



Université du Québec
**École nationale
d'administration
publique**

Canadian Foreign Policy and the War in Iraq: Sailing Down a Long Quiet River?

Nelson Michaud, Ph.D.
École nationale d'administration publique

Paper presented at the
2006 Canadian Political science Association Annual Conference
June 1-3, 2006
York University
Toronto, ON

This paper is a preliminary version of a larger research project. Please do not cite or quote without the author's permission. The author wishes to thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for their financial support of this research project. He also wishes to thank Stéphane Tremblay for his research assistance and valuable comments and Véronique Dumesnil for her support in the preparation of this paper.

Canadian Foreign Policy and the War in Iraq: Sailing Down a Long, Quiet River?

Nelson Michaud, Ph.D.

Associate Professor

École nationale d'administration publique

The events of September 11, 2001 will be present in our collective memory for a long time. In the United States, a President who, up until then, did not seem to consider foreign policy issues to be a field where to leave his imprint, had to adopt a radically different position. Nations of the world rallied behind the President's call: "Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists". Through the regulation of multilateral institutions, armed forces from several countries, including peace-seeking Canada, shouldered their share of the burden in this "war against terrorism", as everybody kept its breath, waiting for new developments. However, as the elusive bin Laden is still hiding somewhere in the caves of Afghanistan, generals in the Pentagon, politicians on the Hill, and media people were ready for more action. To answer this "need", another chase was launched. After the presentation of evidence, which seems today less reliable than most thought when Secretary of State Colin Powell produced it at the UN Security Council, the United States embarked upon a new hunt; the target was the leader of one of the "Axis of Evil" countries: Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein.

This time, the United States did not wait for the explicit approval of the UN or of NATO. They took the lead having in mind this old say: *qui m'aime me suive!* The level of response was not the same. Canada, for one, insisted that without a Security Council resolution, the country was not to participate in this new war. At the same time however, Canada had and kept surveillance vessels in the Persian Gulf. Moreover, several military personnel stayed in American and British units to which an exchange agreement had sent them before the war started: they were under foreign command, but had to obey the orders received from Ottawa, which stipulated that they were not to be involved in combat situations. To say the least, the image projected regarding Canada's participation to the Iraq War was blurred.

At home, hundreds of thousands of people marched down the streets of major Canadian cities to express their rejection of any Canadian involvement, sending the Chrétien government a clear signal. Despite these demonstrations, the answer people heard was not clearer: on the one hand, the government spokespersons repeatedly said that there would be no involvement and the Opposition leaders and the media, both pro and anti-war, were as constant in their accusations of a lack of leadership and of an ambiguous position that needed to be better defined¹: was Canada taking an autonomous stance or was it simply avoiding the action in the field, but nevertheless cheerleading behind the US bench? Was Canadian foreign policy taking a new turn or was it "business as usual", sailing down a long quiet river?

The opponents to the government had some grounds on which to build credible questioning. With the possible exception of the Bennett government who had its hand full dealing with the Great Depression at home, the Chrétien government is probably the worst in Canadian history in terms of foreign policy performance. Not only did it rely for its whole 10 year tenure on an immediate post-cold war policy framework, not even considering the new context ushered in by the events of 2001, but the Prime Minister himself demonstrated time and again his lack of sensitivity, if not his minimal interest, in foreign policy issues. The gaffes made during a Middle East tour are sorely memorable, the damaging of Canada's

relationship with its powerful southern neighbour are well documented, and the lack of resources were a real embarrassment for a G8-NATO-UN believing country: Canada's diplomacy experienced severe morale problems, political considerations prevailed over the obvious need for new military equipment and human resources, and Canada's ODA slid to one third of Mike Pearson's UN objective of 0.7% of the GNP.

Many analysts agreed: Canada was no more "big enough to be heard" (Hampson and Molot 1996) or "a big league player" (Hampson, Hart and Rudner 1999); they referred to Canada as a "fading power" (Hillmer and Molot 2002), barely "coping with the American colossus" (Carment, Hampson and Hillmer 2003). At the end of the Chrétien era, books and analyses were coming from all sides: an Ottawa journalist (Cohen 2003), as well as Harvard (Ignatieff 2003) and Oxford (Welsh 2004) academics were celebrities for a while, simply by asking a question everybody had in mind: where is Canada going?

The question has been explored from many perspectives: historical, political, economical, and even global. Studies have gathered evidence in all foreign policy domains. The main characteristics these research and analyses have in common, is that they come from a wide angle, remain at a macro level and try to demonstrate or question general trends. However, one aspect that has not retained much attention is the message the government has used to advocate its stance. This is a gap this research aims at filling.

In doing so, this research will explore the micro level, that is, the level at which a government policy is applied to a specific case. This should provide a better understanding of the policymaking process compared to what the macro level offers. Looking at general trends offers an overall picture that is useful to characterize, generally speaking, a government's stance. However, such a reading could lead to over generalization that an analysis at the micro/decisional level will help to avoid.

Indeed, it is important to consider the micro level for other reasons. First, it is where we find the enunciation of a justification for a given policy. This justification is often the basis on which the policy rests. And for one who wishes to understand the rationale of a policy and to find the clues that lead to a clearer reading of the decision making process, it is necessary to be familiar with the elements that were kept for diffusion and distinguish them from those that were left out. Second, micro-level analysis complements the macro level study, which forces us to get away from the heart of the policy statement; as a consequence, it is easy to build "common knowledge" from one study to the other, a "knowledge" that could tend to get away from the actual policy stance.

The Canadian policy choices regarding the war in Iraq can serve as a good example: media reports and some studies will present the government's position as ill-defined, as I mentioned earlier; however, as we will see, the answers given by all members of the Chrétien Cabinet in the House of Commons followed a tightly written script. The micro level provides a more in-depth analysis and reveals important nuances. Finally, since the micro level prioritizes the words over action, it brings a more widely shared reading of a policy stance: actions must be interpreted within a frame that might bring cultural biases while the spoken word heard by all constitutes what constructivists define as the speech act, that is, the construction of a political reality through the words.

As I have mentioned, the Iraq war provides an interesting field where to launch this larger project that will compare, at term, three major international crises to which Canada responded from different perspectives: the first Gulf War (participation under a Conservative government), the war against terrorism (participation under a Liberal government), and the Iraq War (non participation under a Liberal government). In all these instances, a key question was asked to politicians and through the media: does Canada's foreign policy reflect an autonomous stance or is Canada having the foreign policy of its geography, being engulfed in

the international actions of its powerful neighbour? This is the research question this paper will answer.

