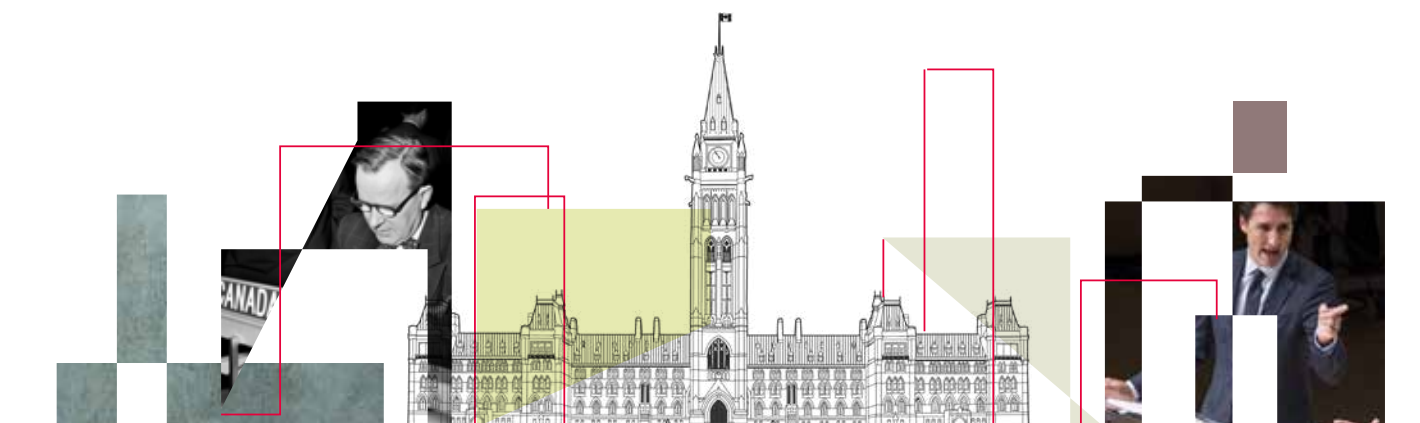


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A CIGI Essay Series

Situating Canada in a Changing World: Constructing a Modern and Prosperous Future

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The late Canadian diplomat and commentator John Wendell Holmes believed that the best public policy emerged out of an appreciation of history and context. This essay series, sponsored by the Holmes Trust, reflects on six contemporary themes in Canadian foreign and security policy, with historians considering the background of each issue and practitioners responding with a view to the future. Together, the essays demonstrate the value of history to a decision maker's analytical calculus and offer practical suggestions to inform Canada's response to the challenges ahead.

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Introduction

The Search for World Order in the Twenty-First Century

Adam Chapnick and Aaron Shull

Contemporary practitioners of Canadian statecraft face no shortage of overwhelming challenges: a shift in global power from West to East; the stress testing of democratic institutions; a fracturing multilateral system; a deteriorating security landscape at home and abroad; and a digital transformation that is touching every facet of life. In this era of increasing global uncertainty, they require not only the acuity of the traditional diplomat, but also a degree of intellectual flexibility that can be a challenge to maintain in these polarizing times.

Such flexibility is best nurtured through dialogue and debate, but in recent years, as political scientists Brian Bow and Andrea Lane (2021, 4) have argued, discussions are often missing perspective, which they define as “a broad view of Canadian foreign policy across many issue areas and over time.”

For much of the twentieth century, such a view was offered consistently by John Wendell Holmes (Chapnick 2009). Holmes won his university’s gold medal in history as an undergraduate in 1932 and completed a master’s degree at the University of Toronto the following year. He spent a summer in Trois-Pistoles, Quebec, immersed in francophone culture, and then taught English for five years at a progressive boarding school in Pickering, Ontario.

When the Second World War derailed his Ph.D. aspirations at the University of London, he joined the Canadian Institute of International Affairs (CIIA) (today’s Canadian International Council), quickly rose to the position of national secretary and was soon recruited into the Department of External Affairs. Holmes’s ascent through the diplomatic ranks was similarly brisk. Soon, he was drafting speeches for Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King and coordinating Canada’s post-hostilities planning process.

He retired as a senior assistant deputy minister in 1960 and returned to the CIIA, this time as its president. He began teaching Canadian foreign policy, first to graduate students at the University of Toronto, and then through the lens of international organization to undergraduates at York University's Glendon College. He discussed Canada's place in the world in the popular press, with national and international audiences, and with student groups. He produced an overwhelming cannon of books, academic essays and popular commentaries, including his magisterial, two-volume *The Shaping of Peace: Canada and the Search for World Order* (1979, 1982), from which this introduction draws its title. His approach was historical, yet practical, forever emphasizing the importance of context, compromise and clear communication.

When Holmes retired from the CIIA, its members created a library fund in his honour. After his passing in 1988, that fund received further donations. Ever since, the John Holmes trustees have been tasked with managing the money in conjunction with, first, the CIIA and, more recently, CIGI.

CIGI and the trustees present here an innovative new project designed in a manner that is faithful to Holmes's intellectual legacy: a commissioned collection of essays on Canadian foreign policy that brings together the views of historians and practitioners.

With Aaron Shull representing CIGI and Adam Chapnick representing the trustees, we have identified six contemporary themes relevant to Canada and its future: the geopolitical context; the deterioration of the

international system of global governance; threats to liberal democracy; the evolution of the international trade, investment and development regimes; the emergence of a digital age; and national and international insecurity.

Six historians at the leading edge of Canadian and international scholarship and six practitioners with significant national and international experience were recruited to contribute to this series. Each historian was asked to craft an essay exploring the background to a single theme and each practitioner was asked to respond with a view to the future.

The essays that follow are the result.

Michael Cotey Morgan launches the series by reminding us of one of the great paradoxes of Canadian foreign policy history: inasmuch as Ottawa has asserted independent control over its external affairs, it has nonetheless remained reliant on its great power partnerships for effective engagement. "Officials in Ottawa could choose the tactics," he writes, "but other governments continued to set the strategy." The history of Canadian foreign policy is a story of "reconciling the limits of power with the imperative of independence."

Today's multipolar world is more complicated, argues Rohinton P. Medhora. Canadian policy is no longer shaped primarily by its partnerships with, first, Great Britain and, later, the United States, but by an international system of rules and laws that it did much to create. Contemporary challenges such as climate change and the impact of digital technologies and data flows cannot be managed by Canada and its allies alone. Nonetheless, Medhora's policy prescription reveals echoes of Morgan's thoughts: "Institution building and global governance require commitment, credibility, and all the other hard and soft resources that underpin coalition building" — an idea with which Holmes would have mightily agreed.

But "multilateralism, it seems, is in crisis," opens Brendan Kelly in his historical account of Canadian engagement in the international institutions of global governance. Those institutions — the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Commonwealth, la Francophonie, the

Contemporary challenges such as climate change and the impact of digital technologies and data flows cannot be managed by Canada and its allies alone.

Group of Seven (G7) and the Group of Twenty (G20), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, the Organization of American States and the World Trade Organization — traditionally provided Ottawa with vehicles to shape the rules of the international game in a manner that advanced the national interest. Kelly argues convincingly that, no matter the strain facing contemporary multilateralism, Canadians must continue to commit to it.

Rector of United Nations University David Malone is critical of the trajectory of Canada's most recent multilateral efforts, citing two consecutive losses of elections to the United Nations Security Council as evidence of a country whose "trend line raises more questions than comforting answers." He also yearns for greater stability among Canada's foreign policy leadership. "Personality, competence and experience all count in ministerial functions of an international nature. Knowing one's counterparts, and appreciating as many of them as possible, an ability to seize the gist of complex files often previously completely unknown to new appointees, and a reputation for reliability," are assets that are hard to develop when the average tenure of the 12 most recent Canadian foreign ministers has been less than two years.¹ But stability at home is more necessary than ever in a world where "international relations have deteriorated considerably" ever since the rise of illiberal leaders in China and Russia.

If Malone is concerned by the state of contemporary global affairs, Susan Colbourn reminds us that the rise of authoritarian regimes is hardly new. Nor are the dilemmas that they pose to contemporary practitioners. Indeed, she writes, authoritarian states "provided a sort of organizing logic that framed Canada's foreign policy and the central objectives thereof for much of the twentieth century." Viewed through such a lens, much of Canada's international relations history can be understood as an effort to balance the perennial Canadian desire to promote and defend the tenets of liberal democracy and human rights with the need for economic growth, no matter its origins. Colbourn's essay points to some of the paradoxes that formed a regular part of Holmes's writing. Consider the following: "Canadians defined their wartime efforts as nothing short of the defence of freedoms and liberties in a democratic

system, and yet, to do so, also accommodated themselves to policies that inhibited those freedoms." She also counsels humility: Ottawa has a long history of principled, liberal foreign policy rhetoric and less principled commercial activities.

Long-time Canadian diplomat Leigh Sarty suggests that the most significant change to Canada's international realm in recent years is less the authoritarians themselves than "a southern neighbour no longer inclined or able to exercise the leadership on which Canadian foreign policy has traditionally relied." Like Malone, he advocates greater diplomatic dexterity and notes "the importance of seeing the world as it is, rather than as we believe or would wish it to be." Sarty is confident that liberal democracy offers the world more than Russia or China ever could but is concerned that Canadians have yet to harness the inherent strengths of the system in support of the national interest.

Part of the solution will have to include a coherent trade, investment and development policy. Jennifer Bonder takes us back to the first meeting of what ultimately became the G7. The organization was formed to manage the challenge of what she calls "globalization without governance." As she writes so eloquently, "economic summitry reoriented Western alliances to new purposes and policy coordination promised to bolster economic and social stability." Historically, when liberal democracies have cooperated economically, they have been able to posture more effectively on the world stage.

A former senior trade advisor to Canada's twenty-second prime minister, Meredith Lilly examines how the G7 has evolved since its genesis in the 1970s. No longer are members focused exclusively on trade and the economy, and no longer is an American president bending over backwards to integrate Canada into its most critical geoeconomic partnerships. She agrees with Malone that Ottawa must pay more attention to the Indo-Pacific but is critical of a national tendency to "downplay the positive spillover effects of being America's neighbour, even during challenging periods." Lilly sees a need for both an independent Canadian trade policy and a strong bilateral relationship with its most significant security partner.

Holmes was one of Canada's first foreign policy analysts to extend his guise beyond traditional measures of statecraft. Heidi Tworek's essay on the history of Canadian diplomatic engagement in the realms of international communication and aviation technologies would therefore have pleased him deeply. Tworek demonstrates that Ottawa's post-Second World War response in the communications realm — a political effort to defend its own interests — was profoundly different than in the aviation world, where it chose a more traditional middle-power route. Her point, with which Holmes would have agreed, is that foreign policy is always about choices. No matter Canada's affiliation or alliance, its leadership must make decisions for themselves.

The Government of Canada's former director of international telecommunications policy, Bill Graham, is no stranger to the challenges that Tworek describes. He sees more continuity than change in Ottawa's successful efforts to navigate the future of communications governance. What has changed is the world of telecommunications regulation, where governments have ceded much of their prior control to the private sector and civil society. Ottawa has generally welcomed this more inclusive approach, even if it has dramatically increased the complexity of future foreign policy challenges.

Timothy Andrews Sayle picks up on Graham's optimism. Canadian foreign policy has always required Ottawa to manage international relations within an evolving world order. Trade has always been about more than just economic gains. Inasmuch as technological change has disrupted the international system, it has also offered Canada significant opportunities for growth. And "political division and the seeds of dissolution," rather than invasion or annexation, have posed the greatest threat to Canadian national and international security. "If there is a pattern to Canada's national security history," Sayle concludes, "it is that, for more than 150 years, the viability and integrity of the state has been preserved first and foremost by ensuring that Canadians remain united."

Laurence Deschamps-Laporte draws on her recent experience advising three Canadian foreign ministers to reinforce Sayle's emphasis on the importance of national

unity. She calls for greater cross-partisan cooperation in the national security realm by highlighting the benefits of a broad national consensus on recent policy toward Ukraine and North American Free Trade Agreement renegotiation. Canada is stronger when it enables the official opposition, provincial authorities and civil society to contribute to the foreign policy discourse. Today, she concludes, we must guard against political divisions at home that risk undermining the strength of Canada's posture abroad.

Holmes once described the Canadian position in *The Atlantic Community Quarterly* as an "admixture of pragmatism, scepticism, heresy, and what I might call the disciplined irresponsibility which is the privilege and the responsibility of lesser powers in an alliance" (Holmes 1964–1965, 528). Together, these essays capture the spirit of cautious, humble optimism. Geography has gifted Canadians with a fortunate position in the international community. Successive generations of policy practitioners have leveraged that geography and its strategic implications to help shape a liberal democratic international order consistent with the national interest and inimical to the forces of extremism and authoritarianism that seek to threaten its existence. Although Holmes might not have recognized the post-Cold War order described by Medhora, or the contemporary digital communications realm discussed by Graham, he would certainly have been familiar with the perennial challenges of balancing bilateral relations with the United States with Canada's multilateral commitments in both trade and security; the persistent value of national and international statecraft; and the importance of political cooperation to Canada's foreign policy posture. And he would have welcomed the contribution of leading Canadian historians to conversations about these issues. We hope that you do as well.

NOTE

1 See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minister_of_Foreign_Affairs_\(Canada\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minister_of_Foreign_Affairs_(Canada)).

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As CIGI's managing director and general counsel, Aaron Shull acts as a strategic liaison between CIGI's research initiatives and other departments while managing CIGI's legal affairs and advising senior management on a range of legal, operational and policy matters. A member of CIGI's executive team, Aaron provides guidance and advice on matters of strategic and operational importance, while working closely with partners and other institutions to further CIGI's mission. He also serves as corporate secretary. Aaron is an expert on cybersecurity issues. He coordinated the CIGI essay series *Governing Cyberspace during a Crisis in Trust*. In his introduction, he argues that more robust international norms for cybersecurity are a national imperative for Canada. Prior to joining CIGI, Aaron practised law for a number of organizations, focusing on international, regulatory and environmental law.



Canada in a Shifting Geopolitical Context

Michael Cotey Morgan

Between the late nineteenth century and the mid-twentieth century, the world's geopolitical centre of gravity shifted. Great Britain gradually lost the pre-eminence that it had enjoyed for decades as other industrial powers grew wealthier, developed new military capabilities and extended their global reach. To lessen the strains on their power, British leaders made new allies, such as Japan, and repaired relations with long-time rivals, such as France. To avoid unnecessary conflicts, they appeased potential adversaries, especially the United States, which was emerging as the world's leading industrial economy (Kennedy 1976). And they increasingly called on their Empire to shore up Britain in times of crisis.

This shift pulled Canada in two different directions. Canadians had deep connections with both the declining British and the rising Americans. Although Ottawa had enjoyed autonomy in domestic affairs for decades and took pride in its status as the oldest of the Empire's dominions, it had little say in its relations with the rest of the world. Officials in London made foreign policy not just for Britain, but for the Empire as a whole. Besides, Britain remained Canada's largest trading partner, and most English Canadians retained important bonds — both familial and emotional — to the mother country. As a North American state, however, Canada could not escape its richer and more populous southern neighbour. In the final decades of the nineteenth century, hundreds of thousands of Canadians migrated to the United States, linking families on either side of the border. Growing railway networks carried goods and ideas, in addition to people, back and forth. Depending on the circumstances, Canadians viewed the United States as a potential threat and a potential partner, a source of envy and alarm, and an object of admiration and condescension.

The era of geopolitical flux posed challenges and created opportunities. As old assumptions about Canada's place in the world became obsolete, new problems bedevilled decision makers in Ottawa. Could Canada count on Britain to defend it? Should Canada come to the defence of Britain or other parts of the Empire if they were threatened? Should the country — could the country — pursue its own national interests? What were those interests anyway? The course of events between the 1870s and 1940s brought these problems to a head, transforming Canada's relations with the outside world and highlighting both the country's abiding advantages and perennial afflictions. As Canada moved from the British sphere to the American one, it gained unprecedented control over its fate, but simultaneously grappled with the limits of its influence. That control meant it could make its own choices about foreign policy. But those limits, which endured through the Cold War and beyond, meant that the range of its choices would be constrained by decisions made in foreign capitals. Once Canada gained full independence, officials in Ottawa could choose the tactics, but other governments continued to set the strategy.

In the years that followed Confederation, decisions made in London demonstrated that British and Canadian interests did not always overlap. In 1871, the British army evacuated all but one of its bases in Canada. Although the American Civil War had nearly brought the countries to blows, British officials assumed that peace with the United States would prevail. To ensure that it would, they conceded to American demands in a number of disputes. In the context of a territorial dispute over Venezuela in 1895, the American government insisted that “the United States is practically sovereign on this continent, and its fiat is law.”¹ In London, Lord Salisbury acquiesced (Schoultz 1998, 115). His decision implicitly accepted that Canada fell within an American sphere of influence. Shortly thereafter, when Ottawa questioned the location of the border between Alaska and the Yukon, the British took the Americans’ side. Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier lamented the United States’ “grasping” behaviour, but recognized that he could not change the outcome (Stacey 1977, 99).

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This pattern of events forced Canadians to grapple with fundamental questions about their country’s identity and global posture. In the heated debates that ensued, three rival approaches took shape. The first aimed to reinforce the imperial connection for both practical and sentimental reasons. Canadian identity — for many English-speaking Canadians, at least — was intertwined with British identity, and Canadian nationalism often expressed itself as support for the

Empire and pride in Canada’s place in it (Berger 2013). “I...am an Imperialist because I will not be a Colonial,” political scientist Stephen Leacock told a Toronto audience in 1907 (Leacock 1907, 282). In this view, the Empire gave Canada a place and a purpose in the wider world. Besides, preserving the imperial connection was a matter of life and death. “Independent, we could not survive a decade,” Leacock argued (*ibid.*, 288).

The second approach embraced the United States. As cross-border ties multiplied, Canada was moving toward a “general fusion” with its southern neighbour, the writer Goldwin Smith (1891, 279) argued. In their sense of themselves and view of the world, Canadians (at least English Canadians) already resembled their American cousins so closely that it was difficult to tell them apart. Erasing the border would protect, enrich and empower all British North Americans. Politics, economics, demographics and geography all pointed so strongly in that direction that there was no point delaying the inevitable.

The third school of thought envisaged what Leacock and Smith both repudiated: a country reliant neither on Washington nor London. If Britain would not stand up for Canada, the next time Ottawa faced a challenge to Canadian interests, instead of outsourcing its policy to the imperial government, the country ought to respond “in our own way, in our own fashion, according to the best light that we have,” Laurier argued (Stacey 1977, 99). The member of Parliament and journalist Henri Bourassa (1901) similarly exhorted his listeners to develop an authentically Canadian patriotism. Charting a course between the “old British frigate” and the “American privateer,” Canada had to be careful not to “tumble into the abyss” of the one or “trail in the wake of the other” (*ibid.* 42). On many questions, Laurier and Bourassa regarded each other as adversaries, but on this point at least, they agreed. Both men stopped short of demanding complete independence, but their ideas pointed in that direction.

These contending approaches regularly collided. In 1899, the British government called on Ottawa to send soldiers to fight the Empire’s enemies in South Africa. The request split Laurier’s Cabinet and threatened to divide the country. Much of English Canada rallied to the call to arms, but few French

Canadians wanted anything to do with the conflict. Laurier worried that sending troops to a distant conflict would set a bad precedent but doubted that he could stand up to the force of pro-war sentiment. His government recruited volunteers to form a battalion, on condition that Britain covered the soldiers' costs as soon as they reached South Africa. This compromise satisfied the war's supporters but infuriated Bourassa. Canada was making sacrifices to help Britain, he argued, but it had no say in the direction of the war. Laurier agreed. "We should have the right to say to Great Britain: If you want us to help you, call us to your councils," he told Parliament (Laurier, quoted in Long 1903, 138).

The First World War put this principle to the test. From its population of nearly eight million, Canada sent more than 600,000 soldiers overseas. The scope of the national contribution raised questions about the extent of Canadian influence over imperial policy. In the early stages of the conflict, Prime Minister Robert Borden fumed that the British denied him even basic information about the course of the war, let alone a say in major decisions. Echoing Laurier, he insisted that Britain no longer take the dominion for granted. "Unless [Canada] could have that voice in the foreign relations of the Empire as a whole, she would before long have an independent voice in her own foreign affairs outside the Empire," he threatened in 1918. As a loyal supporter of the imperial ideal, Borden did not want that independence, but he used Britain's reliance on Canadian support to claim greater influence while keeping the country within the Empire. British Prime Minister David Lloyd George accepted Borden's proposal to include the dominions in imperial foreign policy deliberations once peace had returned (Hillmer and Granatstein 1994, 62). This approach foresaw a more cooperative — but still united — Empire. Canada would have influence but not control.

This vision never materialized. For one thing, it proved too difficult to put into practice. For another, the figures who dominated Canadian external policy in the interwar period concluded that the country needed more — but not total — independence. With a succession of small steps through the 1920s, Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King expanded Canada's ability to determine its relations with other states. He demanded

the power to negotiate and sign treaties without London's endorsement. Although British officials worried that this principle would shatter the unity of imperial foreign policy (and their unilateral control over it), they granted King's request — and not just for Canada, but for the other dominions too. As Canada put it into practice, it established its own embassies, first in Washington, and then in Paris and Tokyo. King likewise asserted Canada's "complete control" over military policy, rebuffed British plans for closer defence cooperation and, in 1922, rejected London's request for Canadian troops during the Chanak crisis (Hillmer 2006).

