



CIGI PAPERS  
NO. 29 — APRIL 2014

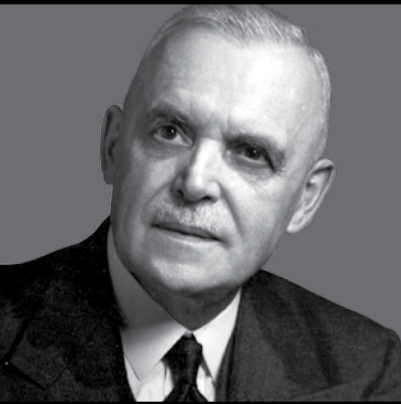
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# THE BIG BREAK

## THE CONSERVATIVE TRANSFORMATION OF CANADA'S FOREIGN POLICY

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JOHN IBBITSON





**THE BIG BREAK:  
THE CONSERVATIVE  
TRANSFORMATION OF  
CANADA'S FOREIGN POLICY**

**John Ibbitson**



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



John Ibbitson is a CIGI senior fellow. During his one-year appointment, he is on leave from *The Globe and Mail*, where he was chief political writer. During his leave, he is also working on a biography of Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper for McClelland & Stewart. The book, to be released just before the next federal election in 2015, will encompass the life, both personal and political, of Canada's twenty-second prime minister.

In a career spanning more than 25 years, John has worked as a reporter and columnist for the *Ottawa Citizen*, *Southam News*, the *National Post* and, since 1999, *The Globe and Mail*. He has served as the paper's Queen's Park columnist, Washington bureau chief and Ottawa bureau chief, becoming chief political writer in 2012.

John has published four works of political analysis and also writes plays and novels. His latest work is the national bestseller *The Big Shift: The Seismic Change in Canadian Politics, Business and Culture, and What it Means for Our Future* (HarperCollins, 2013), co-written with Darrell Bricker. John's writing has also been nominated for the Governor General's Award, the Donner Prize, the National Newspaper Award, the Trillium Award and the City of Toronto Book Award.

## ACRONYMS

CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
DART	Disaster Assistance Response Team
GMAP	Global Markets Action Plan
G7	Group of Seven
G8	Group of Eight
G20	Group of Twenty
MP	Member of Parliament
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDP	New Democratic Party
NGO	non-governmental organization
TPP	Trans-Pacific Partnership

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The foreign policy of the Harper government has been called ideologically conservative, incoherent, a betrayal of a proud foreign policy tradition, and worse. The critics have a point, in that the Conservative view of Canada in the world represents a transformation from all that has gone before. But that transformation — that “big break” — disrupts an approach to foreign policy that was already under great stress. In fact, the arc of Canadian foreign policy from the end of World War II to the present can be divided into four periods: a period of Laurentian coherence, when the political, academic, bureaucratic and media elites living in the cities encompassed by the St. Lawrence River watershed formulated and implemented Canada’s postwar approach to engaging the world; Laurentian incoherence, when that approach began to unravel due to both internal and external pressures; Conservative incoherence, when the Harper government tried — but often failed — to impose its own approach; and Conservative coherence, in which the Harper government has become increasingly sure-footed in its handling of diplomatic issues. Future governments may seek to reverse this Conservative reversal of the Laurentian approach, but given the breadth and depth of the Conservative coalition, at least some of the big break is likely endure.

## INTRODUCTION

In the years since the January 2006 election, Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s three Conservative governments have pursued a foreign policy so unlike what came before that it could be called the big break.

What was elitist became populist; what was multilateral became self-assertive; what was cooperative became confrontational; what was foreign affairs became an extension of domestic politics. What was peacekeeping, foreign aid, collective security — you name it — became a relentless focus on trade agreements.

The big break — or the Conservative transformation of Canada’s foreign policy — has been heavily criticized by academics, former diplomats, politicians and journalists, but it has also had a few defenders. This paper examines how the big break came about and what it looks like. It also seeks to place the transformation within the context of a foreign policy that was already in flux. The paper divides the arc of Canada’s engagement with the world from the end of World War II up until today into four

periods: Laurentian coherence; Laurentian incoherence; Conservative incoherence; and Conservative coherence.<sup>1</sup>

## A TEMPLATE FOR CANADA IN THE WORLD

When Jean Chrétien became prime minister in November 1993, he inherited from his Progressive Conservative predecessor, Brian Mulroney, a set of foreign policy assumptions that Mulroney and his predecessors had inherited from Louis St. Laurent.

On January 13, 1947, in the long shadow of World War II, St. Laurent, then external affairs minister to Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, delivered the first Gray Lecture at the University of Toronto.<sup>2</sup> In that landmark address, he laid down the principles that became the foundation of Canada’s postwar foreign policy. St. Laurent talked of the need for Canada to embrace and advance collective security. In the wake of World War II, and facing a new Cold War, he believed it was in Canada’s interest to enter into alliances with other democracies, promote the international rule of law, and willingly and fully shoulder Canada’s share of international responsibilities, because “security for this country lies in the development of a firm structure of international organization” (St. Laurent 1947).

The lecture placed particular emphasis on Canada’s presence in the various multilateral institutions that had been forged to promote global security and governance in the wake of the war: first and foremost the United Nations, but also the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Civil Aviation Organization, the World Health Organization and other newly minted authorities that aimed to stabilize a war-torn world and to narrow the gap between developed and developing countries.

It was in Canada’s interest to become the very best of global citizens, St. Laurent concluded, because “our geography, our climate, our natural resources, have so conditioned our economy that the continued prosperity and well-being of our own people can best be served by the prosperity and well-being of the whole world. We have thus a useful

1 This paper draws from a talk presented at the Centre for International Governance Innovation on January 29, 2014. It can be found here: [www.cigionline.org/videos/harper-doctrine-conservative-foreign-policy-revolution](http://www.cigionline.org/videos/harper-doctrine-conservative-foreign-policy-revolution). I am grateful to the many individuals who offered encouragement, criticism and advice in the wake of that address. I am particularly indebted to the three scholars — each far more distinguished than the author — who offered their perspectives during the peer review process. I incorporated many of their suggestions, while respecting the truth that, in some cases, the difference in perspective was simply unbridgeable. In questions of foreign policy, as in all public policy, people of goodwill may disagree.

2 I am grateful to Colin Robertson for sharing with me his paper, “Stephen Harper’s Foreign Policy: Canada as a Rising Power,” in advance of its publication, in which he analyzes this address.

part to play in world affairs, useful to ourselves through being useful to others” (ibid.).

