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Canada's NATO Commitment: Current controversies, past debates, and future issues

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West Berliners, right, watch as East German construction workers erect a wall across Wildenbruchstrasse and Meidelbergstrasse in Berlin in August 1961.

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The Wall Comes Down

In the summer 1961, I was serving as a COTC officer with the 8th Canadian Hussars, part of Canada's brigade with forces of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in the Federal Republic of Germany. It was a summer of political and military tensions. Warsaw Pact forces were aggressively carrying out summer manoeuvres close to the West German border on the Luneburg Heath (where Montgomery received the German surrender at the end of the Second World War) near Hamburg. And, despite the denials of Walter Ulbricht in June, construction of the Wall in the already divided city of Berlin began in August.

We were to be given a few days' leave during our summer deployment, and, in common with most of my friends, I intended to take that leave in Berlin. I like to think that desire was driven by a wish to view history in the making, but it is possible that a peek at the Soviet zone would have been quickly superseded by exploration of the more worldly delights of the fabled Kiirfurstendamm. It was not to be. No doubt partly to ensure that there would be no inadvertent incidents to exacerbate the tension, all recreational and non-essential military travel to Berlin was cancelled for the duration of my stay.

Fast forward to November 1989. The Wall had been breached on 10 November, and by happenstance, as chief of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, I was to visit my German colleagues near Munich the following week. Our talks naturally focused on the recent events in Berlin and what would happen next - anybody's guess is my recollection. In

were as surprised as the rest of us that the East German regime was crumbling as quickly as it clearly was! But the most important aspect of this visit to Pullach was my hosts' invitation to spend the following weekend in Berlin, an invitation I accepted with alacrity.

Twenty-eight years on, I was finally in Berlin. And what an explosion of images from the roller coaster of German history lay in store. First stop, the bridge over the Glienike Brucke. You've all seen it, either in films or on the news. It was the traditional crossing point, usually in the wee hours of a dark and misty morning, when captured intelligence agents would be exchanged, in fic-

ly emotional moment, full of hope for the future.

From this emotional high, we plunged deep into one of the troughs of Germany's history - the suburb of Grossen-Wannsee, site of the Wannsee conference where, over a convivial lunch, fifteen senior Nazis plotted and named that most infamous of actions - the 'Final Solution' of the 'Jewish Question.' The building itself, large but unexceptional, was empty and as grey as the waters of the Wannsee that lapped the shore. I remember feeling nothing but a profound emptiness and how little I could say in comment to my hosts.

From there to the courtyard of the old War Ministry in the Bendler-

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Lion and in reality. What a contrast was that morning in November 1989. The sun shone as the crowds came to see the nose-to-tail parade of shabby little Trabants, uniformly belching black smoke on their way across yesterday's forbidden border. The little cars were met along the way by young West Berliners - too young to remember the events that led to Europe's division for forty years - giving a carnation to the occupants of each auto. It was an intense-

strasse, now a memorial, where von Stauffenberg and a few other leaders in the 20 July 1944 plot against Hitler had been summarily executed that very night. A dignified setting and a sober reminder that even at a late stage there were those who put their lives on the line to remove the dictator who was still obsessed with the war's continuation.

And then, to the Wall itself, down a road bordered on both sides by the Wall to an isolated enclave of West



"Attention - you are now leaving West Berlin"

Berlin. At this section of the Wall and its killing ground behind, the East German guards clearly believed it was still business as usual. Patrols and dogs walked this stretch, as if all the cataclysmic developments of the past week had never happened. All this was glimpsed through small holes in the Wall's crumbling concrete. Chilling.

Downtown then, past Checkpoint Charlie, that other favourite crossing point for Le Carre's and Deighton's characters, and on to the Potsdamer Platz where we gazed across the Wall at the low mound under which lay Hitler's bunker and final refuge. Here the atmosphere was anything but business as usual. Rather a holiday atmosphere prevailed, with crowds of West Berliners walking and talking, many equipped with

hammers to extract their chunk of the Wall.

Here the East German guards seemed more bemused than anything else. A few shouted half-hearted warnings to the concrete hunters but took no further action. Some made monosyllabic replies to the comments addressed to them by Western sight-seers, but most simply stood atop the Wall, silent and clearly unsure of what was happening around them. Mostly young, it was difficult to match these youths with those we had just seen patrolling with their dogs. Or with the ruthless killers of record, whose targets (100 plus) are commemorated with wreaths and plaques at the spots along the length of the Wall where they had attempted to cross.

My last image. Walking down the Ku'damm, past the Kaiser Wilhelm Gedachtniskirche, that mute symbol to the horrors of war, in company with thousands upon thousands of

Berliners from both sides. And, amazingly, to hear voices singing 'The Battle Hymn of the Republic.' Odd. That aside, the amazement of the East Berliners at the unremitting opulence of this jewel of capitalism was palpable. For example, one could not even approach the Mercedes showroom for the crowds. And a welcome for easterners everywhere, fueled by a handout on crossing of 50 West German marks. For many, a goodly portion of the DM 50 was left with the pub and bar owners of West Berlin, even though they provided virtually free drinks to anyone who could show they came from across the Wall. For many others, however, our observation was that perfume and fresh fruit were high on the shopping lists.

This most remarkable weekend of contradictions is perhaps best epitomized by the two performances we attended. One night we went to the Volksoper (the real opera house being in East Berlin) to see Gounod's 'Faust.' On that day in Berlin, who was the Devil and whose soul was on the auction block? The second night we saw a thoroughly incomprehensible German musical involving Pepsi Cola's European manager, the social shenanigans of his family, and a full sized helicopter that arrived on stage a la Miss Saigon. Go figure.

Reid Morden was director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service from 1987 to 1991 and deputy minister of foreign affairs between 1991 and 1994

Ten Years After: Whatever Happened to the 'German Problem'?

There is no longer a 'German problem' in global terms, although there are and will always be German problems. What are these problems, and how might they affect domestic, continental, and international security?

BY DAVID G. HAGLUND

Two historical events have recently been celebrated: the 10th anniversary of the breaching of the Berlin Wall and the dawning of a new millennium. These are fitting occasions to reflect upon one of the core security challenges of the past hundred years, namely the so-called German problem in international relations. It is not difficult to understand Germany's central place in European and, by extension, international security as the 20th century began. It is, however, difficult to the point of being impossible to make a claim for exceptional German significance in global security as the 21st century begins. Today, it might even be said that what is noteworthy about Germany as a geopolitical actor is that it is not particularly noteworthy. Whatever happened to the German problem of yore?

At the start of the 20th century, Germany was one of the principal 'revisionist' states in a world characterized much more than today's by rivalry and even power-balancing competition among several major powers. Moreover, and most important, it was a discontented power on a continent, Europe, that had yet to learn how to avoid civil war. Today, Germany is a decidedly status quo state in a world that has been spared for some decades the less salubrious aspects of multipolarity.

At the outset, it is necessary to be clear about what is meant by the German problem in international relations.

At the risk of oversimplification, I shall argue that there have been only two chief ways of interpreting the phenomenon.' The first tends to be the province of specialists in German politics and history who draw on the crucial but difficult notion of 'political culture' to generate a set of hypotheses based upon a belief in German historical, political, and cultural uniqueness. The second group is found among the international relations theorists who focus far less on whatever may set the Germans apart as a people (or as a society), and ask instead what it is about Germany's 'geostrategic' situation, in particular its power and its location, that made it such an important factor in international relations during the past century.

Analysts in the first school tend to argue that Germans - singly and collectively - ultimately constitute the nub of the German problem. Writers in the second school, in contrast, de-emphasize the significance of political culture and national character - even assuming such could be identified - and focus instead on power, interests, and place in seeking to come to grips with the problem. The approach I take here borrows from both, but probably owes more to the second than to the first school. I would not wish to

Hundreds of Berliners atop the Berlin Wall, demanding that the wall be pulled down, and carving out chunks of concrete for souvenirs



claim that 'political culture' is a specious variable; I say only that it is difficult to operationalize.

It can also be controversial, and usually is, as revealed by the debate a few years ago over a book published by a Harvard professor. In *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*, Daniel Goldhagen claimed that it was the German national character, steeped in anti-semitism, more than the German political system (that is, Nazism) that accounted for the Holocaust. As for how we should think about Germany and global security as we enter the 21st century, this variant of the political-

Despite the welter of publications that followed on the heels of German unification and were concerned with the ultimate meaning of the newer, ostensibly 'stronger,' Germany for European and international security, it soon appeared that the real problem was going to be Germany's weakness, not its strength.

culture argument offers grounds for concern because it can lead to the conclusion that Germans are no different now than they were 60 years ago - or, as one letter to the editor of the *International Herald Tribune* put it during the early stages of the Goldhagen debate, 'there are no compelling reasons to believe they are not that way today.' The same writer continued, rather ominously: the 'character of a nation, like that of an individual, is revealed in adversity.'²

Of course, not all political-culture arguments lead to the conclusion that Germans are iniquitous and therefore in need of careful watching; indeed, some claim the opposite, namely that the identity of Germans has been so altered that they stand out by dint of their moral superiority. For example, during the Gulf War the German public initially defied the Western consensus on the need to resist Saddam

Hussein's aggression against Kuwait; it counted itself almost too upstanding to fight. To those analysts, Germans have had war beaten out of their system (and, to some, their genes), and, unlike their forbearers, they now bestride the planet as its pre-eminent pacifists.

If political culture can lead in any number of directions, analysts in the second camp - who stress power, interests, and strategic location - can themselves be deeply divided on the nature of the German problem today. Unlike their counterparts in the subdiscipline of comparative politics, theorists of international relations who examine Germany tend to eschew political-cultural explanations - at least they try to arrive at answers to their questions with minimal reliance on such explanations. Instead, they concentrate on 'structural' and other 'institutional' features of the international environment.' That said, they can be every bit as disputatious as their comparative politics cousins, and, on the broad issue of war and peace, the international relations theorists effortlessly divide between the pessimists and the optimists. On the specific issue of Germany and the question of war and peace, they divide further into those who believe Germany is too strong (and either celebrate or fret about this) and those who think it is too weak (and worry or exult accordingly).

The dominant view today is reasonably optimistic, certainly when put in historical perspective. (Indeed, how could it not be, in that perspective?) The reasons are varied and have to do with both international and domestic structures or 'systems.' Quite irrespective of whether Germans are better or worse than any other people, the optimists believe that Germany cannot adopt a unilateral approach to its foreign and security problems because the institutional and societal constraints are simply too vast and the incentives for multilateralism too abundant. Germany will not cast aside its established network of institutional and other ties to its Western neighbours in favour of a new Sonderweg, or special (and disastrous), German path.

To the question of Germany's role in international security today, as compared with the past, optimists among the experts provide two answers. For some, multilateral institutions of a transatlantic and West European nature have supplied the solution to Germany's age-old security dilemma. German leaders, understanding where their country's best interests lay, wisely chose the path that would bind them to Western structures after the catastrophes of two world wars, and nothing has happened since 1989 to make them abandon their faith in the country's self-imposed '

For other optimists, what is truly remarkable today is not so much the institutional structure of peace; it is rather the ideational one. In other words, the norms and values of democracy have become so firmly implanted in the contemporary German socio-political order that it remains fundamentally impossible for the country ever again to menace the European or transatlantic status quo. Germany will have its own interests to pursue, to be sure, but it will do so through peaceful, 'civilian' means backed up by confidence in the durability of the 'democratic peace.'

For the optimists, then, Germany's strength will keep it peaceful - a strength that inheres both in the country's international institutional linkages and in its domestic economic and political arrangements. But pessimists (and there are some, especially in the ranks of the international relations theorists) deduce from the assumption of German strength the opposite conclusion, that a future challenge to the international security order is well nigh inevitable. In particular, the breed of theoretician known as the 'structural realist' sees in the rise of German power evidence that a challenge to American primacy is in the offing.

For structural realists, peace in the long post-World War ii period was kept by the bipolar international 'structure,' which organized states into two tightly bound alliances,

possessed of the nuclear wherewithal to preserve an uncertain peace by the prospect of certain annihilation in any superpower war. Without that bipolarity, one can expect the future of interstate relations to look like nothing so much as the pre-1939 era. In the words of a leading structural realist, international relations at that time consisted of the 'same damn things over and over again: war, great power security and economic competitions, the rise and fall of great powers, and the formation and dissolution of alliances.'⁵

Despite the welter of publications that followed on the heels of German unification and were concerned with the ultimate meaning of the newer, ostensibly 'stronger,' Germany for European and international security, it soon appeared that the real problem was going to be Germany's weakness, not its strength. Images of a 'Fourth Reich' that characterized much of the debate in 1990 and 1991 soon gave way to anxiety about whether a new Weimar was in the making. In contrast both with today's general optimism regarding Germany's security future and with the initial assumption that unification was going to produce a stronger Germany, the mood in 1992 and 1993 among Germany watchers swung sharply toward pessimism, and for reasons related to internal and external developments.

