

Canadian NATO  
Parliamentary Association



Association parlementaire  
canadienne de l'OTAN

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation  
respecting its participation at  
the Visit of the Defence and Security Committee**

**Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association  
(NATO PA)**

**Washington, D.C. and Dayton, Ohio, USA  
February 1-5, 2012**

# Report

## INTRODUCTION

The Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association has the honour to present its report respecting its participation at the Visit of the Defence and Security Committee held in Washington, D.C. and Dayton Ohio, USA February 1-5, 2012.

Canada was represented by Senator Joseph A. Day, Mr. Tarik Brahmi, M.P. and Mr. Laurie Hawn, M.P.

Despite necessary strategic re-evaluations and budgetary constraints, the United States are not turning away from its commitment to European security, even if the transatlantic relationship must continue to evolve to keep pace with a changing global strategic context. This was the principal message delivered by US officials to members of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly during the annual visit of the Defence and Security Committee to the United States, held at the invitation of the House of Representatives.

The delegation, led by Senator Joseph Day (Canada), was composed of roughly 35 members of parliament from 19 of NATO's 28 member states. Members met with senior officials from the White House's National Security Staff and from the Departments of Defense and State. At the US Naval Academy, the delegation also held a seminar on countering the threat of piracy and in an event hosted by the Atlantic Council of the United States discussed the potential impact of the 2012 elections on US foreign and security policy with senior political analysts and advisors.

Finally, the Committee travelled to Dayton, Ohio, for a seminar on the Balkans and the unfinished legacy of the Dayton Accords, as well as extensive briefings at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base on the extremely impressive facility's various units and the many missions and functions they perform.

## STATE OF THE TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONSHIP

President Obama's ten trips to Europe in the last three years is a testament to the unique relationship between the United States and its European allies and partners, according to Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for European Affairs Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall. The President is deeply knowledgeable about and interested in European affairs, she told the delegation, and he has invested in the revitalisation of our bilateral relationships, in NATO, as well as in the relationship with the European Union; there are no issues of consequence that are not a subject of consultations with European allies and partners. The administration believes that a strong European Union is in the US interest.

In the Alliance context, the administration has focused on maintaining its rock-solid commitment to Article 5 and the operational capabilities that must undergird it, Sherwood-Randall explained, as well as prioritising NATO's role as a hub for a global network of partnerships that has demonstrated its worth through the International Security Assistance

Forces (ISAF) and Operation Unified Protector in Libya. Afghanistan, defence capabilities, and partnerships should be at the top of the agenda at the upcoming NATO Summit in Chicago, she stated, and were a logical progression from previous summits.

Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Tina S. Kaidanow echoed these themes, suggesting that the Chicago Summit would be an opportunity to 'put meat on the bones' of the Strategic Concept NATO agreed at the Lisbon Summit in November 2010. The Summit also has provided an opportunity to re-engage younger generations in understanding NATO's continued relevance in the 21st century, an important challenge that the White House is taking very seriously, according to Sherwood-Randall.

On Afghanistan, Allies would assess the on-going transition process and discuss the challenge of sustaining the Afghan National Security Forces in the medium and longer terms, according to Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Beth Jones. The Ambassador alluded to recent media reports regarding the possibility of talks with the Taliban, emphasising that history suggested that the conclusion of insurgencies nearly always required a political settlement. Ambassador Jones underlined that committing to a long term partnership with Afghanistan would provide exactly what that country needs – confidence, clarity, and specificity for the future, as well as a signal to the insurgents that Afghanistan would not be abandoned. She assured members that the Administration remained very seized of the need to ensure women's and minority rights in the long-term future of Afghanistan, as well as the development of a free media that could play a positive role in checking corruption.

## **UNDERSTANDING THE NEW US DEFENCE STRATEGY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR EUROPE**

Senior officials from the US Department of Defense briefed the delegation on the Defence Strategy released by the Obama administration in the weeks prior to the visit. Todd Harvey, Principal Director for Force Development, explained that the strategy review had begun under then-Secretary of Defense Robert Gates in response to emerging funding challenges, as well as an inflection point in the strategic environment, to include geopolitical events such as the Arab Spring, as well as the rise of India and China. The drawdowns of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan also made the moment opportune, Harvey stated.

Gates and his successor, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, insisted that the review be driven by strategy rather than budget; inclusive of civilian and military leaders across the defence establishment; closely monitored and guided by the President; and that everything was on the table. Among other considerations, the Secretaries were committed to keeping faith with the All Volunteer Force as regarded issues such as their care and benefits.

Among the principal findings of the review, Harvey suggested, were the following: that it was necessary to begin looking beyond Iraq and Afghanistan to other future missions; that the United States would not maintain a standing capability sized for doing protracted large-scale stability operations (allowing for a reduction in ground forces, a 'calculated risk' according to Harvey); that the traditional 'two-war' force-sizing construct would be re-

evaluated<sup>1</sup>; that the military should retain proficiency across all mission types, even if the capacity in some areas could be reduced; and that the greatest security challenges lay in the Asia-Pacific and Middle East regions, necessitating increased attention and resources.

