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Out of sight, out of mind NORAD vis-à-vis CANUS politics

Andrea Charron and James Fergusson

Centre for Defence and Security Studies, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB, Canada

ABSTRACT

The North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) is insulated politically from tensions between Canada and the United States (U.S.). We argue the reasons why are three-fold. First North American defence is a low priority generally speaking and so NORAD is also low on the political radar. Second, NORAD is defended and challenged by misplaced politics of sovereignty (especially in Canada), both of which marginalize NORAD. Finally, NORAD is largely managed by the military professionals of both states at the bureaucratic/technical level. This means that NORAD is able to adapt and evolve without any political interference; indeed, often without any political guidance which is problematic from a civil–military balance perspective. Despite the fact that "defending Canada" and "defending North America" are priorities number one and two for every Canadian defence policy since 1964, far too little attention is paid to how NORAD has evolved over time to adapt to new threats and geopolitical trends. NORAD, like other aspects of the CANUS defence relationship is left to run unencumbered by political distractions in other issue areas. While the lack of political attention is perceived as beneficial, it may be what most challenges NORAD in the long run as it seeks more funding to modernize and continue to evolve against new and more dangerous threats to North America. NORAD should be careful for what it wishes.

KEYWORDS

NORAD; Canada; United States; defence; homeland; CANUS defence relationship

RÉSUMÉ

Le Commandement de la défense aérospatiale de l'Amérique du Nord (NORAD) est politiquement isolé des tensions entre le Canada et les États-Unis (USA). Nous avançons que les raisons sont triples. Premièrement, d'une manière générale, la défense nord-américaine est d'un faible niveau de priorité, de sorte que le NORAD est peu présent dans le paysage politique. Deuxièmement, le NORAD est défendu et remis en question par des politiques de souveraineté mal placées (en particulier au Canada) qui, toutes deux, le marginalisent. Enfin, le NORAD est largement géré par des professionnels militaires des deux États aux plans bureaucratique et technique. Cela signifie que le NORAD est en mesure de s'adapter et d'évoluer sans aucune interférence politique ; et en fait, souvent sans aucune orientation politique, ce qui est problématique du point de vue de l'équilibre civil-militaire. Bien que la « défense du Canada » et la « défense de l'Amérique du Nord » soient les priorités numéro un et deux

CONTACT Andrea Charron Andrea.Charron@umanitoba.ca Centre for Defence and Security Studies, University of Manitoba, Room 348 University College, Winnipeg, MB, R3T 2N2, Canada

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de chaque politique de défense canadienne depuis 1964, trop peu d'attention est accordée à la manière dont le NORAD a évolué au fil du temps pour s'adapter aux nouvelles menaces et tendances géopolitiques. Comme d'autres aspects des relations Canada-USA (CANUS) de défense, le NORAD est laissé libre de toute distraction politique dans d'autres domaines. Si ce manque d'attention politique est perçu comme bénéfique, il constitue peut-être la plus grande difficulté pour le NORAD sur le long terme, alors que celui-ci cherche à obtenir davantage de fonds en vue de se moderniser et de continuer d'évoluer face aux nouvelles menaces plus dangereuses qui pèsent sur l'Amérique du Nord. Le NORAD doit être attentif à ce qu'il souhaite.

Officially in its 61st year, the North American Aerospace Defense (NORAD) command remains a unique defence relationship because of its binational command structure. It has weathered dramatic transformations in the international strategic environment since its creation at the height of the Cold War. Remarkably, it continued to evolve after the Cold War, despite the disappearance of the Soviet Union, its main focus of attention, and when it failed to prevent the attacks on 9/11. Throughout its history, NORAD has acquired new roles, including assisting with drug interdiction since the 1990s and acquiring a maritime warning mission in 2006 when the binational agreement was signed in perpetuity. Now, faced with the emergence of great power rivalry, NORAD is evolving again to meet the new challenges portended by new geopolitics and advanced military technologies. What is more, NORAD has managed to transform and evolve, while avoiding the political up and down relationship between Ottawa and Washington D.C., and the Canadian Prime Minister and the American President. As a result, the NORAD "brand" continues to be invoked reflexively as proof of the strong Canada–US (CANUS) defence relationship.

NORAD seems to reside in a strange apolitical space, largely out of sight and out of mind of those at the highest political levels of both Canada and the United States and insulated from political machinations. This is not to suggest that there have never been occasions when the NORAD relationship has been buffeted by political winds, especially in Canada. These incidences, however, are rare and were usually associated with dialogues around the five-year annual review necessary prior to 2006.[1] Tensions within NORAD as a result of outside political factors have also been short in tenure and have had no appreciable impact on NORAD's operations and continued evolution. Nor is there any evidence, beyond supposition, that the NORAD relationship or broader aspects of the CANUS North American defence relationship have been linked to or affected by other contentious issues, such as softwood lumber disputes for example.