The principal cause of disquiet in the latter category was German diplomacy over the disintegrating Yugoslavia, especially the clumsy attempt to get the Europeans to extend early recognition to the breakaway republics of Slovenia and Croatia. But most of the anxiety about

Hundreds gather at the Berlin Wall in front of the Brandenburg Gate in hopes that the East German troops would smash their way through at this highly symbolic point





Germany's future in 1992 and 1993 stemmed from the domestic front. By late 1992, in the aftermath of Germany's summer of discontent symbolized by the name of a Mecklenburg port city, Rostock, it was becoming harder to sustain the early post-unification thesis that Germany had become stronger. Instead, analogies were increasingly drawn between Bonn and Weimar. With an apparent rise in right-wing ultranationalism, a confused and at times supine state, and the replaying of all-too-familiar battles between leftist and rightist extremists in Germany's streets, all but the most Micawberish students of the new Germany were evincing concern that occasionally bordered on alarm.

What had gone so wrong, so quickly? To begin with, the challenge of absorbing and genuinely integrating the old East Germany was proving far more difficult and costly than even its strongest proponents could have imagined in the heady months between the tumbling of the Wall and the disappearance of the GDR. Now, to that challenge was added an influx of refugees from further east in Europe that was larger than that arriving in any other West European country - in some cases by many orders of magnitude.

As the 'new world disorder' shunted aside the cold war order, the flood of asylum seekers into Germany intensified: in 1989, 120,000 sought a better life there; in 1990, nearly 195,000 more came; in 1991, a further 256,000 entered; and in 1992, some 440,000 arrived. For a country that placed such value on ethnic homogeneity as a social

East German border guards look through a hole in the Berlin Wall after demonstrators pulled down a segment

good, and was maintaining at one and the same time a very liberal asylum policy and a highly restrictive immigration one, the costs were substantial, and showed up in a number of widely publicized acts of violence against asylum seekers and other foreigners that peaked in 1992, when 2,639 such incidents were recorded.

Germany was by no means the only West European country that had to deal with a rise in social and political tension associated with increased migratory inflows; in a sense, it was not even the most xenophobic; polls revealed that some of its West European partners - France and Greece, to name two - were more hostile to 'foreigners.' Nevertheless, for reasons related to its history, its centrality to Europe geographically and economically, and its potential political and even military power, the events in Germany seemed to generate greater shockwaves than did similar anti-foreigner activities elsewhere in Europe. This led some observers to speculate during the mid-1990s that the refugee crisis was liable to send the Germans careering off on another dangerous *Sonderweg*, fuelled like the last one in no small measure by an invigorated nationalism.⁶

Despite such fears, the refugee crisis did not destabilize Germany. Notwithstanding the images of skinheads and

other goons running riot through German streets in 1992 and 1993, right-wing extremism has been held in check (though not eliminated) in the past few years, both in those streets and at the ballot box. A good part of the explanation for the demise of the extreme right is to be found in the country's revised asylum policy, which took effect on 1 July 1993. Its legality was upheld by the constitutional court in Karlsruhe when it ruled in May 1996 that the government was within its rights to exclude from asylum consideration anyone who entered Germany from a 'third country' that was thought to be a respecter of human rights or directly from other countries held to be 'safe.' In practice this has meant that no one could claim asylum if he or she entered Germany from a bordering state, or from the non-contiguous members of the European Union, or from Norway and a host of other third and safe countries.

It is reasonably safe to conclude, with the dark days of the early 1990s well behind us, that there no longer is a

Federal Republic has known." If anything, a case can be made that the funding scandal carries with it the potential to move the country further in the direction of reform and modernization, which should bolster democracy.

The challenge to security lies elsewhere, albeit in such a way as to emphasize the eternal verity that security and economics are inextricably intertwined. The link between economics and security could be made in a number of ways; not too long ago, it was common to hear (and to read) that the threat lurked in the country's high unemployment rate. As Ethan Kapstein, an early critic of globalization, expressed it, the 'world may be moving inexorably toward one of those tragic moments that will lead future historians to ask, why was nothing done in time?' With undisguised allusions to Weimar Germany, he continued: 'it is sobering to realize that Germany's current level of four million unemployed is the highest it has been since the early 1930s.'

Nor was it just American (and other foreign) writers

And so it is that Germany is struggling to pare back state spending and restore its economic competitiveness. Herein arises the security preoccupation associated with today's Germany: the fear that it will be unwilling or unable (or both) to shoulder its share of the defence burden on a continent from which war has not been banned and in an alliance that seems to ache for a 'new transatlantic bargain' ...

'German problem' in international relations. Germany seems to have become what many a decade ago insisted it could never be permitted (or allow itself) to become, a 'normal' nation. Germany is a normal nation, but therein lies the rub: it is 'normal' for states to run into problems that, unless skilfully managed, can threaten to complicate, if not undo, their foreign policy. The United States has known such occasions, and not just once, and so too have lesser powers like Canada (to say nothing of France or Britain).

So what are the challenges of the early 21st century that most bear watching, from the perspective of Germany and international security? To begin with, let us dismiss the likelihood that recently discovered slush funds operated by the former Christian Democratic government carry the potential to destabilize the country's party system, and therefore its democracy, and thus constitute, in the alarming words of one long-time Germany watcher, the 'worst crisis the

who could sound so ominous: the former chancellor, Helmut Kohl, was a past master at drawing connections between economic developments (especially those related to European integration) and the future of European peace. According to the chancellor, what was at stake in the early 1990s' drive toward European monetary union was much more than a common currency. The latter was merely a means, albeit an important one, of melding the myriad nations of (Western) Europe into a federal entity that would be capable of preserving the peace and prosperity Europeans have only occasionally known in their long history, even if they have known nothing else in those recent decades of the cold war dubbed 'the Long Peace.' "Thus integration could never be allowed to lose momentum, for if it did, could disintegration be averted?"

As the chancellor saw things (and he was not alone), the peace and freedom of Europe could not be taken for grant-

ed even though no great-power threat loomed on the continent. Indeed, the chancellor believed that the primary security threat to Europe might be Europe itself, that is, its tendency to relapse into nationalism of a politically destructive nature. That is why, as he put it on numerous occasions, the 'politics of integration is really a question of war and peace in the 21st century.'⁹

Here, Kohl was simply reiterating what his French counterpart, Francois Mitterrand, had also argued, most notably in his address to the European Parliament on 17 January 1995, when he hinted that unless the integration

One never relishes an accusation of being a deadbeat, and the government ... will squirm a bit as a result of that charge ... but, for the allies who complain about German underspending on defence, solace may be found in the reflection that this is not what they used to worry about before they became allies.

of Europe gained momentum and the virus of nationalism was held in check, the continent would revert to former, sinister, means of interstate interaction. In case anyone missed his point, Mitterrand made it plain that 'nationalism means war!'¹⁰ This is the context in which one had to contemplate the initial anxiety of European federalists over European Monetary Union, namely that it might never be accomplished, with calamitous consequences for the old continent.

But EMU was accomplished, and if the Euro's drop in value throughout the year of its introduction (1999) minimized some worries about an impending financial tussle between 'Euroland' and the United States, it nevertheless unleashed some other security-related concerns.

Incredibly, by the end of the decade many saw Germany as the economic 'sick man' of Western Europe. The once-vaunted German model had stalled, victim it seemed of an excess of generosity (and not just toward the new Lander in the east) and a shortfall in productivity, as German companies felt the ever-tightening grip of a vice, the jaws of which were embossed with 'globalization' and the 'social safety net.' To continue providing services Germans had come to take for granted, deficit financing had become the order of the day. But that technique, as Canada discovered earlier in the 1990s, can buy only so much time; eventually the piper must be paid.

And so it is that Germany is struggling to pare back state spending and restore its economic competitiveness. Herein arises the security preoccupation associated with today's Germany: the fear that it will be unwilling or unable (or both) to shoulder its share of the defence burden on a continent from which war has not been banned and in an alliance that seems to ache for a 'new transatlantic bargain' in which (presumably) NATO finds greater equilibration in the post-Kosovo era through the West European search for a more robust defence capability (a European Security and Defence Identity, or ESDI) within the alliance. All members of the European Union appear to have convinced themselves that ESDI is a necessity if they are to continue to experience in the next half-century anything like the stability and prosperity West Europeans have known in the past half-century.

The principal challenge for the Germans will inhere in the evolution of ESDI. If burden sharing increasingly characterizes Western security, and if the Europeans are to be encouraged and expected to take on more responsibility for their own security interests - including those that might be threatened from what used to be called the 'out-of-area' regions - then it would be logical to assume that Germany must play a larger role in safeguarding, with force if need be, the interests of Europe. It is difficult to see how Germany can be brought easily to accept such responsibility. Not so long ago the problem was thought to be German constitutional and psychological inhibitions against the use of force except in the event of an attack on German territory or the territory of some of Germany's allies. Certainly the 'Kohl doctrine,' which forbade German troops from being deployed on terrain once trod by the Wehrmacht, seemed a constraint on participating in just the sort of crisis-management activities that currently give NATO meaning.

But quickly the Kohl doctrine, too, disappeared, so that Germans are now legitimate partners in policing the

Balkans - even (though to a limited extent) going on bombing raids against one of those Balkan countries, Serbia. A decade ago, only a few would have imagined such a possibility. And while some might see in Germany's exercise of the responsibilities of a 'normal' state a re-emergence of the German problem in international relations, the truth is, that old menace is dead. The country's security difficulties in the future will be of a more mundane nature, in some respects not terribly different from those facing Canada: can it afford to pay for the security it needs? And though Germany's challenges will continue to tax the ingenuity of policy-makers, to say nothing of the patience

Not so long ago the problem was thought to be German constitutional and psychological inhibitions against the use of force except in the event of an attack on German territory or the territory of some of Germany's allies ... But quickly the Kohl doctrine, too, disappeared...

of friends and allies, German security deficiencies in the medium-term will owe far more to sins of omission than of commission.

One never relishes an accusation of being a deadbeat, and the government of Gerhard Schroder will squirm a bit as a result of that charge being flung by some of the allies; but, for the allies who complain about German under-spending on defence, solace may be found in the reflection that this is not what they used to worry about before they became allies. Until such time as the Germans solve their fiscal crisis and reclaim the mantle of economic competitiveness, that will continue to be the 'problem' vis-a-vis Germany and international security.

David G. Haglund is director of the Centre for International Relations and professor in the Department of Political Studies at Queen's University. He has held a visiting professorship in Germany, where he was affiliated with the German-Canadian Centre at the University of Bonn (1996-7). He has also been a visiting researcher at the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik in Ebenhausen (1997).

NOTES

1. See David Calleo, *The German Problem Reconsidered* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1978); and Dirk Verheyen, *The German Question: A Cultural, Historical, and Geopolitical Exploration* (Boulder CO: Westview Press 1991).
2. Michael Neros, letter to the editor, *International Herald Tribune*, 19 April 1996, 9.
3. 'Structure' can be interpreted to mean the relative distribution of power in the international system (so dear to structural realists), or a social structure constructed on the basis of intersubjective understandings of security elites (the preference of social-constructivists). I use structure here to embrace both.
4. Hans J. Giessmann, 'The "cocooned giant": Germany and European security,' *Hamburger Beitrage zur Friedensforschung und Sicherheitspolitik*, no. 116 (September 1999).
5. Christopher Layne, 'Kant or Cant: the myth of the democratic peace,' *International Security* 19 (autumn 1994), 10. Also see Kenneth N. Waltz, 'The emerging structure of international politics,' *ibid*, 18 (Autumn 1993), 44-79.
6. See Jacob Heilbrunn, 'Tomorrow's Germany,' *National Interest*, no. 36 (summer 1994), 44-52.
7. Fritz Stern, Columbia University, quoted in Roger Cohen, 'Germany's crisis of party democracy,' *International Herald Tribune*, 22-23 January 2000, 1, 4.
8. Ethan B. Kapstein, 'Workers and the world economy,' *Foreign Affairs* 75 (May/June 1996), 22.
9. Author's notes, 33rd Munich Conference on Security Policy, Munich, 3 February 1996.
10. Henri de Bresson and Marcel Scotto, "'Le nationalisme, c'est la guerre," declare Francois Mitterrand,' *Le Monde*, 19 January 1995, 2.