The first part of this answer will help us understand the importance of the question I raise. Throughout its history, Canada had to answer calls from abroad and in cases of conflict overseas and, as a consequence, a high level of sensitivity advocating Canada's autonomy has developed. A quick reference to history will allow a better understanding of a context that remained remarkably stable over the years: the Canadian sensitivity showed towards American military initiatives is not as much a matter of anti-Americanism than it is a strong, deeply rooted will to affirm Canada's autonomy in its foreign policymaking.

Since the analysis of the micro level is not that often performed, it is important to clearly set the parameters with which the study will be conducted. This information will form the second part of the paper. A particular attention will be paid here to the definition of our variables and indicators in view of getting a better reading of the results this paper will put forward and discuss in the following sections. Finally, the conclusion will offer elements on which future research could be conducted.

Lessons from History

Canada's need to express itself as an autonomous actor on the world scene is almost as old as Canada itself. In fact, despite structural stumbling blocks, almost all Canadian Prime Ministers from John A. Macdonald on have tried to affirm, in a way or another, Canada's will to act as a self-governing country in matters of foreign relations and foreign policy (Michaud 2006). This was true when the Union Jack floated over the world, and it is still the case under the Star Spangled Banner.

This paper is not the place to go into the details of this historical evolution. However, it is possible to outline some conclusions from Canada's foreign relations evolution. First, Canada has forged its international stature not as much from a definite plan as it did seizing opportunities as they showed up, being it Robert Borden's participation to the Imperial War Cabinet meetings, or Mackenzie King's initiatives to affirm Canada's autonomous actions. In fact, what made Pearsonian internationalism such a successful approach is more its timing than its content. The same content in a different context would not have produced the same level of success and contemporary policymakers are wrong when then look at this "Golden Age" for solutions to contemporary challenges. This first conclusion make us consider that when we will look at our corpus, we will need tools that will allow a measure of long term trends as well as actual challenges Canada faces.

The second element that comes to mind is the constant struggle Canada had to respond to, affirming itself from pressures originating first from Great Britain during the Imperial Wars era, and then from the United States during the Cold War. The route Canada chose was to affirm its autonomy within the framework offered by international institutions; it then tries to influence the international context from within these institutions, used as leverage in defence of Canada's own interests. Despite this apparent clearly identified behaviour, a question remains: how much autonomy does Canada have in the conduct of its foreign policy ? This is a long lasting debate that still needs some light and this contribution therefore aims at filling part of this gap.

Methodological Considerations

As a matter of fact, even if it still needs a renewed answer, the question has nothing new. In 1968, Stephen Clarkson was asking if there was "an independent foreign policy for Canada" (Clarkson 1968). The collection of essays he then presented are summed up in two opposite approaches ("quiet" vs "independent") that, with some contextual adjustments, are

still very much present today in their essence. This gives a good idea that, almost 40 years later, the debate has not yet been lead to a definite answer.

In view of trying to better define this much needed answer, there is an element of importance from a methodological point of view, that the previous discussion has put into light: it is the need to count on a tool that will measure long term trends and not only contextual stances. The first such instrument that comes to mind is the role values play in the policy making process. Some researchers refer to them as a leader's core beliefs and they have inspired their share of research, from the behavioralist studies of the 1970s up until today. They are no doubt a key element behind the motivations that bring a policy forward. Their use has gathered the attention of a good body of research and, in Canada, their role in foreign policy has been at the heart of key debates over the recent years.

This started with the 1995 policy, *Canada in the World*, that had as its "third pillar", the "projection of Canadian values and cultures" (Government of Canada 1995). When time came to review the policy, the place values should take was at the center of many discussions and, according to some witnesses, this question was the cause of some of the delays in the publication of the policy. Although most recognized the importance of values in the shaping of the policy, it was also reasoned that the projection of Canadian values was somehow an imperialistic approach that did not match... Canadian foreign policy values. Nevertheless, the International Policy Statement issued by the Martin government in April 2005, did not hide the concept and the prime minister even acknowledged, in his foreword, that one of the objectives of the review is to ask "how best to project Canadian values and interests through the world" (Government of Canada 2005:3). However, it is the bi-level, hierarchised approach coined in the dual phrase "to protect and to promote our values" that is more often used throughout the document, the protection being at the fore and the projection ranking at a second tier in importance.

Among the analysts that played some role in the upcoming of the policy, Jennifer Welsh is probably the one who more bluntly translated the need to keep values role in Canadian foreign policymaking, considering them at the heart of Canada's place in the world. She stated: "As tempting as the interests-before-values mantra is, we cannot abandon a values-based agenda. We live in a democratic society, where the values and principles we stand for must form a critical part of our activities in the international arena. Such values help to forge cohesion across a huge territorial mass and diverse population, and make collective action possible." (2004:203) And she added: "Values we project globally help to define who we are. Foreign policy is partly an exercise in forging national identity. Rather than trying to deny or hide this fact, we should recognize this as part and parcel of our contemporary world". (2004: 204).

A recent research (Michaud 2005) has demonstrated that it was erroneous to consider values in terms of Canadian foreign policy as monolithic, for he concludes that different sources will put different values forward. Some are carried by the Ottawa-based foreign policy apparatus and they comprise concepts such as the rule of law, multilateralism, peacekeeping, economy (before security), and international aid. Others, as Steve Lee (2002) has pointed out, come from the polity; they include respect for the environment, democracy and democratization, social equity, human rights and tolerance, civil society involvement. Largely, it can be said that together, these two groups of values define what is Canadian in Canada's foreign policy.

This survey brings another element to the fore. Couldn't we postulate that if these values indeed represent the Canadian distinctiveness, and if an autonomous foreign policy reflects distinctive components, then the presence of these values will indicate that we are facing an autonomous foreign policy? This is in fact the reasoning that I will use to analyse the data I have gathered. However, a policy is rarely influenced by only one factor and some

factors could have a dual influence, both domestic and external, as I have said about the impact of multilateralism: the belief Canada expresses towards institutionalism is no doubt a domestic/political motivation, but in turns it calls from abroad for action that Canada cannot really escape from. This means that this general postulate needs some refinement and the higher level of sophistication we are looking for will be reached through the formulation of hypotheses that this study will test.

In view of answering our research question – is Canada taking an autonomous stance regarding participation to the war in Iraq or is it simply avoiding the action on the field, but nevertheless cheerleading behind the US bench? – four hypotheses will be examined. The first one is of a general nature. Based on the past practice of Canadian governments to advocate autonomy, as we have seen, it can be expected that

H1: in justifying its policy choices, the Chrétien government will refer more often to domestic factors than it will to factors of foreign origins.

It is expected that, should an autonomous policy prevail, the hypothesis will be validated. The validity of this hypothesis will offer a first indication about the level of autonomy in which the government frames its policy. It is however far from being enough to provide an indisputable answer to our question. We need to go further.

