

**Canadian Centre
for Foreign Policy
Development**



**Centre canadien
pour le développement
de la politique étrangère**

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**SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS FROM PRESENTATIONS AND
DISCUSSIONS: THE WASHINGTON D.C. ROUNDTABLE ON
TRENDS IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY**

Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development

April 2, 2001
Washington, D.C.

8012.1E

ISBN: E2-425/2001E-IN
0-662-31204-X



Department of Foreign Affairs
and International Trade

Ministère des Affaires étrangères
et du Commerce international

Canada

**Summary of Key Points from Presentations and Discussions:
The Washington D.C. Roundtable on Trends in U.S. Foreign Policy**

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**The Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development *and*
The Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars**

On April 2, 2001, the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development, in partnership with the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars (Washington, D.C.) and the Canadian Embassy in Washington D.C., organised a roundtable on Trends in U.S. Foreign Policy. The roundtable was the second in a series of discussions taking place in the U.S. and Canada over a three months period (San Diego - March 20, Edmonton - April 12, Toronto - May 18, Halifax, Denver). Prominent U.S. thinkers, former U.S. officials, and Canadian officials met to address:

- 1) emerging directions of U.S. foreign policy,
- 2) trans-Atlantic relations,
- 3) “humanitarian” intervention and regional conflicts, and
- 4) domestic sources of U.S. foreign policy.

Among the participants were Chantal de Jonge Oudraat (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace), Kent Hughes (former senior Commerce Department official and current Woodrow Wilson Centre Public Policy Scholar), Jane Holl Lute (United Nations Association), Thom Shanker (New York Times) and Daniel Abele (Canadian Embassy in Washington) . The discussion was chaired by Robert Litwak (Director of International Studies, Woodrow Wilson Centre). Steven Lee (Executive Director, Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development) made opening remarks. Blair Bobyk (U.S. Relations Division), and Marketa Geislerova (CCFPD) attended from DFAIT.

1. Emerging Directions of U.S. Foreign Policy

Critics of early Bush administration directions lament that emerging U.S. foreign policy exhibits three worrisome tendencies:

- unilateralism
- revival of Cold War style antagonisms
- growth of personal antagonisms based on ideology

Examples of unilateral behaviour, some tainted by "Cold War thinking" include: resisting the opportunity for a visit to the U.S. of President Vladimir Putin, the expulsion of Russians accused of spying, the shift in approach toward China, the repudiation of talks with North Korea, the

embarrassing of South Korean President Kim Dae-jung, insistence on NMD despite international opposition, scepticism about European Security and Defence Policy, the rejection of the Kyoto Protocol, opposition to nation-building in the Balkans, decreased funding for nuclear arms control, and launching a defence review.

A suggestion was made that the incipient U.S. foreign policy aims to fulfil three principles:

- match resources to "basic interests"
- avoid advocating U.S. (military) solutions to every international problem
- avoid "feel good" diplomacy (i.e., pay limited attention to democracy and human rights).¹

The choice between unilateralism and multilateralism determines how the U.S. - the sole remaining superpower – approaches foreign policy issues including: human rights, NMD, and regional conflicts, as well as larger dilemmas, such as, the growing power and wealth disparities in the world. The revival of the term “rogue states” supports the assertion that the new U.S. foreign policy tends to be unilateral. The term (phenomenon) has no standing in international law and allows for inconsistent and selective policy application. It has been useful, however, in rallying public support for NMD and to justify ending talks with North Korea, for instance.

Complementing the “unilateralism *versus* multilateralism” debate, a question was posed whether the U.S. will become an assertive hegemon, as opposed to a multilateral leader. A side-note was made that former President Bill Clinton was not very successful in leading multilateral efforts.

One should keep in mind that many key appointments have not been made yet and that rhetoric may not translate into policy. The anti-Clinton campaign will likely subside, including the irrational desire to banish Clinton-era policies, good or bad. It may also become clear that unilateralism and “black and white Cold War” thinking are not viable in a globalised world, marked by complexity and diversity. Moreover, there are probably 4 or 5 players involved in foreign and defence issues. It is not yet clear who is pulling the strings at the White House and what role President Bush plays. (The actors include: Colin Powell - Secretary of State, Dick Cheney - Vice-President, Condoleezza Rize - National Security Advisor, and Ronald Rumsfeld - Secretary of Defence).

2. Transatlantic Relations

2.1. Europe

Comparing the U.S. to 19th century Great Britain, a point was made that while the U.S. has assumed a position of *status quo*, Europe is in flux. With the European enlargement process underway, it is not yet certain what form Europe will take. Will it become a loose federation or a

¹ Some doubted that the decreased attention to nation-building will actually translate into absolute abandonment of human rights promotion.

strong confederation? Will it expand to the Middle East to include Turkey? To what extent will the European Union (EU) take responsibility for the Balkans? If the EU were to expand to the Middle East and become a direct player in and a neighbour to this strategically important region, Europe's place in U.S. foreign policy would undoubtedly grow in significance. However, before enlargement goals are achieved, serious challenges have to be met. They include concerns about political legitimacy and declining public support for enlargement and for the Euro.