Micro-credit, poverty and development: the case of Bangladesh

Very small loans used to encourage entrepreneurs in the Third World are being hailed by some as a powerful tool in the eradication of poverty. One of the founders of micro-credit describes what it is doing for the people of Bangladesh.

BY F. H. ABED

Micro-credit has created enormous interest among development practitioners and policy-makers in many parts of the world. It has also garnered wide support from aid agencies, governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the public at large. Assuming the character of a movement, it has spread to four continents and even percolated into the heartland of the USA. In 1997, the influential *New York Times* went so far as to proclaim that microfinance was the 'much needed revolution in anti-poverty programs.' Since then, there has also been a micro-credit summit to extol its virtues before the world leaders and give a call for mobilization of \$20 billion for channeling as small loans for alleviation of poverty not only in the Third World but also in the developed nations where pockets of poverty exist.² According to the senior vice president and chief economist of the World Bank, microcredit programs are an effective policy instrument for reducing poverty among poor people with the skills to become self-employed. It also shows that such programs are more cost-effective than other types of

Micro-credit: definition and use

Simply put, micro-credit describes small loans made to poor households to finance small-scale entrepreneurial activities. NGOs in Asia, Africa, and Latin America are the largest providers of micro-credit to those sections of society - rural landless, disadvantaged women, marginal farmers, and wage labourers - who depend largely on selling their labour for a living. In many countries, the poor have little or no access to institutional credit because they have no assets that can be used as collateral. Micro-credit has emerged in those countries as a potent instrument to alleviate poverty and improve the access of the poor to financial services. Such credits, which are otherwise unavailable to the poor or available only at exorbitant terms from moneylenders, enable poor households to undertake productive economic activities and provide an opportunity to escape the shackles of poverty. Against this background, micro-credit programmes have expanded rapidly in the low-income countries and have become more than a poverty reduction strategy. Because

have helped many NGOs to build a financially sustainable pool of independent working capital.

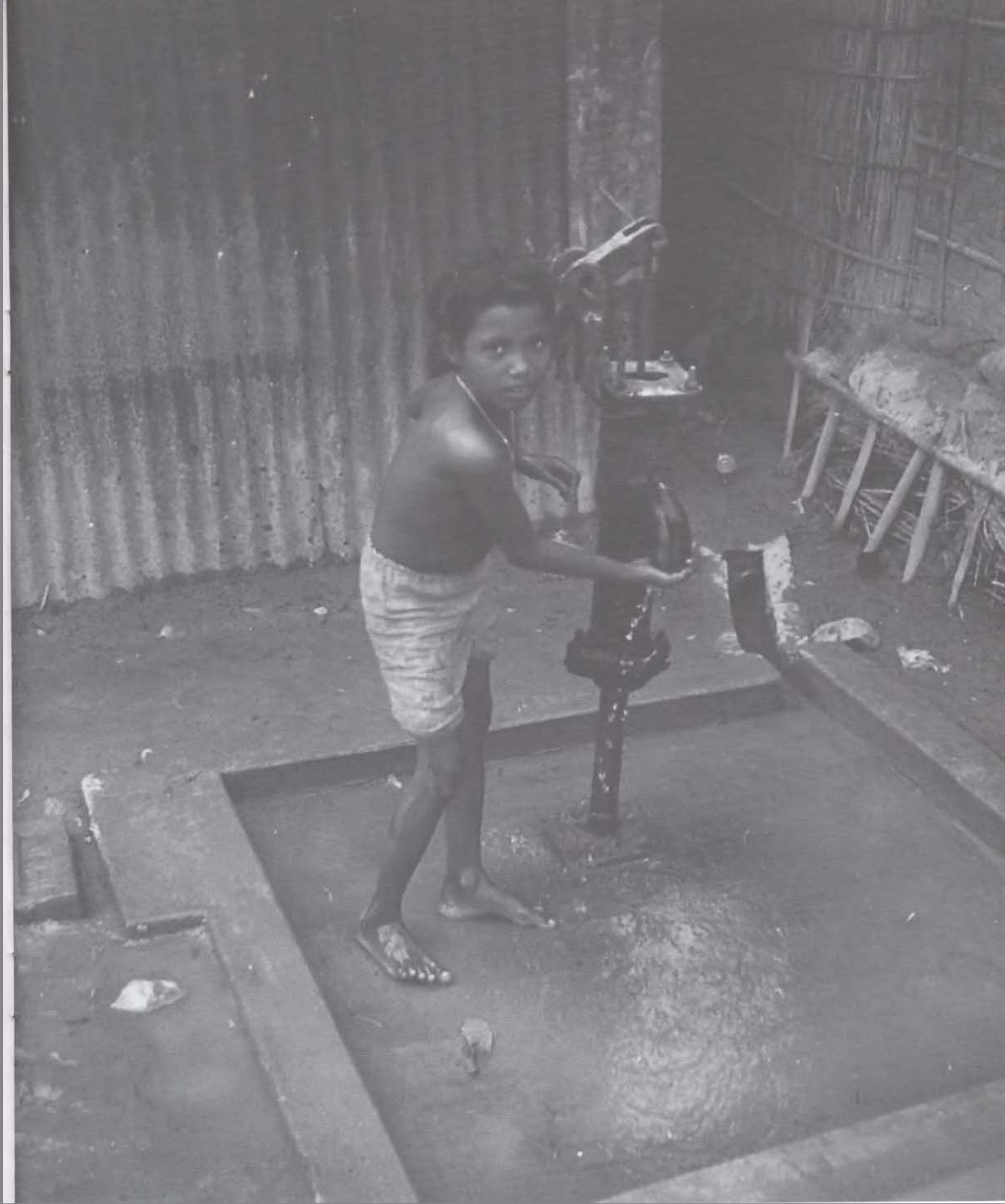
Micro-credit: some strategic issues

Many countries have established micro-credit programmes and micro-finance institutions (MFIs) over the last two decades. Their growth in different parts of the world has given rise to some critical issues and questions:

- where micro-credit is used and to what end;
- whether wider financial services can be used effectively by the poor;
- whether micro-credit is used as a development strategy and as an alternative and/or complimentary strategy;
- whether credit alone can address the problems of poverty, or whether it has to be accompanied by broader intervention programmes of social development and mobilization; and

Micro-credit, in combination with other social development programmes, is improving the living conditions of many of the poor in Bangladesh

Nick Etheridge



These issues are discussed with particular reference to the experiences of Bangladesh where micro-credit has attained unprecedented growth. Bangladesh has provided models of recognized global significance in such aspects of micro-credit as scale of operation, modes and practices of micro-credit, alternative models of wider financial services, programme sustainability, and empowerment of women. Illustrations have largely been drawn from the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), one of the largest NGOs in the world, which has a sizeable micro-finance operation.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh can be considered the birthplace of the current concept of micro-credit; the NGOs here have rich experience in the field; and Bangladesh is regarded as a leader among those low-income countries that provide micro-credit. As some international commentators have observed: 'while there are numerous models and practices around the world linking financial services to the livelihood

Table 1: Micro-credit in Bangladesh (NGOs and GB) : June 1998

Membership	9,511,427
Savings of the members (million us\$)	234
Cumulative disbursement (million us\$)	3,038

Source: F H Abed, 'Micro-credit programme of BRAC: meaningful cooperation in poverty alleviation'; unpublished paper, 1999

strategies of the poor, the experience of Bangladesh has become globally influential:4

Both public and private sector organizations are involved with micro-credit in Bangladesh, but NGOs have taken the lead. Of the approximately 15,000 registered NGOs in Bangladesh, nearly 1,000, including BRAC, provide a large part of the micro-credit services. Grameen Bank has received international recognition for its micro-credit services. Together, NGOs and Grameen Bank have enrolled around nine million poor in their micro-credit programmes. BRAC alone has organized over 3.3 million poor, approximately 96 per cent of whom are women, into its micro-credit programme. The growth of micro-credit programmes can be seen in Table 1.

Growth of micro-credit has spawned two new institutions to meet specific needs. The Palli Karma-Shahayak Foundation (msF), funded by the government and the World Bank, provides credit funds to wis. The Credit and Development Forum (CDF) is a networking NGO that provides need-based training and customized service to its member NGOs.

As NGO programmes expand in Bangladesh, so too does micro-credit. Programmes are expected to triple over the next seven years, thereby raising the annual disbursement to us\$3 billion from the current level of one billion dollars. The number of borrowers is expected to reach 12 million. Some basic information about Bangladesh is provided in this context.

Bangladesh - some basic facts

Bangladesh, which broke away from Pakistan in 1971, is the most densely populated country in the world. With

Table 2: Some basic facts about Bangladesh

Population (1996)	126 million
Density (population per su. km)	850
Human Development Index Rank (1998)	147
Infant mortality (1996)	83
Adult literacy (1998)	51%
GNP per capita (1998) us\$	280
Landlessness	50%
Population in poverty (below 2,122k cal/day/person)	47%

Source: UNDP, 1998; UNICEF, 1998; A.M. R. Chowdhury and A. Bhuiya, 'Do poverty alleviation programmes reduce inequalities in health? The Bangladesh experience,' in Leon and Walt, eds, *Poverty Inequality and Health* (Oxford: Oxford University Press forthcoming).

a per capita gross national product of us\$280, it is also one of the poorest. Approximately 80 per cent of the population live in rural areas, and 60 per cent of the labour force depend on agriculture for their livelihood. Over half of the population is landless. Between 1975 and 1993 food production almost doubled, and life expectancy increased by 30 per cent between 1970 and 1996. Net enrollment in primary schools has increased to 77 per cent, and the gender gap has been considerably reduced.

Despite these impressive strides, Bangladesh ranks 18th from the bottom among 123 developing coun-

tries, according to the World Bank's new system of measuring the wealth of nations (PPP).

In Bangladesh the constitutional responsibility for development rests with the government, which has not always performed to its full potential, especially true in the area of poverty alleviation. The War of Liberation in 1971 raised new expectations and provided fresh impetus to create a just and poverty-free Bangladesh. The NGOs, born out of the need for relief and rehabilitation operations in the aftermath of war, got involved in this task and later in the field of development. BRAG is one such organization.

BRAG - from relief to poverty alleviation

BRAG started its work in 1972 with a relief and rehabilitation project. In 1973 it shifted its strategies from addressing the 'acute crisis' of the aftermath of the war to dealing with the 'persistent crisis' of development. Over the years BRAG has grown exponentially in development innovation and scale. It now works in all parts of Bangladesh and implements nationwide programmes on poverty alleviation through micro-financing, non-formal primary education, and health programmes. Its runs over 34,000 primary schools for 1.2 million children. Seventy per cent of the students are girls and over 90 per cent of the teachers are women. BRAC's health and population programme covers around 35 million people. Using village-based voluntary health workers, it provides essential health services to villagers with emphasis on specific diseases such as tuberculosis and women's issues such as family planning and nutrition.

BRAC's primary poverty alleviation effort is its Rural Development

Programme (RDP), a multifaceted programme designed to promote both social and economic development. The RDP is active in over 50,000 of Bangladesh's 86,000 villages and involves nearly 3.3 million poor women from as many families. The twin goals of BRAG, poverty alleviation and empowerment of women, are reflected in RDP's activities and strategies.

Impact of micro-credit in Bangladesh

Micro-credit programmes have had an impressive impact on reducing poverty in Bangladesh. The provision of financial services, skills training, and targeting mechanisms has translated into big changes for the programme participants. For example, a variety of skills have been passed on to the poor participating in BRAC's RDP - modern methods of poultry rearing, cattle rearing, pisciculture, sericulture, vegetable cultivation, plant

nursery, and so on. The technology diffusion in the poorer households has helped them to widen their income earning potential. A study sponsored by the World Bank has produced evidence of the wide-ranging impact of micro-credit on the conditions of borrowers. The study, which examined programmes of BRAG, Grameen Bank, and RD-12 of Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB), a public sector organization, found that per capita expenditure had increased among the micro-credit borrowers in all of these programmes. A household's net worth also increased. The study clearly indicates that micro-credit reduces both moderate and extreme poverty, though at varying rates.'

Another study examined the effect of micro-credit on poverty, vulnerability, and female empowerment. (Micro-credit programmes operated by the NGOs, Grameen Bank and public sector organizations are largely, if not entirely, targeted at women.)