The reasons why NORAD seems insulated politically are multi-faceted but we suggest there are three primary explanations. First, NORAD, is a product of the generally lower priority of North American defence among the other political concerns of both nations. Second, NORAD is defended and challenged by misplaced politics of sovereignty (especially in Canada), both of which marginalize NORAD. Finally, NORAD is largely managed by the military professionals of both states at the bureaucratic/technical level.

Defence in the grand scheme of national priorities

In order for a relationship, such as the CANUS defence, and its institutional core, NORAD, to be vulnerable to the ebb and flow of political relations between two states, and the possibility of being politically linked to contentious issue areas, the key political decision-makers must possess a high level of consciousness about the relationship. While trying to evaluate what politicians are thinking is highly problematic (methodologically-speaking), evidence, such as the level of attention paid to testimony given by military personnel connected to NORAD, suggests that NORAD resides, at best, on the margins, and, this, in turn, is reflected within the public domain of both nations. At most, NORAD's Santa Tracker[2] or references in films or TV shows like Stargate (Mitchell 2015) are solipsistic shorthands for all that is NORAD. For example, few people in Winnipeg realize that the city is home to Canada NORAD Region (CANR) headquarters and if one were to ask any locals in Colorado Springs, the headquarters of NORAD, for information on where one can buy souvenirs you invariably get the response "what's NORAD?"[3] Furthermore, in a survey conducted on behalf of DND in 2018, when asked about the CAF's domestic roles, respondents:

> … felt they could not provide an accurate assessment because they do not see much military activity domestically. However, there was a sense that when it comes to the military's domestic operations, "no news is good news." Participants felt that as long as they hadn't heard anything, the CAF must be operating well (Earnscliffe 2018, p. 9).[4]

In the case of Canada, this lack of knowledge and interest in one of the CAF's most important domestic roles, i.e. NORAD, is a function of its low political salience reflective of the lower priority attached to national defence in general. The lack of political salience is a product of several factors. First, Canadians perceive little, if any direct threat to Canada (Paris 2018). Despite testimony by successive Commanders of NORAD warning of serious military threats to North America (O'Shaughnessy 2019, Robinson 2019) including the persistent existence of long range aviation and ballistic missiles capable of striking Canadian and North American targets, Canadians still feel secure in the defence provided by three oceans, and the location of potential adversaries in faraway lands. The sole exception is the overestimated danger of terrorist attacks which Canadians consistently cite despite evidence to the contrary (Earnscliffe 2018). In the government's 2018 terrorist threat assessment, it states:

> no terrorist attacks have been committed by terrorist groups or their followers in Canada [in 2018]. In fact, the rate of terrorist attacks in the West has decreased overall; statistics show a decline in the rate of terror attacks since early 2016, after having peaked in late 2014/early 2015. (Harvey 2014, Public Safety Canada 2018)

It seems, therefore, that Canadians perceive a threat where it is relatively unlikely and fail to consider persistent military threats successive Commanders of NORAD have warned against.

Second, Canadians' sense of security at home, coupled with images, as promoted by many governments, of Canada as a peaceful and peacekeeping nation (Earnscliffe 2018), are reinforced by our neighbour and foil that is the US global hegemon. As noted by Doug Bland, defence white papers (especially Liberal ones in his estimation) downplay the military threats to the homeland while also assuming that if one emerges, the United States will provide Canada with protection (Bland 2004, Bland 2016).

Finally, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) has a small footprint in the country given the geographic expanse of it and the small size of the forces. For most Canadians, their direct exposure to the CAF is temporally limited to disaster relief, or possibly the Snowbirds,[5] or via news reports mainly of the forces in action overseas. Few know of the role played by Canadians at NORAD (or at North Bay, in Fairbanks, in Winnipeg and other NORAD-related sites with Canadian personnel) or the extent of the daily NORAD missions and watches and hundreds of other bilateral defence activities that help to secure both states.

