

ON MARITIME THREATS TO CANADA

Introduction

Oceans and navies have pre-occupied mankind for at least two thousand years. They have played key roles in the economic prosperity, peace and security of most if not all nations, especially littoral ones. This has certainly been the case for Canada, and two of its founding nations, France and Britain, and its neighbour to the south, the United States. Canada, in its short history, owes a lot of its past and present prosperity to ocean resource exploitation and seaborne trade¹. Canada's evolution, prosperity, peace and security have, in the past, been threatened and shaped, directly or indirectly, by military force or the threat thereof, and other threats, at home and far afield. Threats² to Canada's economic prosperity, peace and security, military and other, continue to exist; they exist in all environments, including at sea.

There are several factors which influence the nature and size of a state's required naval forces. The most important of these is the threat, both present and, especially, future. This paper examines the maritime threats that challenge³ Canada's national interests and drive the need for a capable and effective Royal Canadian Navy.

Canada's National Interests

Like most nations, Canada basically has two national interests: to prosper economically⁴ and to live in peace and security. These interests are intertwined. Often, a nation will be challenged to prosper economically if it does not enjoy peace and security, and vice-versa.

Threats in General

All threats, in one way or another, affect a nation's ability to prosper economically or to live in peace and security⁵. In a perfect world, nothing would stand in the way of a state pursuing its national interests. Unfortunately, the world is far from perfect. There are natural phenomena and human activities which work against the intertwined pursuits of economic prosperity and peace and security. Natural phenomena and human activity which cause damage

¹ Trade can be defined as "the act or process of buying, selling, or exchanging commodities, at either wholesale or retail, within a country or between countries". See Dictionary.com, <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/trade>, last accessed 7 May 2017.

² Simply speaking, a threat can be defined as "a person or thing likely to cause damage or danger." See English Oxford Living Dictionaries, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/threat>, last accessed 7 May 2017.

³ Or adversely impact.

⁴ In a national context, economic prosperity is normally understood to mean a high or growing per capita Gross Domestic Product.

⁵ Some threats affect human safety, but this paper is focussed on those threats which affect economic prosperity and peace and security. While safety and security are often used interchangeably, this paper makes the following distinction. Safety is used when the danger, risk or injury is non-intentional or accidental e.g. natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes; accidents; illness and disease, including that which results from air, water and soil intoxication. Security is used when the danger or threat is human and intentional i.e. criminality, including crimes against property and persons, terrorism; and armed conflict.

to property or endanger human life and freedom and economic activity are, in many circles and especially military ones, called threats. Some threats, such as disease, tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, drought and climate change, are natural and some, such as pollution, crime, terrorism⁶, cyber warfare⁷ and armed conflict⁸, are human. Some have a greater impact on the economy, some have a greater impact on peace and security, and some impact both in varying degrees. Some threats affect people directly and some affect people indirectly. Some human threats are accidental, but most are intentional. Some human threats are military in nature; some are non-military. Military threats play out in all environments: on land, in the air, in space, and at sea.⁹ Human, intentional threats, especially military ones, have the greatest impact on a state's national interests.

Responses to Threats in General

Governments ordinarily (1) take steps to minimize or eliminate threats and (2) develop contingencies for dealing with threats before they arise. While methods vary between states and governments, there are some common patterns. Most governments employ: (1) civilian health and emergency services to deal with the threat and impact of disease and natural disasters; (2) police forces and justice systems to deal with the threat and impact of crime; and (3) military forces to deal with the threat and impact of external armed aggression.¹⁰ While military forces can be and sometimes are used to assist civilian agencies and police forces when they deal with out-of-the-ordinary or overwhelming circumstances, military forces are normally mandated and equipped to focus on dealing with the threat posed by other states' military forces. Normally, the principal purpose of a state's armed forces is to defend a state and its people against external military aggression.

⁶ There is no commonly-agreed definition of terrorism. Generally, terrorism refers to an act of violence destined to coerce a change in a group's attitude, behaviour or policy. Terrorism is normally carried out by individuals or by a group of individuals. Sometimes terrorism is not limited by geographic boundaries. Sometimes terrorism is sponsored or supported by the government of a state. Sometimes terrorism is treated as crime, especially if it occurs within the boundaries of a state. Sometimes it is treated as armed conflict, especially when it originates in another state.

⁷ "Cyber warfare involves the actions by a nation-state or international organization to attack and attempt to damage another nation's computers or information networks..." As defined by the Rand Corporation. See <https://www.rand.org/topics/cyber-warfare.html>, last accessed 27 May 2017.

⁸ The most extreme form of armed conflict is war. For a more detailed discussion on the differences between armed conflict and war, see <http://www.differencebetween.com/difference-between-war-and-vs-conflict/>, last accessed 18 April 2017.

⁹ There is much debate as to whether this list should also include cyberspace (or the information highway).

