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PUBLISHER
Donna Jacobs
PUBLISHER IN MEMORIAM
Neil Reynolds
EDITOR
Jennifer Campbell
ART DIRECTOR
Paul Cavanaugh
BOOKS EDITOR
George Fetherling
CULTURE COLUMNIST
Margo Roston
FOOD COLUMNIST
Margaret Dickenson
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Ülle Baum
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Denise Amyot
Sue Christie
Wolfgang Depner
Andrej Droba
Karlis Eihenbaums
Robert D'A. Henderson
Fen Hampson
Pierre Jolicœur
Abdul Kareem Kaab
Patrick Langston
Alejandro Marisio
Jeremy Paltiel
Paul Robinson
Robert I. Rotberg
Stephen M. Saideman
Arun Kumar Sahu
Joanne Schnurr
Pieter Van den Weghe
Mikhail Zherebtsov
CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS
Ülle Baum Ashley Fraser
Mike Beedell Sam Garcia
MCpl. V. Carboneau Sgt. Johanie Maheu
Jana Chytilova Lois Siegel
Larry Dickenson
BUSINESS MANAGEMENT
Jessie Reynolds O'Neil
WEBMASTER
Gilles Laberge, www.redrocket.ca
DISTRIBUTION
Pierre Pagé and Peixian Han
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ADVERTISING INQUIRIES
Contact Donna Jacobs, donnajacobs@gmail.com
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Jennifer Campbell

Russia: What you need to know

When Donald J. Trump became the 45th president of the United States, many things came immediately to Canadians' minds, not least of which was the future of the world's largest trading partnership. But not far behind that — for some, at least — was what his victory would mean for world order, and, in particular, what it would mean for Russia's place in the world.

To that end, *Diplomat* put together a panel of Russia experts, each of whom wrote on his specialty area. Pierre Jolicoeur, who teaches political science at the Royal Military College in Kingston, wrote about Russian foreign policy and defence. He notes that apart from its military, Russia is a weak world power.

Carleton University professor Stephen Saideman wrote on the relationship between Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin. He notes that, by far, the biggest change in U.S. foreign policy will be Trump's rapprochement with Putin.

Carleton University China specialist Jeremy Paltiel writes about the China-Russia relationship, noting that the two countries are "joined in deep suspicion and active rejection of the global liberal hegemony led by the U.S. and supported by Europe and America's allies."

Mikhail Zherebtsov, a postdoctoral fellow at Carleton University, writes about Russia's economic crises and what role global sanctions are playing.

And finally, University of Ottawa professor Paul Robinson writes about Canada-Russia relations and how Canadian officials could consider attempting to repair them.

Further in our Dispatches section, Wolf-

gang Depner examines the question of global education and looks at the OECD's very own global grading system. He brings analysis of the Top-10 performers in this world race for the best and brightest and assesses the laggards. Canada finds itself among the Top 10.

We also have a story on Taiwan and its continuing bid for a spot at the table of various international organizations, including the World Health Organization and the International Civil Aviation Organization. Under President Ma Ying-jeou, Taiwan made some headway, but now that it has elected Tsai Ing-wen, that headway appears to be disappearing.

Africa columnist Robert I. Rotberg offers a disturbing look at the genocidal killing fields of Africa.

Up front, columnist Fen Hampson compares the United Nations to a "super-tanker" dangerously adrift and calls on newly appointed Secretary General Antonio Guterres to straighten its course. Also up front is my interview with MP Andrew Leslie, who has been named a parliamentary secretary to Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland. His responsibilities in that job focus squarely on the Canada-U.S. relationship, one he says Canada can't afford to take for granted.

In our Delights section, books editor George Fetherling writes about Shanghai in the 1930s, and examines several titles on jailed journalists, a troubling global trend. In her food column, Margaret Dickenson dips her fork into the culinary temptations of Madagascar, while Patrick Langston takes a tour of the residence of Pakistani High Commissioner Tariq Azim Khan. In the back of the magazine, we have a travel feature on Slovakia, by Slovakian Ambassador Andrej Droba.

In New Arrivals, we welcome heads of mission from Austria, Brazil, China, India, Israel and Vietnam. And on a sadder note, the new envoy from Morocco, Mohammed Lotfi Aouad, died earlier this year, just weeks after presenting his credentials at Rideau Hall. Our condolences to his colleagues and family.

Jennifer Campbell is editor of *Diplomat*.

UP FRONT

Russia is much in the news these days, particularly since the election of U.S. President Donald Trump. Our cover package, written by several well-known Russian scholars, examines Russia's foreign policy, defence, economy, its relationship with China and Trump's relationship with Putin. The package starts on page 36.



CONTRIBUTORS

Jeremy Paltiel



Jeremy Paltiel is professor of political science at Carleton University and was visiting professor of international relations at Tsinghua University in Beijing in 2009. He previously taught at the University of Alberta (1984-1990), the University of Arizona (1983-84), and the University of California at San Diego (1981-83). He received his BA from the University of Toronto in 1974, a diploma in philosophy from Beijing University in 1976 and his MA (1979) and PhD (1984) in political science from the University of California, Berkeley. In 2016, he published, with Huhua Cao, *Facing China as a New Global Superpower: Domestic and International Dynamics from a Multidisciplinary Angle*, published by Springer.

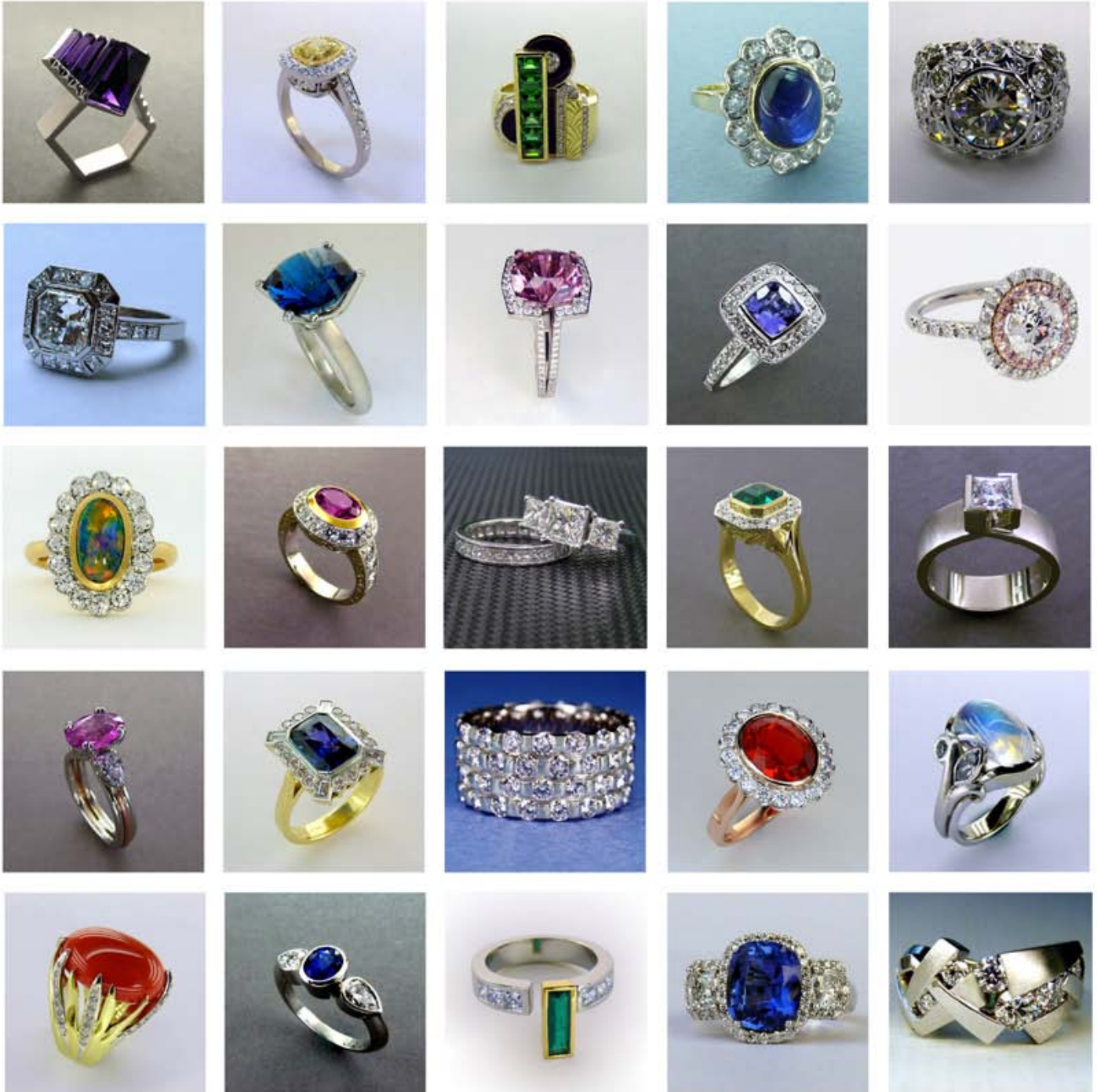
Stephen M. Saideman



Stephen Saideman holds the Pater-son Chair in International Affairs at Carleton University's Norman Paterson School of International Affairs. He has written *The Ties That Divide: Ethnic Politics, Foreign Policy and International Conflict*; *For Kin or Country: Xenophobia, Nationalism and War* (with R. William Ayres); *NATO in Afghanistan: Fighting Together, Fighting Alone* (with David Auerswald); and *Adapting in the Dust: Lessons Learned from Canada's War in Afghanistan*, as well as articles on nationalism, ethnic conflict, civil war and civil-military relations. He blogs at saideman.blogspot.com and tweets too much at @smsaideman.

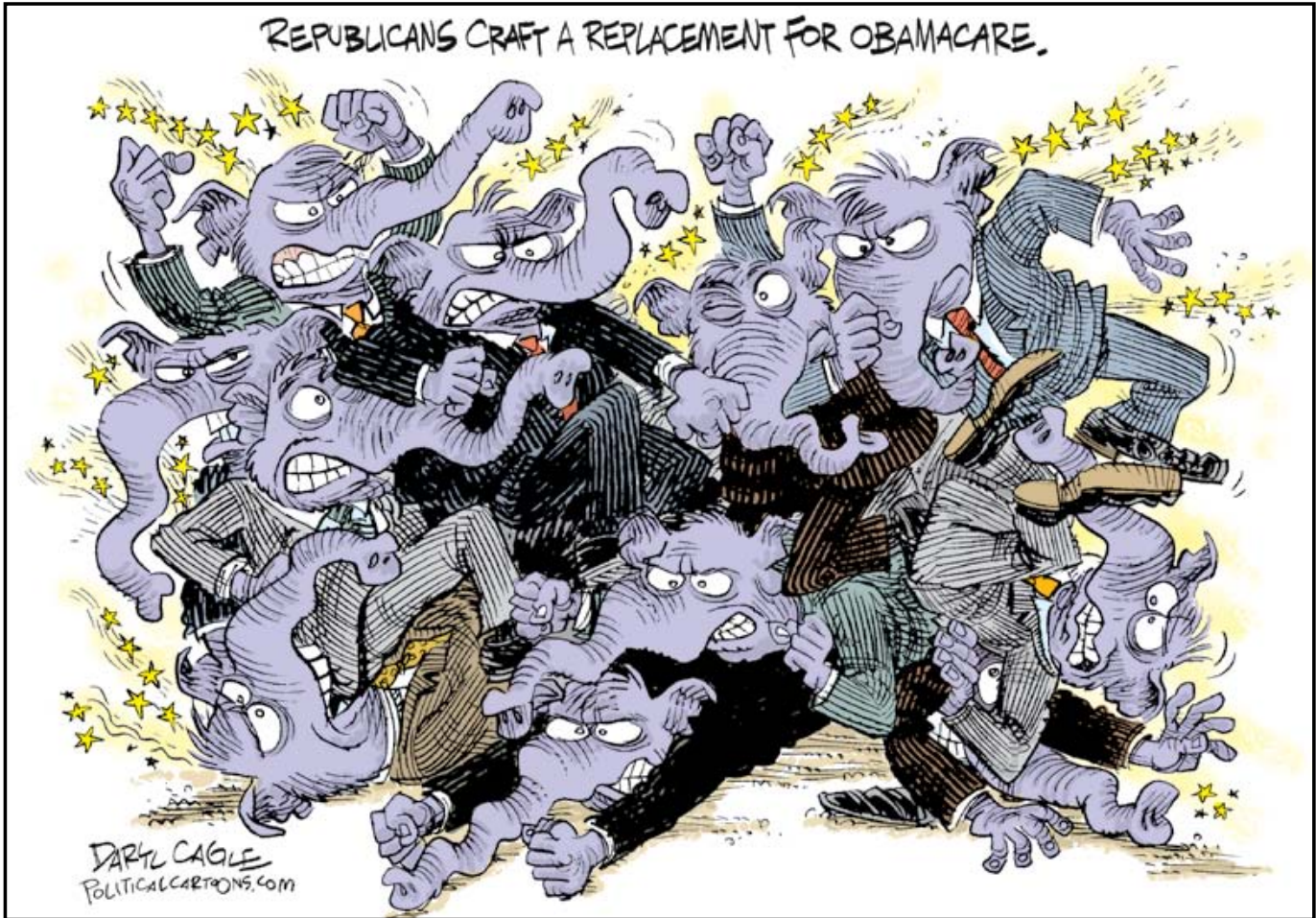
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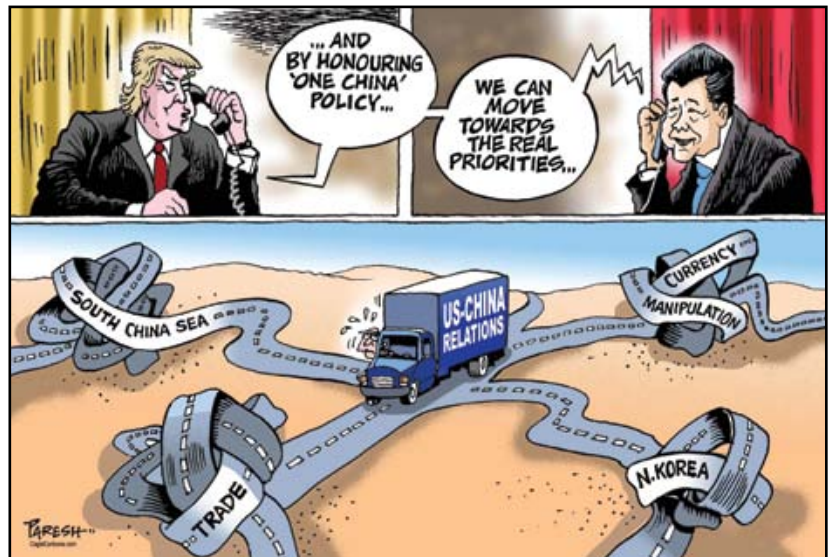
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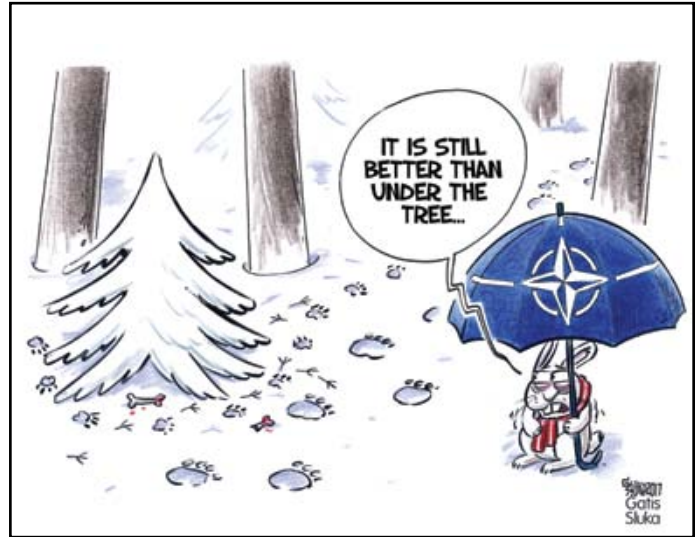
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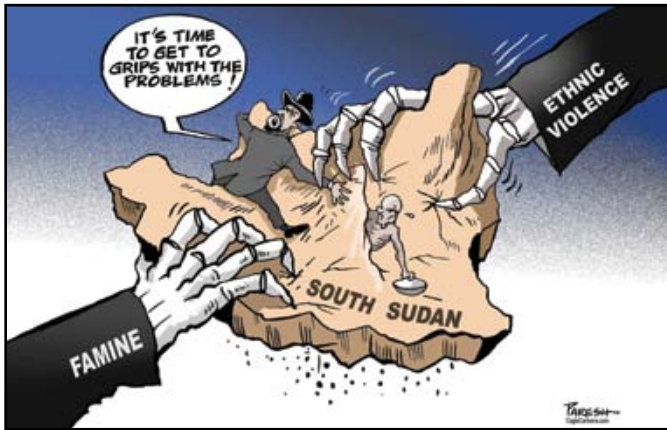
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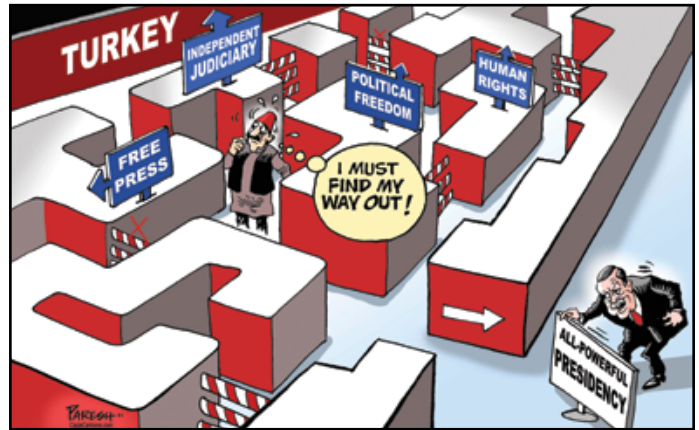
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A UN supertanker dangerously adrift



U.S. President Donald Trump is no fan of the United Nations, whose New York headquarters are pictured here.



Fen
Hampson

Like a giant supertanker foundering in stormy seas off a rocky coast, the United Nations requires a strong, firm hand at the tiller, someone who can steer the ship away from the perilous course on which it is now headed.

The new occupant of the White House, Donald Trump, is no fan of the organization, describing it in one of his tweets as “just a club for people to get together, talk and have a good time.”

The new Republican-dominated U.S. Congress doesn't much like the UN either. Some Republicans want to eliminate funding for the organization entirely because they are rankled by the recent UN Security Council vote that condemned Israel for building settlements on the West Bank and in East Jerusalem — a resolution on which the outgoing Obama administration chose to abstain rather than veto.

Those Republicans who don't want to go that far still want to cut the size of the U.S. contribution or make it voluntary. The U.S. pays almost one quarter of the UN's total regular budget, which, in 2016-17, amounts to \$5.6 billion US. (Canada's contribution, in contrast, is about three per cent). Any of the reductions being contemplated will have a major impact on the organization's operations.

Trump has also threatened to withdraw the United States from various UN treaties and conventions, including the recently concluded Paris agreement on climate change. Even if he doesn't actually formally withdraw the United States from these conventions, there is still a good chance he still may not honor the U.S.'s commitments.

But it is not just the Trump administration threatening the effectiveness and future of the UN. Relations in the Security Council among the five permanent members have been dysfunctional on vital issues of global peace and security for much of this decade. Russia and the western powers, for example, are deadlocked over how to deal with the ongoing crisis in Syria. Hundreds of thousands of Syrians have lost their lives in the country's brutal civil war. Millions more have been

displaced. It is the biggest mass exodus of refugees since the Second World War. Syria burns while the UN fiddles.

The UN's peacekeeping reputation has also taken a hit. UN peacekeepers in Congo and the Central African Republic have been implicated in the widespread sexual abuse and exploitation of minors. UN peacekeepers from Nepal were apparently responsible for a major cholera epidemic in Haiti, which led to the death of many civilians.

Last year, former UN assistant secretary general Anthony Banbury (who was responsible for overseeing the UN's efforts to deal with the outbreak of Ebola in Africa) published a scathing indictment of the organization in the *New York Times*. He accused the organization of “colossal mismanagement” and blamed it for shoddy hiring practices, excessive red tape and decisions made on the basis of political expediency. Banbury admitted he was clearly not the first person to point out the UN's failings, “but too often, these criticisms come from people who think the United Nations is doomed to fail. I come at it from a different angle,” he said, “I believe that, for the world's sake, we must make the United Nations succeed.”

That challenge now falls squarely on

the shoulders of the former prime minister of Portugal, Antonio Guterres, who became the ninth secretary general of the United Nations at the beginning of this year, replacing Ban Ki-moon, who had been in the post for 10 years.

Guterres is no stranger to the UN. He served as UN High Commissioner for Refugees from 2005 to 2015 and from all reports did a credible job. The only blemish on his record was a highly critical internal UN audit report about the way the organization managed its finances.

Unlike his predecessor, Guterres is known to be outgoing and a good communicator. In his first address to the members of the Security Council, he talked about the importance of preventing global



The job of reinvigorating the UN falls squarely on the shoulders of new Secretary General Antonio Guterres.

crises instead of the UN's usual default mode, which is to "respond" to them. "We must rebalance our approach to peace and security," he urged. "For the future, we need to do far more to prevent war and sustain peace."

This is not the first time a UN secretary general has stressed the importance of conflict prevention. It is an all-too-familiar refrain. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who served as secretary general in the early 1990s, urged the same in his much-touted *Agenda for Peace*. So, too, did Kofi Annan, who tried to develop an institutional "culture of prevention" in the UN. Alas, there has been little in the way of effective conflict prevention and the UN is still very much in firefighting mode on those occasions (increasingly rare) when it decides to act.

One does not have to be a hardened

devotee of *realpolitik* to appreciate the UN's limitations. Major bodies of the UN and the UN Security Council, which are supposed to stand at the apex of the global security system, are failing to meet the test on the most critical problems of global security. Secretary General Guterres says the challenge now "is to make corresponding changes" to the UN's "culture, strategy, structure and operations."

At the top of his list should be reform of the Security Council, which is long overdue. For more than two decades, the open-ended working group on Security Council reform has met to review and discuss different proposals, but there has been only one successful reform of the membership. That was during the height of the Cold War in 1965 when non-permanent membership was increased from six to 10 members. Britain and France, which are both European members and nuclear powers, wield a veto in the council. Some believe that Europe should only have one seat, but if Britain leaves Europe, that argument may be less tenable. It is also highly questionable whether Russia, and indeed China, should be allowed to exercise a veto, especially in light of their recent performance on Syria. Perhaps ve-

toes should be abandoned in favour of a super-majority plurality.

Japan, Germany, India and Brazil should also become permanent members of the Security Council. These countries are simply too big and too influential to be excluded. Japan and Germany, in particular, are also major contributors to the UN's operations and budget. There should also be proper representation for those countries that do the heavy lifting in peacekeeping operations and the work of the UN's specialized agencies.

Guterres will have to be bold and tough if he is going to succeed. What the UN needs is heavy doses of tough love. But that is a tall order and it is also going to have to be directed at the organization's member states, which are ultimately responsible for many of those very deficiencies and failings that have so enfeebled the UN.

