

Canadian NATO  
Parliamentary Association



Association parlementaire  
canadienne de l'OTAN

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation  
to the Visit to the United States by the Defence and Security  
Committee**

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

**United States of America  
January 26 – 30, 2009**

# Report

The Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association has the honour to present its report on the Visit to the United States by the Defence and Security Committee, held January 26-30, 2009. The Canadian delegation was represented by Senator Joseph Day.

## OVERVIEW

As of late January, with the transition to the Obama Administration only in its earliest stages, definitive statements on major lines of the new government's policy were impossible, outside of several broad themes including increased attention to Afghanistan and Pakistan, a greater multilateral and cooperative diplomatic engagement, and an intent to improve relations with Russia.

In addition, a broad bipartisan consensus in the United States regarding the overall value of pursuing missile defences continues to hold, even if the Obama Administration has not as yet expressed the same enthusiasm for these programs as its predecessor. The future of the proposed deployments of system components in the Czech Republic and Poland was very much undecided.

Finally, missile defence technology had matured significantly during the Bush Administration, with operational interceptors in California and Alaska as well as shorter-range systems tied together with deployed sensors and satellites through a complex command and control architecture intended to be interoperable with any future NATO capabilities in this area. However, ongoing testing of long-range ground-based interceptor systems had not yet demonstrated their full effectiveness in real-world conditions.

These were the principal conclusions that the NATO Parliamentary Assembly's Defence and Security Committee brought back from their annual visit to the United States in January of 2009. The delegation, composed of 33 members of parliament from 17 NATO member states and led by Committee Chairman Julio Miranda Calha, visited Washington for discussions with the 111th Congress, senior career executive branch officials, and independent experts at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).

In addition, the delegation visited the headquarters of the Missile Defence Agency (MDA) and conducted site visits of the Missile Defence Integrated Operations Center at Schriever Air Force Base in Colorado and the missile defence interceptors based at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California.

## **I. TRANSITION**

The Committee's visit began on the seventh day of the Obama Administration. With very few senior members of the new foreign policy team in place, and with the overwhelming focus on the economic crisis, the transition was very much unfinished, and little could definitively be said on the policies of the new administration.

That said, President Obama himself has made clear that Afghanistan will be a major focus of his administration, and it was widely expected that other Allies would be asked to 'match' the new American commitments, perhaps at the April NATO Summit.

A renewed focus on alliances and multilateralism was also evident in the rhetoric of the incoming foreign policy team including Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Secretary of Defence Robert Gates, as well as a desire for a better relationship with Russia and progress on issues such as the expiring START Treaty.

## **II. MISSILE DEFENCE**

The U.S. has been spending money on missile defence programs continuously since the 1950s, regardless of which party controlled the White House or Congress, an expert from the Congressional Research Service reminded the delegation. The evidence demonstrated a fair degree of consensus between the executive and legislative branches on funding these efforts, particularly over the last 10 to 15 years.

An important distinction was made between on the one hand the shorter-range missile defence systems such as Aegis, Patriot, and THAAD, which had been extensively and successfully tested and fielded in cooperation with U.S. partners around the world, and on the other hand long-range defensive systems such as the ground-based interceptors deployed in California and Alaska and proposed for Poland, which had a spottier record of testing and performance to date.

The overall consensus on the potential utility of missile defence writ large was in large part based on the general bipartisan agreement on the potential threat from Iran, according to experts. Missile Defence Agency Director Lt Gen Patrick O'Reilly emphasized that his organization had no mandate or funding to pursue defences against Chinese or Russian capabilities.

Congresswoman Ellen Tauscher affirmed that the evolution of Iranian ballistic missile programs had become a present threat to NATO Allies, and called for close cooperation between the US and its Allies to counter this threat from short and medium-range missiles. Specifically, the proposed NATO point-defence system should evolve beyond the protection of potentially deployed forces to a system that could protect NATO's southern flank as a whole.

Last year, Congress funded the Bush Administration's requests on long-range missile defence, with several conditions: that the Czech and Polish parliaments had to ratify relevant agreements with the US; and that the missile defence interceptors must be certified as operationally effective before their deployment.

Concerns about the characterization of the outcome of recent tests of the ground-based long range interceptors troubled some observers of the program. Military officials,

however, assured the delegation that the testing program was far from complete and that the technology was continually improving through increasingly more challenging operational testing conditions. This was especially the case for the two-stage interceptor planned for use in the proposed European interceptor site.

Experts believed that the Obama Administration is likely to take a more deliberate approach on missile defence deployment, including renewed stringency in testing and acquisition rules, and consideration of the defences' utility within the overall context of US strategic concerns, including the relationship with Russia. Of course, the need for the defences also largely depends on the perception of threat from Iran; it was simply too early to tell how the Obama Administration assessed Iran's actions and intent.

### **III. AFGHANISTAN**

Defence Department officials acknowledged that 2008 had been a difficult year in Afghanistan, with violent attacks increasing by 40%, and suggest that 2009 may well see the same level of violence or higher. While, until recently, efforts had centred on developing national-level capacity and capabilities, a shift was underway towards greater focus on the provincial and district levels. The voter registration process in advance of the Presidential elections scheduled for August had gone very well, with nearly no insurgent violence against the process itself and millions of Afghans registered.

The State Department also acknowledged continued difficulties in Afghanistan, but also underlined important elements of progress, including the most effective line-up of Governors in the country in years; the thousands of kilometres of roads built by the international community and the economic activity that they allowed; and improvements in the previously problematic police training programs. In addition, poppy production was predicted to drop another 30% in 2009, an encouraging sign that programs to reduce this problem were headed in the right direction.