St. Laurent’s lecture serves as a template for foreign policy as pursued by the Laurentian consensus. The term is derived from *The Big Shift: The Seismic Change in Canadian Politics, Business, and Culture and what it Means for Our Future* (Bricker and Ibbitson 2013, chapter 1). The book argues that elites — political, bureaucratic, media, academic, cultural and business — in the urban centres within the St. Lawrence River watershed (essentially Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal) governed Canada for much of its history.<sup>3</sup> On the great issues of the day, from the National Policy introduced by Sir John A. Macdonald in 1876 to gay marriage in the last decade, these elites debated among themselves, usually reached a consensus and implemented that consensus. They ran the country.

The consensus extended beyond domestic policy. In his lecture, St. Laurent emphasized the need for agreement among all major regional and political factions before Canada should raise its voice to take a point of view. “No policy can be regarded as wise which divides the people whose effort and resources must put it into effect,” he warned, “for a disunited Canada will be a powerless one” (ibid.).

Although there were fractures from time to time — the conscription crises, the Bomarc missile crisis, reciprocity/free trade with the United States — for the most part, Liberal and Progressive Conservative governments and the Laurentian elites shared the same approach — whether in the halls of the United Nations, at international conferences or in issues of peace and war. From the founding of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) through the peacekeeping initiative to fighting apartheid in Africa to crafting the doctrine of Responsibility to Protect, Canada projected its values to the world through a bipartisan consensus.

At its best — and, as noted above, Canada has often been at its best — this period of Laurentian coherence in foreign policy allowed the country to influence the shape, though never the actual existence, of international organizations, institutions and treaties. It also instilled in Canadians a certain pride, given the respect Canada was accorded by other nations. The world, we assured ourselves, needed more of us.

## FROM COHERENCE TO INCOHERENCE

As the twentieth century reached its end, however, this decades-old approach to Canada in the world was fraying at the edges and starting to come apart at the seams, undermined by external shocks and internal erosion.

Internally, national social programs such as public health care, public education, the Canada Pension Plan, social housing and welfare were paid for, in part, by slashing the defence budget. From a peak of eight percent of GDP in the 1950s, when Canada was on the frontlines of the Korean War and the Cold War, defence spending fell steadily through the St. Laurent, Diefenbaker and Pearson years.

The defence budget remained, by contemporary standards, a robust 2.6 percent of GDP when Pierre Trudeau came to office. But Trudeau helped finance his “just society,” in part, by cutting spending on the military. By the time he left office, defence spending accounted for 1.8 percent of GDP. Brian Mulroney, as prime minister, generally maintained that level of spending, although it had already started to erode by the time the Liberals returned to power in 1993. With federal deficits threatening to undermine the financial stability of the country, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and his finance minister, Paul Martin, cut spending savagely, including spending on defence, which had fallen to 0.9 percent of GDP by 2000 (Department of Finance 2013).

A smaller military meant Canada was less able to contribute to peacekeeping and other manifestations of the global security agenda. Peacekeeping missions grew explosively in this century. Fewer than 20,000 UN blue helmets were deployed around the world in 2000; by 2010, the number had burgeoned to 100,000 (World Federalist Movement — Canada 2013), but there were few Canadians among them. Canada ranked first in the world in its contribution to peacekeeping in 1991; it had dropped to sixty-first in 2013 (United Nations 2013). In part, this drawdown stemmed from a greater reliance by the United Nations on peacekeepers from developing countries, but it was also the result of an increasing reluctance by Canadian governments to commit to new peacekeeping operations.

A diminished military also meant a diminished Canadian role in NATO. Louis St. Laurent believed that Canada could only secure its borders by contributing to the collective security of the West during the Cold War. For that reason, Canada participated in the creation of NATO and was a respected voice within the organization throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, at one point ranking fourth in alliance members’ per capita contribution (Lawless 2006).

The years of relentless defence cuts led Dennis Stairs to glumly conclude in 2002 that “the chances of our having an impact (for good or ill) are profoundly affected by the assets we have on the table. And the truth of the matter is

3 “Laurentian,” in this context, refers to the elites living in the cities within the watershed of the St. Lawrence River, not to the heirs of the foreign policy tradition established by Louis St. Laurent. (Although the two are essentially interchangeable.)



that we have allowed our assets to run down” (quoted in Lawless 2006).

External shocks were even more severe. The end of the Cold War eliminated the stability of a bipolar world order, and 9/11 threw what was left of that order into chaos. Although the United Nations successfully brokered agreements in Namibia, Cambodia, Mozambique and elsewhere, it proved unable to contain sectarian strife in the Balkans, where Canadian peacekeepers were taken hostage. Canadian men and women working for the United Nations watched helplessly as Rwanda descended into genocide. Russia sought to reclaim its status as a great power even as a rising China asserted its claims in East Asia.

In the years following 9/11, Canada struggled to respond to American rage over the terrorist attacks. The Canada-US border thickened, as security concerns trumped economic. The Chrétien government refused to support the US invasion of Iraq, but did agree to participate in the mission in Afghanistan; Paul Martin, once he became prime minister, deepened that commitment, with Canada taking responsibility for security in turbulent Kandahar province.

Martin also sought to thaw a deepening chill in Canada-US relations by promising to join the US ballistic missile defence system; however, he then reversed that decision, and when his minority government was threatened with defeat he began condemning the United States for failing to meet the challenge of global warming, even though neither the Chrétien nor Martin governments had done anything other than study the issue.

By the time of the 2006 election, Canadian foreign policy was mired in Laurentian incoherence as Canada preached collective global security but abandoned the practice of contributing to it, while alternately supporting or bashing the United States.

A third force was also at work. Both Canada’s values and its centre of political gravity were shifting. Population, wealth and political power were flowing to Western Canada, as the boom in oil, gas and other natural resources supplanted central Canada’s troubled manufacturing sector, and five million immigrants — twice the population of Toronto — almost all of them from Asia and the Pacific, flooded into the country after the Chrétien government increased the immigration quotas in the 1990s. These two shifts, in combination, brought the Laurentian consensus to its knees.

## THE BIG SHIFT AND THE BIG BREAK

The Laurentian elites assumed that the West would always remain a region — conservative, yes, but never powerful

enough to dictate the agenda in Ottawa. But the West got bigger much faster than they anticipated. In the 1997 election, for example, the centrist Liberal Party obtained only 16 seats in the four western provinces, compared to 60 for the conservative Reform Party, but the Liberals obtained a majority government through their strength in Ontario and, to a lesser extent, Quebec.<sup>4</sup> But Western Canada has grown in population and influence. The 2011 Census revealed that there are now more Canadians living in the four western provinces than in Quebec and Atlantic Canada combined (Statistics Canada 2012, 10). The oil sands have become a major driver of the Canadian economy. Nine out of 10 net new jobs in Canada in 2013 were created in Alberta (Grant 2014). Liberal assumptions that the West, especially the Prairie provinces, could be safely ignored turned out to be dangerously complacent.