Assuming that the Canadian political elite are reflective of the dominant values and beliefs held within society at large, then one would not expect them to hold a high level of consciousness about defence either, nor about the CANUS defence relationship *per se* other than it exists and is important. In effect, NORAD and the CANUS defence relationship are politically out of mind. What is more, given that what NORAD and the CANUS defence relationship entails (threat analyses, air surveillance, maritime surveillance and hundreds of bilateral agreements that facilitate joint exercises and missions), actions are often literally out of sight. The importance and priority the Canadian government and senior CAF leadership attach to overseas commitments further pushes the CANUS defence relationship to the margins of consideration. As threats to national security are persistently perceived to be located overseas in faraway places, the logical priority is to meet these threats in their place of origin. As noted by Leuprecht and Sokolsky, "Canada has historically embraced an expeditionary approach when it comes to defence policy and the posture and deployment of Canadian military power," (2014, p. 545). Bercuson and Granatstein have also noted: "From Paardeberg to Panjwai, Canadian governments[…] have believed that one of the key missions of the Canadian military is to deploy abroad … " (2012, p. 193). From World War I and II, Korea, the NATO alliance commitment in Europe, the former Yugoslavia, and most recently Afghanistan, Canadians fight and die overseas, not at home according to prevailing logic.

The priority attached to overseas commitments also generates political side benefits for elites. On the one hand, the commitment of military forces overseas is perceived to provide a nation like Canada a "seat at the table" on high level international defence and security issues. Whether or not a formal, à la NATO, or an informal "seat at the table" à la participation in coalitions actually provide significant influence with regard to these issues is an open question. Moreover, there is no evidence that the "seat" as a function of military commitments to American-led operations has generated any political capital in Washington useful to advance other Canadian interests and priorities in the bilateral relationship.[6] In other words there are few if any "hard linkages" between issue areas; Canadian and US diplomacy tends to remain confined to particular issues without crossover into others (Bow 2009, Paradis and James 2014). For example, Canada committed forces early on to the US Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, but this commitment does not appear to have had any appreciable impact on the US decisions regarding the negotiations connected to new Canadian–US border management post 9/11. Perhaps, the "seat at the table" may be better understood in terms of prestige and status considerations for domestic political reasons. The ability of Canadian elites in general, and Prime Ministers in particular, to exploit opportunities to be seen with the major players on the international stage may be seen to translate into images of Canadian importance on the world stage and the Prime Minister as an international leader and "statesperson". Being seen to be there is politically sufficient.

Finally, the CAF and its leadership, which provides military advice to political decision-makers, reinforce the priority of overseas over national or homeland defence. A function of overseas being the place of great military achievements (i.e. Vimy and D-Day), armed forces prioritize combat as essential to their being part of a profession of arms.[7] There is no combat to be had at home (defined in the minds of Canadians as active shooting at a target to defeat a threat), and the rare occasions in which armed force has been deployed for coercive means in North America, such as during the Northwest Rebellion/Resistance, pre-World War I strike breaking, Akwesasne or 1970s War Measures Act deployment, are buried in history. Home equates to assistance to the civil power for disaster relief or search and rescue which are not automatically eligible for operation medals nor are they grounds for hardship and risk allowance pay reserved for deployments (Canadian Armed Forces).[8] Valuable for public relations purposes, no heroes or readily identified public traditions arise from such activities. Moreover, the advanced military capabilities one associates with "combat", such as tanks and blue-water missions, are rare for homeland missions. Even the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF), whose advanced fighter interceptor capabilities are essential to the defence of North America, still prioritizes overseas commitments. Homeland missions are perceived in deterrence rather than combat terms.

Overall, political and military elites in Canada perceive defence in overseas, rather than homeland terms. Homeland defence, and thus NORAD are "backwaters". The same holds for the United States, but for different reasons. Defence and security are politically salient and a political priority for the American public especially after 9/11. The United States, according to the American Assembly, "place[s] its physical security above the free flow of goods, services, capital, and people across the border" (2005, p. 4). As the U.S. ambassador to Canada, Paul Cellucci stated: "security trumps trade while [Canada] must keep trade flowing." That being said,

> [w]hile Washington has indeed given new priority to homeland security and defense, it needs to be clearly understood that the primary focus of the U.S. military has not changed; it is not at home but abroad, as Ottawa well knows. (The 105th American Assembly 2005, p. 8)

The US will always view its security in global terms; concomitantly, Canada will be expected to contribute globally as well.

US security preoccupations also limit Canada's ability to leverage its modest contributions to North American defence and thus NORAD as a possible means to advance Canada's overarching economic policy priority. Not only does the United States contribute much more to the defence of Canada than Canada provides to the defence of the United States, but the United States can realistically defend its homeland without Canada. In other words, there is little, if any leverage for Canada to apply against the US especially given the polarized nature of politics these days and the return to anti-American and anti- Canadian rhetoric reminiscent of the 2003 decision of Canada not to contribute to the US-led coalition against Iraq. In the memoir of former US Secretary of State George Schultz, he provided a useful metaphor for thinking about the bilateral relationship. It needed "gardening," he wrote; otherwise the weeds would grow up (The 105th American Assembly 2005, p. 8).