Independent analyst Anthony Cordesman foresaw a near doubling of U.S. resources in Afghanistan in 2009, based on the likely outcomes of several ongoing policy reviews. He suggested that most independent assessments of progress were grim and indicated that losing the war remained a real possibility. The goals set out in the Afghan Compact, he argued, were simply unrealistic and unachievable. However, with more effective organization, he argued success (albeit carefully defined) was still possible, through an increase in the mix of US and NATO forces in the field, ramped up development of Afghan security forces, and incentivization of the regions of Pakistan feeding the insurgency.

### **IV. RUSSIA**

Officials suggested that 2008 had been a very difficult year in relations with Russia, and underlined the continued strains caused by Russian actions in Georgia and violations of the cease-fire agreement, including the possible establishment of a Russian military base in Abkhazia. However, better relations were a distinct possibility given continued common strategic interests.

Andrew Kuchins of CSIS argued that Russia, particularly in the current economic context, cannot afford a neo-imperial policy and was still struggling with a post-colonial paradigm. He suggested that the constraints placed on Moscow by massive financial difficulties, coupled with a new approach from Washington, could lead to better relations. However, his cautious optimism was tempered by concerns about potential social unrest in Russia caused by the economic crisis, and the continued demonization of the U.S. by Russian political leaders.

## **V. CYBER-SECURITY**

Increasing dependence on information networks designed to be open and offering anonymity is a potential threat to the critical assets of any country today, CSIS Technology Policy Program Director Jim Lewis told the delegation. The nature of the system gives the advantage to the attacker rather than the defenders. The market had failed to secure the system and active government policies were required to defend a nation's cyberspace, just as a nation's borders needed a proper defence.

The most dangerous threats, according to Lewis, were from foreign intelligence services, particularly those of China and Russia; they are well resourced and equipped and have demonstrated their capabilities through several successful attacks. A second threatening group, cyber-criminals, have reached the level of sophistication of a mid-level state attacker, and when coupled with a thriving black market where capabilities can be rented by the hour, represent a major threat to governments.

Beyond the critical issue of the penetration of a government's classified networks, the potentially damaging effects of cyber-attacks are on three levels: at the political level, where they can cause a loss of confidence in a national government's ability to respond to crisis; in economic terms, where lost intellectual property through espionage activities can be extremely damaging; and finally through the disruption of physical services such as an electrical grid.

Lewis suggested proper public messaging by governments (deterrence for enemies, reassurance for domestic publics), as well as increased and clear legal penalties for attackers. Equally important was to work on the problem of attributing attacks to their source, as well as increased multilateral international cooperation among like-minded states to ensure rapid and effective cooperation during attacks and the development of norms and standards on cyber-security.

Other issues the delegation discussed with interlocutors included the evolution of American policy in Iraq; larger Middle East issues including the conflict in Gaza and its implications and the overall diplomatic approach towards Iran; U.S. non-proliferation policy; prospective appointments of individuals to key U.S. policy posts; and the impact of the financial crisis on various strategic concerns.

The Defence and Security Committee's meetings included:

Parliamentary Dialogue

Meeting on Transatlantic relations with the U.S. Delegation to the NATO PA, led by NATO PA President **John Tanner**

Meeting on Congressional views on missile defence issues led by Rep. **Ellen Tauscher**, Chairwoman of the NATO PA Sub-Committee on Future Security and Defence Capabilities and Chair of the U.S. Strategic Forces Sub-Committee of the House Committee on Armed Services

U.S. Department of Defence Officials

**Peter F. Verga**, Acting Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defence for Policy

**Mary Burce Warlick**, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence for European and NATO Policy

**Bobby J Wilkes**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence for Central Asia

**Christopher C. Straub**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence (Middle East) designate

**Dr. Peppino A. Debiaso**, Director, Office of Missile Defence Policy

U.S. Department of State Officials

**William J. Burns**, Under Secretary for Political Affairs

**Marcie Ries**, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs

**Pat Moon**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Affairs

**Ian Kelly**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Military Site Visits

Missile Defence Agency Headquarters- Lt Gen Patrick O'Reilly, Director

Missile Defence Integrated Operations Center (MDIOC), Schriever Air Force Base

United States Air Force Academy (USAFA)

**Vandenberg Air Force Base**, California: visit of the Ground Based Interceptor and related facilities

Congressional Research Service (CRS)

**Carl Ek**, Specialist in European Affairs in the Europe and Americas Section

**Steve Hildreth**, Specialist in Missile Defence Policy for the Defence Policy and Arms Control Section

**Nate Lucas**, Research Manager for the Defence Policy and Arms Control Section

**Vince Morelli**, Research Manager for the Europe and the Americas Section

Center for Strategic and International Studies

**Julianne Smith**, Director, Europe Program

**Anthony Cordesman**, Arleigh A. Burke Chair in Strategy

**Andrew Kuchins, Director**, Russia Program

**Jim Lewis**, Director, Technology Policy Program

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Leon Benoit, M.P.  
Chair

Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)

## Travel Costs

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	Meeting / Visit Name
<b>DESTINATION</b>	City, Country
<b>DATES</b>	Start date to end date, year
<b>DELEGATION</b>	
SENATE	Names of Senators
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Names of Members
STAFF	Names of Staff
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	\$
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	\$
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	\$
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	\$
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	\$
<b>MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES</b>	\$
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$