2.2. NATO and European Security and Defence Policy

U.S. relations with NATO will be shaped by NATO enlargement to the East and the development of a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), which provides for the creation of a rapid reaction force. Further NATO eastward enlargement will have to be considered against the backdrop of Russia's objections and concerns. It is unclear, at the present, where the U.S. administration stands in respect to the ESDP. Nonetheless, a suggestion was made that implementation of the ESDP would most likely not lead to a deterioration of U.S. - NATO (U.S. - Europe) relations. A question arose whether trade is not a more contentious issue for relations between the U.S. and Europe than the creation of the rapid reaction force.

2.3. NMD and Defence Policy

A point was made that the alleged wide-spread opposition to NMD is exaggerated. It appears that European objections have collapsed. Great Britain's Prime Minister Tony Blair and Germany's Chancellor Gerhard Schröder are nearly on board, Russia's President Vladimir Putin understands the principle of rogue states and accepts NMD in principle. European soft support notwithstanding, NMD is far from a deployment stage and there is no acute reason for worry today.

When considering NMD one should keep in mind that:

- there is no imminent deployment,
- allies are not asked to financially contribute,
- the Russian and Chinese governments have been reassured that NMD will not threaten their nuclear deterrence.

On the other hand, one has to ponder the implications of amending or scrapping the ABM treaty. The assertion that the ABM treaty is outdated, because the concept of nuclear deterrence and the relationship between offence and defence have changed dramatically since the fall of the Berlin Wall, should be carefully considered.

There is tension between those in support of diplomatic solutions (i.e., dialogue with China and North Korea) and those favouring building defences (i.e., NMD).² It should be noted, in this context, that former President Clinton was on the verge of reaching an agreement with North Korea, putting a stop to its ballistic missile programme. The Bush administration, in turn, humiliated the South Korean President Kim Dae-jung, who has been trying to bring North Korea out of its isolation, during his visit to the U.S. In a similar vein, the new administration renamed the directorate dealing with non-proliferation as counter-proliferation. This change in terminology signals a shift in approach to proliferation issues from prevention to unilateral (possibly military) intervention. The former approach assumes that proliferation is preventable and being pro-active pays off. The latter sees proliferation as inevitable and aims at managing consequences *via* military instruments.³ Both of these developments – the treatment of President Kim Dae-jung and the shift to counter-proliferation, indicate that the balance in the White House is being tipped in favour of military defence, to the detriment of diplomatic solutions.

3. "Humanitarian" Intervention and Regional Conflicts

There is a disjuncture between the emerging U.S. interests and views on "humanitarian" intervention, on one hand, and the views of the international community, on the other.

The U.S. military needs to separate "humanitarian" operations from an outright war. When the U.S. goes on a mission, it has the whole war in mind. The military is prepared to use full force for two basic reasons: first, to perform and second, to avoid loss of (American) life. A point was made that while the military can stop fighting, it does not bring peace.

The demands on the U.S. military in the post Cold War era are unparalleled. They include:

- diversifying roles in complex "humanitarian" interventions
- meeting expectations of domestic actors as well as the international community
- defending interests of the U.S.
- performing to meet multiple and diverse expectations.

When determining the pace and the nature of response, humanitarian considerations come last. The U.S. military and the administration ask first of all, whether the problem abroad poses a security threat. Second, what are the political implications of (solving or not) the problem and last, are human rights (security) threatened?

The standard approach to any military intervention is interest-based, capacity-based, or threat-based. None of these approaches are adequate to address the challenges of the contemporary

² Although not implicitly stated, some would like to see NMD aimed at neutralising China, as well as "rogue states targets."

³ This debate is not new and generated controversy with allies in the early 1990's.

world. The interest-based approach is inherently state-based (or territorial) and incapable of addressing far away problems, seemingly unrelated to a narrowly defined national interest. The capacity-based approach is inadequate because U.S. capabilities and resources are basically limitless. The threat-based approach is not viable since the U.S. is rarely seriously threatened. Therefore, a new, needs-based approach should be developed. It should address the fundamental needs of the U.S. today, including:

- a safe and secure homeland
- a dynamic economic engine
- a desire to maintain strong friends and allies
- predictable relations with others

A point was made that the bar for "humanitarian" intervention is set too high. It is necessary to re-evaluate what is U.S. national interest and where and when should U.S. troops be deployed. How many lives lost and how much suffering does it take for the U.S. to pay attention? Preventing genocide and massive violence is surely in the U.S. interest. Using force only as a last resort is also problematic because it undermines (the use of force for) prevention.

The assertion that public support is a prerequisite for the government to intervene abroad is false. The experience from the Gulf War, for instance, demonstrates that public support requires political leadership.