¹⁰ The response to some threats is not always clear cut. For instance, many governments are struggling with how best to respond to the evolving threat of terrorism and the new and rapidly expanding threat of cyber warfare. Responses to these threats may vary depending on the circumstances. For instance, terrorism on national soil will normally be handled by police forces but countering terrorism abroad may be handled by intelligence services and military forces. In the case of cyber warfare, some threats will be acted upon by police or law enforcement services and others may be acted upon by non-police forces.

Human Threats in General

The human threats to the intertwined national interests of economic prosperity and peace and security, those for which armed and police forces are normally raised, can be categorized and summarised as follows.

Inter-state Tension and Conflict. Despite the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, tensions continue to exist between states. These tensions are rooted in: (1) geo-strategic power and influence struggles; (2) a sense of sympathy or responsibility (genuine and legitimate or not) for ethnic, linguistic or religious diasporas living in neighbouring countries; and (3) economic competition for limited natural resources including water, food, minerals and energy. Some observers feel these tensions are on the rise.¹¹ These tensions lead to an inability to respect the sovereignty and interests of other states. These tensions cause potential antagonists to spend large sums of money on warfighting capabilities. An increased number of states have acquired or are seeking nuclear weapons. Unresolved tensions between states can lead to state-on-state coercion and state-sponsored or supported terrorism. These tensions can, as it has so often happened in the past, degenerate into inter-state conflict. Such tensions and conflicts can affect peace and security and economic prosperity beyond the states in question.

Intra-state Tension and Conflict. Despite increased drives for democratization, tensions continue to exist within states. These tensions and conflicts are rooted in: (1) an inability to live together owing to ethnic, linguistic, religious, socio-economic and ideological differences; (2) unfair, unregulated or aggressive competition for limited natural resources including water, food, minerals and energy¹²; and (3) an inability to share wealth. These challenges lead to an inability to share political power. Some observers feel these tensions are on the rise. Unresolved tensions within a country can, as it has so often happened in the past, lead to social unrest, emigration, civil strife, lawlessness, piracy, terrorism and civil war. Such tensions and conflict, which give rise to failing and failed states, can affect peace and security and economic prosperity beyond the borders of the state in question.¹³ Failing and failed states sometimes provide safe havens for international terrorist groups. Some observers feel the number of failing and failed states are on the rise.

Criminal Activity. Independent of inter- and intra- state tensions and conflicts, there has been and always will be crime, organized and not, national and transnational, essentially

¹¹ Gilles Bertrand, Anna Michalski and Lucio R. Pench, *European Futures: Five Possible Scenarios for 2010*, p.57, https://books.google.ca/books?id=rsslqeyascgC&pg=PA57&lpg=PA57&dq=the+rise+of+inter-state+tension&source=bl&ots=R1k2FLvKHC&sig=ChUV_6BI72c2mZU-Mc5XRUsedcA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiut8bjuMrTAhVL_4MKHS1hCakQ6AEIOjAE#v=onepage&q=the%20rise%20of%20inter-state%20tension&f=false, last accessed 29 April 2017.

¹² While not yet generating equivalent tensions, pollution of the living environment, de-forestation and climate change may one day do so.

¹³ Some have suggested the recent waves of African and Iraqi migrants and refugees to Europe have caused problems in their receiving countries.

involving for-profit trafficking of stolen and/or prohibited goods and services, including, but not limited to, cigarettes, alcohol, drugs, arms, money and human beings. As mentioned previously, countering the threat and impact of crime is normally the responsibility of police forces and justice systems. A state's military forces, especially its land forces, are normally not involved in this area, except under exceptional circumstances.¹⁴

Military Threats in General

In terms of threats of a military (or quasi-military) nature, one needs to consider both the capability¹⁵ and the intent¹⁶ of a potential adversary. There are several different scenarios in this regard. Military capability takes time to develop¹⁷ and is relatively easy to assess and quantify.¹⁸ Military intent is more difficult to assess and quantify, and the intent of a capable state can develop or change in a very short period of time, much more quickly than capability can develop or change. If a state has no military capability, it clearly represents no military threat¹⁹. If a state has significant military capability but no aggressive intent, it may represent an unlikely or negligible threat.²⁰ If a state has significant military capability and an unclear or aggressive intent, it represents a serious or likely threat. Assessing military intent is not always easy. Again, there are several scenarios in this regard. Clearly, past actions can be tangible harbingers of future actions; in such scenarios, intent and the resultant threat are easier to assess. A more difficult scenario is one in which there has been no past aggressive action but there is much or increasing aggressive rhetoric.

¹⁴ Many states provide their (land-centric) police forces with reasonable capabilities and resources to execute their law-enforcement mandate. Many states do not have laws which readily permit their military forces, especially land forces, from becoming engaged in law-enforcement activities on a routine basis.

¹⁵ Capability can be defined as "The ability to complete a task or execute a course of action under specified conditions and level of performance." See *DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, as of March 2017, http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/dictionary.pdf, last accessed 25 April 2017. A capability normally requires a cogent combination of equipment, personnel, doctrine, training and support to be effective and efficient. Without equipment, however, there is *no de facto* military capability.