Table 3: Some basic facts about BRAG: 1999

Full-time staff	24,200	Amount saved by village organization	us\$ 68 million
Part-time staff	33,746	Primary schools run by BRAG	34,517
Number of districts with BRAG programme	64 (of 64)	Students enrolled	1.2 million (70% girls)
Participants in poverty alleviation programme	3.3 million	Population covered in BRAC's health programme	35 million
Loans disbursed to the poor	us\$ 900 million	Total budget	\$131 million
Percentage of loans repaid	98%		

Results suggest that micro-credit's greatest impact is on the set of indicators relating to female control over assets and knowledge of social issues.⁶ Other empirical studies have also come to the conclusion that 'micro-credit has been found to strengthen crisis-coping mechanisms, diversify income-earning sources, build assets and improve the status of women.' One study specifically estimates that 'for every 100 taka lent to a woman, household consumption increases by 18 taka; interestingly the figure is 11 taka if the same amount was lent to a man.'⁸ Two other studies have found that 'a small amount of money works as a miracle in a cash-hungry society and significantly raises the woman's power in the family.'⁹

In many cases, women participate in decisions that have to do with household issues. Women in BRAC's micro-credit programme have become critically aware of issues relating to dowry, family and inheritance laws, family planning, and education of their children.

All of these studies point to three things: micro-credit's impact on poverty, its protection against vulnerability, and its empowerment of women. Nearly half of the population of Bangladesh still lives below the poverty line. The women, particularly those from poor households, are the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. Alleviation of poverty has been accorded priority. So has the issue of gender

skills, diffusion of new ideas and technology, and peer consultation have enabled the poor who participate in the programme to use their credit quite effectively. All micro-credit programmes use community-based organizations to ensure the active and direct participation of borrowers in the lending process. MFIs have used the group-based approach to enforce their targeting criteria. This approach has fostered participation and social mobilization. In Bangladesh, a chronic problem for commercial banks and development finance institutions is the accumulation of large non-performing loans. This has, in turn, created a serious problem in the financial sector. Micro-credit has helped to break the legacy of defaulting on loans.

Micro-credit and modern technology

Micro-credit has largely been used in Bangladesh for traditional activities. Its full potential has, therefore, been held back by the virtual absence of modern production technology in rural areas. BRAC has made a significant commitment to new technology in its micro-credit programme. The technologies include: high yielding varieties of birds, vaccination, modern hatchery, and chick rearing units in poultry; insemination of livestock; fish hatchery development; seed multiplication, tissue culture, and the use of hybrid seeds in crop production; and improved varieties of mulberry trees, quality production of cocoons, and modern reeling facilities for the sericulture programme. Effective use of these technologies requires training, which can substantially increase productivity and profit



Nick Etheridge

Women in Bangladesh, particularly those in poor households, are the most disadvantaged group. A large number of studies on microfinance and women's empowerment suggest that the former has had an impact on the latter. The mobility of the women outside their home and some control over their own income have increased.

women. As a part of the national development strategy, micro-credit programmes are playing an important role in both.

Some people question whether the poor can use wider financial services effectively. Micro-credit has helped capacity development of the poor in several ways. Training in marketable

ination, they can significantly increase the effectiveness and productivity of micro-credit programmes.

Micro-credit and social development

MFIs follow different approaches in providing micro-credit. There are basically three approaches: 'credit alone,' 'credit plus,' and 'credit with social development.' In Bangladesh the four largest MFIs are BRAC, Proshika, ASA, and Grameen Bank. The first three are NGOs. BRAC and Proshika have combined credit with social development programmes. ASA is operating a one-dimensional credit programme. Grameen Bank's programme is also one-dimensional, but it encourages some social development activities for its borrowers. Proponents of the credit-alone approach argue that the poor need capital; if it is provided in the form of credit, the poor will be able to take advantage of some interactive forces within the economy to improve their economic condition.

This argument, however, neglects the fact that many other factors - health and education, to name two - are equally important for poverty alleviation. Take health, for example. Bangladesh is poor by almost all health indicators - morbidity, malnutrition, access to medical care, and so on. To focus on the first indicator, morbidity is associated with the economic status of households: income erosion as a result of morbidity further impoverishes the poor. A recent study found that poor households in Bangladesh, that is, those with a monthly income of less than taka 1000 (US\$20), showed a morbidity of 215 per thousand or 35 per cent higher than the morbidity rate for those earning taka 3,000 or more per month.¹⁰ These findings clearly sug-

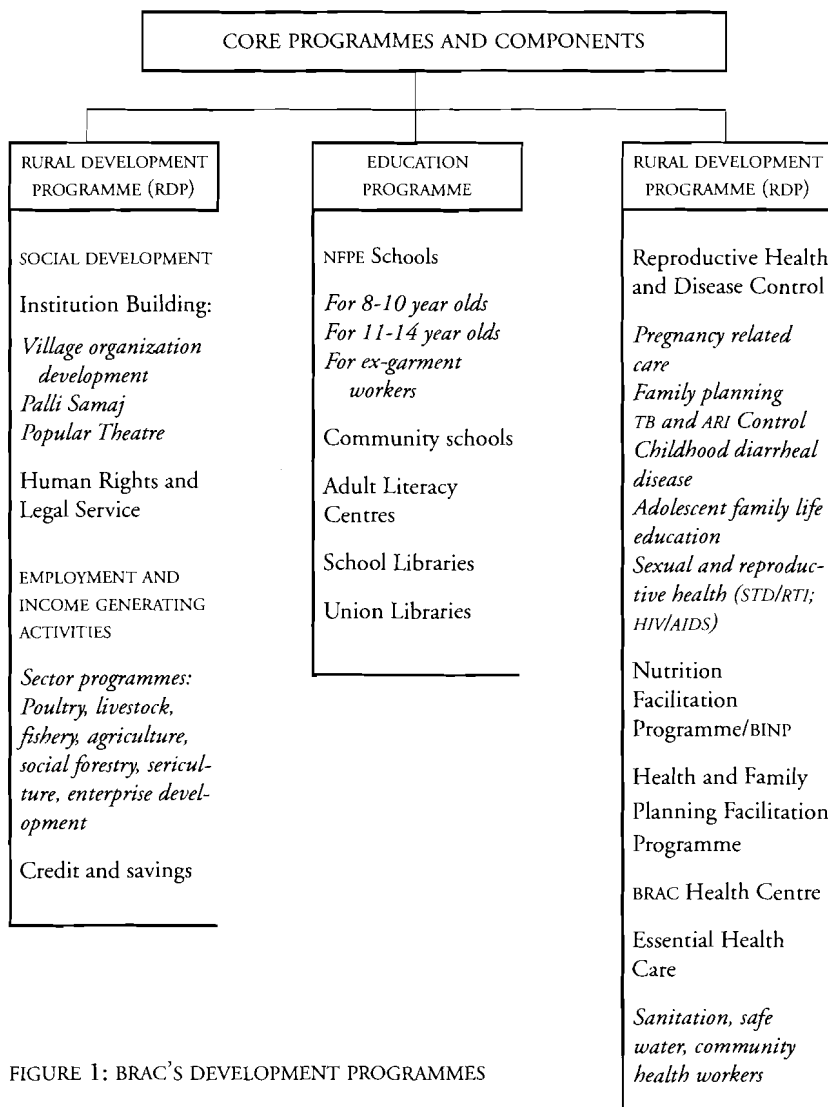


FIGURE 1: BRAC'S DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

gest that if micro-credit programmes are to succeed, they should address the health needs of the poor.

A group of experts recently concluded that, while credit is obviously needed for poverty alleviation, it alone is not enough. Social development is a 'precondition for realising the full potential value of credit and financial interventions.'¹¹ The importance of combining credit with social development interventions was emphasized at a 1996 workshop in Dhaka: 'There is an overall preference ... for combining a strategy of wider, flexible financial services with a recognition that the value of such financial

services can only be secured in a sustainable way by wider forms of intervention in the political economy via various strategies of social mobilisation and conducive macro-economic management.'¹²

BRAC believes that if problems of poverty are to be addressed, a micro-credit programme has to be accompanied by broader intervention programmes of social development and mobilization. RDP, which is designed to deal with poverty alleviation, comprises two broad activity areas - social development and economic development.

Impact of holistic approach

Many experts and professional researchers have critically examined the impact of BRAC's holistic approach. BRAC has, of course, carried out its own assessments. Its Research and Evaluation Division (RED) has produced nearly 750 reports on different aspects of BRAC programmes, including their impact. One recent study, carried out jointly by RED and the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Diseases Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B), looked at the impact of BRAC's multi-sectoral programmes on a variety of indicators. It found that BRAC member households spent significantly more on

Micro-credit and the ultra poor

A criticism of micro-credit is that it has not reached the poorest of the poor. The criticism is valid. There is a segment within the poor who are worse off than ever. This is the segment that will not take loans because, with no regular source of income, they fear they will be unable to pay the regular instalments on a loan. The ultra poor are primarily women who are destitute, widows, or divorcees. They are less able and less willing to use credit profitably and to become self-employed. However, if safety nets and wage employment are provided, these women could be attracted to credit facilities.

922,000 women have graduated from the IGVD programme to BRAC'S RDP.

Micro-credit: what's in the future?

Access to financial resources in the form of collateral free loans has helped many borrowers of micro-credit programmes to cross the poverty line. Some emerging entrepreneurs are now prepared to make larger investments in their enterprises and consequently seek larger loans than NGOs usually provide. This emerging aspect of many micro-credit programmes calls for new solutions.

BRAC has attempted to address this situation and to meet the financial needs of specific groups. One such attempt is the new Micro Enterprise Lending and Assistance (MELA) programme for micro entrepreneurs. MELA's objective is to create employment and increase community income by providing credit facilities of between Tk. 20,000 and Tk 200,000 (us\$ 400-4,000) and technical assistance to small and new businesses. The borrowers in the MELA programme are the graduates of RDP and other members of rural communities.

Another item on BRAC'S agenda for the future is a bank. A revitalized small or medium enterprise would create millions of jobs for the burgeoning population, including the poor who enter the job market every year. A BRAC bank would also provide financial services to NGOs. iences gained through micro-credit operations can be immensely useful for operating the MELA and the bank. Micro-credit programmes have thus created a new dimension of financial services in Bangladesh.

Concluding observations

Research has shown that micro-credit is more effective when it is used with other interventions. Preoccupation with micro-credit should not displace social mobilization and social development programmes

food, which reflected higher calorie intake, decline in malnutrition, and increase in the rates of child survival compared to those not involved in BRAC programmes. The integration of credit and non-credit programmes, that is, the holistic approach, has been particularly effective in empowering women. The study concludes: 'Poverty alleviation programmes focused on women as implemented by BRAC are effective in improving well-being, particularly in the areas of childhood nutrition and

In 1988, BRAC designed a large-scale endeavour that became known as Income Generation for Vulnerable Groups Development (IGVD). IGVD, which is supported in various ways by the government and the World Food Programme, provides wheat to the vulnerable women for 18 months. BRAC provides skills training credits and other support to these women to enable them to earn sustainable income. The Palli Karma Shahayak Foundation (PKSF), a newly developed financial institution, provides credit funding to BRAC and MFIs. Over



used to address poverty in low-income countries, tools used by interested governments, development organizations, and NGOs. Micro-credit has a positive impact on poverty reduction and in empowering women. Because the ultra poor account for approximately one-tenth the population of Bangladesh, there are too many of them to be covered by micro-credit programmes. Since the poorest of the poor cannot be reached, an obvious question is: to what extent can micro-credit programmes be effective in poverty alleviation? Experience tells us that special programming with sufficient start-up support can attract many of the ultra poor towards micro-credit. BRAC'S IGVGD programme is a case in point.

Financial intervention alone cannot address all the problems of poverty

and an investment in human and social development to increase workers' productivity. Research has shown that micro-credit is more effective when it is used with other interventions. Preoccupation with micro-credit should not displace social mobilization and social development programmes. NGO micro-credit programmes in Bangladesh have recently concentrated on addressing basic human needs such as food, shelter, health, sanitation, and education of those most afflicted by poverty. The search for programme innovations and operational strategies must be ongoing if micro-credit programmes are to grow and to have an impact.

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Canada's NATO commitment: Current controversies, past debates, and future issues

Since the conflict in Kosovo, we can probably expect the familiar debates about Canada's involvement in NATO to continue, as issues of cost-effectiveness, democracy, and constructive engagement remain unresolved.