Of course, one might suggest that the US security priority is ultimate leverage against Canada. However, like Canada, the United States' focus on the global threat assessment

explains why NORAD and its twin US Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) struggle to be identified as "real" combatant commands despite possessing the defining feature – a four-star U.S. Commander. Instead, USNORTHCOM, which is part of the US's geographic unified command plan, is usually referenced as a command necessary only to provide defense support to the civil authorities (DSCA) rather than an integral part of the global defence plan equal to PACOM or EUCOM in importance. Despite USNORTHCOM's "kill" mission for ballistic missiles' targeting the US and NORAD's air control mission, the United States' status as a global superpower means it has undervalued and overlooked its homeland defence responsibilities.

The net result is defence and security debates in the United States are overwhelmingly focused overseas. Homeland defence and security did receive significant attention and funding in the wake of 9/11, evident in the establishment of USNORTHCOM and the omnibus Department of Homeland Security, but these decisions met with no public or political debate. All, it seems, agreed with their necessity. At the same time, the primary military response was directed to the origin of the attack – Afghanistan, followed subsequently to Iraq. Since then, homeland defence has, like the case of Canada, largely returned to its strategic "backwater" status – out of sight and out of mind. In other words, NORAD, like homeland defence and security in general, is simply taken for granted, and in effect largely absent in the American elite consciousness as well.[9]

NORAD's place on the political margins, out of sight and out of mind of political decision-makers on both sides of the border, is further evident in US alliance relations. President Trump has repeatedly criticized its NATO allies for their failure to share the defence burden, employing the agreed NATO measure of 2% of GDP. Canada has failed to meet this spending level since 1989 (Fraser Institute 2017), and even its projected funding increases will only amount to a level of approximately 1.4% of GDP. At the same time, in the first meeting between President Trump and Prime Minister Trudeau, they agreed that

> North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) illustrates the strength of our mutual commitment. United States and Canadian forces jointly conduct aerospace warning, aerospace control, and maritime warning in defence of North America. We will work to modernize and broaden our NORAD partnership in these key domains, as we domains, as well as in cyber and space. (2017)

While many are aware of how little Canada contributes to NATO, it occurs to only a very few what Canada contributes to NORAD.

Of course, one might explain this contradiction as a degree of cognitive dissonance on the part of the President in applauding a guilty ally, or perhaps as a subtle attempt by the Administration to influence the then forthcoming 2017 Canadian defence policy. The agreed statement may also have simply been inserted by the supporting bureaucracy as a relatively uncontentious positive statement to draw focus away from the uneasy relationship between a Liberal Prime Minister and Republican President. Yet, relative to American overseas defence priorities, Trump's criticism of allies is actually directed at the frontline European allies, not Canada.[10] Regardless, NORAD, and with it the CANUS defence relationship in North America, is simply beyond the political consciousness of elites on both sides of the border. Whereas this lack of consciousness in Canada is a product of its political irrelevance of defence in Canadian politics, the lack of attention in the United States is a product of the political importance of defence but globally projected.

2. Defence and national sovereignty

National defence is generally viewed as the last bastion of national independence, or sovereignty in a complicated, globalized world. A clear case in point is the place of defence in the long process of European economic and political integration. While the European Union (EU) has taken some small steps forward since the end of the Cold War towards defence integration, its European Security and Defence Identity and Policy (ESDI/P) remains mostly rhetoric. In some ways, this may be attributed to significant differences among the EU members related to the EU itself, and the place of the NATO (read United States) in the provision of European defence and security. At the same time, however, it also reflects the core linkage between national defence and the state expressed in terms of national sovereignty. Basically, to cede a state's national defence to a supra-national body or for that matter another state or an international organization amounts to a significant loss of sovereignty.[11] To take this step has significant domestic political implications which lead EU members to step away from overt discussion or action. It is one thing to talk with EU bureaucratic circles about defence integration; it is another to actually undertake practical steps towards integration.