Fen Osler Hampson is co-director of the Global Commission on Internet Governance. He is a distinguished fellow and director of the Global Security & Politics Program at the Centre for International Governance Innovation. He's also Chancellor's Professor at Carleton University.



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Andrew Leslie: Parliamentary secretary, Canada-U.S. relations 'Friendships need work; let's not take [the U.S.] for granted'

Photos by Jana Chytilova

In 2011, Andrew Leslie retired from the Canadian Forces as a lieutenant-general. He had served as chief of land forces and also as chief of transformation. He retired on a Friday after 35 years in uniform, and started working for a large corporation the following Monday. It wasn't for him, though, he says, and nor was consulting. Instead, he found his second career by knocking on doors in his Ottawa neighbourhood of Orléans and was first elected to parliament in October 2015. He was soon named whip and, after the election of U.S. President Donald Trump, he was named parliamentary secretary to the foreign minister. His responsibilities focus on the Canada-U.S. relationship.

The tireless politician met with *Diplomat's* editor, Jennifer Campbell, in late January, just after accepting his newest position. He gave this interview at the end of a long day that started with a 30-minute run and about 25 minutes of weight training, something he tries to do every day and succeeds in doing five to six times a week.

***Diplomat* magazine:** Just yesterday [January 30], you formally took your post as parliamentary secretary (Canada-U.S. Relations) to Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland.

Andrew Leslie: Technically, yes, but actually, the prime minister asked me to do this a week ago.

DM: And that's why you ended up at the Trump presidential inauguration in Washington?

AL: Yes, and right from there to the cabinet retreat in Calgary.

DM: This [Canada-U.S. relations] is an unusual new area of concentration for a parliamentary secretary at Global Affairs Canada. How important is it?

AL: It is important, and it's not completely unprecedented because my very good friend, Scott Brison, did exactly the same job about 13 years ago. The whole idea is to reposition assets, in this case, people, to better facilitate a good, clean dialogue with the Trump administration.

Starting at the top, you've got the prime minister, who is and has always been actively engaged on the file, but now more so than ever. You have Marc Garneau, who is chairing the Canada-U.S. committee. You have heavy-hitters from the Prime Minister's Office being repositioned into the chief-of-staff role and others in Global Affairs.

You have Chrystia Freeland replacing Stéphane Dion as minister of foreign affairs, and she has unbelievable U.S. contacts because of her former journalistic career. And, much more modestly, you have people like myself, who have a variety of contacts in the U.S. based on many years' experience of travelling to Washington to help resolve a variety of issues that we were dealing with. In my time, it was mainly the Afghan war, but not solely; I also had a lot of dealings at the time of the Yugoslavia operations.

DM: When Freeland was named foreign minister, there was a kind of "in brackets" part of her title that said she will remain responsible for the Canada-U.S. trade file (given that her former position was as minister of international trade). Will that part of her job fall to you?

AL: No, that stays very much within her immediate portfolio. There's only one minister. The parliamentary secretary, though I represent the minister in her absence and I can articulate the position of the government, I'm by definition not a minister, so she has the executive authority for that, subject to the will of cabinet. We'll both sit on the cabinet committee for Canada-U.S. relations, but that's more an advisory group that then reports to the full cabinet committee. I'm not part of the latter, unless invited. I have the same status as I did as a whip. I'm a member of the Privy Council, but [I] don't go to cabinet meetings unless [I'm] invited. I was rarely invited to cabinet as a whip.

DM: It's been reported that you've been given this job because of the appointments of Gen. James Mattis as defense secretary and Gen. Mike Flynn [who has since resigned] as national security ad-

viser. Is that so?

AL: Those may have been triggers. Having spent some time on the phone with former colleagues in Washington, namely army buddies, and having been there for a while over the last week or two, there are literally thousands of positions that President Trump's administration is going to have to fill. [These are the positions of] political appointees who, by tradition, submit their resignations on the 20th of January. So they're going to have to fill those positions and the indicators are that a lot of military folk will be competing for them, and may be selected. The prime minister thought I could be of use there. And he also needed someone to help coordinate the flow of rekindling the flame between friends. Friendships need work. Let's not take it for granted — especially not now.

DM: How was being at the inauguration?
AL: I started the morning down on the grass in front of the Capitol Building. That was fun and there was lots of energy. There were some differences of opinion. I went to the [Canadian] embassy by 10:30 a.m. and that was equally interesting because the ambassador and the team there did a magnificent job of hosting thousands of people. I'd say two thirds of the crowd was American and the rest were Canadians who worked or lived in the area or who just came down for the inauguration.



U.S. political appointments: "The jungle drums are alive and well."

DM: Who were the Americans in attendance? Why were they there?
AL: Some had business interests in Canada, some were friends of Canada. There



U.S. Secretary of Defense James Mattis

were a significant number of people in uniform — air force, army, navy. I didn't see any coast guards, but I saw marines. People whose family members had married Canadians — that sort of stuff. It was all very friendly.

DM: Do you have any sense of why they call James Mattis "Mad Dog Mattis"?
AL: He hates that. Well, 'hates' is too strong a word, he dislikes it, I'm told. I don't know that for a fact because I've never actually discussed it with him. He is an extraordinarily bright, thoughtful,



Trump's view of Canada: "I think we're on his radar, but what size blip we are, I don't know."

articulate warrior scholar and he is very much a field officer and very much a counter-insurgency and counter-terrorist theorist. But like any field commander,

he's had to talk to large numbers of troops who are about to go and do very unpleasant things and there's a certain tone of voice and motivational way of talking. And apparently, there was a journalist one day... and the nickname stuck.

DM: And how do you expect this administration will change foreign and defence policy from the Obama administration?
AL: It's too early to say. There's a lot of opinion out there and there always is in a period of transition. Opinion leads to uncertainty and uncertainty can lead to tension because people aren't sure what's about to happen and that, in turn, gets people talking and then rumours sweep through social media at the speed of light. The simple answer is I don't know. I've read two of President Trump's principal books and I've seen the manifesto that he published about 45 days before the election and so far, nothing he has done is a surprise in terms of what he said he would do. I think how it's been done is a bit... innovative. But we just have to maintain the dialogue. Let's never forget they're our closest friend and ally, there are millions of Canadians who've married Americans and vice-versa. About a fifth of my family, maybe even a quarter, is down in the States as Americans.

The relationship is going to need more work and the more people you know in times of uncertainty, the more clarity you can get.



The state of the Canada-U.S. relationship: "Strong. They're still our closest friend and ally."

Last weekend, there was the issue of the [travel] ban list [preventing travellers from seven Muslim countries from entering the U.S.]. Was that going to impact



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Canadian, American, and Latvian vehicle technicians practise their recovery drills in Latvia. Canada has troops on the ground there as part of an allied operation.

Canadians? We didn't know, but based on patient, diligent work over the past couple of months, senior officials in the Prime Minister's Office were able to call their opposite members in the White House. Our national security adviser called their national security adviser. Our ambassador got a hold of senior members of the State Department. And very quickly, we had a clear answer that Canadians were not affected. That speaks to the relationship, the contacts and the good work that's already happened.

DM: Did you meet Mattis in your previous military life? Can you share some anecdotes about time you've spent with him?

AL: I've met him. I don't know him as well as I know Shawn [points to his assistant, Shawn Kalbhenn] but I've met him. Our paths have crossed over the years. I didn't see him during the inauguration because he was... kind of busy.

I'm not alone in this [job]. We have other parliamentarians — multiple dozens — who have strong contacts in the States and someone's going to have to try to coordinate our efforts and that's part of what my remit will be.

DM: Generally, how do you see the current state of Canada-U.S. relations?

AL: Strong. They're still our closest friend and ally. We still have integrated economies. Canadians have millions of friends down there and vice-versa. We in Canada think a lot more about the States than they think about us — it's simply a matter of scale. But [the relationship] is not something we can take for granted.

This period of uncertainty around a transition is natural, perhaps now more so than in other times that I can think of, but that just means we've got to do more.

DM: Is Canada even on Trump's radar?

AL: I think we're on his radar, but what size of blip we are, I don't know. I think he's mainly focused south of his border, mostly because of the trade imbalance that exists between the U.S. and Mexico. Mexico sells far more to the U.S. than vice-versa, whereas we're actually the other way around, though that fluctuates.

DM: Do we want to be on his radar? I interviewed Howard Dean about a week after the election and he told me: 'You Canadians always complain that you're not on the U.S.'s radar. I suggest you just stay there and enjoy it.'

AL: [Laughs.] I know we're on [Trump's] radar. He and the prime minister have spoken several times [and since this interview, they've met in person at the White House]. And when we were at the cabinet retreat, days after his inauguration, Steve Schwartzman, who is the president of his economic advisory council and a multi-billionaire himself, came out and spent a whole day with us. He's a busy guy, plus he has a huge series of companies to run on his own. What was interesting was that, of the 50 or 60 people in the room, he probably already knew a dozen, so we're certainly known.

Being the president of the United States though — I can only imagine how busy that is. And the president's time is probably allocated to areas that are problems, so

the more time you're on their radar, that's not necessarily [what you want.]

DM: How do you see the U.S.'s inward-looking economic protectionism and seeming domestic preoccupation, as opposed to its role as world police, jiving with Trump's promise to rebuild its military?

AL: A variety of equipment that the U.S. armed forces have has been very hard used in, quite frankly, 25 to 28 years of continuous warfare. Most important, a lot of the troops are in danger of being exhausted by continual deployments. In some cases, it's generational. We have mothers whose sons are deploying to the same region where those women first deployed. Iraq is one, but there are others, such as Afghanistan. The U.S. has [hundreds of thousands of] troops deployed internationally and though they may not all be in active combat, they're still away from home, there's training cycles you go through and the list goes on.

But [on military rebuilding], there's no detail. So obviously, we're going to stand by our principles and defend our interests. First, we try to understand what surrounds a variety of statements. What's the detail, what does it actually

mean? That's where personal contacts are key because you can try to extract those details and you can help shape them in a way that's more logical for our values and interests.

DM: I know you have other responsibilities, but speaking strictly about this new Canada-U.S. mission, what three areas will you make your priorities?

AL: First, to facilitate the dialogue, keeping in mind that I'm not responsible for being the voice. The principal voice is the prime minister of Canada, followed by the minister of global affairs and I'm there to help them. We're also going to be reaching out, not only to parliamentarians. I've already spoken to the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and I will be speaking to the Council of Chief Executive Officers, and the list goes on.

Second, though it may not please everybody, part of my role is to live by the mantra of keep calm and carry on. Let's wait for some facts to emerge before we react. I don't want to give the impression we're not doing contingency planning, but in times of uncertainty, it doesn't take much to cause destabilization. We don't want to underreact and we don't want to overreact.

The third is to continue to represent my constituents. They're well informed, well educated, they've got lots of good ideas and they've got lots of friends in the U.S.

DM: What members of the Trump administration have you met?

AL: I've not been in the White House since president George Bush. The key is to remember that proportionally, a tiny percentage of Trump's team is actually in political office. We've already mentioned the thousands of political appointments he has to make. I know a number of people who claim they're about to get offered a job. We'll see. But the jungle drums are alive and well.

DM: Trump, on the one hand, recently told British Prime Minister Theresa May that he's "100 per cent behind NATO," but he's also called the organization obsolete. He has, however, been consistent on one thing: That he will insist that allies pony up more money as a percentage of GDP on military spending. We are 23rd out of 28 NATO countries, so we're on the black list at the moment. How will Canada respond to that?

AL: You're quite right. He said both those things and he's also said he sees the

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Lt.-Gen. (ret'd) Andrew Leslie served in the Canadian Forces for 35 years, including in the former Yugoslavia and Afghanistan.

enormous value of NATO. He has said he wants to see nations do more, and do their fair share. One subtle differentiator that our country has as compared to many is that we've been alongside the Americans through thick and thin. We go outside the wire. We fight when we have to. We fight hard, we've suffered casualties, we've shared spilled blood and that's true for our air, land, sea and special forces. So, unlike some other NATO members, we have a very good reputation with the Americans and we train with them just about all the time.

Right now, there are probably close to 500 Canadian armed forces personnel who are stationed in the U.S. The army sends hundreds, if not thousands, of troops down there; the same is true of the air force and the navy. Our ships interact with their carrier battle groups and our air crews train in the U.S. and the Americans come up to Cold Lake — I think our troops get the better end of that deal.

DM: But what about spending with respect to NATO commitments?

AL: We'll see. That's out there, but there's no detail. You need technical experts and those will show up in due course.

DM: My understanding is that there are different ways to count the money. For example, some countries count the pensions of their military personnel as part of their defence spending. Others don't.

AL: There are different ways to count the money. And that's why we need technical experts. I know enough about the subject to know that if you and I were representing different countries and I wanted to make our numbers look bigger, I could. That's why we need these people with really big brains with lots of experience to sit down and figure it out.

DM: Will our troop commitment in Latvia play in our favour?

AL: I think having troops anywhere will

play a role in our favour — whether it's Latvia or elsewhere. And, of course, we've got a mission pending and our minister of national defence and our minister of global affairs will be discussing that possible deployment with their American counterparts, like we always do. When I was commander of the army, there were many times I was down in Washington and I'd be briefed as to where the U.S. army would be sending a battalion or brigade. They would always do us the courtesy of informing us so we could figure out what it meant and maybe they wanted us to consider sending some people along.


DM: With respect to Canada rebuilding its military, in your transformation position, you were critical of bloated bureaucracy and cost overruns.

AL: I stand by that. It wasn't terribly popular, but it had to be done.

DM: Given that, how should Canada go about rebuilding?

AL: The big priority is the navy and our navy is in a state of emergency. It has been that way for five or six years. The good news is, we're getting close to further definition of the way ahead to replace the supply ships — we're leasing them from other countries right now — and our surface combatants. Work is already under way for the coastal patrol vessels and the Arctic patrol, but the big crisis is the navy. That's where most of our time and effort should go. There's always stuff for the army and the air force, of course, but I think the CF-18 interim Hornet [Canadian fighter aircraft] buy is a good plan [because] it stabilizes the capability again. Now, it's all hands on deck for the navy.

DM: Can you briefly discuss one lesson that you learned when you were with the military, maybe the former Yugoslavia,



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or Afghanistan [to which Leslie returns three times a year for a couple of weeks at a time]?

AL: One thing that I've learned — and by the way, it's not always popular — is when you've got to move fast, move really fast. But if you don't have to actually move fast, then just take a second, pause, figure out what the facts are, come up with a plan that has some options, and then start to move. When the results of a decision are not based on facts, you cause chaos and confusion with the troops. I'm by no means a procrastinator — trust me, I'm not — but you should take the time you have to work out a plan.

The second lesson is that trying to settle things between friends is so much easier than trying to bellow at each other from the rooftops.

DM: So you'd rather have this job than Canada-Russia relations?

AL: [Laughs] Ouch! I'm not going to touch that. Good try, though.

DM: What's it like to move from the military, to a brief flirtation with consulting, and then to the fast-paced job of parliamentary whip to the now even faster-paced job of Canada-U.S. relations?

AL: I did my 35 years. I left on a Friday and started Monday with a big corporation. It wasn't really me, though. And I really got intrigued by what I saw happening with Mr. Trudeau — then the leader of the third party — and his team. I dabbled in consulting, but my heart wasn't in it and then I started knocking on doors. I did that for almost two years. And here we are now. In the whip's job, I learned a great deal. I had a great team. My role was to keep calm and carry on. They're all high energy, they're all very smart, they're all driven. They're all really passionate about their constituency and they all want to do their own thing. So it was 184 people. They're all fast-movers and it wasn't my job to slow them down, it was just my job to help them succeed.

DM: No speed limits at all?

AL: Maybe a couple.

DM: Last weekend, U.S. President Trump issued a ban on people from seven predominately Muslim countries entering the U.S. There are some Canadians in limbo. What's happening with them?

AL: Remember how I said it's sometimes wise to think through what it is you're

trying to achieve? I happen to know the phone lines have been burning up between Ottawa and Washington. We're trying to keep it at as low a level as possible. We're trying to see what it means for, say, person A in country B with category C whose child is ill — you see where I'm going? In some cases, those haven't been thought through, because the staff isn't there yet to be able to establish that dialogue. So we're not sure, but we do know that Canadians are not affected in the main. It's those exceptions where the circumstances aren't normal that everyone's still scratching their heads about it.

DM: Canada has volunteered to take people caught in limbo. How many headaches does that cause you in this job?

AL: Well, I think what the prime minister's done is wise in that he hasn't said anything for or against any other country. He's said 'Here's what we're doing.' We're staying true to our values and our principles without shouting from the rooftops or getting into unpleasantness. It's a very Canadian way. It's kind of like when we deploy. We don't say 'They're doing it wrong' or 'We're doing it right,' we say 'Here's what we're doing.' ▣

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“Ottawa Welcomes the World” is a program dreamed up by Mayor Jim Watson for Ottawa’s 2017 celebrations. The city offered all foreign missions in Ottawa free rent in either Lansdowne’s Aberdeen Pavilion or the Horticulture Building if they agreed to host a cultural event there.

A total of 75 missions — a healthy majority of the city’s total of 135 — took the mayor up on his offer and the Ottawa 2017 Bureau, along with lead sponsor CIBC, will help facilitate the events.

“As the capital of Canada and host of so many foreign embassies and high commissions, our city has the unique opportunity to engage the international community in Canada’s 150th birthday celebrations,” Watson said.

Guy Laflamme, executive director of the Ottawa 2017 Bureau, said he’s delighted to have such a “wide spectrum of uptake from the diplomatic community. It fits with our mandate because it’s a celebration of diversity,” he said.

Mexican Ambassador Agustin García-López was on hand at a launch event at the Aberdeen Pavilion, to which he brought a mariachi band. He noted that when Mexico celebrated its 150th in 1960, Canada’s gift was a totem pole that was



Various embassies and high commissions provided entertainment for the Ottawa Welcomes the World launch at the Aberdeen Pavilion, where many of this year’s events will take place. Here, Radha Jetty performs a traditional Indian dance.

recently restored in honour of the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Canada and Mexico.

“We’d like to do something special for your 150th,” he said, but added that for now, it has to remain a secret. What’s not a secret is the fact that Mexico will host a three-day event around its Cinco de Mayo celebrations in May.

Serbia will also take part. “It’s an embassy thing, and a community thing — it’s culture, dance, music and gastronomy,” said Ambassador Mihailo Papazoglu about his plans for a May 22 event. “The free venue was a real boost for everyone to join Canada’s 150th celebration.”

See page 27 for a full schedule of the events for the rest of 2017. ▣

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May 17	Embassy of Haiti
May 19	Embassy of Cuba
May 21	High Commission for Guyana
May 22	Embassy of Serbia
May 26-27	Embassy of Ukraine
May 28	Embassy of Ethiopia
June 1	High Commission for Kenya
June 9	Embassy of Croatia
June 13	Embassy of Honduras
June 16	Embassy of Ireland
June 23	Embassy of Slovenia
June 25	Embassy of Korea
June 28	Embassy of Madagascar
July 6	Embassy of Venezuela
July 7	High Commission for Rwanda
July 11	Embassy of Mongolia
July 14	High Commission for Tanzania
July 15-20	Embassy of Egypt
July 23	Embassy of Uruguay
July 28	Embassy of Thailand
July 29	Embassy of Lithuania
August 4	Embassy of Colombia
August 6	Embassy of Macedonia
August 7	High Commission for Jamaica
August 16 & 17	High Commission for Pakistan
August 20	High Commission for Trinidad and Tobago
August 25-27	Embassy of Indonesia
September 10	Embassy of Bulgaria
September 24	High Commission for Barbados
September 26- 27	Embassy of Saudi Arabia
September 29	High Commission for India
October 1	Embassy of Slovakia



October 3	High Commission for Uganda
October 4-10	Embassy of China
October 15	Embassy of Japan
November 17	Embassy of Haiti
November 20	Embassy of Lebanon
December 1	Embassy of Romania
PARTNER EVENTS:	
April 11	Ottawa Diplomatic Community – fundraising food and wine fair
May 24	Africa Day (30 countries)
June 11	Delegation of the European Union: 18 countries and their capitals of culture
June 19	AKDN (Aga Khan Development Network)
July 9	Taipei Economic and Cultural Office

Children's Bridge Foundation: Making futures bright

By Sue Christie and Joanne Schnurr

Lucy was just six years old when both her parents died from HIV/AIDS. She and her siblings, all from the coastal region of Kenya, were sent to live with their grandmother, but their grandmother was also ill and struggled to support the children. To complicate matters, Lucy's little sister, who was infected with HIV at birth, wasn't getting the medication she needed to fight the disease. Lucy and her siblings did their best to look after themselves and their grandmother, but the situation became increasingly difficult. Eventually neighbours intervened and the children were taken to an orphanage.

This might sound like the plot of a Dickens novel, but there are, in fact, 18.5 million orphans living like this in developing countries — children who have lost both parents or whose parents are unknown. This number is roughly equivalent to 50 per cent of Canada's population. Some live with extended family, and a very small number are adopted either in their own country or internationally, but far too many live in orphanages, some of which can hardly afford even basic care.

This is where The Children's Bridge Foundation (CBF) steps in. This Ottawa-based registered charity was started in 2003 by a group of adoptive parents who wanted to do something to help the children left behind in orphanages. Today, the foundation continues to be run entirely by a group of passionate volunteers, allowing more than 93 per cent of funds raised to go directly to support health and education programs for orphaned and abandoned children in Kenya, China, Zambia and, most recently, unaccompanied children from Aleppo in refugee camps.

In Kenya, the foundation helps Lucy and many other children at the GOF orphanage in Watamu, through educational sponsorships. Primary school education is free in Kenya, but government-funded schools are ill-equipped and sometimes dangerous, with class sizes of up to 100 students. To ensure the GOF children have a chance to escape poverty, the foundation provides funds for them to attend one of many local private schools. Sue Christie, president of CBF, visits the orphanage annually to meet the children and discuss



Susan Christie, president Children's Bridge Foundation, in December 2016, with some children at the GOF orphanage in Watamu, Kenya. CBF sponsors their education and Christie visits every year.

their progress and plans for the coming year. CBF also gives educational support to children in Zambia, in orphanages in Lusaka and Ndola. There, CBF provides tuition, uniforms, educational materials and transport to school for the children, as well as educational resources for the early childhood learning centre.

In China, CBF supports a group of HIV-positive children who are particularly marginalized. Life in orphanages in China is hard, but for these children, it is even worse. They are frequently not allowed to eat or play with other children, and many spend their lives in isolation. The fear of contracting HIV/AIDS is so strong that often even orphanage staff members are afraid to touch them. Without human contact, these children have very little hope. To help them, CBF partnered with Elim Kids, an organization founded by two Australian doctors. They established the Elim Group Home to care for HIV-positive children from orphanages in China. There, the children are cared for in a family-style environment and receive the medical treatment and care they need to stay healthy. Providing education for the children, however, became a problem. Once the local schools discovered they had HIV, they were no longer welcome.

Home schooling became a necessity. CBF stepped in to provide a teacher as well as professional development for the caregivers working at Elim, ensuring the best possible future for the children living there.