To do so, we will need to have a better impact analysis of the Canadian values. We have seen that since the coming of the new empire, multilateralism has been brought as a counterweight to US influence in Canadian foreign policymaking. Should Canadian foreign policy towards Iraq be autonomous,

H2: in justifying its policy choices, the Chrétien government will make abundant use of multilateralism as a domestic value.

The level of specification of this hypothesis will require our research design to take into account and differentiate both impacts (domestic and from abroad) multilateralism can bring. Recent research conducted in the context of the war in Iraq and looking at other countries has cast some clouds of pragmatism over Keating's enthusiasm towards multilateralism (Morin, Macleod and Malfatto 2005: 31). Should their reading prevail in Canada, this hypothesis would be infirmed.

The third aspect that might help offering us a better understanding of the level of autonomy Canada displays in its foreign policy stances is a comparison between self-professed reliance on Canadian heritage, symbols, and values and the acknowledgement of a need to answer the call from an allied. As a consequence

H3: in justifying its policy choices, the Chrétien government will use references to Canadian identity, rather than acknowledge bilateral obligations.

Taking into consideration economic as well as geo-strategic arguments, critics of the government position have clearly alluded to the overwhelming importance of the Canada-US bilateral relationship. Should they be right, the hypothesis would be infirmed.

The last aspect that can allow a better reading of the nature of Canada's stance relates to the actors involved in the defence of the government's position. It offers a level of nuance rather than raw evidence. To appreciate it, we must rely on the common practice of governments who wish to clearly signal their domestic audience as well as their counterparts abroad: they then generally ask a higher level actor to voice the State's position. A stronger signal can be motivated, among many factors, by the personal interest/involvement the head of government wishes to take – something that, as mentioned earlier, would be surprising in Mr. Chrétien's case –, by the need to affirm the governing party's unity behind the issue – which was never questioned in the case we are analysing here – or by the necessity to clearly establish a country's self-governance against real or perceived encroachments from abroad. In

itself, this indication cannot be translated into a more or a less autonomous foreign policy. However, it could reveal the presence of higher pressures coming from abroad.

Due to the level of priority the Prime minister seemed to give to most foreign policy issues and due to the unity the government demonstrated on this question,

H4: it can be expected that Jean Chrétien will leave ample room to his ministers to answer questions related to Canada's response to the Iraq war.

A dominant involvement of the Prime Minister would signal that the questions needed to be answered at the higher echelon of the government to signal an answer against real or perceived challenges to Canada's foreign policy autonomy. Considering the role Prime Ministers have played in the making of Canadian foreign policy, this hypothesis should also be infirmed.

It could have been possible to add a temporal hypothesis, that is, a policy stance defined from the evolution of the general context would be more autonomous than a policy reacting to the sole American actions. However, as we will see, the corpus on which this study is based originates from the opposition and not the government. This has the advantage of looking at answers the government did not orchestrate on purpose of reaching a momentum of some sort, which allows us to analyze a message that bears some level of spontaneity². However, the downside to this is that it prevents the use of the chronological measure that could have brought an interesting complementary reading³. This being said and as we will see in the results section of this paper, references to time are not totally excluded for they could bring some interesting complementary information, as long as they relate to dimensions on which the governments keeps the control.

To test the hypotheses I have retained, I rely on policy justifications brought forward by government spokespersons. The corpus I will use comprises statements made during question period in the House of Commons. In the Canadian parliamentary system, question period allows the Opposition to ask the government to shed light on its policy choices and behaviour. Contrary to the Westminster practice where questions are written and sent in advance to ministers who are given specific days when they are under the limelight, the Canadian custom is that questions are fired at the government without notice; this gives a definite edge to the opposition and forces the government to always be ready to provide answers. It therefore constitutes a better sample of government justifications given "on the spot", than rehashed speeches and press releases would do. The statements made during question period nonetheless provide elements of the message the government wishes to carry for question period is the moment of the parliamentary order of the day when journalists pay a special attention to the work of the House. This means that, through media reports, what is said during question period reaches a larger audience, being it Canadians or foreign observers around the world.

This being established, we would still be left with a humongous corpus. It is therefore necessary to refine our guidelines to better define what will constitute the material to be analyzed. The first boundaries to establish are temporal. The American military still being present in Iraq, we need to limit the field of investigation to a more concise period of time that reflects the war period. I have chosen to start with the first indications given by the American President of a military action on the Iraqi territory. This was during his State of the Union Address of January 29, 2002, when he came with his famous "Axis of evil" reference, which ignited the action the United States were to embark upon. North Korea and Iran were given one sentence each, but it was Iraq that gathered most of the President's attention. He stated: "Iraq continues to flaunt its hostility toward America and to support terror. The Iraqi regime has plotted to develop anthrax, and nerve gas, and nuclear weapons for over a decade. This is a regime that has already used poison gas to murder thousands of its own citizens – leaving

the bodies of mothers huddled over their dead children. This is a regime that agreed to international inspections – then kicked out the inspectors. This is a regime that has something to hide from the civilized world.” (White House 2002). The first echo these remarks got in the Canadian Parliament was heard on February 18. This will constitute our lower temporal limit. The upper limit has been fixed on May 1st 2003, when President Bush declared that the war was over. This speech act in itself turned a page as the “stabilization/reconstruction/democratization” phase started. The rhetoric used in this new context was necessarily different, so I did not include this later part in the corpus.

The second factor to consider was who to include as government spokespersons. Of course the Prime minister was the first one to put on the list. The Canadian parliamentary practice does not make him the sole governmental actor to intervene. Often, ministers will provide answers on aspects of the question related to their responsibilities. Cabinet solidarity ensures that their answer is the government’s answer. I therefore included them as well. Finally, it happens that on any given day, a minister is not present in the House due to other professional engagements. In these circumstances, an “acting minister” or even the minister’s parliamentary secretary will ensure that answers are given to the elected assembly. These actors, speaking on behalf of the government, were therefore also included.

The third limitation to the corpus relates to the nature of the answers given. Question period being highly politically motivated, partisan remarks abound (e.g. Minister of Defense John McCallum saying “I can take any amount of muddle-headedness from the Bloc and the NDP but I wish the Alliance members would spare us their rank hypocrisy.” (Hansard, April 1st, 2003)). These remarks were left out since they did not pertain to a government decision. As well, answers that provided mere explanations of an administrative process were not kept for they did not reflect a policy decision. What was kept was what Frensley and Michaud (2000) identify as “decisional statements”.

According to their research, decisional statements are not only the “chosen course of action, authoritatively declared or implied”, but they also include problem/goal identification, option generation, the defence of the decision process, choice or implementation, they can signal an intent, or they can provide the assessment of the consequences of another actor's action or even of one’s own action. Decisional statements reflect the heart of the decision making process for they reveal what specific concepts are at the basis of the decision.