King's Conservative successor, R. B. Bennett, did not attempt to reverse these changes, but hesitated to go further. He felt a strong attachment to the Empire and doubted that Canada could accomplish much by acting alone, even under the auspices of the League of Nations. After King returned to office in 1935, he reduced Canada's international commitments to a bare minimum, and reined in officials who wanted to take greater risks. When the head of the Canadian delegation to the League, Walter Riddell, called for an oil embargo against Italy, Ottawa smacked him down. Justice Minister Ernest Lapointe told the press that the "Government is not taking the initiative...and does not propose to take the initiative" (quoted in Eayrs 1965, 24). Likewise, facing the growing threat that Nazi Germany posed to European peace, King hoped for the best, even to the point of naïveté, and refused to guarantee that Canada would aid Britain in the event of war. He understood, however, that Canada could not remain neutral in any such conflict. Public opinion in English Canada would not stand for it and, besides, the country could not survive if Britain fell: "The only future left for Canada," King concluded, "would be absorption by the U.S." (quoted in Hillmer and Granatstein 1994, 145).

The United States' rising power had long inspired ambivalent feelings in Canada. But as a matter of choice and necessity, the Great Depression and the Second World War brought the two countries closer together. In 1891 and 1911, Canadian voters had rejected freer trade with their American neighbours, for fear that economic integration would set the stage for political absorption. In 1935, however, King and American president Franklin D. Roosevelt agreed to slash tariffs

on goods moving across the border. Three years later, a new agreement went even further. The prime minister remained leery of American influence but reasoned that closer commercial ties would help the Canadian economy recover. Once the war broke out, he resented American neutrality, but the fall of France and the prospect that Britain might succumb to a German invasion prompted him to seek closer continental military cooperation. In August 1940, the Ogdensburg Agreement created the Permanent Joint Board on Defence, which ensured American assistance in the event of an attack on Canada. The following year, Canada became a partner in producing US Lend-Lease supplies for Britain. By establishing “the economic corollary of Ogdensburg,” King told Parliament, the two countries had forged “a common plan of the economic defence of the western hemisphere” (Hillmer 1989, 107). Fifty years earlier, Canada had counted on Britain to guarantee its security in a crisis. Now it looked to the United States.

The war confirmed both Canada’s independent control over its foreign policy and its reliance on its great power partners. In 1939, King’s long-time adviser O. D. Skelton had worried that, by entering the conflict at Britain’s side, Canada had confirmed its colonial subservience. But the prime minister emphasized that the decision had been Canada’s alone, waiting a week after Britain had declared war to do the same. Ottawa also tripled the number of countries with which it maintained official diplomatic relations. Although the British and Americans excluded them from high-level talks to coordinate policy, Canadian officials demanded and received independent representation in areas where their contributions rivalled (or surpassed) those of their partners, especially food production. King could have pushed harder for Canadian membership in other such agencies, but he worried about antagonizing London and Washington. On the most important questions, from the shape of military strategy to planning the postwar settlement, the British, Americans and Soviets made the big decisions, and expected the Canadians to follow their lead. Some officials in Ottawa embraced this arrangement. Others resented it. But no one thought that Canada had the military or economic heft to challenge it.

The emergence of the postwar world reinforced these patterns, along with Canada’s

move from the British sphere to the American. King rejected a British proposal to strengthen the Commonwealth as an organization to maintain international security and looked to the United Nations instead. In establishing the United Nations, however, the great powers laid down the key principles themselves, and ignored almost all of Canada’s proposals. As the Cold War took shape, Canadian officials had somewhat more success in putting their stamp on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which emerged from joint talks with the British and Americans. The Atlantic alliance also kept Canada’s two closest partners aligned on the biggest geopolitical questions, helping Ottawa to reconcile the “antinomies created by our position as a North American country and as a member of the Commonwealth,” as diplomat Norman Robertson put it (quoted in Jockel and Sokolsky 2021).

Throughout these decades of geopolitical upheaval, Canada’s place in the world changed in fundamental ways. By taking advantage of Britain’s weakness to expand its own authority, the country slowly gained full command over its foreign policy. This newfound autonomy spawned both anxieties and fantasies. Officials worried about asserting too much independence and going out on diplomatic limbs, but they also dreamed of Canada playing an indispensable role in international affairs, especially as a mediator between London and Washington.

Despite these developments, however, certain patterns endured. From the 1870s to the 1940s, Ottawa expected and allowed other governments to establish the parameters within which it would operate. In 1939, Skelton lamented that, after decades of effort to achieve full sovereignty, Canada had still not secured “independent control of her own destinies” (Hillmer 2013). Although its influence had increased, other countries still made the choices that determined the course of world events. In war and diplomacy alike, Ottawa made tactical decisions but left the strategy to others. It continued to do so throughout the Cold War and after. As the geopolitical balance shifts again today, Canadian officials must contend with many of the same challenges that their predecessors faced, reconciling the limits of power with the imperative of independence.

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1 Richard Olney to Thomas F. Bayard, July 20, 1895, in *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1895, Part 1*, Office of the Historian, US Department of State.

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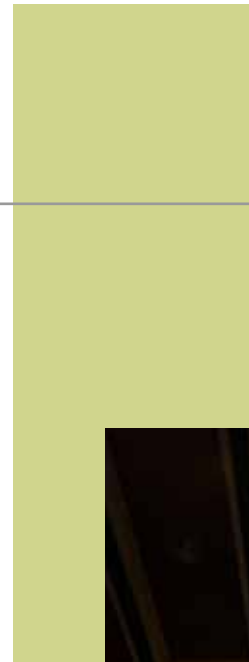
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Situating Canada in a Shifting Geopolitical Context

Maximizing Influence without Having Control

Rohinton P. Medhora



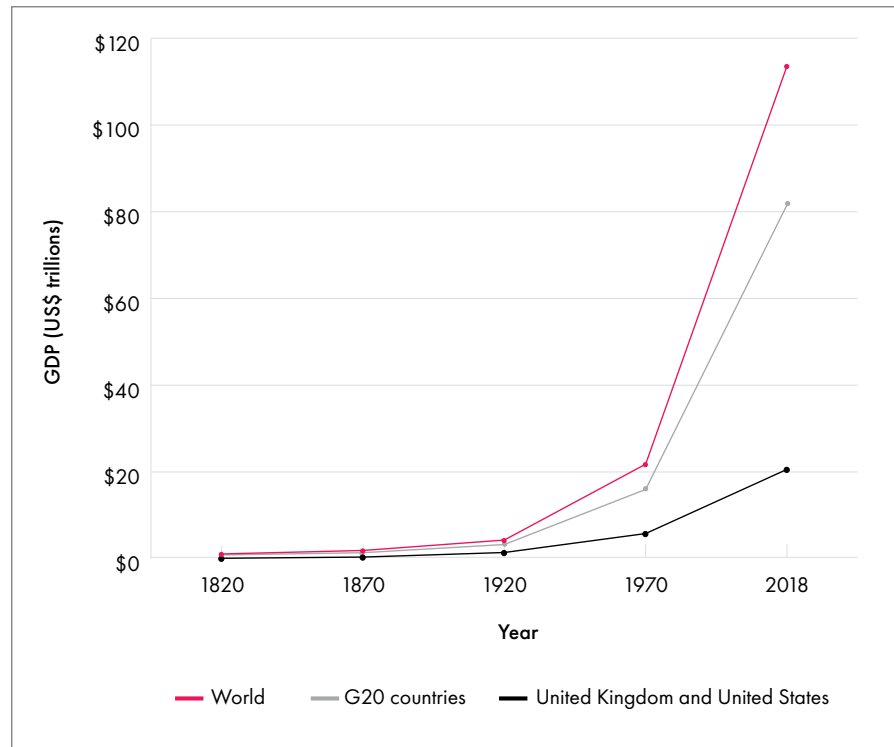
Between the late nineteenth century and the mid-twentieth century, the world's geopolitical centre of gravity shifted.” Thus begins Michael Cotey Morgan’s pithy essay providing a historical context to the arc of Canadian foreign policy. The evocation of the concept of gravity is telling in a series devoted to articulating choices in foreign policy. Any country’s physical location is immutable, but the gravitational pulls around it are fluid over longish periods of time, represent different facets of geopolitics — economic, political, human — and *can* be (actually, have to be) understood, managed and even altered.

If the principal dilemma for Canada for the better part of the last century was the decline of Great Britain’s pre-eminence and the rise of the United States, consider our predicament today: several centres of gravity now exist, of which the United States, European Union and China are pre-eminent but not exclusive. In addition, former powers mingle with middle powers and emerging powers to give true meaning to the term multipolarity. Today, the Group of Twenty (G20) (which actually comprises 19 countries) accounts for about 80 percent of global GDP and trade and 65 percent of global population. A century ago, the United Kingdom and United States alone would have accounted for the same degree of dominance in global economic activity (see Figure 1).

This dissonance of power coexists with unprecedented (and near-ubiquitous) technological change driven by digital transformations and big data; high and rising inequality within countries and falling but still appreciable inequality between them; multiple existential threats in the form of climate change, pandemic(s) and a new generation of hyper-weaponry; and a hitherto vibrant but undermanaged form of globalization for which enthusiasm has waned.



Figure 1: GDP, 1820 to 2019 (US\$ trillions)



Data source: <https://ourworldindata.org/>.

No single country can pretend to have control over the situation, but this is not the same as despairing of it. The potential for crises abounds, but so do the opportunities. As Morgan's and many other essays in this series indicate, Canada is not without the ability and willingness to pursue them. These opportunities are not dichotomous. Focus and prioritization is one thing, tunnel vision quite another.

While Ottawa wrestles with its bilateral relationships anchored by the Canada-US axis, the multilateral dimension is never far behind, for it is axiomatic that smaller players have a visceral interest in a well-functioning, rules-based multilateral order. Rather than take this as a given, Canada has played an outsized role in shaping and running the international political ecosystem. From Brock Chisholm's seminal headship of the World Health Organization to Ottawa's influential role in global finance (first by establishing the Bretton Woods system of fixed exchange rates and then by temporarily leaving it, thus providing lessons for its reform) (Bordo, Gomes and

Schembri 2009), to Paul Martin's central role in the creation of the G20 at the leaders' level, Canada has demonstrated that size and self-interest can combine to create a global public good.

The response to the financial crisis of 2008–2009 is illustrative. Although Canada was affected by it, the economy and financial sector escaped the worst effects (International Monetary Fund [IMF] 2012). (This was not least because of the astute decision by the government of the day, criticized at the time, to prevent large bank mergers [Pearlstein 1998]). The decision did nothing to endear Canada to the US government and its banks, who had long wanted to expand more fully across the border.

Ottawa, in particular Bank of Canada Governor Mark Carney, recognized the main causes of the crisis, which were not a failure in global macroeconomic coordination or trade governance for which we had imperfect but broadly appropriate institutions, although these did play some role, mainly via unsoundly

low risk premia across countries (Carney 2008). Rather, the main culprit was weak management of banks and other financial institutions domestically (in particular in the United States) and the resulting interplay with international financial flows, which had become a distinct factor of globalization. The answer was not to retool existing institutions, such as the IMF, but to create a new institution — a process that it was hoped would become an institution over time — dedicated to understanding and managing the spillover effects of the operation of financial sectors.

As it turns out, the wheels had been set in motion by another Canadian during another crisis — Finance Minister Paul Martin, along with US Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers, was a key proponent of the Financial Stability Forum (FSF) that was created in 1999 by Group of Seven (G7) finance ministers and central bank heads in the aftermath of the Asian financial crisis (Helleiner 2010). Thus was born the Financial Stability Board (FSB), with expanded membership and a broader mandate to promote financial stability. (Between 2011 and 2018, Carney served two terms as chair of the FSB.) Martin is almost certainly correct in arguing that “the FSB should have full treaty status and true universal membership, giving it the weight it requires to be the fourth pillar of the global economic architecture” (Martin 2015).

The FSB story illustrates three important points. First, sound foreign policy must be informed and backed by sound domestic policy. Second, despite the exigencies emanating from a key bilateral relationship, multilateralism cannot play second fiddle to it — indeed, it might be used to counterbalance the gravitational pull of bilateral forces and provide nuance to them. Third, institution building and global governance require commitment, credibility, and all the other hard and soft resources that underpin coalition building.

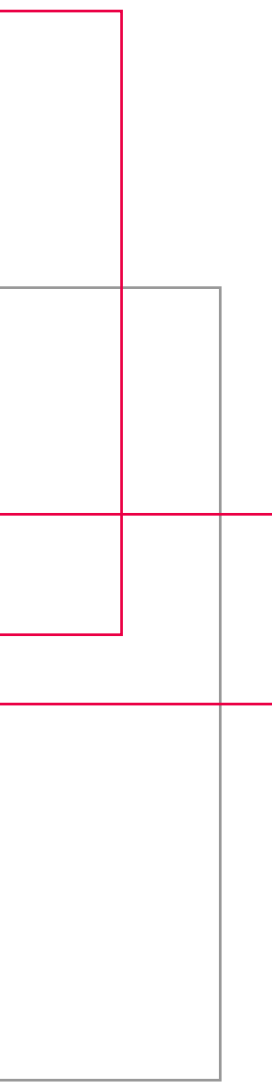
Currently, two challenges that mirror the emergence of financial sectors as distinct and important players in global well-being dominate. One — climate change — is of relatively long standing. The other — digital technologies and data flows — is more recent. While a plainly existential threat to

humanity, I would argue that climate change is well along the path of comprehension, public awareness and range of solutions. One can envisage (albeit imperfect) ways forward without the need for fresh thinking or a new institution. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and numerous national and international bodies provide authoritative, sometimes real-time analyses of the problem. National policies (for example, subsidies to fossil fuels or incentives to encourage green lifestyles and technology) have to adapt more swiftly to promote the public good, but there is a wide consensus on what the choice set of options looks like. International measures — for example, a border carbon adjustment regime (essentially a differential tax to equalize the carbon value of traded goods when domestic processes vary across countries) to prevent carbon “dumping,” or resources to help developing countries adapt to and mitigate climate change — are easily visualized, and institutional “homes” for them can be readily ascribed.

Firms in the digital space have characteristics that are different from the traditional model of manufacturing-based growth.

Not so with the set of issues associated with digital technologies and the use of data as drivers of economic, social and political activity. And here Canada might join, and indeed help create, the global coalition to multilateralize a rapidly evolving situation dominated by a very small number of large and adversarial players.

Firms in the digital space have characteristics that are different from the traditional model of manufacturing-based growth. Participants face high upfront costs and, associated with them, high risk of failure. But success breeds success — marginal costs of reproduction



are zero or near-zero, business models are protected by proprietary intellectual property (IP) laws, and, as with big data, the more you have of it the better your product and the better your product the more customers and data you have. There is a first-mover advantage that is accentuated if product or industry standards are developed concomitantly. Success in this area is underwritten by economies of agglomeration and geopolitical strategy. In the high-tech sector, “clustering,” be it of firms, talent, finance or support services, coupled with an active national strategy to nurture and build out the sector, are key to understanding the winners.

As a result, the world is effectively balkanized into four zones. In the China-centric zone, data is largely controlled by the state, while in the United States, data is largely controlled by the digital platforms. Despite the seeming implacable nature of the competitive conflict between these two countries, their systems have one thing in common — *citizens* are disempowered when it comes to many aspects of data that might belong to them or at least originate with their actions. The European Union’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) puts the individual at the centre of data governance and provides an appealing policy frame. This still leaves the majority of countries in the world, Canada included, to be drawn into the undertow of one or the other regime.

The consequences, good and bad, of the rise of digital platforms and the “digital-industrial complex” are varied and deep. No single player has the wherewithal to create a global governance process here, yet its benefits would be universal — an analogy with the Bretton Woods system is apt (Medhora and Owen 2020). If, say, Canada joined Australia and India in galvanizing a discussion whose starting point is akin to the GDPR ethos but integrates Chinese and American priorities, there is a fighting chance for a global regime to start forming. To use the FSF/FSB analogy, a Digital Stability Forum might bring in disparate interests and provide the table for meaningful, evidence-based discussion (Moore and Tambini 2021). Over time, it might become a board and thereafter a treaty-based fifth pillar of the global economic architecture. (Even if the case for digital governance goes well beyond economics.)

Unfortunately, Canada’s domestic policies might not provide the same credible backstopping that our domestic financial policies did a generation ago (Carney 2009), not because of what they are actively getting wrong but because of a general lack of coherent strategy. Arguably, Canada signed on to certain provisions of the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) — preventing data localization, and use of the safe harbour provision to shield digital platforms operating in Canada from scrutiny of the content they carry — without having had a national discussion, much less a strategy, about society’s view on such matters in the information age. But at this point, even if the ideal time to act has passed, it is not too late — working to create a global regime, however imperfect, beats the status quo enduring forever. There might also be some wind in the sails of progress as both chief protagonists, China and the United States, understand that prolonged conflict in the pursuit of a zero-sum victory is an inferior proposition, economically and otherwise, to shared governance of the ever-growing pie that is the digital world.

In creating the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement (DEPA), Chile, New Zealand and Singapore have shown what the new breed of international accord might look like. Large gaps — such as the valuation of and regulatory issues around intangible assets such as IP and data — remain to be filled. By joining DEPA early, Canada would play a leading role in establishing the rules of the new game (Ciuriak and Fay 2022).

The current discussion over (COVID-19) vaccine inequity, and controversy to revisit the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), the global regime governing IP and innovation more broadly, provides another example of the changing nature of geopolitics. Vaccines are principally manufactured in China, the European Union, India, Russia and the United States, which have contrasting positions on the TRIPS waiver. Each in its own way has conducted “vaccine diplomacy” to further its strategic aims, and yet there is no meaningful discussion on how to make research and development and manufacturing globally more equitable (and, by the way, also more resilient and efficient) by opening up the innovation-stifling aspects of the current regime.

Today it is pandemics, tomorrow it might be a breakthrough technology to fight climate change. The choice for Canada isn't choosing between two countries' views, as it was a century ago, but rather to select from among competing views in a multipolar world to synthesize what is best for it. More often than not, the solution is multilateral or plurilateral, not strictly bilateral. If such dilemmas provoke long overdue *national* discussions *before* we dive into seeking global solutions (or, as in the case of CUSMA, having solutions handed to us), so much the better. The geopolitical and geoeconomic world around Canada has changed too much to assume that its national priorities and, yes, even values remain constant.

David M. Malone and I have argued that while there is no question that global cooperation is under threat, a significant part of the reason could be the inability of existing international institutions and processes to adapt to new realities, be they thematic — the emergence of “new” issues such as big data, climate change and pandemics — or geopolitical — the dissolution of a G7-centric world to a G20-centric one and the contested rise of China (Malone and Medhora 2020).

Shaping institutions for the next century is as important for Canada domestically as it is internationally, ideally in that order. While the Bretton Woods conference is — correctly — seen as a battle of ideas and for primacy between the United Kingdom and the United States, dominated by the larger-than-life personalities of John Maynard Keynes and Harry Dexter White, the heads of the two countries' delegations, Kathleen Britt Rasmussen (2001) has systematically documented how refined Canadian preparation and Canadian proposals were at the conference. A widely cited recent account of the negotiations makes the assertion that “other than the United States, United Kingdom *and Canada* [italics mine], few delegations came equipped to make intellectual contributions to the architecture of the fund and the bank” (Steil 2013, 229).

Initial reports indicate that Canada played an outsized role in designing and promoting key elements of the unprecedented financial and banking sanctions now crippling Russia's economy (Fife and Chase 2022). All this country's resources, talent and avowed penchant for peace, order and good

government will have to be marshalled as, in Morgan's concluding words, “Canadian officials...contend with many of the same challenges that their predecessors faced, reconciling the limits of power with the imperative of independence” and, I would add, remaining influential on the global stage.

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It is hard for Canadians to understand that we can be very helpful as facilitators, as providers of certain functions in a diplomatic operation, without claiming that we pulled off the success on our own.

John Holmes to Michael Fry, January 13, 1988, in Holmes Papers, box 51, file 2, Trinity College Archives, University of Toronto

Canada in the World: The Multilateralist Tradition in Canadian Foreign Policy

Brendan Kelly

Multilateralism, it seems, is in crisis. The world's multilateral institutions have proven ill equipped to handle new challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic and attempts by the great powers to use these institutions (when they use them at all) for competition rather than cooperation. As Canada faces a fractious and uncertain international system, a brief historical review since 1945 of the highlights of what political scientist Tom Keating (2013) has called the "multilateralist tradition" in Canadian foreign policy is timely.

The idea of such a tradition may seem odd. Too small to impose its will on the world, what choice does Canada have but to collaborate with other countries? But its historic commitment to multilateralism, both broad and deep, makes that word appropriate. It in no way diminishes that other venerable tradition in Canadian foreign policy: bilateralism with the United States, the importance of which no Canadian government can afford to ignore. Yet it was partly Canada's fear of domination by the United States, particularly after 1945, that led to a more extensive engagement with the world. Multilateralism became a counterweight to continentalism. Canadian leaders also recognized that harmonious global relations were clearly in Canada's best interest.



The Second World War laid the foundation of the Canadian multilateralist tradition. Spared attack at home, Canada emerged from the war with a robust economy and the world's third-largest navy and fourth-largest air force. Casting off the quasi-isolationism of the pre-war period, in 1947 Canadian foreign minister Louis St. Laurent declared, "There now rests with us the opportunity to show the same degree of competence, the same readiness to accept responsibilities, the same sense of purpose in the conduct of our international affairs" (St. Laurent 1947). Motivated by a desire to prevent another Great Depression or world war, Canada, a self-proclaimed middle power, joined with other countries to build a more prosperous and secure world based on multilateral institutions and common rules.

Canadian policy makers thus became active (if junior) architects of the rules-based international order that emerged. They were present, for example, at the Bretton Woods conference of 1944 that created the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Similarly, they were heavily involved in the drafting of the 1947 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), whose original 23 signatories pledged to work to eliminate trade barriers among themselves, a welcome departure from the beggar-thy-neighbour policies that had prolonged the Great Depression. Canada was also a founding member of the United Nations, having succeeded at the San Francisco Conference of 1945 in strengthening the socioeconomic aspects of that organization's charter. When it became clear, however, that the United Nations' collective security role would be jeopardized by the emerging Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, Canadian diplomats strongly supported the establishment of the more regionally focused North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). While hardly a new institution, the British Commonwealth was also a major factor in postwar Canadian foreign policy. For example, Canadian foreign minister Lester B. Pearson (St. Laurent was now prime minister) helped transform the Commonwealth into a multiracial organization by successfully promoting a compromise that allowed newly independent India to join its ranks as a republic.

