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Coalition warfare. Canadian troops relieving elements of the US 101st Airborne Division on the defensive perimeter of Kandahar airport in Afghanistan, February 2002.

THE MATURE EXERCISE OF SOVEREIGNTY

by L. Yves Fortier

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At this, the dawn of the 21st century, it is more evident than ever that the challenges faced by our country are, in many respects, identical to those which confronted our predecessors and, indeed, have existed throughout our history. While the events of 11 September 2001 have certainly brought these issues into sharper focus, the challenges to which I refer are no more or less acutely felt today than at many other moments in our history.

I refer to the challenges of defining ourselves as a nation and Canada as a sovereign state.

Who are we — and who are we not? What do we stand for — and what do we oppose? Who are our friends? Our allies? Our adversaries? Where do we fit among the community of nations? What useful role can we play on the world stage?

I hesitate, however, lest, in purporting to address such traditional Canadian conundrums, I be taken for some sort of self-professed shaman, dispensing answers to questions that have bedevilled Canadians for cen-

turies. Let me state clearly: nothing could be farther from the truth. To paraphrase Mark Twain: “I am gratified to be able to answer these questions promptly, and I will: I don’t know!!”

That said, if I do at times sound certain of my opinions, it is only because I must confess to feeling a bit like Twain’s *Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court*: a man perhaps foolishly sure of himself, yet nonetheless to be excused if his views contain at least a certain understandable element of “been there; done that”. Here, in Toronto, inarguably the seat of economic power in Canada, and to many Québécois the centre of what they consider — inaccurately, I know — a monolithic ‘ROC’ (rest of Canada), I have a secret to tell you. The struggle that Canada is once again experiencing, the struggle to define and assert one’s identity and distinctiveness in an ever-converging world, is a struggle that we in Québec, I am pleased to say, have won.

That is not really a secret — although it may be welcome news to many. The real secret is *how* this occurred, and it is this which I propose to share with

Mr. L. Yves Fortier, CC, QC, LLD, former Canadian Ambassador to the United Nations, is a Senior Partner in the law firm of Ogilvy Renault in Montréal.

you. In truth, this secret is no big deal. The answer was there all along. It's quite elementary. The realization gradually dawned on us that Québec's age-old struggle was in fact, for the most part (at least since the quiet revolution), of *our own making*. And one day sometime during the last decade, we simply decided to shuck that self-imposed yoke. Whereas Québec traditionally defined itself as what it was *not* —not English-speaking; not protestant; not wealthy; in two words, not Canada — today it considers its distinctiveness as self-evident and sees its identity in terms of its *positive* attributes: modern, open and sophisticated.

It is no coincidence — and not a little ironic — that even today the old and tired purveyors of separatism in Québec continue to harp on what they contend Québec is not —primarily, the 'ROC' — in order to peddle their snake oil. The vast majority of Québécois could hardly care less. They no longer find self-worth by staring out the window at the rest of the world, but by looking in

have doubts regarding what they see as the loss of sovereignty inherent in such arrangements? Why is it that so many Canadians imagine only threats to our sovereignty lurking behind so many corners? What is it about our sense of self, in particular as regards the United States, that prompts such reactions?

It is the issue of Canada's sovereignty, in particular vis-à-vis our great neighbour to the South, and more specifically, the question of 'continentalism', by which I mean, broadly speaking, the harmonization of policies as between Canada and the US, which I propose to address.

AFGHANISTAN OR BUST

One of the most recent and tangible examples of the manifestations of what I have chosen to call the 'continentalist' question was Defence Minister Art Eggleton's announcement, on 7 January 2002, of

Canada's decision to send 750 ground troops to assist the US effort to root out, mop-up and destroy the remaining Taliban and al-Qaeda forces in the southern areas of Afghanistan. For several weeks prior to that date, the government of Canada had been considering the deployment of Canadian troops in a more traditional peacekeeping role, under the banner of the United Nations. This is, of course, the sort of role that Canada has relished — a role, it could be said, practically invented by Lester Pearson at the time of the Suez crisis. It is a role that gives our country significant clout within the international community and for which Canada is almost universally admired and respected.