While headlines had underlined this perceived 'pivot' to Asia by the United States, the Defense Department saw things differently, according to Julianne Smith, Principal Director for European/NATO Policy in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. She suggested that there was no 'zero sum game' by which increased attention by the United States to Asia and the Middle East would in some way diminish or belittle the relationship with Europe. She also reminded the delegation that the difficult Pentagon decisions affected not only bases and presence in Europe, but also significantly in the United States and elsewhere – Europe should therefore not feel 'targeted' by these decisions. Both Smith and Harvey underlined that the United States remained steadfastly committed to its sacrosanct Article 5 responsibilities, and would ensure a robust presence in Europe through greater use of innovative approaches involving rotation of forces and exercises. Harvey also emphasised that the capability to increase US presence in Europe rapidly, should it be required, would be maintained.

Indeed, in the latest defence budget, the United States were increasing its contributions to the NATO Response Force as a demonstration of its continued commitment to NATO capabilities, Smith told the delegation, emphasising that there was no stronger supporter than the United States of the 'smart defence' concept entailing multinational solutions to capabilities challenges. Further, the significant US commitment to its European Phased Adaptive Approach to missile defence was in no way altered by the latest budget, she said, which was one demonstration that recent US decisions were not simply 'takes' from Europe but also 'puts.'

Both speakers also underlined that Europe would remain for the United States the unique and natural partner in addressing security challenges beyond Europe; this capability for operating together in other regions would continue to drive much of what the United States would continue to do with and in Europe. Still, Smith warned delegates that given current resource constraints across the Alliance, NATO would have to look hard to determine whether it will have the capabilities and force structure in the next five to ten years to successfully conduct the kinds of operations it had recently carried out. She emphasised that NATO may no longer be able to over-rely on US enablers (such as its reconnaissance assets or refuelling tankers) going forward, and encouraged Allies to think creatively about how to fill capability gaps.

Delegates also discussed the concept of 'sequestration', a situation that requires an additional \$600 billion reduction of the US defence budget should Congress not find an alternative. Congressman Michael Turner, head of the US delegation to the Assembly, agreed with Pentagon officials and experts who suggested that such drastic cuts would hollow out the force and impact the Alliance in a fundamental manner. However, Turner underlined that few expect that these cuts would ultimately be enforced; while no one yet

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<sup>1</sup> "If we are engaged in a major combat operation in one theater, we will have the force necessary to confront an additional aggressor by denying its objectives or imposing unacceptable costs". Defense Budget Priorities and Choices, Department of Defense publication, January 2012, [http://www.defense.gov/news/Defense\\_Budget\\_Priorities.pdf](http://www.defense.gov/news/Defense_Budget_Priorities.pdf).

knew exactly how the cuts might be avoided, he told delegates, everyone was optimistic that a solution would be found.

## **THE ARMS CONTROL AND NON-PROLIFERATION AGENDA**

Ellen Tauscher, Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security and former member of the Defence and Security Committee of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, reviewed the Obama administration's arms control and non-proliferation accomplishments, including the New START Treaty, the Nuclear Security Summit, and successful diplomacy in the context of the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference. Much work was left to be done, Tauscher told the delegation, including pushing for US ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty; missile defence cooperation with Russia; and further progress towards a world free of nuclear weapons. Tauscher confirmed that the United States would support a decision by NATO to modify its declaratory policy on the use of nuclear weapons to bring it into line with the latest US Nuclear Posture Review. She also reminded delegates that the United States had clearly stated that its intent to reduce non-strategic nuclear weapons was based on reciprocal steps by the Russian Federation. Finally, she stated that Russian cooperation on missile defence was in both sides' interest, but that ultimately the United States would not forsake defence of its homeland and its allies. Tauscher underlined her continued commitment to making concrete the vision laid out by Presidents Obama and Medvedev in their agreement on missile defence cooperation.

## **COUNTERING PIRACY**

The delegation was welcomed to the US Naval Academy by Superintendent Vice Admiral Michael H. Miller. During a tour of the academy, delegates learned that the four-year institution conferred Bachelors' of Science degrees to its midshipmen; the overall student population of roughly 4,400 took on an intensive and rigorous curriculum intended to promote each aspiring naval officers' moral, mental and physical development. Once applicants had succeeded in the challenging admissions process, their education at the Academy was provided free of charge (and included a small stipend) at a cost of roughly \$250,000 per student per year; however, each graduate was committed to serve at least five years in the military (with an additional five years required of pilots).