Laurentianists also assumed new Asian arrivals would happily embrace the values, beliefs and voting habits of those who came before, just as earlier European immigrants had. But the Chinese, Filipino, Indian and other immigrants who have come to Canada over the past two decades are socially and economically more conservative than most native-born Canadians, according to election-day exit polls conducted by Ipsos Reid (Bricker and Ibbitson 2013, chapter 2). And as these new arrivals settled and prospered, moving into the sprawling suburban cities surrounding Toronto, they began doing something that the Laurentian elites had never anticipated. They began voting Conservative.

In the 2000 election, 70 percent of visible-minority voters supported the Liberal Party. Fewer than 20 percent voted for the Canadian Alliance Party, successor to the Reform Party. By 2008, 40 percent of visible-minority voters voted Liberal; 38 percent voted for the Conservative Party (Gidengil et al. 2009), which was formed in 2003 from the merger of the Canadian Alliance and Progressive Conservative parties. By 2011, the Conservatives were dominating the vast swathes of suburban ridings in the Greater Toronto Area. Many of those ridings contained large minorities or even majorities of immigrant or visible-minority voters.

The big shift, then, is actually two shifts: the shift in population and power and influence from central Canada to the West, and the shift in voting patterns by aspirational immigrants living in the suburban cities surrounding Toronto (often described as “the 905,” after the region’s 905 area code). The implications for domestic policy and politics are profound, and the impact on Canadian foreign policy is no less far-reaching. The shift contributed to the big break: the transformation of Canada’s foreign policy from Laurentian to conservative.

<sup>4</sup> For past election returns, visit the Elections Canada website: [www.elections.ca](http://www.elections.ca).

Foreign policy played no role in the Liberal defeat in the 2006 election. Scandal was the dominant issue. That election brought a shaky Conservative minority government to power. Its priorities were entirely domestic: cutting taxes, toughening penalties against criminals and reducing wait times in health care. “Advancing Canadian Values and Interests on the World Stage” took up a small part of one page at the back of the 46-page Conservative election platform. That single paragraph contained a glimmer of what was to come. “Too often, Liberal foreign policy has compromised democratic principles to appease dictators, sometimes for the sake of narrow business interests,” the platform declared. “Foreign aid has been used for political purposes, not to ensure genuine development. We need to ensure that Canada’s foreign policy reflects true Canadian values and advances Canada’s national interests” (Conservative Party of Canada 2006, 44).

Reconciling democratic values to economic interests would prove to be a challenge for the Conservative government. Still, a governing party that held such notions, and was prepared to act on them, would bring fundamental change to Canada’s relations with the world. Stephen Harper did hold such notions, and he was prepared to act — once, that is, he got his act together.

## CONSERVATIVE PRINCIPLES, CONSERVATIVE INCOHERENCE

The electoral coalition that sustains the Harper government is unique. There has never before been a majority government in this country without substantial support from Quebec. (The Conservatives won only five of 75 ridings in that province in the 2011 election.) This is a majority government in which there are essentially as many Members of Parliament (MPs) from the West in the caucus (72, as of March 2014) as there are from Ontario (73). And take a look at those Ontario ridings: About a third are predominantly rural. Most of the rest are suburban ridings, many of them surrounding Toronto, and many of those ridings contain large minorities or even majorities of immigrant or visible-minority populations. Those breakdowns are reflected, on a smaller scale, in British Columbia.

Rural and suburban Ontario, the Prairies, rural and suburban British Columbia — this is the Conservative coalition. The foreign policy of the Conservative government reflects the values of this coalition.

The Ipsos Reid exit poll from the 2011 election captured the responses of almost 40,000 voters across Canada. Among them, 91 percent who voted Conservative agreed with the statement: “I think it’s important that the government maintains a balanced budget.” Eighty-nine percent maintained the economy should be the government’s top priority. And 62 percent agreed with the statement “when

the government gets involved in the economy, it does more harm than good.” This last response is the most crucial of all. While most New Democratic Party (NDP) and Liberal voters were also greatly concerned about the economy, only 50 percent of NDP voters agreed that the government does more harm than good when it interfered with the economy, while 56 percent of Liberal voters disagreed with the statement. So Conservative voters tend to be more economically conservative — or at least more *laissez-faire* — than NDP or Liberal voters (Bricker and Ibbitson 2013, chapter 2).

According to the poll, immigrant voters were more trusting of Harper on the law-and-order issue (42 percent) than those that were native-born (39 percent) (*ibid.*).

So the Conservative coalition is English-speaking, and from rural and suburban Ontario and British Columbia, and both rural and urban Prairie communities. (It is also well represented in New Brunswick, where the Conservatives took eight of 10 seats, but poorly represented in the rest of Atlantic Canada, where the Conservatives held only five of 22 seats.) The coalition is more conservative in outlook than the rest of the population on issues of government interference in the economy and getting tough on crime.

“In the Canadian Conservative electoral coalition, the new multicultural pillar seems well connected to the older western populist and traditional Tory pillars,” wrote Tom Flanagan (2011), the University of Calgary political scientist who managed the 2004 and 2006 Conservative election campaigns.

The multicultural voters who have now been attracted to the Conservative Party (not all, to be sure) seem to be demographically and psychographically similar to other Conservative voters — middle-aged or older, married with children, imbued with family values, respectful of religion, distressed about the impact of crime, oriented toward the private sector and concerned about taxes and the general business climate. They make no demands on government other than those that Conservatives generally make. They may have some racial or linguistic differences, but their location in policy space is very close to other Conservative voters. That makes the coalition “connected.” (*ibid.*)

Equally important to understanding who is inside the Conservative coalition is understanding who is outside of it. Almost anyone from Quebec is outside this coalition, as is almost anyone who lives south of Eglinton Avenue, west of the Don Valley or east of the Humber River in

Toronto. (The Conservatives took a number of suburban seats within Toronto itself and in parts of the former Metropolitan Toronto, such as Scarborough, Etobicoke and North York, but were shut out of the old city of Toronto, with the exception of Eglinton-Lawrence.)

The downtowns of several other Ontario cities — including Ottawa, Kingston, Hamilton and Windsor — also elected opposition MPs. Dalhousie University, Laval University, Université de Montréal, McGill University, Carleton University, the University of Ottawa, Queen's University, Ryerson University, the University of Toronto, York University, the University of Guelph, the University of Windsor, the northern Ontario universities, the University of Winnipeg, the University of Regina, the University of Alberta, the University of British Columbia and the University of Victoria are all situated in ridings that sent opposition MPs to Ottawa in the last election.