Two factors appear to have determined the matter. "European politics," said Minister Eggleton at the time, effectively left little room for a meaningful Canadian

presence among the seventeen countries committed to the UN operation being coordinated by the British. More fundamentally — and of far greater and, I submit, more lasting significance — was Canada's desire to play, and to be seen to be playing, a more important and direct military role in Afghanistan. In the circumstances, the government decided that, given a choice between a minor role in a multilateral UN operation and a more robust combat contribution to the US war effort, Canada's interests were better served by working with the Americans, thereby putting meat on the bones of the Prime Minister's declaration, six days after the September 11 attacks, that "we are at war against terrorism."

The import of Canada's decision was immediately noted by supporters and critics alike. For the first time, Canadian ground forces would be operating under uni-



Imperial war. The Royal Canadian Regiment crossing the Modder River during the Boer War in South Africa, February 1900.

the mirror and seeing who they are and what they have achieved. And interestingly, as they have done so, that is, as Québec has matured as a society and come to feel increasingly comfortable *dans sa peau*, Québécois have lost the need to insist on their 'difference', and to see separation — the ultimate political statement of 'what we are not' — as an element of self-expression, that is, of autonomy.

It is from this perspective that I have recently pondered the curious issue of Canadian sovereignty. 'Curious' in that it is an issue at all, let alone one which has re-surfaced with such unabated force since 11 September 2001. I find the matter fascinating. Why is it, for example, that Québec can embrace NAFTA unequivocally — and nowhere more so than among the ranks of the so-called sovereigntists — while many elements within the far larger, more powerful 'ROC' continue to

lateral US operational control, that is, under the US flag although the US action was sanctioned as self-defence by the UN Security Council on the morrow of 11 September. Canadians had operated under American command previously, on land, at sea and in the air; however; Canada's ground forces had never done so on a direct bilateral basis. All previous Canadian deployments of ground forces, either alongside Americans or under American command, had occurred within the context of NATO operations, such as in the Balkan conflicts, for example, or as part of a multilateral coalition formed for specific purposes, such as the Gulf War of 1991. Even in the Korean War, the UN flag flew over the anti-Communist alliance of which Canada was a member. In short, this was the first time in our history as a fully sovereign nation that Canadian ground forces would gird for battle under the banner of the US or, I believe, under the flag of any state other than Canada. As political and military observers remarked, the decision to send Canada's Army where its Navy and Air Force had gone before was especially significant, because, no matter the sophistication of military hardware, ground troops remain the essential element in warfare, and because the Army is by far the largest branch of the Canadian Forces.

Notwithstanding the groundbreaking nature of our government's decision, the deployment of Canada's Army harks back to what has been referred to as "an honourable Canadian tradition," and in fact resurrects a dilemma at least a century old. I will return, in a few moments, to this historical context since I believe that it is only by attempting to understand current events through a historical lens that we can learn from history, rather than blindly repeat it.

First, however, I wish to consider the primary argument articulated by opponents of Canada's decision to deploy our troops in Afghanistan. The concern, of course, was that the ramifications of the government's decision extended far beyond the battlefield and effectively put Canadian sovereignty at risk. The point was well and succinctly made by Canada's former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lloyd Axworthy, on the same day that the decision was announced. In remarks widely published in the media, Mr. Axworthy, condemned the decision as "regrettable" and suggested that Canada was increasingly "spinning firmly in the US orbit." The result, he believed, would undermine our country's role as what he called an "independent international operator."

Referring more broadly to what he considered the ill-fated effort to harmonize Canada's security policies with those of the US in the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks, Mr. Axworthy is quoted as stating: "The only test is how high we jump."

This, in pith and substance, is the concern that lies at the heart of the debate concerning what I referred to, at the outset of my remarks, as 'continentalism' in all its many and varied manifestations.

I cannot, in good conscience, end this brief discussion of the issues raised by Canada's deployment in Afghanistan without referring to the views on the subject expressed by another eminent Canadian, retired Major-General Lewis Mackenzie. Once again, I consid-



Alliance warfare. Canadians storming Vimy Ridge, April 1917. Some historians have said that Canada 'came of age' and achieved sovereign status because of the feats of its Army in the First World War.

er General Mackenzie's observations particularly relevant because, whether or not they are accurate, and whether or not they are shared by all Canadians, they too reflect and can be said to represent the views of many in this country.

General Mackenzie applauded the Government's decision. In typical, engaging fashion, he said that joint operations with the US, in and around Kandahar, would be more meaningful for Canada than — in his words — "directing traffic in Kabul" under the UN flag. It is significant, I believe, that in this assessment (though it was likely framed in different language), Canada's military leaders clearly agreed. The decision to engage in a joint operation with the US, with a full battalion deployed as an intact unit under Canadian command but overall US operational control, appears not only to have been a political decision, but was favoured as well by senior military commanders.