If multilateralism made Canada a citizen of the world after 1945, the country was most at

home in the Western camp, which it sought to strengthen. While reluctant publicly to criticize the United States, the undisputed leader of the Western alliance, Canadian diplomats worked behind the scenes in multilateral fora to moderate certain American positions. Its economy booming, Canada engaged in a huge military buildup in response to the United Nations' call for assistance during the Korean War. Ottawa also stationed an infantry brigade and an air division in Western Europe to help NATO defend against the Soviet menace. The importance of alliance solidarity was dramatized by Pearson's key role at the United Nations in 1956 in defusing the Suez Crisis by proposing a United Nations Emergency Force to keep the peace. Pearson may have "saved the world," according to the Nobel Committee that awarded him its Peace Prize for 1957, but his chief aim had been to repair the rift created within both NATO and the Commonwealth by Britain and France's ill-advised invasion of Egypt over its nationalization of the Suez Canal. Although some criticized Pearson for not supporting "Mother England," his peacekeeping initiative at the United Nations captured the imagination of many Canadians — both then and since.

The Progressive Conservative victory in the 1957 Canadian election did not alter the main tenets of postwar Canadian foreign policy. "In international affairs generally," reported one foreign diplomat in Ottawa, "[the Tories] are almost pathologically conscious of the shadow of Mr. Pearson and have in the main been content to continue the policies of the previous Government" (quoted in Kelly 2019, 107). When the UN Secretary-General appealed for peacekeepers for a mission in the Congo, the government of John Diefenbaker found itself pressured into participating by Canadians who saw peacekeeping as part of their identity. An anglophile who admired the Commonwealth, Diefenbaker helped preserve that institution's multiracial character when he became the only white leader to oppose apartheid, and thus the readmission of South Africa, at the 1961 Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference. The next year, he rallied Commonwealth members against Britain's potential "abandonment" of the organization for the European Economic Community. A cold warrior, Diefenbaker discovered that the US-led Western alliance occasionally entailed uncomfortable responsibilities, such

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as Canadian acceptance of nuclear weapons for both the defence of North America and — under NATO — Western Europe. His waffling on this issue exasperated Canada's allies, ultimately precipitating the fall of his government.

When the Liberals returned to power in 1963, many Canadians expected Pearson, now prime minister, to increase Canada's international profile. But Canada's place in the world had changed. With the economic recovery of Western Europe and Japan, and a host of new countries at the United Nations, Canada's international influence was reduced. The postwar consensus on Canadian foreign policy collapsed in the 1960s over the US war in Vietnam and NATO's reliance on nuclear weapons (which Pearson had agreed to accept). "Quiet diplomacy," which had served Canadian multilateral and bilateral diplomacy so well for so long, became a term of disparagement, as critics called for a more "independent" stance.

Still, Canadian multilateralism was not unproductive in this period. By playing a leading role in the establishment of a UN peacekeeping force on the island of Cyprus, where sectarian violence risked provoking war between NATO allies Greece and Turkey, Canada bolstered not only NATO but also the United Nations, which was mired in a stultifying debate over the authorization and financing of such missions. Within the Commonwealth, Pearson negotiated a compromise between Britain and the African, Asian and Caribbean states over the appropriate response to the unilateral declaration of independence by the self-governing British territory of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), whose white minority government clung to power as Africa decolonized. In

NATO, Canadian diplomats, having always resisted the organization's overwhelmingly military focus, pushed for a re-examination of its goals, a process that resulted in the conclusion reached by the 1967 Harmel Report that NATO should focus as much on peace with the Soviet bloc as on defence against it.

In 1968, the new prime minister, Pierre Trudeau, promised a severe reassessment of postwar Canadian foreign policy, which he criticized for subservience to NATO and for unrealistic notions of Canada as a "helpful fixer" or "honest broker" in the world. On peacekeeping, Trudeau declared that Canada was not the world's policeman. Desiring a foreign policy more in the national interest, he halved the number of Canadian NATO forces in Europe. A retired Pearson grumbled privately that genuine national interest involved "co-operation with others...leading to a world order which promotes freedom, well-being and security for all" (quoted in Bothwell 2007, 293). Canada, it seemed, was shunning multilateralism.

In fact, the Trudeau government was neither inclined nor able to do so. Its 16 years in power were marked more by continuity than change in foreign policy. For instance, despite his zany slide down a banister at his first Commonwealth conference, Trudeau quickly came to respect the serious informal conversations such gatherings made possible with leaders of what was then referred to as the Third World. He also warmed to NATO. Tangible commitments to the organization — such as the purchase of new military equipment for Canadian forces in Europe — could help secure European support for Canadian efforts to diversify its trade beyond

the United States (the so-called “Third Option”). While Trudeau generally avoided the United Nations, whose long-winded debates bored him, his government sympathized with its initiatives to reduce inequality between First World and Third World countries. Canada also participated in every UN peacekeeping mission in this period. In major international negotiations in the 1970s, such as the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe and the third UN Conference on the Law of the Sea, Canadian diplomats were active participants. When Canada was admitted to the exclusive and newly formed Group of Six major industrialized nations in 1976, making it the Group of Seven (G7), Trudeau even developed a taste for summitry.

When Brian Mulroney became prime minister in 1984, his Progressive Conservative government promised “super relations” with the superpower to the south. His signature international achievement was the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement of 1989, which Canadians had endorsed in a contentious election on the theme of Canadian independence. Because free trade was so dominant an issue, Canada appeared to be abandoning multilateralism for bilateralism, eschewing the world for North America.

Instead, the Mulroney government continued the postwar Canadian approach of balancing an increasingly close relationship with the United States with ever broader global engagement. Mulroney pushed for economic sanctions against South Africa

during apartheid at the Commonwealth, at the United Nations and at the G7. Canada became a founding member of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum and finally joined the Organization of American States. Compromise between Ottawa and Quebec on the controversial question of provincial participation in la Francophonie facilitated the first of that international organization’s biannual summits.

When the Cold War came to a surprisingly abrupt end, Canada cashed in its “peace dividend” by withdrawing its forces from Europe, even though this step weakened its voice in NATO. Still, the government did not hesitate to commit Canada to the UN military coalition assembled by the United States to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi invasion. Some Canadians feared that the country’s involvement in such “muscular multilateralism,” despite the Gulf War’s legal sanction by the Security Council, compromised Canadian peacekeeping, but the Mulroney government was active here too, supporting UN missions in places such as Somalia and the former Yugoslavia. Mulroney also took a personal interest in the United Nations’ work on the environment and on the welfare of children.

Nonetheless, the early 1990s were marked by uncertainty in Canadian multilateralism as Canada struggled to find its place in a world no longer defined by the Cold War. In an era of trade liberalization, the new Liberal government of Jean Chrétien ratified the previously negotiated North American Free Trade Agreement, sent bilateral “Team Canada” trade missions abroad and joined the World Trade Organization (which replaced GATT). To some, Canadian foreign policy seemed merely a quest for the almighty dollar.

The Chrétien government honoured the peacekeeping commitments it inherited in Somalia, the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, but, as it turned out, there was no peace there to keep. Traditional peacekeeping, establishing a buffer between two sides (usually countries) after a conflict, struggled to handle violence within failed or fragile states. The international community’s tragic inability to prevent the Rwandan genocide popularized the concept of human — as distinct from state — security. Drawing on Canada’s “soft power,” that is, its ability to persuade, Canadian foreign minister

The early 1990s were marked by uncertainty in Canadian multilateralism as Canada struggled to find its place in a world no longer defined by the Cold War.

Lloyd Axworthy made the human security agenda his own. Determined to reform a world sorely in need of it, Axworthy was willing to work outside the United Nations to obtain action. As a result, Canada forged an impressive alliance between like-minded states and civil society groups that led to such achievements as the Ottawa Treaty banning anti-personnel landmines and the establishment of the International Criminal Court, although the United States, Russia and China remained conspicuously absent from both. Creative as Canadian multilateralism was in this period, there was a cognitive dissonance between Axworthy's bold positioning of Canada as a major player on the world stage and the deep cuts the deficit-slaying Chrétien government had made to Canadian diplomacy, development assistance programs and defence. As one disapproving academic put it, Canada was engaging in "pinchpenny diplomacy" (Nossal 1999). Nevertheless, marshalling its limited hard power in the name of human security, the country played a major role in NATO's bombing campaign of Serbian forces in Kosovo.

The US response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, challenged Canadian multilateralism in new ways. With other NATO allies, Canada helped the Americans overthrow the Taliban government in Afghanistan. In the new "war on terror," however, the US administration of George W. Bush was more focused on Saddam Hussein's Iraq, which it insisted possessed weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). The Chrétien government argued that Canada's participation in such a war required the multilateral support of the United Nations, where Canadian diplomats sought to buy weapons inspectors more time to find the alleged WMDs. Determined to invade Iraq no matter what, the United States, Britain and a "coalition of the willing" simply bypassed the United Nations. The Chrétien government's refusal to participate in the Iraq War, undoubtedly its most important foreign policy decision, was popular with the Canadian public largely because it reaffirmed Canada's commitment to multilateralism at a time when many Canadians were becoming uneasy with America's increasing propensity to ignore international opinion. Nevertheless, as in 1956, a minority of Canadians expressed regret that Canada had not stood with its closest ally (or, in this case, allies).

One such Canadian was Stephen Harper. Following Paul Martin's 26-month tenure as prime minister, marked by such initiatives as strong Canadian support at the United Nations for the new Responsibility to Protect (R2P) human security doctrine and the deployment of Canadian forces in Afghanistan under NATO to Kandahar, Harper formed a government in 2006. During its near decade in power, the Conservative Party professed to stand for a principled foreign policy that distinguished Canada's friends from foes, and good from evil. Under Harper, Canadian multilateralism became highly selective. The government extended the country's military mission in Afghanistan under NATO to 2014, participated in that organization's air campaign against Muammar Gaddafi's Libya, joined Canadian allies in fighting the Islamic State and vociferously condemned Russia's annexation of Crimea. Harper's strong interest in global economic governance and international trade, which were more important than ever following the Great Recession of 2008, led to his enthusiastic participation in such multilateral fora as the Group of Eight (G7 after Russia's suspension) and Group of Twenty (created in 1999, thanks in part to the support of then Finance Minister Paul Martin) and to the aggressive pursuit of trade agreements, including the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

On the other hand, the Harper government was deeply skeptical of the United Nations. After Canada failed in 2010 to win election to a temporary seat on the UN Security Council, the prime minister declared that his country would "no longer just...go along and get along with everyone else's agenda" or "please every dictator with a vote at the United Nations" (Harper, quoted in Chase 2011). Similarly, in other large multilateral institutions, such as the Commonwealth and La Francophonie, the government did not hesitate to boycott meetings or to criticize publicly member states that did not share Canada's commitment to freedom, democracy and human rights. While supporters lauded the Harper government for having the courage of its convictions, critics charged that its "megaphone diplomacy" undermined a constructive engagement with other countries that, no matter how repulsive their governments, was the best way for a nation Canada's size to exert influence.



When the Liberals defeated the Conservatives in the 2015 election, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau famously declared that Canada was “back” on the world stage. While it will be up to future historians to assess whether Canada is indeed back, or if it ever left, the Trudeau government has certainly given strong rhetorical support to a multilateral system under strain. That said, reports of multilateralism’s death have been greatly exaggerated. While the system may creak and groan under the weight of new pressures and challenges, and while its need for reform is universally acknowledged, it is still the world’s best option. The alternative — confrontation and the law of the jungle — is ultimately self-destructive, hence, no option at all. Seen in this light, Canadian leaders and policy makers can take pride in their country’s commitment to multilateralism over the last 75 years as they chart a path forward in the twenty-first century.

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Brendan Kelly is the head of the Historical Section and deputy director of the Foreign Policy Research and Foresight Division at Global Affairs Canada. His biography of the Canadian diplomat Marcel Cadieux, *The Good Fight: Marcel Cadieux and Canadian Diplomacy* (UBC Press), was awarded the 2020 J. W. Dafoe Book Prize for the best book on Canada, Canadians, and/or Canada’s place in the world. His research on Canadian international and diplomatic history has appeared in such journals as the *Canadian Historical Review*, *the American Review of Canadian Studies*, and *International Journal*. He is a senior fellow at the Bill Graham Centre for Contemporary International History at the University of Toronto and the former editor of the Book Reviews section of *International Journal*, Canada’s leading journal of global policy analysis.

AUTHOR’S NOTE

The views expressed in this article are the author’s alone, and not those of either Global Affairs Canada or the Government of Canada.

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Canada itself is basically a framework, a framework within which diverse people can live secure, prosperous — and non-republican — lives. The function of our kind of state is peace, order, and good government, in my view a thoroughly modern approach to statehood if not exciting. We are not and never were intended to be a nation state nor the bearers of a mission.

Holmes, "Canada in World Affairs," December 5, 1977, speech at Columbia University, in Holmes Papers, box 10, file 11, Trinity College Archives, University of Toronto

A Fractious and Uncertain International System

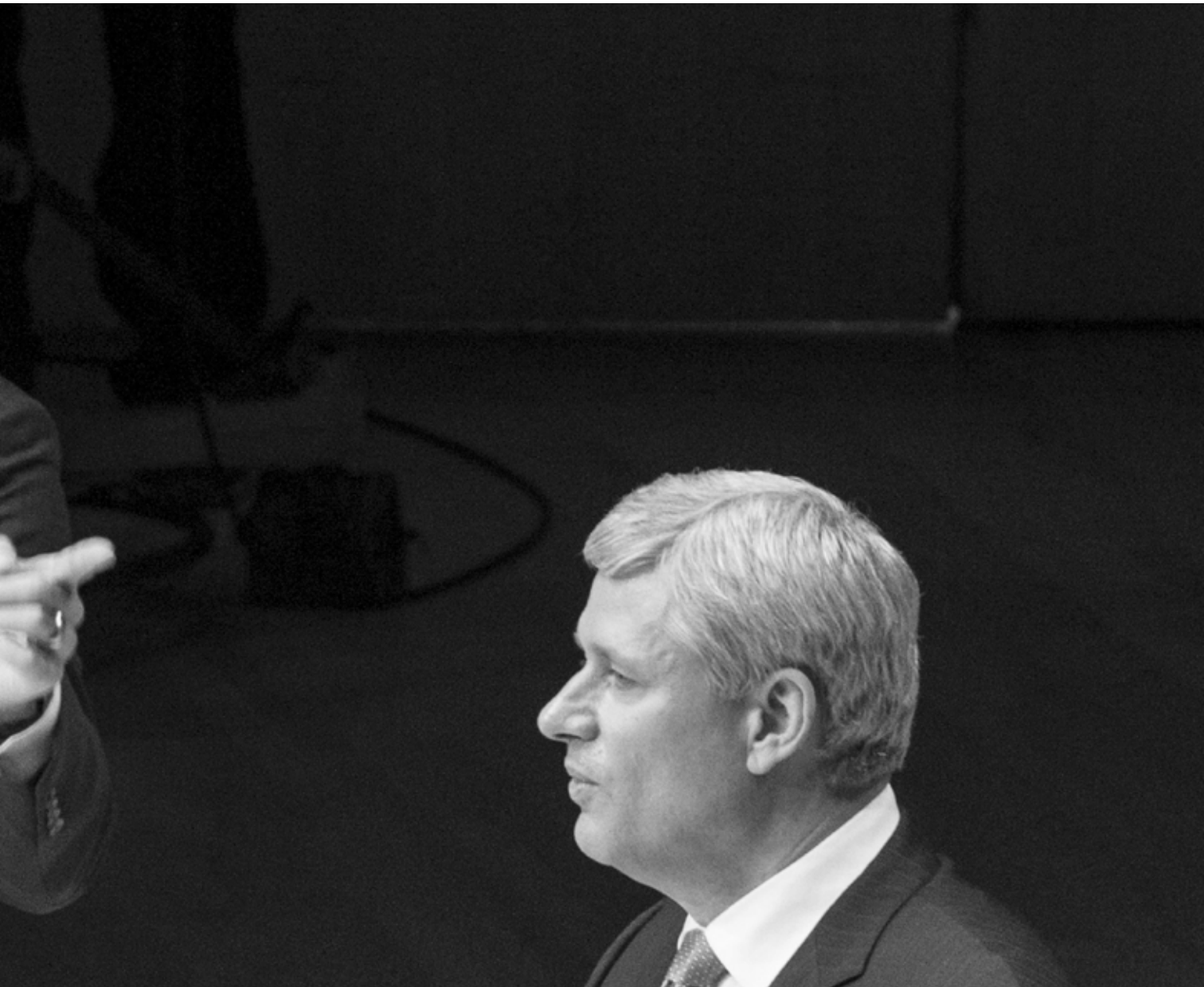
Canada's Multilateralism: A Story of Growing Drift?

David M. Malone



This brief essay is a tribute to the excellent lines of Brendan Kelly sketching out with great economy the emergency of multilateralism as a major theme in Canada's foreign policy, with all of which I agree. I am privileged to have been asked to add to them on this important, often misunderstood theme nearly systematically short-changed by Canada's media unless a multilateral summit or ministerial meeting prompts some coverage or comment.

Multilateralism first became an option for Canada through the League of Nations. The country joined as a recent combatant in the First World War. Canadian Senator Raoul Dandurand, an iconic figure of the times, presided over the League's assembly in 1925 and represented Canada in its council from 1927 to 1930. During the two world wars, Canada was subordinated to Britain and, to a lesser extent, to the United States, and by the end of the Second World War, needed to develop more of an autonomous international identity in order to free itself from outdated colonial strictures. Notably, its economic relationship with the United States had by then displaced that with Britain, and a foreign policy of its own became a necessity.



The early years of sketching the content of this policy coincided with the creation, exponential growth and expanding ambition of international organizations (some but not all linked to the United Nations), many of which Canada joined with enthusiasm. And it was Canada's good fortune to have a confident prime minister, Louis St. Laurent (1948–1957), who was happy to leave much of the sketching of the policy's content to the expert secretary of state for external affairs, Lester B. Pearson, during those same years. Pearson was a born multilateralist, not for sentimental reasons or due to altruism, but because he intuited that it was a field in which Canada could make its mark, and he proceeded to demonstrate the acuity of this perception throughout his tenure. Such thinking was hardly partisan; in the 1980s and early 1990s, the Progressive Conservative government of Brian Mulroney operated under similar assumptions.

Canada's attributes in the field included: not having itself been a colonial power outside of North America; its enviable geographic position and the extent and variety of its land mass; its natural resource wealth; ideal conditions for farming in some regions; and only two contiguous neighbours, the United States, which has, despite many differences, been a good one, and the Russian Federation, across the inhospitable Arctic and the frigid waters surrounding it.

Canada's most attractive feature internationally, and one that is rare, is its continuing and enthusiastic nature as a country that is welcoming to immigrants. It has a reputation for providing space for growing openness of mind, perhaps unlocked in part by the horrors of both world wars, and further encouraged by its growing number of communities drawn from a multiplicity of nations. Immigration from Europe (Hungary in 1956–1957 provided the last big wave) was soon overtaken by immigration from countries such as India, China and Vietnam. Somehow, so far, the experiment has been a happy, fairly harmonious one. The extent to which this aspect of Canada's international identity plays in the country's favour globally is sometimes underestimated within the country.

In terms of war and peace, in the wake of its role in the winning alliance of the Second World War, Canada fielded a considerable

military force in the Korean War of 1950–1953, which travelled under the UN flag. It wisely sat out the Vietnam War, to the fury of US Presidents Lyndon B. Johnson and Richard Nixon, who were further irritated by Canada's welcoming stance toward US draft dodgers, and also steered clear of most subsequent US-driven military ventures, except, for example, the defence of Kosovo against Serb attacks in 1999.

Since 1945, Canada's diplomacy has both contributed to and refracted internationally through a variety of multilateral bodies (several of them regional in nature). Rightly, the example most often cited is the UN system. But Canada has also contributed to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, not so much in terms of defence spending (which has been meagre, a perennial bone of contention with Washington), but, for example, through the opportunities Canada provides for pilot and other forms of training in the varying conditions of its generous geography. It has also joined several economic fora, including the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and its successor, the World Trade Organization; it participates in Group of Seven and Group of Twenty diplomacy; it has benefited greatly from its membership of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; and, in terms of regional bodies, it has joined both the Organization of American States and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, thus leveraging its economic weight and geographic reach. Sadly, other initially promising organizations to which Canada belongs have faded in international relevance over time, including both the Commonwealth and la Francophonie. If spread were all, Canada's international relations would be a sure-fire winner. But, of course, this very spread has aroused differences over whether, in fact, Canada is spread too thin, and whether this effort yields positive tangible results for the country as well as the warm, fuzzy feelings of belonging it invokes. The Conservative government of Stephen Harper addressed the multilateral sphere with asperity; its successor, led by Justin Trudeau, has been more enthusiastic.

Canada's international profile was at its zenith in the closing days of the Second World War and in shaping the peace that followed. During those years, Ottawa pressed for decolonization, while many of the colonial powers were

ambivalent at best about facilitating it. Most developing countries retain some memory of this. And, as Kelly rightly documents, for several decades Canada's diplomacy, increasingly global, proved energetic and deft under both governing parties.

For all these reasons, among others, multilateralism has appealed to Canada since 1919 and Canada, while often in an unfocused way, mostly appeals to other countries.