Understanding who is inside and who is outside the Conservative coalition is key, because like all governments, the Harper government pays particular attention to the needs and values of those within its own coalition.

It would be a mistake, however, to say that the Conservatives came to office in 2006 with a carefully considered foreign policy tailored to appeal to the Conservative coalition. It would be a mistake to say that the Conservatives came to office with any foreign policy at all. As noted above, the Conservatives had paid scarcely any attention to foreign affairs in their election platform. Stephen Harper had reportedly never travelled outside North America before becoming prime minister (Chianello 2008, A5). Neither the prime minister nor many of his senior advisers knew much or cared much about external relations.

The weak minority Conservative government, which could be scuppered at any time by the opposition parties in the House, was focussed on getting its domestic agenda of tax cuts and law-and-order legislation passed, in order to have something to run on in an election that always appeared imminent.

This led to a series of foreign policy missteps. These were so numerous, and occurred on such a broad range of files, that Canada could be said to have entered a period of Conservative incoherence in foreign affairs. This is not to say that the Harper government's actions weren't grounded in any set of principles. Looking back, they can be readily discerned. But those principles, when applied to real-world situations, came a cropper, time after time.

## FIVE IDEAS, AND WHAT BECAME OF THEM

The first of those principles is by far the most important: Conservative foreign policy reflects the values and interests

of the Conservative coalition. But values and interests sometimes conflict. Consider the vexed question of China.

For many in the voting coalition, and within the government caucus, the previous Liberal obsession with wooing Chinese business opportunities while ignoring the communist regime's flagrant human rights violations, represented the worst form of opportunistic pandering. Stephen Harper agreed. "I don't think Canadians want us to sell out important Canadian values," he declared at the 2006 Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation summit. "They don't want us to sell that out to the almighty dollar" (CBC News 2006b). Just to make sure the Chinese received the message, Harper met with the Dalai Lama in his office, with a Tibetan flag on the prime minister's desk, which a spokesperson for the Chinese Foreign Ministry described as "disgusting conduct" (*The Ottawa Citizen* 2007).

But the government's assumption that Canadian businesses could pursue opportunities in China, even as the Canadian government snubbed the regime in Beijing, turned out to be flawed. Business leaders warned Ottawa that Canada was being frozen out of the Chinese market. Trade with China declined, relative to other countries such as the United States and Australia (Carmichael 2009). Stephen Harper, writes Paul Evans of the University of British Columbia, "had put Canada in a category of one, as almost every other government in the world was approaching engagement with the fervour and techniques the Harper government was abandoning" (Evans 2014, 67).

Word also began filtering up from the suburban shires: While the first wave of Chinese immigrants to Canada in the 1990s came from Hong Kong, driven by a suspicion and even loathing of the Beijing regime, more recent Chinese arrivals were from the mainland, and did not appreciate China bashing. Those Chinese immigrant voters lived in suburban ridings the Tories coveted. MPs and party workers warned that Stephen Harper's cold shoulder to China was putting Conservatives' electoral fortunes at home at risk.<sup>5</sup>

By 2009, the Sino-Canadian relationship was a mess, and Stephen Harper was entirely to blame.

Foreign policy reaches its apogee in war. And the Conservatives inherited one. When they came to office, the security situation in Kandahar province was deteriorating by the day, as the Taliban shocked Western forces with the intensity and effectiveness of their resistance.

On March 6, 2006, during an unannounced visit to Afghanistan, Harper declared: "There will be some who want to cut and run, but cutting and running is not my way and it's not the Canadian way. We don't make a

<sup>5</sup> From confidential sources.

commitment and then run away at the first sign of trouble. We don't and we will not, as long as I'm leading this country" (Wheery 2012).

The Conservatives accelerated the buildup of defence forces that had begun under Paul Martin. Defence spending increased by roughly a billion dollars a year. In 2001, defence represented 0.9 percent of GDP; by 2010 that had risen to 1.3 percent (Department of Finance 2013).

That commitment spoke to a second principle of Conservative foreign policy: Canada's military will be a source of pride, not embarrassment. Canadians responded. Most visibly, the people who lined the roads and highways honouring the war dead revealed, as one military commander observed, "that Canadians took ownership of their military" (Ibbitson 2010a).

The Harper government also used the military as a tool for reimagining Canada's history. The reintroduction of the word "Royal" to the names of the air force and the navy, the commemorations of Canada's martial past in the new citizenship guide for new Canadians and the downplaying of peacekeeping in favour of peacemaking sought to dilute the Laurentian lens through which Canadians viewed their past, bringing into sharper focus a Canada that fought to preserve its freedom and values whenever they were threatened. Promoting the bicentennial of the War of 1812 as a seminal event in Canada's evolution was part and parcel of this reimagination.

There is myth, and then there are boots on the ground. Even with 3,000 troops in Afghanistan — the largest Canadian deployment overseas since the Korean War — resources did not begin to meet demand. In 2007, the prime minister commissioned a panel led by former Liberal Deputy Prime Minister John Manley to assess the situation in Afghanistan. Manley's task force recommended an additional battalion for Kandahar province. Retired General Andrew Leslie, who was chief of the land staff at the time, later declared: "Whoever told John Manley that a battalion was needed should be taken out and spanked" (Wells 2013, chapter 7). It would take at least three brigades to assert any real control over Kandahar — which is what the United States sent in when they took over in 2010. Until the Americans relieved them, the Canadians barely hung on in Kandahar, as the death toll climbed to more than 150.

The Conservatives' military buildup was about more than Afghanistan. The *Canada First Defence Strategy* released in 2008 envisioned a fleet of Arctic patrol vessels and a deepwater port at Nanisivik, Nunavut, in support of aggressive Canadian claims over Arctic lands, water and seabed (National Defence 2008).

The new Conservative Arctic assertiveness stemmed from more than a robust determination to defend Canadian interests in the Far North. The Conservatives have long

chafed at the many Canadian symbols and values — the national flag, peacekeeping, the welfare state, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation — that were identified with the Liberal Party. The party leadership was anxious to establish new myths, ones that Canadians would associate with the Conservative Party and conservative values. As we have seen, they chose the military as one vehicle for rewriting the national myth. They also chose the North (Chase 2014).

Stephen Harper's love affair with the Arctic — he has travelled there every summer since he became prime minister — highlights the third Conservative foreign policy principle, one that very much relates to the second: Canadian foreign policy shall bolster patriotic pride. Bullish Conservative assertions of sovereignty over not only Arctic lands, but waters and the seabed all the way to the North Pole, is probably the most visible example of that policy.