I will return to the question of military and security-related integration with the US — one important manifestation of continentalism in its present-day form. But first, a brief historical perspective is in order.

WHAT'S PAST IS PROLOGUE

In *The Tempest*, Shakespeare wrote: "What's past is prologue." And so it is. We would all be remiss if, in the context of the current debate on continentalism, in its various forms, we did not consider previous incarnations of the issue.

That continentalism has become such a hot-button issue is undeniable, and was likely unavoidable in the aftermath of September 11. When the Leader of the Opposition opened Question Period in Parliament on 3 October 2001 by saying, "It is now day 22," no expla-

government of the day, under Wilfrid Laurier, was intent on increasing Canada's influence within the British Empire. At the time, in effect, Great Britain was undeniably 'the sun around which Canada revolved', though there was considerable and vocal uncertainty in this country regarding 'how far from that sun this country should orbit'. Substitute 'the US' for 'the UK', and you have, in a nutshell, the dilemma facing Canada today.

The great debate regarding Canadian sovereignty during the first third of the 20th century reflected two contrary points of view, one of which was reflected in Laurier's policies. He and his Tory successor, Robert Borden, believed that Canada would gain autonomy and influence as a nation by participating fully in Imperial affairs. Indeed, Borden is credited with ensuring a significant Canadian presence at the post-First World War peace table as a result of our country's contributions and sacrifices on the Western front during that conflict. The opposing viewpoint, championed by William Lyon Mackenzie King, held that Canada could gain the autonomy it sought only by keeping its distance from Britain, and especially from British defence planning. That policy, too, was effective, as the Statute of Westminster testifies eloquently.

It must be acknowledged, however, that these contradictory poli-

cies, each of which was successful in its day, reflected two radically divergent sets of circumstances: war and peace. Clearly, each was appropriate to the particular context within which it arose.

The United States is today, arguably, even more powerful compared to the rest of the world than was Britain a century ago. The dilemma for Canada nonetheless remains largely as it was then, and as it has been throughout many of the great debates of the 20th century. Reasonable Canadians continue to disagree about how Canada should come to grips with what the French call a "hyper-power". The centre of our solar system may have shifted, yet the question remains as to 'the optimal radius of the Canadian orbit around the [new] American sun'. The actions of Canada in recent months, in response to the shameful attacks of September 11, and the collective soul-searching engendered both by the attacks and our government's reaction, poignantly illustrate the durability and complexity of this dilemma.

nation was required. "Day 22" obviously meant 22 days after September 11. Indeed, in many respects, our current national debates concerning a wide range of issues date from, and are conditioned by, that horrific day. In fact, however, many of the issues with which we currently grapple have existed since the beginning of 'this experiment called Canada', and have always been at the core of most of our critical debates. Through two rounds of free trade, the National Energy Policy, the railroads, inter-continental missiles and weapons testing, concerns regarding the twin issues of continentalism and Canadian sovereignty ruled the day. History even sheds light, and perhaps a lesson or two, on the current deployment of Canadian forces in Afghanistan.

One hundred years ago, Canadian troops, including the Strathconas, elements of which are today in Afghanistan, were fighting beside British troops and under British command during the Boer War. As the scholars Barry Cooper and David Bercuson have written, Canadians took part in that military initiative because the



JSPA Combat Camera Photo by Sgt. David Snashall

Coalition warfare. A soldier from the Lord Strathcona's Horse Reconnaissance Squadron standing on his Coyote recon vehicle at Kandahar airport, Afghanistan, February 2002.

Not for the first time, it occurs to me that Canadians are uniquely prone to identity crises. Perhaps alone among the peoples of the world, it seems that we are never happier than in the throes of debate concerning our sovereignty, our unity, our values: in a word, our identity, especially as it relates to the US.

THOSE DAMN YANKEES

The pull of the United States is inexorable. Canadians of all stripes are well aware of it and, it must be acknowledged, appear less frightened by the prospect of closer ties with their southern neighbour than many within the current and previous Liberal governments. Over the past five or so years, the government has floated a number of what might be called ‘continentalist’ ideas, including a common currency, a customs union, water sales and a common energy policy. In almost every instance, however, the mere utterance of such ideas is followed by qualification, denial and, inevitably, little or no meaningful change.