¹⁶ Intent is synonymous with aim or plan. *DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* defines: commander's intent as "a clear and concise expression of the purpose of the operation and the desired military end state ..." and hostile intent as "the threat of imminent use of force against ..., or other designated persons or property."

¹⁷ It takes years and in many instances decades to research, develop, design, build and deploy the equipment which is at the heart of most modern, military capabilities.

¹⁸ Several organizations, private and governmental, spend considerable time and resources gathering intelligence, via sophisticated and not-so sophisticated means, about country-specific and world-wide military capabilities. See: Global Firepower, 2016 World Military Strength Rankings, <http://www.globalfirepower.com/>, last accessed 26 April 2017, and CIA, *The World Factbook*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>, last accessed 26 April 2017.

¹⁹ Costa Rica, for instance, has no armed forces, and consequently represents no military threat to its neighbours. For more information, see Army-technology.com, *The world's biggest countries without armed forces*, <http://www.army-technology.com/features/featurethe-worlds-biggest-countries-without-armed-forces-4514110/>, last accessed 25 April 2107.

²⁰ Some suggest capability in and of itself is no indication of intent. There are indeed examples of this being true. For instance, Japan Self-Defence Forces, which were established after the Second World War, have much military capability, but there have been no instances of aggressive military intent or action on their part.

Managing Military Threats

While not normally talked about in such terms, the science and art of assessing the nature, potential impact and means of countering military threats is part and parcel of classic risk theory and management. Risk is commonly spoken of as “a situation involving exposure to danger.”²¹ Risk theory considers risk and its likelihood (or chance) in an uncertain world.²² Risk management is the “process of evaluating the chance of loss or harm and then taking steps to combat the potential risk.” Risk managing military threats, or protecting the state and its people against the possibility of external military aggression, is the principal business of politicians and international relations and military professionals.

Response to Military Threats

National governments, including Canada’s, assume a responsibility²³ to defend their citizens and sovereign territory, especially from external military aggression. To do so, national governments must acquire and maintain an ability to counter military threats. Most normally do so by raising and maintaining standing military forces and by collaborating and cooperating, militarily and otherwise, with liked-minded, allied nations. Most normally focus first on the ability to defend their territorial sovereignty and then, if sovereignty and territory are not under immediate threat, on the ability to address peace and security problems abroad so that these problems do not one day adversely affect peace, security and economic prosperity at home.

Canada maintains a standing military force of 68,000 regular force soldiers, air personnel and sailors.^{24,25} This military force is destined to provide for the defence of Canada and of North America, and to contribute to international peace and security. The force is principally designed to counter military threats.²⁶ Since the end of the Second World War, Canada has sought to reduce the threat of external, military aggression through membership and strong support of the United Nations (UN)²⁷ and military alliances. When not otherwise busy countering military threats, military force can also assist in countering non-military threats. While capable of some

²¹ English Oxford Living Dictionaries, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/risk>, last accessed 12 April 2017.

²² “Risk, then, is exposure to a proposition of which one is uncertain.” See Glyn A. Holton, *Defining Risk*, 2004, <https://www.glynholton.com/wp-content/uploads/2006/10/risk.pdf>, last accessed 12 April 2017.

²³ Some would call it an obligation. See Study.com, *National Government: Definition, Responsibilities & Powers*, <http://study.com/academy/lesson/national-government-definition-responsibilities-powers.html>, last accessed 25 April 2017.

²⁴ “The Regular Force personnel strength is currently about 2,000 personnel below its authorized strength of 68,000.” As per the Department of National Defence Report on Plans and Priorities 2017-18, <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/about-reports-pubs-report-plan-priorities/2017-spending-and-human-resources.page>, last accessed 27 May 2017.

²⁵ See Statistics Canada’s Perspectives, Jungwee Park, *A Profile of the Canadian Forces*, July 2008, <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75-001-x/2008107/pdf/10657-eng.pdf>, last accessed 27 May 2017.

²⁶ Of late, the Canadian Armed Forces have also been used to tackle para-military terrorist organizations.

²⁷ “The Purposes of the United Nations are: To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to ...” United Nations Charter, Chapter 1, Article 1, <http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-i/>, last accessed 7 May 2017.

independent military action, Canada relies heavily on military alliances with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the United States of America (USA).

There is much debate as to the economic rationale and benefit of large investments in a state's military forces.²⁸ Canada currently spends about 1% of its Gross Domestic Product on military spending. Some say this is more than adequate. Some²⁹ say this is not enough. Some say the Canadian Government and people rely too much on the protective umbrella of the USA.³⁰

Canadians' Perceptions of Military Threats

While threats, especially military ones, affect all states and peoples, they are not felt the same by all.

Many people around the world, including many Canadians, hoped the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s would have ushered the beginning of a new era of increased peace and security and reduced military spending. It is not clear if this has been the case³¹. Since 1989, there has been a seemingly increasing number of crisis and conflicts which has troubled global peace and security³² and seen the regular use of military force.