BY ERIKA SIMPSON

Although Canada has been a committed member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) since the alliance was founded in 1949, it has not greeted all NATO decisions with unalloyed pleasure, as the recent debate about enlargement and the controversy over NATO bombing of Kosovo and Serbia will attest. And we can probably expect yet another debate about Canada's commitment to NATO later this year because the foreign minister, Lloyd Axworthy, has promised to question NATO's continued reliance on nuclear deterrence. There is also bound to be future dissension over whether the Allies should embrace such countries as Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia in a 'second round of expansion.' While issues related to NATO expansion and the war in Kosovo have dominated the news lately, it might be useful to stand back and look at some past debates and possible future issues around Canada's NATO involvement since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the cold

CURRENT CONTROVERSIES

Expansion could be a risky business

In the spring of 1999, before the war in Kosovo, NATO was preparing a party in Washington, DC, to mark its fiftieth anniversary. Celine Dion would sing, and NATO jet fighters would fly in formation overhead. Among the achievements to be celebrated was NATO's expansion from 16 to 19 members as it took in Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic in the first round of enlargement. But the black ties and tuxedos were never unpacked, and the big party was cancelled in favour of a quiet meeting to discuss what might be done about the crisis in Kosovo.

Although every political party in Russia vigorously opposed NATO expansion, at the last moment, President Boris Yeltsin backed down. Nonetheless, the issue raised a great deal of controversy. Some NATO analysts in the West and in the East saw expansion as a regression to regional alliance formations and balance-of

power politics. Some even feared a return to the politics of containment, to the focus on military force, to collective defence, and possibly extended deterrence. Others saw it as a challenge to current efforts, under the United Nations (UN) for example, to co-ordinate security at lower levels of defence expenditure and worried lest the expansion of a regional collective defence organization would be at the expense of efforts to reform a universal collective security organization such as the UN. Still others saw that expansion could risk another security dilemma, that efforts to increase NATO security might lessen Russia's sense of security and possibly lead to greater tensions, maybe even to another arms race in a divided Europe. Others argued that NATO expansion would

From left to right: Polish Prime Minister Mr. Buzek, Czech Prime Minister Mr. Zeman, NATO Secretary General Mr. Solana and Hungarian Prime Minister Mr. Orban at ceremony to mark

Photo courtesy of NATO



provide Russian nationalists with another excuse to turn back the clock and reverse reforms. Nonetheless, plans were made to expand.

Now that the first round of expansion has taken place, NATO policy-makers must forge a consensus among 19 allies - NATO officially runs by consensus, not majority vote - to decide who will be accepted in the 'second round' of expansion. The risks that expansion could eventually lead Russia to move some of its conventional or nuclear arsenal into defensive positions along a newly defined border, along a new central front remain.

On just which countries to invite into NATO during the second round -

violated article 5 was raised as a salient point. Article 5 raises other troubling questions. For instance, if Hungary, now a NATO ally, were to be drawn into a war with Romania over Transylvania, an area over which the two countries have argued for centuries, would NATO automatically be involved? Both countries made a great effort to patch up their differences so that they would be invited into the NATO club. But a few years or decades from now, if an armed conflict should occur, as it has done between two other NATO allies, Greece and Turkey, would Canada be left in a quandary about its article 5 commitment? It is fair to say that NATO expansion is not entirely

NATO obligations should the war spill over into the rest of the Balkans. During the crisis in Kosovo, concerns were voiced about whether Canada should condone bombing a sovereign country that had not attacked any member of NATO, and that was technically outside NATO's territory of responsibility. When CF-18 Canadian fighter planes were sent to assist with the aerial bombing of Serbia and Kosovo, a debate arose over whether air strikes were necessary or morally unjustifiable.

Not surprisingly, the possibility of a ground war in the former Yugoslavia also incited a great deal of debate across the country and in the media. Many radio hot-line shows burned up the airwaves on the issue of contributing ground forces to Kosovo and the question of whether Canada should take in refugees. The Defence Department housed thousands of refugees, temporarily, at various Canadian Forces bases.

Whether the federal cabinet was internally divided on these questions is not yet known. Certain comments by Lloyd Axworthy indicate that he harboured reservations about unequivocally supporting NATO's actions in the Balkans.² Put simply, the war served to remind Canadians that NATO membership entails obligations and commitments that might be difficult to sustain.

DEBATES SINCE THE END OF THE COLD WAR

Challenge and Commitment

In 1987, the Progressive Conservative government of Brian Mulroney published a defence white paper. *Challenge and Commitment* (sometimes rather derisively referred to as the 'coffee table white paper' because of its many colour photographs)

The government announcement in September 1991 that it intended to withdraw all but 1200 troops from the central front in Germany came as no great surprise ... It was a different matter when the minister of finance announced plans to withdraw Canada's contingent from Europe completely. The members of the Canadian delegation to NATO were given only a few hours' notice...

Slovenia, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Romania, or Bulgaria - NATO policy-makers are ambiguous. Their ambiguity stems, in part, from concerns about the risk of undermining the credibility of article 5 of NATO, which I call the 'three Musketeers' article because it guarantees that an attack against one is an attack against all. This is by far the most important article in NATO's founding treaty. For example, during the Kosovo debate, the fact that technically Serbia's president, Slobodan Milošević, had not

The War in Yugoslavia and the Debate at Home

Most recently, the Canadian government's strong support of NATO actions in Serbia and Kosovo during the war seemed to many to be proof of loyalty to the Alliance. Certainly, the United States Information Agency saw it that way.' However, the bombing did provoke substantial public discussion about the role Canada should take in NATO's management of the crisis in Kosovo and Serbia. It also prompted fears about the nature of Canada's

promised a significant increase in defence spending, ostensibly because of the challenge from the Soviet Union. It also promised to strengthen Canada's NATO commitments. Specifically, the government intended to acquire a fleet of 10-12 nuclear-powered submarines at a cost of \$10-\$12 billion. It wanted to double Canada's troop strength in Europe and modernize Canadian equipment for high-intensity warfare on NATO's central front. Basically, the government proposed to spend \$183 billion on defence over the next fifteen years. It was a very expensive package for countering the primary threat of the cold war.

A couple of years later, in 1989, the Conservatives suddenly announced an abrupt freeze on defence spending. They cut back major capital expenditures. The nuclear submarines were cancelled along with new main battle tanks and plans to deploy a division in Europe. It was evident to almost everyone that the nature of the threat from the Soviet Union had changed. Canada could no longer devote so much money and resources toward improving collective defence, particularly through its NATO commitments.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 and war in the Persian Gulf in the winter of 1991, Canadians continued to debate whether there was any reason for Canada to retain its NATO commitments. The government spent approximately \$1 billion a year merely to maintain Canadian troops in Europe - and that did not include the cost of training, equipping, and supplying the rest of the Armed Forces, which were also structured primarily for big-league NATO roles, including war in Europe.



Canadian Efforts to Promote NACC and Peacekeeping

The government announcement in September 1991 that it intended to withdraw all but 1200 troops from the central front in Germany came as no great surprise. The financial savings involved in a gradual withdrawal were estimated at some \$1.2 billion over five years. It was a different matter when the minister of finance announced, in February 1992, plans to withdraw Canada's contingent from Europe completely. The members of the Canadian delegation to NATO were given only a few hours' notice of the change in policy. Initially, the decision was difficult to justify, especially since just a few months before Mulroney had assured Helmut Kohl, the chancellor of Germany, that Canada intended to retain a visible military presence on European soil. The European allies and the American military representatives at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) sharply criticized the timing of the decision and the fact that it was taken without proper consultation with the other

Summit meeting: Bonn declaration stresses that NATO will never be the first to use arms

allies.' Canadian delegates to NATO and SHAPE in Brussels tried to soften the blow by underscoring Canada's commitment to European security through its peacekeeping efforts in the former Yugoslavia and by pointing out the significant role Canada's ambassador to NATO was playing in establishing the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC).⁴

Mulroney had broached the idea of associate membership in NATO for former Warsaw Pact nations in 1991. When this possibility was rejected - Britain and France worried about the security guarantee it entailed - the Canadian ambassador to NATO set about devising a form of NATO membership for the east Europeans under NACC auspices.⁵

Then there was the claim that Canada's contribution to the peacekeeping operation in Yugoslavia was a renewed contribution to European security. The claim was assisted by the high media profile of the commander

Lewis Mackenzie. Indeed, it was not long before Canadians at NATO headquarters received requests from the other allies, including the Americans, for more information on peacekeeping. Although high-level representatives from allied countries such as Britain and Germany still saw Canada's most valuable contribution to European security was to retain on European soil troops earmarked for NATO, in the early 1990s it seemed as if the sudden shift of interest to peacekeeping might somehow

cement of the troop withdrawal, that Canada would meet its other commitments to NATO.⁶

Canada's Continuing Alliance Commitments

Despite the end of the cold war, many of Canada's other NATO commitments remained unchanged after the 1992 announcement. For instance, it could still dispatch an expeditionary brigade group, two squadrons of CF-18s, and an air defence battery to Europe, if necessary. A Canadian Forces battal-

to defend the Canada-US region of NATO, as well as to contribute to the North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD), which is responsible for the defence of NATO's largest single land mass. Canada also offered its allies facilities and territory for military training, such as those at CFB Goose Bay in Labrador and CFB Shilo in Manitoba, and the underwater naval testing range at Nanoose Bay in British Columbia.

The Conservative government continued to demonstrate its support for NATO through other means as well. The portion of the infrastructure budget at NATO headquarters paid by Canada, although not widely known, was viewed at NATO headquarters as a significant contribution. The government's intention to retain approximately 650 Canadian personnel at NATO and SHAPE as military planners, attaches, and representatives on the Canadian delegation was also seen as an important commitment. The renewal of a ten-year contract to train approximately 6,000 German Armed Forces annually at CFB Shilo and CFB Goose Bay was described as yet another example of Canada's intention to help strengthen the alliance. Although aboriginal residents complained about the environmental effects of low-flying jets, and Goose Bay was slated to be closed because the United States thought it was too expensive for training purposes, German and other NATO planes continued to train there.

The Chretien Government's Defence Review

In November 1993, Jean Chretien's new Liberal government announced a comprehensive review of Canadian defence policy which precipitated

The challenge for Canada, once again, is to remain constructively engaged - to chart a safer course - and to ensure NATO responds cost-effectively and responsibly. Canada must remind the other NATO allies that some arguments, controversy, debate, and dissension can and should be expected in what is alleged to be a democratic relationship

brighten Canada's image at NATO headquarters.

The general attitude of the Canadian delegation to NATO was one of resignation. It was aware that the Canadian announcement was most likely a precursor to similar announcements of reductions and cut-backs among the other allies. It was clear that Canada would remain an active participant in the North Atlantic Council, in the hundreds of committees at NATO and SHAPE, and in the discussions surrounding the implementation of the New Strategic Concept. NATO's secretary-general, Manfred Woerner, assured the allies in February 1992, after the announ-

tion was prepared to deploy to Europe with the Allied Command Europe (ACE) Mobile Force or the NATO Composite Force. Canadians continued to serve as part of the NATO Airborne Early Warning (AEW) system in Geilenkirchen, Germany, and as aircrew aboard NATO AEW aircraft. Canadian destroyers and frigates were prepared to sail with the Standing Naval Force Atlantic, while eleven destroyers and frigates, one supply ship, three submarines, fourteen long-range patrol aircraft, and twenty-five helicopters retained their role in patrolling the North Atlantic as part of NATO's 'augmentation' forces. Canada would continue to do its part

Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons was established to initiate consultations and report to the government. In testimony before the Special Joint Committee on Canada's Defence Policy, some policy-makers continued to argue that NATO had to remain a priority for both defence and foreign policy because of new conflicts in the world, particularly in Europe, the instability of the Russian leadership, and the remaining military threat. They advised the government to ensure that the country had modern military equipment and sufficient tri-service personnel to fulfil the strategic requirements of deterrence as well as NATO's New Strategic Concept. Canada, they argued, must continue to structure and train its military for mid-to-high intensity combat operations. They acceded that Canada should contribute to UN peacekeeping and peacemaking operations, but such contributions should remain a low priority for the Canadian Forces relative to their general combat capability for defending Canada and its allies. As some argued, the alternatives posed a risk to security and stability as well as to Alliance relations. In their opinion, NATO was adapting to the new uncertain environment, and NATO alone retained the political coherence and military capabilities to ensure collective defence and security.'

Others assigned a lower priority to NATO with the disintegration of the Soviet military threat and the disappearance of both the Warsaw Pact and the USSR. They noted the unlikelihood of an attack across Europe's central front and frequently cited the historic inability of military alliances to combat diffuse threats such as ethnic conflict, environmental degradation, and human rights violations. Some suggested that Canada should de-

emphasize its military commitments to NATO but retain a diplomatic and consultative presence in the higher councils of the Alliance. Alternatively, many favoured increasing Canada's foreign aid and its contributions to UN agencies and operations. There were also related proposals for new defence priorities that would emphasize monitoring and surveillance of Canadian territorial waters and air space as well as expand the country's commitment to peacekeeping operations under UN auspices. Rather than attempt to maintain a general-purpose, combat-capable army, navy, and air force, there were calls for the Canadian Forces to be restructured and retrained to contribute more productively to peacekeeping and the various initiatives outlined in the 1992 UN *Agenda for Peace*. In the new environment, there would be unnecessary risks and expenses in adhering to the prevailing assumptions, practices, and institutions of the past fifty years.'