But the economic crisis of 2008 threw Conservative procurement policies for a loop. Plans for the patrol ships were put off, and put off again. The deepwater harbour in Nanisivik still exists only on paper. And as the Russians massively redeployed their military to the north (RT News 2013) to assert their own Arctic claims, and the Chinese commissioned icebreakers that Canadians could only dream of (Xinhua News 2014), the Harper government's commitment to double down on Arctic sovereignty looked more and more like a bad bet.

The Conservatives did work cooperatively with the Arctic Council, which represents those nations with territory in the far northern hemisphere, on environmental protection, search and rescue, and other areas. But in other forums, especially at the United Nations, the Canadian commitment waned under the Harper Conservatives, and deliberately so. A fourth policy principle of the Harper government is that Canada will contribute to multilateral institutions only to the extent they advance Canadian interests.

Nothing represents a greater break from the Laurentian world view than the Conservative skepticism toward participating in multilateral institutions simply for the sake of being part of the gang. A commitment to such institutions was central to St. Laurent's approach to external affairs as laid out in the Gray Lecture, and had been at the heart of Canada's foreign policy ever since.

But Conservatives, both large and small "c," see institutions such as the United Nations, the Commonwealth, La Francophonie and other "talking shops" as just that — places that spend too much time jawing, and too little time doing. Stephen Harper, who is diffident, even shy by nature, and who started out with little experience in foreign affairs, travelled reluctantly, and often returned from summits complaining that little had been accomplished for the amount of sleep he had lost. He is particularly skeptical of two institutions in

which, heretofore, Canada has played a major role: the Commonwealth and La Francophonie. Harper is attracted to the historical connection with Great Britain that the Commonwealth represents, and he appreciates its mix of larger and smaller developed and developing nations, bound, at least in theory, by a commitment to Westminster parliamentary democracy. But he finds its agenda light on deliverables. As for La Francophonie, the prime minister sees it as an organization with two major developed nations, France and Canada, and an assortment of mostly developing nations, some of them particularly unpleasant, whose meetings accomplish little or nothing.<sup>6</sup>

The Harper government's relations with the United Nations are particularly strained. In an address to the General Assembly on October 1, 2012, Foreign Minister John Baird bluntly criticized the United Nations' obsession with process over performance. "The United Nations must spend less time looking at itself, and more time focused on the problems that demand its attention," Baird told the assembled diplomats, adding that Canada "cannot and will not participate in endless, fruitless inward-looking exercises. Canada's Permanent Mission to the United Nations will henceforth devote primary attention to what the United Nations is achieving, not to how the UN arranges its affairs" (Baird 2012).

Baird delivered his address two years after the greatest foreign policy embarrassment of the Harper years: the failure of Canada's bid for one of the temporary seats on the UN Security Council on October 12, 2010. That failure was the product of two Conservative principles in conflict: suspicion of the United Nations versus patriotic pride. Because of that suspicion, the government initially showed little interest in securing one of the rotating seats that came available in 2010. But a seat on the Security Council confers international prestige, which would bolster Canadian patriotic pride. So, as the date for the vote approached, new orders came from the Prime Minister's Office to the Canadian mission in New York to secure the seat. But by then there was too little time, the mandate was confused and contradictory, and Conservative support for Israel and cutbacks to aid for Africa had angered key constituencies (Ibbitson and Slater 2010, A14). Portugal was elected to the Security Council instead.

Once again, as with the China file, Conservative values, or perhaps simple preachiness, conflicted with Canada's interests, at a high price.

A core domestic Conservative priority also animates the fifth and final — at least for this survey — Conservative foreign policy priority: trade is job one. The Conservative agenda is dedicated to protecting workers and consumers, as the Conservatives understand them. All Conservative policy is economic policy, and all economic policy is aimed

at protecting jobs and spending power. As a result, the government is very bullish on trade agreements.

David Emerson, the former Liberal industry minister, crossed the floor to become the Conservative international trade minister in 2006. His first task, which he fulfilled (at a cost of some \$1 billion in unreturned US tariffs), was to settle the softwood lumber dispute that had troubled Canada-US relations for years. The Harper government was determined to redress the irritants between the two countries. The US market, Harper believed, was the market that mattered most, and a prime responsibility of any Canadian government should be to remove impediments to that market. When Barack Obama became president in 2009, Harper urged him at their first face-to-face meeting in Ottawa to work cooperatively with Canada on expanding trade. Settling the lumber dispute was part of Canada's contribution to that effort.

As international trade minister, Emerson also launched an impatient drive to reorient trade negotiations. As part of Canada's commitment to multilateralism, Liberal governments had promoted global trade liberalization through the Doha round of trade talks under the auspices of the World Trade Organization. But Doha was moribund, undone by disagreements over agricultural subsidies in developed countries and manufacturing tariffs in developing ones (*The Economist* 2011a). Emerson pushed instead for bilateral trade agreements. Jordan came first, followed by European countries outside the European Union, then Peru, Panama, Honduras and Columbia.

But the trade initiative also foundered. Congress implemented protectionist "Buy American" policies that excluded Canadian bidders, even as the Homeland Security department continued its unrelenting efforts to make it harder to get into the United States (Canadian Press 2009). The requirement that both Canadians and Americans crossing the border have a passport was particularly damaging. A 2012 study revealed that overnight US visits to Canada had declined by 23 percent over the preceding decade; the number of same-day trips had declined by 69 percent. "Border security, including the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative [which implemented the passport requirement], contributed to the drop," the Fraser Institute report concluded (Moens and Gabler 2012, 25).

And the great recession of 2008-2009 revealed dangerous weaknesses in the US economy that made it wise to wonder whether Canada should have so many eggs in the American trade basket (Hampson et al. 2012).

Beyond the 49th parallel, Canada's trade policy descended into a particularly egregious example of incoherence. In 2006, a consortium of Pacific nations began talks aimed at a new kind of trade agreement that would go beyond tariffs to include financial services, government procurement,

6 From confidential sources.

intellectual property, even agricultural subsidies. When Canada was asked whether it wanted to join the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) talks, Ottawa declined, refusing even to discuss dismantling the protections on dairy and poultry known as supply management. But then the United States came on board the TPP, and suddenly the Harper government wanted in. Sorry, too late, came the word from the negotiating table (Ibbitson 2010b).