The war in Syria has produced more than 13 million refugees, six million of whom are still there. Half are children, and sadly, some of these children have been orphaned by the war, or separated from their families. An unaccompanied child in a refugee camp is at risk of becoming ill, malnourished, abused or exploited, so CBF has partnered with SOS Children's Villages to monitor and support these children through the creation of child-friendly spaces and care centres in the refugee camps. The children receive medical care, counselling, nutritious meals, protection and a safe place to play.

Through its fundraising efforts, CBF is living up to its motto — "embrace a child, brighten a future." To learn more about the CBF or to find out how you can help, visit childrensbridgefoundation.com or follow us on Facebook.

Sue Christie is the president of Ottawa-based Children's Bridge Foundation. Joanne Schnurr is a director of its board.



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Recently we have been hearing the word “torture” thrown about by politicians of the highest ranks and we never really stop to ask ourselves what that word truly means. What are the long-term effects of keeping a nation under constant threat of violence and intimidation? I have a horrifying tale to tell, and I hope it will answer those questions and shed light on the mentality of a nation that was in a constant state of fear.

Before I describe my experience in Abu Ghraib, Iraq’s infamous prison, I want to give some context about what it meant to be a political prisoner in Baathist Iraq. The majority of those incarcerated from 1978 to 2003 were political prisoners who posed a potential threat to the integrity of the Baath regime. Among their “crimes” were being educated, young and able, of the Shiite faith, not pro-Baathist enough and defenders of human rights or supporters of charitable causes.

The Iraqi people were under the watchful eye of a special police force that was focused on targeting anyone who posed a potential threat to the party or merely took the party’s name in vain. The state had achieved complete control over all media organizations. That included censoring newspapers, broadcasts, literature, textbooks. They scrambled satellites and forbade copy and print machines. Once the secret police had an individual in their field of vision, that person would be subjected to assault and imprisonment.

Political prisoners all over Iraq were blindfolded for days, tortured, bound, starved and deprived of every basic human need. The daily torture they endured included acid burns, amputation, electrocution, painful contortion and worst of

all, being made to watch a loved one being tortured or molested. Many prisoners died, but those who survived were reminded weekly by having to go to their local secret police station and sign their dossier,

be tortured and inter-

rogated. While the censorship, deprivation and torture were bad enough to break the strongest activist, the true struggle — for the lucky ones — came after their release. They were systematically alienated by the removal of their right to work, higher education and travel.

In 1979, during the height of the Iran revolution, the Baath regime, along with partner regimes of similar interests, feared a revolt by the people. To prevent a revolution, the regime took extreme measures. Despite all attempts at censorship, the Iraqi people found ways to spread the news of the Iranian revolution and slowly a sense of rebellion spread. After decades of humiliation, religious persecution and

lack of personal freedom, the Iraqi people finally saw hope when their neighbours broke free from a totalitarian regime. Iraqis were inspired by the potential freedom and went out on the streets protesting immediately after the regime arrested some vocal political clerics. Protesting, at that time, was a never-before-seen act of defiance in Iraq.

This is where my story as a political and human rights activist began. It would take me to prison three times. I spent a total of three years behind bars. My first arrest was due to my efforts in planning and participating in the Baghdad protest.

Ironically, the true threat to the Baath regime came from within when, in 1979, Saddam Hussein orchestrated a coup to take down Ahmed Hassan Al-Bakr, the leader of the Baath party and the president of Iraq, killing 23 of the highest-ranking Baath members and officials in the process. As an act of appeasement, Saddam let some political prisoners go to avoid any attack on his newly formed government. I was one of them.

My second and longest stretch behind bars was in 1984 when I was arrested for making a donation to the families of deceased political prisoners. I had seen many families of political prisoners systematically isolated and intentionally starved.



Abu Ghraib was the site of serious breaches by American soldiers during the U.S. occupation of Iraq, as pictured here. Ambassador Kaab wasn’t subjected to American torture, but he was jailed and tortured by Saddam’s people on three different occasions.

Charity or any form of aid provided to the families of political prisoners was an act of treason and was punishable by death. Being financially independent, I created an intricate network to disseminate my personal donations. Recipients and participants had no knowledge of each other, making it relatively safe from detection by the regime's security services. In 1984, an acquaintance, who had at one point taken part in my donation network, was jailed and while being tortured, he named me as the organizer of the charity.

I was then arrested, identified by my friend and again subjected to the same torture and conditions I faced in 1979. I was sentenced to 10 years, despite the lack of evidence and my refusal to confess, and sent to serve my sentence in Abu Ghraib. In 1986, I received news that hundreds of my fellow political prisoners and I were to be released and taken into military camps, where we would be forced to serve on the front lines of the Iran-Iraq war.

At this stage, the war had been going on for six years and the situation in Iraq had reached a new low. Saddam had slowly depleted his supply of young men and was drafting anyone who could hold a Kalashnikov. Due to a lasting injury to my right hip and leg, acquired through

torture, I was unable to walk without the aid of a crutch, which meant that I was not suitable for the front. I was given a position as an engineer in the military and spent my service as an unarmed soldier.

By 1991, I was married with one child and another on the way. I had a lot more to lose, so I attempted to return to normal life, but my weekly dossier signings were a constant threat. I was sporadically imprisoned for a day or two and tortured frequently as a form of intimidation and to serve as a reminder of the torture I experienced in prison.

During the height of the Second Gulf War, when thousands of corpses lay rotting and unclaimed on the battlefield, Iraqi citizens took to the streets and called for an end to the Baath-Saddam regime that had claimed the lives and freedom of all who dared to stand up to them, and of the hundreds of thousands who died and were injured in Saddam's useless wars. The Baath-Saddam regime feared that I, and anyone who had a political history, would contribute to the uprising and, in a desperate effort to regain some control, they arrested anyone who was a potential threat. For me, this meant yet another stay in prison, this time for three months, as a preventative measure and without a clear

charge. That was my last long stay in the jails of a brutal dictator where I was subjected to torture in an effort to get a confession that I had any part in the uprisings.

Anyone who was a potential threat was dealt with by the most brutal methods, particularly anyone who had a shred of conscience and the ability to fight for human rights. Decades of systematic oppression and starvation created a generation of young people who were unaware of their most basic rights and who were too afraid to even dream of rebellion. Certain groups were targeted by the Saddam Baathist regime and tens of thousands lie unnamed in mass graves.

I remember seeing hysterical mothers searching for the remains of their sons in piles of ashes and bones, only to break down upon the sight of a familiar piece of torn cloth. Decades spent in complete isolation and under sanctions from the international world, yearning for a book to read or a song to sing, created a generation that does not even understand its own culture, let alone that of the world.

I recall seeing coalition troops deployed near Baghdad during the 1991 Gulf War and I ask myself: "Where was the world when Saddam filled another mass grave?" ▣



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Consider Latvia Canada's Baltic trade hub



By Kārlis Eihenbaums

With increasing bilateral co-operation and a brisker pace of high-level visits, Canadian and Latvian trade is poised for steady growth in the coming years. This is particularly so given Latvia's role as an undisputed Baltic hub and Canada and Latvia's mutual intensive work with international organizations such as the OECD, the WTO, the UN and NATO.

Canada and Latvia are set to celebrate the ratification of CETA, the free-trade agreement that represents a huge triumph for EU-Canada relations and will smooth the way to new business prospects.

Bilateral trade between Latvia and Canada has been pattering along at well below 100 million euros per year and Canada hadn't been among our Top-40 trade partners until now. Soon, it will take a dramatic jump thanks to the long-term alliance forged between Bombardier and Latvian national carrier airBaltic, which has just bought 20 CS300 Series jetliners, technologically advanced aircraft that will become the workhorses of Latvia's fleet.

Bombardier, a world-renowned company, is headquartered in Quebec. It has packed three decades of experience into these planes while equipping them with bigger windows, more comfortable seats, wider aisles, larger overhead storage and fuel efficiency that others only dream about as they compete for clients and try to realize the 2030 sustainable development goals for a smaller carbon footprint.

Though Bombardier is an all-Canadian company, Canadians will have to travel to Latvia to test out this new plane. Even with Bombardier's Mirabel assembly line going at full steam, the Canadian airlines will have a long wait.

And speaking of air travel, Riga Inter-



Bombardier, visited here by Latvian delegates, has made a major sale to the Latvian government.

national Airport offers direct flights to more than 80 destinations serving more than five million passengers per year.

We believe business breeds business and we think the quality and performance of the Bombardier planes will be a good advertisement for Canada in Latvia. They will attract Latvian entrepreneurs to visit Canada and vice-versa.

Over the centuries, Latvia's geopolitical situation has been shaped by its strategic Baltic Sea location. Which sectors are particularly promising in Latvia? We see eight in which Latvia has great potential and which are ripe for harvesting: wood-working and metalworking, mechanical engineering, transport and storage, information technology (including global business services), green technology, health care, life sciences and food processing.

Recent exports from Canada to Latvia include vehicles, machinery, chemicals, plastics, optical devices and farm products. Likewise, Latvian exports to Canada include machinery, food products, vehicles, building supplies and textiles.

Latvians are inventive and are open to co-operation. Some smart Latvian entrepreneurs have become leaders in fields you might not expect.

To wit, the world's smallest mechanical camera, the VEF Minox (James Bond "spy camera") is from Latvia. Groglass is a world-class developer and manufacturer of glass coatings used in high-end electronics and architecture, among other applications. Erenpreiss bicycles are made in Latvia, while Finieris is a leading provider of birch plywood while also working in forest management, logging and produc-

tion of synthetic resin and phenol films with customers in 60 countries. AirDog manufactures the only drone made for action sports while Blue Mic makes microphones, including "the ultimate USB microphone for PC, Mac, iPhone and iPad."

How do you know if Latvia is a good bet for you? Along with a well-developed infrastructure, access to European and regional markets, an income tax rebate for larger investments and macroeconomic stability, the most important of the recent "stamps of approval" for the investment climate in Latvia came with Latvia's successful OECD membership bid.

The OECD accession process involved an extensive review of the various sectors of Latvia's economy, including transparency, good governance and accountability. The Canadian company, Couche-Tard is already in Latvia through its new global convenience brand, "Circle K."

Canada's leadership in NATO's multinational battalion in Latvia should also be understood as a positive sign for Canadian companies contemplating Latvia as a starting point for their business. Latvia has been a strong supporter of the transatlantic links to Europe and welcomes Canada's flag and forward presence in our country as we start to celebrate Canada's 150th birthday and are on the verge of celebrating Latvia's centennial in 2018.

Visit www.liaa.gov.lv/en if you're interested in exploring opportunities and investment incentives in Latvia.

Kārlis Eihenbaums is Latvia's ambassador. Contact him by phone (613) 238-6014 or by email: embassy.canada@mfa.gov.lv.

India: The world's fastest-growing economy



By Arun Kumar Sahu

India-Canada bilateral relations are underpinned by shared values of democracy, pluralism and expanding economic engagement. Canada is home to more than 1.2 million people of Indian origin, making up three per cent of its population. Highly educated and industrious Indo-Canadians are well integrated and serve as a strong bridge between the two nations.

Both countries have established institutional links to strengthen co-operation, trade and investment, especially in the sectors of infrastructure, railways, space, civil nuclear co-operation, energy, education and skills development, agriculture, science, technology, innovation, culture and people-to-people ties.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has an ambitious agenda that will catapult India onto a new growth trajectory. In 2015, India emerged as the fastest-growing economy in the world with GDP growth of 7.6 per cent in 2015 and 2016.

Committed to minimum government and maximum governance, India's government has made it easier to do business and created attractive avenues for foreign direct investments in almost all sectors. Modi has also launched flagship programs, including Digital India, Smart Cities and Clean India and has encouraged public-private partnerships.

These programs open up opportunities for Canadian companies. To ease movement for visitors, business people and investors, the government has simplified its 10-year visa procedures and has also introduced e-Tourist visa facilities.

India-Canada two-way trade has increased from \$4.2 billion in 2010 to \$6.4 billion in 2014 and, again, by 29 per cent to \$8.2 billion in 2015. But this does not re-



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is spurring India's economy with ambitious programs.

flect our true potential. India accounts for just 0.7 per cent of Canada's global trade; it exports \$3.9 billion worth of goods to Canada and Canada sends \$4.3 billion worth to India.

Major Indian exports to Canada include gems, jewelry, precious stones, pharmaceutical products, ready-made garments, textiles, organic chemicals, light engineering goods, iron and steel articles. Major exports from Canada to India include pulses, newsprint, wood pulp, asbestos, potash, iron scrap, copper, minerals and industrial chemicals. Canada is a key supplier of potash and pulses, such as lentils — indeed India is the largest importer of Canadian pulses. More than 30 per cent of India's imported pulses and 25 per cent of India's potash for use in fertilizers come from Canada.

Animal husbandry, dryland farming, food processing technologies, cold-chain management (a temperature-controlled supply chain for fresh and frozen agricultural products) and agricultural sustainability are priority areas for bilateral co-operation.

Reputable Indian companies have invested in Canada, especially in the sectors of information technology, steel and natural resources. Included among them are Aditya Birla Group, Essar Steel, Tata Consultancy Services, Tata Steel Minerals Canada, Tech Mahindra and Gujarat State Fertilizers and Chemicals Limited (GSFC). State Bank of India and ICICI Bank have

branches across Canada.

Similarly, Canadian companies are active in India's sectors of power and energy equipment and services; oil and gas; environmental products and services; telecommunications and IT and financial services, including insurance. Those include SNC Lavalin, Bombardier, CAE Inc., CPPIB, Fairfax Financial, Brookfield, Sun Life Financial, Canpotex Limited, McCain Foods, Amdocs and Bank of Nova Scotia.

India and Canada are committed to finalizing the bilateral foreign investment promotion and protection agreement (BIPPA) and comprehensive economic partnership agreement (CEPA) to further strengthen relations. Our trade ministers met in Toronto in late September 2016 to discuss finalizing both agreements.

Canada is a reliable partner in India's quest for energy security. We have established an energy dialogue whose three pillars are power, clean energy and innovation. Both sides are committed to investing in clean technology research and development and to stimulating private-sector investment in the sector. A third round of talks was held last autumn.

Education is another area of collaboration. More than 35,000 Indian students study in Canada. India and Canada also co-operate in space science, Earth observation, satellite launch services and ground support for space missions. Our IC-IMPACTS initiative brings together researchers, industry innovators, community leaders, government agencies and community organizations from across India and Canada.

Today, there's a growing tendency for governments to look inward, but not India's. Modi, during his visit to Ottawa in April 2015, said: "Today it is my deep belief that not only will we be present in each other's thoughts, but also in our endeavours. We will work together." It was Lester Pearson, who, after the Second World War, advocated for "participatory internationalism." India is confident the current Canadian government will continue to hold high that Pearsonian spirit.

Arun Kumar Sahu is India's deputy high commissioner. Reach him by email at dhc@hciottawa.ca or by phone at (613) 744-3751.

Canada-Chile FTA: 20 years of prosperity



By Alejandro Marisio

Chile and Canada have much to look forward to in 2017. This year, we celebrate 20 years of our bilateral free-trade agreement, a milestone, as it was the first of its kind for Chile. Back in 1997, we negotiated an ambitious agenda and the FTA included goods, services and investment that were complemented by environment and labour agreements, as well as a treaty to avoid double taxation and tax evasion.

With more than 98 per cent of our trade completely free of tariffs, the results have been impressive. Our bilateral trade has tripled in 20 years, soaring from \$559 million US in 1997 to more than \$1.6 billion US in 2016 and is set to grow again after a period of low commodity prices.

Chile values its trade experience with Canada and regards it as a successful example of how working together can deliver concrete results to both countries and their people. We also strive to expand free trade with the rest of the world and Chile's commitment to liberalization is evident in agreements we have with 60 countries that represent more than four billion people.

The Chile-Canada FTA is a living agreement and has been expanded several times to include more economic sectors. Our countries continue to work to maximize the benefits of free trade. The constant modernization of our regulatory framework has created new opportunities in public procurement, financial services and beef exports and we carry on searching for ways to improve regulations.

Chile's exports to Canada are focused on gold, copper, silver, fresh produce, processed foods and wine, while Canada's exports to our country consist mainly of wheat, polymers, vegetable oils, coal and retail medicine. Both countries continue to



Chile produces a third of the world's copper.

work at diversifying their export matrix.

Trade is not only a bilateral endeavour. Our country also participates in multilateral and regional integration efforts and is an active member of the Pacific Alliance, a joint initiative with Colombia, Mexico and Peru. Indeed, Chile currently occupies the organization's presidency. Canada has free-trade agreements with all four members of the Pacific Alliance and is an observer country that has established a strategic partnership with an ambitious work agenda geared at strengthening trade and investment through co-operation.

Investment is also a vibrant part of our economic relations. Canada currently has foreign direct investment (FDI) in Chile of more than \$19.2 billion US. Canada's more intensive foreign direct investment is in the mining sector and it is Chile's third-largest investor overall. Canada's presence expands to financial services, utilities and the chemical industry. Chile also invests in Canada, in mining, industry and services, including air transport and IT.

Foreign investors from around the world continue to grow in numbers in Chile. In 2015 alone, we saw new investments of \$20.5 billion US, a trend that continued last year. Investors value Chile for its economic stability, reliable foreign investment regime and regulatory framework, ease of doing business, transparency and competitiveness and they keep selecting our country as a choice destination in Latin America and beyond.

Our interest in the mining sector brings

us together with Canada every year at the Prospectors & Developers Association of Canada (PDAC) Convention in Toronto. Chile attended PDAC 2017 as a sponsor to showcase opportunities in mining and related services.

Chile offers attractive opportunities in strategic sectors, such as mining equipment, technology and services (METS), the food industry, energy, infrastructure and tourism.

Last year, Chile and Canada celebrated 75 years of diplomatic relations. Our trade and investment relationship is based on a common view of the world. We regard each other as like-minded countries and strategic partners that share common values and a commitment to democracy, human rights, the environment and a free-market economy.

This common vision is the basis of our extensive and growing exchange in two-way travel. Canadians and Chileans can visit our respective countries without a visa and tourism and educational exchanges continue to expand.

As we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Chile-Canada free-trade agreement, we look forward to new opportunities over the next 20 years, a time during which both countries will keep improving our future on the basis of the solid and deeply rooted relationship we have built together.

Alejandro Marisio is the ambassador of Chile. Reach him by email at lcaceres@minrel.gob.cl or at (613) 235-4402.



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On guard for Russian defence

Aside from its military, Russia is a weak major power.

By Pierre Jolicœur

Many see today's Russia as one of the most challenging threats to Canada, the United States and, to varying degrees, their allies. There is much debate about how to counter these threats — where Russia might strike next, and how to deter Russian aggression — but there's no doubt that Russia is, once again, on Canada's security agenda. The war in Ukraine, Russia's intervention in Syria, its attempts to influence the recent presidential elections in the U.S., combined with its extensive program of military modernization, lend urgency to this debate.

Moscow's perspective on those events will help illustrate the increasing abyss between the ways security issues are perceived by western capitals and by Moscow.

Divergent views

For many western observers, the war in Ukraine is symptomatic of a fundamental shift in the characteristics of the post-Cold War era. Although Russia's relations with the west had already been strained since the mid 2000s, the annexation of Crimea and the outbreak of war in Ukraine in 2014 have dramatically aggravated the situation. Russia, which, for most of the post-Cold War era was absent from western political radar, or was not perceived as a significant military threat, made an impressive return to the forefront of the strategic agenda.

Russian actions have raised a series of concerns in the Euro-Atlantic community

about Vladimir Putin's intentions and what the Russian president might do next. Considering Putin has established an authoritarian, expansionist state, some western analysts, although not the mainstream, have even expressed fears that a belligerent Russia might, at some point, launch an attack against some NATO members, namely the Baltic states, which could re-



Russian President Vladimir Putin, shown here greeting members of his military, has established an "authoritarian, expansionist state."

sult in a confrontation with NATO. In the same vein, many NATO members have observed with apprehension Russia's resurgence, its recent "militarization" and the substantial increase in Russian defence investment resulting in significantly improved military capabilities.

Beyond the obvious disagreements

over the nature and causes of the war in Ukraine and the causes of the deterioration in relations between the west and Russia, the big picture of international affairs might be perceived, in some respects, similarly in Moscow and in western capitals. Official documents and speeches from Russian officials point to an increasingly unstable, threatening international environment; indeed, Russia also faces an "arc of crisis" around it.

Still, the two perceptions diverge in many fundamental respects. Russian officials, for instance, have voiced their concerns about western attempts to provoke a "colour revolution" (think Ukraine's Orange Revolution) in Russia and its neighbouring states. Moreover, rather than having confidence in an international system that could be working with the collaboration of all, it appears that the Russian leadership is implementing emergency measures based on the assumption that Russia is not ready to face these external and internal challenges. From its perspective, rather than "militarizing" aggressively, Russian officials are putting in place a defensive plan for an eventual war.

A "new containment" against Russia

Given the deep deterioration in Russia's relations with the majority of the west, there is much debate in Russia, and western countries, about the potential emergence of a Cold War 2.0 and a new confrontation between Russia and the west. This confrontation takes the shape of a "new containment," performed by

NATO member states, both by the alliance's successive enlargements of the past two decades and by the deployment of additional troops and weapons in new NATO member states.

There are often-stated and well-known accusations made by Russian officials denouncing the destabilizing role of the west, particularly the United States, in international affairs. Some depict a growing encirclement of Russia, emphasized by NATO enlargements and by U.S. deployments around the world. More specifically, Moscow accuses the west of causing an imbalance in Euro-Atlantic security through the expansion of exclusive organizations such as NATO (and the European Union). Yet another type of intrusive intervention by the west is perceived within Russia itself. Unless the new Trump administration completely stops playing that role, the U.S.-led west is seen by Moscow as interfering in the internal affairs of sovereign states, exacerbating instability through its financial and military support to rebel groups and mercenaries, which facilitates the appearance of colour revolutions in states that resist U.S. hegemony. Thus, senior figures in the Russian leadership, including Putin himself, have often pointed to a threat posed by those colour revolutions.

In this sense, the war in Ukraine is seen by Russian authorities as just one part of a wider crisis that has been evolving for some time.

Russia's actions and perceptions

Facing the combination of this perceived external arc of crisis and neo-containment, in addition to internal problems, the Russian government appears to be implementing emergency measures exploiting a besieged fortress narrative in order to mobilize popular opinion and to obtain high approval ratings among the Russian population. Of course, this patriotic mobilization is also aimed at sustaining high levels of popular support for Putin until the presidential elections scheduled for 2018. Some observers have suggested, though, that the peak of Putin's popularity has been reached and that it will be difficult for him to maintain this level of support, given dire economic trends that might provoke social protest against his leadership.

In Moscow's view, Russia finds itself under pressure from external and internal risks and threats. The Russian leadership is responding with a review of its strategic documentation and an attempt to consolidate Russian society and concentrate its

resources. Moscow's military campaign in Syria is, in many ways, the practical demonstration of Russia's new posture. It represents a continuation of the competition, even confrontation, with the west that erupted in Ukraine and that is sustained by Russia's attempts to rebuild a military capacity that is deployable across the world. Its new capacities allow Moscow to prevent what it considers as undesirable developments, such as a western-led campaign of regime change in Syria, and to defend Russian interests throughout the world. Indeed, the Syrian conflict is the first substantial demonstration of Russia's determination and its ability to conduct expeditionary warfare in a remote

2014 when it invaded Ukraine, a number of Moscow's concerns date back a decade or more, and are a consequence of western interventions in Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria.

