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Assessment:

Security Challenges in the 21st Century: EU, USA, and Canadian Approaches
(Osvaldo Croci and Amy Verdun)

The analysis on 21st century security challenges concerning the EU, U.S., and Canada by Osvaldo Croci and Amy Verdun offers valuable discernment into threat and security perceptions of transatlantic ties, underlining Canadian contributions. They argue that the potential for transatlantic revitalization, via a more concerted US-Canadian counter-terrorism stance, demonstrates room for improved North American-European security cooperation. According to Croci and Verdun, this incentive for better transatlantic relations centers on leaderships grappling more effectively—together—over traditional hard power (U.S. priority) vs. soft power (European priority) politics, policies, and, to a certain extent, lessons learned. Significantly, by underscoring Canada's role as transatlantic mediator, acting concertedly with the U.S., yet not necessarily beholden to its southern neighbor, Croci and Verdun argue convincingly that Canadian mediation attempts to overcome inter-allied dissension can also advance Canadian-EU relations.

For the 21st century security challenges, Croci and Verdun point to the power and threat disjuncture, based on their latest research and the works they've amply cited, for both the post-Cold War and post-9/11 eras. On the American side of national security priorities, the key concerns and the hard power responses or, increasingly, the "the preventive self-defense" military strikes needed globally—beyond Europe—concentrate on weapons of mass destruction proliferation, rogue states, and Islamist terrorism. On the European side, the authors emphasize that threats and predominantly soft power, non-military prioritized approaches stem from ethnic conflict and political-economic instability involving Central and East European, Russian, and Mediterranean-based nation-states. Interestingly, even though Canadians officially and publicly acknowledge similar threat perceptions as the U.S., trying to find a balance between hard and soft power planning, Croci and Verdun stress that the underlying rationale regards trade, prosperity, and border security. This latter reasoning makes sense, particularly given the commercial tensions seen as the long-time top policy consideration when Canadian-American relations get the most visibility. However, the recent and successful Canadian counter-terrorist operation out of Toronto accentuates the concerted reality, not only of even more vigilant border security, but also, as Croci and Verdun explain, the centrality

of greater Canadian and Canadian-American counter-terrorist measures.¹ Such measures relate to increased security, intelligence, and military effort and neighborly engagement, cooperation, and coordination.

Importantly, Croci and Verdun examine that the trade-offs between hard and soft power may find less disjuncture in transatlantic ties than many contend. If EU and NATO member states strengthen their defenses and expand their defense budgets and capabilities in ways that provide “complementary” rather than “alternative” scenario and strategic planning priorities, transatlantic relations and the Atlantic Alliance, itself, can prosper in a post-9/11 world.² Whether European or Canadian defense budgets increase to provide the complementary transatlantic linkages with the U.S., time can only tell. But, as the authors contend, we need to understand the critically important disjuncture that points toward a larger EU and, by extension, a growing NATO, both of which become unable to counter or prevent threats, without the vital “Atlantic ‘concert’” to protect transatlantic linkages. Further, as the authors gauge the U.S. must necessarily remain wary about unilateral security initiatives and operations that pull transatlantic procedures and planning apart. For Croci and Verdun, one bottom line consideration, then, points to the US, NATO, and EU members dividing their responsibilities in the Balkans to secure, stabilize, and reconstruct, or help the post-civil war Southeastern Europeans to take on that mantle.

What remains unclear, however, focuses on what Canada has done, as well as how Canada might play out the consequential “mediator” role more specifically to which Croci and Verdun argue underlies the main premise of their paper. Further examination and even additional, detailed examples for post-9/11 policy implications would enable clearer accounting for such power brokering—or power influencing—by Canada on the U.S. and the EU, NATO, OSCE, and UN, for example, on such explosive security futures regarding Iraq, Afghanistan, and Iran. By examining in some more depth how the U.S.-led operations in Afghanistan and Iraq have resulted in some important troop and non-military contributions by Canadians and Europeans over the past several years, the authors could reinforce their analysis of EU, USA, and Canadian approaches to 21st century security challenges. Especially essential are the Canadian military contributions to the expanded NATO missions in Afghanistan.³ Hence, the long-term consequences for such evolutionary security policy and implementation, and lessons learned, give a bigger

¹ “Canada charges 17 terror suspects.” BBC News. 4 June 2006. Accessed on 4 June 2006 (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/5044560.stm>).

² For background on scenario and strategic planning, see Philip Bobbitt. “Seeing the Futures.” December 8, 2003. *The New York Times*. Accessed on 6 June 2006 (<<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/12/08/opinion/08BOBB.html>>). For background on the roots of transforming the Atlantic Alliance, still arguably current for the post-9/11 world, see Charles Barry, Sean Kay, and Joshua Spero, “Completing the Transatlantic Bargain: The United States and European Security,” *Current History* (March 2001): 129–144.

³ Lee Carter. “Canadians struggle with army's new role.” BBC News. 19 May 2006. Accessed on 6 June 2006 (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/4997678.stm>).

picture to how Canadians, Europeans, and Americans are trying to forge ahead on security challenges productively together, in places such as Afghanistan.

Although the policy memo began with the contention for how transatlantic partners, taking into account how “Iraqi lessons learned” might tackle Iran’s regional and global threats, there wasn’t an actual examination of this vital issue. By analyzing the fallout politically, economically, and militarily, to slightly greater extent, of the lessons hopefully learned from the US-British led Iraq invasion, we might better be able to grasp the consequences for Iran’s security challenges. Certainly, given the status of Iran’s regional and global security challenges, how the various international negotiation forums on possible resolution to a future nuclear Iran evolved, devolved, and reemerged during the past several years could strengthen Croci and Verdun’s arguments. Since the US support for the European three (E3)—Great Britain, France, and Germany—and the E3’s negotiations with Iran to denuclearize, as well as how the EU and U.S. viewed separate Russian-Iranian efforts, analysis could consider such means for approaching security challenges. Additionally, the diplomatic go-rounds regarding U.S. and European efforts toward Russia and China on Iran in the UN Security Council could enlighten readers about whether a potential new 21st century transatlantic relationship is either emerging, or not.

Finally, as importantly, when analyzing transatlantic security cooperation, especially in regional hotspots such as Afghanistan and Iraq, or toward Iran, we must bear in mind that such cooperation needs to account for even larger global security challenges. When we look at how challenges—and threats—to close allies such as environmental degradation, demographic explosions and mass unemployment, pandemics, or failed state instabilities, we need to take such “non-traditional” security challenges as the new realities.⁴ The Croci and Verdun memo begins to lay down a framework for examining these transatlantic determinants, as needed these days well beyond the traditional transatlantic “borders.” In all, we have some fine analysis presented in the Croci and Verdun memo, on which to build and, undoubtedly, per their citations, they should be publishing in the near future.

⁴ See, importantly, as well, Sean Kay, *Global Security in the Twenty-first Century: The Quest for Power and the Search for Peace* (Lanham, MD: Roman and Littlefield Press, 2006).