So what does it all add up to? Five Conservative foreign policy principles, each of which has been undermined:

- **Conservative foreign policy reflects the values and interests of the Conservative coalition.** But that led, among other things, to tension and anger in Canada's relations with China.
- **Canada's military will be a source of pride, not embarrassment.** But despite an impressive buildup of personnel and equipment, it became clear that Canada was unable to do more than hang on in Kandahar.
- **Canadian foreign policy shall bolster patriotic pride.** But when the Conservatives proved unable to back up their claims in the Far North, patriotic pride began to look a lot like simple bluster.
- **Canada will contribute to multilateral institutions only to the extent they advance Canadian interests.** But that led to humiliation when Canada tried and failed to win a seat at the UN Security Council.
- **Trade is job one.** Unless it affects cows and chickens.

It is hard not to conclude that Conservative foreign policy, at least in the early years of the Harper government, was essentially incoherent. That incoherence perhaps reached its pinnacle with Kyoto.

The Conservatives inherited a difficult situation on the Kyoto Protocol to combat global warming. The targets agreed to by the Chrétien government could never be reached. Chrétien had reportedly told negotiators that Canada must match or exceed whatever target was agreed to by the US delegation. But the Americans set their ambitious bar knowing that it would never be ratified by Congress, and so would never have to be implemented (Wells 2006, 298–300). Canada found itself agreeing to a Kyoto commitment that simply couldn't be met, which is why neither the Chrétien nor Martin governments bothered to try.

However, global warming was a top-of-mind concern for Canadians, according to the polls, so the Conservatives promised action. The first effort, in fall 2006, focussed on reducing the intensity of emissions, rather than on emissions themselves. The reception was so hostile (CBC News 2006a) that the plan was never implemented and

the environment minister responsible for creating it, Rona Ambrose, lost her portfolio and was demoted within cabinet a few months later.

The global economic crisis submerged climate change as an issue for voters (Gidengil et al. 2009, 9). But the Liberals, under Stéphane Dion, remained committed to action through a carbon tax. Economy versus the environment was a defining issue in the 2008 election, which produced another Conservative minority government and the worst defeat for the Liberal Party in its history to that point, in terms of the popular vote.

When Barack Obama became president, Stephen Harper promised to work with the United States on a continental strategy to fight global warming through a cap-and-trade system to reduce industrial emissions. But it soon became clear that Congress would never approve cap and trade. Unable — as well as unwilling — to meet its Kyoto targets unilaterally, and unable to secure a cooperative agreement with the United States, on December 12, 2011, Environment Minister Peter Kent announced Canada was withdrawing from the Kyoto Protocol, the first country to do so.

Canada's cavalier dismissal of the need for emphatic action on climate change, and its formal withdrawal from the Kyoto Protocol, harmed energy export opportunities, critics warned. "Bad publicity from the decision may indeed make tar-sands oil harder to sell abroad," *The Economist* predicted, after Kent's announcement (*The Economist* 2011b). The government's casual assumption that US approval for the Keystone XL pipeline — which would deliver oil from the oil sands to US refineries — was, as Harper called it, a "complete no brainer" (McCarthy 2011) failed to consider the power of the environmental lobby for a Democratic administration. Labelling the opponents of the Pacific Gateway pipeline "foreign radicals" only stiffened resistance to that pipeline at home. In every intersection of the environment, energy and the economy, Conservative policy appeared to contradict itself.

Such actions, as well as others, have led some of Canada's most respected voices to question the foreign policy direction of the Harper government.

In *Getting Back in the Game: A Foreign Policy Playbook for Canada*, Paul Heinbecker lamented the "pinched vision and curtailed ambition" of the Harper government's agenda. The former diplomat and foreign policy adviser to Brian Mulroney warned that "the government's foreign policy, initially at least, and its light-switch character [the government's tendency to do the opposite of whatever Liberals had done before] has lowered Canada's profile in world affairs" (Heinbecker 2010, 12, 214).

In *How We Lead: Canada in a Century of Change*, Former Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister Joe Clark warned that, under the Conservatives, a country with a reputation

for quiet and constructive diplomacy has degenerated into a cowardly bully. “Canada now talks more than we act, and our tone is almost adolescent — forceful, certain, enthusiastic, combative, full of sound and fury,” he wrote. “That pattern of emphatic rhetoric at the podium and steady withdrawal from the field, raises a basic question: what does the Harper government consider the purpose of foreign policy?” (J. Clark 2013, 100).

If the story ended here, it would not be much of a story: Conservative incoherence replaces Liberal incoherence, as Canada’s standing in the world continues its long decline. But that is not the whole story — far from it. In the second half of the “Harper decade,” Canada’s foreign policy has started to show both coherence and competence. With the security of a majority of government behind it, after the election of May 2, 2011, the government adjusted its five Conservative principles — respecting the Conservative coalition, rebuilding a robust military, fostering a sense of patriotic pride, re-evaluating multilateral forums and making trade a top priority — and adapted them to fit a fluid reality. The government has learned — to the point where we can now say we are in a period of Conservative coherence, as far as foreign policy is concerned.

## FLATTENING THE LEARNING CURVE

One sure sign of a weak and confused ministry is a steady rotation of ministers through it. Between 2000 and 2011, Foreign Affairs was led by Lloyd Axworthy, John Manley, Bill Graham, Pierre Pettigrew, Peter MacKay, Maxime Bernier, David Emerson, Lawrence Cannon and John Baird. Nine ministers in 11 years! But Baird has broken the curse. He shares the prime minister’s world view and has his confidence. Baird appears set to be the first foreign affairs minister since Joe Clark to serve from one election straight through to another in a majority government.

Recognizing that he needed to change his approach to China, Harper travelled to Beijing in 2009. As they stood together in the Great Hall of the People, Premier Wen Jiabao publicly humiliated the prime minister, saying it had been five years since a Canadian prime minister had come to China. “Five years is too long a time for China-Canada relations and that’s why there are comments in the media that your visit is one that should have taken place earlier” (Dyer 2009), the Chinese premier scolded. Remarkably, there were Chinese newspaper and television reports the next day criticizing Harper for neglecting relations with China. It was almost as though the premier knew what the press was going to say.

Since then, the two countries have signed a foreign investment protection agreement, and the government approved the takeover of the Canadian energy firm Nexen by the Chinese state-owned China National Offshore Oil

Corporation, while warning that future acquisitions by state-owned enterprises were likely to be blocked unless conditions were extremely favourable to Canada.

“In many respects, the high policy of engagement was back where the Martin government had left it in 2005,” Evans (2014, 75) concluded — though balancing engagement with China and the hostility toward the regime of the conservative base will always be a delicate calculation for this government.

