework-for-prosperity/)

28 "One year since Canadians Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor arbitrarily detained in China." Global Affairs Canada. Government of Canada. December 9, 2019. Available at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2019/12/one-year-since-canadians-michael-kovrig-and-michael-spavor-arbitrarily-detained-in-china.html>

29 "U.S.-Canada Smart Border/30 Point Action Plan Update." U.S. Department of State. December 6, 2002. Available at: <https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/wha/rls/fs/18128.htm>

30 Tanner, Mark. "Testimony Before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security, and Claims." Foreign Terrorist Tracking Task Force. Federal Bureau of Investigation. October 16, 2003. Available at: <https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/news/testimony/foreign-terrorist-tracking-task-force-ftttf>

31 "Foreign Terrorist Tracking Task Force (FTTTF) Data Mart." U.S. Department of Justice. May 9, 2007. Available at: https://www.archives.gov/files/records-mgmt/rcs/schedules/departments/departments-of-justice/rg-0065/n1-065-07-009_sf115.pdf

32 "FACT SHEET: National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism." The White House. June 15, 2021. Available at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/06/15/fact-sheet-national-strategy-for-countering-domestic-terrorism/>

33 Abbas, Tahir et al. "The Buffalo Attack – An Analysis of the Manifesto." International Centre for Counter-Terrorism. May 18, 2022. Available at: <https://icct.nl/publication/the-buffalo-attack-an-analysis-of-the-manifesto/>

34 Nardi, Christopher. "Canada's foreign affairs department targeted in 'significant' cyber attack." National Post. January 23, 2022. Available at: <https://nationalpost.com/news/politics/canadas-foreign-affairs-department-targeted-in-significant-cyber-attack>

35 Chase, Steven. "Nearly one month on, Global Affairs remains hobbled by computer disruption." The Globe and Mail Online. February 15, 2022. Available at: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-nearly-one-month-on-global-affairs-remains-hobbled-by-computer/>

tic threats, plans have been under-utilized in emergency situations. The 2012 North American Plan for Animal and Pandemic Influenza (NAPAPI) outlined how governments could work collaboratively in a pandemic situation instead of resorting to individualized approaches.³⁶ When COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic in March 2020, Canada and the United States adopted separate national plans with different entry requirements, causing unnecessary disruptions at the border and incurring economic costs to communities and industries that rely on cross-border flows.^{37,38} North American leaders recently committed to a review and revision of the 2012 NAPAPI,³⁹ but the extent to which these changes will help institutions hold up under the stress of emergency situations remains to be seen.

Frontiers of Future Partnership

The United States and Canada have developed a close security relationship based on shared values and threat perceptions. Institutionalization of cooperation through joint structures such as NORAD and formal alliances such as NATO has enhanced the security partnership by making Canada a full security partner of the United States despite the asymmetries of power and capabilities. This has enabled the United States to replace Britain as Canada's leading security partner for intelligence-sharing, continental defense, defense of Canadian interests in Europe, and countering new threats within Canada.

Institutionalization is as important for the United States as it has been for Canada. U.S. security services would encounter difficulty monitoring Canada for radicalized individuals or pandemics without Canadian cooperation, and cross-border linkages make it advantageous for Washington to have access to Canadian intelligence and public health research as it assesses domestic threats. In these cases, the U.S.-Canadian security cooperation model—an agreement between sovereign equals to enable cooperation with pooled resources—can and should be applied to new domestic threats that are common concerns in Ottawa and Washington.

The belligerence of Russia and China toward near neighbors is reshaping the global balance of powers and threatening the U.S.-led international order that has safeguarded Canadian national interests at home and abroad since the 1940s. The lack of a role for Canada in the U.S.-led security architecture being developed for the Indo-Pacific region is a significant vulnerability and limits the United States and its regional allies from closer cooperation with a willing partner.

The history of U.S.-Canada security cooperation suggests that the two countries will adapt and extend their partnership to meet new threats to shared values and interests at home and abroad, and later institutionalize security cooperation in agreements and formal alliance structures. The incentive of alliance is a proven means for Washington and Ottawa to increase commitments to collective security; in a rapidly evolving threat environment, both countries stand to benefit from actively pursuing that transition before their position of strength can further deteriorate.

36 "North American Plan for Animal and Pandemic Influenza (NAPAPI)." U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2012. Available at: <https://www.phe.gov/Preparedness/international/Pages/napapi.aspx>

37 "Report of the Wilson Center Task Force on Public Health and the U.S.-Canadian Border." Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. 2021. Available at: <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/report-wilson-center-task-force-public-health-and-us-canadian-border>

38 Border Policy Research Institute, Western Washington University, et. al. "Border Barometer. Border Policy Research Institute Publications. 127. 2021. Available at: https://cedar.wvu.edu/bpri_publications/127

39 "FACT SHEET: Key Deliverables for the 2021 North American Leaders' Summit" Prime Minister's Office. Government of Canada. November 18, 2021. Available at: <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/backgrounders/2021/11/18/fact-sheet-key-deliverables-2021-north-american-leaders-summit>



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Thinking Canada is a series of commentaries and working papers on public policy issues in Canada, topics relevant to U.S.-Canadian relations, and the North American region. The views of the authors are their own and are published by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars through its Canada Institute to promote greater awareness and insight on the United States' neighbor and longstanding partner.

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