The Academy also hosted a seminar for the delegation on the US Navy's experience in countering piracy, with presentations from several experts (including a group of junior officers) with direct experience in anti-piracy missions in the Gulf of Aden. Delegates reviewed the history of the most recent rise of the pirate threat due largely to poor governance in Somalia; the threat's progression throughout the previous decade; and the current situation. The threat had increased in several respects: its geographic scope, the number of incidents, and the average level of ransom paid to pirates. 2008 was described as a pivotal year, in which several high-profile incidents raised international attention, culminating in a UN Security Council Resolution (1816) which authorised international interventions to fight piracy off the Somalia coast.

Missions by the EU and NATO were joined by the US led Combined-Joint Task Force 151 in January 2009; 2009 also saw the establishment of an Internationally Recognized Transit

Corridor (IRTC) to better coordinate protection of vessels. Shipping companies reluctantly began to employ private security guards on vessels, which, while having proved effective in protecting ships, nevertheless raise important questions about jurisdiction and rules of engagement, the Committee learned.

Delegates learned that at any one time, roughly a dozen or so ships were being held, as well as hundreds of individuals; the average ransom has risen from \$80,000 in 2005 to \$3-5 million. Experts suggested that an effective fight against piracy would require recognition of the scale of the problem; sustaining interest in and resources towards addressing it; clearly identifying which actors are responsible for addressing various elements of the problem; and taking appropriate measures, including finding judicial frameworks in which to prosecute and incarcerate offenders. Various potential strategies were explored during the seminar, including increased attention to targeting leaders behind the piracy epidemic, including its financiers; finding ways to encourage alternative legitimate economic opportunities, including safe fishing; and deploying military means more tailored to the needs of the mission in order to maximize their efficiency.

## **US ELECTIONS AND FOREIGN POLICY**

The Committee was hosted by the Atlantic Council of the United States for a roundtable discussion on the implications of the 2012 Elections on US Foreign and Security Policy, moderated by the Council's Executive Vice President, Damon Wilson. Analysts from both sides of the aisle agreed that Mitt Romney appeared to be the likely Republican nominee, and that debated whether the bruising Republican primary would benefit or hurt Romney in the general election. The general election was likely to turn on the state of the economy, the analysts agreed. However, they debated whether foreign policy would also play a significant role, and whether Republican critiques of the Obama Administration's policies as moving towards a "European" model were merited. Elections for the US Senate were described as 'hard ground' for the Democrats, given that Party's relatively large number of seats in play; elections in the House of Representatives would only be somewhat less challenging for Democrats. Regardless, whatever inputs ultimately determined them, the analysts concurred that the elections (especially the general and Senate elections) would have profound implications for US foreign policy going forward.

## **SIGHT VISIT: WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE AND DAYTON, OHIO**

Following their political dialogue in Washington, the Committee travelled to Dayton, Ohio, for a programme centred on a visit to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, one of the US Air Force's largest installations. The site of the world's first operational airfield, the Base is now home to a highly specialised workforce of over 27,000 military, civilian and contractor employees. It is the most diverse and organisationally complex base in the US Air Force, with units responsible for missions such as acquisition and logistics management, research and development, advanced education, heavy airlift flight operations, intelligence, and a vast array of other activities.

The Committee received extensive briefings on a wide variety of units performing complex tasks at Wright-Patterson, including the Air Force Materiel Command; the Foreign Military Sales mission of the Air Force Security Assistance Center; the Aeronautical Systems

Center; and the National Air and Space Intelligence Center. Delegates also had the opportunity to closely inspect advanced research products in areas such Micro Air Vehicles, and interact with combat-medic trainers at the School of Aerospace medicine.

During their time in Dayton, delegates also participated in a panel discussion on the legacy of the Dayton Accords organised by the German Marshall Fund. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Phil Reeker reviewed the state of the process of Euro-Atlantic integration across the Western Balkans, and emphasised that US leaders remained seized of the need to continue to work towards to the goal of a Europe whole, free and at peace. Vice-President of the German Marshall Fund Ivan Vejvoda underlined the importance of sustained US and EU joint effort in what he called the 'inner courtyard' of Europe to complete its transition towards inclusion in European structures and lasting geopolitical stability and prosperity; he also suggested the recent agreement to form a government in Bosnia-Herzegovina was a sign that progress was possible there, even if it will naturally be slowed by the complexity of its institutions.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant, M.P., Chair  
Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association  
(NATO PA)

## Travel Costs

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	Visit of the Defence and Security Committee
<b>DESTINATION</b>	Washington, D.C. and Dayton, Ohio, USA
<b>DATES</b>	February 1-5, 2012
<b>DELEGATION</b>	
SENATE	Senator Joseph A. Day
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. Tarik Brahmi, M.P. Mr. Laurie Hawn, M.P.
STAFF	
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	<b>\$2,186.24</b>
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	<b>\$2,896.52</b>
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	<b>\$654.10</b>
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES</b>	<b>\$201.04</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$5,937.90</b>