In the midst of this defence review, the government announced its commitment to the conversion of Canadian Forces Base Cornwallis in Nova Scotia into a multinational training centre for UN and NATO-affiliated personnel. At the new Lester B. Pearson Canadian International Peacekeeping Training Centre, the government would sponsor training for military and civilian personnel from countries participating in NATO's Partnership for Peace, as well as from developing countries under Canada's Military Training Assistance Program. This decision provoked yet more controversy about peacekeeping training and the advisability of establishing a privatized peacekeeping training centre.

The 1994 Defence White Paper

In December the Department of

National Defence released *The 1994 Defence White Paper*, which announced that Canada would remain a full and active member of NATO. The monolithic threat to Western Europe had disappeared, and the principal responsibility for European defence lay with the Europeans. At the same time, the government valued the transatlantic link and recognized that NATO had made progress in adapting to a post-cold war world. The paper noted in particular those aspects of NATO that reflected a co-operative approach to European security relations, including the creation of NACC, Partnership for Peace (PfP), and the development of the Combined Joint Task Force Concept. This perspective on NATO 'underpinned' the future of Canada's Alliance commitments. In the event of a crisis or war in Europe, the contingency forces Canada maintained for all multilateral operations would immediately be made available to NATO. Yet, for the first time, the Defence Department consistently referred to Canada's NATO defence commitments after pointing out the country's UN obligations. This seemed to herald a fundamental reordering of Canada's defence priorities.

The Costs of NATO Enlargement

Predictably, the release of this 1994 white paper did not end the debate over the measure and extent of Canada's NATO commitments. Gradually some high-level foreign and defence policy advisers became concerned about the costs of NATO enlargement for Canada. Prime Minister Chretien initially supported expanding NATO membership from twelve to sixteen (with Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovenia being the preferred additions). However, estimates of the costs

in part because of uncertainty about how many new members to admit. Nevertheless, in 1997 many high-level American officials agreed that expansion would cost somewhere between US\$27 billion and US\$35 billion over the next 13 years.

Behind the scenes, some senior Canadian policy-makers worried about the looming costs of expansion and about the extent to which Canada should or could support the rebuilding of the defence systems of the new members. In the weeks prior to ratification of the enlargement decision in the United States Congress, the State Department concurred with NATO's revised assessment that enlargement could cost only us\$1.5 billion rather than us\$27-35 billion. Nonetheless, these wide variations in estimates among such reputable analysts as the United States Congressional Budget Office, the Pentagon, the State Department, and NATO headquarters raised more questions about the measure of Canada's NATO commitments and whether all estimates might prove to be too low. Even as NATO opened the door to the first round of expansion, many Canadians worried about the potential cost of Canada's NATO obligations.

FUTURE ISSUES

NATO's Nuclear Strategy and the Middle Powers Initiative

One issue around which further controversy will undoubtedly swirl is NATO's reliance on nuclear deterrence strategy. The NATO summit in Washington in April 1999 opened the door to a wide-ranging review of NATO's nuclear weapons policy. NATO's New Strategic Concept, which since 1991 has reaffirmed its reliance on nuclear weapons, will be reviewed and re-examined. Pressure

from the leaders of the Middle Powers Initiative and the non-nuclear weapon states, particularly from key policy-makers in Canada, Germany, Sweden, Norway, and Japan, may result in a serious review of the Strategic Concept. In particular, the Middle Powers Initiative, launched in 1998, could influence NATO's decision-making regarding its nuclear commitments and lead to important and subtle shifts in NATO's deterrence strategy between 2000 and 2002.

The issue that NATO has promised to review is of historical and practical, as well as theoretical, interest. After fifty years of relying upon nuclear weapons for defence, recent developments, including the end of the cold war, present an opportunity to enter this millennium with a plan for the abolition of nuclear weapons. Many distinguished world figures argue that the risk of retaining nuclear arsenals in perpetuity far outweighs any possible benefit imputed to nuclear deterrence. They believe that the end of the cold war created a climate for international action to eliminate nuclear weapons, an opportunity that must be exploited quickly or it will be lost. They see the Middle Powers Initiative as a bold attempt to encourage NATO leaders to 'break free from their cold war mindsets' and move rapidly to a nuclear weapon-free world.

The Middle Power Initiative was launched to buttress the grassroots efforts of hundreds of international and non-governmental organizations determined to abolish nuclear weapons. Canada's Senator Douglas Roche is the chair of the Middle Powers Initiative, which includes other non-nuclear weapon states such as Germany, Norway, Sweden, Japan, and Mexico. Whereas NATO's

Strategic Concept has hardly changed since 1991 on the issue of relying on nuclear weapons, the Washington summit communique, issued on 24 April 1999, commits NATO to 'review' its strategic policy. At a news conference on the same day, Lloyd Axworthy confirmed NATO's willingness 'to have a review initiated' of its nuclear weapons policies. Explaining that this was the thrust of the recommendations in the report of Canada's Foreign Affairs Committee, Axworthy added: 'It's a message that the [Canadian] Prime Minister took [to] certain NATO leaders ... I think we have now gained an acknowledgement that such a review would be appropriate and that there would be directions to the NATO Council to start the mechanics of bringing that about.'⁹

This gives the non-nuclear weapon states in NATO, and the 12 abstainers on the New Agenda Coalition's 1998 resolution at the UN, an opportunity to press for a 'quality review' rather than a perfunctory one. The Middle Powers Initiative believes that the NATO communique strengthens the possibility that appropriate representations can be made to a number of important countries around the world. Indeed, it was Canada, in its official policy statement, that urged NATO to begin a nuclear weapons review, and this was carried into the NATO summit. Members of the Middle Powers Initiative are expected to press for further changes in NATO's deterrence strategy in the near future. Success will depend on whether a new coalition of leaders from countries respected by the nuclear weapon states - especially by the United States - generates sufficient political momentum and media attention. (It should be noted

that Canada recently abstained on crucial nuclear disarmament resolutions put forward by the New Agenda Coalition at the 1998 and 1999 sessions of the UN First Committee, and voted against resolutions put forward by China and Russia to strengthen the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.)

CONCLUSION

Canada's policy record since the end of the cold war indicates that it will remain committed to NATO, but on somewhat different terms. One seldom reaches a silver or golden anniversary in any relationship without some doubts and an occasional shift in terms of commitment. Still, as many concede, this has been a relatively successful alliance over the last fifty years. The challenge for Canada, once again, is to remain constructively engaged - to chart a safer course - and to ensure NATO responds cost-effectively and responsibly. Canada must remind the other NATO allies that some arguments, controversy, debate, and dissension can and should be expected in what is alleged to be a democratic relationship - indeed, they may help improve this long-standing institution.

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keeping training centre, now the Lester B. Pearson Canadian International Peacekeeping Training Centre, Cornwallis.

NOTES

1. Diana McCaffrey and Katherine Starr, eds, 'Consequences of Kosovo - views from Western Europe and Canada,' United States Information Agency, Office of Research and Media Reaction, 9 July 1999, available at <http://www.usia.gov/admin/005/wwwh9709.html>. It has recently come to light that NATO was internally fractured. See, for example, 'The dilemmas of war: what went wrong for NATO?' CBC Television, 11 June 1999, online transcript available at <http://www.tv.cbc.ca/national/pgminfo/kosovo3/nato.html>.
2. See, for example, 'Mission to Moscow,' CBC television, transcript <http://tv.cbc.ca/national/pgminfo/kosovo2/axworthy990426.html>; and 'Lloyd Axworthy's biggest test,' *Globe and Mail* (Toronto) 16 June 1999.
3. Confidential interviews at NATO and SHAPE Headquarters, October 1992; 'NATO greets troop pullout from Europe "with regret,"' *Montreal Gazette*, 27 February 1992; and 'Canadian troop pullout upsets allies in NATO,' *Globe and Mail*, 5 March 1992.
4. Briefing on NACC from Ralph Lysyshyn, Deputy Ambassador to the North Atlantic Council, NATO headquarters, October 1992; interviews with Angela Bogden, Canadian Delegation, and Glen Brown, Canadian Liaison Officer, NATO headquarters, Brussels, October 1992.
5. Prime Minister's Office, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, Speech to Stanford University, 29 September 1991: 'Throw Soviets a "lifeline "

Mulroney says,' *Globe and Mail*, 30 September 1991.

6 'NATO greets troop pullout from Europe "with regret,"' *Montreal Gazette*, 27 February 1992. Despite Woerner's comments, a classified report was apparently issued at NATO headquarters that took Canada to task for the withdrawal. Confidential interview, NATO headquarters, October 1992.

7 Although this is a generalization of different positions, it is evident in various presentations to the Special Joint Committee on Canada's Defence Policy. See, for example, the testimony of Michael Hennessy and Greg Kennedy, *Minutes and Proceedings of the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons on Canada's Defence Policy*, 2 (19 April 1994); Vice Admiral Daniel Mainguy (ret.), 4 (26 April 1994); Lt. Col Ernest Wesson (ret.) and Col. Sean Henry (ret.), 3 (20 April 1994); and David Haglund, Robert Spencer, and Lt. Col. John Martinson, 5 (27 April 1994).

8 Once again, this is an approximation of various arguments and proposals. See, for example, Donald Macdonald, Janice Stein, and Maurice Archdeacon, *Minutes and Proceedings of the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons on Canada's Defence Policy*, 3 (20 April 1994); Harriet Critchley, 10 (9 May 1994); Admiral Robert Falls (ret.), 4 (26 April 1994); and H. Peter Langille, 26 (21 June 1994).

9 Quoted in Douglas Roche, Analysis of NATO action on nuclear weapons,' 28 April 1999, available at <http://sen.parl.gc.ca/droche/>

Bonn at the centre of the world

Random reminiscences that never find their way into the history books

BY THOMAS DELWORTH

In fin de siècle Bonn, the only game in town changed in the late 1980s from the diplomatic community's constant complaints about the boredom of life in the small town in Germany, known affectionately as Bundesdorf or Langweiligsburg, to the bewildering excitement of unification-watching. Given the speed with which it happened, the daily challenge for diplomats and natives alike was to explain what happened yesterday before facing the daunting task of reading the new day's newspaper headlines. Within an amazingly short span of time, the basic architecture of the flawed 'settlement' - if it can be described as such - that imposed itself on Europe in 1945 came apart and opened the way for the two Germanys to be reunited, thereby setting the history of Europe on a new course. Throughout the long years of the cold war when the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) provided a stalwart shield against Eastern encroachments on Western Europe, there were not many among the Allies who would have taken issue with the often unarticulated German dream of a

who believed in the inevitability of the once-and-future homeland no less than those who prayed for the disappearance of that agonizingly dangerous dividing line. But, in the end, the realization of a dream shared by both romantics and strategic planners brought with it a lot of surprises - the most unexpected of which was that it happened at all.

The process was, most certainly, a triumph for the West - especially as not a single shot was fired. Has history another example of such a cataclysmic revolution happening peacefully? But the unexpected reservations and qualifications and the long-suppressed doubts and challenges that emerged from the onward rush of seemingly uncontrollable events were what made this page - or more accurately, this huge chapter - in the history of our times so fascinating.

A few words about the Stockholm Security Conference, 1984-6 (the so-called CDE, but more properly CCSB-MDE) might be a useful beginning for these anecdotal reminiscences. The conference, which began amidst the unabated tensions of the cold war - circumstances that had energized

Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's peace initiative - turned out to be more than routinely significant because it elicited the first signs of major changes in Soviet thinking. In the final days of the conference, rudimentary measures for military inspection and verification, which had eluded Western arms control negotiations for years, fell into place quickly in a framework of confidence-building. Few, if any, saw the real significance - although shortly after the conference ended the chief Soviet negotiator was cautiously but confidently predicting sweeping reforms as a result of internal events in the Soviet state. Delphic to be sure - but mind-boggling as a refreshing change from the usual banal Soviet diplomatic 'confidences' so common in earlier decades of cold war negotiations and conversations.

But, like the gestation of elephants, it all begins by the dark of night, and it takes some time for anything to happen.