Most Canadians do not sense a near-and-present military threat to Canada. While Russia has recently resumed probes of North American airspace³³³⁴ and has carried out a flag-waving at the North Pole³⁵, Canadians do not seem to view these activities as truly threatening to national sovereignty. There are likely several reasons for this sense of relative security. Firstly, most living Canadians have never sensed or experienced the threat of military attack, invasion or occupation here in Canada. Secondly, Canada, being surrounded by three of the world's oceans,

²⁸ Spending on defence is like buying insurance: (1) you have to pay for it upfront; (2) you don't know when you will ever need to use its full capacity; and (3) you can't readily acquire some or more when a crisis suddenly emerges. Unfortunately, the only sure way to determine whether enough is being spent on defence is when the country's defence is actually put to the test.

²⁹ Including the Naval Association of Canada.

³⁰ The Economist, Strong, proud and free-riding, 12 September 2015, <http://www.economist.com/news/americas/21664208-canadians-see-themselves-global-benefactors-fact-they-have-been-pinching>, (last assessed 29 April 2107).

³¹ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), *World military spending: Increases in the USA and Europe, decreases in oil-exporting countries*; 24 April 2107; <https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2017/world-military-spending-increases-usa-and-europe>, last accessed 24 April 2017.

³² See UNHCR's Global Trends Forced Displacement in 2014 at <http://www.unhcr.org/556725e69.html>, last accessed 2 May 2017, and International Rescue Organization's Crisis Watch 2016 at <http://crisiswatch.webflow.io/>, last accessed 2 May 2017.

³³ CBC, Canadian fighter jets intercept Russian bombers in Arctic, 19 September 2014, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/canadian-fighter-jets-intercept-russian-bombers-in-arctic-1.2772440>, last accessed 27 April 2017.

³⁴ Canadian Press, Lee Berthiaume, Canada intercepts Russian bombers off coast, 21 April 2017, <http://www.msn.com/en-ca/news/canada/canada-intercepts-russian-bombers-off-coast/ar-BBA8bDq?li=AAadgLE&ocid=spartandhp>, last accessed 22 April 2017.

³⁵ The New York Times, C.J. Chivers, *Russians Plant Flag on the Arctic Seabed*, 2 August 2017, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/03/world/europe/03arctic.html>, last accessed 27 April 2017.

is relatively well insulated from direct military threat. Thirdly, Canada lives under the umbrella of the most powerful state on Earth.³⁶ These three facts likely cause most Canadians not to be as concerned with military threats as many people are in other parts of the world. In the end, the likelihood of a conventional military attack on Canada, especially given its proximity to the United States, is very low.

Also, the thought of an attack on our North American neighbour or our own homeland by a nuclear armed adversary, which was prevalent during the Cold War, was, until recently, felt to be a thing of the past. The sense of relief, post-1989, was welcomed and palpable. Today, unfortunately, more and more states have acquired or are attempting to acquire nuclear weapons and some are attempting to acquire increasingly long-range, autonomous and precise delivery systems. Despite our best hopes and wishes, the possibility and threat of a nuclear attack still exist.

Canadians do sense the threat of terrorism, especially that practised by Islamic jihadists, both at home and abroad. At home and in allied countries, the threat is considered non-military and is principally handled by police forces and the justice system, with assistance of the military as appropriate. In terrorist havens abroad, the threat is considered military and allied nations, along with Canada, have been countering it with military force.

Canadians do sometimes sense non-military threats to Canada. These threats are mostly economic and criminal in nature. These threats, which exist far from most Canadian cities, rarely command the public's attention in a significant and persistent manner. Many of these threats exist just beyond Canada's land borders. They exist at sea. The most tangible ones are illegal migration³⁷, illegal fishing³⁸, drug trafficking³⁹, pollution⁴⁰ and climate change. The less tangible ones are ocean estate and sea-access⁴¹ disputes and piracy.

The Challenge and Impact of Accurately Predicting the Future Threat

We live in an unpredictable world. Events happen and continue to happen in unpredictable and surprising manners. Few Canadians saw or predicted: the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall; the 1990 invasion of Kuwait; the 1992 collapse of Somalia; the 1993 collapse of Yugoslavia; the 2001 use of high-jacked civilian aircraft to conduct a coordinated terrorist attack

³⁶ Some say Canada free-loads on the coattails of the United States.

³⁷ Vancouver Sun, Keith Fraser, Trial begins for four men accused of smuggling 492 Tamils into Canada, 19 October 2016, <http://vancouversun.com/news/local-news/trial-begins-for-four-men-accused-of-smuggling-492-tamils-into-canada>, last accessed 7 May 2017.

³⁸ See The Turbot War, <http://britishseafishing.co.uk/the-turbot-war/>, last accessed 7 May 2017.

³⁹ The Toronto Sun, The Associated Press, Curt Anderson, U.S. Coast Guard, Royal Canadian Navy seize \$715-million of cocaine, 15 December 2016, <http://www.torontosun.com/2016/12/15/us-coast-guard-royal-canadian-navy-seize-715-million-of-cocaine>, last accessed 7 May 2017.

⁴⁰ Environment Canada, Number of Marine Pollution Spills from Identified Vessels, <https://www.ec.gc.ca/indicateurs-indicators/default.asp?lang=en&n=8D7B3A02-1>, last accessed 7 May 2017.

