



## **Atlantic Community: collective defence to co-operative security**

*by Tim Creery*

Canadian foreign policy begins with the United States and tries not to end there. The most enduring of the attempts to diversify Canada's foreign relations, famously interpreted by John Bartlet Brebner as the Atlantic Triangle, is the subject of David G. Haglund's *The North Atlantic Triangle Revisited: Canadian Grand Strategy at Century's End* (Irwin Publishing, Toronto, 2000).

Professor Haglund, who is director of the Centre for International Relations at Queen's University, goes back to the days when Canada's external relations were still supervised by Great Britain. He writes that "for nearly a century after Confederation, Ottawa's relationship with London, on the one hand, and Washington, on the other, was tantamount to its relationship with the world". But in the past half century Canada's relations have become global. Professor Haglund argues that too much importance has been accorded new institutional relationships with Latin America and Asia at the expense of the old one with Europe. He regrets "the marginalization of Europe in Canadian consciousness".

The "grand strategy" of his sub-title refers to the combination of defence policy and broader foreign policy to obtain objectives in international relations. In the North Atlantic Triangle, revisited as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, collective defence was its almost exclusive concern during the forty-year rivalry with the Soviet Union in the Cold War, but now the economic, social and humanitarian aspects of foreign policy, which Canada sought to embed in Article 2 of the treaty, have come to the fore. This represents a movement toward the "realist liberalism" of Lester B. Pearson: the North Atlantic Community has moved from collective defence to the broader -- and fuzzier -- concept of "co-operative security", which Haglund sees as the keystone of Canada's grand strategy.

Professor Haglund's case might be better made if he took the geometric idiom off the metaphorical life support he offers it here. For one thing, the side of the triangle represented by Britain has had to be enlarged to include Western Europe after World War II. Then we must remember the growing explicitness of Canada's partnership with the dominating United States in various arrangements, starting with, say, the disarmament of the Great Lakes after the War of 1812 and culminating in the Mulroney trade deal. Canada can hardly be considered a distinct side of a triangle whose other two sides are the U.S. and Europe.

In any case, Haglund notes the limitations Canada has run up against in trying to use Europe as a counterweight to continentalism. On Diefenbaker's idea of trade diversion to Europe in order to reduce dependence on the United States, he quotes Robert Bothwell's observation that this was "an attempt to secure the triumph of politics over geography". Similarly, the Trudeau-Sharp policy of the Third Option was doomed as a similar effort to redirect a proportion of Canadian economic activity away from the U.S. and toward other parts of the world, particularly Western Europe.

Nevertheless in recent years Europe has accounted for an increasing percentage of Canadian investment abroad, Haglund observes, and co-operation with Europe through NATO and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe has appealed to Canada as an important means of keeping a large and like-minded area of the world safe for peace. The Atlantic Community and Atlanticism have come to exemplify the fact that no two democratic nations have ever gone to war with one another, and to embody strategies to make such peaceful conditions persist. NATO policies are designed to support human rights, the rule of law, and democratic government. NATO has used force to try to make these elements of co-operative security prevail in the Balkans. Within the Atlantic Community, balance of power has become obsolete as a means of keeping the peace.

"Co-operative security's defining characteristics," Haglund writes, "can be considered to be: its inclusiveness; its reliance upon an expanded understanding of security, which embraces such currently popular orientations as 'peacebuilding', and even 'human security'; its preference for gradual over rapid institutionalization; and, directly flowing from the last point, its emphasis upon the value of building upon and transforming existing institutions inherited from the balance-of-power context."

Atlanticism has become a model for post-Westphalian, or post-realpolitik, or postmodern - in any case, post-Kissinger, I guess - interstate relations. Haglund's book makes the point that Atlanticism continues to be an important element of a broader Canadian world vision than one obsessed by relations with the United States.