At What Cost Sovereignty: Canada-US Military Interoperability in the War on Terror
by Eric Lerhe

Halifax, Centre for Foreign Policy Studies
Dalhousie University, 2013
397 pages plus Index, $C35.00 (pbk)

Reviewed by Paul Mitchell

The consideration of Canadian Defence policy is a relatively fallow field. R.J. Sutherland, in his classic essay “Canada’s Long Term Strategic Situation,” described the geographic constraints which considerably limit the flexibility of Canada in devising an “independent” defence policy, and Nils Orvik directly argued that all Canada needed in terms of its own was to provide minimal evidence to the United States that its northern neighbor would not permit its massive land mass to become a threat to American security (“defence against help”). Doug Bland has also well described the on-going indifference of the Canadian political class to the issue of defence. Despite the end of the Cold War, 9/11 and the War on Terror, and the slow withdrawal from Afghanistan, there is little to suggest that anything has changed in the Canadian strategic environment to alter the conclusions of these three assessments.

If there is anything that causes the political antennae of Canadians to twitch when it comes to matters of defence, it most certainly can be found in terms of our relations with the United States. Undeniably, the foundation of NORAD at the beginning of the modern era of Canadian defence in the 1950s raised concerns amongst Canadian politicians about both the strategic issue of American dominance and the civil/military issue of professional collegiality undermining Canadian political sovereignty. Both themes were front and centre in the debate that erupted following the events of 9/11 and Canada’s commitment to operations in both Afghanistan, the Persian Gulf, and more broadly in a global sense as Canadian security agencies reacted to a dynamically changed policy environment south of the border. In all these debates, the mythology of the small virtuous nation subverted by the overweening power of its neighbor is never far away.

Since the 1970s, Dalhousie’s Centre for Foreign Policy Studies (CFPS) has contributed numerous minor classics to the study of military affairs. Eric Lerhe easily falls into this legacy with his book At What Cost Sovereignty?, wherein he addresses the mythology of Canada-US military interoperability. Indeed, Lerhe himself is responding to an earlier CFPS work on interoperability, The Canadian Forces and Interoperability: Panacea or Perdition? The titles of both works illustrate the strength of the myth of pernicious American influence on Canadian independence.

In At What Cost Sovereignty?, Lerhe squarely addresses the long standing concerns of Canadian security policy independence through the lens of its actions in the War on Terror. What follows is a series of six critical case studies examining a set of rigorous hypotheses that emerge from the extent literature on Canada’s relationship with the United States:

Canada’s external sovereignty is violated:
When the Canadian government alters its support for international agreements and it senses US opposition to them;

When the Canadian government adopts, rejects or modifies domestic policies as a result of US pressure;

When the Canadian government adopts, rejects or modifies personnel policies as a result of US pressure;

When the Canadian government commits to US-led military coalitions despite the presence of disincentives; and

When Canada is prevented from joining non-US-led military coalitions because of its close interoperability ties with the United States.

Canada’s internal sovereignty is violated:

When Canadian officials advance military projects with the United States without government support; and

Canadian officials support the position of the US government over the Canadian position.

What follows is essentially a magnum opus examining not only the minutiae of each of these propositions within the context of the War on Terror, but also the first comprehensive review of Canada’s participation in that endeavor as well as a study on the practice of coalition operations from the perspective of a small military power. Several books have already explored Canada’s engagement in the War on Terror, most visibly, Janice Stein and Eugene Lang’s *The Unexpected War*, which established the early narrative on Canada’s return to offensive military operations after a break of nearly fifty years. What distinguishes Lerhe’s efforts from these other works is his extensive use of primary materials acquired from both extensive access to information efforts, as well as taking advantage of the treasure trove of documents released in the WikiLeaks scandal, and interviews with key Canadian decision makers. This, together with Lerhe’s personal involvement as a task group commander in the Persian Gulf and his subsequent role within the navy, gives him a unique perspective which he employs to full effect.

Lerhe interrogates the conclusions of multiple studies on Canada-US military interaction, an area that is poorly understood by most Canadians, and thus, is often viewed with considerable suspicion. Interestingly enough, Lerhe discovers that rather than American pressure dictating Canadian policy, the reverse frequently took place, replicating the findings of Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye in their influential *Power and Interdependence*. In this, his chapter on detainee policy is eye-opening: “…rather than the United States pressuring Canada, the evidence is overwhelming that Canada, with other key allies, pressured the US. … Moreover, US documents show that Canada was the only country pressuring it on the law.”