⁴¹ The United States often speaks of "freedom of navigation" issues.

against the United States; the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq; the 2008 financial crisis; the 2008 rise of piracy off the Horn of Africa; the Arab spring which commenced in Tunisia in 2010; the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan, and the resultant nuclear catastrophe; the 2011 NATO-led military intervention in Libya⁴²; and the 2014 annexation of Crimea by Russia. Humans are not very good at predicting the future.

This lack of predictability presents a serious peace and security conundrum. Optimum military forces, which take years and in some instances decades to design and procure, can only be properly identified if the future threat has been correctly predicted.⁴³

Who, in the late 1990s, predicted that Canada would fight a 10-year anti-terrorist-oriented land campaign in Afghanistan in the new millennium? What lessons has Canada learned (or re-learned) from the pre-Afghanistan, 1990s, budget-related decisions to cut the Canadian Army's explosive ordnance disposal capability, to dispose of CHINOOK heavy-lift helicopters, to dispose of battle tanks, and to acquire less expensive unarmoured, commercial-pattern land vehicles, capabilities which were all urgently reacquired or adjusted during the casualty-heavy Afghan campaign? Predicting the future is not easy. What does this enduring reality mean in the context of lengthy and costly procurement of complex defence capabilities such as warships and submarines?

A state's defence policy, and the difficult capability (and equipment) choices that flow from it, should be based on a clear assessment of the threat of military aggression, at home and abroad, both present and future.⁴⁴ The most important threat to assess is the future one;

⁴² NATO Operation UNITED PROTECTOR was commanded by Royal Canadian Air Force General Charles Bouchard.

⁴³ Herein lies the biggest challenge confronting political leaders and defence planners. The more certain the prediction of the future threat, the more confidently less-balanced, single-purpose military capabilities can be pursued. The less certain the prediction of the future threat, the less risky it is to pursue more balanced, general-purpose military capabilities. Given the difficulty of correctly predicting the future, the later course of action has always been advisable.

⁴⁴ The Naval Association of Canada (NAC) agrees with the North American threat assessment which was captured in the September 2016 House of Commons Committee on National Defence and Security Report on NORAD and Aerial Readiness."

unfortunately, it is also the most difficult to predict.⁴⁵ An unclear or debatable assessment of future threats⁴⁶ does not facilitate difficult military capability and equipment choices.⁴⁷

States Which Represent a Potential Military Threat to Canada

The news of late has put the spotlight on two states which pose the greatest military threat to the national interests of Canada, and of other states. These military threats are not new. They did not suddenly appear. They have been around, percolating and building for quite some time.

At the top of the list is Russia. Not only does she have significant military and cyber capabilities, which are on the rise, but she has been inclined to use them of late. She has been active militarily of late on the periphery of her borders. Many peripheral states are worried about Russia's next moves. While she has not verbally threatened North America with armed force, she does have the ability to do so, and she has developed a willingness to conduct cyber attacks of North American information servers.

Next is North Korea⁴⁸. She possesses significant military capability, and is actively pursuing nuclear⁴⁹ and long-range missile capabilities⁵⁰. She has been active of late in skirmishes with

⁴⁵ The most important aspect of any defence policy is the forward-looking one. This aspect is critical to ensuring the right military forces are developed.

⁴⁶ In 2008, the Canadian Armed Forces' Chief of Force Development suggested in *The Future Security Environment 2008-2030*: "Although asymmetric warfare is presently the prevalent security threat, the possibility of state-on-state conflict cannot be dismissed. National aspirations, regional instabilities, and the desire to challenge the balance of power, which currently favours the United States, are all potential triggers for states to wage war on each other. Conflict is also likely to emerge in regions of instability, in failed or fragile states, or between states that feel a need to assert/reassert state power at the expense of regional – if not world – peace. Islamist terrorist attacks are a significant threat in the Maritime South-East Asia and Oceania regions, as well as South-Central Asia. Consequently, the possibility of inter- state armed confrontation means that the CF needs to be prepared to address the full-spectrum of conflict, not just asymmetric threats."

⁴⁷ The Government will eventually need to espouse, publicly or privately, its own assessment of future threats, and weave the implications into both defence and foreign policy. Several significant and negative security environment changes have occurred since the publication of Canada's last defence policy document, the Canada First Defence Strategy, in 2008. These need to be taken into account. For example, what are the Government's positions on: Russia's recent extra-territorial activities? Russia's future intentions? China's recent activities in the South China Sea? North Korea's long-range missile and nuclear weapons ambitions? Can we exclude the possibility that the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) might one day be directed to respond to any of these, or other, challenges?

⁴⁸ "This rogue regime in North Korea is a danger not only to the immediate region but the entire world," Trudeau said. Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), *Canada could be called on for troops in event of war with North Korea*, 21 April 2017, <http://www.msn.com/en-ca/news/canada/canada-could-be-called-on-for-troops-in-event-of-war-with-north-korea/ar-BBA8x5c?li=AAadgLE&ocid=spartandhp>, last accessed 22 April 2017.