Let me be clear: I do not appear before you today as an advocate for such change. Nor do I believe that ‘continentalist’ policies — policies harmonized with those of the US — are required or appropriate in all cases. What I do deplore is the almost reflexive gnashing of teeth and rending of garments that often follows the merest suggestion of closer links with our American cousins. Why? Because such reactions serve only to stifle debate regarding the very matter which the so-called Canadians nationalists, self-titled defenders of our country, purport to defend; namely, our identity as Canadians and the values and policies that we espouse.

Let’s be frank. Anti-Americanism only clouds the issues that its proponents claim to resolve. Poll after poll demonstrates that Canadians have no desire to become Americans. Yet it is equally clear that Americans certainly have no aspirations to digest Canada. As Stephen Handelman pointed out in a recent article, Canada’s immigration policy may be shifting to meet the post-September 11 concerns of the US. However, even US officials acknowledge that “no one is talking about erasing the border or setting up a customs union. For a very good reason: the US is wary of [an] erosion of sovereignty too.” That pithy observation is extremely insightful and, I submit, particularly well worth bearing in mind at this time of heightened sensitivity to the issue of relations with the United States. The fact is that we are not alone in our desire to preserve our sovereignty, and this simple fact itself suggests that we have less to fear from the US than many people imagine.

Historians J. L. Granatstein and Norman Hillmer recently addressed the question: “Why does rabid anti-Americanism stir some Canadians so deeply?” Their article was a timely response to the view — to my mind, obscene — expressed by some people in Canada, to the effect that the events of September 11 should be seen as just punishment, or at least foreseeable retribution, for US actions abroad. Granatstein and Hillmer noted that what they call the “hardy

perennial of Canadian anti-Americanism” returned in full flower this past September, even as Americans were grieving their losses.

Granatstein and Hillmer’s conclusion, with which I strongly agree, was that, “at its best, anti-Americanism is a defence mechanism for Canadians who want to remain independent in an integrated North America. At its worst, it is bias and prejudice, fuelled by envy, hatred and a naïve view of the world.” I would add that, in my opinion, anti-Americanism is but a reflection of what I have called our propensity for identity crises. To be fair, it may only be natural both that the question ‘who are we?’ and the temptation to answer that question by loudly proclaiming ‘who we are not’ should arise with some frequency, given our proximity and ties to the ‘elephant’ to the South. However, in the final analysis, the task of defining ourselves and our country is ours alone. It is to ourselves that we must look to answer the question ‘who are we?’ That is the essence of autonomy. Similarities with the US are not a threat to that autonomy, but part of who we are. Being different from the Americans (or anyone else) is in no way an affirmation of sovereignty. ‘Doing what is right by us’ is, ultimately, the only mature exercise of sovereignty.

Most Canadians are in fact at peace with their southern cousins. They live contentedly as a part of North America. And if we are at times consumed by a struggle to remain distinctive, it is only, I submit, because our similarities with the US greatly outweigh our differences, beginning with our common embrace of such values as freedom, tolerance and order. From September 11 to the present day, polls have demonstrated that most Canadians support the US in its war on terrorism. So they should, because it is our common values of pluralism, secularism and democracy that have come under attack. Canada is as threatened by terrorism as the United States, it is equally threatened by the social, political and economic instability that terrorism, if unchecked, can cause.

I would go further. Permit me to share with you certain of the emotions that I experienced, personally, on 11 September 2001 and during the days which followed. Of horror I need not speak; all of us, I know, experienced the same emotion. Horror with respect to the depravity of the individuals responsible, the scope of the disaster and the scale of human life taken. “There but for the grace of God go I...” is a thought that perhaps also occurred to many people — and certainly I believe that realization is important, both for individuals and for states not directly targeted by the perpetrators of the attacks. More fundamentally, however, I could not but feel on September 11 that the souls who perished on that day did so, in part, for me. They did so because they were, for the most part — but by no means exclusively — Americans. For no other reason than that they were citizens of a nation envied and despised by the attackers. A nation whose founding principles most of us cherish for ourselves. And a nation whose power and might — whether economic, technological or military — is essential to maintaining the existence that much of the world, including ourselves, lives on a daily basis.