Arguably, the same may be said for North American defence integration, except for one major difference. Neither Canada nor the United States ever speak about defence integration and yet they have taken practical steps towards integration with NORAD as its cornerstone.[12] As evident in the agreement and terms of reference, both nations ceded the core homeland defence requirement aerospace warning and control to a binational command.[13] The command structures of NORAD, its headquarters and regional commands, consist of mixed American and Canadian personnel, with every command under either an American Commander and Canadian Deputy or vice versa. The arrangement entails the commitment by both nations' National Command Authority (NCA) of assets to NORAD, and provides for the movement of these assets across national borders. The longstanding NORAD idea of centralized control, de-centralized execution means that in the case of an air- breathing attack against North America, regional commanders issue the air tasking orders (ATO) and undertake the actual air defence battle.[14] The Commander NORAD sets the force level given threat levels which automatically provides regions with forces for execution of operations. The regional Commanders then publish an ATO which details how those forces will be used and tasks Wings with commensurate missions. Normally, national assets complete the sorties in national territory under national command. There are, of course, provisions for U.S. assets to assist in Canadian territory and vice versa but the transfer of control of these assets is generally via prearranged operational plans and authorized by various authorities starting at the Commander NORAD level. Canadian assets, therefore, may come under American Command and vice-versa.

From its origin, this unique binational command structure, which preferences the defence of North America as opposed to Canada and the US separately, was driven, at its roots, by a common threat perception related to the Cold War and the emerging threat of Soviet Long Range Aviation (LRA). Building upon close cooperation in World War II, and politically legitimized by the 1949 Treaty of Washington, the resulting binational command was simply the logical outcome, or next step in the various bilateral decisions and investments undertaken in the previous decade, jointly directed by the two air forces.[15]

It would be incorrect to argue that either Ottawa or Washington ceded their sovereignty to this command at its creation or now simply because both national command authorities (NCA) agreed to jointly defend the airspace approaches to North America. Either state has always had the right to end the arrangement under the terms of the binational agreement.[16] Ultimate authority remains with the NCA of both nations.[17] Nonetheless, from the moment of the official signing of the Agreement in 1958, and on subsequent, albeit relatively rare occasions thereafter, sovereignty has been the political caution attached to NORAD, especially in Canada. Critics, then and now, claim that NORAD cedes sovereignty to the United States (Byers 2002–03, Fawcett 2010) whereas proponents claim NORAD enhances Canadian sovereignty (Charron and Fergusson 2014), especially found within the Canadian military in general, and the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) in particular. Critics and proponents misguidedly link sovereignty to the idea of controlling one's national territory. The former argue Canada cedes control to the United States via NORAD, whereas the latter posit that Canadian control is enhanced through the arrangement. It is consistent with what John Holmes would describe as "life with Uncle" (1981).

While the factors underlying the creation and continued existence of NORAD are multifaceted, understanding the sovereignty debate requires understanding the basic self-interested trade-off between Canada and the United States in the context of the Cold War.[18] Canada provided territory to enhance the security of the United States by pushing intercept points for potential incoming Soviet LRA far north of the United States' border. The United States provided capabilities and investment to enhance Canadian security as a function of the geographic expanse of Canada and the costs of building infrastructure especially in the Canadian Arctic. In other words, Canada "borrowed" capability from the United States and the United States "borrowed" territory. The net result was the mutual recognition by both parties, over time, that the defence of North America is indivisible.

This is not to suggest that Canada contributed nothing to its own defence beside territory. For example, Canada contributed 40% to the costs of the North Warning System (NWS), and the same amount is assumed to be contributed to its modernization or replacement. Even so, the costs of an independent national defence posture remain largely beyond the capacity, or will of Canada, and would likely require Canada to eschew overseas commitments. As discussed above, failing to contribute to overseas commitments remains an anathema to Canadian political and military elite for a variety of reasons including the fact that the United States views Canadian engagement overseas as important, if only for political reasons.

However, from a sovereignty-as-control perspective, it is easy to perceive the territory use vs capabilities' gain trade-off as Canada ceding more to the United States, despite the fact that NORAD infrastructure in Canada, such as the North Warning System (NWS), is actually Canadian. Dwarfed by American military capabilities, it is not difficult to also conclude that the trade-off was decidedly one-sided. Military capabilities are often a slippery-slope argument invoked to determine who is really in control as the F35 debate has seemingly demonstrated. This perception then becomes wrapped in much broader and wider fears of Canada politically, economically and socially as a dependent of the United States, an American satellite, and "branch plant".

Of course, these perceptions and linkages are problematic for a variety of reasons, including the reality that NORAD is an organization of sovereign equals, despite capability

inequality, and constant American sensitivity to Canadian sovereignty concerns.[19] Nonetheless, to move the CANUS North American defence relationship and NORAD into the political limelight is to trigger all of these sovereignty concerns within the domestic debate, and there is nothing to be gained politically for Canadian elites and only the potential to lose this vital relationship. It is for this reason, as a function of the sovereignty debates around every NORAD renewal, that Canada agreed to indefinite renewal in 2006 (aided by the timing of a Conservative government and Republican administration.) This also explains why the United States proposed an indefinite renewal as means to keep this vital defence relationship beyond the reach of the vagaries of Canadian domestic politics.