Regrettably, this proud claim can now be disputed, due in part to nearly 10 years of Stephen Harper's skeptical world view (one he has broadened considerably since leaving office), and to a somewhat easily distracted Liberal government that has displayed admirable intentions but at times has failed to follow up convincingly. Kelly mentions the loss of an election to a UN Security Council seat in 2010, mostly attributable, in my view, to the Harper government's early lack of warmth toward Africa (which holds 54 of 193 votes in the UN General Assembly) and an ill-timed falling out with Arab countries immediately before the vote. Further, Canada ran against two popular members, one of them, Germany, important. The other, Portugal, in spite of an odious past as a colonial power, has more recently cultivated with great skill a positive brand of international engagement, not least by leveraging its now excellent relations with those countries it used to oppress, including Brazil, Mozambique and Angola. The result was thus not entirely surprising.

But the outcome of the 2020 UN Security Council election was a shock, internationally as well as domestically. Canada's opponents this time were two considerably smaller countries, Norway and Ireland, albeit each with a hard-earned, attractive international profile. Prime Minister Trudeau travelled the world widely and garnered significant media attention, mostly favourable, in the run-up to the vote. In spite of these efforts, and a much friendlier overall foreign policy than Harper's interests-based calculations allowed his to be, Canada lost badly, not even able to force a run-off ballot.

It's not clear what reflection in Ottawa this sorry result provoked. However, Canada thereupon made a deft move by nearly immediately appointing the well-chosen Bob Rae as its new envoy to the body, where he is

widely considered a heavy hitter, so history has moved on.

An even more striking incident unfolded in 2018 within the Asia-Pacific multilateral sphere. Canada was an early supporter of a Trans-Pacific Partnership agreed to in 2016, from which US President Donald Trump, no fan of binding international agreements, defected soon after taking office. Following six months of diplomatic silence, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan pushed for the adoption of an adjusted text, known as the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), which essentially removed a number of clauses the United States had strongly pressed for under President Barack Obama relating to labour rights and intellectual property.

The CPTPP text, thought to have been agreed by all the remaining members ahead of a signature ceremony in Hanoi in late 2017, had to be cancelled at the last moment thanks to second thoughts in Ottawa. Canada did sign on in 2018, having resolved whatever internal consultations still needed to be engineered, but that event in 2017, so offensive to the Japanese and wider Asian preference for predictability and order, points to a long-standing bias in

Myopia prevails in day-to-day commentary, but the trend line raises more questions than comforting answers.

Canadian foreign policy toward Europe, and perhaps also to a lack of understanding in political and senior official circles in Ottawa as to how Asia functions multilaterally and more generally.

Thus, we have come a long way from the days of Lester B. Pearson and Brian Mulroney. And, from a perspective shaped by *la longue durée*, it is by no means certain that the last 15 or so years have been brilliant ones for

One measure of how serious an international player an industrialized country aims to be is the dynamism and level of its international aid program.

Canada at the international level. History, of course, may remember this period otherwise. Myopia prevails in day-to-day commentary, but the trend line raises more questions than comforting answers.

Personality, competence and experience all count in ministerial functions of an international nature. Knowing one's counterparts, and appreciating as many of them as possible, an ability to seize the gist of complex files often previously completely unknown to new appointees, and a reputation for reliability are all assets not just in Asian but also in global multilateral and bilateral diplomacy. In little more than six years, Canada has offered the world five different foreign ministers, some excellent, others, nearly inevitably with such short tenures, above all forgettable.

Has the country lost the plot of how international, particularly multilateral relations function and what they require in the advancement of national interests? As we emerge from the COVID-19 crisis with depleted national coffers and a renewed widening gap in prosperity between the industrialized countries and developing ones, it may be helpful for Canada's government to recalibrate its foreign policy instruments.

One measure of how serious an international player an industrialized country aims to be is the dynamism and level of its international aid program. In truth, Canada's once proud performance on that front — several decades ago, it commanded resources exceeding 0.5 percent of gross national income, and, while never perfect, seemed relevant at country and continent levels throughout much of the developing world — has since then almost halved (in real inflation-adjusted terms), marked more by ministerial announcements than lasting impact in the

field. This is not a particularly partisan trend: both governing parties have adduced reasons to cut the program back, although the current government, to its credit, has sought to rebuild it.

Today, Canada has one theme that resonates well with domestic reality and international need relating to gender equality, and another, embracing an admirable range of environmental goals, which suffers from insufficient funding and, at least somewhat, the handicap of Canada's own poor performance on CO₂ emissions. It has had four ministers responsible for international assistance in a little more than six years, one of whom was in the complex and demanding portfolio for less than a year. Overall, Canada's official development assistance performance has underwhelmed relative to the country's occasionally soaring rhetoric.

Ever since the emergence of Chairman Xi Jinping as the dominant leader of China, the seeming gradual radicalization of President Vladimir Putin of the Russian Federation and the election of President Trump in the United States, international relations have deteriorated considerably. Early hopes that the election of President Joe Biden in 2020 would usher in a lastingly more sober era within the United States, and perhaps internationally, have subsided. Every country's foreign policy choices appear to be more constrained than they were 10 years ago. And this, at a time since early 2020 when national leaders have needed to contend domestically with the unanticipated, hugely disruptive and expensive COVID-19 pandemic.

Given this backdrop, and the urgent need for Ottawa to recalibrate its energy mix in years to come, it might be tempting simply to navigate only as far as the eye can see. This would be a lost opportunity to think about how Canada

might craft a role for itself globally, not least within the multilateral sphere, amid the current turmoil — one seeking to help shape the international dispensation in keeping with its values and in support of its interests. Are we there yet?

I conclude with a modest plea from one living on the edge of the world's economically most dynamic continent: we should not so much rebalance toward Asia, and by implication away from the trans-Atlantic sphere (which remains very important for Canada), but rather simply and determinedly up the country's game in the Asia-Pacific region, including through multilateral channels. Meanwhile, we must continue to nurture the cross-party and public support for an active immigration policy that marks Canada's brand so positively in an era that has been a depressing one for international relations writ large.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

I am delighted to participate in an essay series carrying the name of John Holmes, one of Canada's outstanding early senior foreign service officers who rose very quickly to a senior level, and who then fell victim to the Canadian government's discrimination against those of same-sex inclination during the 1950s and early 1960s, driven by McCarthyite panic in Washington. Leaving Ottawa when further advancement was foreclosed, he reinvented himself as one of the foremost scholars of Canadian foreign policy at York University and later at the University of Toronto, also serving as a dynamic leader of the Canadian Institute for International Affairs. During the 1950s, when I was a young child in Ottawa, John often came over to our family home for dinner on Sundays. He was a gentle, brilliant figure of admirable intellect and values very popular indeed with us kids.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David M. Malone joined the United Nations University on March 1, 2013 as its sixth rector. In that role, he holds the rank of Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations. A Canadian national, Rector Malone holds a B.A.A. from l'École des Hautes Études Commerciales (Montreal); an Arabic Language Diploma from the American University (Cairo); an M.P.A. from the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University; and a D.Phil. in international relations from Oxford University.

Prior to joining the UNU David served from 2008 to 2013 as president of Canada's International Development Research Centre, a funding agency that supports policy-relevant research in the developing world. He has published extensively on peace and security issues.





Canada in a World Where Democracies Are under Strain

Authoritarian Challengers and the Conduct of Canadian Foreign Policy

Susan Colbourn

Authoritarianism and its various practitioners are frequently invoked as a collective threat to democracies across the globe, Canada included. At its most basic, the label “authoritarian” applies to countries that have rejected political pluralism in favour of concentrated and centralized power. Underneath this broad umbrella, authoritarian regimes come in all shapes and sizes, from military juntas to personalist dictatorships. The People’s Republic of China, Saudi Arabia and Russia, for example, all certainly qualify, yet despite fundamental differences between these regimes, they are often lumped together and cast as an omnibus (albeit amorphous) challenge to Canada and to like-minded democracies.

What follows examines how challenges from authoritarian states have shaped the trajectory of Canadian foreign policy over the course of the twentieth century. At various points, Canadians organized themselves — marshalled their political, economic and military resources — to stand against Prussian militarism, fight Nazi and fascist aggression, and guard against the threat of communist incursion. Successive governments in Ottawa did so, motivated in large part by a desire to defend their own political system against the dangers posed by various authoritarian challengers. Authoritarian states, as a result, provided a sort of organizing logic that framed Canada’s foreign policy and the central objectives thereof for much of the twentieth century.

More often, Canada’s relations with authoritarian regimes have revolved around questions of how and on what terms Ottawa should engage them.

Not every authoritarian state has presented Canada with an existential challenge. The threats, both real and perceived, that defined the First World War, the Second World War and the Cold War determined the geopolitical landscape of much of the twentieth century but, in the grand scheme of Canada’s engagement with authoritarian states, they were statistical outliers. More often, Canada’s relations with authoritarian regimes have revolved around questions of how and on what terms Ottawa should engage them. Canadian governments faced perennial dilemmas about how to balance their desire to promote the tenets of democracy, such as freedom of speech

or human rights, against other priorities, including trade ties and stable and productive diplomatic relations.

In the summer of 1914, a crisis broke out in the Balkans, triggered by the assassination of the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Austria-Hungary responded, declaring war against Serbia. Bit by bit, a web of alliances and alignments drew the powers of Europe into conflict, with Russian, French and German declarations of war following in rapid succession. The government in London, fearful that Germany might come to dominate Europe, soon joined in, bringing with it the British Empire, including Canada.

London touted its involvement in the war as an endeavour “to save the freedom of the people in all Europe” and to defend them against the imposition of the German way of life. “In Germany,” one war poster declared, “the Emperor rules, the people have no power, there is no free speech. The military class does what it likes.” Should the Germans be victorious, it was that system that would win out and “the cause of freedom and equal justice and fair play for you will be gone for hundreds of years.”²¹ That rhetoric resonated with a great many Canadians who saw London’s cause as their own. “The democracies of Greater Britain stand together in all parts of the world to support the traditions of British liberty,” the historian George Wrong insisted (McKercher 2019, 60).

But there lay a profound disconnect between the stated aims of defending liberty abroad and the day-to-day realities of what the Canadian war effort entailed at home. Under the terms of the War Measures Act of 1914, the federal government could suspend habeas corpus, intern suspected “enemy aliens,” ban various political organizations and introduce wide-ranging censorship measures to restrict speech. The tools deemed necessary to defend democracy in times of war could — and did — come at the cost of many of those same democratic freedoms. Indeed, successive generations in power in Ottawa have struggled to protect the freedoms and liberties of their democratic system against the dangers of easily exploited elements of the very system they hoped to defend.

In the wake of the Great War, Canadians threw themselves into the work of avoiding

another global conflict. Prominent and high-profile citizens, including former prime minister Sir Robert Borden, launched the Canadian Institute of International Affairs in 1928. And the late 1920s saw a boom in organizations dedicated to the new multilateral forum, the League of Nations, with local League of Nations societies emerging from coast to coast.

A broad commitment to multilateralism and to the new structures of the post-1919 world did not automatically translate into a firm policy designed to rebuff those who hoped to revise and reorder that world. Throughout the 1930s, with capitalism in the doldrums of the Great Depression, other ideologies — and the authoritarian states that backed them — gained support across Europe and Asia and found adherents at home among Canadians.

The challenges of authoritarianism in the 1930s, whether arising from Nazi Germany, imperial Japan, fascist Italy or the communist Soviet Union, were met with a tepid response in Ottawa. When Japan moved against the resource-rich Chinese province of Manchuria in the autumn of 1931, for instance, Canadian observers argued over the national response. From the Canadian mission in Tokyo, Hugh Keenleyside denounced Japanese actions as an act of outright aggression. Japan might have had treaty rights in Manchuria, many of which had been violated by China, but those rights did not justify the use of force in response. Herbert Marler, Keenleyside's superior, disagreed. The Japanese move had not changed the circumstances on the ground, given China's already weak central government. Even if it were an act of aggression, Marler concluded that the great powers were unlikely to take action to stop it beyond a string of pious speeches at the League about the preservation of peace (Meehan 2004).

As Japan, Italy and Germany left the League of Nations and violated the restrictions imposed by the settlements of 1919, Ottawa maintained its diplomatic relationships. A Canadian delegation helmed by Minister of Trade William Euler and the diplomat Dana Wilgress concluded a bilateral trade agreement with the Germans against the backdrop of the 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin. Two years later, the mass, state-sanctioned violence of Kristallnacht caused a growing segment of the Canadian population to lobby Ottawa to

extend greater aid to Jews hoping to flee Nazi persecution. These pleas were rejected.

Even in early 1939, Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King remained convinced that war could be averted. "Appallingly critical as I know the whole situation to be," the prime minister confided in his diary in January, "I cannot bring myself to believe that war will come between Germany and England."²

King's optimism proved unfounded. When war broke out in September 1939, countless Canadians rallied to the cause just as their forebears had in 1914. Once more, the struggles of war were cast in existential terms as a fight to defend the current system against its rivals and challengers. "Keep These Hands Off!" exhorted a broadside from the National War Finance Committee on an image of a mother and child surrounded by two menacing hands, one emblazoned with the swastika of Nazi Germany, the other with the rising sun of imperial Japan.

The end of the Second World War provided only the briefest respite. Before 1945 was through, the news of a Soviet spy ring operating in Canada's midst rattled official Ottawa. Even the typically cautious King was convinced that Josef Stalin's Soviet Union threatened the hard-won state of peace. "The rest of the world," the prime minister concluded on March 5, 1946, reflecting on Winston Churchill's now-famous Iron Curtain address in Fulton, Missouri, "is not in a very different position than other countries in Europe when Hitler had made up his mind to aim at the conquest of Europe."³

In the face of such a threat, Canadian officials were determined to avoid the mistakes of the past by constructing a bulwark against the expansion of communist power spearheaded by the Soviet Union. Ottawa forged new political arrangements, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, to deter Muscovite pressure.

As had been the case during both world wars, the Cold War was often described in stark terms. Its stakes were nothing short of protecting the freedoms and liberties enjoyed by Canadians and their counterparts throughout the West in the face of the grim alternatives offered by the Soviet Union. That rhetoric was not always compelling to Canadians, whether in or out of government.

And as the Cold War stretched on, its urgency dissipated. Canadians worried about the excesses of anti-communism, whether on the part of their own government or, more often, by their allies south of the border.

These wars, both hot and cold, illustrate how a struggle against authoritarianism could give meaning and shape to the conduct of Canadian foreign policy. But in the broad sweep of the country's history, these were the exceptions that proved the rule. For every Nazi Germany or Stalinist Soviet Union, there were countless other regimes deemed unsavoury, but not nearly as threatening to Canada or its interests.

In the day-to-day conduct of Canadian foreign relations, Liberal and Conservative governments alike have grappled with fundamental questions about how and on what terms to engage with authoritarian regimes of various persuasions. How could the government of the day, for instance, reconcile a desire to expand and sustain trade ties with the defence of broader principles such as human rights?

These wars, both hot and cold, illustrate how a struggle against authoritarianism could give meaning and shape to the conduct of Canadian foreign policy.

Attempts to strike a balance have defined Canada's relations with a range of authoritarian states, from the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China to Iran and Saudi Arabia. Critics have lambasted various governments' failures to calculate that

balance correctly, highlighting the disconnect between Canada's professed principles and its day-to-day decision making. Ottawa's 2014 decision to export \$15-billion worth of light armoured vehicles to Saudi Arabia, with its egregious human rights record, is a recent example. The satirical outlet *The Beaver* pilloried the agreement, joking in one headline "Saudi Arabia condemns Canada's appalling human rights record of selling arms to Saudi Arabia" (Field 2018). Tellingly, although the deal was initially approved by the Conservative government of Stephen Harper, the backlash mounted precipitously when Justin Trudeau's Liberals took power, boasting of Canada's return to the world stage (*Toronto Star* 2015) and the virtues of a feminist foreign policy (Vucetic 2017).

Perhaps nowhere have the trade-offs to balance these competing impulses been more visible than in Canada's relations with China. As Prime Minister Jean Chrétien's Team Canada pursued expanded trade with Beijing in the 1990s, his government studiously hoped to sidestep mention of China's dismal record on human rights. On one occasion, Chrétien insisted that a country of Canada's stature could not tell China how to behave at home. Size and relative influence shaped when and where Canadian governments felt emboldened to speak out in favour of their principles. Under Stephen Harper, for instance, the government denounced Iran's human rights record and lobbied against Ugandan legislation to criminalize homosexuality (Chapnick and Kukucha 2016). Similar restrictions and persecution in Saudi Arabia went undiscussed. These dynamics continue to govern Canada's policies toward China: in early 2021, when the House of Commons voted to label China's treatment of the Uighurs a genocide, Trudeau's Cabinet did not appear for the vote (Jones 2021).

Looking to the past does not offer any sort of how-to guide for Canadian policy makers to deal with authoritarian regimes. But the Canadian experience throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first does remind us of the perennial dilemmas at play.

The major conflicts that defined so much of Canada's twentieth century — the First World War, the Second World War and the Cold War — put day-to-day problems facing generations of Canadian policy makers in the sharpest

relief. Canadians defined their wartime efforts as nothing short of the defence of freedoms and liberties in a democratic system, and yet, to do so, also accommodated themselves to policies that inhibited those freedoms. Revisiting these difficult legacies can and should be a pivotal part of our conversations about what looms on the horizon, particularly as Canada's most important ally, the United States, presses for a "summit of democracies" in the hopes of rallying against the rising tide of autocracy and authoritarianism (Miller 2021). How Canada navigates relations with China, for instance, will depend in large part on how the United States decides to manage its own competition with Beijing.

Such sharp distinctions, pitting democracy against authoritarianism, can easily obscure the much more messy realities of policy making in Ottawa. For the most part, Canadian governments have had a far less principled track record, favouring business as usual with authoritarian countries — with a heavy emphasis on business. Doing business with authoritarian governments remains difficult to sell to voters across the country, but it has typically been easier than bearing the economic costs of taking a principled stand.

NOTES

- 1 See www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/27859.
- 2 See www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/politics-government/prime-ministers/william-lyon-mackenzie-king/Pages/item.aspx?idNumber=19890&.
- 3 See www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/politics-government/prime-ministers/william-lyon-mackenzie-king/Pages/item.aspx?idNumber=29340&.

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Democracy, Authoritarianism and Canada's Sovereign Course

Leigh Sarty

Susan Colbourn has described how authoritarian states have historically provided “a sort of organizing logic” for the conduct of Canadian foreign policy, while confounding its stewards with the “perennial dilemmas” that arise when a country committed to democracy and human rights engages those that embrace neither. Her thesis is an apt starting point for the analysis that follows. Like Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, Xi Jinping’s China and Vladimir Putin’s Russia are of concern to Canada because, as great powers, they have a disproportionately large impact on the global environment that conditions the policy choices on which Canada’s security and prosperity depend. The war that Putin has unleashed in Ukraine brings this home with tragic clarity. Although a far cry from the “totalitarianism” that menaced Western capitals in the twentieth century, the regimes in Beijing and Moscow are unmistakably authoritarian, and their outlooks complicate our dealings with them in important ways. Colbourn’s thoughtful discussion of the difficulty inherent in balancing Canada’s support for democracy and human rights with “other priorities” brings this home. Examples are seemingly legion, for Liberal and Conservative governments alike, of principles taking a back seat to other interests, most often commercial gain.

The world today is not what it was even five years ago, let alone during the distant post-1945 era that forged Canada’s internationalist ideals. The global environment and the challenges Canada faces have changed incontrovertibly, and yet Ottawa persists in framing its policy debates — and its approaches to global actors as significant as China and Russia — in a manner suggesting they have not. The most important challenge Canada faces in 2022 is a southern neighbour no longer inclined or able to exercise the leadership on which Canadian foreign policy has traditionally relied. “Internationalism,” the collaborative enterprise aimed, in Michael Tucker’s (1980, 2) phrase, at “the enhancement of interests or values commonly shared with others outside of Canada, with a view to helping create or sustain a better world order,” successfully underpinned Ottawa’s diplomacy after 1945 because it dovetailed with the purposes and unprecedented capabilities of the American superpower. As American purposes and capabilities evolve, and not necessarily for the better, Canada needs to ensure that the laudable aims of its internationalist vocation continue to align with the means available for carrying them out.



Recent indications are not encouraging. To be sure, Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland's June 6, 2017, address to the House of Commons was a promising start. Acknowledging that the United States had "come to question the very worth of its mantle of global leadership," Freeland (2017) declared it was time that Canada set "our own clear sovereign course." However, her call to action turned out to herald more of the same, nowhere more tellingly than in Marc Garneau's September 2021 UN evocation of Lester Pearson, as if the legacy of the Nobel laureate's achievements in the 1950s continues to bear directly on the challenges of our own times.¹ The same inattention has resulted in the appointment of five different foreign ministers in a span of six years, as if the insights and influence forged by experience and sustained, personal diplomacy are somehow superfluous to the needs of Canadian foreign policy.

Canada's policy toward Russia is a good illustration of how basing external interactions on outdated thinking clouds our ability to effectively meet the challenges of the present. Although the war in Ukraine has opened a new and tragic chapter in the history of East-West relations, Canada's approach to Russia during the decade leading up to that conflict did us little credit. For Ottawa, demonstrating our revulsion at the excesses of Putinism consistently took priority over any nuanced evaluation of how engagement might both have amplified that revulsion while selectively advancing our commercial, security and people-to-people interests. This is a calculus that virtually all of Canada's like-minded allies successfully undertook. For them, firm support for sanctions over Russia's brazen (but then still limited) interference in Ukraine coexisted with ministerial exchanges and the active promotion of non-sanctioned commercial interests with Russia. Yet when war broke out in February 2022, a Canadian foreign minister had not visited Russia in more than a decade, giving us less of a voice in the diplomacy of this crucial period than our interests clearly warranted.