Real Russian capacities

Despite the new Russian assertiveness described above, we have to put Moscow's capacities into perspective. Notwithstanding formidable military capabilities, Russia remains a weak major power. Without any doubt, a qualitative change is occurring in Russia's military and influential capacities, especially if we compare them with those it had at the time of its military intervention in Georgia in 2008. This being



Russian authorities see the war in Ukraine as just one part of a wider crisis that's been evolving for some time.

geographical region, made possible by the improvements to its air force and navy thanks to its modernization program of the past few years.

In short, there is an increasingly obvious abyss between the ways security is perceived by the west and by Russia. Although the assessment of some security threats is quite similar, Moscow draws different conclusions from its own view on the current international environment. Developments in Syria are the most recent example. Furthermore, it appears that although western observers tend to date Russia's threats and aggression back to

said, Russia's recent military actions also indicate that the country's relative weakness remains.

If we take the intervention in Ukraine as an example, it is clear that, from a geopolitical perspective, Russia needs Ukraine to act as a buffer to western powers. Before the ousting of president Viktor Yanukovich, a pro-Russian government was in power in Kiev. It was overthrown and replaced by a pro-western government. Putin's invasion of Ukraine and annexation of Crimea, where Russia already had forces deployed by treaty, was simply an at-

tempt to demonstrate decisive force, but turned out to be a half-defeat. True, with the conflict boiling, Ukraine cannot join the EU or NATO, but Putin's bid to foment an uprising across all of eastern Ukraine failed. Despite a much wider distribution of ethnic Russians in eastern Ukraine, the uprising only occurred in the Donbass region.

After the Ukrainian experience, Russia needed a military victory that would be seen by the world. Putin's intervention in Syria allowed him to save Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Even if the success in Syria is real, it took more than a year to recapture ISIS's fort of Aleppo. Now that Aleppo has fallen, Russia's new assertive

right-wing groups around the world.

Trump's victory: Opportunities for Russia

Over the past year, mounting tensions have exposed that not only was the abyss increasing between Russia and western powers, but that new cracks — some were there since the old-new Europe divide identified by former U.S. defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld — appeared in the western front against Russia. The Brexit issue revealed deep rifts in the European Union, and the establishment of Donald Trump's new administration makes a rupture appear in Washington's policy towards Russia. Elections across Europe in 2017 — France, Germany, Netherlands —

Russia's position to negotiate with the Trump administration over a range of issues.

Closer to Russia's borders, these changes will enable Russia to recover some of its influence on the former Soviet Union's territory. Given the state of the EU, Brussels will be hesitant to move forward with the admission of new members in the near future. As their prospect for integration with the EU and NATO is collapsing, countries such as Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia might re-evaluate their relationship with Russia. Some signs are already showing. In Moldova, a recent presidential vote has elected Igor Dodon, a candidate who has pledged to increase ties



During the Cold War, Russia dominated or heavily influenced strips of the Middle East. Today, it controls only parts of Syria.

power appears somewhat blemished. During the Cold War, Russia dominated or heavily influenced entire strips of the Middle East: Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Libya and Algeria. Today, Russia controls only parts of Syria.

This is not to say that Russia no longer constitutes a threat. If its leaders should lose their minds, they have a variety of nuclear weapons they could use. If the Russian leadership was willing to take extreme risks, it could attack the Baltics and thereby do what is needed to reunite NATO — or to dissolve it. But instead, Putin is increasingly supporting extreme

could further widen the cleavages dividing the Euro-Atlantic bloc and challenge the future of the EU.

For Moscow, the west's looming struggles in the coming year represent new opportunities. Russia has worked to exploit and, in some cases, influence the dynamics of the EU and the U.S to undermine western unity through propaganda campaigns and cyberattacks. Moscow will likely intensify these efforts in 2017, making the most of the discord within the west to achieve its goals, such as an end to the sanction regimes. Moreover, the relative success observed in Syria could improve

with Russia and re-evaluate the country's EU integration perspectives. Similarly, Ukraine and Georgia might adopt a more pragmatic approach towards Russia, increasing trade ties with the big brother and, to their great despair, compromising over the status of their breakaway territories.

Pierre Jolicœur is a professor of political science at the Royal Military College of Canada in Kingston, Ont. He's currently a Fulbright fellow at the Peace and War Center at Norwich University in Northfield, Vermont.

Trump and Putin: A troubling, high-stakes relationship

By Stephen M. Saideman



Perhaps the most dramatic change in foreign policy under U.S. President Donald Trump is the turnaround in attitudes towards Russia and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

While the presidency of Donald Trump has presented many sea changes in American foreign policy, perhaps the most dramatic is the turnaround in attitudes towards Russia and Vladimir Putin's leadership. Previous presidents have tried to reset the relationship with Russia, but Trump's admiration of Putin and his apparent willingness to side with Putin against American allies is beyond a reset — it is revolutionary. This relationship raises doubts about the future of NATO and stability in Europe. There has been much speculation about the sources of this attitude toward Russia, with no definitive answers.

The challenge in understanding Trump is that he often says things that contradict previous statements. However, when it

comes to Vladimir Putin, Trump has been quite consistent. He has repeatedly spoken positively about Putin, often in admiration of his strong leadership. Putin "has been a leader far more than our president [Obama] has been," he told the BBC. This is not new, as Trump complimented Putin in a 2011 book, *Time to Get Tough: Making America No. 1 Again*. Given that Putin has had opponents and journalists killed, given harbour to Edward Snowden, and, of course, attacked Ukraine, one would think that an American politician would not want to be too chummy with him. However, to Trump, these may be assets and not drawbacks.

There has been much speculation about why Trump has such fondness for Putin. Most famously, a widely circulated dos-

sier suggested Trump is being blackmailed due to indiscretions the Russians filmed in Moscow and perhaps elsewhere. One could focus on Trump's business interests in Russia. He may owe hundreds of millions of dollars to Russian banks. However, he also owes a great deal of money to Chinese banks, but is quite hostile towards China.

It might make more sense, therefore, to focus on Trump's admiration of authoritarian leaders. Putin is not the only autocrat that Trump has admired. About Kim Jong Un of North Korea, he told those at an Iowa campaign rally: "You have to give him credit... he goes, he takes over and he's the boss."

He has said similarly positive things about Libya's Muammar Gaddafi, Chinese

leaders and even Mussolini. So, one does not have to buy into theories of blackmail, but instead pay attention to Trump's words. He likes autocrats, respecting strength even as it is defined as repression and brutality. Perhaps the key to Trump's fondness for Russia these days is that Putin has played his cards well, pandering to Trump and his ego. Again, it is hard to tell what is driving this dynamic.

It is far easier to discern the effects of this relationship on international peace and stability. Simply put, Trump's relationship with Putin puts a great deal of the post-Second World War order at risk. Trump's stances on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO], the European Union and Ukraine all present grave threats. The risks in the years ahead are mighty high.

The future of NATO is at stake

For as long as NATO has existed and especially after the end of the Cold War, there has been much anxiety about its continued existence. Today, the alliance truly is in danger. Trump is very inconsistent on most things, but he has consistently been critical of the Atlantic alliance. While many American leaders have been critical of the burden-sharing, Trump is the first to suggest that countries that do not pay enough might not receive American backing in a crisis. Indeed, Trump's language is closer to a protection racketeer: It would be awful if something happened to you... if you do not pay up. This would be problematic in normal circumstances, but it is doubly dangerous now with Putin seeking any opportunity to break NATO. Since the illegal annexation of Crimea, NATO has struggled to provide stronger assurances to those most exposed — Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and, to a lesser degree, Poland. At the last summit, NATO countries agreed to send modest numbers of troops, a thousand to each of the four, to deter Russian aggression. The Obama administration deployed a brigade combat team early, just before Christmas, perhaps to make it harder for Trump to backtrack on Obama's promises.

However, it does not take much to undo these commitments. First, the American troops are rotated in and out, and there is nothing stopping Trump from cancelling the U.S.'s next rotation. Congress cannot force Trump to meet his alliance commitments. Second, despite efforts by Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis to reassure Europeans, in a crisis, the person deciding how the United States would vote at the North Atlantic Council, NATO's

decision-making body, is the president. So, the leaders of the Baltics are most uncertain these days about whether the United States would come to their defence. And that is a problem since Article V — an attack upon one is to be considered an attack upon all — is at the very heart of NATO. If Putin were to trigger a crisis and the United States does not act as it has promised for 70 years, the alliance might well fall apart.

One of the basic findings in the study of war is that wars occur when there is uncertainty about alliances. Sometimes, it is when a country feels overconfident about its friends and launches aggression. Often, it is when a country feels that its target will be alone, attacks, and then finds itself at war with an alliance. The Gulf War of 1990-91 started exactly this way. Maybe Putin will be surprised and find NATO to be more resolute than he expects, but that would be after the crisis is well along, perhaps leading to a real shooting war in Europe. The stakes are simply that high, with Trump creating too much uncertainty about what NATO might do.

The European Union as an alternative

If NATO were to fall apart, some might look to the European Union to replace the alliance as the provider of security in Europe. The problem is that Trump is abetting Putin's assault on the European Union as well. Ted Malloch, Trump's choice for U.S. ambassador to the European Union, said on a late-night talk show that he "had in a previous career a diplomatic post where I helped bring down the Soviet Union. So maybe there's another union that needs a little taming." Trump's hostility to the EU was clear as he rooted on Brexit, but appointing an ambassador who is this hostile to the organization is shocking Europeans. Again, this would not be so problematic if Putin were not also seeking to undermine the EU. By supporting far-right parties across Europe that are hostile to the EU, Putin is trying to make sure that Ukraine and Belarus and other countries in its self-appointed sphere of influence are denied the temptation of membership.

While the EU has had much difficulty facing a series of crises over the past few years, it has also been responsible for much prosperity as well as the fostering of democracy in what used to be the Warsaw Pact. Its demise would be detrimental to international commerce and stability in the Balkans where the promise of membership may have moderated the impact of nationalists in Serbia, Croatia and

Bosnia. While the EU is somewhat less vulnerable than NATO — the British are learning that exit is hard and costly — it still faces a rough road ahead due to the combined challenges posed by Trump and Putin.

Ukraine as a battlefield

Perhaps no country is more worse off after Trump's victory than Ukraine. While the United States does not have a commitment to defend Ukraine, at least not one as strong as the ties to NATO countries, its support of Ukraine in its war against Russia has been significant. Trump, however, has indicated that Crimea is a done deal, and it is time to put that dispute in the past. While social scientists like to say that correlation is not causation, it may not be a coincidence that Russian attacks in Ukraine recently escalated, shortly after Trump had his first presidential phone call with Vladimir Putin. Whether Trump gave Putin a green light or not, the appearance of one will create yet more uncertainty and fear in Ukraine and in the region.

Uncertain times

We really do not know what is motivating Trump, but his apparent willingness to drop sanctions against Russia without getting anything in return is suggestive. Trump seems to favour Putin and his preferences over those of the U.S.'s traditional allies and newer friends. Trump's hostility to multilateral co-operation threatens not just NATO and the European Union. Combined with the Putin admiration, it makes the threats to these institutions more severe.

The key problem is that the United States has spent 70 years trying to reduce uncertainty about its role in Europe and in the international order, and now Trump is willing to kiss all of that goodbye. Leaders will worry and try to anticipate, either by arming themselves or by appeasing their potential aggressor. Neither pathway leads to stability or prosperity. International relations are hard enough to conduct when the bedrock upon which much is based is firm, but when it is shaking, as Trump shakes U.S.'s commitment to the international order, countries will be facing tough choices, guessing about the likely behaviour of friends and foes, and probably making more than a few tragic mistakes.

Stephen M. Saideman is the Paterson Chair in International Affairs at Carleton University.

Repairing Canada-Russia relations

By Paul Robinson



Canadian diplomats posted to Russia — who work in the embassy pictured here — have been busier thanks to a thaw in relations after the 2015 election. But the appointment of a new foreign minister has some experts wondering if relations will revert back to pre-2015 ways.

Dealing with the Trump administration will no doubt be the top priority of Chrystia Freeland, Canada's newly minted foreign minister, but it was the question of her attitude towards the Russian Federation that generated the most headlines when she took the job in January.

Those hoping that Canadian-Russian relations might improve under the current government reacted very negatively. Her nomination was a “catastrophe,” professor Michael Carley of the Université de Montréal told *Sputnik News*. Similarly, Piotr Diutkiewicz, Carleton University's distinguished professor of Russian studies, told the CBC that dialogue with Russia under Freeland's leadership was hard to imagine. “I believe it will be a period of frozen

relations on both sides ... Ms. Freeland is heavily anti-Russian biased,” he said.

During Stephen Harper's final term in office, the Canadian government pursued a policy of cold-shouldering Russia. On the rare occasions when Canadian officials found themselves in the same room as their Russian counterparts, they used the opportunity to deliver lectures. Not surprisingly, constructive dialogue about matters of mutual interest proved to be impossible.

The Liberals' victory in 2015 brought hope that things would change. To some extent, this did indeed happen, as foreign minister Stéphane Dion carried through with a promise to engage with Russia. Mark Gwozdecky, Global Affairs Canada's assistant deputy minister for international

security and political affairs, visited Moscow in November last year and met Russian deputy foreign minister Sergei Ryabkov. Junior diplomats and military officers have been spotted at functions at the Russian embassy in Ottawa; and Global Affairs and the Russian embassy co-sponsored a conference at Carleton University on the subject of Canada-Russia; Dialogue and Co-operation in the Arctic.

In an interview for this article, Kirill Kalinin, spokesman for the Russian Embassy, said that prior to the 2015 general election, Russian diplomats “did not have contact with our colleagues in the Department of Foreign Affairs.” Now, however, “professional contacts have resumed” and “people have started to discuss issues.”

This constitutes a “big improvement,” Kalinin said.

However, the choice of Freeland as foreign minister has sparked fears that the brief détente might come to an end. Freeland is a long-standing critic of Russian President Vladimir Putin, and has often called for even stronger measures to be taken by western states against Russia. Before the 2015 election, for instance, she criticized the Harper government for being too soft and demanded that Russia be excluded from the SWIFT international banking system.

Despite this, it appears for now that Freeland is unlikely to halt the Canadian government’s policy of incremental, “controlled engagement.” In a statement for this article, Michael O’Shaughnessy, a spokesman for Global Affairs Canada, said, “Canada believes in the importance of engagement, dialogue and diplomacy; including with countries where we have profound disagreements.” According to O’Shaughnessy, Canada will continue to condemn Russia for its actions in Ukraine and will work with allies to maintain sanctions and economic pressure on Russia. But it will also “continue to engage with Russia for the purpose of advancing Canadian interests and expressing Canadian values on issues such as the Arctic and international security.”

In light of these statements, the fears that accompanied Freeland’s appointment may prove to be exaggerated. The current government seems to understand that its predecessor’s policy was counterproductive and that Canada needs to talk with Russia in order to solve common problems. That said, it is clear that engagement will not mean an end to sanctions and a return to relations as they were before the start of the Ukrainian crisis in 2014. More probably, the new normal will involve limited conversations between the two countries on matters of mutual interest, but within an overall relationship that remains quite tense.

This should come as no surprise. Russian-Canadian relations have almost never been particularly good. There was very little contact between the two nations prior to the First World War, and following the Revolution of 1917, Canadian governments looked upon the Soviet Union as a dangerous ideological opponent. In the mid-1920s, there were considerable tensions between Canada and the Soviet Union as a result of propaganda and currency forgery allegedly carried out in Canada by the Soviet trade delegation.

In 1931, Canada went so far as to im-



Chrystia Freeland's appointment as foreign minister in January was heralded as a “catastrophe” by one expert, but that may prove to be exaggerated, says writer Paul Robinson.

pose a trade embargo on Soviet imports. Only in 1942, in the midst of the Second World War, did Canada establish diplomatic relations with the USSR. After the end of the war, the Gouzenko spy case sent relations once again into a tailspin. Pierre Trudeau’s brief attempt to strengthen Canadian-Soviet ties in the 1970s did not achieve much, and by the early 1980s, the Mulroney government was back to casting the Soviet Union as a serious threat. Another rapprochement in the 1990s turned out to be equally short-lived.



Canada has said it will continue to engage Russia for the purpose of advancing Canadian values on such issues as the Arctic.

And yet, the two countries’ interests coincide far more than they conflict. As neighbours in the Arctic, Canada and Russia share concerns about issues of resource development, environmental protection and the delineation of international borders. They also have common interests in ensuring a stable international order and countering threats to security such as terrorism and weapons proliferation.

Putin has repeatedly made it clear that a strong Russia depends upon a strong economy, which in turn depends upon international stability and Russia’s integration into global institutions. Supporting a stable international order is thus as much in Russia’s interests as it is in Canada’s. The differences that exist between the two countries, for instance on the subject of Ukraine, pale in significance when compared to these larger mutual goals.

Both sides are, of course, responsible for the failure to exploit their common interests to build a good relationship. That said, in recent years it has been Canada that has taken the initiative in sanctioning Russia, sidelining Russia and denouncing Russia — not vice-versa. There remains a strong sense that Russia is a hostile and aggressive power that needs to be treated as such. There are a number of explanations for this.

First, Canadian attitudes towards Russia

must be understood in the context of decades of Russophobic thinking. Stereotypes of Russia as authoritarian and imperialistic exert a powerful influence on how Canadian political elites view that country. Sensible, dispassionate analysis of Russian politics is almost entirely lacking. Russian foreign and domestic policies are instead described in the darkest tones, with newspaper headlines such as “Putin’s secret plan to destroy the west.” Whatever one thinks of Russian policy, these exaggerate the supposed threat Russia poses to Canadian interests while generating demands for a hostile response.

Second, although some Canadian companies (especially in the mining sector) have invested heavily in the Russian

lobby favouring good relations with Russia. Canadian governments can pontificate about the evils of Russia without risking a political backlash or serious damage to the economy. Russia thus provides a suitable target for politicians wanting to show how tough they are.

Third, Canada’s desire to be a good ally has led it to unquestioningly follow the lead of other NATO members. Instead of questioning the wisdom of measures such as NATO expansion, European missile defence and the deployment of additional NATO troops in Eastern Europe, Canada has gone along enthusiastically, forgetting that alliances are meant to serve our interests, not to be ends in themselves.

Fourth, there are political forces within

are purely external and can be solved by getting foreign countries to exert pressure on Russia. This has distracted attention from the important internal causes of the conflict and has prevented action from being taken to address those causes.

What can Canada do?

Russians’ expectations are fairly modest. While they would like to see an end to sanctions, they are realistic enough not to expect this in the short term. Instead, according to Kalinin, what they seek is the “normalization of ties,” which he says involves “honest dialogue” and means that Russia’s national interests are taken into consideration. It should not be too difficult for Canada to satisfy this desire, as Canada appears to recognize that there are areas in which constructive dialogue with Russia is possible, most notably the Arctic, where there are still unresolved issues, such as overlapping territorial claims. With this in mind, the most important thing that the Canadian government should do is continue to expand the policy of engagement begun under Dion. Canada should also ensure engagement involves real dialogue rather than merely lectures to the Russians. Russians do not think Canada has the moral right to lecture them, and are offended, not persuaded, when it does.

Next, although Russians are not expecting great changes, they do want consistency. Engaging Russia on the one hand, while criticizing it and strengthening sanctions against it on the other, is not likely to generate a positive response.

Improvements in inter-governmental relations are not likely to be long-lasting if they do not rest upon a strong base of Russian-Canadian ties at a lower level. Not only have such ties always been somewhat weak, they have become even weaker in recent years. Long-term progress requires an effort by Canadians in a variety of professions — businesspeople, academics, politicians, public servants and others — to revitalize networks with their Russian counterparts. These ties can become the foundation of a future relationship based on mutual understanding.

The government of Canada and ordinary Canadians have a role to play in improving relations between the two largest countries in the world. If they take the opportunity, Canada can only benefit.

Paul Robinson is a professor of public and international affairs in the faculty of social sciences at the University of Ottawa.



Russian soldiers in Ukraine: The differences that exist between Russia and Canada, such as those involving the war in Ukraine, writes professor Paul Robinson, pale in significance when compared to their larger mutual goals.

Federation, overall, Canada does very little trade with Russia. Canadian exports to Russia amount to less than \$1 billion a year, a tiny amount compared to the \$20 billion a year exported to China, and the \$350 billion exported to the United States. Canada-Russia trade rose in the 1990s, but began declining after 2010, and has fallen considerably since the start of the Ukrainian crisis. Notwithstanding the existence of the Canada Eurasia Russia Business Association, Canada lacks a strong business

Canada that favour a tense relationship with Russia. The most prominent of these is the Ukrainian lobby, although the extent of its political influence is hard to estimate. The Harper government’s support for the Maidan Revolution, a political upheaval that has brought Ukraine nothing but woe, was remarkably irresponsible. Since then, by focusing relentlessly on Russian aggression as the cause of the war in Donbass, the Canadian government has encouraged a belief in Kiev that its problems

China and Russia: It's complicated

By Jeremy Paltiel

With the advent of Donald Trump and the rise of populism in much of the western world, many fear we have descended into a new age of authoritarianism in which Vladimir Putin and China's Xi Jinping set the tone for international politics. While China and Russia have enjoyed close relations in recent years, easily dismissing the foreign policies of these two countries obscures more than it clarifies.

Though these two leaders deploy harsh repression against civil society critics and are determined to crush the first hint of any "colour" revolutions, their world outlooks are far from congruent and the bilateral relationship between their two states generates considerable friction below the surface protestations of friendship and good neighbourliness within a "strategic partnership." Both sides acknowledge each other as their first strategic partners; nonetheless, they are far from allies.

The two countries and their leaders are joined in deep suspicion and active rejection of a global liberal hegemony led by the U.S. and supported by Europe and the U.S.'s allies. But they do not share a single vision of global governance, nor do they bring to global governance, the same toolkit with which to influence global outcomes.

China is the stronger economic power whose strength is derived largely from the benefits of globalization. It is a strong supporter of free trade and the multi-lateral trading order, and it is willing to use considerable economic and financial resources to support it. Just recently, China's Xi travelled to the Davos Forum in Switzerland to reaffirm his unshakeable support for open trade and globalization, warning against "closing oneself off in a dark room."

Russia's comparative advantage lies overwhelmingly with oil and gas, with strength in other natural resources. This is the basis of considerable trade complementarity that masks an uncomfortable asymmetry in the bilateral relationship. Russia leans on the legacy of Soviet Cold War militarization to achieve goals along its periphery, but also further afield, in the Middle East. China has been steadily and cautiously building its military forces, but tends to shy away from direct mili-

tary confrontation. It prefers to hide its strength behind a screen of pawns rather than sacrificing them in military adventures. Whereas Putin looks to asymmetrical hybrid conflicts to gain tactical advantage, China chooses to steadily build up its comprehensive national strength. It looks to dominate in the long term, rather than scramble for temporary advantage. For that reason, the two countries hold contrasting views over the need for global stability. China craves peace and development as the backdrop for its peaceful rise. Putin moves from accommodation to



China and Russia are joined in their deep suspicion and active rejection of a global liberal hegemony led by the U.S. and supported by allies.

confrontation as tactical advantages arise. China does not need to win points so long as it gradually gains strategic ground.