As an example that relates to this study, I could use this response given by Jean Chrétien, on March 20, 2003:

Mr. Speaker, we all hope that the war will be as short as possible with a minimum of victims on both sides. I think it is too bad. We have worked very hard to try to avoid a war and unfortunately the decision was made. It was the Americans' privilege and right to make that decision. We respect that. We made a decision. They have known about it for a long time, and they have respected our decision. I hope that this war will be very short and that there will be a minimum of victims. Of course I hope that the Americans will do as well as possible.

As we can see, the former and the latter part of the answer (my italics) do not refer to any government policy. They express wishes. However, the middle part contains elements clearly referring to a decision and it is this part of the answer that was kept for our coding purposes.

Decisional statements will therefore be the units of analysis used in this study, one of the key factors to first establish in any content analysis, for they are not a given research parameter. The objective is to break down the rhetorical elements to the level appropriate for the analysis. For instance, when a speaker uses long, complex sentences (Bill Clinton is a good example), this unit could be the clause since many ideas or nuances can be presented within one sentence. And if a locutor uses shorter and crisper sentences (GW Bush comes

here to mind), the sentence per se might be considered as the unit since ideas are circumscribed within a few words. However, with multiple rhetors, as it is the case in this research, one cannot rely on any individual's stylistic considerations to establish what the unit of analysis will be. This is why decisional statements, which are the common denominator to all, will be defined as the unit of analysis appropriate for this paper.

The next step is to identify our variables. The dependant variable has already been identified as the level of autonomy. The independent variables will be the values used to justify Canada's policy choices. These variables will be straight forward and will refer to the two factors having a more direct influence on the policy outcome, that is, domestic values (D) that will have a direct influence on the level of autonomy professed and the international values (I) that will bear a reverse influence on the level of autonomy advocated. Although these variables could be enough in view of testing our first hypothesis, we will need a finer level of coding if we wish to provide answers to hypotheses 2 and 3. It will be necessary to go to the level of the indicators to reach a meaningful test.

From the theoretical basis that I have outlined above, it will be possible to establish what type of arguments government spokespersons will rely upon to justify policy decisions. I will start with indicators that allow a finer reading of the domestic values variable. There, the first item that strikes the eye when one looks at Canada's search for an autonomous international stance, is the historical continuity in which this quest is inscribed. This long term pattern can no doubt be evoked by politicians who want to provide a contextualized justification for the choices they have made. We have therefore coded as D1 decisional statements made in reference to history and to precedents that are used to establish the rationale for a policy.

Canadian values per se must of course be circumscribed in the indicators we will use. One caveat is in order however. I have mentioned earlier that these values are not monolithic and that there is a difference between the values advocated by the Ottawa policymakers and those in which the polity recognizes itself. Since the corpus we are analyzing here emanates from and reflects the Ottawa foreign policymaking spokespeople, the values that we will recognize here will be more in tuned with the former and less with the latter. Values such as the rule of law – as well as all institutions that symbolize it – can be considered as national symbols that Canada uses to define itself. Largely, we could include in these symbols values carried by the polity since they are of the same nature as they carry more progressive symbols and institutions of a modern Canada.

We also included references to peace and peacekeeping in this second indicator. The reason why we proceeded this way is twofold. First, as we had to differentiate two meanings associate with the concept of peace, one of them being the ultimate security aims at (it therefore has an operational value and is something more closely associated with the external environment of a country) and the other being the philosophical ideal that is opposed to war; it is a symbol Canada uses to identify itself, including in the national capital's parks and on its currency. For these reasons we put this meaning of the "peace" concept in the group of symbolic domestic values, which we coded as D2.

Two other values are too closely related to the practice of Canadian foreign policy to consider them as part of a larger ensemble. We refer here to multilateralism and to foreign aid. They refer to diplomacy and development, the two components of any foreign policy that answer to domestic stimuli. I have already referred to the double nature of multilateralism and I will not reproduce here the differentiation that we in our coding of indicator D5. For its part, the development aspect was captured in the wider concept of humanitarianism, that we coded D4. This includes reconstruction in general, health care and social needs to be filled, and all other calls to helping those in needs due to the war context.

The way these values were affirmed constitutes another indicator we needed in order to test hypothesis 3. We need to know if national identity and pride as well as patriotism were values used in the carrying of the government's position. National identification is no doubt a domestic value, but it could take several forms, from the open affirmation of an autonomous decision to a call to support "our troops". These were coded as D3.

Two of the values identified in Michaud's earlier work have not been yet taken into consideration. They are these values that relate to defence and trade issues and we have labelled them as "call to security" and "call to the economy" and they most obviously belong to the international environment since these are stimuli that do not emanate from within Canada: in the context of this study we understand that threats to security come from abroad and that the importance of trade issues rests on the pressure brought by the anticipated reaction of foreign partners to a Canadian decision that would go against their interests. These two indicators were respectively coded as I1 and I2.

Of course, we also had to consider the other side of the coin regarding multilateralism I have outlined that multilateralism can be a demanding endeavour, these operational demands coming from the international institutional context and not from the country's ideological will to support the institutions. These demands were coded as I3.

Finally, since we have defined the domestic values to be considered in testing hypothesis 3, it is now time to identify the counterweight necessary to conduct this test. On the international values side, we had to consider two aspects: regionalism (D4) since, in the post-September 11 context, the call for a continental effort is very much present; and the more usual bilateral relationship (D5) that focuses on the demands coming from a single foreign partner. It is important to note here that when references were made to a bilateral relationship initiated by Canada, it was of course coded among the domestic values.

The last aspect to make ourselves familiar with is the coding protocol we used. I will not enter here in the finest details (the full protocol is available upon request), but there is a need to explain further how we proceeded, now that we know more about the elements I have already outlined (re: unit of analysis, materiel kept, materiel left out, etc.).

Two coders reviewed separately government answers provided to the Canadian parliament during question period during the time we have defined. This brought an inter-coder reliability of 94% for the domestic/international variables, most of the differences being related to the multilateralist indicators and in some occasions, with the symbol vs security dichotomy regarding the concept of peace. In all these cases, it was possible to clarify the situation by going back to the question the answer was referring to, an operation that provided the appropriate background for a better understanding of the concepts used by the locutor.

The coding of the indicators provided even a higher inter-coder reliability, which gives an indication that the categories were watertight enough to bring in a high degree of reliability. Discrepancies here resulted, in the domestic values variables, from the differences to be established between national symbols and national identity. With the international values variable, it was the bilateralism/regionalism that brought some questioning; its source was the mention of a single actor (United States and Mexico) while referring to a continental security initiative. When this latter precision was brought, we considered the decisional statement as being justified by a regionalist consideration.

