



INTRODUCTION: LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES IN AN ERA OF UNCERTAINTY

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The need for leadership, the lack of proper resources to carry out foreign, defence, and development policy, the apparent absence of clearly defined priorities, and the failure to step up to the plate on pressing global issues are dominant themes in current debates about Canadian foreign policy. It is also fashionable to refer to Canada as a declining power on the world stage, although this theme is not new. It was the argument of Andrew Cohen's book, *While Canada Slept*,¹ which drew invidious comparisons between the quality and assets of Canada's foreign policies with the so-called golden age of Canadian diplomacy in the 1950s, as did an earlier instalment of *Canada among Nations*, published under the subtitle *A Fading Power*.²

Canadian foreign policy has always had its critics. Recall the criticisms that were levelled at Liberal Prime Minister Jean Chrétien's Team Canada missions in the early 1990s, and the charge that Canada's diplomacy was unduly crass and motivated by narrow economic self-interest, or later on at Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy for being overly idealistic, moralistic, and utopian. But today such criticism appears to have reached a new crescendo, intensified perhaps by the intense partisanship and rivalry that comes with chronic minority government status and the constant threat of an impending federal election.

1 Andrew Cohen, *While Canada Slept* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2004).

2 Norman Hillmer and Maureen Appel Molot, *Canada among Nations: A Fading Power* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2002).



Notwithstanding partisan slings and arrows, underlying today's debates about Canada's place in the world is a deeper disquiet, which is reflected in four different contending schools of thought (or world views) about the future course and direction of Canadian foreign policy. Each of these schools has a different take on where Canada should channel its energies and resources in international affairs, and each deserves to be taken seriously. These schools can be characterized as follows: (1) *continentalism*; (2) *revival (or restored) internationalism*; (3) *niche diplomacy*; and (3) *global problem-solving*.

Continentalism

"Continentalists" argue that Canada's international relations should play second string or second fiddle to preserving the health of the Canadian economy and the vitality of our trade and investment relations with the United States. They argue that with almost two billion dollars worth of goods and services crossing the border each day, and the fact that almost half of our gross domestic product (GDP) is generated by exports to the United States, Canada cannot afford to take any aspect of its economic and security relationships with the United States for granted, especially at a time when the United States is erecting new barriers to trade and the free movement of peoples across our border in order to thwart terrorists and other criminal elements who seek to enter the country.

According to this perspective, Canada cannot risk alienating or antagonizing Washington because we just have too much at stake in terms of our economic survival and well-being. Continentalists believe that the economics of our bilateral relationship should also dictate our other international political priorities and alignments, including our key defence and security priorities. Along with our commitment to the Afghanistan mission, where our troops have been working alongside American and NATO forces, continentalists also believe that there should be a greater commitment and share of resources that go into continental security and defence in order to secure the perimeter of North America, including greater investments in coastal maritime surveillance and control, intelligence, public safety, and general border security management with the United States. This is because Canada cannot risk the closure of, or disruption along, the border if there are future terrorist or military attacks against the North American continent.

Revival (or Restored) Internationalism

"Revival internationalists" focus on burnishing Canada's multilateral vocation and credentials. They argue that we should concentrate the bulk of our diplomatic energies and efforts on making international institutions work better and on reforming the formal and informal machinery of international governance via the G20 and other new bodies to address new global challenges. They also believe that because the traditional postwar pecking order of



power and influence in the world is changing with the rise of new powerhouses in Asia and Latin America—notably China, India, and Brazil—Canada should strengthen its political and economic relations with these countries and vigorously support their efforts to gain a stronger voice in international institutions, particularly within the so-called Bretton Woods institutions, i.e., the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

Many of these same internationalists hark back to the key leadership role Canada played in the late 1980s and throughout much of the 1990s, when we championed the anti-personnel landmines treaty, the establishment of the International Criminal Court, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other global, normative regime-building efforts, many of which were associated with Lloyd Axworthy's tenure as foreign minister and his human security agenda, or even earlier when a Conservative government led by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney led the anti-apartheid movement in the Commonwealth and championed global action to halt climate change and protect forests and biodiversity at the 1992 United Nations (UN) Conference on the Environment and Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro. They point out that our international activism, which garnered much international acclaim and attention, was also reflected in the vital involvement of our military, police, judiciary, and NGO communities in the great state building and democratic reconstruction enterprises of the late 1980s and early 1990s, which were led by the United Nations in such countries as Namibia, Mozambique, Cambodia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Bosnia, and Kosovo.