3. Functional defence cooperation

Arguably, the place of continental defence cooperation and NORAD in the politics of American-Canadian political relations is not unique. As a function of the evolution of the modern state, expanded by technological advances over the last century or so, functional-based bureaucratic organizations evolved and continued to expand. The military is perhaps the exemplar. Even though political elites, to use the Canadian term, speak today of a "whole of government" approach, the reality remains a silo-based bureaucratic structure where the functional experts maintain their "turf" largely because of their experience and knowledge and the difficulty of non-experts to grasp all of the dimensions of NORAD.[20]As a product of this functional structure, links across government and political "borders" are largely dominated by common functional experts in common functional bureaucracies. The net result is that the "day-to-day" management of the complicated relationship between Canada and the United States is undertaken by the upper and mid-level bureaucratic officials.

This reality is a product of several factors, ranging from the multi-faceted roles and responsibilities of the political actors, the general lack of expertise of the political actors, the complicated nature of the issues involved, the lack of oversight and direction once provided by a now largely moribund Permanent Joint Board on Defense[21] and the nature of the relationship between permanent, expert civil servants, and the coming and going of elected officials. In other words, political actors and governments come and go but the bureaucracy remains to guard the national interest.

Even when there are significant political differences of opinion or conflicts associated at the highest political level, there has been no major impact on the actual machinery and management of NORAD or the CANUS defence relationship. The political problems related to personalities and ideologies, such as in the Diefenbaker- Kennedy, Trudeau-Nixon, Trudeau Sr.-Reagan, Harper-Obama, and now Trudeau-Trump "clashes", the business of defending North America continues relatively undisturbed. The preeminent example of course is NORAD and both navies' actions taken during the Cuban Missile Crisis despite a deep distrust expressed between Diefenbaker and Kennedy. NORAD, with its standard operating procedures, carried on as did the US and Canadian navies (Ghent 1979, pp. 159–184). Certainly, Canada and the US have disagreements - the difficult renegotiation of NAFTA in 2018 and into 2019 and the extraneous tariffs on Canadian products are cases in point – but these conflicts have no real effect on the overall management of the CANUS defence relationship. In part, this is a product of the continued oversight of the CANUS defence relationship by political decision-makers and the fact

that functional experts continue to work to solve the conflicts and ensure that domestic military operations continue.

In addition, bureaucratic reality also explains the absence of linkage politics crossing issue areas. While suggestions have been made about linkage politics, such as in the case of the Canadian 2005 decision not to participate in the US ballistic missile defense (BMD) program, practical or political linkage does not really occur.[22] Instead, policy disputes remained embedded in the bureaucratic structure.

Like the other bureaucratic parts of the Canada–US relationship, functional commonality (i.e. Air Force to Air Force in the case of NORAD) is reinforced by the evolution of close personnel ties across the border. Personalities matter and serve as an insulator to potential political disruption from higher levels.

The bureaucratic factor also provides a significant explanation for NORAD's continued existence during the period roughly between the end of the Cold War and the resumption of Russian LRA activity in the Arctic and down the coasts of North America when its functional raison d'être disappeared in 1989. On the one hand, NORAD did not represent a significant financial burden on the defence budgets of both states. The major modernizations of NORAD, the NWS in particular, had already been completed, and thus there was no need for significant investments which would expose NORAD to political forces on both sides of the border. On the other hand, neither in the current Canadian nor in the American defence budgets are there NORAD line items to draw political attention.

Even so, bureaucratic inertia after roughly 40 years of air defence cooperation ensured that NORAD's future was never in doubt. Consider this as possibly a habit that could not be broken; neither American nor Canadian military officials could imagine a world without NORAD, and NORAD was, and remains their world, out of sight and out of mind politically.

As a final consideration, senior NORAD officials, as well as senior military and civil defence officials, are cognizant of their limits or political parameters. Recall it is the departments of defence/defense which craft the primary policy documents (i.e. white papers, TORs, etc.), which are subsequently signed off by the executive. These are carefully crafted in taking into account what is known of government policy preferences, and also, especially in defence, tend to be normally short on detail to guard against an unpredictable future, and the government being placed in a position of duplicity or contradiction.

As a result, senior officials of NORAD, on both sides of the border, usually have a clear understanding of what political traffic is likely to be able to bear. Thus, their own policy, plans, and operations are created within the limits of political possibility, which, in turn, keeps NORAD and CANUS defence relations from attracting extra attention. So long as NORAD does not cross the boundary of what is accepted politically, it keeps itself out of sight and mind, especially when considered in light of the aforementioned sovereignty question.