⁴⁹ BBC.com, North Korea's nuclear programme: How advanced is it? 6 January 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-11813699>, last accessed 28 April 2017.

⁵⁰ BBC.com. North Korea crisis: North 'test-fires ballistic missile', 28 April 2107, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-39750240>, last accessed 28 April 17.

⁵¹ Foster Klug, The Associated Press via The Globe and Mail, North Korea says new long-range missile can carry heavy nuke, 14 May 2017, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/north-korea-says-latest-missile-test-aimed-at-testing-ability-to-carry-large-nuclear-warhead/article34984507/>, last accessed 14 May 2017.

South Korea⁵²⁵³. Above and beyond her military capability, North Korea has of late gleefully embarked on a course of bellicose rhetoric. North Korea poses a real and existential threat to South Korea, and is now threatening the continental United States (and by extension Canada).

While not attracting as much media attention of late, there are other potential military threats that should concern Canada.

China's military capability is well known. It is building and modernizing⁵⁴. There is much debate as to China's intentions beyond its land borders. There is much debate as to the trajectory of China's naval expansion and strategy.⁵⁵ To date, China has eschewed international criticism of its controversial actions in the South China Sea⁵⁶. In 2106, the Permanent Court of Arbitration, at which China chose not to represent itself, found China's South China Sea actions to be unlawful.⁵⁷⁵⁸

Iran continues to pose a military threat in the Middle East. Its current military capabilities are perhaps not of the gravest concern, but it has and continues to use them to influential effect.⁵⁹ It is no secret that Iran has long wished for the destruction of Israel.⁶⁰ There have been and continue to be grave concerns that Iran is seeking nuclear weapons and associated delivery systems⁶¹. Notwithstanding the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action⁶²⁶³ which

⁵² South Korean Navy Ship Cheonan was sunk on 26 March 2010 by a torpedo fired from a North Korean submarine, killing 46 sailors. See <http://www.bbc.com/news/10129703>, last accessed 28 April 2017.

⁵³ The Telegraph, North Korea bombs South Korea's Yeonpyeong Island, 23 November 2010, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/southkorea/8153000/North-Korea-bombs-South-Koreas-Yeonpyeong-Island.html>, last accessed 28 April 2017.

⁵⁴ Reuters, *China launches first home-built aircraft carrier amid South China Sea tension*, 26 April 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-military-carrier-idUSKBN17S06B>, last accessed 26 April 2017.

⁵⁵ See the book review by James R. Holmes and Toshi Yoshihara, *Chinese Naval Strategy in the Twenty First Century: The Turn to Mahan*, London, Routledge, 2008, http://www.idsa.in/system/files/jds_3_3_srajassimman.pdf, last accessed 28 April 2017.

⁵⁶ The Guardian, *China nears completion of its controversial airstrip in South China Sea*, 2 July 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/02/china-controversial-airstrip-south-china-sea-spratly-islands>, last accessed 26 April 2017.

⁵⁷ See the Permanent Court of Arbitration's case information concerning the South China Sea Arbitration at <https://pca-cpa.org/en/cases/7/>, last accessed 27 April 2017.

⁵⁸ The New York Times, *Tribunal Rejects Beijing's Claims in South China Sea*, 12 July 2016, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/13/world/asia/south-china-sea-hague-ruling-philippines.html?_r=0, last accessed 26 April 2017.

⁵⁹ Asharq Al-Awsat, *U.S.-Iranian Skirmishes in Strait of Hormuz*, 10 January 2017, <http://english.aawsat.com/heba-el-koudsy-and-jordan-dakamseh/world-news/u-s-iranian-skirmishes-strait-hormuz>, last accessed 29 April 2017.

⁶⁰ The Atlantic, Jeffrey Goldberg, *The Iranian Regime on Israel's Right to Exist*, 9 March 2015, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/03/Iranian-View-of-Israel/387085/>, last accessed 1 May 2017.

⁶¹ See the Nuclear Threat Initiative's Overview of Iran at <http://www.nti.org/learn/countries/iran/>, last accessed 27 April 2017.

⁶² The New York Times, *Deal Reached on Iran Nuclear Program; Limits on Fuel Would Lessen With Time*, 14 July 2015, https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/15/world/middleeast/iran-nuclear-deal-is-reached-after-long-negotiations.html?_r=0, last accessed 29 April 2017.

⁶³ The Economist, *Everything you want to know about the Iranian nuclear deal*, 5 April 2015, <http://www.economist.com/blogs/economist-explains/2015/04/economist-explains-3>, last accessed 28 April 2017.

seeks to delay its march towards a nuclear-weapon capability, Iran continues to be accused of sponsoring extra-territorial terrorism.⁶⁴⁶⁵

These states possess impactful military capabilities and have demonstrated through their actions or their rhetoric aggressive intent towards other states. While not directly threatening Canada at this time, any further offensive military action by any of these states would likely impact Canada's prosperity and peace and security interests and likely warrant a Canadian response.