Revival internationalists see sizeable payoffs for Canada in such multilateral ventures and associations where we can build coalitions, work with others, play the role of intermediary, and thus extend our political and diplomatic influence, especially at a time when rising powers such as India, China, and Brazil are exerting growing influence in the global political economy and perhaps even challenging the established political order.

Niche Diplomacy

Advocates of “niche diplomacy” are in some ways foreign policy bargain hunters. They argue that out of necessity Canada's international relations will have to be carried out on the cheap in years to come for reasons that we understand all too well as we continue to grapple with the aftermath of the financial and economic crisis of 2008-2009. Niche diplomacy advocates believe that it is unrealistic for any government—Conservative or otherwise—to open the spending floodgates on Canada's international relations when there are just too many things to worry about (and spend on) at home, especially as we now begin (yet again) to tighten our belts and close our wallets. Niche diplomacy advocates, for example, argue that our development assistance should be directed at a very small group of poor nations where we can work closely with other donors and in ways that demonstrate concrete results. We should also scale back on our foreign policy commitments to regions of the globe that are most closely tied to our national self-interest, such as the Western Hemisphere. In sum, champions



of niche diplomacy believe that we need to prune our international commitments, not enlarge or inflate them.

In many ways, niche diplomacy backers resemble and repeat the arguments of the early Trudeauocrats who repudiated what they saw as outsized Pearsonian pretensions or aspirations. Helpful fixer “meddling” was expressly rejected in the 1970 “Foreign Policy for Canadians” review, although by the end of his political life Pierre Trudeau had developed broader international aspirations and even some meddling habits of his own.

Global Problem Solving

“Global problem-solvers,” like Thomas Homer-Dixon,³ the Mackenzie Institute, and even some members of the medical profession and intelligence community, have a somewhat different take on the future course of Canada’s international relations. They are preoccupied with the very real global threats we confront and argue that today’s world is a much more dangerous place than it was during the Cold War, but for very different reasons that have little to do with traditional military-security threats. This is because there are a large number of indiscriminate, non-traditional threats and challenges to global security that emanate from a wide variety of largely non-state sources. Global warming, biodiversity loss, and pandemic and emerging infectious diseases like HIV/AIDS, SARS, H1N1, etc., all pose major new risks to the health and survival of people around the globe, including Canadians. Canada must prepare itself for these new global risks and uncertainties by deploying a much greater range of capabilities and assets to manage its international relations.

Global problem-solvers argue that foreign policy is increasingly a citizen-based activity directed at managing global risks. It is also one where traditional, bureaucratic lines of authority between the domestic and the international are blurred and problem management goes well beyond the competence and capabilities of traditional governmental authorities and lines of accountability. According to this school, developing an effective global risk management strategy for Canada will require new tools, new levels of civic engagement, new organizational mandates, new ways of thinking, and a whole new set of networks and relationships between governments and domestic and transnational civil society actors. (This emphasis on civic engagement distinguishes this school from revival internationalism which continues to put much stock in the value of intergovernmental institutions—albeit reformed ones—and states.)

According to the global problem-solving school, niche diplomacy only makes sense in a world that is predictable and where you can plan for the future. But, in a world that is filled with surprises, Canada needs to have much more robust capabilities and a much more diverse

³ See Thomas Homer-Dixon, *The Upside of Down: Catastrophe, Creativity and the Renewal of Civilization* (Toronto: Knopf, 2006); and *The Ingenuity Gap* (Toronto: Knopf, 2001).



portfolio and range of foreign policy instruments, assets, and civic engagement. Heightened levels of public awareness and engagement must be tapped so that society as a whole can better anticipate crises, adapt to change, and be prepared for a world where it will be anything but business as usual.

These four schools or approaches in the current debate about Canada's international relations drive home the point that we are, in effect, confronted with some tough choices. There is more than a kernel of truth to the point of view represented by each "school." By the same token, each argument taken to its logical extreme takes us down a path that no policy maker—or Canadian—could plausibly support.

Do Canadians really want a foreign policy that plays second fiddle to our trade and economic ties with the United States and which defines our security and foreign policy interests so narrowly? That is, in effect, what we are saying if we subordinate foreign policy to keeping the Canada-US border open for business as some continentalists argue. Most Canadians would flinch at the proposition that Washington, even under an Obama administration, should dictate the terms of all or even most of our international engagements.