The field of bureaucratic politics, despite the many valuable contributions it has made to our understanding of how policy develops, has often had a frisson of suspicion surrounding military advice. If so, then perhaps the most reassuring finding is that Canadian officers represent their nation loyally, as we should expect, rather than selling out in the pursuit of narrow technical and professional goals. As he notes, “…the broad thrust … that the Americans were misled by ‘hawks in our military’ is found to be one-sided if not outright wrong.”

Finally, Lerhe’s work is applicable outside the narrow confines of Canadian foreign policy or its relationship with its powerful neighbor. The selection of cases powerfully illustrates the political dynamics that exist within contemporary coalitions. Lerhe’s chapters on Canada’s rejection from ISAF and the debate over our involvement in Operation *Iraqi Freedom* spell out the complex relationships between our close military partners, the heavy operational demands placed upon the Canadian military and the spillover effects they had for other international commitments, and the ‘cut-throat’ intra-coalition competition for a ‘special relationship’ with the United States in a world of security pygmies.

This is an important work. If there is any criticism to be had, it is that it is unfortunate that Lerhe released his study through the bespoke publishing of the Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, probably narrowly limiting the book’s distribution. This is a work that deserves to be read by all those concerned with Canada’s ongoing relationship with the United States, Canadian defence in general, and the conduct of contemporary international security operations.

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The War on Terror cost more than $2.4 trillion. Here are details on what was spent each year, what happened, and its effect. The War on Terror is a military campaign launched by President George W. Bush in response to the al-Qaida 9/11 terrorist attacks. The War on Terror includes the Afghanistan War and the War in Iraq. It added $2.4 trillion to the debt as of the FY 2020 budget. Departments that also played roles in the War on Terror—such as Veterans Affairs, Homeland Security, State Department, and the National Nuclear Security Administration—have separate budgets. War on Terror Timeline and Costs. Here is the War on Terror costs by budgetary years, courtesy of the National Defense Budget Estimates for FY 2020. 3rd, when US military intelligence was able to confirm that Democrats and Biden were acting illegally to steal the election. DNI John Ratcliffe, we believe, issued a classified report to Trump and the DoD, documenting the foreign interference and cyber war operations carried out against America by foreign aggressors. The recent letter from the US Joint Chiefs reveals that the military will only follow lawful orders, and that the military will defend the US Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic. The Capitol Building attack was Antifa and BLM driven— all tactical deception as they call it in the military. It’s common practice. 6) The War on Terror is really a war on Islamic extremism, Islamic totalitarianism and salafism. We dance around terminology and ideas. America had the answer for the War on Terror which began in earnest twelve years ago. The fundamental promoting of civil society and democracy serves as the only strategic answer for a problem so evil, the answer must be found in man's ultimate good. Dr. Lamont Colucci is an associate professor of politics at Ripon College, former Fulbright scholar to the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna and author of The National Security Doctrines of the American Presidency: How they Shape our Present and Future, among other books. You can find out more at lamontcolucci.com. Canada-Us Military Interoperability in the War on Terror as Want to Read: Want to Read saving… Want to Read. Currently Reading. Read. At What Cost Sovereignty by Eric James Lerhe. Other editions. We’d love your help. Let us know what’s wrong with this preview of At What Cost Sovereignty? by Eric James Lerhe. Problem: It’s the wrong book It’s the wrong edition Other. Details (if other): Cancel. Thanks for telling us about the problem. Return to Book Page. Not the book you’re looking for? Preview — At What Cost Sovereignty? by Eric James Lerhe. At What Cost Sovereignty?: Canada-Us Military Interoperability in the War on Terror. by. Eric James Lerhe. The US has blown past $6 trillion in 'war on terror' spending since 2001 â€“ and its cost to taxpayers will keep climbing for decades, study says. Joseph Zeballos-Roig. 2019-11-21T17:43:11Z. “Even if the United States withdraws completely from the major war zones by the end of FY2020 and halts its other Global War on Terror operations, in the Philippines and Africa for example, the total budgetary burden of the post-9/11 wars will continue to rise as the U.S. pays the on-going costs of veterans' care and for interest. on borrowing to pay for the wars,” study author Neta Crawford wrote. Back in March, the Department of Defense estimated that the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria have cost each US taxpayer around $7,623 to date.