Basic complementarities

As the world's largest oil importer, China leans on Russia to support its energy security. China imports most of its oil from the Middle East, with Saudi Arabia its largest supplier. That oil must travel to China by sea, through the Indian Ocean and the Strait of Malacca before reaching the South China Sea. Much of this route is patrolled by the U.S. navy, leaving China vulnerable to an oil cutoff should relations with the U.S. deteriorate. Russia supplies China with oil from Siberia, which flows directly overland by pipeline into China's northeast, where China's largest conven-

tional domestic reserves are dwindling and where much of China's petrochemical industry is housed. But Russia's reserves in eastern Siberia are limited and it cannot supply more than a fraction of China's needs. Furthermore, Putin has been wary of relying on China as a sole customer with the leverage China gains over pricing.

Putin has flirted time and again with Japan and Korea as economic partners for Siberian resources. Russia also supplies China with natural gas along the same route. Again, these supplies are not sufficient to meet China's demand, and Russia has reached another contract to supply China in the west, involving a spur from Russia's West Siberian fields into China's northwestern Xinjiang territory. This is relatively far from China's major centres of demand along the coast, and supplies into Xinjiang compete with abundant gas, supplied from the former Soviet Republic of Turkmenistan, and which travels through Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan to China.

Western Siberian gas also flows west to Europe and the Chinese, given the Turkmen alternative, have been able to negotiate a price lower than that paid by Europe once Russia was hit by European sanctions. Similarly, China is a major investor in oil from Kazakhstan, which likewise enters China by pipeline to Xinjiang. The Russians are keenly aware that friendship with China comes without special favours. At the same time, the economic inroads China has made in Russia's backyard, in former Soviet Central Asia, are further cause for wariness.

Russia wary of China's reverse-engineering

China makes a point of not poking the bear in that region, but nonetheless, Central Asia's authoritarian and secular post-Soviet leaders are eager for whatever economic benefits they can negotiate with the Chinese. China not only provides economic assistance through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, it has also announced a major initiative around the New Silk Road or One Belt-One Road, which is aimed at boosting infrastructure and connectivity from East Asia across the Eurasian continent.

That means the Russian-sponsored customs union, the Eurasian Union, is less

enthusiastically embraced than it might be otherwise, and the post-Soviet Central Asian “stans” have been eager to embrace the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, originally designed to secure the region’s post-Soviet borders, as an organization promoting economic development under the sponsorship of China. The One Belt- One Road (OBOR) or New Silk Road initiative promoted by Xi has further enhanced the prospects of economic co-operation with China to the relative detriment of Moscow’s patronage in the region.

In the Middle East, while China and Russia have together vetoed UN resolutions condemning Syria, they are not entirely aligned. China has cultivated good ties with the Saudi monarchy, its largest supplier of oil. Russia’s patronage of Syria puts it alongside Iran in the great religious schism of Islam.

One area of significant, but eroding, complementarity is the area of high technology weapons supplies and the supply of weapons technology. Following the imposition of weapons embargoes on China after June 1989, in the waning days of the Soviet Union, Russia became a major support for the modernization of the People’s Liberation air force and navy. That support continued under president Boris Yeltsin and an independent Russia. This included complete fighter aircraft, submarines, destroyers and ancillary weapons systems.

However, Russia became increasingly wary of Chinese efforts to reverse-engineer Soviet weaponry and pirate Russian intellectual property. China’s J-11 and J-15 aircraft are near-clones of the Sukhoi Su-27 and Sukhoi Su-33s sold to China. Intellectual property became the major sticking point in negotiations to supply Sukhoi Su-35s as an interim fifth-generation fighter aircraft. Today, China is emerging as a major weapons innovator on its own, just as it earlier perfected expertise in rocketry. Russia still maintains a lead in advanced jet engines on which China relies for some of its newest aircraft, but Russians have few illusions that they can maintain exports into the future.

China-U.S. trade dwarfs China-Russia trade
Nuclear energy is another area of co-operation. Russia has supplied China with two reactors and plans have now been made for another two. Again, Chinese reliance on Russian technology is likely to decline over time, as China strengthens technical co-operation with France’s Areva and comes up with its own indigenous designs.

So, while Sino-Russian trade has grown almost 18 per cent per annum in recent years, total trade is still less than \$100 billion US, with Russia taking only about two per cent of Chinese exports. While Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev pledged to more than double the Russia-China trade volume to \$200 billion by 2020, even this aspirational goal would represent less than 10 per cent of China’s total trade. Under any scenario, Sino-U.S. trade would dwarf trade with Russia. There is no prospect under which mutual trade could displace or replace respective trade with Europe or the U.S.

China actively supports the UN and UN peacekeeping, forges ahead in bilat-

CHINA HAS ITS SIGHTS ON A STABLE GLOBAL ORDER WITH ITSELF AT ITS CENTRE. RUSSIA STRIVES TO RETAIN A ROLE AS A GREAT POWER THROUGH DISRUPTION.

eral and regional multilateral free-trade agreements, sponsors multilateral economic development banks, including the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the BRICS New Development Bank (where Russia is a joint sponsor). China has its sights on a stable global order with itself at its centre. Russia strives to retain a role as a great power through disruption.

It is telling that while Russia openly celebrated the election of Trump, China’s reaction was muted, even sombre. The Chinese media did not cover the inauguration live. Not only was Trump’s challenge to China clear in his inauguration speech, China did not welcome either the prospect of confrontation or the prospect of a new Trump-Putin axis. Xi chose to have himself photographed with Ukraine’s President Petro Poroshenko while attending the annual gathering at Davos. This was a less than subtle message that Russia and China’s interests are not congruent.

In the transactional world that Trump has summoned up, it will take some time before future alignments settle down. China has long relished a warm relationship with Germany and German Chancellor Angela Merkel that is no less cherished than its relationship with Russia. It would be foolish and patently wrong to imagine a Russia-China alignment, still less an alliance, aimed at the west. Chinese dip-

lomats and senior officials have explicitly ruled out such a development.

Limited Russia-China partnership

Ironically, the election of Trump has removed one of the major planks of China’s alignment with Russia. China has, with Russia, feared a hegemony of liberal values that would encourage civil society activists that threaten “colour revolutions.” By rejecting this kind of liberal interventionism himself, Trump removed one of the major factors underlining the cosiness between Beijing and Moscow. Furthermore, for strategic reasons and because of the environmental burden, China needs to wean itself from a fossil fuel-fed economy that Putin and Trump would like to see extended into the indefinite future.

Thus, while the relationship between China and Russia is more than the “axis of convenience” — as the British academic Bobo Lo termed it — it is neither as intimate as some fear. Xi has met with Putin more often than with any other world leader, well over a dozen times since taking office in 2013, but limited economic complementarity and deep-seated suspicions bedevil the relationship. Many Russians are still fearful that China has designs on Russia’s sparsely populated Far East, most of it seized from China by 19th-Century “unequal” treaties. Chinese businesses and businessmen have regularly faced racially motivated harassment in major Russian cities and, in some cases, have had their goods confiscated. Still, polling shows Chinese and Russians maintaining favourable views of each other in international relations and there is a lively exchange of tourism, with Russian students making up one of the largest contingents of foreign students in China. This is a solid relationship, but not a feared anti-western bloc. Putin faces Xi as a self-professed Christian European, while Xi is an avowed Communist atheist who believes in Asia for the Asians.

Where Russia noisily persecutes LGBT activities, China quietly tolerates depoliticized LGBT behaviour.

China and Russia may see eye to eye on liberalism and opposition to Islamic fundamentalism, but their hearts do not beat in unison. Russia and China may trade and even conduct yearly joint military exercises, but as the Chinese saying goes, “same bed, different dreams.”

Jeremy Paltiel is professor of political science at Carleton University, specializing in Chinese politics and the politics of East Asia.

Financial crises; no lessons learned

By Mikhail Zhrebtsov

In many countries, economic crises often result in political transformations. In some instances, they lead to cabinet shuffles or even changes of government. They can also give rise to substantial changes in the economic course of a country, as policy priorities shift to counter negative economic trends. Active and effective actions by governments are often crucial in this context. While true for many countries, Russia seems to be the exception in this case.

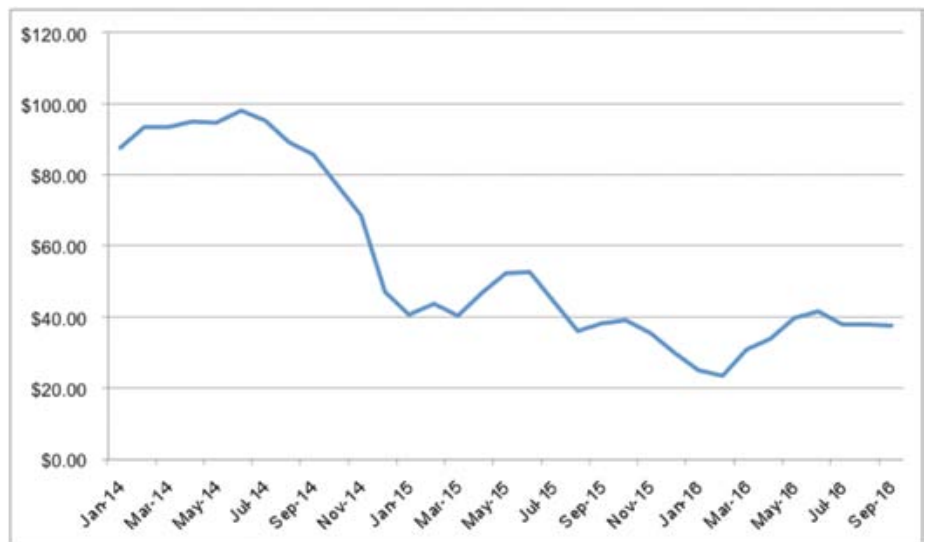
In 2014, the Russian economy fell into a full-scale crisis for a second time in 10 years. The first crisis was a result of the global financial meltdown of 2008-2010 and demonstrated the dependence of Russia's economy on high hydrocarbon prices.

The factors that led to the second crisis were twofold. On the one hand, it was a decline of more than two thirds in the price of oil from slightly more than \$100 per barrel in March 2014 to as low as \$30 in February 2016. On the other hand, it was sanctions, limiting and prohibiting some international economic activities. They were imposed on certain Russian public figures and, more important, state-affiliated economic enterprises in response to the Russian annexation of Crimea in early 2014.

Many OECD countries, including the U.S., Canada, and, more important, the European Union member states, imposed restrictions, which, for example, prohibited banks and financial institutions mentioned in the ban from applying for credit in these countries' banks or borrowing money by means of issuing bonds and other securities on international markets. In addition, these countries also prohibited companies residing on their own territory from investing in projects controlled by Russian companies. But perhaps the larger impact on the dynamics of the Russian economy in the post-annexation period came from the counter sanctions that the Russian government imposed against certain economic sectors and industries of western, predominantly European, countries.

Russian counter sanctions hallmarked

Monthly average crude oil prices.



DATA PROVIDED BY [HTTP://INFLATIONDATA.COM/INFLATION/INFLATION_RATE/HISTORICAL_OIL_PRICES_TABLE.ASP](http://inflationdata.com/inflation/inflation_rate/historical_oil_prices_table.asp)

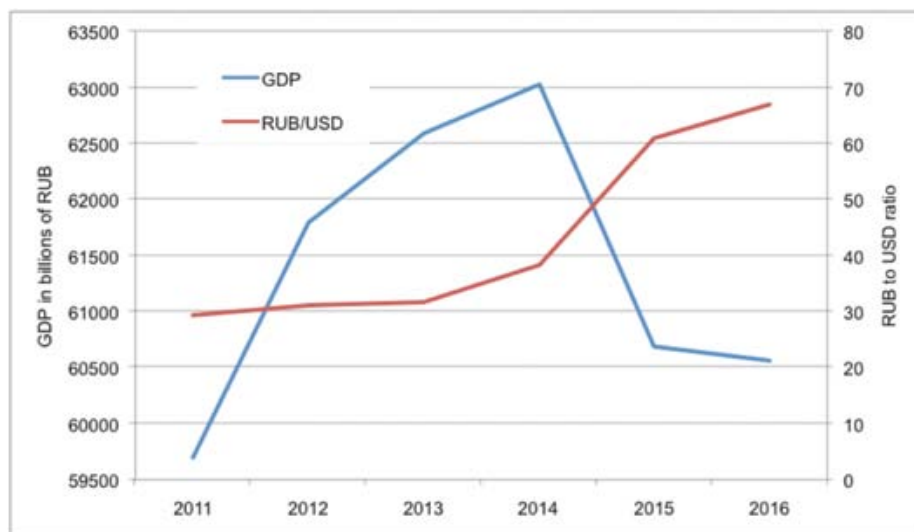
the asymmetrical response to anti-Russian policies. Officially, they were introduced in order to protect domestic producers from unfair competition imposed by the west through its sanctions. The most significant part of these counter sanctions was a large-scale ban on importing various food products, including meat, fish, dairy products and vegetables from Europe. While some may treat this as a purely political move by a Russian ruling elite upset at the reactions of other world leaders, others regard this as an opportunity for Russia to finally implement long-term plans to modernize, diversify and re-industrialize its national economy.

Cumulatively, these actions have had a somewhat significant impact on the Russian economy. The steady recovery from the global financial crisis, fuelled by skyrocketing oil prices, was abruptly halted, predominantly by the tectonic shifts in global energy markets. Numerous factors, including innovative excavation methods, the growth of alternative and renewable energy sectors, especially in Europe, Russia's main market for hydrocarbons, as well as geopolitical factors, such as the

removal of the embargo on Iranian oil, contributed to the significant decline in oil prices. Revenues from the energy sector, however, are an important component in the income structure of the Russian budget. To compensate for such a loss, the government had two main options: It could either propose a budget sequestration and thus reduce public expenses, or, alternatively, it could allow the national currency to decline.

The first neo-conservative approach was fraught with the risk of increasing social tension. Other options, which included borrowing on global financial markets or using internal reserves were not feasible under the given circumstances. On the one hand, global financial markets were restricted due to sanctions; on the other hand, attempts to rely on internal reserves proved ineffective during the previous crisis. Hence, the Russian Central Bank chose to abolish the soft target of the ruble to the U.S. dollar and the euro in late 2014. Whether intentionally or not, by liberating the exchange rate, the Central Bank and the government of Russia were able to compensate for the decline of global oil prices and maintain high levels

GDP of Russia in rubles (RUB) (in constant prices of 2011) vs annual average RUB/USD rate



Oil prices relevant to the ruble rate

Date	Brent Price (USD)	RUB:USD (RUB)	Brent Price (RUB)	Decline of price in USD	Decline of price in RUB
2014-03-04	\$ 109.17	36.38	3,971.43	-- %	-- %
2015-03-04	\$ 59.18	62.36	3,690.75	54%	93%
2016-03-04	\$ 37.61	73.82	2,776.53	34%	70%
2017-02-10	\$ 56.70	58.22	3,301.25	52%	83%

of budget revenues in rubles.

Since mid-2014, the Russian ruble has lost almost half its value in comparison to the U.S. dollar. The decision of the Central Bank, however, had an immediate impact on ordinary Russians. In a resource-oriented economy, the welfare of its citizens is highly dependent on the purchasing power of the national currency. With the rapid deterioration of the ruble's value, inflation and consumer prices increased substantially, not only on imported products, but also on domestically produced goods. In 2014 and 2015, the inflation rate doubled and reached an annual maximum of 12.9 per cent in 2015.

The food embargo only negatively contributed to the situation, artificially decreasing the quantity of available goods, as plans for substituting the nomenclature of imported items with domestically produced ones did not quickly come to fruition. As a result, retail prices for the majority of essential food products grew by 11-24 per cent annually in 2014 and 2015. While the trend has decreased for 2016, it has not reversed.

The situation also affected the anxiety and societal expectations of ordinary citizens. The Levana-Centre, an independent public opinion research institute, indicated these changes in its regular reports. Thus, by 2016, almost a third of the entire population had spoken on the significant impact of the economic crisis. Indeed, more than two thirds admitted that there is a crisis and expect it will last longer than the previous one. As people cut their personal and family budgets, they also refuse en masse to commit to large and long-term purchases. For example, 2016 was the fourth consecutive year of declines facing the national automobile market. Starting in 2013, sales dropped five per cent in comparison to the previous year, declining 10.4 per cent in 2014. They plummeted in 2015 by 35.7 per cent and fell 11 per cent in 2016. Cumulatively, this represents a 51.3 -per-cent decline in the automobile market between 2014 and 2016.

At the same time, the ruling political elite does not share the pessimistic views on the Russian economy that are reflected in public opinion polls. Instead, they see

the current global trends and the counter sanctions as an opportunity to finally fulfil the long-awaited policies aimed at accelerating industrial growth, import substitution, and the increase of food security. The very same ideas hovered in the air in 2008, when the global financial crisis began. Modernization of the national economy was the main slogan of the Dmitry Medvedev presidency (2008-12). The idea was to focus on certain innovative and high-tech industrial spheres and secure governmental budgetary support in order to ensure the flow of investment into these sectors. Yet the plans were a fiasco. The innovation fund, known as Skolkovo and also referred to as the Russian Silicon Valley, failed to achieve substantial progress, revealing many cases of misappropriation of budgetary funds.

Responding to the challenges that emerged in 2014, the Russian government focused on import substitution, particularly emphasizing growth in the agricultural sector, the perennial stumbling block of all economic reforms. In some areas, the lack of international competition and the development of certain consumer niches spurred domestic production. In nominal indicators, growth was even detected in the majority of agricultural spheres, especially livestock, dairy and crops. However, in almost all other sectors, productivity indices (relative to the previous year) have declined since 2014, magnified by the growing deterioration of basic production assets.

The fact that the Kremlin's plan for import substitution does not work as expected could be illustrated through the cash-flow dynamics of the National Reserve Fund. Launched in 2004 as the Stabilization Fund against the backdrop of rising oil prices, it was designed to compensate the deficit of the national budget should oil prices go down. As the economic situation has deteriorated, use of the fund has grown, reducing it considerably to approximately one per cent of GDP today.

Reflecting on the conditions of the Russian economy and the government's attempts to manage the crisis, many expressed quite pessimistic views. A majority of respondents to a PriceWaterhouseCoopers Russia study pointed out negative trends in the Russian economy, specifically the rise in prices for purchased materials (77 per cent), decline in demand (62 per cent), and the inability to finance new projects (53 per cent).

Overall, Russian business draws a pessimistic picture of the consequences of the

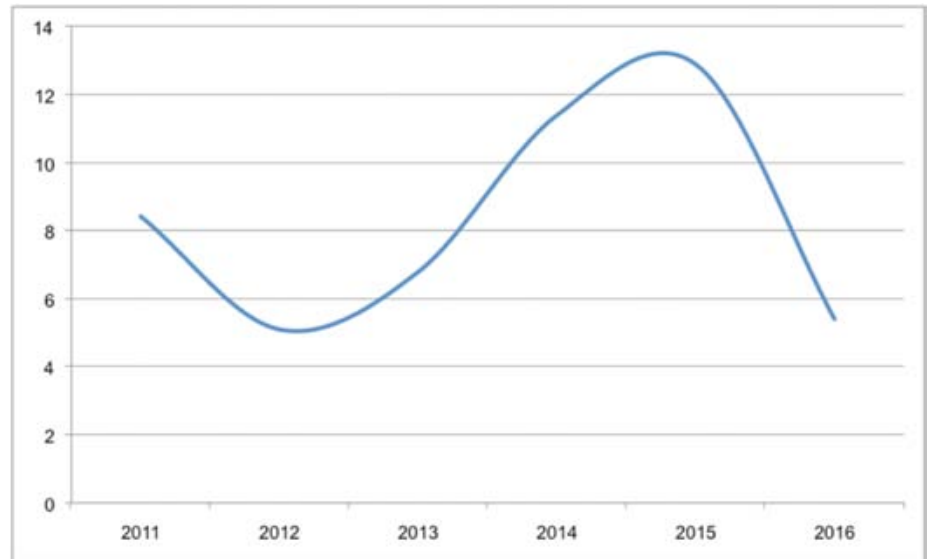
crisis for the national economy. First, there are low expectations from import substitution to spur economic growth. In addition to this, they expect that the two almost consecutive crises will change the habits and behaviour of consumers from spending to saving.

Finally, the introduction of sanctions and the subsequent reaction of the Kremlin divided academics into two separate and seemingly irreconcilable camps. The liberal opposition camp described future development in terms of “the battle between the fridge and the TV set.” They argue that the continuous deterioration of economic conditions would inevitably and negatively affect the welfare of ordinary citizens and, subsequently, result in the growth of discontent that would shake the stability of Putin’s political regime. Needless to say, they see Russia’s development in the context of the conventional global paradigm, linking growth and prosperity of the country to its inclusion in the global market through multiple international co-operation agreements and trade unions. Conventional logic implies that international competition, combined with proper infrastructural reforms would foster diversification and ensure the growth of the national economy. Any deviation from such a path is baneful.

Sergei Guriev, the chief economist of the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development and the former president of the Russian Economic School, an independent Moscow-based university, argues that while sanctions deteriorate the economic conditions in Russia, the major cause has been declining oil and other commodity prices and Russia’s dependence on them. This opinion was echoed by another famous Russian economist and current University of Chicago professor, Konstantin Sonin. He argues, in his paper “Two Crises: 2014 and 1991” that the current measures of the government will not be successful without contract law, independent courts, non-corrupt police, accountable government and free media.

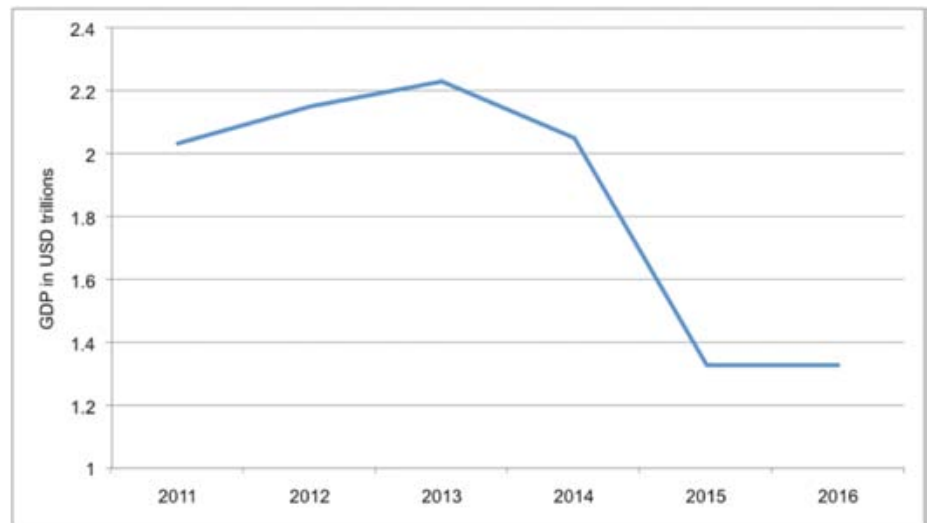
Such views have been opposed by an impressive group of economists, led by Sergey Glaziev, the presidential adviser for economic affairs. They criticize and accuse the government and the Central Bank of implementing liberal monetary policies that result in the freefall of the national currency and subsequent freeze of cash flow in real sectors. They tend to disregard the crucial importance of political institutional factors, emphasized by their opponents from the liberal economic camp,

Annual inflation (consumer prices) rates in Russia (per cent to the previous year)



THE DATA PROVIDED BY THE ROSSTAT – RUSSIAN STATISTICAL AGENCY.