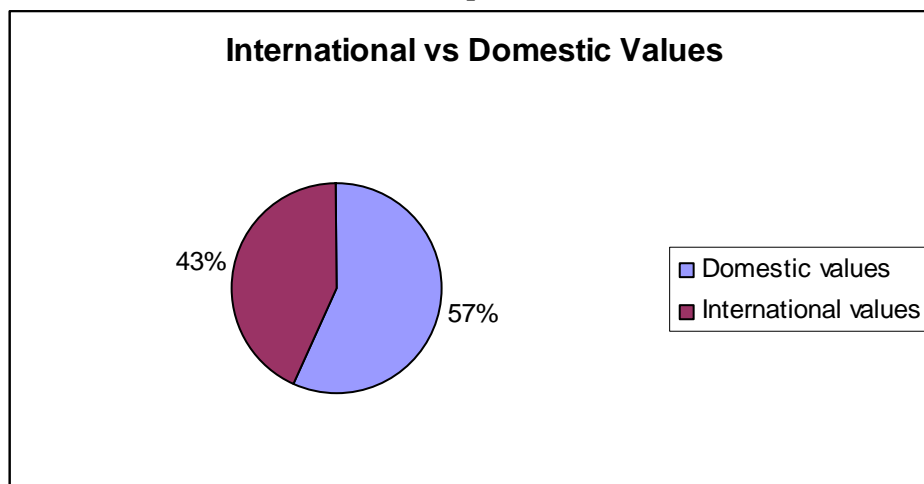
Results

The analysis of the answers provided by representatives of the Canadian government in the House of Commons resulted in the observation of 1252 decisional statements. These statements were codified according to the protocol outlined above and were classified by actors. In this regard, it is useful to note that the answers provided by parliamentary secretaries were minimal. Three of them intervened: Dominic Leblanc (National Defence, 1

day, 1 statement), Aileen Carroll (Foreign Affairs, 1 day 1 statement), and André Harvey (CIDA, 1 day, 1 statement). Due to these low numbers and because the practice is that the parliamentary secretary usually answers from notes prepared for his/ her minister, these were included in the numbers for each respective minister. Although acting ministers (in this study: Don Boudria for CIDA and David Collenette for Defense), work from a similar script, they, as members of the Cabinet, have a wider margin of manoeuvre, which can influence the type of decisional statements being used. I therefore kept them.

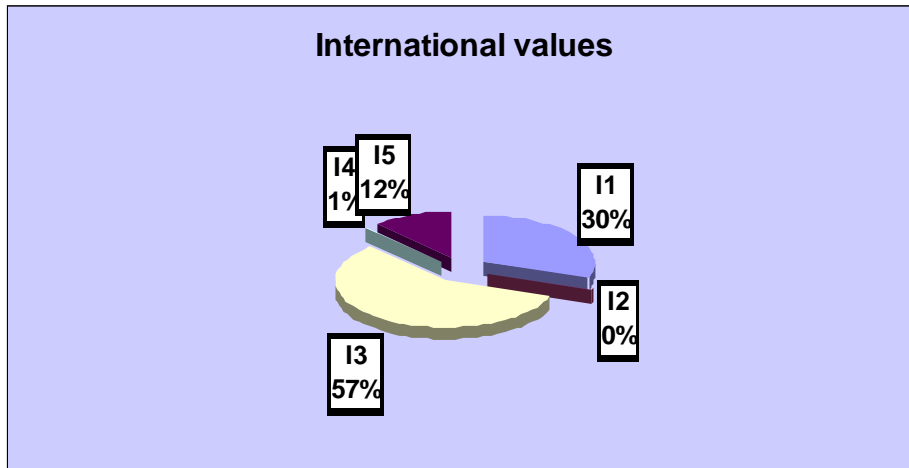
The graphs below provide a first reading of what the observations reveal. The first indication we have address the question raised by our first hypothesis, which stipulated that, in justifying its policy choices, the Chrétien government will refer more often to domestic factors than it will to factors of foreign origins. A more frequent use of domestic values was expected to translate the intent of a more autonomous policy. *Graph 1* clearly indicates that, although domestic values were more present (57%) than were international values (43%), the image projected outlines a non-negligible presence of the latter. This is not exceptional: a country like Canada cannot rely almost solely on its “national interests” – as do the United States – in crafting its international position. From this data, we see that the government showed a definite will to project an image of autonomy, but since it necessarily had to take some international factors into consideration – and numbers reveal that it did to an important degree – this left enough material to the opposition to question this autonomy.

Graph 1



The impact of international values is particularly interesting to look at and it needs to be nuanced. *Graph 2* will help in this as we see that most of these international values (57%) refer to the call of multilateral institutions (I3). As a consequence, this gives weaker grounds to criticism expressed by the NDP, the Bloc Québécois and several media in the country.

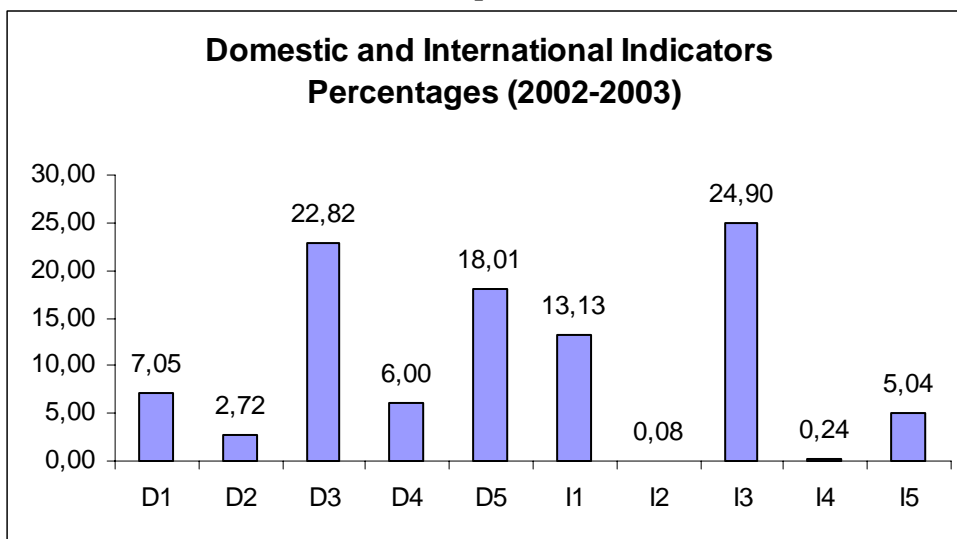
Graph 2



In fact, due to the importance multilateralism has in the crafting of Canadian policy, it is probably the international value that has the strongest resonance within the country.