However, most Canadians are not unabashed revivalist internationalists either. They are smart enough to recognize that the world has changed since the days of the Cold War or the heady days of Pearsonian internationalism. They also recognize that simply throwing more dollars into diplomacy, overseas development assistance (ODA), and defence will not buy Canada one iota more of influence unless those dollars are spent wisely on causes that have real merit, impact, and public support.

Ringed endorsements of Pearsonian-style, liberal internationalism miss the mark. The world is a much more complex place than it was in the 1950s when the Cold War was in full swing. Today we confront a much wider array of problems, and the world stage is crowded with many more actors and institutions than it was in the 1950s. The real questions are, "Where should we act?" and "With what goals and intended result?" There are many failed or ailing states in the world and it is unrealistic to think that we can serve them all.

The sober warning of advocates of niche diplomacy that new money will not come easily under coming conditions of fiscal austerity suggests that some tough choices will ultimately have to be made. We obviously cannot do everything. But as the global problem-solvers warn us, we should not delude ourselves into thinking that there is some comfortable niche into which our foreign policy priorities easily fall. We do need a new approach to global risk management—one that engages ordinary Canadians along with the many different branches and levels of the Canadian bureaucratic and governmental apparatus and which breaks through the silos of traditional decision-making authority, mandates, and mindsets.

Finally, continentalists have a real point in that nothing practical can now be said of Canadian foreign, defence, or development policy without acknowledging the post-9/11 meanings



dominating Canada's relations with the United States. However, this is the area of greatest uncertainty and also one of the most contentious domestically. Public opinion polls show consistently that although Canadians want "good relations" they have little appetite for any kind of grand, new, strategic bargain with the United States in trade, defence/security, or even immigration. Although security is now a central concern of Canadian policy, its variable meanings remain imprecise and controversial within the policy community and among the public-at-large. The uncertainty about how to define and shape the Canada-US relationship is magnified by the fact that we continue to live with minority governments in Canada, which greatly narrows and restricts political horizons and the prospects for any major new initiatives in relations with our southern neighbour.

As the essays in this study demonstrate, any serious review of Canada's international relations and role in the world will have to grapple with the challenges represented by these four different schools. Successful foreign policy cannot be made by adopting any of these one-dimensional approaches or preference systems alone. It can only be made by resolving the tensions between them in ways that durably reflect Canadian interests and values. This indeed is the true test of political leadership.

The essays in this report offer the perspectives of ten thoughtful Canadians we recruited to discuss and debate the priorities of Canada's international engagement in the coming years. We challenged each contributor to identify between three and five priorities, and to be as specific as possible. Our purpose was not to reach agreement on a singular vision, but rather to generate as many creative, forward-looking ideas and recommendations as possible, and to make these ideas available to a wider audience. As you will see in the essays that follow, the contributors responded to our challenge with intelligence and imagination.

Nearly all of the essays in this collection describe seismic changes taking place in the global political, economic, and security landscape—and lament Canada's desultory response to these changes to date and the absence of serious public discussion of our international policy options. As a country, we have still not fully recognized the scope of these changes or to understand their impact on this country, nor the need to develop coherent, longer-term strategies to respond to these challenges and opportunities. To quote from Gordon Smith's contribution: "Canadian foreign policy has rarely needed a thorough rethink more than it does now." While the essays in this collection are not fully fleshed-out strategies, they do offer fresh ideas that could be the foundations of a new strategy or strategies—and they all share the strikingly similar conviction that Canada and Canadians cannot afford to act as though these global changes are not already upon us.

Consider just a few of these transformations, along with the challenges they pose:

- Emerging powers are rapidly transforming the world economy. Canada's trade and investment relationship with the principal emerging markets is still relatively small, and our predominant trading partner—the United States—faces a crushing debt burden and the prospect of several years of modest economic growth. Further, the



North American free trade agenda is languishing, and post 9/11 security concerns have added uncertainty to relations between the United States and its North American partners.

- The international financial crisis and “Great Recession” exposed the fragility and interconnectedness of the global economy, and its effects will be with us for the foreseeable future. At home, we face the prospects of painful adjustment as jobs fail to return in underperforming manufacturing sectors, and the eventual task of reducing stimulus-inflated budgetary deficits during a period of expected low growth. Meanwhile, Canada’s productivity growth rate—the basis of our long-term prosperity—remains lower than many of our competitors.
- The system of international institutions that Canada helped to build after World War II is under great strain. Multilateral trade talks are stalled, there is little prospect for reforming the UN Security Council (which reflects the world of 1945, not today) and it remains unclear if the G20 will emerge as a central coordinating body in place of the G8—or whether some other mechanism, in which Canada may not have a seat or voice, will ultimately prevail.
- Transnational challenges in health and the environment have never been greater, with climate change posing a major threat to the earth’s future. Fragile and failing states, ethnic and religious tensions, transnational crime and terrorism, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) technologies also pose serious challenges. These problems are aggravated by the growing gap between the richest and poorest: while some parts of the developing world are lifting themselves out of poverty, conditions for the “bottom billion” have continued to worsen.