This is not to suggest that Canada should have "softened" its opposition to Moscow's pernicious behaviour, but rather to ask why Canada's Russia policy before the war lacked the dexterity of which others seemed capable. Domestic politics — the influence of the (robustly anti-Putin) Canadian Ukrainian

community, and the desire of all politicians to court it — of course played a role. But the decisive factor, I would suggest, was the mindset forged through decades of taking for granted the protective shield of the United States, which gave Canada a degree of security after 1945 of which countries less desirably located in the international system could only dream. Since state survival was never really at stake, Canadians could afford to be less hard-nosed than others; a certain moral superiority crept into our brand of internationalism, a sense that we are somehow better that makes us feel good about ourselves as we promote the values of which we are justifiably proud. If the shield that made that possible has begun to crack, some serious reckoning is in order.

Canada's approach to China is no less dysfunctional. Here, at least, we are in good company. Beijing's increasingly belligerent swagger now touches every member of the international community; all our like-minded partners are grappling with how to manage China's seemingly inexorable rise and unrepentant authoritarianism. Such concerns are well founded, but there is a harshness to the discourse that reflects something more than a preoccupation with shifts in relative power. A palpable sense of betrayal infuses this debate, most evident in Washington but present in Ottawa as well. Xi's dictatorship is an affront to four decades of engagement intended to bestow the blessings of democracy upon China's millions. No matter that perceptive observers such as James Mann (2007) long ago anticipated that the Chinese Communist Party's brutal monopoly on power might endure, or that others have acknowledged the naked self-interest that led relevant Western elites to assert otherwise (Mulrone 2020). By evolving in accordance with its own long history and unique political culture, China has defied the claim that democracy and respect for human rights are universal, challenging a pillar of the post-Cold War international order and the West's foreign policy *raison d'être*.

Dealing with China has historically been an endeavour that made Canadians proud about their role in the world. From the missionary impulse that informed Canada-China exchanges in the nineteenth century to Pierre Trudeau's prescient opening to China and the Team Canada missions of more recent times, Canadians believed that they sought

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what was best for the Middle Kingdom. Engagement to foster democracy and mutual prosperity promised a “win-win” outcome for all concerned. Disillusionment that things turned out otherwise, quite apart from justified grievance over the “two Michaels,” helps explain why developing a sound China policy is proving so difficult. This is not to downplay the many other considerations that complicate our bilateral relations, Beijing’s increasingly assertive “wolf warrior” diplomacy foremost among them (Zhu 2020). Aggrieved umbrage in Ottawa (as elsewhere) over Beijing’s enduring authoritarianism does not help matters, however. Surely, the principal lesson of a half-century of engaging China is the importance of seeing the world as it is, rather than as we believe or would wish it to be.

All states exaggerate threats to some degree. This is simply prudent in a world with no protective higher authority, where not erring on the side of caution can prove fatal (Mearsheimer 2001). But the sense of betrayal that Canada and many like-minded partners feel about Xi’s China has further distorted this tendency. A similar sentiment amplifies our distaste for Putin’s Russia, although in that case the memories of Western efforts to export democratic enlightenment have become more distant. The outcome in both cases, however, is to build up Putin and Xi to be much more powerful than they are while overlooking the significant challenges both face. We are right to accentuate, and to seek to address, the strains plaguing democracy in 2022, but in the process, we risk downplaying the fact that our authoritarian rivals are no better off.

However troubled the contemporary democratic enterprise (and commemorations of the January 6, 2021 assault on the US Capitol remind us it is troubled indeed),

the authoritarian cause remains saddled by fundamental shortcomings of its own making, capital flight and chronic corruption chief among them. Although Yuen Yuen Ang’s (2020) recent study shows clearly how, in China’s case at least, corruption in no way portends imminent collapse, Chinese and other anti-democratic elites’ foreign real estate, investment and educational choices belie a lack of faith in the robustness of their own institutions. The resulting insecurities are reflected in the visceral fears of “coloured revolution” expressed in official discourse in both China and Russia, and in the massive sums both spend on domestic security apparatuses to prevent it (Sarty 2020). The trolling, hacking and exploitation of social media through which Beijing and Moscow seek to subvert Western societies, and which have fostered their image as all-powerful threats to our security and well-being, are in fact signs of their relative weakness. They are efforts by regimes that find themselves on the wrong side of history to counter the still-compelling draw of Western freedoms with the only ham-fisted tools at their disposal (Sarty 2021). The war in Ukraine is a tragic case in point. None of this is to diminish the democratic West’s own internal challenges. But it is a reminder of the importance of comparative perspective. Every difficulty or setback on our side does not necessarily mean our authoritarian rivals are advancing.

For Canada, seeing China and Russia as “more fragile than frightening” would be an important first step toward putting our foreign policy on a more effective footing (Sarty 2020). The stark, Manichean discourse on these countries, reminiscent of the “white hats vs. black hats” approach once favoured by Foreign Minister John Baird, does not serve Canada well (MacKinnon et al. 2015). Instead

of trash-talking from afar and spinning a great line about our values, we need to undertake a serious, far-reaching and dispassionate assessment of our national interests and how to advance them in a challenging world. Such advice will not be welcomed by those accustomed to viewing international affairs as a realm for self-serving rhetoric and easy appeals to domestic constituencies. But it is better suited to the demands of present-century world politics than the reflexive formulas of the last.

This is not just to take Canada to task. Trying to grasp a world in which democracies are under strain raises larger questions about the democratic cause writ large. That its fate should be in doubt is nothing short of astonishing. Francis Fukuyama (1989) was right when he called the triumph of the liberal-democratic ideal “the end of history.” As a lifetime practitioner in the realms of Russian and Chinese affairs, I can assert with some conviction that the drawing power of this ideal still stands head and shoulders above anything that Beijing or Moscow has on offer. Our rivals’ intentions are inimical to our interests, and we need to guard against them. But there is no prospect that the “lure” of Putinism or Xi’s dictatorship will displace the global appeal of free societies and free markets, which extends, selectively but importantly, to the very authoritarian elites who challenge it.

Sins of omission and commission, spearheaded by Washington and abetted by its allies, have squandered the West’s triumph in the Cold War and helped to unleash the forces that menace us from without and within. Russian machinations in Ukraine not only reflect Moscow’s determination to relitigate the Soviet Union’s collapse, but shortcomings in our own management of Russia’s Cold War defeat. The West can scarcely be blamed for the menace that is Xi’s China, but decades of Western self-interest and self-delusion have compounded that challenge. And although the origins of democratic backsliding lie well beyond the scope of this essay, there is surely something to Ben Rhodes’ (2021) argument that elements of dysfunction in post-September 11 America — corrupt money in politics; demonizing the foreign “other” — have found reflection in the playbooks of leading authoritarians from Hungary’s Viktor Orban to Vladimir Putin.

We need to rethink the notion that the world can be made safe for democracy. Surely the August 2021 debacle in Kabul, following on the heels of events in Syria, in Libya, in Iraq and even the war in Vietnam, vindicates John Mearsheimer’s (2018) assertion that America’s effort to remake the world in its own image is a “great delusion.” Whether we like it or not, the values at the heart of Canadian foreign policy, the promotion of democracy and human rights above all, have been validated and entrenched over time precisely because of our (and our like-minded Western partners’) intimate connection with American power. As the aims and extent of that power evolve, values deemed to be “universal” when that power was at its height might take on a different cast.

The implications of this are sobering but unavoidable: “We need to get more serious about our diplomacy than ever before” (Donaghy and Axworthy 2020). At a minimum, we need an informed debate about whether and how the ideals and foreign policy prescriptions that have served Canada in the past align with the truly disturbing array of challenges we face in 2022. If (and it is a big “if”) the requisite political will can be found, Canada may at last arrive at the “clear sovereign course” that our tumultuous times demand.

NOTE

1 See Garneau (2021).

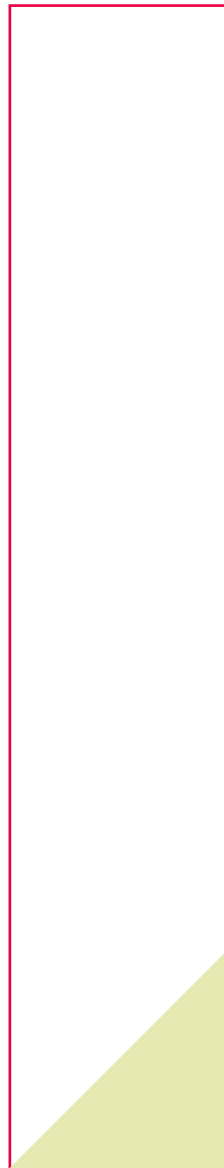
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Advancing Trade, Investment and Development

Building Confidence through Trade and the Start of Economic Summitry

Jennifer Levin Bonder



The first economic summit of the Cold War met outside Paris, France, in November 1975. At the summer residence of the French president, an exclusive club of countries — France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States — met to exchange views on predefined topics related to the ongoing currency and energy crises. Initial reports were hardly positive. According to *The New York Times*, “its impact was so amorphous that it already appears to be slipping quietly into the dim recesses that history reserves for minor footnotes about insubstantial events” (Shabecoff 1975). A White House official compared it to a “religious retreat” (ibid.), a kind of declaration of faith in the ability of industrial democracies to weather the economic storms of unemployment and inflation, but nothing more. Without meaningful policy decisions, concluded *The Economist*, “Chateau Rambouillet 1975 is already slightly corked” (*The Economist* 1975, 69). In spite of the pessimism, this first meeting in France ultimately spawned the Group of Seven (G7), and its complementary Group of Twenty, two international economic institutions that have persevered to this day.

Since the Bretton Woods Conference of 1944, the global monetary system had functioned according to fixed exchange rates and an International Monetary Fund (IMF) to bridge temporary imbalances of payments. But as economist Robert Triffin had warned before Congress,¹ the accumulation of dollars overseas — some via post-Second World War Marshall Plan aid money — brought into doubt the capacity of the US government to convert dollars into gold at the official rate of \$35 per ounce. One possible solution was devaluing the dollar, but this would only punish those allies who had held onto their reserves, namely Japan, West Germany and Canada.

Canada’s balance of payments had always been vulnerable to the capriciousness of US politics. These vulnerabilities were fully exposed by US President Richard Nixon’s New Economic Policy, where Canada was no longer exempt from 10 percent import surcharges (Goodman 2008). These measures, and abandoning the gold standard (Amadeo 2021), became known as the Nixon Shock — a nod to his false assumption that Japan was America’s largest trading partner.



Destroying Bretton Woods and establishing an alternative international monetary order was not the goal of the Nixon administration, but by fixating on national prosperity with little regard to the consequences for international economic governance, it did just that. Inflation and unemployment — two phenomena that previously no one thought could rise together — soared. The stagnant economy of the 1970s assumed a new portmanteau, stagflation, and it overhauled the entire economic system.

The so-called contagion of protectionism needed to be contained, and Rambouillet served as a first step in doing so. To lament that its final communiqué made no mention of future gatherings nor policy breakthroughs, as *The New York Times* did, misses its point. The purpose of the meeting was psychological: to restore the West's collective self-confidence. It set a path in creating a more robust alliance among advanced liberal democracies.

The 1970s were the ugly, rough draft of trade, investment and development policy we are seeing today. The Cold War was one major theme of postwar international history, but so was globalization. And globalization without governance left open how global dilemmas, such as climate change and financial crises, might be managed in the future. Consider the language of the 1975 joint statement, and how it could just as easily apply today:

International trade is one of the most powerful forces for long term growth and to lower inflation. To maintain an open trading system in a period where pressures are developing for a return to protectionism the main trading nations must avoid resorting to measures by which they could try to solve their problems at the expense of others and which could lead to economic, social and political evils. Moreover it is necessary to expand world trade and we believe that multilateral trade negotiations should be accelerated. They should aim at substantial tariff cuts, even eliminating tariffs in some commodity areas, and significantly improving the regime for agricultural trade, and at reducing non-tariff measures. (G7 Leaders 1975)

What is more, although it was not recognized at the time, Rambouillet marked the first sweeping revision of international monetary arrangements since Bretton Woods. (Offstage talks that started in France to modify the IMF Articles of Agreement were ratified the following year at the Jamaica meeting of the Interim Committee of the IMF.²) In exchange for Washington's pledge to maintain orderly exchange rates, Paris committed to outlaw currency manipulation. The IMF's official historian described the agreement as the "early embodiment" of the new economic dogma favouring free markets and private enterprise over government regulation (De Vries 1986, 761).

Canada's deliberate exclusion from that first meeting by French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing is critical to the longer story of Canada's bilateral relationship with the United States and engagement on the world stage. At the time, France ranked fourth after the United States, Japan and the Netherlands in terms of foreign investment in Canada, particularly in uranium (Bothwell 1984) and hydrocarbons.³ Even still, the French viewed Canada as a satellite of American interests.

As planning got under way, US President Gerald R. Ford bluntly told Giscard, "I continue to feel strongly that Canadian participation is justified given Canada's role in the world. As I have already pointed out to you, Canada is our largest trading partner; our economies are intimately connected. Its absence from our deliberations would not be understood in this country."⁴ On the same day he expressed this frustration to Giscard, Ford also communicated his exasperation to the leaders of Britain⁵ and Germany⁶ that he "could not believe that our French colleague would persist in a position that could only detract from the promise of the enterprise." It made sense for the meeting to be small, but if Italy could be invited to strengthen its North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)-friendly government in the face of a Communist threat, surely Canada, with its larger economy, could be included as well.

As Berkeley historian Daniel J. Sargent has written (2017), economic summitry reoriented Western alliances to new purposes and policy coordination promised to bolster economic and social stability at a time when Communist parties in Europe were strengthening; today, the threat is from authoritarian regimes.

Economic summitry reoriented Western alliances to new purposes and policy coordination promised to bolster economic and social stability at a time when Communist parties in Europe were strengthening; today, the threat is from authoritarian regimes.

The Americans had been so sure of Canada's participation that their draft press releases always included "[Canada]" in brackets, and any time the number of countries was listed, "[7]" was bracketed, too. Ford's advocacy was ultimately unsuccessful, but he did not concede. He warned the French leader: "in all candor...while I have agreed to come to this meeting...it is difficult for me, in the circumstances that have arisen, to contemplate future gatherings of this kind."⁷

Whether intentionally — by not being exempt from the Nixon surcharges — or unintentionally, Ford could not get his way; these experiences made the United States seem like an unreliable neighbour.

Canadian foreign policy shifted to realism, as Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau recognized the People's Republic of China, increased foreign aid and established closer relations with developing nations, such as India and Cuba. The government's foreign policy review from 1970 focused on the United Nations and international development, and the geographical areas of Europe, Latin America and the Pacific (Franks 2006a).

The government had handed over economic matters related to the United States for consideration by a separate task force under the direction of Herb Gray, at the time Canada's minister of national revenue (Franks 2006b). Canadians eagerly anticipated the government's plans to limit the impact of American money and culture, which were seemingly hollowing out the country. Institutions such as the Foreign Investment Review Agency and the National Energy

Program were the eventual result; as historian Stephen Azzi (2007) has shown, foreign investment was decreasing at the time, so the former seemed a misplaced endeavour if the metric was economic and not emotion, and the latter alienated western Canada then, and its legacy still does today. The United States had started paying attention to Canadian nationalism, but really only began to take Canada's threats on monitoring foreign investment seriously when Mexico thought about doing the same (de Onis 1970).

Meanwhile, Trudeau visited France in October 1974 to "fonder les neiges," or thaw relations between the two countries. That month, US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger met Canada's minister of external affairs, Allan MacEachen, acknowledging Canada was no longer a "minor partner" on the world stage (Kissinger, quoted in Martin 2006).

Shortly thereafter, Giscard met with Ford. This meeting was shrouded in controversy as news got out that Kissinger said he did not want the two to be left alone at any moment.⁸ Nonetheless, in Martinique in December 1974, they affirmed that informal cooperation among the most powerful countries would substitute for the rules-based approach to the international monetary order that had existed under Bretton Woods (Lewis 1974). Smaller European nations or developing countries could instead be part of the IMF.⁹ Its role would be diminished (Office of the White House Press Secretary 1974); the IMF would enforce, not make, the rules. This loose framework evolved into a tangible plan for an international economic summit.

More important for Canada, at least at the time, was the signing of the 1974 US Trade Act that gave, and continues to give, the president the power to unilaterally apply protectionist measures. Section 301 means the president can, in violation of rules set forth in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), take all measures necessary to protect American products not just in the United States, but in other markets, too (Levinson 2016). It is the section that President Donald Trump invoked against China (Office of the United States Trade Representative 2019) but has also been used regarding Canadian softwood lumber (Congressional Research Service 2022).

Giscard did not want his summit to resemble the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) or something traditional.¹⁰ He argued that Canada had not been as adversely impacted by the economic crises of the early 1970s because its economy relied so heavily on the export of natural resources. Canada could make decisions in existing institutions of which it was already a full member, such as the OECD, IMF and GATT, Giscard offered (CBC Radio 1975). To make up for its dismissal at Rambouillet, Canada was made the chair of a North-South energy conference on economic cooperation, which led to the Washington Energy Conference and the creation of the International Energy Agency in November 1974.¹¹

Seven months after Rambouillet, a second summit was held in Puerto Rico (Office of the White House Press Secretary 1976). Canada was included, but not without similar squabbles. The French wanted the invitation to be clear that Canada was only being invited because of its geography (both it *and* the meeting were in the western hemisphere) and at the request of the American president. This language was meant to ensure France could keep a veto over Canadian participation at any future events. The novelty of summitry had already worn off by this point and results were inconclusive, but Puerto Rico sustained a dialogue among the G7 countries. A third meeting was held in London in May 1977 and focused on more concrete actions.

Ironically, despite France's opposition to Canada's participation in the summits, French language connections have been a

substantial part of Canada's international assistance program since 1970. Like the rest of the economic system, foreign aid has its roots in the success of the Marshall Plan that channelled aid to reconstruct Europe. Canada's program began in this period of optimism, first through the 1950s Colombo Plan (Stairs 2006). Ottawa's original commitment aimed to support the recently independent Commonwealth countries of Asia, but later expanded to French-speaking Africa and the broader la Francophonie. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) was founded and accepted the target of dedicating 0.70 percent of GDP (now gross national income) to foreign aid in 1970. Canada has yet to hit that target but has twice exceeded 0.50 percent (under Prime Ministers Pierre Trudeau and Brian Mulroney). In 2013, CIDA was controversially merged into Canada's foreign affairs department (Schwartz 2013).

As for ties to the United States, it has been a long time since Canada has felt the kind of support Ford showed at Rambouillet. After all, at the 2018 G7 summit in Charlevoix, Quebec, President Trump left in a huff, and retracted US support for the closing statement while criticizing Prime Minister Justin Trudeau as "very dishonest and weak" (Paletta and Achenbach 2018).

Still, some lessons learned from those early summits persist. When successive US administrations blocked the appointment of new judges to a World Trade Organization dispute resolution tribunal, the Canadian government pursued offstage negotiations through what became known as the Ottawa Group to come up with practical measures to break through the logjam.¹²

The 1970s were a shock to the system after the high growth of the postwar period and countries convulsed in different ways. At Bretton Woods, New York replaced London as the centre of financial and international affairs. Giscard used the dollar and energy crises as an opportunity to remake his country into a hub for the foreign and intellectual class to deal with these concerns. There were the philosophical differences between Western Europeans, who favoured collaborative management of the world economy, and Americans, who were inclined to leave it to the markets.

During this time, Canadians reimagined themselves as active members of the Commonwealth, the United Nations and NATO, and as close allies and partners of the United States. But as political scientist Jennifer M. Welsh (2021) has said, multilateralism is a means, not an end.

The G7 was established not as an economic club, but as a forum to build a more robust alliance among advanced liberal democracies. Similar to the post-First World War optimism that was felt at the Locarno conference of 1925, the spirit of Rambouillet was a kind of declaration of faith in the ability of industrial democracies to weather economic storms. Often times, bad weather for Canada came in the form of protectionism blowing north. In response, Canada has tried metrics such as “significant benefits” (Arnett 1985) and “net benefits,”¹³ which often came down plainly to jobs. The administration of US President Joe Biden has created a Made in America Office, to help Americans with these same advantages (The White House 2021). Whether the spirit of cooperation can be maintained through the latest crises — COVID-19 and climate — and whether it is even sufficient to enable Canadians to face the challenges of the future, remains unknown; in the 1970s, Rambouillet was only ever supposed to be a footnote.

NOTES

1 See www.imf.org/external/np/exr/center/mm/eng/mm_sc_03.htm.

2 See www.cvce.eu/en/obj/the_jamaica_agreements_kingston_8_january_1976-en-8662ac6a-4fd2-4517-ada5-db1c8613a1ee.html.

3 « Présentation des lettres de créance de M. Gerard Pelletier Ambassadeur du Canada, 16 December 1975, » Archives de la présidence de la République, 1974–1981, AG/5(3)/342, Archives Nationales — Pierrefitte-sur-Seine (France).

4 Gerald R. Ford to Valéry Giscard D’Estaing, October 20, 1975, in *Foreign Economic Policy, 1973–1976*, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, vol. XXXI, edited by Kathleen B. Rasmussen (Washington, DC: Office of the Historian, US Department of State, 2009), 347, <https://static.history.state.gov/frus/frus1969-76v31/pdf/frus1969-76v31.pdf>.

5 Gerald R. Ford to Harold Wilson, *ibid.*, 348.

6 Gerald R. Ford to Helmut Schmidt, *ibid.*, 338.

7 Gerald R. Ford to Valéry Giscard D’Estaing, November 3, 1975, *ibid.*, 356.

8 Document : « Compte rendu d’une conversation entre M. Henry Kissinger et Pierre Salinger –

15 December 1974, » File : « Conseilles diplomatiques – États-Unis (1974), Archives de la présidence de la République, 1974–1981, AG/5(3)/982, Archives Nationales — Pierrefitte-sur-Seine (France).