Evolving Naval Threats

Against this background, Canada needs modern, balanced, and capable armed forces, which include naval forces. Such forces must be designed to counter extant threat weapons, now and into the future. Unfortunately, a potential adversary's threat weapons, and the platforms that launch them, are in continuous evolution.

There continues to be no end to mankind's motivation and ability to discover, develop and/ or deploy new threat weapons and launch platforms.⁶⁶ Threat weapons, and some of their launch platforms, are increasingly faster, stealthier⁶⁷, longer-range and/or more effective. This is especially true of naval platforms and threat weapons being developed and introduced by Russia and China.

In the maritime⁶⁸ environment, the proliferation and improvements in submarines⁶⁹, mines, anti-ship torpedoes⁷⁰, anti-ship missiles⁷¹, and cruise and ballistic missiles in particular,

⁶⁴ Center for Strategic and International Studies, Defeating the Iranian Threat Network: Options for Countering Iranian Proxies, 29 November 2016, https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/congressional_testimony/ts161206_Dalton_Testimony.pdf, last accessed 29 April 2017.

⁶⁵ Newsweek, Iran Rejects Mattis Claim About Sponsoring Terror, 1 April 2017, <http://www.newsweek.com/iran-rejects-mattis-claim-sponsoring-terror-577769>, last accessed 28 April 2017.

⁶⁶ This is a cat-and-mouse game that has been around since the beginning of time and is unlikely to disappear in the foreseeable future.

⁶⁷ This means the weapon is more difficult to detect and to counter. For instance, a modern anti-ship missile has a very small radar cross section, making it difficult to be detected by the targeted ship's radar, and will wait until the very last moment before turning on its terminal guidance radar, making it difficult to counter.

⁶⁸ "Connected with the sea, especially in relation to seaborne trade or naval matters." See English Oxford Living Dictionaries.

⁶⁹ "Since the end of the Cold War, the total number of active submarines in the world has fallen, largely as a result of large-scale decommissioning of former Soviet vessels. However, the number of countries operating submarines has increased, due largely to ongoing regional tensions..." As per the Nuclear Threat Initiative's Submarine Proliferation Resource Collection; see <http://www.nti.org/analysis/reports/submarine-proliferation-overview/>, last accessed 27 April 2017.

⁷⁰ The National Interest, Lyle J. Goldstein, China's New Missile-Torpedo May Curb U.S. Submarine Power, 16 August 2016, <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/its-missile-its-torpedo-its-chinas-new-anti-submarine-weapon-17374>, last accessed 29 April 2017.

⁷¹ It was reported that on Sunday 9 October 2016, shore-launched anti-ship missiles, possibly Chinese-made C802s, were fired towards United States Navy (USN) ships in international waters off Yemen's west coast; while no ships were hit, the USN apparently deployed countermeasures consisting of Standard Missiles (SM-2) and Evolved Sea Sparrow Missiles (ESSM), and NULKA off-board jammers. The 9 October incident was preceded by a successful 1

represent increasing potential to do harm, directly or indirectly, to North America and to the naval forces destined to counter them. Such evolving threats should not be discounted⁷², and preventive and/or protective defence measures need to be considered and implemented.⁷³

The Risk (or Threat) of Reliance on Others

While Canada has been a strong proponent of the UN and NATO, these organizations have been shaken at varying times in their willingness and ability to provide the rule of law and safeguards which contribute to global and Canadian peace and security.

The UN can only take substantive action when the UN Security Council sees fit. With each of the five permanent members of the Security Council, which includes Russia and China, wielding a veto, it is not always assured that measures necessary for promoting international justice, peace and security will be agreed to.⁷⁴

NATO decision-making is based on consensus, and NATO action is highly dependent on the leadership of the United States. It can not always be assured that measures necessary for promoting international justice, peace and security and mutual defence will be agreed to.⁷⁵

Assessing the Military Threat and the Likely Use of Military Force

In addition to the need for clear alignment with foreign policy, a state's defence policy, to be balanced, should be based on a rational assessment of the threat of military aggression, at home and abroad, both present and future.

History continues to demonstrate great difficulty in correctly predicting the future. In April 1992, Defence Minister Marcel Masse wrote: "The whirlwind of contemporary events is

October C-802 missile attack against a United Arab Emirate high-speed catamaran which was transiting the Bab Al Mandeb strait.

⁷² Because something has yet to happen does not mean it won't. History shows there is great difficulty in correctly predicting what might happen tomorrow. Was the threat of suicide plane attacks on the World Trade Centre considered the greatest threat to the United States in 2001? Was the threat of interference by Russia in Ukraine considered the greatest threat to NATO in 2015?

⁷³ The Naval Association of Canada believes the Royal Canadian Navy, subject to difficult equipment choices, has an important role to play against all of these evolving threats.

⁷⁴ The National Post, Edith M. Lederer, 13 April 2017, *Russia vetoes UN resolution to condemn Syria chemical attack: 'Russia now has a lot to prove*, <http://news.nationalpost.com/news/world/russia-vetoes-un-resolution-to-condemn-syria-chemical-attack-russia-now-has-a-lot-to-prove>, last accessed 19 April 2017.