The papers in this collection represent our modest attempt to motivate and inform this discussion. Each contributor’s essay is unique and speaks for itself. By design, we did not press the authors to reach a consensus. In fact, we asked them not to speak to each other about their papers until they were written—in order to solicit the broadest range of visions and suggestions for the future of Canada’s international policy. As expected, their perspectives are diverse, although several common themes emerge.

Peter Singer of the University of Toronto, for example, argues that Canada should focus on developing and exporting scientific solutions to global health, agricultural, and environmental problems. Former senior diplomat Jeremy Kinsman also believes that Canada should strive to become the “go-to” country for new solutions to vexing global issues, and that achieving this goal will require Canada to “reinvigorate its capacity for creative diplomacy” and to situate itself at the centre of international “civil society and research webs.” Mobilizing non-governmental networks is also one of the recommendations put forward by Ontario’s Fairness Commissioner, Jean Augustine, who previously served as chair of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade when she was a



Member of Parliament. According to Augustine, Canadians are well-placed to share their own experiences with urban issues in our multicultural cities—including community-based solutions to housing, employment, safety, and social welfare—with other countries, such as societies that are in the process of rebuilding after conflicts. Although Singer, Kinsman, and Augustine offer many additional recommendations in their respective articles, they envisage a similar niche for Canada in the world: we should be leading the search for solutions to specific transnational problems where we have a foundation of expertise, including through non-traditional types of diplomacy that muster the efforts of a broad range of governmental and non-governmental, international, and local actors.

While Augustine mentions war-torn states, they are a central theme in three other papers. Former Chief of Defence Staff Maurice Baril suggests that Canada should re-commit itself to supporting UN peace operations after the bulk of Canada's military forces withdraw from Afghanistan, as they are scheduled to do in 2011. Baril notes that "peacekeeping is not dead but has evolved" from traditional to "robust" peacekeeping and peace enforcement in unstable countries, including several in Africa. Using expertise acquired in Afghanistan—including experience in civil-military and "whole of government" coordination, as well as counterinsurgency techniques—Canada could dedicate itself to supporting UN missions with civilians and military forces and by training personnel deployed by other countries. Along similar lines, Nancy Gordon, former president of the UN Association of Canada and former vice-president of Care Canada, writes that "serious consideration should be given to re-engagement with UN peacekeeping missions" after 2011, also noting that "robust" peacekeeping is the new reality. She puts special emphasis on the humanitarian imperative and civil-military cooperation in emergency situations, along with the principles of the Responsibility to Protect doctrine. Justin Massie of the University of Ottawa also recommends that Canada engage in fragile states, including Sudan/Darfur, in part because such missions can serve to unite different foreign policy constituencies within Canada, including those holding more humanitarian and more security-oriented views. Whatever international role is ultimately pursued, however, Massie insists that it must be based on a broad domestic consensus within Canadian society.

The Globe and Mail's national affairs columnist, Jeffrey Simpson, also underlines the importance of building public support for a more sophisticated approach to Canada's international engagement. Specifically, since "most issues are global in one way or another," leaders in all walks of life need to explain the linkages between domestic and international policy to Canadians. Paradoxically, this "internal" imperative should be the "first objective of Canadian foreign policy," including greater understanding of how various domestic policies may support or hinder our global activities, and vice versa. Michael Kergin, Canada's former ambassador to the United States, also sees the need for more coherence between domestic and external policies: "...our ability to manage new external pressures, or indeed, even influence international trends, will be proportionate to Canadians' capacity to maintain



economic and social cohesion within the federation.” But as Simpson notes, knowledge of international affairs and its relevance to Canada may be a precondition for achieving such coherence, which leads us back to Gordon Smith’s lament about the dearth of serious debate on international issues in this country. Smith puts it bluntly: “...we lack a reasoned and informed public discussion.”