In early 1988, Bonn showed little sign of anything remarkably different from standard cold war postures and reactions. The Berlin Wall remained malevolently intact, and watchtow-

ers, barbed wire, and killer dogs were commonplace as borders and border-crossing points continued to embody the outward dimensions of divisive confrontation and human tragedy. The SNF and modernization debate swirled on with no real prospects for resolution despite seemingly endless and frantic political attempts to solve the problem with words. And yet there was, in some quarters, the quiet suspicion - or was it only hope? - that something might be happening in the closed world to the East. Sooner or later, and as a result in part of the corrosive impact of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) on Soviet thinking, some gesture might well be made to the West, and especially to Germany, perhaps in military terms, but also, and more important, in a humanitarian context: measures to ease some of the restrictions on inter-German travel and family reunification, perhaps, or something similar.

It did not happen quite like that. Although the elements - and especially the 'human dimension' elements - were all increasingly present, it took a little time for the final denouement to take shape and gather momentum.

State visits, official visits, working visits have all become so frequent in our times that it is sometimes difficult to assess their importance (if any) one by one. But, in this particular period, it was almost impossible to measure the real significance of each before a new one appeared on TV screens and in headlines. In the autumn of 1988 the chancellor of West Germany, Helmut Kohl, visited Moscow with a supporting party of politicians, officials, and bankers that, gargantuan at the time, could stand respectable comparison in numbers with contemporary Team Canada travels. At the United Nations a month later

Mikhail Gorbachev talked about freedom of choice. In June 1989 he visited Bonn in an atmosphere that assured a place for the word Gorbysmanid in the work of German lexicographers. Meanwhile all sorts of extraordinary things were happening in eastern Europe that were difficult to put into meaningful patterns but that were nonetheless aspects of a rapidly changing scene. By the early autumn, Hungary opened its frontier to permit East Germans to move to the West; and the freedom trains were not far behind. And then came the death knell: Gorbachev's visit to

beach as the tide comes in. No one, least of all the West Germans, for all their theoretical and assumed intelligence advantages in dealings with East Germany, really knew what was happening in the East, so quickly were events producing a political kaleidoscope of chaos. It was almost universally assumed - because anything else was hardly conceivable - that something like the GDR would continue to exist but in a more liberal and humanized form.

It was also assumed that such a residual state would facilitate longterm reconciliation. The federal



East Berlin for a major celebration of the founding of the German Democratic Republic (GDR): the speech in which he referred to the dangers of being left behind must have struck as much terror into the hearts of the East German party faithful as it evoked incredulous joy in the Federal Republic. Was the Soviet Union actually abandoning the GDR? No one could possibly have suspected that we were about to witness the inexorable disintegration of a nation state (of sorts) like a sandcastle on the

A man waves to relatives on the other side of the wall

print for a Vertragsgemeinschaft, a community of agreements, by which inter-German relations would be governed. It went nowhere because the powerful wave engulfing East Germany had already undermined the foundations of the GDR on which Eastern participation in this community of agreements was to have been built. Some officials in Ottawa grumbled petulantly (the Canadian nation-

al preoccupation with being 'consulted' was, as usual, alive and well) that this, and indeed other forms of Bonn's responses to the cyclonic winds of change from the East, 'had not been vetted by NATO.' It is probably safe to assume that not even all interested officials in Bonn had been 'consulted' in many instances. But what would ultimately remain of the GDR was simply not grasped - nor indeed at the beginning could it have been.

Some members of NATO tried to move quickly to establish diplomatic

long-ago world. Canada was preparing credentials, but the process was abandoned when it became clear that no one in East Berlin knew just who the head of state was (or would be, the next day), and the speaker of the Volkskommer was not sure that she was the proper public figure to preside at such a portentous diplomatic happening. 'Let's wait and see.' And so Canada was deprived of a distinction achieved, so far as is known, by Iceland alone.

In the midst of all this chaos, the vision of a world without a GDR - and

his immediate advisers, such an argument was unthinkable: this was no time for misguided socialist romanticism and historical nostalgia. It was instead an opportunity - perhaps fleeting - to achieve what Germans had dreamed of since the end of the war, a reunited homeland. And making it possible was a Soviet Union itself in the throes of transformation. If only to answer the painful debate over short-range nuclear forces (SNF), only a fool would forego such an opportunity by adopting a go-slow policy. Ever true to his training as a historian, Kohl's single-minded determination to move forward without hesitation and without wrestling with enormous philosophical doubts was probably the outstanding feature of the Bonn political landscape for months.

What disappointed Kohl deeply was the initial lack of spontaneous enthusiasm among some of the Allies for the prize he was grasping at so vigorously. He must have asked himself why not everyone seemed to be rejoicing at the prospect of an undivided Germany without the wall and all it stood for. Reticence and hand-wringing in the face of what was clearly inevitable seemed to Canada a poor substitute for policy, regardless of how others may have assessed the risks. Was it even conceivable in the minds of others more powerful than we that there might be effective measures that could be orchestrated to stop or deflect this headlong rush to satisfy the pent-up desires and frustrations of generations of Germans? Unification was going to happen. Was it in the broader interest for this to occur against the efforts of Germany's postwar friends who had always implicitly or explicitly envisioned a freely united Germany as a desirable (if realistically unattain-

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relations with what some saw as a new centre of authority or residual state emerging in East Berlin. No longer would relations be conducted, as many of the Allies, including Canada, had done, through their Warsaw embassies as dual accreditations. The Icelandic ambassador to Bonn presented his credentials in East Berlin, becoming the first NATO ambassador, probably the first diplomat of any stripe, and probably the last as well, to be concurrently accredited to two German capitals from Bonn, in an ironic reversal of the Hallstein Doctrine that had been in force in a

indeed a lot of other things as well - was beginning to emerge with some clarity. Greatly to the surprise of those who admired Kohl's decisive determination to take the tide of history at its flood and to lead Germany on to fortune (or, in Kohl's view, to its destiny), there were voices in the public debate that lamented the inevitable death of the German 'socialist' tradition whose heartland and homeland had been largely geographically congruent with the GDR. A not insignificant group of Greens, writers, and intellectuals asked whether an effort should not be made to prevent this. For Kohl and

able!) objective? A Germany reunited without the blessing and active support of its major friends might have been tempted to lapse into a sullen and self-preoccupied mood, which would have been the worst possible outcome for all concerned. The Germans were realistic in their assessments of the power factors involved and knew how serious the reservations in Paris and London and to a lesser extent in Washington were. But Canada's early and decisive rejection of such a 'go-slow' option was noted in Bonn and publicly appreciated by Kohl. In any event, the Canadians were the first (or among the first few) to welcome the prospect of German unification despite our own share of painful memories.

But what to make of Margaret Thatcher's apparently active hesitation? And above all, what of France, supposedly Germany's most devoted friend and partner as the 'engine' of a united Europe? Bonn officials could scarcely believe what they heard from Paris. As the East German sandcastle was in the final stages of being swept away, senior officials at the Elysee were exploring the possibility of an official visit by President Francois Mitterrand to 'the other half of Germany' in response, they said, to an invitation issued by Erich Honecker many years ago. By then, Honecker had disappeared from the scene. After all the fine rhetoric and all the planning for a new united Europe based on a Franco-German entente, the shattered Germans could only conclude that the French still believed in the aphorism of Francois Mauriac: 'We love Germany so much that we are glad there are two of them.'

The office of one of Kohl's senior advisers was dominated by an ener-

getic photograph of Kohl and Mitterrand holding hands at Verdun. A clever and politically sensitive photographer had captured the two leaders in sharp silhouette: an enormous Kohl and a much smaller Mitterrand in an attitude symbolizing permanent friendship between the two countries. A powerful visual image and statement. When the possibility of an East German visit became known, this powerful visual image and statement was quickly put into storage with the comment: 'They didn't really meant

to join the ranks of the souvenir hunters. I still derive pleasure from the memory of the sight of 'a little old lady' - always a special category of Berliner - taking her own revenge on this obscenity of a monument. She had donned her woebegone, old (probably pre-war), and unfashionably short fur coat and a pair of Adidas running shoes of more modern vintage, and marched defiantly up to the wall to confront it boldly and to contribute to its destruction vigorously with her screwdriver and hammer, humming

I still derive pleasure from the memory of the sight of a little old lady' - always a special category of Berliner - taking her own revenge on this obscenity of a monument... contributing! to its destruction vigorously with her screwdriver and hammer, humming quietly to herself something that sounded remarkably like the Ride of the Valkyries

reason, the French were not in the forefront of Germany's Allies in welcoming the scarcely believable political realities emerging beyond their eastern frontier. And perhaps the attitudes of Britain and some other Allies are also understandable, even if the reasons were different. Mercifully the shadows of ambiguity they cast across the path of history were relatively short-lived.

But there were no signs of ambiguity in the attitudes of ordinary Berliners. One cold morning in November I visited the Wall just behind the Reichstag, partly, I con-

tribute to myself something that sounded remarkably like the Ride of the Valkyries. And on that cold, bright morning, could anyone with the slightest knowledge of the unbelievable things that had been happening have argued convincingly that the notion of Briinnhilde and her horse galloping triumphantly across the German heavens was nothing more than pure Wagnerian fantasy?

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The Kosovo War: A long catalogue of losers

With 20/20 hindsight it is apparent that the actions of all parties involved in the war in Kosovo have brought to the fore issues around humanitarianism, values, and consistency. Will any lessons be learned?

BY LOUIS A. DELVOIE

It is not uncommon for wars to produce more losers than winners, especially wars involving civilian populations. This fact is, however, often obscured in the midst of the euphoria which usually marks the end of a war. Last year's war over Kosovo was no exception. With the benefit of a bit of hindsight, it is now possible to draw up a provisional list of the losers, and that list is distressingly long. It includes international organizations, nation states, and peoples, as well as prospects for peace, security, and stability in Europe.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) won a military victory over Serbia, but at great cost to its image, reputation, and future effectiveness as an instrument for change in the European security environment. For the first fifty years of its existence NATO had been able to portray itself quite accurately as a *purely defensive* alliance, whose military arsenal would be employed solely to defend one or more of its member states against aggression. On the basis

could legitimately claim that it posed a threat to no one, and thus blunt the arguments of its opponents and critics around the world. That all came to an end with the Kosovo war. Whatever its other misdeeds, Serbia had not attacked nor threatened to attack any member state of NATO. However noble its motives may have been, the fact remains that NATO launched a war of aggression against Serbia. This fact cannot be obscured by the efforts of NATO communique writers to describe the war euphemistically as a 'non-Article 5 crisis response operation.' In launching the war, NATO undermined, if it did not outright forfeit, its claim to be a purely defensive alliance; in so doing it strengthened the hand of its many critics and detractors, especially in Russia.

Another institutional casualty of the Kosovo war was the United Nations (UN). Marginalized and sidelined in the diplomacy and negotiations leading up to the war, the UN played no part in the decision to intervene militarily or in the conduct of operations against Serbia. This gave

the lie to the hopes and pretensions that in the post—cold war and post—Gulf War environment the UN would once again be able to play the role assigned to it by its Charter in the realm of international peace and security. The fact was that the UN Security Council was paralysed by a standoff totally reminiscent of the cold war: the veto-wielding Western powers versus the veto-wielding Eastern powers. The UN ended up with no role to play, other than to help pick up the pieces by aiding refugees and contributing to the reconstruction of Kosovo. However unjustly, this reality served to reinforce the view that the UN could be an effective actor only in those conflicts that did not engage the interests of the permanent members of the Security Council.

A third institution whose credibility was undermined by the Kosovo war was the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). As part of a ceasefire agreement concluded in October 1998, the government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia had agreed to the deployment



throughout Kosovo of international observers operating under the authority and direction of the OSCE. Known as the Kosovo Verification Mission, the 1300 observers worked tirelessly to prevent outbreaks of violence, to re-establish local ceasefires, to negotiate disengagements, and to provide humanitarian assistance to the victims on both sides of the conflict. Their efforts were often highly successful, and their very presence served to curb the worst excesses, since it reminded the belligerents that they were under constant scrutiny by the international community. The tasks of the Mission came to abrupt end in late March 1999 when 19 (the NATO countries) of the 54 member states of the OSCE decided to launch military operations against Serbia. The OSCE, out of concern for the safety of its personnel,

the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and the exactions of the Serb security forces against the population of the province had produced hundreds of dead and thousands of displaced persons. With the start of the NATO bombing campaign those figures rapidly escalated to thousands of dead and hundreds of thousands of refugees. Why the change? Leaving aside the empirically unsustainable proposition that a humane and moderate leadership in Belgrade, imbued with moral scruples, had then had an unexplained change of heart, the sudden intensification of the Serbian campaign in Kosovo would seem largely attributable to the removal of external deterrents. One of those deterrents was the presence of the OSCE observers. Another was the threat of NATO bombing. It is inherent

Although obviously not as great as that of the Kosovars, the suffering endured by the people of Serbia was nonetheless real and widespread. It certainly extended well beyond the families of the hundreds of Serbs killed as part of the 'collateral damage' done in the course of the NATO bombing campaign. The systematic destruction of Serbia's infrastructures and communications networks had an immediate impact on the lives of the people in the form of food and water shortages. In a longer-term perspective, the bombing, combined with a prolonged period of economic sanctions, will have had the effect of reversing much of the economic progress which Serbia had made during the second half of the twentieth century. The cost of repairing the damage will be enormous, and the process will take years, especially since it seems most unlikely that Serbia will benefit from any external assistance so long as Slobodan Milokvid remains in office.