In fact, hypothesis 2 dealt specifically with this aspect. I then mentioned that in justifying its policy choices, the Chrétien government would make abundant use of multilateralism as a domestic value. It is indeed the case as shown in *Graph 3*: 18.01% of all decisional statements (31.82 % of domestic values) referred to Canada's faith in multilateral institutions, ranking this value right behind national identification. Together, both the domestic and international references to multilateralism amount to close to 43% of all decisional statements. The signal sent by the Chrétien government could not have been clearer.

Graph 3



The way this reference to multilateral institutions is used is probably of a greater importance than these raw numbers already suggest. I will retain here two factors that are totally under the government's control: the consistency in time and the consistency among actors. These elements are revealed in *Table I* and *Table II*. We see that indicators D5 and especially I3 score high consistently. As well, if we consider the three main government spokespersons (Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, Minister of Foreign Affairs Bill Graham and Minister of Defence John McCallum made 89% of the decisional statements), the reference to multilateralism also represents a good share of the message they carry.

Table I
Chronological use of the values

	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	TA	I1	I2	I3	I4	I5	TI	Total
02/02	1	1	5	0	4	11	7	0	6	0	1	14	25
03/02	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	2
06/02	0	0	1	0	2	3	1	0	1	0	0	2	5
10/02	3	0	2	0	4	9	4	0	5	0	2	11	20
11/02	1	0	3	0	2	6	3	0	4	0	3	10	16
12/02	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	1	2	4
Total 2002	6	1	11	0	13	31	16	0	17	0	8	41	72
01/03	9	0	9	1	19	38	7	1	40	0	4	52	90
02/03	19	17	46	4	84	170	41	0	107	1	10	159	329
03/03	38	10	160	33	68	309	77	0	84	2	25	188	497
04/03	16	6	59	37	41	159	23	0	63	0	16	102	261
Total 2003	82	33	274	75	212	676	148	1	294	3	55	501	1177
Total	88	34	285	75	225	707	164	1	311	3	63	541	1249

Table II
Key Government Spokesperson's Use of Values

	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	TD	I1	I2	I3	I4	I5	TI	TOTAL
Jean Chrétien	29	9	80	24	65	207	52	1	131	0	13	197	404
Bill Graham	27	23	96	23	130	299	58	0	91	1	24	174	473
John McCallum	13	2	84	3	15	118	49	0	45	2	20	67	235

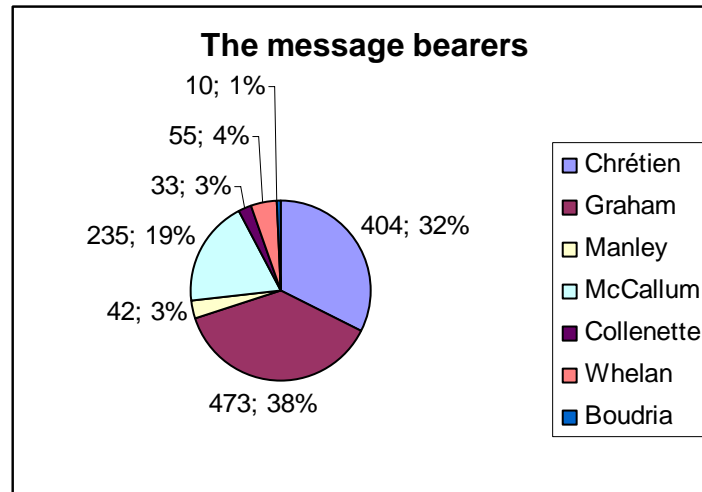
It can therefore be said that, under most aspects this study considers, multilateralism is the factor of importance in the way Canada enunciated its policy stance.

This blunt statement does not mean however that there are no other aspects this corpus has disclosed. If we go deeper in analyzing what the indicators have shown in *Graph 3*, *Table I*, and *Table II*, we see that the government's will to express autonomy, which I generally outlined from the domestic/international values dichotomy, is further asserted through the use of national identity and national symbols. Indicator D3 – national identification – scores particularly high, reaching close to 23% of all the decisional statements made, ranking 5 points ahead to domestic reference to multilateralism. This means that almost 1 out of 4 decisional statements used by government spokespersons, was to reassure that the Canadian response expressed Canada's self-governance. This is slightly reinforced, in terms of numbers, when we include in the portrait the call to national symbols (D2 at 2.72%). The use of this value reached its peak at the time the war was declared and both Prime Minister Chrétien and Minister of Defence McCallum relied heavily on it.

Moreover, as is suggested by hypothesis 3, what is interesting is to compare these results with the indicators that refer to the call for bilateralism (I5 scores at 5%) or regionalism (I4 does not reach 1%). We see that the indicator referring to an autonomous action relate in a 5:1 ration to those referring to American or North American needs. The economic – practically, this element (measured by I2) has not been evocated – and geo-strategic arguments that Canada must follow the United States are not reflected in the government's decisional statements.

Now that we have a clear image of the type and content of the message the government wished to broadcast, the last element I will consider refers as to how this message was carried. The particular interest of this comes from the fact that, Canadian Prime Ministers theoretically play a significant role in the crafting of Canadian foreign policy, but that Jean Chrétien has a reputation of not having demonstrated much interest in the question. We need to see how the facts will apply to our fourth hypothesis stating that Jean Chrétien would leave ample room to his ministers to answer questions related to Canada's response to the Iraq war.