9 See www.imf.org/external/np/sec/memdir/memdate.htm.

10 The Organisation for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) was founded in 1948 to run the European Recovery Program and was replaced by the OECD in 1961.

11 See www.iea.org/about/history.

12 See www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2019/05/ottawa-group-and-wto-reform.html.

13 See www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/ica-lic.nsf/eng/h_lk00007.html#q8.

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The simple debate over Canada's relations with the United States is distorted by two schools of thought: anti-Americanism and anti-anti-Americanism. The simple desire to score points against the United States stands in the way of reason. So does the blind assumption that any relationship other than total commitment is unmentionable.



Holmes, "Canada and the United States: Political and Security Issues,"
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Advancing Trade, Investment and Development

US Formation of New Geoeconomic Alliances: Canada's Shifting Relevance

Meredith Lilly



In Jennifer Bonder's illuminating essay, we learn the fraught history of Canada's entry into the Group of Seven (G7), an exclusive alliance of the world's most advanced democracies by economic size. In 1975, US President Gerald Ford went to incredible lengths to orchestrate Canada's invitation to that first summit. Yet, host country France was unconvinced, and Canada was excluded from the original meeting of the Group of Six (G6), which took place *sans les Canadiens*. Undeterred, Ford persisted, and invited Canada to join the Puerto Rico summit of 1976. Canada has remained a member for more than 45 years.

Bonder also outlines the impetus for that original meeting: addressing high unemployment, protectionist contagion, and the serious inflationary and energy challenges facing members. The agenda was squarely economic, and the go-to solutions were to ensure markets remained open and were further liberalized through multilateral trade agreements (G7 Leaders 1975).

In reflecting on the factors that influenced both the creation of the G7 and the conditions for Canada's involvement, three issues seem particularly salient today.

First, there are remarkable similarities between the challenges facing the G7 at the time of its origin and those facing it today. The global pandemic has accelerated growing economic nationalism and protectionist sentiment that was already under way (Lilly 2020). More recently, high energy prices have impacted household budgets (Fernández Alvarez and Molnar 2021), and inflation has re-emerged as an impediment to economic growth for the first time in decades.

In addition, Vladimir Putin's 2022 full-scale invasion into Ukraine has thrust Russia back to the top of the list of global threats to the liberal democratic order.

There are remarkable similarities between the challenges facing the G7 at the time of its origin and those facing it today.

Second, despite facing similar challenges to the mid-1970s, G7 members today are decidedly *not* turning to the same solutions. No Western political leaders in 2022 dare advocate the *carte blanche* trade liberalization policies advocated by G7 leaders in 1975. Recent G7 communiqués have replaced 1975-era language around free and open markets with an emphasis on “fair” trade that offers “reciprocal benefits” (G7 Leaders 2018). Individual members are also less inclined to cooperate with each other, although the re-emergence of a common enemy in Putin may rally them again. The United States is increasingly turning inward economically, with President Joe Biden's administration continuing the managed trade and protectionist Made-in-America industrial policies launched by his predecessor, Donald Trump (The White House 2021). Similarly, European members are using the region's economic clout to advance values-embedded trade agendas, with environmental and labour strings attached. As a trade-reliant country, Canada is attempting to straddle both agendas to keep markets open for Canadian goods and services. In addition, although both time periods reflect energy challenges, the mid-1970s solution was to increase access to energy resources broadly and from diversified markets, without consideration of the climate implications. Today's energy challenges are partially a response to those twentieth-century decisions. As countries focus on transitioning to clean energy, instability and shocks will continue until sufficient and affordable supplies, sourced from reliable security partners, catch up to demand (Yergin 2021).

The third issue contrasts the contemporary role of the G7 with its origins to consider whether Canada will continue to be regarded as a world leader in addressing global economic challenges in the future. The purpose of those original G6/7 meetings was to address the most pressing economic challenges facing liberal democracies. While macroeconomic policy and trade issues still feature in every G7 leaders' summit and communiqué, the meetings have shifted over time to focus on threats to the international rules-based order by authoritarian countries such as China and Russia, and action on global problems such as climate change and COVID-19. This shift was deliberate: the G7 largely relinquished its economic focus by creating the Group of Twenty (G20) as the global forum for international economic dialogue, in order to include major economies such as India and China (G20 2008). For example, it was the G20 that led the response to the 2008 global financial crisis (G20 Leaders 2008) and the importance of such multilateral cooperation by a larger group of countries is well recognized. Nevertheless, the collective ambition of G20 members to articulate, address and agree on solutions to complex economic problems often remains low, reducing the forum's productivity and impact.

Adapting the G7 as Gravity Shifts from the Transatlantic to the Indo-Pacific

In recent years, legitimate questions have been raised about the G7's current membership, particularly as growth projections for Indo-Pacific countries eclipse those of some of the original members. Since Russia's ousting from the G8 in 2014, and President Trump's damaging interventions during his presidency, there has been active debate around whether G7 members represent the correct group of countries to address the global challenges of the twenty-first century. There is renewed recognition that democracy is under threat and there is a need for liberal democracies to cooperate and align their interests: any lingering doubts about this have been eliminated by President Putin. While his war against Ukraine may rally the G7 around this renewed purpose, it is against the backdrop of other musings about the potential for G7 enlargement to correct the group's transatlantic

bias. For example, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson had advocated growing the G7 into a D-10, a forum of 10 leading democracies, to confront China and improve resilience in global supply chains (Brattberg and Judah 2020). Although the D-10 has been rebuffed for now, the United Kingdom included all three potential new members in the 2021 G7 summit: Australia was invited for a third consecutive year, alongside India and South Korea. Although India is unlikely to join the G7 permanently in the near term, Australia¹ and South Korea² are poised for impressive economic growth and greater geopolitical significance in the coming decades. Their recent willingness to impose sanctions against Russia alongside G7 members suggests Australia and South Korea may be preparing to assume larger leadership roles on the global stage.

While it is too soon to understand the full implications of Putin's ongoing war on Ukraine on global economic trends, it is likely that regional economic growth will continue to shift away from the transatlantic and toward the Indo-Pacific. Thus, an alternative to strengthening the G7 may be to develop a new set of purpose-built alliances among "like-minded" partners to address the geoeconomic challenges arising from the region's gaining importance. There is some evidence that the Biden administration is seeking to lead such an effort, to both confront the challenge of China while also recognizing and representing the most influential economic players in the region. A review of recent US-led "minilateral" meetings suggests the Biden administration finds value in convening small groups of relevant countries to focus on emerging regional issues. For example, the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue ("Quad") of Australia, India, Japan and the United States is focused on geopolitical stability in the Indo-Pacific region, given the rise of China (US Department of State 2022). In its 2022 Indo-Pacific Strategy, the White House references deepening alliances with regional countries such as Australia and Japan many times (The White House 2022). However, it also mentions roles for the European Union, France and the United Kingdom as allies in those efforts. Canada is not mentioned in the 18-page document.

US–Canada Tensions over Trade with China

Contrary to the diplomatic and political capital the United States was willing to deploy in 1975 to ensure Canada's participation at the G7, there is no evidence that the Biden administration considers Canada to be an essential member of these new rulemaking tables for the Indo-Pacific century. Rather than meeting this reality with indignation, Canada should reflect on some of the possible reasons. During Ford's time, Canada could largely be counted on to support and advance most US priorities at multilateral tables. While Canada can continue to be relied on by the United States on many files, when it comes to trade with China, the United States regards Canada as wobbly.

For example, in 2015, President Barack Obama was deeply opposed to the creation of the China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and urged allies not to join (Allen-Ebrahimian 2015): while all European countries in the G7 joined anyway, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe kept their countries out. Yet, the following year, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau reversed his predecessor's decision, launching Canada's application to join the AIIB during his first official visit to China in 2016 (Lilly 2018). Under the Trump administration, Trudeau's determination to forge stronger trade relations with China so worried US trade officials that Ambassador Robert Lighthizer insisted on a clause in the new Canada–United States–Mexico Agreement (CUSMA; known as the United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement, or USMCA, in the United States) that required parties to notify each other of plans to initiate free-trade negotiations with non-market economies.³ Even the worst trade dispute between Canada and the United States of the last decade can be traced to US anxiety about China. US Congressional Library (Congressional Research Service 2021) and Department of Commerce (2018) reports reveal that the primary reason Canada was not exempted from US Section 232 tariffs on steel in 2018 was due to concerns about Canada's unwillingness to address Chinese overcapacity by enforcing transshipment into the United States. When the tariffs were lifted following the conclusion of a renegotiated North American Free Trade Agreement deal,

CUSMA, Canada had also imposed safeguards on steel imports to address trade diversion and strengthen enforcement on transshipment, thereby resolving the US concern.⁴

Although China's illegal detention of Canadians Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig in 2018 has ruined Canada's bilateral relationship with China, Ottawa has shown no sense of urgency in developing its trade and economic approach to the country following their 2021 release. Policy silence and bilateral neglect may *be* the government's new strategy. Nevertheless, Trudeau's refusal to issue a formal decision on files such as Huawei 5G has dismayed American trade and security officials. They are even more bewildered by Canada's December 2021 decision to permit the billion-dollar sale of a Canadian-owned lithium mine in Argentina to a Chinese state-owned enterprise. Lithium is a key component of electric vehicle batteries needed to fuel the transition to clean energy vehicles. Canada declined to conduct a comprehensive national security review, which would have required formal consultations with the United States and other allies, and would have highlighted geoeconomic concerns around the proposed transaction (Standing Committee on Industry and Technology 2022). As a result, members of Congress wrote to the White House in February 2022 (Madan 2022) to question Canada's commitment to cooperation with the United States on critical minerals (Government of Canada 2020) and on addressing the strategic threat presented by China's dominance in the sector.

Striking the Right Balance on Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy

While Canada struggles to define future goals for its bilateral relationship with China, Canadian officials are seeking to advance trade and economic relations with other countries in the Indo-Pacific (Office of the Prime Minister 2021). Although the Canada-US relationship need not be central to achieving those objectives, US interests also cannot be cast aside. As the above examples highlight, Canada has too often framed its efforts to grow trade relations with China in a manner that conflicts with or antagonizes the essential trading relationship with the United States. The United States will always be Canada's

largest and most important trading partner. In comparison to partners in the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), Canada and Mexico are uniquely dependent on trade with the United States, which represents upwards of 60 percent of bilateral trade for both countries.⁵ Yet, trade with the United States accounts for less than 20 percent of bilateral trade for all other CPTPP countries, most of which are more trade-exposed to China. Thus, it is essential that Canada approach its trade diversification efforts with the region in a careful manner vis-à-vis American interests.

Continuing to grow relations with CPTPP partners should be Canada's primary trade focus in the region. Neither China nor the United States are members, providing Canada with an opportunity to work with leading members such as Japan and Australia to shape the CPTPP's future by welcoming new members such as Taiwan (Lilly 2021). Further engagement with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, South Korea and India also represent important efforts that can be pursued concurrently to the United States' own efforts. In addition, Canada must bear in mind that it is competing with the United States (The White House 2022), the European Union (European Commission 2021), Japan (Policy Exchange 2020), the United Kingdom (ibid.) and Australia (Australian Government 2017) for influence in the region. These countries have already rolled out comprehensive and established Indo-Pacific strategies of their own that address trade and economic matters, but also collective security and defence, foreign policy, environmental action and democratic development.

Conclusion

Returning to Bonder's essay, what is so clearly highlighted by an examination of Ford's efforts to include Canada in the G7 is how much the forum has shifted away from its original focus on trade and the economy. Canada can now stake its own claim to major multilateral trade and economic efforts, which is obviously positive. However, it is clear from the Biden administration's actions to create new groupings to address future geoeconomic challenges, and which do not include Canada, that there may be longer-term challenges to address. Canada should find more ways to be useful and relevant to the Americans on

trade and economic files in the Indo-Pacific. Active support for Taiwan's sovereignty, digital trade rules, energy security and supply chain resilience are all opportunities for cooperation that are consistent with Canadian priorities.

Canada-US cooperation is also important for Canada's broader international relationships. Canada's perceived influence with the United States is monitored by other countries, which view their own bilateral engagement with Canada partially as a mechanism to understand and influence the United States for their own goals. For example, the pursuit of bilateral trade agreements with Canada is often seen as a stepping stone to eventual negotiations with the United States. Canada's visibly deteriorating relationship with the United States during the Trump years was less problematic when many countries were united in their opposition to his leadership style and foreign policy approach (Wike et al. 2021a). Yet, continuing negative views of the United States by Canadians following Trump's departure from office (even compared to views of the United States by other countries) may reduce the impression that Canadians can still interpret the red-white-and-blue signals (Wike et al. 2021b).

Canada is a country of citizens who at least partially define themselves culturally as "not American." To some extent, Canadian criticism of the United States is a natural reflection of the almost familial closeness of the relationship (Alden 2021). When Trump was president, many Canadians felt they no longer recognized their American cousins, wistful for the chummy days of the Obama and Trudeau "bromance." Yet, Canada also tends to downplay the positive spillover effects of being America's neighbour, even during challenging periods. Canada's bilateral challenges with its great power to the south are minuscule relative to those faced by small and middle powers bordering China and Russia. It is essential that Canada maintain perspective and recognize the tremendous security and economic benefits accrued from the relationship, even as each country pursues new trade and economic relationships independently.

NOTES

- 1 See <https://data.oecd.org/gdp/gdp-long-term-forecast.htm>.
- 2 See https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/visualisation/projected-gdp-ranking-2030_en.
- 3 See https://ustr.gov/sites/default/files/files/agreements/FTA/USMCA/Text/32_Exceptions_and_General_Provisions.pdf.
- 4 See www.international.gc.ca/trade-commerce/controls-controles/steel_alum-acier_alum.aspx?lang=eng.
- 5 See <https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/WLD/Year/2019/TradeFlow/EXPIMP>.

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A sound foreign policy must be based on the acceptance of paradox. This is true for great powers, but it is especially true for a middle power whose reach ought not to exceed its grasp. However exasperating and however irksome, there is no escaping considerations on the one hand and considerations on the other, even when they are not reconcilable.

Holmes, *The Better Part of Valour: Essays on Canadian Diplomacy*
(Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1970), vii



RAL

PRESIDENT
OF THE COUNCIL

Communications, Technology and Canadian Foreign Policy

Heidi Tworek

In 1902, the physical barrier separating the Dominion of Canada and the Commonwealth of Australia was bridged by way of a submarine cable, bringing the two largest settlement colonies in the British Empire into direct telegraphic contact.” A master’s student at the University of Sydney introduced his thesis topic with this statement in 1986. That student’s 268-page thesis delved into the origins and frictions around the laying of this cable, which was “the first public work undertaken jointly by Great Britain, Canada, New Zealand and the Australian colonies.”¹

As the student traced, the cable arose from Australian and Canadian proposals that first emerged in the 1880s. The Canadian plan for a connecting Pacific cable was suggested by the chief engineer of the Canadian Pacific Railway, Sandford Fleming. Despite opposition from the major British-based global cable company, the Eastern & Associated, British politicians from the mid-1890s saw the Pacific cable as key to creating an “All-Red Route” around the world. Cables landing on British imperial or colonial soil would now circumnavigate the globe. For British officials ever more suspicious of their German rivals, such communications security seemed vital.

Canadian communications were inseparable from broader imperial, colonial and global politics, as this student had shown. That student is the current premier of British Columbia, John J. Horgan. No one ever seems to have asked Horgan what political lessons he drew from his thesis. But it suggests that the history of Canadian communications can hold relevance for contemporary politics.

History theses such as Horgan’s raise an even broader question: how has Canada tried to accommodate the dominant players in international communications, whether Great Britain or, later, the United States? As this essay will show, Canada chose to remain a political player in communications, unlike other middle powers such as Switzerland. Even more interestingly, Canada chose to act politically in communications at the same time as it acted very differently in other new technological realms such as aviation. In the mid-1940s, Canada chose to act like Switzerland in aviation. Why not in communications?

To answer that question, this essay will focus on Canada's role in two international organizations: the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). In the ITU, Canada teamed up with Commonwealth and European countries to stymie a US vision of global communications. But in the long run, the United States did globalize its vision of communications through Hollywood, satellites and social media platforms. In ICAO, Canada successfully positioned itself as neutral, became the host country for the organization and has benefited economically ever since. Canada's actions in the mid-1940s suggest that there are many ways for a country to advance its interests in communications and technology.

Canada's actions in the mid-1940s suggest that there are many ways for a country to advance its interests in communications and technology.

As it became clear from 1943–1944 that the Allies would win the Second World War, planning for the postwar world accelerated. Whether in international finance with Bretton Woods in 1944 or the United Nations in San Francisco in 1945, the Allies hosted conferences that aimed to create a rules-based international order. These efforts went far beyond what was negotiated at the Paris Peace Conference after the First World War. They represented an attempt to regulate the world according to Allied eyes in everything from agriculture to aviation.

These years also saw Canada exert a more independent foreign policy. One model was

Ottawa's role in the founding of ICAO. In 1944, the American government convened a conference in Chicago to create an international regulatory body for aviation. Despite overall agreement on the importance of international regulation, tensions lingered around commercial issues such as routes.

There were also struggles over the location of the new organization. Its headquarters seemed to symbolize the postwar direction of international relations. The Europeans worried that the Americans might dominate the skies, while the Americans believed that the air should be open to free competition. Such competition would, in turn, secure American dominance by building on the country's commanding position. Around 72 percent of global air commerce in 1945 was controlled by the United States (MacKenzie 2010).

As discussions over headquarters grew heated, Canada positioned itself as a compromise between European fears and American aspirations. At the Chicago conference, the Americans proposed finding a location in Canada and were supported by Latin American countries. The French countered with Paris. Although Canada was a Commonwealth country, the British feared that Ottawa was too close to the United States. Montreal was suggested instead. The bilingual city also eased French concerns about language.

ICAO came to focus on technical standards and safety over commercial questions, as Alan Dobson (2017) has traced in his history of the organization. But those standards underpinned the expansion of mass tourism starting in the 1950s. ICAO created and still maintains the standard and recommended practices, or SARPs, for air traffic control and airline operations. As the threats of hijacking and terrorism emerged in the 1970s, ICAO expanded its remit. While ICAO's budget has never been overwhelming, its information-sharing and global technical standards have proven influential.

The choice of Montreal occurred against a background of Canadian conference management, which showed the potential and limits of Canadian participation in international affairs. On the one hand, Canada raised its profile by hosting conferences. In August 1943, Canadian Prime Minister

William Lyon Mackenzie King hosted the Quadrant conference in Quebec City with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. On the other hand, King himself was not invited to many important meetings on matters such as the invasion of France. The following year, in September, King hosted a second conference in Quebec City, called Octagon. Again, the Canadian prime minister was not privy to the highest-level discussions. Château Frontenac in Quebec City hosted the founding conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization in October 1945. Conferences and international organizations offered a new mode of Canadian international participation, although only within certain parameters.

ICAO's headquarters have exerted three broader pull effects for Montreal and Canada, attracting associated agencies, business and prestige. First, other organizations, such as the International Air Transport Association, headquartered in Montreal to take advantage of proximity to ICAO.

Second, companies in the industry put their headquarters or regional centres in Montreal. The global airline telecommunications organization SITA, for instance, chose in 1986 to manage its operations in the Americas and the Caribbean from Montreal. The Canadian city was, a SITA representative told *The Gazette* in October 1986, "the capital of international civil aviation" (Doughtery 1986). Bombardier Aerospace is headquartered near Montréal-Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport.

Third, Montreal's proven track record of hosting ICAO became an argument to attract other international agencies, fairs such as Expo 67 and agreements such as the Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer signed in Montreal in 1987. By January 1993, *The Gazette* even suggested that the city could become a "world headquarters" by pitching itself as the new location for four UN specialized agencies that were contemplating a move out of New York (*The Gazette* 1993).

By contrast, Canadian officials acted quite differently in the realm of communications in the mid-1940s. Since the Pacific cable connection of 1902, Canada had remained within the British orbit of communications. In the 1920s, British control of imperial communications began to cede to a

Commonwealth system for commercial and political reasons. To avoid competition between cables and the new technology of wireless, a complex merger of the Eastern & Associated Telegraph Companies with Marconi's Wireless Telegraph Company created Cable & Wireless in Britain in 1929.

Although Cable & Wireless was a private company, the British government held the right to appoint one of its two directors. As the company served British dominions and colonies, it also had an Imperial Communications Advisory Committee (ICAC) to oversee service policies; the British government could appoint the chairman. The ICAC was headed by Campbell Stuart, a Canadian diplomat during the First World War and a high-level executive at *The Times* in London and later the *Daily Mail*.

Commonwealth representatives, including Stuart, and others from colonized countries such as India were critical of the Cable & Wireless system for charging high rates for international communications. In 1941, a conference in Canberra rebranded the ICAC as the Commonwealth Communications Council and tried to decentralize control. For example, representatives of member states had to live in their own countries, rather than London. Stuart described the conference as creating a "new quality of Empire relationship, which at long last triumphed over the hard-dying body of London control" (quoted in Beyersdorf 2015). Only after the Second World War did these plans come more into fruition when Commonwealth countries finally bought out Cable & Wireless' technological infrastructure, making them into public utility corporations.

By 1945, this Commonwealth system was clashing with American priorities, because Washington saw communications as another space to remake the world around its principles. The State Department and the Federal Communications Commission hoped to create a New Deal for international communications. By liberalizing cable and wireless rates, they could open up the international market for American firms. To do so, they hoped to influence the ITU, which had been created in 1865 and was headquartered in Berne, Switzerland.

Yet, the United States misread Commonwealth and European concerns around American

hegemony in communications. Like in aviation, European and Commonwealth countries feared that the United States wished to globalize its commercial dominance. Countries such as Canada worried that the United States might be trying to control the ITU, even moving its headquarters from Berne to the western hemisphere. Such a move would undermine the comparative freedom that Canada had just gained from Britain.

