

# Deep Integration and the Military

Since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the U.S. has repeatedly reminded Canada that “security trumps trade.” Proponents of deep integration, that means that unless Canada throws its full support behind President George Bush’s “War on Terror,” the U.S. will shut its border to Canadian goods. So far our government has not disappointed them. Canada has drastically increased military spending in order to fight U.S. wars abroad, and we have put U.S. demands at the heart of our foreign policy.

## Why Afghanistan?

As Canadian casualties continue to climb in Afghanistan, it’s becoming increasingly clear that our government agreed to participate in the mission in order to appease the United States. According to a recent CBC report, Jean Chrétien ignored military advice when in February 2003 he decided to send 2,000 troops to Afghanistan. The move was to save face with Bush, who wanted Canadian troops for Iraq. Former defence minister Bill Graham admitted in 2005 that “mending fences with the Bush administration” was also a key factor in agreeing to lead today’s extremely dangerous mission in southern Afghanistan.

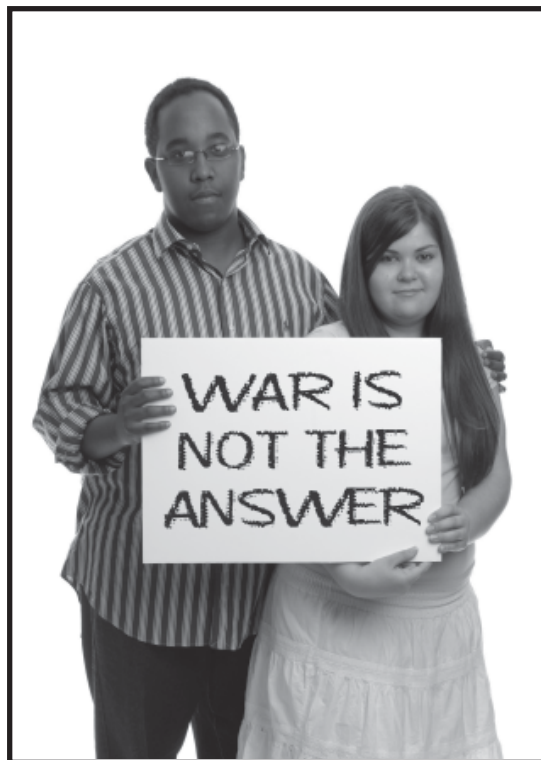
Because Canada has dedicated the majority of our military resources to the war in Afghanistan, our participation in United Nations peacekeeping has significantly declined. Before the mid-1990s, Canada was consistently among the top-10 contributors of UN troops. In 2005, Canada had dropped to 35th out of 96 participating countries. Today, Canada’s total contribution of troops to UN peacekeeping missions could fit on a single school bus: 56 soldiers, out of 66,786 international troops serving in UN peacekeeping operations worldwide.

## Going ballistic

Though Canada officially said no to missile defence in 2005, Canadian participation in the U.S. scheme looms on the horizon. Prime Minister Stephen Harper has said he is open to discussing the idea with President Bush, and former Canadian ambassador to the U.S. Frank McKenna has urged the Liberal party to reconsider its position. This is despite a new militarized U.S. National Space Policy that rejects future arms control agreements and asserts the right to restrict access to space to anyone “hostile to U.S. interests.”

## A common foreign policy

In September 2006, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade handed Parliament an updated list of strategic directions. At the very top of that list was “greater collaboration with the United States,” particularly on military missions abroad, “to demonstrate that Canada is interested in being supportive of American priorities.” This is despite an international policy survey conducted by the University of Ottawa in October 2005, cited in DFAIT’s own report, showing that 83 per cent of



Canadians think we should pursue an independent foreign policy, even if it leads to disagreements with the United States.

## What can we do?

The current Conservative government knows that military integration with the U.S. is unpopular. But unless we make our voices heard, Canada will continue to sink deeper into the mud of the U.S. “War on Terror” – a war that by all accounts has made the world less safe. Canada needs to remember its roots and take a leadership role in keeping the peace.