The Kosovo war also presented a major setback for two ambitions oft proclaimed by Western leaders: stability in the Balkans and a cooperative framework for security in Europe. The war contributed to instability rather than stability in the Balkans as tens of thousands of Kosovar refugees inundated poor and poorly prepared neighbouring countries, often rekindling old ethnic tensions within and between states, and as Greece's unease with the whole NATO operation became progressively more palpable. On a broader canvas, the war also set back the prospects for creating a 'new security architecture' for Europe in the post—cold war era. Most observers and analysts seem to agree that such a scheme will require the full and whole-hearted involvement and co-operation

More serious in terms of the United States' role in the world was the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade. On the one hand, the explanations given for the intelligence failures behind this mistake were reminiscent of an episode of the Keystone Cops.

ordered the observers to withdraw from Kosovo. With their hasty, but orderly, withdrawal, the civilians of Kosovo lost the modicum of protection which their presence had provided, and the OSCE suffered a blow to its reputation and credibility.

Of the peoples affected by the war, none suffered more than the ethnic Albanians of Kosovo, precisely the people that NATO wanted to protect. In the months immediately preceding the war, the Serbian campaign against

to the concept of a deterrent that once it is actually used, it ceases to be a deterrent. That proved to be the case for NATO bombing in the Kosovo war; once actually begun, it no longer served as a restraint, instead it became a signal to the Serb leadership to unleash the full fury of their security forces on the hapless Kosovars. Even with the wholehearted support of the international community, it will take Kosovo decades to recover from the trauma, dislocation, and destruction of 1999.

ful state. In attacking Serbia, one of Russia's oldest allies, and in bypassing the UN, NATO provoked widespread anger and condemnation in Russia, and not only among nationalists and communists, who were already incensed over NATO's eastward expansion to include Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. Much time and skilful diplomacy will be required to mend fences and to get the Russian government back into a frame of mind where it is genuinely prepared to cooperate with the West in the development of a 'new security architecture' for Europe (as opposed to securing Russia's signature on some more or less meaningful document by threatening to withhold some credit or other from the International Monetary Fund).

The stature and credibility of the United States, as the world's one remaining superpower, also suffered as a result of the Kosovo war, particularly when measured against the high-minded rhetoric from the Clinton administration about war aims and its proud boasts about American military prowess. A few examples will illustrate the point. In its efforts to compensate for inept American and European diplomacy in the run-up to the war, and to further its endeavours to demonize the Serbian leadership, the American administration chose to whitewash the Kosovo Liberation Army, which only a few weeks earlier had been regularly branded by the US intelligence community as a terrorist organization, heavily involved in the narcotics trade to finance its operations. Another example was President Clinton's public announcement early on in the war that the United States would not send ground troops to Kosovo. Although probably necessary to sustain domestic political support for the war, this statement was widely criticized for providing a measure of

reassurance to its Serbian adversaries as to what to expect. At another level, the statement was interpreted to mean that the United States was prepared to risk the lives of Serbs and Kosovars in defence of its values and ideals, but did not deem them sufficiently important to risk the life of a single American GI. (In a Canadian frame of reference, this brings to mind the old saw about Britain being willing to fight to the last, the last Australian or Canadian that is.)

More serious in terms of the United States' role in the world was the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade. On the one hand, the explanations given for the intelligence failures behind this mistake were reminiscent of an episode of the Keystone Cops. They certainly did not reflect well on the capabilities of a superpower that expends tens of billions of dollars on its intelligence establishment each year. On the other hand, the action itself put the United States on the defensive in its relations with China. This could not help but adversely affect the position and influence of the United States in ongoing discussions with China on the protection of human rights and intellectual property, trade liberalization, China's admission to the World Trade Organization (WTO), and, most importantly in the longer term, issues relating to the status of Taiwan and regional security in east Asia. The bombing of the embassy was at the very least a most unfortunate episode in what seems likely to become the most important and most difficult bilateral relationship of the first half of the twenty-first century.

Finally, by what they said and did in the Kosovo war, the governments of all of the major Western countries left themselves wide open to the

when the Russians launched their offensive in Chechnya at the end of 1999. Qualitatively there was little to differentiate the destruction wrought and the human rights abuses perpetrated by the Russian forces in Chechnya from the actions of the Serb forces in Kosovo. What was radically different was the response of Western governments to the two situations; polite diplomatic admonitions for the Russians, threats and bombardments for the Serbs. Realism, of course, dictates that the West cannot do unto a nuclear-armed Russia what it did to a militarily weak rump state in the Balkans. And yet, since the actions against Serbia were largely justified on the basis of universally applicable principles, the West's genuine adherence to those principles inevitably becomes rather suspect when they are put on the proverbial back burner as soon as they collide with harsh reality.

The debate over the Kosovo war will no doubt continue for years to come. There are many questions, to which no definitive answers have yet emerged, regarding the diplomacy leading up to the war, the legality/legitimacy of NATO's military intervention, the conduct and effectiveness of the bombing campaign, etc. But it may not be too early to suggest that there are already some lessons to be derived from the war, lessons which Western governments could usefully ponder in the formulation of their foreign policies and the conduct of their diplomacy in the years ahead.

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Back to the Future: What aspiring diplomats need to know

Every year the Public Service Commission Post-Secondary Recruitment Campaign for government jobs introduces significant changes without notice. The autumn of 1999 was no exception. The affected candidates were those applying for Foreign Service (Fs), Management/Consular (As) and Development Officer (PM) positions.

Almost all candidates believed that the changes were indeed 'new' when in fact the campaign was - from the vantage point of one who has followed it intimately for over twenty years - a 'back-to-the-future' exercise. A look at how and why I arrive at that conclusion may help future test-takers - as well as those they approach for advice.

Academic criteria

The shift to a Bachelor's degree only for Fs candidates surprised many. Historically, however, this is the norm, not the exception. From 1928 to 1992 a Bachelor's was the Fs entry ticket (though aspiring diplomats often had advanced degrees, plus languages). The 1993 to 1998 interregnum, when either two degrees or one degree plus an exotic foreign language were mandatory, reflected two contextual issues: a buyer's market approach by government which took advantage of the situation in which lots of people with multiple degrees were chasing few jobs, and the federal deficit which dictated a reduction in the number of candidates to limit the per head cost of processing them.

Concerning PM eligibility criteria, the proliferation of degree specialties identified in 1999 simply verifies the continuing confusion shown in recruiting by the Canadian International Development Agency. For the record, As academic criteria changed only marginally.

An unpublicized purpose for lowering the Fs entry bar was to combat increasingly high attrition rates over the past five years among officers hired with advanced academic degrees, specialized language skills, and considerable real-life experience. The government's presumption underlying the change was that younger, less highly educated people would be happier with the Fs job, its potential and salary than those longer in the tooth. In fact, the notion is misguided because abundant numbers of older candidates still emerged and will succeed in the competition. Foreign Affairs interviewers traditionally select the brightest, most mature, and best-performing candidates for the eligibility list. This often - though not always - disadvantages those with little experience of any type, particularly when they assume, incorrectly, that their academic work is relevant to the exams and interviews, and that they need not prepare for a competition in which, typically, only one and a half to two per cent of candidates from any level are successful.

One final, important note about academic criteria. Despite what government literature and recruiters sav-

to Fs, As and perhaps PM candidates, neither degrees nor scholarly achievements are relevant in selection for an interview, a job, or for assignments and promotion after hiring. First, test scores (plus an affirmative action formula in some cases) and, then, interview performance determine hiring success. It was always thus.

Candidate Volume

The government's 1999 campaign goal was to double the number of candidates from last year in the Fs, As and PM groups. This meant about 8,000 or more were expected to apply for Fs jobs, and about 3,000 to 4,000 each for PM and As positions. The method to get the volume increase was to lower or broaden academic criteria, as described above. The back-to-the-future benchmark for setting anticipated numbers: about 6,500 applied for Fs jobs in 1992, when the criterion of a Bachelor's degree only was last used. Why the volume push? More people stepping up to the hiring plate makes government work look attractive again and makes the Public Service Commission look effective as a recruiter in a time when the job market for grads is hot. Also, the higher the volume of candidates and the broader the range of acceptable academic disciplines, the greater the likelihood of increased participation by under-represented social groups, which attempts to address diversity concerns in government employment

Test changes

The back-to-the-future movement was evident in alterations to two of the three tests in 1999 (the Written Communication or WCT test remained the same). The cognitive Graduate Recruitment Test (GRT) required for FS, AS, and PM candidates was tinkered with as usual. In place of five types of exercises in 80 questions, as in 1998, the 'new' version had four types of exercises in 55 questions, with a disproportionately small reduction in test time. Not only were many of the questions the same as in 1998, several were the same as in 1989 and years following when the Entry Level Officer Selection Test (ELOST) was used.

Why the changes? Very few finished the long, more varied 1998 exam, and that caused cut-off scores that were the lowest in recent memory, possibly ever. Higher scores, and particularly higher passing scores inevitable with a pool of 4,000 to 8,000 test takers (depending on career stream), will be the result from the 1999 GRT.

As to the Foreign Service test required for FS candidates only, it underwent the biggest alteration. But - again - it was not as radical as interpreted by uninformed test-takers. The main change was that the old knowledge-type geopolitical and policy questions were eliminated. (These had been used in one form or another - essay or multiple-choice or both - since Lester Pearson was the first successful national test recruit in 1928.) Instead, the 'new' Foreign Service Written Simulation Test (FSWST) provided four detailed, heavily nuanced, hypothetical situations that diplomats could encounter and asked candidates to respond, in point form, as to how they would deal with the scenarios.

Though new to the exam, these questions were fundamentally the

same as, and were graded similarly to, the verbal situational and role-play questions used for decades in the Foreign Service interview. Also, they resembled old 'judgement questions' which accompanied the former FS knowledge test in the 1970s and 1980s. Result? Plus ça change, plus ça meme chose.

What prompted these changes? Three things. Government recruiters decided, arguably in the opinion of many current and former diplomats, that competency testing provides a better indication of job aptitude than knowledge testing for prospective FS officers. Indeed, the government has for years been downgrading the importance of international geopolitical and policy knowledge in candidates' cumulative (cognitive/writing/Foreign Service) test score until in 1998 the FS exam was worth only 10 per cent of the final total.

A second reason for change alleged that candidates from presumed non-traditional academic backgrounds for the Foreign Service would have a better chance of passing. This is not so, but another article would be needed to demonstrate why. The third reason for test changes was to prevent - horror of horrors - candidates from 'studying' for the exam. Nonetheless, while ingestion of knowledge was not possible, or necessary, to prepare for the new exam, my analysis of interview reports and hiring results in the past repeatedly proves that training on how to approach the situational questions, sample answers, and evaluation advice raises scores dramatically.

Conclusion

In 1999, the government probably encountered more people from different and lower-level academic backgrounds who knew less about the tests they were about to take than in recent

memory. As for candidates, more of them were taken aback by the 'new' eligibility criteria and tests sprung on them with little notice and less background information than ever before. For the benefit of those attracted to FS, AS, or PM careers in next year's Post-Secondary Campaign, a few words of advice. All detailed questions about tests should be directed not to local government offices/spokespersons or to hastily assembled and badly briefed campus information teams, but rather to informed Ottawa-based co-ordinators of the campaign at the Public Service Commission and the Foreign Affairs Department where there is a modicum of institutional memory about the process and how it really works. Comments about the tests and interviews by former diplomats and, occasionally, by faculty can be helpful, but bear in mind that people will likely talk about their test experience, which was long ago, far away, and differently evaluated. On a positive note, conferring with serving and ex-diplomats or their family members can help candidates understand the milieu they aspire to work in once the arcane vicissitudes of the exam, interview, eligibility, and hiring process are successfully negotiated.

Barry Yeates, President, Foreign Service Examination and Career Counselling Inc. Mr. Yeates, a former diplomat and senior university administrator, provides preparatory seminars and study materials to help candidates across Canada and internationally prepare for the FS, AS, and PM exams and interviews. Well over 200 of his clients serve in all branches of the Foreign Service

INTERNATIONAL Journal

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