At an international conference in Atlantic City in 1947, these concerns came to a head. Like in Chicago in 1944 for aviation, this conference featured debates about the location of an international organization. In this case, however, Canada acted differently. Rather than offer itself as a broker, Canada clubbed together with other Commonwealth and European countries to stymie American plans. Against US wishes, these countries voted to revitalize the ITU in its current format (Beyersdorf 2015). The organization remained in Switzerland, although its headquarters moved from Berne to Geneva. Meanwhile, US officials and experts continued to pursue policies to create free flows of information (Lemberg 2019) or foster media development (Nelson 2021) according to American principles and often outside the ITU.

Canada chose in communications to act politically. Switzerland was for communications what Canada was for aviation. In both cases, however, that neutrality was constructed. Switzerland started to “market” itself as neutral in the 1860s to counter its reputation for violence after the 1848 revolutions. When disputes over two rival telegraphic systems broke out in Europe in the 1850s, Switzerland brokered a compromise. The conflict was resolved with the creation of the International Telegraph Union (later International Telecommunication Union). To recognize Switzerland’s role, the ITU was headquartered in Berne. Thus began Switzerland’s very consciously crafted reputation as neutral and its role as a host for international organizations.

In the mid-1940s, Canada too started to create a new reputation for itself on the international stage. By hosting conferences, it began to portray itself as a “middle power.” Indeed, historian Adam Chapnick (2006) has called Canada’s relations with the United Nations a “middle power project” where Ottawa

projected its influence on the global stage by cooperating energetically with international organizations. The location of ICAO in Montreal cemented that role, at least in aviation.

Alternatively, political scientist John Ravenhill (2018) thinks of Canada as an “entrepreneurial state.” Such countries exhibit “a distinctive view of statecraft,” including “the demonstration of entrepreneurial and/or technical leadership; playing the role of catalyst or facilitator; and placing an emphasis on coalition-building and cooperation-building” (ibid.). These types of countries cannot lead alone but build alliances and partnerships to fulfill their aims. Examples of entrepreneurial states range from Canada to Brazil to the United Arab Emirates (Chapnick 2020). Whether we call them “middle powers” or “entrepreneurial states,” countries such as Canada (and Switzerland) have pursued international influence by acting as the host location for technical international organizations.

In communications, however, Canada has chosen to engage in politics. Ottawa has seen communications infrastructure as integral to the national interest since at least Sandford Fleming. Communications content has seemed just as integral since at least the creation of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) in 1936. In the interwar period, Ottawa invested in the CBC to “defend” Canadian content against the potential encroachment of commercial American radio, as Marc Raboy (1990) has discussed in his work on Canadian broadcasting policy. That focus on Canadian content has persisted ever since.

More recently, Canada has found itself trapped in a web of tension over communications, whether it be around social media platforms, 5G infrastructure or data privacy. In each case, Canada confronts a situation that is surprisingly familiar. It must broker between major communications powers. The transition between Britain and the United States as dominant political powers in the 1930s and 1940s confronted Canada with challenges in many arenas of foreign policy. Canada chose different paths in aviation versus communications. Those past manoeuvres do not offer a straightforward solution to current dilemmas. But they remind us that Canada does have choices.

NOTE

1 See Horgan (1986).

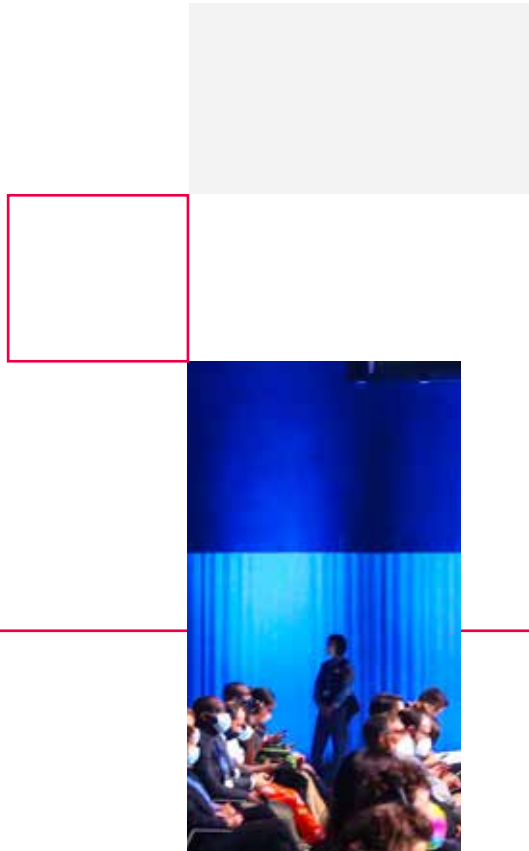
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Heidi holds a doctorate from Harvard University and has held visiting fellowships in the United Kingdom, Germany and the United States. She currently serves on the board of Digital Action, a project of the New Venture Fund, and is a non-resident fellow at both the German Marshall Fund of the United States and the Canadian Global Affairs Institute.



INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM POLAND

INTERNET UNITED



A Twenty-First-Century Approach to Advance Canada's Foreign Policy on Communications and Technology

Bill Graham

As Heidi Tworek effectively demonstrates, even middle powers have choices in the complex international environment of communications governance. Indeed, as an “entrepreneurial state” (Ravenhill 2018), Canada has continued to exert disproportional influence in that world by adopting the various roles she refers to — drawing on technical expertise, playing the role of coordinator or facilitator and building partnerships to achieve its aims.

This entrepreneurial approach has been well illustrated in the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), where Canadians led the three most important reform efforts of the late 1980s and early 1990s. The first was the Independent Commission on World-Wide Telecommunications Development, known as the Maitland Commission. Its report *The Missing Link*, published in 1985, served to reorient the ITU by establishing the goal of achieving universal service in telecommunications by early in the twenty-first century (ITU 1985). Soon after, Canadians chaired the committee that overhauled the organization's structure and functions to address the changing telecommunications environment (ITU 1991). Finally, a Canadian steered the automation of the ITU's spectrum management functions and simplified its governing regulations to modernize and improve use of the radio frequency spectrum.¹

In these cases and many others, Canadians drew on their deep technical expertise in telecommunications and their ability to form effective alliances to advance their interests. Canadians also had the advantage of being able to work with the developing world as well as with European states and the United States without bringing the same suspicion of having imperial or commercial interests behind their every action. Canada continues to advance its interests by building coalitions of support in the ITU and in other international bodies, such as the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organization and the Inter-American Telecommunications Commission.

But the world of telecommunications regulation Tworek describes has changed. Long-established international organizations have declined in influence, and new forces have emerged to challenge governments' supremacy. Two developments are responsible for these shifts. The first is the combination of the rapid evolution of new technologies, such as wireless communications and the internet,

Long-established international organizations have declined in influence, and new forces have emerged to challenge governments' supremacy.

along with a decline in government ownership of communications facilities. Together, these shifts have decreased the capacity of government or intergovernmental agencies to exert control.

The second development is the increasing willingness of many governments, predominantly of developed liberal democracies, to accommodate demands from business and civil society for a greater say in the governance of new communications media.

New technologies have developed and commercialized rapidly. Governments did not anticipate their impending dominance and did not act to ensure national or international oversight. In the case of wireless communications, this resulted in a mixed governance model. Wireless technologies depend on the availability of spectrum for their success, which means that national regulators and the ITU retain a degree of control through the assignment or reassignment of bands of spectrum for wireless use. Yet the international spectrum allocation process generally offers

broad and permissive specifications. That leaves space for competition to emerge between companies over the standards to be used by transmission equipment and handsets that form wireless networks. In some cases, the competition emerged among “national champions” — companies based in Europe, the United States, Japan and later China supported by their governments as instruments of industrial policy. In other cases, particularly in the United States, companies competed among themselves over which standards would prevail. But Washington also strongly advocates on behalf of US-based firms in regional and international intergovernmental fora to ensure each competitor has access to their desired spectrum. In contrast, Canada initially followed a “national champion” approach in support of the globally prominent Nortel Networks, but since Nortel's collapse it has been effectively reduced to a policy taker. Canada also lacks the big global equipment manufacturers that could dominate international decision making. Ottawa has instead chosen to follow the US lead, focusing its efforts on trying to influence the direction Washington takes.

The public's enthusiasm for wireless services and rapid expansion of the commercial wireless sector continues to grow, but the role of government is increasingly confined to broadly defined authorization of which bands of spectrum can be used for which purposes, and the terms and pricing of its release or its “refarming.” Governance is increasingly a matter for private sector consortiums. As new mobile services arise, such as the Internet of Things, 5G and new space-based satellite services, the ITU itself acknowledges that it has become a part of a wider system. The agency is adapting to the times by providing useful new services, such as maintaining a road map of standards development organizations and their work.²

But while the governance of wireless communications remains a hybrid model, with government retaining a central role, modern communications has come to be almost entirely dependent on the internet as its underlying technology, and there the situation is quite different.

The expansion of the internet provides a dramatic example of how government control over international communications

has declined. The origin story of the internet is well known. It was developed primarily by American university-based researchers who did not anticipate its use by the private sector or the general public. Its technical architecture and standards were developed by those same engineers and academics. The network's expansion to other countries was based on informal agreements among system administrators. Governance of the network was loosely based on protocols developed by engineers working in voluntary organizations, most notably the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), an unincorporated body.

A central task for the founding group was to develop a system to ensure data flowed from the sender to the intended recipient. The resulting system consists of a centrally assigned numeric designator for every participating network, and an associated alphabetic name (such as name.com or name.ca), which is easier for users to remember. Together these make up the "phone book" of the internet. As the use of the internet became more widespread, it became clear a more formal and well-resourced entity was needed to manage the assignment of names and addresses.

After a lengthy process, in keeping with the deregulatory spirit of the times, the US government issued a consultation document seeking proposals on how to proceed, but with the caveat that the resultant mechanism was not to be managed by any government or intergovernmental organization (Snyder, Komaitis and Robachevsky 2017). Nor was it to become a general-purpose governance body for the internet. Many governments engaged with this process, including that of Canada, as did a range of academic, private sector and civil society groups. The final result was the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), structured as a multi-stakeholder policy-making body in which governments played an advisory role. The United States retained the power of final approval over ICANN decisions, which, although rarely used, became a source of conflict. Ultimately, toward the end of the administration of Barack Obama, the White House initiated a process to transition its control into a fully private entity, finally achieving the intent expressed nearly 20 years earlier (National Telecommunications and Information Administration 2016).

The creation of ICANN did not address governments' broader concern over their lack of levers to govern the internet. This was clearly manifested during the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), a two-phase UN-based event held in 2003 and 2005. Overt discussion of internet governance first emerged during the preparations for the first phase, and ultimately became one of the few sticking points in negotiations. Many developing countries as well as several Western democracies sought to have the summit create a formal intergovernmental body to reduce US influence over ICANN's addressing functions. This event provided an excellent example of how Canada can bring together a range of states to agree on a compromise. The Canadian delegation played a significant role in the final WSIS outcome of creating the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) under the office of the UN Secretary-General. The IGF annually brings together governments, the private sector, civil society and internet technical experts to discuss contemporary issues of internet governance and to provide advice and recommendations to other organizations working on issues that fall within their respective mandates.

The gradual weakening of governments' power to regulate communications infrastructure has been matched by the rise in the power of the private sector. Washington has had a determinative effect on this change. As described by management professor Fariborz Ghadar (2007), not only has the power and influence of multinational corporations shaped government policy and actions, it also has given rise to a counter force in the form of non-governmental organizations that use internet communications to curb corporate power and promote corporate social responsibility.

Many governments have welcomed the rise of private sector and civil society influence and power in shaping what once were exclusive public sector responsibilities. The increasing reliance on private sector research and the development of communications standards described earlier offers one example. Another is the complex multi-stakeholder model in internet organizations such as ICANN and the IETF.

The Canadian government has championed this model in international communications

policy development. Official Canadian delegations to international conferences regularly include representatives from the private sector and civil society. In the ITU context, private sector engagement is encouraged in the development of standards as well as in the decision-making process governing spectrum allocation issues. Canada is a strong advocate in the ITU's governing body for greater inclusion of and influence for the private sector in the agency's programs. During the WSIS summits, Canada stood out at first as the only official delegation to include civil society representatives during all stages of the negotiations. While this approach seemed radical at the time, it proved useful, allowing other civil society organizations to understand what was going on behind closed doors and to respond by providing information to government delegates to help them better appreciate the implications of complex or technical issues.

If anything, the shift in power from government toward private sector and civil society actors is becoming more pronounced in the fields of technology and communications. Public concern continues to grow about the impacts of applications such as social media, surveillance and political disruption, accompanied by demands that governments "do something." Consider, for example, the many grievances against Facebook (now Meta), including the failure of its algorithm to prevent messages urging acts of violence or terrorism, especially in languages other than English, such as those urging violence in Myanmar and Ethiopia (Akinwotu 2021), and the platform's ongoing struggle to block interference in elections (Scott 2020). Similar complaints have been made about Twitter and Google's YouTube subsidiary. Google, Meta, Amazon, Apple, PayPal and others are accused of scraping and selling users' personal data to advertisers or political campaigners, prompting calls for action (Knowledge@Wharton 2019). Governments around the world share concerns about US cultural hegemony on the internet.

A thorough discussion of these problems and attempts to address them is available in a joint CIGI-Stanford University publication, *Governance Innovation for a Connected World: Protecting Free Expression, Diversity and Civic Engagement in the Global Digital Ecosystem* (Donahoe and Hampson 2018). The platforms claim to be concerned about the negative

effects they are accused of and to be working to reduce the impacts on users, but complaints continue to mount. Governments continue to consider responsive legislative and regulatory measures, but the problems persist. It is not clear how, or when, a solution will be found, but it seems likely that the effort will only come to an end when the companies, governments and civil society activists reach a consensus about what that solution should look like.

Governments no longer have the capacity or resources to be the sole authoritative actor in setting policy and enacting regulation over today's technology and communications matters. A range of new forces are shaping the national and international environment and a variety of new actors have become prominent participants in advocating for and often setting the ground rules. Some areas of agreement about the path ahead include the following.

First, no single institution or group can produce a solution to complex and rapidly evolving challenges in the technology and communications field. Solutions must be sought through multi-stakeholder collaboration.

Second, strong efforts must be made to ensure the inclusion of all stakeholders affected by a policy or its implementation. That requires having an awareness of the breadth of potential impacts, among countries at all levels of development, but also across social, cultural and economic divides. Any attempt to impose a policy or rule without having adequately engaged with stakeholders is likely to fail or to result in ongoing conflict.

Third, multi-stakeholder processes must be adequately resourced. The current international system is struggling in this respect. Multi-stakeholder efforts, such as the IGF, have not secured sustainable funding for operations or civil society participation. What are often less formal processes do not fit into established mechanisms for funding by governments or UN agencies.

Each of these conditions will be most successfully met if all actors are adaptable and take a flexible approach to working methods. Much work has already been done by experts and groups looking at the problems of governance in the current communications environment, and there appears to be



convergence that a new set of norms or a new social contract is needed, based on principles such as those above. This body of work includes reports such as *One Internet* (Global Commission on Internet Governance 2016), *Advancing Cyberstability* (Global Commission on the Stability of Cyberspace 2019), Ronald J. Deibert's 2020 Massey Lectures (Deibert 2020) and Joseph Nye's recent proposal to achieve "the end of cyber-anarchy" (Nye 2022).

The internet is now the technological underpinning of the world's communications systems. Lessons learned from its evolution suggest the kind of governance practices that are likely to be useful more broadly in the technology and communications sector. Examples such as ICANN's transitioning away from US government control offer lessons for the creation of new collaborative efforts. Some traditional institutions, such as the United Nations and several of its agencies, already have successfully expanded cooperation with business and civil society. Canada has often been a catalyst for a more inclusive approach. As Tworek concluded in her essay, Canada does have choices, and the menu is only becoming more varied.

NOTES

1 See www.itu.int/newsarchive/pp06/elections/bios/jones/index.html.

2 See www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/studygroups/com17/ict/Pages/ict-part01.aspx.

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Canadian National Security in Historical Perspective

Timothy Andrews Sayle

Rising powers and a shifting international system. Technological change and revolutionary weapons. The search for a means to deter expansionary powers. Canadians working with — and fighting alongside — allies. A world consumed by global war.

Are these future national security challenges facing Canada? Perhaps. But this list does not describe the future. It is Canada's past.

Consider these four useful categories to help contextualize Canada's national security history: shifting world orders; the challenges posed by economics and trade; technological change; and the lessons of war. The goal in what follows is not to deny the importance, or even uniqueness, of today's national security challenges but rather to suggest that they fit within a broader historical pattern. So-called "traditional" conceptions of national security — grounded in the use of military force — misrepresent the Canadian experience. Annexation and disintegration, rather than invasion or attack, has loomed as the greatest threat to national well-being.

Shifting World Orders

Canada has existed in a "rules-based international order" for only a fraction of its history. Indeed, the Canadian experience navigating new orders reveals that while change can be dangerous, it is not always or necessarily an existential threat. Consider the following three examples: the decline of the British Empire; the rise of the United States; and the onset of the Cold War.

The Eclipse of Europe

It was in 1902, 35 years after Confederation, that Joseph Chamberlain, the British colonial secretary, warned that the imperial centre was a "weary Titan," staggering "under the too vast orb of its fate."¹ "It was time," Chamberlain said, "[for] our children [to] assist us." Already, Canadian soldiers had fought for the Empire in South Africa. And they would again on the killing fields of Europe during the First World War. But in 1922, when Secretary of State for the Colonies

Winston Churchill gracefully sought to draw Canada and other dominions into the Chanak crisis with Turkey — when “The British Lion Call[ed] [Its] Cubs to Face the Beast of Asia” — the cubs stayed home.²

The British Empire was changing, as was the world order around it. Britain’s global obligations had become overwhelming. The evolving world order energized debate and thinking about Canada’s place in it: its role in international diplomacy and international organizations; the relationship with both London and Washington, DC, and the Commonwealth of Nations; and the connections between international and domestic economics. What we now, with the benefit of hindsight, call the “interwar period” was a period of intellectual ferment and innovation as Canadians thought about how to chart an independent foreign policy in the world (Hillmer 2016). Canada was born into an international system in flux. Historical perspective suggests that adapting to a changing international context is not, in and of itself, so much evidence of an existential national crisis as it is an enduring obligation of Canadian statehood.

The evolving world order energized debate and thinking about Canada’s place in it.

The Rise of a Hyperpower

For Canada, the greatest engine of change in the contemporary international system has been the rise of American power. US Founding Father Benjamin Franklin saw advantage in acquiring British Canada. William H. Seward, Abraham Lincoln’s secretary of state, was sure the people of Canada “would have built ‘excellent states’ that would surely be admitted to the union” (quoted in Immerman 2010, 123). Senator Henry Cabot Lodge dreamed of adding Canada to the Republic in 1895. As late as 1912, Richard Immerman writes, Theodore Roosevelt had “never entirely gave up his interest in annexing Canada” (ibid.,

156). Troops were not required in these American imperial visions: Canada would, like a ripe apple, fall into the Republic’s lap.

And yet, the United States did not annex Canada. Ottawa has maintained its political independence from Washington, as well as doing something more miraculous. Over the twentieth century, it managed to exchange great power patrons. Having relied on the United Kingdom to protect it from the United States, Canada came to rely on the United States itself for its defence. The deft and clever minuet by which Ottawa both maintained Canada’s political independence and shifted the prime guarantor of its security was achieved with such care that it is difficult to pin down just when it happened.

In sum, Canadians have been remarkably agile in managing seismic shifts in the international system.

The Cold War

It is often suggested that the Cold War was an easier time for Canadian national security practitioners. The Soviet Union might have posed a credible threat, and nuclear war was a real possibility, but Canada’s loyalties and allegiances were clear, and steady. There was a logic, the thinking goes, to keeping troops stationed in Europe from the early 1950s into the early 1990s. And yet, recently declassified records reveal that as part of a National Security Study begun in 1954, the chairman of the chiefs of staff and the leadership from the Department of National Defence believed the Canadian forward deployment in Europe to be wasteful and unnecessary. They favoured withdrawal. It was the officials from the Department of External Affairs who argued for continued deployment, and they did so because the troops had been deployed as a symbol and their withdrawal would have been equally symbolic. Robert Bryce, the clerk of the Privy Council, described Canada’s national security choices in 1955 aptly, “We are a prisoner of the past” (Department of External Affairs 1955a). The prisoners’ sentence would not expire until 1992. We should be wary of hasty comparisons with — let alone nostalgia for — Canada’s Cold War.

The Economic Lever

For much of Canada's history, Canadian political leaders have feared that economic forces might pull their country in different directions, not least south. The oft-repeated accusation that Canadian proponents of free trade were selling out to the United States was an effective political cudgel during the elections of 1891 and 1911. Indeed, the notion that increased trade with the United States would lead to the demise of Canada as a political entity would seem hysterical were it not for the fact that many American politicians did indeed see improved US-Canadian economic relations as a step toward annexation (Bothwell 2015).

The debates between Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and Opposition leader John Turner in the 1980s echoed these earlier arguments. Turner maintained that free trade with the United States would lead to the surrender of Canadian economic and political independence (Bothwell 2007). A powerful 1988 Liberal Party of Canada election ad even portrayed an imperious American negotiator with a map of North America, scrubbing away the US-Canadian border with a pencil eraser (Liberal Party of Canada 1988).

North American free trade did come to be, first between Canada and the United States and later with Mexico as well. Intriguingly, there is evidence to suggest that free trade, and the greater integration of national economies that followed, secured Canada's independence in national security decision making. In 2003, when the Government of Canada chose not to participate in the star-crossed invasion of Iraq, Ottawa assumed, rightly, that US-Canadian economic integration meant there could be no American retaliation without harm to US financial interests (Thakur and Cunningham 2015).