Cumulative cash flow dynamics of the Russian Reserve Fund.



DATA PROVIDED BY THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION.

focusing solely on economic indicators. They came up with a rather paradoxical hypothesis that the combination of such factors as the economic sanctions, fall in oil prices, the outflow of capital and devaluation of the ruble may lead to the fact that, according to Russian economist Vladimir Popov, “Russia may finally see an acceleration of growth.”

As often occurs, the actual developments disproved the forecasts of both camps. The truth appeared somewhere in between the two opposing views. The reality showed that the crisis didn’t prompt political changes and elite rotation, nor did the government measures spur economic growth. Volatility of global political

processes and the genuine discontent of most of the Russian people about the politics of western countries towards Russia create fertile soil for growing the seeds of propaganda fast enough and maintaining high levels of personal support for the political leaders, especially President Vladimir Putin. However, by focusing on the foreign policy agenda, the Russian leadership ignores the need for structural reforms, especially anti-corruption measures, which are crucial to assure steady economic growth.

Mikhail Zherebtsov is a post-doctoral fellow at Carleton University’s Institute of European, Russian and Eurasian Studies.



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The learning curve

A good education system is at the core of a country's success. We list the leaders in science, math and reading, according to a study by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.

By Wolfgang Depner

Every year since 2000, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has tested school children's aptitudes around the world and compressed the results into a ranking, or score. In certain circles, the much-anticipated release of these rankings generates a wide range of emotions among education experts, reactions *The Economist* likened to the quadrennial World Cup of soccer.

The Programme for International Student Assessment — known globally by its acronym PISA — is the tool with which the OECD measures academic achievements of OECD and non-OECD countries by testing 15-year-old students in three categories: science, mathematics and reading. PISA testing takes place every three years. Each round focuses on one of three categories, without neglecting the others. In 2015, for example, PISA focused on science, and 540,000 students from 72 countries participated.

Education policy-makers and experts from around the world pay attention to PISA and its competitor, Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). These scores are, for better or worse, deeply influential. Countries with strong PISA scores are likely to flaunt them. Those with mediocre or low scores are likely to fret over them. Germany, for example, experienced nothing less than a PISA shock when its 2000 scores showed its fragmented education system was lacklustre compared to its OECD competitors. Germany, in turn, responded by revising its education policies. Today, it finds itself near the Top 10.

PISA, in other words, can point out deficiencies that policy-makers can then remedy — or so supporters say. For critics, the German example actually highlights precisely what is wrong with PISA. According to this critical perspective, PISA focuses on the narrow perspective that education serves the sole purpose of training youth for the workforce. Critics of PISA

also contend that its narrow quantitative methodology has fuelled an obsession with standardized testing that threatens to reduce the entire educational experience to a deadening cycle of test taking and test preparation at the expense of less measurable or even immeasurable educational objectives, such as citizenship.

The list of PISA detractors is long and illustrious. The most public expression of their opposition came in May 2014 when the *Guardian* published a letter of opposition signed by more than 100 education scholars from around the world.

Thousands of other scholars have since joined them in decrying the "PISA regime" that stresses out students and teachers while violating "widely accepted principles of good educational and democratic practices." As the letter noted, no "reform of any consequence should be based on a single narrow measure of equality" and "no reform of any consequences should ignore the important role of non-educational factors among which a nation's socio-

economic quality should be paramount.” These concerns are not without merit and should not be ignored. This said, PISA scores enjoy some measure of legitimacy and this list recognizes the countries whose participating 15-year-olds secured the highest science scores, in line with PISA’s focus on scientific literacy.

What does this list show? Three things stand out. First, Asian countries dominate. Second, most of the countries on this list show some commitment to ensuring socio-economic equality. Third, education systems are deeply embedded in the social fabric and history of any country. This, of course, means countries cannot simply copy from each other, but must instead develop their own policies.

1. Singapore: 556

(No. 1 in math, No. 1 in reading)

To appreciate the scientific literacy of students in Singapore, consider the following: The OECD average score is 490. Scoring 30 points above that average represents an additional year of education. By this measure, students in Singapore are approximately two years ahead of their American peers, who scored 496. And it is not just in science. Singapore students also dominate math and reading.

What accounts for Singapore’s success? Several points stand out. First, Singapore underscores the theory that the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers and educational leaders, as the OECD said in 2012. This means, among other things, that superior school systems have more stringent selection mechanisms for future teachers than inferior school systems. As McKinsey & Co. wrote in a 2007 report, superior systems recognize a “bad selection decision can result in up to 40 years of bad teaching.” Accordingly, Singapore has developed a singular statewide selection process for all applicants to the National Institute of Education (NIE), an autonomous institute at Nanyang Technological University, the only school that trains future teachers. This selection process consists of several stages that stress the following criteria, according to McKinsey & Co.: academic achievement, communication and motivation for teaching.

Singapore limits recruitment of future teachers to the top one third of each graduating cohort. A two-stage selection process follows. Candidates are first short-listed according to university admission standards. Those who pass this screening then undergo interviews to determine whether they possess the necessary ap-



Singapore scored 63 points above the global average, making its students about two years ahead of their American peers.

titude, attitude and personality to be effective teachers. Candidates must then complete a training stint that further assesses their suitability prior to their initial training. Those who fail to complete it must either withdraw or extend their stint for further assessment.

Sing Kong Lee, vice-president of Nanyang Technological University, told the BBC that this training system ensures quality control and creates a consistent approach. Singapore also expects teachers to continue their professional development throughout their career. As the OECD says, teachers are the “pillars” of Singapore’s education system. But if Singapore asks a lot of its teachers, it also rewards teaching with corresponding prestige and pay. According to a 2014 paper by Lim Kam Ming of the NIE, Singapore’s ministry of education regularly reviews the salaries for teachers to ensure that their remuneration remains competitive with other professional salaries. The median starting gross salary for teachers is 41,976 Singapore dollars, a figure comparable to the median starting gross salary for aerospace engineers (42,000) and accountants (40,200).

2. Japan: 538

(No. 2 in science, No. 5 in math)

Not all that glitters is gold. This aphorism might well apply to Japan’s education system. In 2016, Japan confirmed its perennial place near the top of the PISA rankings, finishing second in science and fifth in math among 72 countries or regions. *The Japan Times* says this ranking likely reflects the method of delivering math education.

Japanese teachers cover fewer topics, but in more depth than teachers in countries with lower scores. Teachers also rely on *jugyokenkyu*, a term that describes a process during which teachers first plan their lessons. They then deliver them to audiences composed of students and other teachers, while at least one university observer assesses the performances of the teachers, who then receive feedback. But if Japanese teachers receive room to reflect on their own performance, their students face immense pressure to perform. Students and their parents expend much energy and expense to meet the high academic standards that Japanese society sets.

Starting as early as elementary school, students start to attend Juku private

schools outside of regular school time to prepare themselves for the entrance examinations into the country's top public universities. Attending the latter is considered by many as a stepping stone into the leading segment of Japanese society. To this end, parents pay tidy sums each month to give their progeny an added advantage against the competition.



Japanese teachers cover fewer topics, but in more depth than teachers in countries with lower scores than Japan.

In fact, unceasing competition defines the educational experience of Japanese students from an early age, a condition that has caused personal and public harm.

The intensity of the Japanese school system robs students of the social freedoms their western peers take for granted. Laments about the lack of opportunities for students to release their pent-up frustrations through sports or other channels are growing and the conformist culture of Japanese schools encourages bullying.

Worse, parents regularly contribute to these conditions. Disputes between parents and their children over school frequently contribute to depression and suicides among school-aged children. According to research published by the *Wilson Quarterly* in 2015, one in 12 Japanese elementary school-aged children and one in four junior high school students suffers from clinical depression. According to this same research, the opening day of school (usually Sept. 1) is also the day when Japanese children are most likely to kill themselves. Sometimes it is parents themselves

who will wield the weapon. In August 2016, a 48-year-old Japanese man killed his 12-year-old son with a kitchen knife after the boy failed to study for an entrance exam into a leading private school.

3. Estonia: 534

(No. 3 in science, No. 6 in reading)

Almost three decades after the fall of the Iron Curtain, most of the former Soviet Bloc countries still lag behind the economic and social standards of western Europe. In fact, by some political measures, some parts of the region (Hungary, Poland) have regressed and Russia has emerged as an authoritarian inspiration around the world.

So the region as a whole is not exactly

a source of best practices in education. Exceptions, however, include the three Baltic states, of which the smallest, Estonia, with a population of about 1.3 million, has emerged as a global leader.

Estonia's performance appears especially impressive in light of its ethnic diversity (almost 25 per cent of its population is Russian) and low per-capita gross domestic product (GDP) of \$28,140 US compared to the OECD average of \$39,333 US.

Estonia's current PISA scores (3rd in science, 6th in reading, 9th in math) continue their upward trend from 2012 (6th in science, 11th in reading and math) and confirm the opinion of many experts about the importance of equality and con-



Estonia may be small, with just 1.3 million inhabitants, but it is mighty when it comes to its educational rigour.

sistency in educational policy-making.

Estonian schools try to offer all students, regardless of their ethnic or economic background, the same educational experience. For example, Estonia dedicated additional resources to Russian-language schools after the first PISA assessments of 2006 showed the average science, reading and mathematics scores of Russian-language students lagged significantly behind those of students in Estonian-language schools. These efforts ensured Russian-language students and their teachers would become more proficient users of Estonian, thereby allowing teachers in Russian-language schools to fully participate in professional development.

Estonia also instituted measures to support weaker students or students with less privileged socio-economic profiles. Students undergo annual interviews that assess their progress and schools must help those with unsatisfactory reviews. Estonia has also offered all of its students

education, speech therapy and various forms of counselling.

While the small population of Estonia raises questions about the transferability of its educational policies, it has helped it surpass more powerful and prosperous nations, at least when it comes to education.

4. Taiwan: 532

(No. 4 math, No. 4 in science)

Let us first consider the bad news. Taiwanese students recorded lower scores for their reading abilities than during their last assessment, dropping from 7th to finish 23rd. Notably, this drop marks a reversal, something experts have blamed on changes to the computer-administered test that had doubled the number of questions and their nature towards more open-ended ones that are generally more challenging. This said, Taiwan retained its strong science and math scores, finishing fourth in both categories. For Taiwan, these numbers are not just a source of

This imperative, coupled with cultural factors that stress the importance of studying, is one of the reasons Taiwanese students belong to the global elite when it comes to mathematics. As the OECD notes, more than one in four Taiwanese students are among the top-performing students in mathematics. Mainland China, Hong Kong and Singapore have similar ratios.

High-quality education is essential to Taiwan's political economy, but its educational system has had a history of inflexibility, a condition partially rooted in the political culture, as a 2016 article in the journal *Asia-Pacific Science Education* states.

Drawing heavily on Confucian values and ethics such as loyalty, piety, harmony, peace, self-cultivation and respect for the elderly, Taiwan's political culture was undeniably authoritarian from its founding in 1949 until 1994, when Taiwanese citizens staged a mass demonstration, demanding the removal of the Kuomintang government.

Among the "pioneering endeavours" of Taiwan's democratic transition have been a series of ongoing educational reforms that sought to decentralize "Taiwan's highly regulated traditional education system to foster teacher and student autonomy." As the CIEB notes, Taiwan's education system stands accused of "putting too much pressure on students and focusing too heavily on exams and memorization rather than creativity."

Taiwan's science education has been accordingly more personalized and oriented towards problem-solving.

While this pedagogical transition has encountered resistance from some sections of the educational community, including parents still wedded to Confucian principles, many consider it vital as Taiwan's economy transitions from one that is labour-intensive towards one based on knowledge and its practical application.

5. Finland: 531

(No. 12 in math, No. 4 in reading)

Where to Invade Next? is a documentary movie in which American filmmaker and liberal provocateur Michael Moore visits places around the world to see what, if anything, the United States could learn from the locals. During his travels, Moore visits Finland to study its education system. While those familiar with Moore's style of story-telling will likely find his account saccharine, if not simplistic, his interest in the ins and outs of Finnish education speaks to a global interest in this system.



Taiwan retained its strong science and math scores, finishing fourth in both categories.

free hot lunches, study books and learning material since 2006 to promote equal access to education. All Estonian schools have staff who co-ordinate services for students with special needs and students at risk of dropping out receive personalized services, such as special needs edu-

pride, but essential. As the Washington, D.C.-based think-tank Center on International Education Benchmarking (CIEB) suggests, Taiwan depends on a highly educated workforce to compete in the global economy in light of its limited natural resources.



Finnish educational policies have made a point of creating equal opportunities for students from a wide variety of backgrounds.

One supposed reason for its exemplary nature lies in its foundation. As Pasi Sehlberg, director-general of the Centre for International Mobility and Cooperation, wrote in the *American Educator* (2012), “education in Finland was nothing special in international terms.” Finnish students finished close to the average in various assessments at the beginning of the 1990s. Economic changes during this period pushed Finland into financial difficulties, a condition that initiated far-ranging reforms that propelled Finland up the PISA ladder.

Finnish educational policies have historically prioritized creating equal opportunities. Students from a wide variety of backgrounds, often with very different personal stories, learn together. Second, school curriculums mandate career guidance and counselling, a move designed to minimize the possibility that students end up making the wrong educational choices. Third, the Finnish system eschews standard tests and assessments in favour of personalized learning and support. Sehlberg, however, warns against unrealistic expectations. Finland’s educational system is part and parcel of its larger societal model favouring high measures of consensus and socio-economic equality. “One lesson from Finland is, therefore, that successful change and good educational performance often require improvements in social, employment and economic sectors,” Sehlberg writes.

6. Macau, China: 529 (No. 3 in math, No. 12 in reading)

Located 50 kilometres west of Hong Kong, this former Portuguese colony is home to 650,000 people who share a space of 28 square kilometres. This combination makes Macau one of the most densely populated spots on the planet. It rejoined the People’s Republic of China in 1999 as

a special administrative region under an agreement that promised considerable autonomy under the formula of “one country, two systems.” This arrangement allowed Macau to operate its education system independently of China. Notably, Macau did not develop a unified education system until the late 1980s because its Portuguese colonial government showed little interest in the subject. What existed instead was what Tang Kwok-Chun and Mark Bray, writing in the *Journal of Educational Administration*, called “an uncoordinated poly-centered collection of systems” that had arrived from Portugal, the People’s Republic of China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, “with different rules for each.”

Private and denominational schools flourished and public contributions to education were among the lowest in the world. In 1975, education received 2.2 per cent of total government spending. By 1983, that figure reached 5.3 per cent, still one of the lowest in the world. Change, however, occurred from the outside. As Kwok-Chun and Bray write, the “strongest stimulus to rectify the government’s neglect of education came from the 1987 Sino-Portuguese declaration” leading to the return of Macau to China.

“The government,” they write, “identified education as an important ingredient for stability and transition to the post-colonial era, and the public demanded greater government inputs in order to



Macau matched its previous mathematics scores while exceeding its earlier scores in scientific literacy and reading.

strengthen local identity.” Policies that unified and standardized the education system on the way towards a compulsory free system followed. This process has not been without difficulties. Private interests have remained powerful players in Macau’s educational system and the place of Portuguese, which “does not have strong international status,” remains contested. This said, Macau’s educational system has been near the top of the PISA rankings for some time.

The most recent ranking marks the fifth time Macau has participated in PISA. This time around, Macau matched its previous mathematics score, while exceeding its scores for scientific literacy and reading.

7. Canada: 528

(No. 3 in reading, No. 10 in math)

Our list so far has featured countries that tend to be small, if not minuscule in terms of population, size or both. Canada, with its continental land mass and low population density, breaks this pattern. It also breaks another pattern. It is the first and only federal state on this list. Virtually every federation assigns jurisdictional

control over education to the provinces, notwithstanding some exceptions. So Canada lacks the formal constitutional means to readily centralize and control education policy on a national level, as is the case with the other entries on this list.

The advantages of a more national approach are apparent. It ensures uniformity and responsiveness while easing implementation, whereas the opposite encourages particularism and provincialism. But if some educational policy-makers question the effects of federalism, it has not prevented Canada from joining the ranks of global educational powerhouses. This fact has not gone unnoticed in the United States, where the role of the federal government in education remains controversial in light of the country’s consistently mediocre, if not sub-par, performance.

On the opposite side of this debate, a long-standing proposal to federalize education policy in Germany continues to encounter opposition from the 16 Länder (federal states).

A closer look, though, reveals that the Canadian experience remains unique. While the education system differs from

province to province in reflecting the social, religious and linguistic diversity of Canada, both provincial and federal spheres co-operate in a number of areas, especially social transfers, whereby the federal government provides financial support to the provinces through four major channels: the Canada Health Transfer (CHT), the Canada Social Transfer (CST), Equalization and Territorial Formula Financing.

The first duo consists of conditional transfers that help pay for specific services (health care, post-secondary education, social assistance and social services, early childhood development and child-care.) The second amounts to unconditional grants to poorer provinces so they can provide residents with services that are reasonably comparable to those elsewhere and taxes that are also reasonably comparable. This fiscal federalism ensures relatively similar standards of living across the country and, more important, provides a social safety net for parents and their children.

As the CIEB notes in its assessment of the Canadian system, “[with] concerns



In Canada, thanks to health care and basic incomes, students are more able to focus on academic performance and are less likely to leave school early in pursuit of full-time work.

about health care and basic income removed, parents and students are more able to focus on academic performance and students are less likely to leave school at an early age to pursue full-time work.” The latest PISA report praised this aspect of the Canadian education system by noting that Canada belongs to a handful of countries that balance high educational performances with high equity in educational opportunities.

That is not to say that these spending programs are not problematic. They are a constant source of political friction between the federal government and the provinces and among the provinces. It should also be noted that the performance of Canadian students varies by region. While B.C., Alberta and Ontario generally lead the pack, the Atlantic provinces often bring up the rear.

8. Vietnam: 525

(No. 8 in science, No. 22 in math)

When this Asian country first participated in PISA in 2012, the results were shocking — as in shockingly good. Its 15-year-old students finished 19th in reading, 17th in mathematics and 8th in science, as Vietnam finished above the OECD average. This placing meant it outpaced powerful, prosperous G7 countries such as the U.S. and Britain. While the most recent results showed some slippage, they confirmed that the Vietnamese continue to outperform their western peers on several scores.

They finished 8th in science, 22nd in mathematics and 23rd in reading. Vietnam’s performance puzzles experts because it runs counter to traditional theories. While the economy of Vietnam is becoming more productive and modern, it remains relatively poor. Education theory consistently links educational achievement with prosperity. Schooling is far from universal, while corruption is rampant. Rote learning and memorization were the dominant pedagogical techniques. These concerns have resonated throughout the literature.

Consider a 2014 World Bank report. On one hand, it notes that basic literacy and numeracy skills have “helped Vietnamese workers move from low-productivity agriculture into higher-productivity non-farm jobs. This has promoted rapid economic growth and poverty reduction.”

Today, it continues, “Vietnamese workers perform better in reading than workers in other countries, including wealthier ones.” There is still room for improvement, however. “Looking ahead, contin-



Vietnam's basic literacy and numeracy skills have helped Vietnamese workers transition from low-productivity agricultural jobs to non-farm jobs.

ued strong economic growth will require increased labour productivity and a workforce with the skills to match the job market.” Recommendations include measures that promote the development of technical and cognitive skills, such as critical thinking.

Yet for all of these critiques, Vietnam’s PISA ranking offers several important lessons. First, Vietnamese society values teaching and teachers. Second, school curriculums focus on core concepts. In short, Vietnamese students study fewer things in more depth than their western peers. Third, Vietnamese parents appear much more involved than elsewhere. While this phenomenon also bears dangers, it speaks to the value that Asian societies attach to advancement through education. Fourth, and perhaps most remarkably, Vietnamese students are resilient.

As the OECD notes, the poorest students in Vietnam (along with students from Macau) “outperform the most advantaged students in about 20 other PISA-participating countries and economies.” In short, Vietnamese students are not going to let difficult conditions get in the way on their road towards success. Their aspirations are the aspirations of Vietnam.

9. Hong Kong: 523 (China)

(No. 2 in math, No. 2 in reading)

Call it a case of complaining on a high level. The fact that Hong Kong students finished 9th in PISA science scores prompted not only headlines (“Hong Kong slips to new low in international ranking for student performance in science” — *South China Morning Post*) but also some soul searching among members of the educational community in this special administrative region of the People’s Republic of China. “I do not think this means Hong Kong students have a low ability in science,” Esther Ho Sui-chu, director of the Centre for International Student Assessment in Hong Kong, told the *South China Morning Post*. “We have always been in the world’s top 10 in all three assessed aspects.”

This point certainly speaks to the quality of the Hong Kong education system. It — like Macau’s — reflects the colonial history of Hong Kong.

This obvious point of similarity, however, obscures significant differences between the former Portuguese (Macau) and the former British (Hong Kong) colonies. Whereas private interests initially dominated the education system of Macau, the

Top 10 educational laggards

This list highlights, if ever so briefly, the respective PISA science scores of notable countries. They include the remaining members of the G7 outside of the Top 10, Australia (a prominent, prosperous member of the English-speaking world), Russia, Israel, as well as emerging powers such as Indonesia and Brazil. No PISA scores are available for India. This list is admittedly arbitrary, but likely more interesting, insofar that it shows that some of the world's powerful nations are not all what they are cracked up to be.

14. Australia: 510

The 2015 PISA results prompted Australian Education Minister Simon Birmingham to point out that the country still remained ahead of the OECD average. But if this was the good news, he also acknowledged Australia's results "continued to paint a worrying trend" as scores across all three categories have fallen again.

15. United Kingdom: 509

If one were to rank the PISA scores of the seven most industrialized countries (G7), the United Kingdom would be the best of the rest outside Japan (2nd) and Canada (7th). But as it prepares for a more global orientation following Brexit, educational leaders such as Brett Wigdortz, CEO and founder of the educational advocacy group Teach First, are adamant that the UK educational system still leaves much room for improvement, especially in the training and recruitment of science, technology, engineering and math teachers. "This issue," wrote Wigdortz in *The Telegraph*, "is only going to become more pressing as we increasingly need a highly skilled workforce to compete in a post-Brexit world."

15. Germany: 509

As mentioned, Germany's PISA results triggered comprehensive educational reforms in the country of self-professed poets and thinkers. But questions remain. They include, among others, the question of whether Germany's decentralized educational system will be able to accommodate the recent influx of asylum seekers. The answer to that question might go a long way towards determining whether Europe's most powerful economy will retain another title: *Weltexportmeister* (export

world championship) as measured by its trade surplus.

