

JORDI DIEZ, ED. CANADIAN AND MEXICAN SECURITY IN THE NEW NORTH AMERICA: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS. MONTREAL AND KINGSTON: MCGILL-QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2006.

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Although there has been an impressive amount of research on North American security post 9/11, much has focused on bilateral issues in the Canada - US or the Mexico - US relationship. For the most part, scholars have not closely examined the third dyad, the Canada - Mexico relationship, and the corresponding challenges to this partnership. Jordi Diez's Canadian and Mexican Security in the New North America focuses on post-9/11 continental collaboration and integration in trilateral North American security arrangements, more specifically on the impact of the new security framework on Canada and Mexico. The defence and security challenges facing Canada and Mexico individually intersect with larger trends in the North American triad. The volume thus aims to contribute to the ongoing analysis of North American security challenges and the unique impact and opportunities these present for Canada and Mexico. Diez, an Assistant Professor of Political Science at Guelph University, presents a collection of papers from a 2004 workshop held at Queen's University. Six of the eight contributors, including Diez, specialize in Mexican and/or Latin American politics. Duncan Woods, a professor at the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México, is an international relations scholar, while retired Canadian Forces Colonel Ian Nicholls is the sole contributor with an expertise in Canadian defence issues. Although the book's primary aim is to look at post-9/11 Canadian and Mexican defence and security issues

on the continent, the book covers a broader agenda. In the introduction by Diez and the six following chapters, the authors cover a lot of ground, including the impact of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) on the region, pre-2001 Mexican defence and security policy, and the key catalysts leading to the conceptualization of North America as a distinct region of three countries.

In the first chapter, Duncan Wood presents a progress report on NAFTA as well as an examination of competing visions for its future. Although purely an economic agreement, the 1994 signing of NAFTA by Canada, Mexico and the United States “crystallized the concept of North America as a geographical area and an integrated region” (3). The terrorist attacks of 9/11 acted as the second catalyst for cooperation, notably in defence and security. As Maria Christina Rosas states in her chapter on the potential for closer Canada - Mexico security cooperation, “Both NAFTA and the 9/11 attacks have forced Canada and Mexico, albeit in different ways, to establish more direct ties as they recognize that they are integral components of North America” (49).

Two of the six chapters limit their focus to Mexico. Jorge Chabat’s chapter on Mexican security stresses the importance of building domestic stability within the country. “Security is not just another issue in the public agenda in Mexico,” he writes, “it is the main challenge facing Mexican democracy” (68). Indeed, Chabat describes a country struggling to develop a “real” national and regional security strategy, hindered by several serious security issues including a weak and corrupt Mexican police force, non-traditional threats such as drug trafficking and terrorism, and the process of globalization. Roderic Ai Camp’s essay on Mexican civil-military relations is perhaps the most conceptually challenging of the book, given its use of a robust theoretical

framework. Utilizing a “modified equilibrium model,” Camp looks at the challenges facing the civil-military relationship and concludes that success hinges on Mexico's continued democratization. He contends “The greatest test of the civil-military relationship today does not stem from the military’s behaviour, nor the changing patterns of legislative-executive relations, but rather from the ability of a democratic political model to function effectively and solve Mexican problems” (100). Both these chapters provide significant background on Mexico, which is particularly useful to readers who may not be familiar with Mexico’s history within North America and its unique domestic security challenges.

The second, third and sixth chapters pay closest attention to the volume’s stated goal of examining Canadian and Mexican challenges and prospects in a post-9/11 trilateral security environment. In the second chapter, Raul Benitez and Carlos Rodriguez point out that Mexico and Canada are in the unique position of cooperating more closely with the United States on homeland security issues than any other country in the world. As such, a distinctive North American security system is under construction. However, they argue that this North American security template is dual bilateral, Canada - US and Mexico - US, rather than fully trilateral. In the third chapter, Maria Christina Rosas details the evolution of Canada - Mexico relations and suggests ways to overcome the dual bilateralism Benitez and Rodriguez discuss. Rosas suggests that Canada and Mexico can strengthen their bilateral relationship in the security area by working together in areas of common interest such as international peacekeeping, human security, and engaging with the Americans in the development of US Northern

Command (NORTHCOM).¹ However, given the asymmetries in power on the continent, Rosas says that the United States will continue to act as an intermediary in Canadian - Mexican relations. In both the second and third chapters, the authors explicitly argue that cooperation between Canada and Mexico is necessary to balance against the overwhelming power of the United States. Although Canadian Ian Nicholls does concur with that conclusion, he does so for pragmatic and practical reasons that lie beyond the need to balance against American hegemony. In his succinct sixth chapter, Nicholls states “Any discussion of North American security that does not include the Mexican military is intellectually incomplete...But first we have to understand their history and their current internal missions” (106).

Throughout the book, there is frequent reference to the stark differences between the Canada - US and the Mexico - US relationship. Whereas Canada and the United States are mature liberal democracies, Mexico is still actively building a democracy. Canada has a long history of defence cooperation with the United States: pragmatism and flexibility describe the relationship. The bi-national command structure of the North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD) is unique in the world. On the other hand, Mexico’s foreign policy has historically been isolationist and its military relationship with the United States “has been minimal, if not non-existent” (92). Unlike Canada, Mexico’s largest preoccupations are internal security issues like drug trafficking and domestic order. Mexico, as well, has unique border concerns with the United States, namely the problem of illegal migration to America. Nevertheless, both

¹ US.Northern Command, created in 2002, is an American military command that includes geographic responsibility for the continental United States, Alaska, Canada, Mexico, parts of the Caribbean, and waters out to 500 nautical miles. Its prescribed mandate is to cooperate with Canada and Mexico, not to integrate, displace, or command their military forces. See: United States. Northern Command, “*Mission*.”
< http://www.northcom.mil/index.cfm?fuseaction=s.who_mission>.

Mexico and Canada are heavily dependent economically upon the United States, and post-9/11 security cooperation among all three countries is a necessity. As such, moves toward regional integration are complex and will likely be incremental.

The book does a particularly good job of identifying the issues facing Mexico in a post-9/11 North America. The Canadian side of the equation is somewhat less robust. In fact, the preponderance of contributors with Mexican expertise leads to an imbalance in coverage as well as some questionable assumptions about Canadian security. For example, Rosas states that post-9/11 “NORAD was in effect incorporated into NORTHCOM” (42). In fact, in May 2006 the NORAD agreement was renewed, maintaining the legal equality and sovereignty of Canada and the United States within the historic framework of a bi-national command. Like Mexico, Canada closely guards its sovereignty vis-à-vis the United States. If NORAD had been effectively taken over by the American military, the protest and debate in Canada would have been deafening. However, the shortage of Canadian expertise in this collection is likely a reflection of a general shortage of scholars and scholarship within Canada on the Canadian - Mexican security relationship. This gap presents an obvious opportunity for researchers to explore relatively unexamined subject matter.

The concept of North America as a region is less than two decades old. While NAFTA has increased economic transactions across all three countries, security is still largely approached bilaterally on the continent. Diez's edited collection is commendable as it breaks out of the traditional models and addresses the trilateral security dilemma on the North American continent. Even more significantly, it looks at North American security challenges from the perspectives of the two smaller powers. With the launching

of the Canada - Mexico Partnership in 2004 and the signing of the trilateral Security and Prosperity Partnership in 2005, there is clearly a momentum toward greater collaboration and integration in North America. As such, there is a distinct requirement for more scholarly research and dialog on the continental relationship in general and the Canada - Mexico relationship in particular. Overall, the book is tightly written and well researched. It is a welcome addition to an understudied area of research.

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