Gordon Smith’s paper raises another theme that appears in many of the essays: Canada’s role in the reform of global governance institutions. Canadians need to be “rule makers” rather than “rule takers,” he says, meaning that we should be at the forefront of fashioning new multilateral mechanisms that are sufficiently representative and nimble to break “global deadlocks” on tough issues, from nuclear proliferation to climate change. Many of our existing post-World War international institutions have “outmoded mandates and decision-making mechanisms.” Now is the time, therefore, for Canada to take a leading role in crafting new institutions, including the G20, and to ensure that these mechanisms function well and include Canada as a member. In addition to avoiding Canada’s exclusion from new multilateral centres of power, several of the papers in this project also point to the need for stronger bilateral and regional partnerships, especially with emerging powers, as well as with civil society groups, as noted earlier. These relationships, explains Kinsman, tend to dissipate quickly if they are not maintained and nurtured—in fact, many “have lapsed” in recent years.

Pursuing any of these prescriptions for Canada’s future international policy will require vision, political will, public support, and institutional capacity. Regarding the latter, Kergin and Kinsman both see weaknesses in our international policy machinery. One weakness, according to Kergin, is the apparent lack of political confidence in “Canada’s conventional instruments of foreign policy, such as the Foreign Affairs and Trade Commissioner services.” For his part, Kinsman laments the “degradation of Canadian representational capacity abroad, the slashing of program funds essential for promoting Canadian purposes and activity, and the constricting of public diplomacy generally in favour of centrally controlled Ottawa-centric communications.”

As Robert Miller argues in his contribution, “Canadian foreign policy in general lacks the necessary focus, determination, vigour, and endurance to effectively pursue priorities...The coming year of G8 and G20 summits, which are being hosted by Canada, is an opportune time to get our act together.” However, the advancement of new policy initiatives will have to be complemented by the “dreary business” of fixing the machinery of government. At the top of Miller’s useful list is the need to “fix CIDA,” in much the same way the British government some years ago turned around their own Department of International Development (DFID) via a series of radical organizational and policy reforms. Gordon, whose paper also devotes considerable attention to development policy, says that major additional reforms are required in the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), where “[a]ccountability chill has replaced innovation or creativity.” Several authors assert (or imply) that Canada has not done a good enough job of mobilizing civil society actors—at home



or abroad—in our international policy. This criticism is linked to the theme identified earlier, a theme that is one of the most consistent and strongly expressed across all the papers: If Canada is to succeed in an increasingly polycentric, diverse, complex world, our diplomacy and our diplomats must reinvent their traditional role. They must transform themselves and this country into organizing “hubs” of horizontal global networks comprised of governmental and non-governmental actors at all levels—local, national, and transnational, including both Canadian and non-Canadian actors—focusing on those who are involved in policy areas that matter to Canada.

When the drafts of these essays were presented at a November 2009 workshop in Ottawa, there was no doubt in the room that the United States loomed large in all the authors’ thinking, and that all considered the Canada-US relationship of paramount importance. Perhaps this point was so obvious that the authors opted not to dwell on the issue in their papers. But whatever the case, as Kinsman points out, “a close and productive relationship with the United States, and secure access to the US marketplace,” is one of the few “[o]verriding foreign policy priorities” facing all Canadian governments, regardless of political stripe. In the opinion of the project coordinators, this relationship has been allowed to languish, and seeking new partnerships and markets should not preclude efforts to strengthen the North American economic partnership and to explore “post-NAFTA” options, including a customs union.

Canada will host both the G8 and G20 meetings later this year, and as host we have the opportunity to define these meetings’ central themes. Doing so, however, requires a clear view of our larger and longer-term strategic objectives. The same is true of our ongoing campaign for a seat on the Security Council, which will culminate in a vote in the General Assembly this fall. Do we know what exactly we would seek to accomplish during a two-year term on the Council? Furthermore, Canada’s combat mission in Afghanistan is scheduled to end in 2011, potentially liberating resources for use elsewhere, with continuing commitments to Afghanistan’s reconstruction and development. What role will our armed forces play in Canada’s international policy beyond 2011? These looming questions make it all the more important to engage in a broader strategic discussion of our global goals—and to pursue that discussion right now.

The papers in this study raise many other issues and priorities, from climate change and the environment to aid policies and the rich-poor divide, Africa, public diplomacy, terrorism, the Arctic, and good governance. We invite you to contemplate each author’s vision for the future of Canada’s international policy, to evaluate those visions critically, and to embrace the challenge of defining your own set of priorities.



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