

University of Calgary Institute for United States Policy Research
School of Policy Studies
The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars Canada Institute

**The Next U.S. Administration: Policy Directions & Implications
for Canada-U.S. Relations**

March 6-7, 2009

Session II – Security and Defence
10:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

PRESENTER

Terry Teriff, Arthur Child Chair in United States Security Studies, University of Calgary
Joseph Jockel, Director, Canadies Studies, St. Lawrence University

COMMENTATOR

David Bercuson, Director, Centre for Military and Strategic Studies, University of Calgary
Joel Sokolsky, Principal, Royal Military College of Canada

STUDENT OBSERVER/RAPPORTEUR

Abe Roof, Department of History, University of Calgary

Session II - Summary

While it might seem like a difficult task to find a common theme or agreement in a panel covering such broad issues as security and defense, a clear policy recommendation emerged nonetheless. All the participants in the panel were able to come to a general agreement that Canada must do what it can to support the United States in both foreign affairs and military matters. Panelists also shared the sentiment that it is in Canada's interest to maximize its contribution to missions and policy initiatives which the United States considers to be in its strategic interests. Indeed, the panelists believe that this support, even if it does not represent direct Canadian interests, remains in its national interest simply because of the assumed benefits of American friendship.

Summary of Terry Terriff's presentation

Terriff maintained that although Obama took office with a great deal of fanfare, it remains to be seen whether his administration has a clear policy vision. Thus far it seems that "Obamaism" is a decision-making process and not an ideology. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has had to contend with a seemingly endless array of foreign policy issues, making it difficult to discern what the United States plans to prioritize in the international arena. Terriff said that the conversation between Alice and the Cheshire cat in *Alice in Wonderland* provides a fitting comparison with current U.S. foreign policy. Alice does not care where she is going, as long as she gets somewhere. Nevertheless, there are some indications that Obama has a general sense of the direction that he would like U.S. foreign policy to head.

Obama has compared his own foreign policy strategy to that of former Presidents Truman and Bush Sr. Both of these presidents led America during a time of great flux in the world and tried to steer global events toward American interests. Terriff stated that this is indicative of

Obama's likely foreign policy goals, namely to engage other powers and try to achieve U.S. foreign policy goals in an increasingly multipolar world. To help guide this process, Obama seeks to establish international 'rules of the road' which are to be negotiated by interested parties. This process will have to include China as a partner, said Terriff. The key strategic goal of the United States must be a multipolar world which is governed by international mechanisms and norms that are consistent with American values and preferences.

Terriff pointed out that America will be limited in its international influence by its economic strength at home. America must also strive to practice the values it would have other nations adhere to in order to regain its moral standing internationally. If the United States can achieve this it will be poised to carry out Obama's goal of leading the shift to a more multipolar world. However, the United States will likely expect more from its allies and other states for this more conciliatory posture. Ultimately, the Obama administration's strategy seems to be aimed at engaging all states in a constructive manner in an effort to guide the creation of a new multipolar world in a way that follows America's rules and shares its values. Terriff maintained that this will not be an easy task, Iran and Russia in particular could make this extremely difficult, but the end result is a worthy goal.

Summary of Joseph Jockel's presentation

NORAD is heading for obsolescence, Jockel said. Saving it requires a reversal of the Martin government's decision against missile defense. The arrival of the Obama administration provides the Harper administration with some political cover to achieve this. This would also be the time for Canada and the United States to explore the advantages of transforming NORAD into a "North American Defense Command," an option first mentioned by the Canadian government in 2002. Ottawa may want to seize the "Obama moment" because it believes

NORAD has symbolic value and worries that if NORAD were to disappear, it would be hard to recreate. Ottawa could also use the argument that NORAD is a vital conduit to U.S. information and planning in an effort to further justify the institution's existence.

Jockel maintained that those arguments for retaining NORAD are not strong enough, however, and it is becoming even harder to argue that NORAD is essential for Canada-U.S. defense cooperation. In other words, Canada's security does not hinge on being part of a bi-national aerospace defense command. Nor is a bi-national homeland defense command necessary. So the better course of action will be to let NORAD continue to erode, as well as what little remains of Canada's broader role in aerospace defense. Nonetheless, how to structure Canada-U.S. air defense cooperation in the age of terror remains an important concern to both countries. There will no doubt be important lessons to be learned at the 2010 Vancouver Olympics, including whether NORAD should be retained as an air defense command. The NORAD review now scheduled for 2010 should be postponed until 2011 so that the Olympic experience with air defense can be taken into consideration.

Commentary- *Joel Sokolsky's response to Terriff's presentation*

In order to create a new multipolar world, Obama will need to expand multilateral cooperation while securing America's interests and spreading its values, Sokolsky said. Under Truman, America was able to establish a liberal order flavored with realism. Bush Sr. used this same liberal realism again at the end of the Soviet era. Now Obama can adjust it to new realities. Washington will have to continue to lead in order to make multilateralism work. No one could fill the void left by America, so it will by necessity retain its leadership role—especially in the Middle East. Russia, China and other less liberal states are unlikely to be impressed by a return to American values, as exemplified by the closing down of Guantanamo. If the United States

fails to create the multipolar world it desires, it will not only be the United States that suffers, but the rest of the Western world and other nations as well.

Commentary- *David Bercuson response to Jockel's presentation:*

Bercuson began his remarks by stating that he agreed with Jockel's assertion that while NORAD is at risk of becoming obsolete, the Institution still has enough symbolic value to justify its continued existence. When NORAD was established, explained Bercuson, Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles were already emerging as a primary threat. The emergence of the Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) strategy effectively guaranteed that the Soviets were not going to attack the United States using obsolete bombers when they had perfectly good missiles. Canada contributed significantly in the early years of NORAD, and hundreds of Canadian personnel were involved. In the 1960s a three decade long system of budget cuts began and the number of Canadian aircraft involved in NORAD operations were cut significantly. Canada's contribution to NORAD began to decline consequently, and is now minimal.

Bercuson argued, however, that Jockel is mistaken when he says that Canada's land and airspace are less important than they were a decade ago. If so, stated Bercuson, why do I need a passport to visit my son? After 9/11 it was suggested that sea surveillance should be added to NORAD's mandate. The creation of Northcom and Canada command may be another indication that NORAD is losing its status as an essential defense institution. If we built a continental perimeter, NORAD could become useful again. It is not in Canada's immediate interests to pursue a perimeter defense. Now our forces are more interconnected and interoperable than ever. NORAD is extremely unlikely to detect a terror attack. If Canada dropped out, it might have to take its own air defense seriously. Canada would have to build a substantial air defense

capability of its own. Bercuson stated that saving NORAD is not necessary, but keeping Canada's relationship with the United States friendly and healthy is as important as ever.