The flow of oil from the Persian Gulf. The maintenance of stability in various regions of the globe. The economy within which so many of our goods and services are sold. Even the overwhelming military force under whose umbrella we have long been sheltered, enabling us to direct governmental and societal priorities and spending elsewhere. All this, and more, it occurred to me on September 11, we owe, to some degree, to the United States. Did we ever believe that these boons to our well-being were truly of our own making exclusively, or that they were the products of 'natural' forces independent of human intervention? Did we ever believe that our prosperity was cost- or risk-free? And what are those costs? How are they allocated among the beneficiaries — including ourselves — of peace, prosperity and growth? Do we fully realize that, for all that we are different, for all that we are not Americans, for all that our values and policies are not identical, we too, among other nations, rely upon and benefit from the policies and actions of the US? Were these very policies and actions not the stated reasons that the attacks in question were carried out; not at the headquarters of the Department of National Defence in Ottawa; not at Westminster; not at the Kremlin, or the Forbidden City; not at the Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur; but at the symbols of American military and economic supremacy?

These questions arose and swirled within my mind on September 11, even as the horror of the attacks were felt in my gut. And, while the answers to such questions remain inchoate intellectually, at an emotional level — in my gut — I could not and cannot escape the feeling that, in some measure, the victims of September 11 were targeted precisely because they represented a system — of beliefs, of values, of finance, of industry, of politics, of economics — that underlies our existence as Canadians, today.

In *Faust*, Goethe wrote: "He only earns his freedom and existence who daily conquers them anew." The events of September 11 have caused us to reexamine our "freedom and existence," and challenged us to conquer them anew. The challenge is, broadly speaking, twofold. On the one hand, we are challenged actively to participate in the defence, by force, of the "freedom and existence" that we have chosen for ourselves. At the same time, it is equally necessary for us to consider whether other pro-active measures are appropriate to further that "freedom and existence".

In my opinion, the decision to send our troops into battle alongside Americans and under American control is an example of the first of these challenges successfully, if belatedly, met. Far from constituting a sacrifice of sovereignty, it demonstrates a mature and clear-sighted appreciation of how we can best assist an operation that is fundamentally in our interest. As a Canadian, I am not ashamed to defend a friend, and I am certainly not ashamed to assist a friend whose actions, even if imperfect, benefit my fellow citizens.

It is the second of the broad challenges which I have identified that is, curiously, the more daunting. That is,

a consideration of the many issues that arise, and to some of which I have alluded, under the rubric 'continentalism'. As I have attempted to demonstrate, these questions did not arise for the first time on September 11, anymore than the tumble of tech stocks and the bear market that trend precipitated begin on that date. But there is no doubt that such questions have come into sharper focus since.

BACK TO THE FUTURE

What are the issues of the day? Take a look at almost any newspaper: security, immigration, economic integration, currency, to name but a few. In other words, the meat and potatoes of the 'continentalist' debate. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.*

The issue of continentalism will come to be seen as the defining issue of this, and perhaps the next, government. It lies at the heart of both security and prosperity, two perennial concerns generally recognized as involving transnational, in particular American, factors. Yet, as has been pointed out recently, it also affects a range of secondary issues "from handguns to health care".

It is impossible to foresee precisely what directions Canada will choose to take in respect of all of the issues currently raised by this age-old dilemma. However, the reality is that Canada has always been involved in a necessary dance with America, which must be clearly and broadly acknowledged if we intend to do more than follow the lead of the US. This reality is nothing new. What is perhaps unique, at least in recent years, is the mood of most Canadians since September 11 and the huge sentiment — in many circles, warmth and compassion — toward our lifelong 'dance partner'. This mood must be acknowledged, understood and channelled by our government to a productive end. This, for me, is the great challenge that we face at the beginning of the 21st century. The government of Canada, in particular the Prime Minister, continues to enjoy unprecedented support from the citizens of this country. With, in my opinion, little risk of seeing power wrested from the Liberal Party, this government and this Prime Minister have a golden opportunity to engage Canadians in a forthright discussion, to facilitate a debate that transcends purely political rhetoric and to spell out with boldness and creativity a vision of the Canada-US relationship.