⁷⁵ "IT WOULD have been so easy, but Donald Trump could not bring himself to do it. On May 25th, in a 900-word speech made in front of a monument to 9/11 at NATO's new headquarters in Brussels, the president failed to mention the alliance's Article 5—the bedrock commitment to regard an attack on one member country as an attack on all." See The Economist, Donald Trump fails to endorse NATO's mutual defence pledge, 26 May 2017, <http://www.economist.com/blogs/democracyinamerica/2017/05/trump-s-trip>, last accessed 28 May 2017.

having a major impact on Canada's security interests. Today, the number of certainties is far outweighed by the number of uncertainties." Is it any different today?⁷⁶

The Government of Canada has not been in the habit of publishing official, whole-of-government assessments of present and future threats⁷⁷. It tends to leave the task to the defence planners who depend on such assessments as a primary input for their policy and equipment recommendations. An equivocal or unclear or debatable assessment of the future threat makes it difficult for defence planners to garner whole-of-government and pan-party support for difficult military equipment choices.

So what are the Government of Canada's current views and positions on: Russia's recent extra-territorial activities?⁷⁸ Russia's future intentions vis-à-vis former Warsaw Pact states and other neighbouring states?⁷⁹ China's ongoing activities in the South China Sea? North Korea's long-range missile and nuclear weapons intentions? the ever-present military tensions, internal and external, in the Middle East? the expansion of the Islamic extremism into Africa? Is there any chance that the Canadian Armed Forces, including the Royal Canadian Navy, might one day be asked to respond to any one of these evolving issues?

Regrettably, the only sure way to determine whether enough is being spent on defence and security is when the country's defence and security is put to the test.⁸⁰ In the meantime, defence is like insurance: (1) you have to pay for it upfront (2) you don't know when you will ever have to use it, and (3) you can't purchase any after the fact. So how much is Canada willing to risk, and how much is it willing to pay for insurance against that risk?⁸¹

A capable and effective Navy cannot be stood up quickly when a need arises. For it to be capable and effective, it must be able, against current and future threats, to enter into harm's way

⁷⁶ There have been several unanticipated changes in the international security environment since the publication of Canada's last defence policy in 2008. The CFDS did not mention either Russia or China by name. The actions of both these countries are impacting the [US-led] security regimes in Europe and Asia respectively, and have challenged the international rules-based order over the past years in doing so. Also, it is not clear if CFDS, which was written before the Arab spring upheaval in the Middle East, anticipated Qaddafi's fall in Libya (due to NATO operations), the collapse of Syria, the growth of ISIS and the significant flow of refugees from Africa and Asia into Europe.

⁷⁷ Where has the Government of Canada articulated its assessment of the present and future threat to Canada?

⁷⁸ Suppression of Georgia in 2005; planting of a Russian flag on the sea-floor at the North Pole in 2007; annexation of Crimea in 2014; Russia's attitude and conduct in the aftermath of the downing of Malaysian Airlines Flight 17 in 2014; interference in Ukraine in 2015; engagement in Syria in 2015; long-range bomber flights near Canadian northern airspace in 2017.

⁷⁹ Further encroachment/ interference in Ukraine; Coercion and/ or encroachment in Baltic states, in Poland?

⁸⁰ What is a fair price for defence and security? Unlike private goods and services whose price is set by a competitive market place, defence is a public service and there is no vibrant market place in which a price can be established.

⁸¹ To date, the new Liberal Government appears to be indicating it is willing to pay at least \$18 billion per year (or about 1% of Canada's GDP in 2014).

and have a reasonable chance of success and survivability. For it to be of use when needed, it must exist before a difficult-to-predict situation manifests itself.

Does Canada truly know what the geo-political situation will look like in 10, 25 or 50 years from now? Does the UN, NATO and the USA need more or less military support from Canada? Is it in Canada's national interest to reduce, maintain or increase its military and naval, capabilities?

Conclusion

Canada's national interests of economic prosperity and peace and security are intertwined. Looking forward, the oceans will likely continue to play a key and increasing role in Canada's economic prosperity and peace and security. There remain important threats to Canada's national interests, including maritime ones. It remains difficult to accurately predict the nature and extent of future threats, including maritime ones. Canada must not rely exclusively on others to protect and further its national interests. Future Canadian Government's will likely one day need to send Canadian naval and maritime air forces into harm's way. Without the establishment and continuous maintenance of ready-to-deploy, ready-to-act, capable and effective Canadian naval and maritime air forces, which are purposely designed to operate against current and future threats in Canadian, international and far-away waters, the maritime-related elements of Canada's intertwined national interests will be at risk. Because of the nature of today's threat and the difficulty in predicting tomorrow's threat, Canada continues to need a modern, balanced, multi-purpose, flexible, combat-capable Navy moving forward. A capable and effective Navy is ultimately all about avoiding, preventing and deterring costly conflict and war.

Daniel Sing
Commodore (Retired)
Director of Naval Affairs
Naval Association of Canada