4. Conclusion

In 2016, NORAD officials briefed the PJBD on a futures' study of North American defence cooperation. At the request of the PJBD, the study was broken down into six major components to be delivered priority as follows: Canadian–US defence of the air, maritime, cyber, aerospace, outer space, and land domains. The study was given the title the

Evolution of North American Defence (EvoNAD), and it will provide the blueprint for future CANUS defence cooperation.[23] Given the new strategic environment and new advanced military technologies, it is expected that the NORAD mission suite is likely to expand and broaden. In effect, the process of functional cooperation, which led to the creation of NORAD, suggests NORAD should extend to at least better domain awareness (Charron and Fergusson 2018).

While the specific outcome for North American defence cooperation is difficult to predict, the slow process of defence integration will continue. The likelihood that politics will intervene in any significant way is extremely low for the various reasons outlined above. Moreover, except for the land domain beyond aid to the civil powers in major disasters, which would raise the spectre of the loss of sovereignty, none of the other domains (such as cyber protection of defence assets for example) is likely to cross the line sparking political attention. NORAD, like all the other aspects of the CANUS defence relationship in North America, will be left to run unencumbered by political distractions in other issue areas.

Perhaps the only caveat, especially in the Canadian case, is cost related. Defence obtains political attention, and thus involvement, for good or ill, with major procurement projects, as evident in the ongoing CF-18 replacement debate. The modernization and/or replacement of the NWS will require significant investment even if Canada bears only 40% of the costs as per initial agreements. The government's commitment to NORAD and NWS modernization in the 2017 Defence Policy, *Strong, Secure and Engaged*, and the reality for Canada and the United States of the benefits of defence cooperation and NORAD will work to limit political engagement. Finally, political reality on both sides of the border relative to defence cooperation should not be simply assumed as entirely good for the relationship and for NORAD. There are costs as well, especially in terms of investment priorities. These, however, mostly reside in the relationship between NORAD and the senior military commands in Ottawa and Washington D.C. These, in turn, are the motivators in repeated attempts by NORAD, as well as USNORTHCOM, to raise their public profile. But success here carries potential unforeseen political consequences. NORAD should be careful for what it wishes.

Notes

1. The original 1958 agreement set renewal at ten years. The first renewal of the agreement came in March 1968. The NORAD Agreement has been reviewed, revised, renewed or extended several times since then: May 1973; May 1975; May 1980; March 1981 (when the name was changed to "North American Aerospace Defense Command"); March 1986; April 1991; March 1996; June 2000; and May 2006. See NORAD Agreement at http://www.norad.mil/About-NORAD/NORAD-Agreement/.
2. Santa Tracker is probably the best advertisement of NORAD. In 2017, it got 18 million page views, and the Facebook page had 1.75 million followers. The NORAD Tracks Santa program also received 126,103 calls and answered 2,030 emails, and OnStar received 7,477 requests to locate Santa. See Lang 2018.
3. You can only buy authentic NORAD memorabilia from NORAD headquarters proper in Colorado Springs.
4. Furthermore: "Participants were hard-pressed to volunteer what roles they believed the CAF plays domestically. Someone in each group mentioned they thought the CAF was involved in responding to natural disasters and a few mentioned their role in patrolling our borders

–both worthwhile roles, according to participants." http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/200/301/pwgsc-tpsgc/por-ef/national_defence/2018/076-17-e/report.pdf.