The new administration has made apparent its disinclination to engage in "humanitarian" interventions. This stand reflects the view that former President Bill Clinton had too many priorities. Nonetheless, there are factors that balance this assertion:

- The budget will sustain a commitment to over-seas assistance, including funding for humanitarian organisations. These funds may well be used for "humanitarian" interventions.
- While U.S. engagement abroad may become modest, the U.S. can still leverage (i.e. support and encourage) engagement of its friends and allies in peacekeeping, peacebuilding and nation-building operations.
- The U.S. could contribute to building regional peacekeeping capacity. Attention was drawn to the training of Nigerian troops for peacekeeping duties in Sierra Leone. However, a caution was made not to ignore the regional dynamics. Nigeria, like the U.S., has vital interests to defend and to promote.
- An argument could be made that it is in the U.S. national interest to intervene abroad, if not to relieve suffering, then to diffuse instability with potential spill-over effects.
- It is useful to keep in mind that the U.S. was not doing all that much in the past and that President Clinton himself was reluctant to contribute to "humanitarian" interventions.

4. Domestic Sources of U.S. Foreign Policy

Congress will likely remain active, with sharp ideological and policy differences between the Republicans and the Democrats. The acute tension between hard-line Republicans, on the one hand, and supporters of former President Clinton, on the other, is still playing out in two respects: first, in the escalation of rhetoric and second, in the repudiation of some Clinton-era policies. These tendencies will likely subside in the future and we may expect more continuity than change on foreign policy issues.

The relative sway of key government departments is not yet clear. However, bureaucratic reshuffling and allocation of funds would indicate that more influence is being accorded to the State Department and less to the National Security Council. It is apparent that appointments are targeted at pleasing domestic coalitions.

Domestic constraints on the new administration will include the pressure from conservative Americans as well as issue-based (or ethnic-based) communities (i.e., Cuban Americans in Miami).

The issues which will draw the most attention and will likely have a domestic focus will include:

- economic and trade policy (FTAA, fast track authority, stability of regional markets),
- economic sanctions,
- growing anti-free trade coalitions,
- immigration policy.

The media, newspapers in particular, continue to play a watch-dog role. The new administration has not so far used media in its favour, and demonstrated a lack of consensus on a range of foreign policy issues. While former President Bill Clinton did not particularly like the media either, his staff handled communications well.

The Canada-file has been moved to occupy a space high up within a set of hemispheric priorities. A point was made that personal relationships and "the way one chooses to raise points" are important to President Bush. Relations between the two neighbours will be influenced by these elements.

Washington Agenda
U.S. Foreign Policy Roundtable
April 2, 2001
Washington, D.C.
9:00 am to 12:00 pm
Board Room, Sixth Floor
Woodrow Wilson Center

The purpose of the roundtable is to survey current thinking about U.S. Foreign Policy (by American experts), especially on three themes. The themes and presenters are as follows:

- | | | |
|-------|-------|---|
| 9:00 | 10:00 | Trans-Atlantic Relations (including NMD) |
| - | | Presenters: |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sam Wells, Associate Director of the Woodrow Wilson Center• Martin Walker, Chief International Correspondent, UPI• Robert Litwak, Director of International Studies, Woodrow Wilson Center |
| 10:00 | 11:00 | Humanitarian Intervention and Regional Conflicts |
| - | | Presenters: |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jane Holl Lute, United Nations Association• Eric Schwartz, former NSC staff and current Woodrow Wilson Center Public Policy Scholar• Thomas J. Leney, Executive Director, Program on the Role of American Military Power, Association of the U.S. Army. |
| 11:00 | 12:00 | Domestic Sources of US Foreign Policy |
| - | | Presenters: |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Michael Van Dusen, Deputy Director, Woodrow Wilson Center• Thom Shanker, New York Times• Kent Hughes, former senior Commerce Department official and current Woodrow Wilson Center Public Policy Scholar |

List of Participants

Washington Presenters

Sam Wells, *Associate Director, Woodrow Wilson Center*

Martin Walker, *Chief International Correspondent, UPI*

Robert Litwak, *Director of International Studies, Woodrow Wilson Center*

Jane Holl Lute, *United Nations Association*

Eric Schwartz, *Former NSC staff and current Woodrow Wilson Centre Public Policy Scholar*

Thomas J. Leney, *Executive Director, Program on the Role of American Military Power Association of the U.S. Army*

Michael Van Dusen, *Deputy Director, Woodrow Wilson Center*

Thom Shanker, *New York Times*

Kent Hughes, *Former senior Commerce Department official and current Woodrow Wilson Center Public Policy Scholar*

Participants

Reina Neufeldt, *Doctoral Student, School of International Service, American University*

Dan Plesch, *Director, BASIC - Washington*

Stephen Young, *Deputy Director, Coalition to Reduce Nuclear Dangers*

Dieter Dettke, *Executive Director, Washington Office, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung*

Chantal de Jonge Oudraat, *Associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*

Jon Allen, *Minister-Counsellor, Canadian Embassy, Washington D.C.*

Daniel Abele, *Academic Relations Officer, Canadian Embassy, Washington D.C.*

Blair Bobyk, *Political & Foreign Policy Officer, United States General Relations Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade*

Steve Lee, *Executive Director, Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development*

Marketa Geislerova, *Rapporteur, Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development*