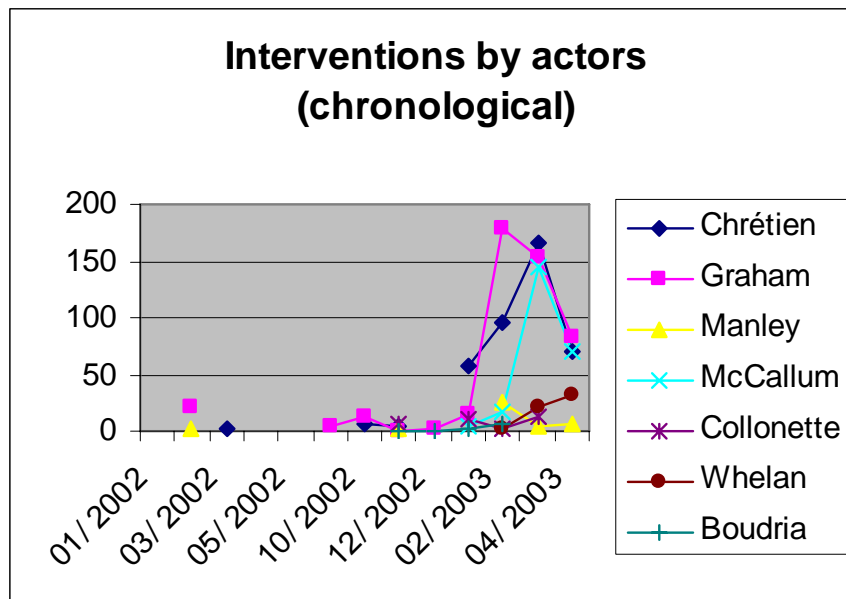
Graph 4



As we see from *Graph 4*, Prime Minister Chrétien issued only one third of the decisional statements over the period we considered. He even ranks second behind Bill Graham, minister of Foreign affairs, in absolute terms. Apparently there is no dominance of the Prime minister on the issue and no need to send a signal against real or perceived challenges to Canada's foreign policy autonomy. Unless the Prime Minister was able to count on Cabinet colleagues who were ready to leave him all powers and to accept taking all the heat – which is not impossible, but would reveal a very weak Cabinet –, this finding comes in total contradiction, at least in the realm of foreign affairs, with what Savoie (1999) has demonstrated regarding the overall conduct of government business.

However, as clear as it seems, this conclusion needs to be nuanced. A look at the chronology could be helpful in this regard. This does not come into contradiction with the rejection of time lines I made earlier for, in this specific instance, looking at who answered for the government over the time period is a decision over which the government – and, as a matter of practical fact, the Prime Minister – has full control, while it has no control whatsoever on the questions that they are asked and the timing of these. *Graph 5* brings interesting elements.

Graph 5



We see from it that not only Bill Graham was the dominant actor for most of the period, but he also regularly dominated on a monthly basis. To this, there are two exceptions of importance, that is, in January and in March 2003. The first instance coincides with the UN Security Council meeting that publicly received reports from UN inspectors Mohamed El Baradei and Hans Blix and with the US President’s answer in his 2003 State of the Union address; this was a defining moment in the evolution of the events since it circumscribed parameters from which all sides identified themselves afterwards. The second corresponds to when the war was imminent and then declared as American troops entered in Iraq. At these crucial points, when the pressure rose and when the question “Will we follow the United States?” was in everybody’s mind, the Prime Minister took the lead in issuing decisional statements.

To sum up the evidence gathered in this study, it can be said that the Canadian government carried a message that advocated a high level of autonomy by referring to domestic values largely based on national identity and partly on national symbols; that it made ample reference to multilateralism both as a national interest-related value and as a call from the international environment to be answered; and that, largely, Prime Minister Chrétien let his ministers be the messengers, with the exception of key moments when he led the issuance of decisional statements. These findings confirm our hypotheses and some theoretical evaluations such as the importance of multilateralism in Canadian foreign policy. However, they also contradict some other theoretical assessments such as the concentration of power in the hands of the Prime Minister, and they enlighten some more as Canada does not seem to reconsider the use of multilateralism as other countries seem doing. They also go against some “common sense” knowledge on Canadian foreign policy: Canada is not the United States’ butler, and the economic factor has not been referred to in policy evaluation.

Conclusion

Studying Canada’s stance regarding the War in Iraq, we might be tempted to conclude that we are far from the long quiet river type of foreign policy. In fact, Massie and Roussel affirm that “this probably constitutes the greatest surprise the Prime Minister had for Canada’s foreign policy analysts over his 10-year tenure” (2005: 69). Coulon goes further: “How to explain Canada’s refusal to take part in the war effort in spite of geography,

economic links and military alliances it shares with the United States? This is one of the greatest mysteries in the study of foreign policymaking decisional processes” (2004: 142). Was it indeed so surprising, so mysterious? Other questions are puzzling: Did the Prime minister opt for procrastination as a strategy, hoping, maybe like Mackenzie King with the Chanak crisis, that time would be on his side? According to unanimous media reports and to analysts, whatever his rationale was, he did.

The reading this research offers does not totally agree with these interpretations, since it is more nuanced. It is unquestionable that Canada has waited until March 17, 2003 to make its final response known. However, it is possible to see things from an angle different from the one that has been largely used up to now. This is why this study brings an appraisal that departs from this generally accepted consensus. It submits that what needs to be considered is that, from the answers given in the House of Commons during Question Period, the government sent ample signals about where Canada would stand.

Very few studies have taken these elements into consideration. Most will refer to speeches and other interventions made abroad or at home by Jean Chrétien, a contradicting John McCallum, Bill Graham, or Paul Heinbecker. These other research agree on the blurry images these interventions left behind, while they omit largely the most attended part of the daily parliamentary order of business. It is there that references to multilateral institutions, seen domestically as a “Canadian way” to react to the threat posed by Saddam and, from an international environment perspective, a binding framework are numerous, continuous, and used to a large extent by all of the key actors. The chronological consistency outlined in *Table I* and the key actors’ frequent references to multilateralism displayed in *Table II* make it hard to believe that the call to the UN is a rabbit Chrétien pulled out of a leprechaun’s hat on March 17, 2003.

Another aspect needs to be better understood. By praising efforts to combat terrorism and answering the call for security (13 % of the decisional statements referred to it), by striking the importance of the Canada-US relationship – although a mere 5 % of the decisional statements refer to the US calls, some answers coded under national identity were phrased in a way that the Americans could not object –, by outlining that the government opposed the process and not the intent when the war was declared, was the Chrétien government simply staying on the sidelines, cheering for its neighbour? It was obviously part of the message, but the political contingency forced Chrétien and his ministers to take into account the opposition Canadians voiced against the War, including members of his own caucus⁴ and while sending some reassurance to the powerful neighbour, it made certain that folks at home get the right message. This necessary two level game, an often observed feature in foreign policymaking, might very well have been interpreted – but wrongly – as a lack of cohesiveness.

Facing a dilemma similar in many points to Tony Blair’s, Chrétien followed a different route in his policy choices. However, this study clearly establishes that despite the apparent contradictions, the message delivered before the elected representatives of the polity demonstrated a certain level of steadiness: close to half of the decisional statements issued between January 2002 and May 2003 referred in away or another to the importance to solve this problem within the framework of multilateral institutions. This contrasts sharply with Savoie’s evaluation (2003) that saw in Chrétien’s policy options a lack of strategic vision, a behaviour that he applies not only to Iraq, but also to other policy sectors.

Does this mean that I reject the general consensus regarding Canada’s apparent lack of decisiveness? This study is too limited to pretend to go that far. In order to present a stronger challenge to the consensus, we would need to enhance the validity of the conclusions I reach here on two fronts.