25. United States: 496

Third from the bottom among the G7 countries, the United States finds itself in the middle of an ideological debate over the role of the federal government in education. Common Core — an initiative designed to create common standards across the entire country — confronts its pending demise just a few years after its introduction. PISA administrators and Democrats generally praise it, but the Republicans, who control Washington, D.C., these days, despise it.

27. France: 495

Social inequality, be it the absence or presence thereof, appears in the literature as one, if not the, defining factor in educational outcomes. It is therefore painfully ironic that the state founded on the principle of *égalité* has the most inequitable educational system. In other words, social background, not talent, determines whether French students succeed or not.

32. Russia: 487

What to make of Russian education? That is the question looming in light of conflicting data. According to PISA's competitor, Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study, Russian students easily crack the Top 10 when it comes to math and science. According to PISA, the country has a mediocre record. Obviously, different testing methodologies are liable to produce different results. Yet the question remains. Which of these is "alternative fact?"

34. Italy: 481

The worst PISA performer of the G7 countries, Italy finds itself in the middle of a political and economic malaise that has lasted for years, if not decades. While the causes and symptoms of this crisis are many, it is hard not to find a relationship between the country's high levels of youth unemployment and its struggling education system, especially in the south.

40. Israel: 467

Overall, Israel is trending up when it comes to its PISA science score. But the country as a whole continues to lag behind the OECD average and the gaps

between students of different sociological groups (Hebrew-speakers versus Arab-speakers; students from prosperous backgrounds versus students from poor backgrounds) were significant. According to *The Jerusalem Post*, "across all areas tested, Israel showed results with the largest range of grades in the world."

65. Indonesia: 403

With a population of almost 250 million, Indonesia is the fourth most populous country on the planet. Yet, for all of its eco-



According to PISA, Russian education has a mediocre record.

nomical gains, the quality of the country's education system has yet to catch up with its economic progress. As the *The Jakarta Post* reports, the 2015 PISA scores show "Indonesia is still struggling." In fact, Indonesian students overall "do not seem to value or see opportunities in becoming a scientist."

66. Brazil: 401

The most populous country of Latin America is perhaps indicative of the problems that confront education on that continent. Brazil performs substantially below the average across all categories, including science. Social inequality is a defining feature of the education system and the society at large.



Hong Kong's education system has become more flexible since the territory rejoined China in 1997.

state has always dominated the education system of Hong Kong.

Few Hong Kong schools qualify as genuine public schools operated and funded by the state, but the government controls virtually all aspects of education, such as curriculum guidelines, classroom content and teacher education.

As Tang Kwok-Chun and Mark Bray write, this dominance reflects a historical choice by colonial administrators to use the education system as a shield against whichever political ideology was prevailing on the Chinese mainland, be it the Nationalists during the first half of the 20th Century, or the Communists after the Second World War.

While Hong Kong's education system has become more flexible since the territory rejoined China in 1997, it has remained committed to ensuring equal access to educational opportunities.

10. People's Republic of China: 518 (Four Regions) (No. 6 in math, No. 27 in reading)

Some methodological clarity first: Not all of China participated in PISA. In fact, up until 2015, all Chinese students who took the PISA exam had come from one area: Shanghai.

Both city and province, Shanghai is

China's most populous urban area and economic centre. Home to about 25 million people, Shanghai contributes to about one eighth of the economy. Given its wealth, it is therefore not surprising that the local education system would produce rather high PISA scores across all categories, including science. In fact, during the two previous PISA tests, Shanghai had topped all three categories.

This time around though, three other provinces — Beijing, Jiangsu and Guangdong — joined Shanghai in submitting to the PISA examinations. In doing so, they depressed the Chinese performance. This development surprised experts inside and outside of China, who had previously predicted that the addition of three new provinces would not significantly damage China's reputation as an educational leader. And it might not have. Chinese society has historically placed a high value on education and major cities (such as Shanghai) are important education hubs. This said, it is important to note that Chinese education stands accused of being manipulative and harmful.

Yong Zhao, a professor in the department of educational methodology, policy and leadership at the University of Oregon's College of Education, has presented evidence that the Chinese government rigged previous PISA results by excluding

weaker students and giving schools plenty of notice to prepare.

Some reports speak of teachers drilling students well into the night. Zhao has also argued in his book, *Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Dragon: Why China has the Best (and Worst) Education System in the World*, that the Chinese system fosters cultural and political habits that are authoritarian in nature. As he told *The New York Times* in a 2014 interview, the Chinese system is "centrally dictated, uniformly programmed and constantly monitored by standardized tests." Accordingly, it is unlikely to "value individual talents, respect students' interests and passion, cultivate creativity or entrepreneurial thinking, or



Previously, only Shanghai participated in PISA but this year, Beijing, Jiangsu and Guangdong also took the tests and in the process, lowered China's score.

foster the development of non-cognitive capacities."

Yet it is those very things — creativity, passion and social-emotional well-being — that will matter in the economy of the future, he argues. In short, Zhao accuses the Chinese education system of draining the life out of students, with consequences for Chinese society. To underscore this point, Zhao asks a simple rhetorical question: If the Chinese education system is so superior, why do so many of the country's elite send their children to college abroad?

Wolfgang Depner has taught political theory and international politics at the University of British Columbia, Okanagan campus. He now lives in Victoria.

2015 BY COUNTRY:

Student scores for science, reading and math

	Science	Reading	Mathematics
	Mean score in PISA 2015		
OECD average	493	493	490
Singapore	556	535	564
Japan	538	516	532
Estonia	534	519	520
Chinese Taipei	532	497	542
Finland	531	526	511
Macau (China)	529	509	544
Canada	528	527	516
Vietnam	525	487	495
Hong Kong (China)	523	527	548
B-S-J-G (China)	518	494	531
Korea	516	517	524
New Zealand	513	509	495
Slovenia	513	505	510
Australia	510	503	494
United Kingdom	509	498	492
Germany	509	509	506
Netherlands	509	503	512
Switzerland	506	492	521
Ireland	503	521	504
Belgium	502	499	507
Denmark	502	500	511
Poland	501	506	504
Portugal	501	498	492
Norway	498	513	502
United States	496	497	470
Austria	495	485	497
France	495	499	493
Sweden	493	500	494
Czech Republic	493	487	492
Spain	493	496	486
Latvia	490	488	482
Russia	487	495	494
Luxembourg	483	481	486
Italy	481	485	490
Hungary	477	470	477
Lithuania	475	472	478

Croatia	475	487	464
CABA (Argentina)	475	475	456
Iceland	473	482	488
Israel	467	479	470
Malta	465	447	479
Slovak Republic	461	453	475
Greece	455	467	454
Chile	447	459	423
Bulgaria	446	432	441
United Arab Emirates	437	434	427
Uruguay	435	437	418
Romania	435	434	444
Cyprus ¹	433	443	437
Moldova	428	416	420
Albania	427	405	413
Turkey	425	428	420
Trinidad and Tobago	425	427	417
Thailand	421	409	415
Costa Rica	420	427	400
Qatar	418	402	402
Colombia	416	425	390
Mexico	416	423	408
Montenegro	411	427	418
Georgia	411	401	404
Jordan	409	408	380
Indonesia	403	397	386
Brazil	401	407	377
Peru	397	398	387
Lebanon	386	347	396
Tunisia	386	361	367
FYROM (Macedonia)	384	352	371
Kosovo	378	347	362
Algeria	376	350	360
Dominican Republic	332	358	328

The Republic of Cyprus is recognized by all members of the United Nations, with the exception of Turkey. The information in this document relates to the area under the effective control of the government of the Republic of Cyprus.

Source: OECD, PISA, 2015 Database

CANADA'S 40 YEARS OF JOB-TARGETED EDUCATION:

800 programs, 100-plus countries

By Denise Amyot

There has been much talk about closing borders and the uncertain future of our unquestionably globalized world; however, Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan) has been busy working across borders with Kenya's ministry of education to get our latest international program off the ground.

The Kenya Education for Employment Program (KEFEP) will help national post-secondary institutions across the East African nation develop new or enhanced competency-based programs in the agriculture and energy sectors in order to increase employment and economic development opportunities for local youth. In total, 1,200 Kenyan students are expected to graduate from KEFEP-supported programs over the next five years. They will be equipped with the skills they need, not only to build a meaningful life for themselves and their families, but also to support economic growth in their communities.

This is just one of many ongoing international projects involving Canadian colleges and institutes, whose expertise is in increasing demand around the world. They are also active in the Caribbean, South America, Asia and in several other African nations, where their successful approach to technical education and training is seen as a strong model for success. In total, our association has been involved in more than 800 such programs in more than 100 countries over the past 40 years, and that doesn't include the countless other projects initiated by our members on an individual basis.

This includes partnerships with an increasing number of developed countries, which are turning to Canada as they seek to enhance their professional and technical education and training. Our approach to applied research is also of particular interest, as is the diverse Canadian offering of degrees and postgraduate certificates.

The Canadian college and institute system has earned a growing international reputation as one of the most relevant and high-quality professional and technical education systems in the world — a fact that is better known internationally than at home.



Students at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology celebrate diversity.

Several high-profile institutions have taken notice, including the Asian Development Bank, which recently concluded that Canada's system was one of the two most relevant Professional and Technical Education and Training systems (sometimes known as TVET) for emerging Asian countries. As a result, CICan was selected to implement activities needed to strengthen the Indonesian network of post-secondary schools.

The success of Canadian colleges and institutes can be attributed in large part to a hands-on and collaborative approach to teaching, which seeks input from employers and key partners within their own communities. Thanks to advisory committees, comprised of local employers who align program requirements to their employment opportunities, colleges operate on the leading edge of skills identification, economic trends and market shifts.

This approach is appealing to educators in many countries where emerging markets or industries are generating demand for an increasingly qualified workforce with sector-specific skills and expertise. In that context, exploring post-secondary education and training models with a proven track record is often the quickest

way to implement real change and generate rapid progress. By adopting a truly bilateral approach, Canadian colleges and institutes also ensure that whatever expertise is transferred, the new curricula will be adapted to the reality on the ground and the needs of institutional partners, students and local employers.

Canadian colleges and institutes also provides support to a variety of international projects, including pre-arrival services for immigrants to Canada through Planning for Canada, an initiative delivered by the Canadian Immigrant Integration Program and the Organization for Migration's Canadian Orientation Abroad program. The initiative provides in-person and online orientation services to economic immigrants prior to their arrival in Canada. It also helps in accessing language classes and other training and education programs, credential recognition, as well as job market information in their respective fields.

Our members also contribute to greater exchanges between countries by hosting more than 50,000 international students every year on campuses across the country. Since they offer a huge range of specialized credentials, including degrees and postgraduate certificates, they attract many international students with a prior degree looking for a more hands-on learning experience or to perfect their professional skills. In fact, more than 20 per cent of students at colleges and institutes have attended university.

The increasing popularity of Canada's colleges and institutes with international students, as well as their ongoing collaboration with institutions around the world, places them in an enviable position as true global leaders in post-secondary education. As Canada continues to work hand in hand with international partners in a tumultuous global climate, the success of these collaborations is one of our best arguments for greater global engagement and dialogue.

Denise Amyot is president and CEO of Colleges and Institutes Canada. Reach her at damyot@collegenstitutes.ca.

Taiwan's search for global space

By Dr. Robert D'A. Henderson



When U.S. President Donald Trump accepted a call from Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen, it was seen as one of the highest-profile examples of Taiwan's ongoing search for international recognition.

In early December 2016, U.S. president-elect Donald J. Trump accepted a congratulatory telephone call from President Tsai Ing-wen of the Republic of China (ROC)-Taiwan. In addition to breaking with decades of U.S.-China diplomatic protocol, this telephone conversation has been seen as one of the highest-profile examples of Taiwan's ongoing search for international space in its global relations. And it is the type of interaction that has been constantly opposed regionally and globally by the Chinese Communist government in Beijing (People's Republic of China – PRC), which sees Taiwan as a “breakaway province.”

While the Beijing government has kept its unhappiness with the telephone call relatively restrained, state-owned news-

papers, including the *China Daily* and the *Global Times*, have run fierce denunciations warning of serious consequences if Trump does not follow the “One China” principle. This view is that there is only “One China” and the governments on either side of the Taiwan Straits can define it as they choose — and that the Beijing government has declared the principle to be the non-negotiable basis of China-United States relations. Trump has publicly stated that the “One China” principle may be negotiable — making China-U.S. and Taiwan-U.S. relations, following his Jan. 20 presidential inauguration, very unpredictable.

During her January transit stop in Houston (Texas) en route for her state tour of Central America — visiting Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua —

Tsai met with two senior Republican politicians, U.S. Senator Ted Cruz and Texas Gov. Greg Abbott. Cruz subsequently stated that he and Tsai had discussed arms sales, diplomat exchanges and economic relations and that he hoped to increase trade between Texas and Taiwan. These stopover discussions sparked renewed opposition from the Beijing government, which continues to call upon Trump to abide by the “One China” policy.

Taiwan's global role

Since Taiwan lost its United Nations seat in 1971 to Mainland China, it has been attempting to retain diplomatic relations with other countries — as well as maintaining membership or observer participation status in the international regulatory regimes that basically run day-to-day

activities around the globe.

Taiwan has a system of democratic governance with national executive, legislative parliament and municipal and county councils that are freely elected every four years. Political parties are permitted under its national constitution, most recently amended in 2005, and can put forward candidates for elected office alongside independent candidates. As an industrially advanced society and a major contributor to the global information and communications technology (ICT) supply chains, Taiwan was the 17th-largest exporting nation and 18th-largest importer of merchandise in 2015, according to the World Trade Organization.

In addition to bolstering its state-to-state diplomatic relations with 20 other countries, Taiwan maintains strong economic and cultural relations with all of the major industrialized countries and regularly campaigns for observer status in international regulatory regimes. Taiwan has full membership in 37 intergovernmental regulatory organizations and their subsidiaries, including the World Trade Organization (WTO), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) — as well as observer status in 22 other regulatory bodies.

ICAO's 39th assembly in Montreal

Last September, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) held its 39th assembly in Montreal. As an increasingly important international regulatory regime — and one of the family of United Nations' specialized agencies — the ICAO holds triennial meetings to deliberate on international issues affecting global civil aviation operations, with the continuing goal of maintaining “a seamless sky” for international air travel.

Even though it is an integral part of the global aviation network — particularly in East Asia — Taiwan was unsuccessful in being granted observer status at the ICAO assembly. Within the global aviation network, the Taipei Flight Information Region (FIR) covers 180,000 square nautical miles of air flight area between Japan's Fukuoka FIR to the north, the Philippines' Manila FIR to the south, and China's Hong Kong FIR and Shanghai FIR to the west. And, in 2015, more than 1.5 million flights carrying 58 million travellers passed through the Taipei FIR.

Taiwan had been invited to the 2013 ICAO assembly as a guest by the ICAO president — with the acquiescence of the Chinese government. Yet, according to

Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Lu Kang, Taiwan was an “inseparable part of China” and had no right to participate in the 39th ICAO assembly in 2016. He went on to state that “Taipei's attendance in the past was based on temporary arrangements,” namely then-Taiwanese president Ma Ying-jeou's Nationalist Party (KMT) government had accepted the “1992 Consensus” that there was only one China.

Since her successful election in 2016, Tsai has not acknowledged or accepted the “1992 Consensus” or the “One China” principle. Rather, her Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) government has repeatedly stated that it would abide by the ROC-Taiwan Constitution and the “will of the Taiwanese people.” As a result, China pressured the ICAO not to issue an observer invitation to Taiwan — despite its continuing role in ensuring “a seamless sky” worldwide.

Foreign ministry spokesman Lu went on to state that the position of the State Council of the Chinese government was that “the prerequisite for Taiwan to participate in any international activity is for it to agree to the one-China policy and for this to be resolved through consultation.”

In search of observer status

Taiwan also campaigned to participate in the 85th General Assembly of the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) held in Bali, Indonesia, last November. It had been an Interpol member until 1984 when it was forced to withdraw as China joined the organization. Basically, Interpol facilitates international co-operation between the police forces of countries worldwide and assists those countries to combat organized crime, cybercrime, trans-border crime and terrorism. As a non-member, Taiwan is denied access to Interpol's global police communications system, and even to its stolen and lost travel documents database.

In March 2016, the U.S. government, under president Barack Obama, signed into law legislation calling for support for Taiwan's efforts to gain observer status in Interpol — a position that other major foreign powers supported. Nevertheless, Taiwan was denied an observer invitation to the Interpol meeting in Bali.

This was despite the cross-strait agreement on joint crime-fighting between China and Taiwan — signed in March 2009 — for joint investigations, information-sharing and documentation exchanges. While low-level exchanges of crime-fighting information continue across the Taiwan Strait, Taiwan officials

say there has been a lack of administrative personnel exchanges between the two sides since May 20 when Tsai took office.

Also in November, Taiwan campaigned to attend the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change-COP22 in Marrakesh, Morocco. Even though it is not a UN member, it was able to attend as a non-governmental observer through a “technical approach” — with little interference from China. Its Environmental Protection Administration (EPA) mission was able to hold meaningful discussions with more than 35 nations on a variety of climate issues, including greenhouse gas reductions. And the EPA team pointed out that the work to fight climate change concerned the “survival of the entire human population.”

Chinese opposition to Taiwan's search for international space is a constant hindrance. In a recent individual example, former Taiwan president Ma was invited to give an address to the 8th World Chinese Economic Summit in Melaka, Malaysia, last November. He sought to urge the summit participants to support Taiwan's effort to enhance its ties with ASEAN countries in trade, education and culture — and to work toward Taiwan applying for ASEAN membership. But, at Beijing's reported urging, the summit booklet omitted his formal official title and replaced it with only his name — thus denying him his rightful and respectful title. In response, Ma wore a self-prepared nametag that identified himself as “Former President of the Republic of China (Taiwan).” In a subsequent press conference, he declared that China had been behind the move and that the summit organizers had apologized to him afterwards.

WHO and SARS 2003 in Taiwan

For an earlier example from 2003, Taiwan was blocked from international co-operation involving the World Health Organization (WHO) and the SARS global health threat. At the time, I was attending an international Asia-Pacific Co-operative Security conference, being held in Taipei. In the months prior, the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) virus epidemic broke out in Guangdong province in southern China.

By mid-March, the WHO had announced that SARS was a “worldwide health threat.” But, due to China's opposition to Taiwan having membership in international governmental organizations or even observer status, Taiwan could not receive WHO health threat alerts. As a result, it had to rely on foreign allies and

friends for health updates — because the Chinese health ministry on the mainland would only pass delayed information through semi-official cross-strait association links.

With Taipei being a major international air travel hub — and with air travel being a primary conductor of the disease — Taiwan was reliant on timely medical updates from its allied countries, especially the United States. In Taipei, we received daily medical briefings on the global SARS situation from two Taiwan National University medical professors who had received WHO alerts overnight from their colleagues in the United States. These morning briefings on the state of affairs were very welcomed by all the international participants. As well, the updated medical information was being distributed island-wide for all residents' welfare. The SARS epidemic would go on to infect 8,098 people — with 774 deaths worldwide including 44 in Canada, according to the WHO.

Beijing's continuing institutional opposition

The Beijing government will likely continue to pressure international organizations to deny Taiwan participation or observer status in any regulatory regimes — despite the goal of global well-being for all the world's citizens that their international activities are meant to achieve. For more on this, see the sidebar on page 67.

Two events in 2017 will cast a spotlight on the tense situation across the Taiwan Straits. First, the ninth annual BRICS Leaders Summit will be held in Xiamen City on the southeast China coastline in September. With leaders from Brazil, Russia, India, South Africa and host nation China meeting at this location across the straits from Taiwan, it will very likely focus BRICS, Asian and international attention on the need for peaceful political and economic relations in the East Asian region.

And second, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) will hold its 19th Party Congress in Beijing in November. These five-year congresses set the national plans and policies for China for the next five years as well as approving the membership of the country's highest political bodies — the standing committee of the politburo and the party politburo. While the CCP Congress is likely to only restate the official CCP perspective that Taiwan is a “renegade province of China,” it seems certain that there will continue to be a strong effort to restrict or hinder Taiwan's campaign for wider international space in

the East Asian region and globally.

Since the Trump-Tsai telephone chat in December, the mainland has called for stronger — though not military — direct measures against the island. In 2005, the Chinese government passed an Anti-Secession Law that claimed authorization to use force against Taiwan if the CCP leadership determined the island had declared independence or that there was civil disorder there. Recent media reporting suggests that senior People's Liberation Army (PLA) officers have called for greater direct pressure on Taiwan by implementing measures such as further reduction in cross-strait trade and tourist



When former Taiwanese President Ma Ying-jeou was invited to address an international audience in Malaysia, Chinese officials meddled with his titles.

groups, no longer permitting direct flights, and even enacting an economic blockade. These actions would be in addition to current PLA air force flights around the island and PLA navy exercises just outside the island's maritime boundaries

Ways to break the impasse

There are two ways Taiwan can participate or have observer status in international regulatory bodies. First, it can keep talking and negotiating with other governments for bilateral agreements on common regulatory issues and other bilateral issues, such as trade and investment regulations.

In recent discussions in Taipei, minister without portfolio Bill K.M. Chen, who heads Taiwan's Office of Trade Negotiations, pointed out that the Taiwanese government was continuously discussing

free-trade agreements and bilateral investment agreements with other governments. These agreements can be with its allied countries and regionally through its new Southbound Policy approach to Southeast Asia, particularly the 10-nation ASEAN organization — the nations of South Asia, and Australia and New Zealand. Taiwan has already reached economic agreements with Singapore and New Zealand.

The second way is a partnership method in which Taiwan seeks joint approaches with an allied government to participate in wider activities of international governmental organizations — in effect, to seek intergovernmental organization membership (IGO) solutions. At the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit — to which ROC-Taiwan has membership — in Lima, Peru, in November 2016, the United States and Taiwan jointly announced their intention to support the establishment of a sub-fund on women and the economy under APEC's auspices.

Such a model of joint participation in IGO developmental projects with foreign countries could gain Taiwan greater international space. And such joint partnership approaches could be pursued while at the same time permitting face-saving cover for China. But the Chinese Communist Party government in Beijing is expected to oppose Taiwan's search for greater international space — whether wider diplomatic relations or observer status — in all cases regardless of the Taiwan government's international and bilateral efforts.

In sum, the Beijing government fears that the Trump White House will use the “Taiwan issue” as a pressure point in bargaining against Mainland China. At the same time, Taiwan sees itself being used as a bargaining chip in U.S.-China dealings. What Trump will actually do is unpredictable for the parties on either side of the Taiwan Strait.

Ultimately, it's difficult to predict how Washington's policy towards Taiwan might change under Trump.

Dr. Robert D'A. Henderson is a retired professor of international relations who currently does international assessments and international elections monitoring. Among his recent writings is “China – Great Power Rising,” in the Routledge Handbook of Diplomacy and Statecraft (London and New York). At the time of the Trump-Tsai telephone chat last December, Dr. Henderson was able to hold wide-ranging research discussions in Taipei, Taiwan.

Taiwan seeks international status

The Chinese Communist Party government in Beijing sees Taiwan as a “breakaway province” of Mainland China. It has therefore continuously sought to block Taiwan’s participation as a national government in international governmental organizations. Under its “One China” policy, China only agrees to Taiwan’s participation in international governmental organizations (IGOs) as either “Chinese Taipei,” as in the Olympic Games, or it agrees to its status as an economic entity — not as the democratic government that it is — as in Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). Alternatively, it agrees to see it as a “guest” observer at the invitation of an IGO president.