5. Scanlon-Simms 2019.
6. Throughout Canada's military engagement in Afghanistan for example, senior Canadian officials spoke regularly, albeit on a non-attribution basis, of the high regard for Canada's commitment from US administration and congressional officials. However, they could point to no place where this high regard was translated as a means to advance other Canadian interests, nor could they suggest how, where or why such regard could be translated. See also Osler Hampson 2010.
7. During the Cold War and the "golden age" of Canadian peacekeeping, the position of the CAF on personnel for these missions was, and remains, the best peacekeeper is a well-trained soldier, and a well-trained soldier (or air and naval personnel) means one trained for high intensity combat only seen overseas.
8. For a full list of honours, see Canadian Armed Forces, "Canadian Honours Chart" at http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/honours-history-medals-chart/medals-chart-index.page and for hardship and risk allowance see Hardship and Risk Allowance for Deployed CAF Personnel [online]. Canadian Armed Forces. Availablefrom: http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-benefits/know-your-benefits-articles/hardship-Expeditionary missions are automatically issued. For operations at home, one could possibly be captured under anniversary-themed medals such as the Queen's Jubilee or the 150th anniversary of Canada and, of course, for bravery. The point however, is that contributing to the defence of Canada as part of NORAD or during a G7 summit in North America, for example, are not issued a standing honour. At most, one can receive a commendation, and one can have an anniversary-themed medal but there is no associated visual queue on the uniform that it is in recognition of a domestic operation unlike the expeditionary medals.
9. USNORTHCOM's importance may be changing due to concerted efforts of current Commander O'Shaughnessy and former Commander Lori Robinson's efforts to raise USNORTHCOM's profile. We note, for example, that the Commander of NORAD and USNORTHCOM gave statements on the same day as the Commander of STRATCOM to the Senate Armed Services Committee on 26 February 2019. The two statements were complementary even if the timings of their testimony was coincidental. See https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/hearings/19-02-15-united-states-strategic-command-and-united-states-northern-command.
10. It has been a regular feature of the CANUS relationship that new American Ambassadors regularly raise in public the need for increased allied defence spending, and Canadian elite and the public regularly ignore it.
11. Iceland, of course, is a problematic case-study for NATO. See NATO, "Iceland and NATO" https://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-21A87C2D-BE06D3F1/natolive/declassified_162083.htm?selectedLocale=en.
12. Among other elements of defence integration are senior command positions held by Canadian officers in American formations and vice-versa, increasingly common equipment, doctrine and training, and an integrated defence industrial and technological base.
13. Until 1981, NORAD concentrated only on warning and controlling air breathing threats. Since 1981, it warns of aerospace threats (e.g. a ballistic missile) but still controls only air breathing ones.
14. This is in the process of changing with the creation, and thus delegation of air tasking orders to a new Combined Forces Air Component Command (CFACC). For details, see Andrea Charron and James Fergusson. *NORAD: Beyond Modernization*. Winnipeg: Centre for Defence and Security Studies. 2019. *See* http://umanitoba.ca/centres/cdss/media/NORAD_beyond_modernization_2019.pdf.
15. For a useful and thorough history of the decisions leading to the creation of NORAD, see Goette 2018.
16. Although the NORAD Agreement was extended indefinitely in 2006, the Agreement is to be reviewed at least every four years or upon request of either party (Article 3(1)), and each nation

holds the right to withdraw upon notice (Article 4(30)). See https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/69727.pdf.

17. For example, both governments have reserved to their own military and political officials --and thus not delegated to NORAD and to officers of the other NORAD partner country--the authority to order the destruction of civilian aircraft, such as those seized by terrorists.
18. Generally, the literature identifies the political foundation of the relationship and NORAD with President Roosevelt's 1938 unilateral defence guarantee of Canada and Prime Minister King's subsequent response. On the basis of this foundation, the literature turns to the "defence against help" to explain subsequent Canadian decisions, even though this explanation is misguided. See Charron and Fergusson 2020.
19. Goette outlines the extent to which the US considered Canadian sovereignty sensitivities leading up to the binational agreement and Joseph Jockel notes this in his book (2007).
20. As evidence, consider the difficulty of experts to try and answer questions posed by committees made up of generalist experts. While MPs need to understand many topics, military experts, with years and years of practise and experience, tend to be more narrowly but deeply focused on particular issues (e.g. command and control). It is very difficult for generalist civilians to challenge and ask the pointed questions of military experts who in turn often provide too much detail which can further confuse the questioning. Vice versa, it is difficult for the military to sometime see the strategic picture and many competing priorities with which the civilians are faced.
21. Only recently has it had a full complement of representatives. It meets only annually now as opposed to biannually. It held its 238th meeting in June 2019 in Ottawa. The Military Cooperation Committee (MCC) is supposed to be the primary strategic link between US and Canadian joint staffs occupied with the defense of North America and CANUS defence interests worldwide. Formed in 1946, it is inconsistent in terms of scope and depth of advice and guidance.
22. In the BMD case, the decision was linked by some to American decisions to block Canadian beef access to the American market because of fears of Mad Cow disease in beef products. For discussion, see Fergusson 2010.
23. NORAD officials announced a future framework in August 2019 but it has yet to be signed off by political officials. See Brewster 2019.

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Notes on contributors

Andrea Charron has a PhD from the Royal Military College of Canada in War Studies. She is currently Associate Professor in Political Studies and Director of the Centre for Defence and Security Studies at the University of Manitoba.

James Fergusson has a PhD from UBC in International Relations. He is currently Professor in Political Studies and Deputy-Director of the Centre for Defence and Security Studies at the University of Manitoba.

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