In this specific instance, however, we can see at least a partial resolution of the vexed question: when values-based foreign policy contradicts interest-based foreign policy, which prevails? The answer for the Conservatives appears to be interest trumps values, when the economic well-being of Canadians is at stake. In this respect, if not in others, Conservative foreign policy is actually rather Laurentian.

The Canadian expeditionary force in Afghanistan transitioned from a combat to a training role, and completed its mission on March 31, 2014. The government has avoided other potential quagmires, limiting itself to air strikes in Libya, offering the French only logistical support in Mali, emphatically rejecting a UN suggestion that Canada might take over leadership of the peacekeeping force in Congo (C. Clark 2010, A11) and expressing deep skepticism over the makeup of rebel forces in Syria.

But even as it withdraws from operations overseas, Canada’s military has shown itself to be remarkably nimble in responding to humanitarian disasters. One of the Harper government’s most astute decisions was to acquire four Boeing C-17 Globemasters, which provide heavy-lift capability, making it possible to dispatch the Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) on a moment’s notice. The swift and effective Canadian response to the earthquake in Haiti in 2010 and to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in 2013 stands in happy contrast to the hapless handling of the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004, when DART sat unused for two weeks while the government searched for a way to get the team off the ground (CTV News 2005).

Although the Conservatives have promised more than they delivered in the Arctic, they have at least partly delivered — most notably with the construction of an all-weather road to the Arctic coast, a project that has been promised for decades but that the Conservatives are finally pushing through (Canadian Press 2014).

A new defence strategy, due in late 2014 or early 2015, will attempt to preserve the expeditionary capacity of the military while also bolstering its ability to defend Canadian sovereignty, especially in the Far North, even as the government reduces defence spending in a post-Afghanistan, deficit-fighting environment. It will be a

difficult circle to square, but then it has been for the past 50 years.

After early missteps, this government has pursued an intelligent and aggressive trade strategy, signing a landmark agreement with the European Union in October 2013 and with South Korea in March 2014 — the first free trade agreement with an Asian nation. Canada also finally won a seat at the TPP talks. Bilateral free-trade talks are underway with India, Thailand and Japan. Signature new trading agreements could be the most important legacy of this government's majority mandate.

This multipronged outreach on trade is part of a policy of tying trade to development and foreign aid that has evolved over the years of Conservative power. It reached its formal expression last autumn, when the government released its Global Markets Action Plan (GMAP). The GMAP orders diplomats at Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development to “entrench the concept of ‘economic diplomacy’ as the driving force behind the Government of Canada’s activities through its international diplomatic network” (Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development 2013). By the time the GMAP was released, the department had already largely transitioned to an increased emphasis on trade and economic development.

Economic diplomacy also lay behind the government decision to dismantle the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). While respected internationally, CIDA had a tendency to give money to a great many projects in a large number of countries. The Martin government initially sought to refocus the CIDA mandate, and the Conservatives accelerated the trend, reducing the number of countries or regions receiving aid to 20; shifting priorities away from Africa and toward Latin America and the Caribbean, and tying aid more closely to economic development (Smith 2009). Ultimately, however, the government decided that development aid should be handled directly by Foreign Affairs, and focussed even more intensely on economic development through trade (Canadian Press 2013). Stephen Harper is convinced that, abroad as well as at home, the best weapon against poverty is a job; henceforth, aid will follow and promote trade and economic development.

The relationship with the United States is, of course, the relationship that matters above all. Here, the record has been mixed. Hopes for a continental border security agreement have been partially realized, through the Beyond the Border accord signed in February 2011. The most encouraging progress is the final agreement to construct a new bridge between Windsor and Detroit, the busiest border crossing between the two countries. (It helped that Canada agreed to bear much of the cost of constructing the new bridge.) Efforts to harmonize the regulatory regimes of the two countries, however, have shown less progress. The Regulatory Cooperation Council, established to review

and recommend areas where harmonization might occur, has limited itself to a series of “stakeholder engagement” events (International Trade Administration 2014).

Beyond sluggishness in efforts to thin the border, anger on the Canadian side over the uncertainty surrounding Keystone XL has cooled relations between Ottawa and Washington to the point that it may require a new president and/or a new prime minister to reset the relationship (Burney and Hampson 2012).

Stephen Harper is now one of the longer-serving global leaders, and that personal experience on the world stage has led to a more experienced approach to multilateral institutions. Two examples: The Group of Twenty (G20) has emerged as the premier forum for global financial issues, and the Group of Eight (G8) (now the Group of Seven [G7], after Russia was, effectively, expelled in March 2014) is still a useful club for like-minded economies. The Harper government has been heavily involved in both, with Canada hosting the 2010 G8, while contributing to the restructuring of global financial regulations under the G20. The example of sound banking oversight and prudent fiscal policy that Canada set for other nations is a prime example of “soft power” diplomacy — championed by former Liberal Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy — in action.

On the other hand, the prime minister boycotted the 2013 meeting of Commonwealth heads of government in Colombo, Sri Lanka over that government’s treatment of its Tamil minority. The Conservatives may well cut funding for the Commonwealth secretariat entirely (C. Clark 2013). While the decision has been widely criticized, it is at least consistent with the government’s approach to engaging only with those multilateral institutions that are effective and that serve Canadian interests.

Many observers criticized the decision to stay away from Colombo as domestic pandering to Canada’s Tamil minority. But what government has ever conducted its foreign policy without keeping a close eye on domestic political consequences? And such an approach is consistent with the principle that Conservative foreign policy shall reflect the values and interests of the Conservative coalition.

Thus, a corollary to the values-versus-interest question: where no major Canadian economic interest is involved, a values-based diplomacy prevails, especially if the message resonates with any or all elements of the Conservative coalition.

That intersection of interests and values is perhaps best represented by the new Office of Religious Freedom, created by the Conservative government in 2013, situated within the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and



Development and currently headed by Andrew Bennett, who oversees a budget of CDN\$5 million.

The office monitors, and advocates on behalf of, religious minorities in countries where they might be subject to persecution, regardless of their faith. Critics fear that it will pay particular attention to persecuted Christian minorities, and that its real purpose is to pander to the Christian conservative element within the Conservative party (Schmidtz 2013). There is, as yet, no empirical support for such criticism.

However, the Conservatives have, on occasion, expressed foreign policy social-conservative principles that they would never employ at home, for fear of alienating the broader coalition. The most obvious example may be the maternal health initiative, in which Harper, as host of the 2010 G8, convinced member nations to contribute CDN\$7.3 billion to support mothers at risk in developing nations. The government decreed that the Canadian portion of the fund, CDN\$1.1 billion over five years, must not be used for abortion-related services, which earned a sharp rebuke from then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton (Blanchfield 2010).