Clearly, I am not alone in this opinion. On 10 January 2002, as I was working on an early draft of this presentation, I learned for the first time, as perhaps many of you did, that the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Commons was preparing to begin hearings regarding "the future of Canada-US relations that will review everything from adopting the US dollar to the unified customs regime...[including] the first comprehensive parliamentary scrutiny of the issue of North American economic integration since Jean Chrétien came to power in 1993." To my knowledge, the committee has yet to commence its hearings, and it remains to be seen whether it will in fact become a forum for discussion of such critical issues, let alone result in a meaningful report to which the government will respond with concrete measures. Its unofficial agenda

is nothing if not ambitious. It includes ‘dollarization’ and economic integration more generally, as well as what its chairman — now, our Foreign Minister — Bill Graham, calls the “institutional framework” of our relationship with the US and the need to move beyond what he sees as the “ad hoc basis” on which the relationship is managed. I say: *from the Chairman’s mouth to the PM’s ears*. Whatever the outcome, I heartily applaud the fundamental objective articulated by Mr. Graham: “to enable a debate.”

Early in his days as Foreign Minister, John Manley emphasised that he views the US as Canada’s most important partner at many levels. That view was reiterated this past December: “We often in Canada focus on our differences with the United States. Those differences are far less significant than the similarities we have in values and objectives and respect for human rights and basic freedoms. We’re usually on the same side of global issues.”

On the question of continental defence, specifically the potential expansion of NORAD, and on the question of sovereignty that arises in any such joint security initiative, Mr. Manley stated: “We don’t see it as a cession of sovereignty. We see it as joint sovereignty operating in a functional way, in a desirable way.” That, to my mind, is what a ‘mature’ exercise of sovereignty is all about. Sharing resources. Pooling sovereignty. But doing so because we have determined that it is best for us. What is any treaty or multilateral convention but a partial compromise of otherwise unfettered autonomy? What is any multilateral organization but a pooling of resources or sovereignty? I submit that the crux of the issue, and the question that most irks Mr. Axworthy, is, at the end of the day, less the lofty issue of sovereignty *per se* than the more mundane matter of which ‘dance partner’ to choose. To my mind, rather than bemoan our fate as neighbour, special friend and ally of the US, we should more honestly acknowledge both the rewards and the challenges of the relationship.

CONCLUSION

If Québécois have discovered, as I submit they have, that their distinctiveness is a given and that their identity lies not in *who they are not* but in *who they are*, there is surely no reason why Canada should do less. We can deal with Americans — as we deal with Russians, Chinese, Angolans and Indians — as equals, without feeling threatened. We can enact policies that

make sense for us, without feeling threatened by a loss of sovereignty. The US doesn’t wish to colonize us any more than we wish to be colonized. We can acknowledge that our fears are often of our own creation — without losing sight of what makes us Canadian. We can recognize similarities, and act on them in concert with the US and other nations, without succumbing to guilt-racked soul-searching. We can be who we are without constantly questioning ourselves.

We are a noble nation, born in peace, forged in war, the envy of much of the world. If only we begin to realize just how true this is and cease demonizing the US, we will finally merit fully the reputation and the laurels that



Coalition warfare. A Canadian CF-18 on the flight line at Doha, Qatar, during the Gulf War.

DND Photo ISC31-5253

we have struggled so hard to attain and that have been bestowed upon us. We can, I dare say, learn from the experience of *les québécois canadiens*, that it is indeed possible to define ourselves, recognize our identity, preserve our autonomy and assert our sovereignty, both on this continent and others, even as we acknowledge and strengthen the ties that bind us to peoples and countries which hold dear the values that we call our own.

In his “Second speech on conciliation with America”, on 22 March 1775, the great English political thinker Edmund Burke declared: “Abstract liberty, like other mere abstractions, is not to be found.” The lesson remains important today. The principles that define us mean nothing in the abstract — what counts is the manner in which they are exercised. Specifically, it is the exercise of sovereignty which renders the concept meaningful. And it is a mature exercise of sovereignty which characterizes a modern, self-assured nation.

It is time for Canadians to stop looking out the window, as opposed to in the mirror, to know who we are.

There is no need for us to demonize others, no need to extol differences or fear similarities, as a basis of self-definition. No need to guard with obsessive jealousy what is indubitably and permanently ours: our identity and our sovereignty. As a mature nation, it behoves us to act accordingly. To acknowledge both the similarities and differences between our neighbours and us. To embrace rather than eschew alliances — be they military, economic or political — which further our own goals. To stand confidently, not timidly, beside our friends in their time of need. To recognize that we do so because it constitutes an exercise of our sovereignty and a recognition of our values. And when asked why, to state proudly — as might any 'Joe': Because, I am Canadian.



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HMCS *Kingston* taking part in training for ships heading to the Arabian Sea, October 2001.