First, it would be very useful to extend the corpus to scrum and press conference transcripts, speeches, press releases, and any other formal statement made by the government and study them with the same apparatus used here to compare notes with other analysts who have relied on these sources to build the said consensus. Moreover, this enlargement of the corpus would allow us to get a better reading of all statements made by government spokespersons during the period, and not only those bound by the frame of a highly partisan parliamentary debate.

A corpus based on question period has many advantages, but it nevertheless presents the disadvantage of being the time of the day politicians on the government side pinch their nose, hold their breath and hope for the best, knowing that the best will rarely come their way. Repetition has a didactical effect and both questions from the opposition and answers from the government can abuse of this pattern since this is where *the* Parliament Hill newsbeat is. This can bring some distortion to the data presented here and only a comparison with other decisional statements by the same actors, on the same topic, and over the same period will provide a definite evaluation of the validity. Since very few content analysis studies of this type have been conducted, there are no benchmarks to compare the present research with.

The other aspect on which work needs to be done will address the possible idiosyncratic biases any study based on a single set of actors will bear. Was Jean Chrétien simply taking a position that had to be in accordance with his 1991 stance against an armed intervention to free Kuwait from the Iraqi presence? Was it, more bluntly, that, as Prime Minister, he did not care enough about foreign policy to count on adequate resources to be better prepared? Was it due to the nature of the relationship he entertained with George W. Bush? In this sense, comparing this data with data coming from the first Gulf War when channels of communication between 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue and 24 Sussex Drive were much more open, would be very interesting.

Finally, this study concentrates on the message sent by the government and considers it as a reflection of the result the decision making process arrived at. This has to be an oversimplification of the "real world". As any message, this one is not exempt of some packaging and, as a consequence, some distortions. This is why the conclusions I reach here should not be taken as absolute. They are in fact a new beam of light directed towards decisions that were taken at a time Canada was looking for new directions for its foreign policy. It is therefore imperative to use them as a tool to refine and nuance the reading we already have even if this means that we might face new answers that challenge established consensus.

Works Cited

- Carment, David, Fen Osler Hampson, and Norman Hillmer, ed.. 2003. *Canada Among Nations 2003: Coping with the American Colossus*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Clarkson, Stephen, ed. 1968. *An Independent Foreign Policy for Canada?* Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.
- Cohen, Andrew. 2003. *While Canada Slept. How We Lost Our Place in the World*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.
- Coulon, Jocelyn. 2004. *L'agression. Les États-Unis, l'Irak et le monde*. Montréal : Athéna.
- Donaghy, Greg. 2002. *Tolerant Allies. Canada and the United States 1963-1968*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill Queen's University Press
- Frensley, Nathalie and Nelson Michaud. 2000. *Coding Instruction Book For the content analysis data compilation*. Unpublished material.
- Government of Canada. 1995. *Canada in the World*. http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/foreign_policy/cnd-world/menu-en.asp
- Government of Canada. 2005. *A Role of Pride and Influence in the World*. <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/cip-pic/ips/ips-en.asp>
- Granatstein, J.L. and Robert Bothwell. 1990. *Pirouette: Pierre Trudeau and Canadian Foreign Policy*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press.
- Hampson, Fen Osler and Maureen Appel Molot, ed. 1996. *Canada Among Nations 1996: Big Enough to Be Heard*. Ottawa: Carleton University Press.
- Hampson, Fen Osler, Michael Hart, and Martin Rudner, ed. 1999. *Canada Among Nations 1999: A Big League Player?* Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Hillmer, Norman and Maureen Appel Molot, ed. 2002. *Canada among Nations 2002: A Fading Power*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Ignatieff, Michael. 2003. "Canada in the Age of Terror – Multilateralism Meets a Moment of Truth". *Policy Options*, vol 24, no 2, p.14-18.
- Keating, Tom. 2002. *Canada and World Order. The Multilateralist Tradition in Canadian Foreign Policy*. Toronto: Oxford University Press. 2nd edition.
- Lee, Steve. 2002. "Canadian values in Canadian foreign policy" in *Canadian Foreign Policy/La Politique étrangère du Canada* vol. 10, no 1: 1-9.
- Massie, Justin et Stéphane Roussel. 2005. "Le dilemme canadien face à l'Irak ou l'art d'étirer l'élastique sans le rompre." in Alex Macleod and David Morin, ed., *Diplomaties en guerre. Sept États face à la crise irakienne*. Montréal: Athéna.
- Michaud, Nelson. 2006. "The Prime Minister, PMO & PCO: Makers of Canadian Foreign Policy?", in Patrick James, Nelson Michaud and Marc O'Reilly, *The Handbook of Canadian Foreign Policy*, Lanham: Lexington Books, p.21-48.
- Michaud, Nelson. 2005. « La réponse canadienne aux États-Unis : Valeurs et défis » dans André Donneur, dir., *Le Canada, les États-Unis et le monde : la marge de manœuvre canadienne*, Québec : Presses de l'Université Laval. p. 7-49.
- Michaud, Nelson. 1998. *L'énigme du Sphinx*. Québec : Presses de l'Université Laval.
- Morin, David, Alex Macleod, and Pierre-louis Malfatto. 2005. "Contre l'hégémonie? L'ordre international à l'épreuve de la crise irakienne." in Alex Macleod and David Morin, ed., *Diplomaties en guerre. Sept États face à la crise irakienne*. Montréal: Athéna.
- Nossal, Kim Richard. 1997. *The Politics of Canadian Foreign Policy*, 3rd ed. Toronto: Prentice-Hall.
- Ripsman, Norrin. 2001. "Big Eyes and Empty Pockets: The Two Phases of Conservative Defense Policy", p. 100-112.
- Savoie, Donald J. 2003. « Chrétien : la politique, une question de pouvoir », *Policy Options*, vol. 24 no 6, p.82-87.

- Savoie, Donald J. 1999. *Governing from the centre: the concentration of power in Canadian politics*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Welsh, Jennifer. 2004. *At Home in the World. Canada's Global Vision for the 21st Century*. Toronto: Harper Collins.
- White House. 2002. "President Delivers State of the Union Address". <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>

Notes

¹ Massie and Roussel (2005) provide an excellent description of this ambiguity.

² Of course, answers provided to questions raised in the House are prepared in advance, government members trying to anticipate what the opposition will throw at them. This preparation is however very general and, even if some answers are repeated time and again, it is where the rawest information can be found.

³ For a very good chronology that looks at the events in a broader context, see Coulon (2004).

⁴ The Bloc Québécois introduced a motion asking that Canada do not participate to a war in Iraq unless there was an explicit UN Security Council resolution authorizing such outcome. Liberals MPs John Bryden, Charles Caccia, Clifford Lincoln, and Carolyn Parrish voted in favour of the motion.