More recent experience is less hopeful. US President Donald Trump was more willing than his predecessors to bundle economic and trade concessions with foreign policy demands. Better-focused presidents, willing to use the power inherent in their control of access to the United States market, may be able to leverage that economic might to influence Canadian foreign, and even domestic, policy, and pose a clear threat to Canada's national security. Increasing Canadian reliance on trade with the People's Republic of China is also concerning

as the concept of "trade as a weapon" regains global favour (Saint-Jacques, quoted in Blanchfield 2021).

Technological Change

Technological shifts have also had significant, and unforeseen, effects on the development and conception of Canadian national security. Consider here railroads and nuclear-equipped missiles.

Railroads

The development of rail travel provided an important "dual use" technology for Canada. The troops sent west to put down Louis Riel's armed rebellion in 1885 travelled via the Canadian Pacific Railway (Bothwell 2007). But the broader national security implications of railways went much further. The railroad was essential in enticing new provinces to join the Canadian confederation. It made tangible the intangible idea of Canada. It forged links that ran east-west, rather than north-south, helping to build a Canadian economy and, as one of Prime Minister John A. Macdonald's biographers put it, "to achieve a separate political existence [from the United States] on the North American continent" (Creighton 1955, 301). Technology, then, helped unite Canada in a political and economic sense, thereby strengthening Canadian national security against American encroachment. Today's focus on disruptive technologies is important, but let us not forget how technology can also be used to bind and strengthen a country.

Nuclear Weapons

No technology has had greater effects on Canadian thinking about national security than the advent of nuclear weapons, and, in particular, the marriage of warheads and missiles. For Canada, the greatest impact was at home: First there was a need to closely combine US and Canadian air defence efforts. Second was the political pressure to obfuscate the extent to which Canada participated in the maintenance of nuclear deterrence. The two are closely connected.

In the 1980s, Canadian diplomats prepared briefing notes on the national nuclear posture: "It is well known," they wrote, that Canada



“is not now and never has been [a] nuclear power” (quoted in Colbourn and Sayle 2020, 227). They were splitting hairs. Canada was a primary transit point for Strategic Air Command (SAC) bombers in the early Cold War, serving as a basing, storage and refuelling area for SAC and its weapons. Canada hosted US nuclear air defence and anti-submarine nuclear weapons and acquired warheads from the United States for Canadian interceptors. In Europe, Canadian Forces were trained and equipped with weapons that would launch American nuclear warheads. Canadian pilots stood by, ready to fly nuclear strike missions against Warsaw Pact targets of opportunity. Canada did and does contribute to the maintenance of the US nuclear deterrent, primarily through joint continental air defence. As officials at the Department of External Affairs wrote in 1954, the main aim of Canadian policy lay in preserving peace. Paradoxically, the “chief means of doing this [was] by building and maintaining deterrent strength,” especially the “capacity to retaliate instantly against aggression with nuclear weapons” (Department of External Affairs 1955b). So closely integrated was Canada in the American deterrent that officials worried in the 1950s that they had pre-committed Ottawa in case of a potential war with China (Department of External Affairs 1955c).

The Canadian public had (and still has) a limited grasp of the role of nuclear weapons in Canadian policy. That disconnect between policy and public has always been dangerous: if Canadians do not understand that their government has a specific technological capability, or why Ottawa engages in, say, cyber operations, there is a risk of confusion and public opposition to using tools that the government might deem essential.

The Lessons of War

Canadian leaders learned a fundamental lesson from the First and Second World War: general war poses an existential threat to Canada. In neither case, however, was the threat invasion or annexation. Rather, it was something equally disastrous: political division and the seeds of dissolution.

Prime Minister Robert Borden’s 1917 electoral success (and subsequent introduction of conscription) was achieved with a campaign that, as historian Robert Bothwell (2007)

notes, “came very close to preaching racial hatred.” Anti-conscription riots, put down with armed force, were short-lived, but the memory endured in Quebec for decades. The conscription crisis of the Second World War was different in nature and effect; Prime Minister Mackenzie King grasped both horns of the dilemma and survived politically. So too did Canada.

The power of war to break Canada was so plain and obvious that it constituted the very foundation of postwar Canadian foreign policy. “The first general principle upon which I think we are agreed,” declared Secretary of State for External Affairs Louis St. Laurent, in his 1947 Gray Lecture, “is that our external policies shall not destroy our unity” (St. Laurent 1947).

During both world wars, the two most powerful political blocs in Canada were divided in the extent of their loyalty to the British Empire. In a future conflict, there is less reason to think a threat to national unity will lie along a French-English axis. Canadians today have connections to a far more diverse number of places in the world, and some consider those links to be an integral part of their political identity. Consider just one example: There has been significant discussion in the United States of late about how best to prepare for war with China in the event that it invades Taiwan. Concurrently, during the 2021 federal election, the leader of the Opposition, Erin O’Toole, came under pressure for taking too tough a stand on China (Blackwell 2021). Another candidate in the election complained of a targeted disinformation campaign in response to his and his party’s stance on China. In retrospect, he suggested the Conservative Party needed to distinguish its policy toward the People’s Republic of China from its attitude toward the people of China (ibid.). But such a distinction makes little difference in open conflict. What would be the nature of political debate in Canada if forced by events to take a decision regarding a war for Taiwan?

The threat of a serious global crisis or war will raise fundamental concerns that go straight to the heart of what it means to be secure: First, what fissures will such a crisis open in Canada, and how will the government manage these divisions? Second, will the Government of Canada be willing to take a decision in a crisis, or will fear of domestic political disharmony or opposition from organized blocs paralyze Ottawa into inaction?

Conclusion

It is unreasonably difficult to study Canadian national security history (Marsden 2021). That is both a shame, and a threat to Canada's future. A better understanding of Canada's history is a source of national security. History can provide lessons from the past, but its broader value lies in helping Canadians understand the difficult decisions leaders make to protect the country, and the costs that come with those decisions.

Canada is not invulnerable today. But nor did its ocean "moats" make it invulnerable in the past. World orders have changed around Canada since Confederation, and Canadians have adapted to these changes. Historically, the greatest security threats to Canada have been economic and political currents that have threatened to pull Canadians in different directions. Canadian leaders carefully managed the politics of trade and economic relations to ensure market forces did not pull Canada apart. They used technology to promote national unity. They also harnessed technology for defence, although this effort required leaders to downplay Canada's reliance on weapons with tremendous destructive potential. And while Canadian leaders felt compelled to join the two great conflagrations of the twentieth century, fighting in these wars posed serious and long-lasting threats to domestic harmony. Indeed, the most acute threat to Canada posed by the world wars lay within the country itself. If there is a pattern to Canada's national security history, it is that, for more than 150 years, the viability and integrity of the state have been preserved first and foremost by ensuring that Canadians remain united.

NOTES

1 Speech to the Colonial Conference, quoted in "Mr. Chamberlain's Opening Speech," *The Times*, November 4, 1902.

2 A Toronto *Globe* headline read "British Lion Calls Cubs to Face the Beast of Asia" (Thompson and Seager 2016).

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Deterrence of Partisanship as Canadian National Security Strategy

Laurence Deschamps-Laporte

Timothy Sayle's essay ends with a reference to how the dire state of our national archives makes it incredibly difficult to study national security history (Marsden 2021). As a contemporary scholar and practitioner, I must agree. It is similarly challenging to reflect strategically on Canada's national security today, for two distinct reasons. First, national security cannot be studied as a standalone concept. No analysis in this area can be divorced from a broader discussion of international affairs. Canada projects itself as a multilateralist power, a promoter of alliances. While this internationalist worldview is part of the Canadian ethos, it means that, as a middle-power, Canada is also deeply *dependent* on alliances. And while Ottawa's engagement in the world is a strength, Canadian national security is a constant negotiation of that dependency.

The second reason is that contemporary national security challenges are rarely discussed in a non-partisan manner. Sayle argues that "if there is a pattern to Canada's national security history, it is that, for more than 150 years, the viability and integrity of the state has been preserved first and foremost by ensuring that Canadians remain united." I agree and, as a result, a fracture in the Canadian public's unity when it comes to existential threats poses a critical challenge to national security. Consider, for example, the deep partisan fracture over the early 2022 convoy protests and invocation of the Emergencies Act (West, Carvin and Juneau 2022). The establishment of a National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians (NSICOP) in 2018 was meant to increase cross-partisan collaboration, but its work was temporarily compromised in the spring of 2021 by a boycott by the official opposition over the government's refusal to provide Parliament with unredacted documentation regarding the dismissal of scientists from the National Microbiology Lab in Winnipeg in July 2019 (Fife and Chase 2021).



NAFTA-ALENA-TLCAN



This essay offers paths for reflection on how Canadian national unity and cross-partisan collaboration can be fostered in the area of national security by analyzing two case studies with deep national security and foreign policy implications: Canada's response to Russia's seizure of Crimea in 2014 and the renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 2017–2018.

Partisanship and parliamentary debates on national security issues are unavoidable — it is the nature of any strong democracy that opposition parties need to hold the government to account. The absence of debate would be of equal concern to the health of our democracy. At key moments, however, concessions and collaboration must take precedence over partisanship to defend what “aims to protect Canada and its people from major threats that would undermine our democratic institutions and processes, our economy, our social fabric and values, and our interests” (Shull and Wark 2021, 9–10). As Sayle has shown historically, uniting the Canadian public remains a prerequisite for ensuring national security.

Crimea

One of the most striking examples of partisan unity in recent years has been the consistency of Canada's defence of Ukraine's sovereignty and tough stance against Russia in response to the 2014 annexation of Crimea. Over the past decade, Russia has increasingly asserted itself as a great military power willing to use hybrid and cyber operations to destabilize its real and perceived rivals. As the Council on Foreign Relations' special report on Russian containment notes: “The evidence that Russia interfered in the 2016 U.S. Presidential election is overwhelming” (Blackwill and Gordon 2018). Yet a deeply polarized political climate in the United States made recognizing and acting on this interference difficult, just as divisions in much of Europe between Russia hawks and pro-Russia doves have created significant vulnerabilities. Canada is far from immune from the threat of similar interference. Indeed, there have been official reports of efforts to sow disinformation and even to disparage cabinet ministers through state-sponsored media campaigns (Dawood 2021). Nonetheless, consensus among Canada's leading political parties regarding the threat posed by Russian interference and

extraterritorial actions has helped preserve Canadian national security and democracy by reducing the opportunities for political exploitation.

The Canadian consensus might be due to a predominantly realist view of Russia's global ambitions among national leaders. Political imperatives surely also play a role. The Canadian-Ukrainian population's advocacy efforts are second to none (Carment and Landry 2016). Moreover, Canada's economy does not depend on Russian energy imports, a luxury that Canada's European allies do not enjoy. Geographically, the fact that Canada has only one land neighbour has meant that its foreign policy has been shaped as much by choice as by negotiation.

In response to the 2014 annexation, Ottawa announced multiple rounds of sanctions,¹ led international campaigns denouncing Russian overt and covert aggression, and collaborated on joint strategies to deter Russian foreign interference and support for dictators such as Syria's Bashar al-Assad. Diplomatic ties had begun to erode even prior to 2014, with meetings between the two countries' leaders limited to brief encounters at multilateral fora. Post-2014, however, direct diplomatic exchanges between public servants were limited to specific issues such as the Arctic. In its official communications, Russia lamented the poor state of bilateral relations, blaming Canada, but still expressed a desire for improving diplomatic ties: “Being neighbors across the North Pole and the Pacific Ocean, sharing common passion for hockey, Russia and Canada can and should maintain stable and predictable relations.”²

The broad cross-partisan agreement on Canada's policy toward Russia in response to the annexation of Crimea did not mean that the question of Ukraine and Russia never featured in Question Period or that it did not engender partisan tension. Before the 2015 federal election, the Liberals challenged the Conservatives' failure to add to the Canadian sanctions list specific oligarchs involved in the annexation of Crimea (Freeland 2015). They also criticized Conservatives for not including representatives from opposition parties on delegations to Ukraine (*National Post* 2014). Similarly, Conservatives challenged the Liberals' unwillingness to transfer lethal aid to Ukraine prior to Russia's more recent

Consensus among Canada's leading political parties regarding the threat posed by Russian interference and extraterritorial actions has helped preserve Canadian national security and democracy by reducing the opportunities for political exploitation.

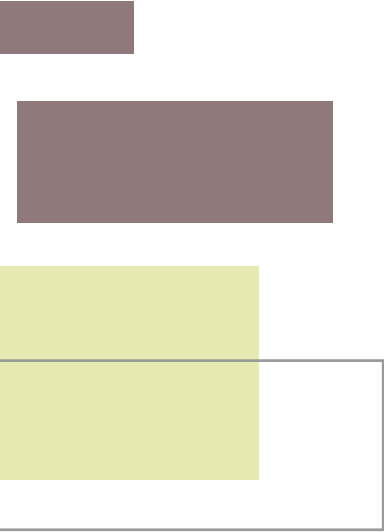
invasion (Boissonnault 2022). All of this, however, is minor crossfire on the margins of what remained a broadly cohesive Canadian position, which can be summarized as “Russia is the aggressor, and Ukraine is the victim” (ibid.). In the aftermath of the annexation of Crimea, parties agreed on the desired outcome (challenging Russia) even if they at times disagreed on the means.

Canadian intransigence was criticized by some as reflecting a diaspora-driven alignment with Ukraine that resulted in insufficient openness to dialogue with Moscow (Ibbitson 2014). Yet, this uncompromising stance was supported by the Canadian public at large. The vast majority of Canadians agree that Canada should assist Ukraine militarily (Stober 2022). The lack of major partisan battles over the threat posed by Russia since 2014 has decreased the vulnerability of Canadian democracy to the sort of destabilization and interference that the United States has experienced. Political scientist Kenneth A. Schultz (2017) notes that by intervening in the American election in 2016 in a way that benefited the Republican candidate, “the Russians put their thumb on the scales of [the American] partisan divide.” The partisan nature of this attack meant that there was an incentive for Republicans to downplay the seriousness of the threat on American national security. In the Canadian context, there is no partisan cleavage to be exploited.

Free Trade in North America

The negotiation of a new trade agreement between Canada, the United States and Mexico in 2017–2018 came at a time of heightened national anxiety. The interlinkages between trade, economic security and national security are spelled out clearly in the 2010 US National Security Strategy: “Our prosperity serves as a wellspring for our power. It pays for our military, underwrites our diplomacy and development efforts, and serves as a leading source of our influence in the world” (The White House 2010, 9). A volatile economy makes it challenging for a state to fully defend its sovereignty. It can become vulnerable to threats through a dependence on foreign debtors. The strength of the Canadian economy, and of its national security, relies on the reliability of its trading relationship with the United States. Given that around 75 percent of Canadian merchandise exports go south (Jiang 2019), the threat of a major disturbance to North American trade quickly seized the attention of Canadians and their leaders.

A reliable, predictable and well-functioning free-trade agreement with the United States enables the Canada-US alliance to remain one of the strongest in the world. Embedded within the trilateral free-trade regime are joint supply chains in the automotive, defence and aerospace manufacturing industries, among others. A degradation in Canada-US trade relations would have had a direct impact across the Canadian national security ecosystem: the movement of people, joint defence



industry, intelligence sharing, joint operations, technology and talent sharing. A permanent deterioration of trading conditions with the United States would have had a profound negative impact on the Canadian economy and forced the government to quickly diversify to new markets, potentially resulting in deeper trade relations with countries that are less aligned with Canadian interests and values. Navigating how and whether to trade with such countries is no longer just a theoretical exercise; it has arguably become the central national security debate in recent years (especially with regard to China).

Overall, the renegotiation process with the United States and Mexico was characterized by a remarkable level of national unity and cross-party cooperation. One key ingredient was the government's proactive creation of the NAFTA Council,³ which included heavyweight opposition representatives such as recent interim Conservative leader Rona Ambrose, former Conservative Minister of Industry James Moore, former senior NDP representatives, as well as business and union leaders. The composition of the council suggested a deliberate strategy to promote cross-party unity. What's more, partisan alignment was enhanced by the parties' agreement both on the desired outcome as well as the general means of achieving it.

Another key factor that can explain the relative lack of partisan strife during the negotiations of the free-trade agreement was the involvement of opposition MPs, premiers and important stakeholders of all stripes in the coordinated joint outreach to American stakeholders at all levels of government and with businesses and unions: a "Team Canada" approach. When it comes to the US relationship, Canadians don't have to depend on embassies and formal diplomatic channels — everyone can be deployed to influence their own universe. If the interests of political actors are generally aligned — as in the case of the NAFTA renegotiation — this productive approach reinforces Canada's position. In September 2017, a delegation made of MPs from all parties met with members of the US House of Representatives in Washington, DC, to advocate the importance of maintaining robust free trade in North America (Parliament of Canada 2017). Conservative premiers also travelled to Washington in February 2019 to attend the

National Governors Association meeting and lobby on Canada's behalf (Canada's Premiers 2019). The renegotiation of NAFTA is an example of politics stopping at water's edge, indeed even kilometres before the edge. This unlikely cross-party alignment (given the previous controversies over the original NAFTA and even the Canadian-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement) enabled a more cohesive national security position for Canada.

Conclusion

Fostering national unity requires active engagement of the opposition: structures that give opposition MPs, provincial politicians and stakeholders a meaningful role in the diplomatic process. All of these political actors can use their involvement to demonstrate their authority and influence — which can be uncomfortable politically for the government. Nonetheless, their engagement is critical.

This reflection focused on two case studies where low partisan polarization enabled enhanced national security. Yet there are many examples where polarization prevailed. The temporary boycott of NSICOP is a tale of partisan quarrelling leading to a missed opportunity to reinforce Canada's national security. The now-defunct parliamentary committee on Canada-China relations was a hotbed of partisan struggle that undermined Canada's ability to present a joint front vis-à-vis an increasingly assertive China. Could these bodies have turned out differently? While partisanship cannot be eliminated (nor should it be), Canada can reinforce specific mechanisms to improve trust in its national security processes — both by parliamentarians and by the general public. NSICOP's role and peculiar structure should be maintained. Its innovative reporting structure to the executive, with its own secretariat, unique even among Westminster systems, was designed to enhance collaboration among parliamentarians. The legislation underpinning NSICOP, due to be reviewed in 2022, should be updated to ensure the independence of the committee's investigations and reports, while keeping the public reports it publishes unclassified (Shull and Wark 2021).

Different strategies should also be explored to test whether cultural change can be fostered among parties on issues of national

security. Institutional mechanisms with a review function, such as NSICOP, are important and represent a viable attempt to include parliamentarians in the review of and communication about national security, but their broad mandate is too focused on process without any broader discussion on the strategic objectives the committee seeks to achieve. One potential initiative is holding a regular structured meeting on national security at the launch of each parliamentary session between the prime minister and the leaders of the opposition parties to frame the work of NSICOP. The discussion could be largely off the record, followed by an agreed-upon public statement, which would encourage the leaders to find common ground and articulate joint national security objectives. Former Secretary of State for External Affairs Louis St. Laurent warned in his 1947 Gray Lecture that “our external policies shall not destroy our unity” (St. Laurent 1947). Today, this maxim must be turned on its head. Instead, we ensure that our national discord shall not destroy our external policies.

NOTES

1 See www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/international_relations-relations_internationales/sanctions/consolidated-consolide.aspx?lang=eng.

2 See https://canada.mid.ru/en/countries/dvustoronne_otosheniya/.

3 See www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2017/08/nafta_council_membersandnewdiplomaticappointees.html.

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Conclusion

Envisioning a Better World

Adam Chapnick and Aaron Shull

This essay series comes at a challenging time in history. The world has been ravaged by the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change continues to visit unabated devastation on communities and Vladimir Putin's aggressive war in Ukraine has wrought suffering on countless civilians.

All three of these catastrophes pose serious challenges in and of themselves, but they are also indicators of a global order whose institutional structures have come under growing strain. Part of the problem is that systems age, and linkages to the past fray over time. Ironically, the actions of the United States have also contributed to the problem, even if it was under American leadership that these institutions were created.

As the essays in this series make clear, what has not changed is the extent to which Canadian national interests are most easily pursued through a predictable, rules-based international system. The fact is, as one of us has previously argued (Shull and Den Tandt 2021), that the Trump administration was deeply destabilizing for Canadians and the world around us, America's protectionist assault on Canada's steel and aluminum industries being only the highest-profile example. There was active disdain for the World Trade Organization, the World Health Organization, the Paris Agreement, and the various institutions of free trade, including the North American Free Trade Agreement and the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

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Such an “America First,” and every country for itself, approach to global governance is incompatible with the challenges posed by actorless threats such as climate change and pandemics. The world is too interconnected, and the hazards faced by states today too omnipresent.

What’s more, our collective failure to nurture the international order has empowered some of its most nefarious actors. As we write this, Russian actions in Ukraine have pushed the world to the closest it has been to global — and, indeed, nuclear — conflict since the Second World War.

No matter the challenge, be it withering support for global institutions, actorless threats or authoritarian disruptors, the solution remains the same: leadership, collective action and competence. In a world marked by multipolarity, the contribution of every state, large and small, matters.

The authors in this essay series are correct to suggest that Canada cannot be a passive bystander in what is to come. The world desperately needs responsible, competent, international contributors, and we hope that this series will play at least a small part in shining light on a path forward.

WORK CITED

Shull, Aaron and Michael Den Tandt. 2021. “Is US President Joe Biden Good or Bad for Canada?” Opinion, Centre for International Governance Innovation, December 13. www.cigionline.org/articles/is-us-president-joe-biden-good-or-bad-for-canada/.



Building the infrastructure of international collaboration may be boring, but let us not forget that it should be the purpose of all peace-lovers to make the world more boring.

Holmes, "The Future of the American Empire,"
International Perspectives 16 (January/ February 1988): 7