This debate of pandering versus principle is most fiercely joined on the question of Israel. Criticism of the Conservatives' unwavering commitment to that government, culminating in Harper's highly publicized visit to Israel in January 2014, has been roundly condemned. In his speech to a Liberal policy convention in 2010, the former diplomat Robert Fowler lacerated the Harper government for "selling out our widely admired and long-established reputation for fairness and justice in this most volatile and dangerous region of the world," for no other reason than "to lock up the Jewish vote" (Fowler, 2010).

Those who know Stephen Harper best, and who have known him longest, say his intense interest in and support for Israel emerged when he was a teenager, and has never wavered.<sup>7</sup> For him, Israel is a democratic Western state struggling for survival in a region of hostile and often unsavoury regimes, in a world where anti-Semitism remains rife (Harper 2014). As prime minister, he has been determined from the beginning to reorient Canadian foreign policy in favour of defending Israel.

This has won the gratitude of Jewish voters in Canada. Several ridings with large Jewish populations, such as Thornhill, north of Toronto, have switched from Liberal to Conservative, because of the Harper government's strong support for Israel. So, is the Conservative stance on Israel principled policy or partisan pandering? The answer is both.

Among the many, many voices criticizing the Harper government, some of the loudest come from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) appalled by the aggressive unilateralism of its foreign policy. Those NGOs have themselves been targeted. After a typically incoherent effort to change the leadership at the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development (also known as Rights & Democracy), the government decided to simply close it down. There were similar storms over the decision to cut funding for the faith-based KAIROS and the Canadian Council for International Co-operation, a move that "was viewed within the nongovernmental community as a virtual declaration of war" (Chapnick 2012, 149). The National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy was also shut down, to the dismay of environmentalists.

However, the robust promotion of Canadian interests and values abroad suggests, for at least a minority of voices, that the Harper government is promoting a healthy and positive sense of Canadian values, even as it protects Canadian interests abroad. "Canada can stand tall as a force for good in foreign affairs, defending democracy and Western civilization, as necessary, without overstretching," wrote McGill University historian Gil Troy. "And in a world with too many forms of aggressive ethnic nationalism, which indeed sometimes seems to be 'winning,' having this positive, constructive, tolerant, civilizing, civic vision can be most welcome, as Canada plays a new, affirmative and assertive role in its long, successful run as the world's conscience" (Troy 2012).

One final example of an increasingly sure-footed Conservative foreign policy: As strife grew in Ukraine, after President Viktor Yanukovich reversed his decision to seek closer ties with the European Union, Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird took the unprecedented step of joining protestors in Kiev's Independence Square in December 2013. He returned in February 2014, immediately after the overthrow of the Yanukovich government, and Prime Minister Harper became the first G7 leader to visit Ukraine, in March 2014, where he expressed Canada's strong commitment to the new regime, while condemning the Russian occupation and annexation of Crimea.

Christopher Westal, former Canadian ambassador to both Ukraine and Russia, strongly criticized the Harper government's stance on Ukraine, saying Canada had surrendered its role as an honest broker in the region for the sake of placating the 1.2 million Canadians of Ukrainian descent. "We've got a diaspora-driven foreign policy," he protested. "It might work at the polls, but it doesn't do much good in the world" (Blaze Carlson 2014). Yet, one suspects it is not only Ukrainian Canadians who support an assertive Canadian response to the Ukrainian aspirations for democracy and good government, and to Russia's attempts to keep Ukraine under its control.

<sup>7</sup> From confidential sources.

## CONCLUSION: A DIFFERENT CANADA IN THE WORLD

Sum it all up and what do you have? A break. A big break. A new emphasis on trade, a new belligerence in the North, a more robust military, a new patriotism, a new skepticism toward at least some global institutions, a new and unqualified commitment to Israel — most of all, a new determination to make Canada's policy more conservative, small and large "c," in word and deed, in order to align that policy to the values and concerns of the Conservative coalition. It's quite a change.

Some people think, and hope, that this break is really only a bump, that after the next election the Liberals or NDP will come to power, singly or in some combination, restoring a more balanced, multilateral, Laurentian approach to Canada in the world (Schmitz 2013, 30). Perhaps, but the West is only going to grow more populous, and more politically potent, with each passing year. The flood of Chinese and Indian and Filipino and other Asian and Pacific immigrants will continue; no federal political party advocates tightening immigration quotas. Rural Canada and its population are in decline, but the suburbs, where 67 percent of Canadians now live (Cook 2013) will swell, literally paving over rural Canada in the process. Starting with the 2015 election, the House of Commons will expand from 308 to 338 seats. Fifteen of those seats are located in Ontario, with 11 of those 15 located in suburban ridings in the Greater Toronto Area (Aulakh and Kane 2012). Of the remaining, 12 are allotted to British Columbia and Alberta. Whichever political party wins the next election, or the one after that, or the one after that, it must take this new reality into account. It must take the West, the suburbs and immigrants all into account. If the West, the suburbs and immigrant Canadians actually like this new Conservative foreign policy, then a different government, whatever its political stripe, will have to take that into account as well.

In which case, the big break will no longer be seen as a break at all. There will be a new term for it. It will be called bipartisan.

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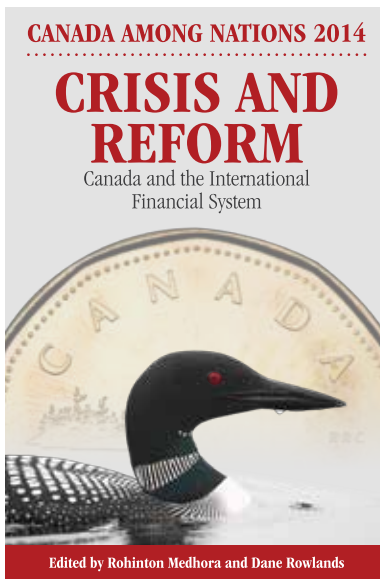
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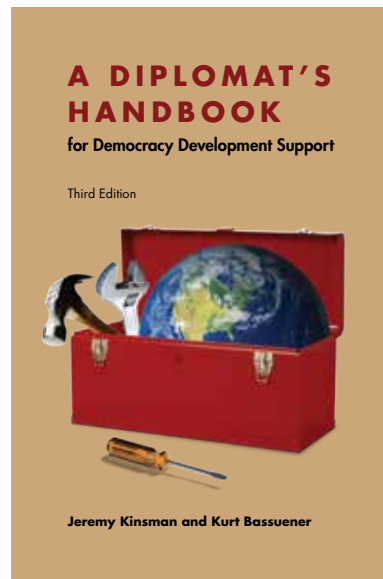
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