Below is a list of recent IGO meetings or annual reports from which ROC-Taiwan was either excluded or only allowed to attend in a reduced or non-voting capacity. According to the foreign ministry in Taipei, there are plans to have a hotlink to an English-language list on its website later this year. See <http://www.mofa.gov.tw/en/default.html>.

April 2016

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) asked Taiwan’s delegation to leave a senior officials’ symposium in Belgium due to pressure from China. Though Taiwan is not a member of the OECD, it was invited as a dialogue partner to attend a high-level symposium on excess capacity and structural adjustment in the steel sector co-sponsored by Belgium and the OECD.

May 2016

A Taiwan representative was permitted to attend the UN World Health Organization’s 69th World Health Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland, on May 25. That invitation was given only because the assembly’s invitation had already been given to former Taiwan president Ma Ying-jeou’s KMT government as “Chinese Taipei.”

As a result, Taiwanese Health Minister Lin Tzou-yien addressed the assembly, calling for the World Health Organization and its member states to support Taiwan in its efforts to participate robustly in WHO meetings and activities.

June 2016

A group of Taiwanese university student participants sought to observe an International Labour Organization (ILO) meeting in Geneva, Switzerland. But, when they presented their ROC-Taiwan passports and university ID cards to obtain an ILO pass, they were rejected out of hand.

July 2016

Taiwanese government officials from its Council of Agriculture were forced to leave the UN Food and Agricultural Organization’s 32nd Session of its committee on fisheries because they held ROC-Taiwan passports.

September 2016

Despite efforts by Taiwan’s diplomatic allies and friendly countries, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) council president chose not to follow the 2013 precedent of inviting Taiwan to attend as an observer at the 39th ICAO Assembly in Montreal, Qué.

September 2016

The World Economic Forum changed Taiwan’s listing in its annual Global Competitiveness



Taiwan had some success at the International Civil Aviation Organization under president Ma Ying-jeou, but has received pushback from China since the election of President Tsai Ing-wen.

Report 2016-2017 from “Chinese Taipei” to “Taiwan, China” with Mainland China’s acceptance. Even so, Taiwan had moved up one notch to No. 14 in the WEF global competitiveness rankings while retaining its No. 4 standing among Asian nations.

November 2016

Taiwan campaigned to participate in the 85th General Assembly of the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) held in Bali, Indonesia, but was refused attendance and observer status. It had been an Interpol member until 1984, when it was forced to withdraw after China joined the organization.

November 2016

Taiwan was forced to send a lower-level official from its Environmental Protection Administration to lead a non-governmental technical delegation to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) COP22 conference in Marrakesh, Morocco, due to China’s pressure because Taiwan was not a member of the United Nations.

November 2016

Taiwan helped co-found the UN Non-Governmental Organization Committee for Rare Diseases. Nevertheless, it was barred from attending its first meeting in New York due to pressure from the Chinese government — despite Taiwan’s contribution to rare diseases research.

November 2016

Former Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou was invited to deliver a speech at the 8th World Chinese Economic Summit in Malaysia, but due to Chinese government interference, his title was downgraded in the summit’s directory and conference handbook. In a follow-up press conference, Ma declared that China’s suppression of Taiwan at the event was unnecessary.

The Chinese government continues to use this practice. It cites President Tsai Ing-wen, Taiwan’s current president, as only “Taiwanese leader Tsai” in its official statements and media reporting.

The killing fields of Africa



The killing sprees in South Sudan right now amount to ethnic cleansing, writes Robert Rotberg.



Robert I. Rotberg

tral African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, South Sudan or Zimbabwe. Even South Africans, in fits of xenophobia, attack outsiders.

Some of these episodes of murderous mayhem rise to the scale of genocide, as defined and prohibited by the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide of 1948. Genocide is the “intent to destroy, in whole or part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such.”

But many more such episodes are per-

ceived as attempts to cleanse a country or a region of an ethnic group. Ethnic cleansing has no accepted legal definition, but it is widely regarded as a war crime that can be prosecuted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) and as a crime against humanity. Large-scale massacres of a group or a classification of individuals constitute ethnic cleansing, and many of the civil wars in Africa have taken on the colour of that definition, with the ICC prosecuting some of the perpetrators and indicting others alleged to be responsible. In the aftermath of Kenya’s bitter 2007 election,

Why do Africans kill each other so easily? Atrocities abound, whether in Burundi, the Cen-

for example, the Kikuyu people killed the Kalenjin and Luo and Kalenjin killed Kikuyu in the Rift Valley. The ICC attempted unsuccessfully to try Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta and Vice-President William Ruto for their alleged fomenting of

Africa is different. There, much of the seemingly endemic mayhem in several countries stems less from gang-like competition and more from power and resource conflicts between ethnicities competing for whatever kinds of wealth-

breakup of Yugoslavia or Myanmar today) can too readily claim that the other group is after “our” land, or “our” opportunities, or “our” chance to amass wealth from newly discovered petroleum or iron ore deposits. “They,” the cry comes, are after “our” diamonds, “our” land, or “our” rights to live in a particular area or region.

The result of this artificially induced anxiety and antagonism is often massive assaults against out-groups by in-groups, and retaliation. Tit-for-tat killings lead to escalated bouts of violence. Sometimes, as in South Sudan now and the Central African Republic last year and before, the killing sprees amount to ethnic cleansing. Between 2003 and 2006, the Sudan clearly engaged in the targeting and extermination of non-Arab peoples in the western Sudanese province of Darfur, subcontracting their killing to Arabic-speaking bands from the northern part of the province. More recently, the Sudanese government has strafed and bombed non-Arabs in the southern provinces of Blue Nile and Nuba Mountains.

Ethnic cleansing episodes occasionally become so intense and horrific that they constitute genocide. That is what happened within a few months in 1994 in Rwanda, when the more numerous Hutu (the locally dominant ethnic group) systematically massacred 800,000 Tutsi, Rwanda’s other, and rival, ethnic people. That genocide was organized and directed by Hutu leaders who were attempting once and for all to eliminate Tutsi pretensions to national power, and therefore to end ethnic contests for the spoils of governing.

In neighbouring Burundi, Hutu-inspired attacks on Tutsi have sometimes verged on episodes of ethnic cleansing, but all-out genocidal warfare would now be curtailed by African Union sanctions and military action and by forceful intervention by nearby Rwanda. President Paul Kagame, leader of the Tutsi and the liberator of post-genocidal Rwanda, would not permit another massacre of his kin, even across a sovereign border.

Instead, a civil conflict in Burundi that began when President Pierre Nkurunziza, a Hutu, declared himself elected to a constitutionally illegal third term in 2015, continues. But Nkurunziza’s opponents are not exclusively Tutsi. In several groups of Hutu and Tutsi opponents, they simply seek to end Nkurunziza’s usurpation of power, and to return to democracy.

In the Central African Republic, one of Africa’s most fractured and poor nations, the struggle in 2013-2016 to control



The International Criminal Court attempted unsuccessfully to try Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, shown here in Nairobi, for his alleged fomenting of fatal violence. The indictments were suspended after witnesses were induced to commit perjury.

that fatal violence; both indictments had to be suspended when witnesses were induced to commit perjury by Kenyan authorities.

Americans also kill, especially in big cities such as Chicago and New Orleans, usually as a result of rivalry between criminalized drug-trafficking gangs. Warfare among gangs also drives much of the murderous violence in the key killing capitals of the world — El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. In Brazil, too, competition over control of cocaine distribution has led to brutal assassinations and dismemberment of rival gangs, especially within prisons. Almost everywhere one turns across the globe, people are murdering fellow countrymen. But little of the gang-perpetrated violence, or the urban deaths, can even remotely be considered ethnic cleansing.

grabbing opportunities are capable of being corralled within national borders. That is why the discovery of oil, gas or mineral deposits often stimulates outbreaks of contention that turn into outright civil war.

Identity rivalries

The resultant conflicts, frequently bitter and ferocious, turn Africans of one identity against Africans of another identity. There is safety and trust in joining one’s own people when another “people” is threatening or attacking. That is natural. But conflict between ethnic groups is not an inevitable recrudescence of some ancient and immutable antagonism between tribes (as so many outsiders assert).

Rather it is easy for irresponsible, power-hungry leaders to mobilize an ethnic group or a sub-clan against an out-group. Leaders (as in Serbia after the



The Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre provides grim reminders of the Rwandan genocide of 1994.

whatever could be extracted from the country — mostly diamonds, some gold and uranium, and access to remittances — seemed to revolve around religious differences. The *Séléka*, a Muslim group from the north, took national power away from a largely Christian group of southerners. Then the Christians fought back and regained national sovereignty.

Along the way, thousands (precise numbers are debated) were killed in all-out campaigns that amounted to ethnic cleansing. Yet, though this conflict was ostensibly religious, it was also ethnic. The Muslims, supported by neighbouring Chad, were linguistically and ethnically distinct from the Bantu-speaking southerners (who happened to be Christians) who had always run the Republic under the French and after independence in 1960.

Ethnic cleansing ignored

In the 1980s, President Robert Mugabe's then newly independent, Shona-dominated government of Zimbabwe slaughtered 20,000 to 30,000 Ndebele from the southwestern corner of the country because they were supposedly a threat to the Shona — traditional rivals of the Ndebele. This bout of ethnic cleansing was largely ignored by Britain, the departed colonial

power, and by the UN. And the man that Mugabe put in charge of the all-out ethnic cleansing was Emerson Mnangagwa, now poised to become Mugabe's successor.

Ethnic cleansing continues today, despite ineffective efforts to hinder it by the United Nations Organization Stabiliza-



Photographs of genocide survivors hang in the Rwandan memorial centre.

tion Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) and the regular national army in the eastern districts of the Democratic Republic of Congo. There, especially in the provinces of North and South Kivu, near Rwanda and Uganda, non-state actors run local militias targeting civilians who are sometimes just “in the way,” or who sometimes belong to or support other local warlords. The drive in this region is to gain or keep control over natural resources, especially coltan, a combination of rare metals (columbite and tantalite) used in cellphones and high-performance aircraft. So far, since about 1988, more than 5.5 million people have been extirpated in this region.

Kleptocratically-driven corruption

All of these ethnic cleansing zones of contention simmer in 2017. But the major cause of concern, and of potential genocide, is in South Sudan, a nation carved out of the southern reaches of the Sudan in 2011. After 30 years of war between the Arab-speaking army of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) of South Sudan, peace was brokered by the United States and Norway, and — with much fanfare and great hope — South Sudan was admitted into the United Nations.

But just as the discovery of oil inside the Sudan (and what subsequently became South Sudan) in the 1970s stimulated a civil war between Sudan and what is now South Sudan, so the possibility of untold riches from oil (largely exported to China and Malaysia) turned the infant South Sudan into a cauldron of enmity. President Salva Kiir, a Dinka and one of the leaders of the SPLA, became the country's first and only president. Riek Machar, a Nuer, and a sometime fighter in the SPLA and a sometime collaborator with Sudan, became vice-president. The Dinka are South Sudan's largest ethnic group (36 per cent of the total population) and the Nuer the next largest (16 per cent).

Before long, a major falling out between Kiir and Machar over “rents” — over the distribution of largesse from oil exports and other revenues — led to an open civil war in 2013 between their supporters. Kiir's Dinka-led South Sudanese army and the Nuer components of the same army battled each other. Despite partial cease-fires in 2016, the war continues. Machar has directed his side of the war from the neighbouring Congo and sometimes from Sudan. Kiir and his military commanders target anyone who is Nuer and therefore anyone who is a possible or a real sup-

porter of Machar. The other side does the same to Dinka. From 2013 through 2016, at least 60,000 Sudanese, mostly civilians, lost their lives either in combat or, more likely, as “collateral” damage. Disease and malnutrition have also taken their tolls. With all the fighting and the ineffectual nature of the UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) that has attempted to stand between the warring parties, starvation has also contributed to ethnic cleansing.

Africa is hardly at peace. So long as greed, kleptocratically-driven corruption and disdain by leaders of any peoples who stand in their way fuels war, some Africans will be driven to kill other Africans whom they have been led to believe are “out to get” them. Tribalism and ethnic cleansing thus become constructed, that is, created externally, always by leaders who whip up hatreds to mobilize followers. This hate cannot be considered primordial.

Africans in the Democratic Republic of Congo, say, kill people who are different from them. But just across the border in Zambia, the same people, speaking the same disparate languages, go about their business peacefully, and even intermarry. Likewise, in Uganda, as opposed to South



Genocide victims' skulls at the Nyamata Memorial Site in Rwanda.

Sudan, or in Botswana versus Zimbabwe there is peace and intermarriage while the same peoples just across borders battle and kill.

Africans therefore assault fellow Africans, and even try to cleanse them ethnically,

when they are driven to kill by false witness or because of fears aroused by self-aggrandizing leaders. Until there is better leadership, leading to better governance, strengthened rules of law, reduced corruption and collegial comity and consensus-building — as mostly in today’s Benin, Botswana, Cote d’Ivoire, Ghana, Mauritius, Namibia, Ghana, Liberia and Senegal — other Africans will continue to kill their neighbours out of fear and greed. Women and children suffer most of all from starvation, avoidable diseases and massive, sometimes intentional, attacks on civilians of the “wrong” ethnicity,

Ethnic cleansing opportunities are always around the next corner unless the forces of order in the African Union, the United Nations and former colonial powers, such as France, intervene, occasionally with effect, as in the Central African Republic and Mali, but sometimes weakly and tragically, as in the eastern Congo and Somalia, and sometimes simply too late.

Robert I. Rotberg is a fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center, senior fellow at the Centre for International Governance Innovation and founding director of Harvard’s Kennedy School program on intrastate development.

Centre for International Governance Innovation

Look Who’s Watching

Surveillance, Treachery and Trust Online

Fen Osler Hampson and Eric Jardine

Edward Snowden’s revelations that the US National Security Agency and other government agencies are spying on Internet users and on other governments confirmed that the Internet is increasingly being used to gather intelligence and personal information. The proliferation of cybercrime, the sale of users’ data without their knowledge and the surveillance of citizens through connected devices are all rapidly eroding the confidence users have in the Internet.

To meet the Internet’s full potential, its users need to trust that the Internet works reliably while also being secure, private and safe. When trust in the Internet wanes, users begin to alter their online behaviour. A combination of illustrative anecdotal evidence and analysis of new survey data, *Look Who’s Watching* clearly demonstrates why trust matters, how it is being eroded and how, with care and deliberate policy action, the essential glue of the Internet — trust — can be restored.

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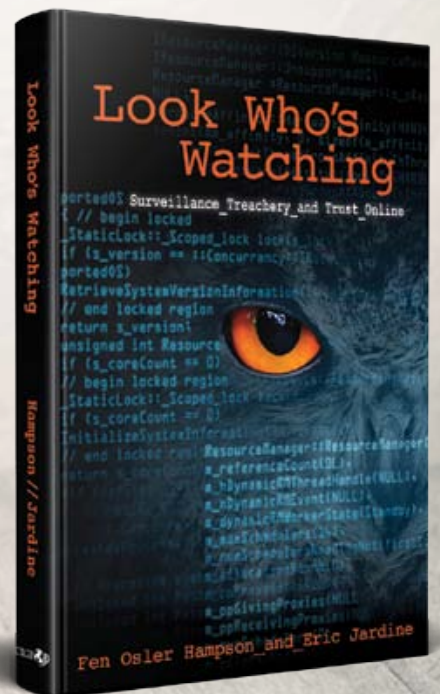
“The authors have produced a clear, timely and essential book about the importance of trust as an engine for the Internet. We must foster that trust if the global Internet is to continue to flourish.

— Michael Chertoff, Executive Chairman and Co-Founder, Chertoff Group, and former secretary of the US Department of Homeland Security

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Shanghai nights and days



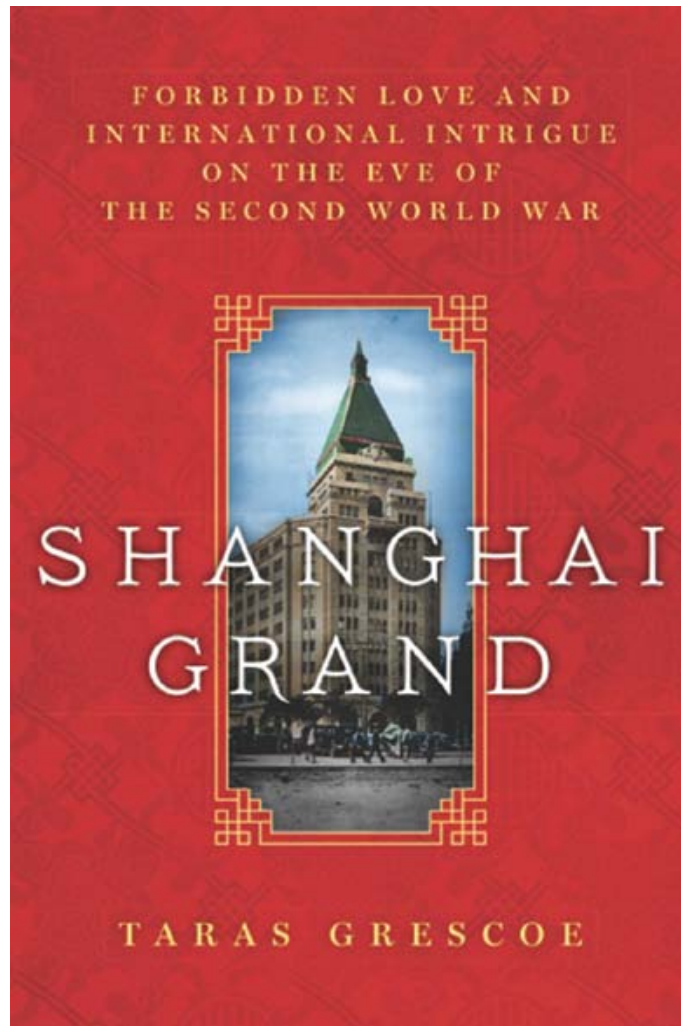
George Fetherling

When the yoga instructor says “Go to your happy place,” I go to Shanghai in the 1930s. I’m not being facetious. In the years between the two world wars, Shanghai had an abundance of a priceless commodity that the world finds in such short supply today: freedom. I’ve spent much of my life looking for a city where outsiders can pursue personal liberty without undue interference.

Berlin during the Weimar Republic was at least two full generations before my time. I even missed, though only by a few years, the foreigners’ paradise that Tangier used to be. But Shanghai in the 1920s and 1930s — that would have been the best time and place for westerners (if unfortunately often quite horrible for so many of its Chinese). The most important lines in Taras Grescoe’s invigorating new book *Shanghai Grand* (HarperCollins Canada, \$32.99) are the ones reminding us that “Shanghai was unique among the world’s great cities in that it required no passports, visas, financial guarantees or certificates of character from new arrivals....” No strangling bureaucracy. To settle permanently in the Paris of the Orient, with its “afternoons at the races, evenings on the river and nightlife that continued well into the next morning,” one had only to show up.

The cosmopolitan and multicultural city that Shanghai became was the result of Britain’s victory in the Opium Wars of the mid-19th Century. Cities up and down the China coast and on the major rivers were declared treaty ports. That meant, among other things, that the British and Americans pocketed the customs and excise money and “could enjoy the benefits of colonial power without any of the costly responsibilities of actually administering a colony.”

Under the doctrine called extraterritoriality, foreigners living in Shanghai could



Shanghai in the 1920s and 1930s was “unique among the world’s great cities in that it required no passports, visas, financial guarantees or certificates of character for new arrivals,” writes Taras Grescoe in *Shanghai Grand*.

not be prosecuted by the Chinese authorities. Rather, they would be dealt with in separate European and American courts established in the two enclaves known as the International Settlement and the French Concession, which also had their own separate police forces and the like. British, American and French citizens, along with exiled White Russians, were the most numerous non-Chinese residents, though there were also Germans, Filipinos, Koreans, Italians, Germans, Dutch — and an estimated 38 other nationalities. In 1935, Shanghai had a population of 3.5 million and was the world’s fifth-largest

city (it now has 24.5 million and is ranked 18th in size).

Grescoe is a Montreal author, the scion of a notable Canadian journalistic family. He began writing travel narratives before branching out into a wide range of other nonfiction genres. But *Shanghai Grand* is more than that. It’s a beautifully constructed work that is equal parts history and romance. On the one hand, it’s a richly researched examination of the rise of the foreigners’ paradise and its destruction in successive wars. On the other, it’s a vivid reconstruction of a famous love affair of the period.

The main character in the latter drama is Emily Hahn (called Mickey), a highly prolific and charmingly eccentric American journalist and novelist, long associated with the *New Yorker*. She was an adventurous opium addict who favoured simians as friends (for instance, she travelled with a gibbon named Mr. Mills). She arrived in China as “a recovering flapper” and was befriended by the richest man in Shanghai, Sir Victor Sassoon, the suave real estate tycoon who built the famous Cathay Hotel. Like Hahn, he was a cultural Jew, but not a religious one. The history of his family’s wealth extended back a thousand years to the Bhasid caliphate in medieval Baghdad. His dress reminded people of the caricature of the millionaire on Monopoly cards, and he was the only Shanghailanders (as the foreigners called themselves) to employ a full-time social secretary.

Hahn became romantically involved with the early modernist poet and publisher Zou Taofeng (now written Shao Xunmei), “the Verlaine of China,” who lost his family fortune, but tried to keep up appearances. As Grescoe writes: “In Republican-era Shanghai [1912–49], kidnappings made being a *flâneur* risky, so he usually opted to be chauffeured in his brown Nash sedan.” Zou and Hahn had a not-quite-official marriage. Later, she wed Charles Boxer, the head of British intelligence in wartime Hong Kong who is now better known as a famous historian of Dutch and Portuguese colonialism.

Hahn noted that “Shanghailanders seemed to look upon the Chinese as quaint — or infuriating — servants, dwellers in picturesque villages, or, at best, descendants of the emperors of a once-great civilization.” The racism that the Chinese had to endure was unrestrained, but the poverty in which so many of them lived was a common source of pity. Typical was a *Los Angeles Times* reporter on the scene who commented that Shanghai had “more cabarets, country clubs, lavish living and degrading misery than any port from Honolulu to Suez.” Aldous Huxley, one of the many literary figures driven to document the place, wrote of the crowded, dirty, lively city that “inspires something like terror.”

The dark side of the city

Viewed at street level, nine floors below the posh Tower Club in Sir Victor’s Cathay Hotel, life was brutal and often brief. A Capone-like figure named “Big-Eared” Du Yueheng first became rich by smuggling opium inside coffins. He could be seen racing through the streets in a flashy

automobile with tommygunners standing on the running boards. A reference book of Shanghai’s social elite characterized him as “one of the leading financiers, bankers and industrial leaders of China.” That is to say, he ran the dope trade in the International Settlement (and coincidentally was also the head of the Opium Suppression Bureau). His contemporary in the French Concession, “Pock-marked” Huang Jinrong, was leader of the justly feared Green Gang. He also ran the Sûreté’s detective squad. Karl Marx famously wrote that “religion is the opium of the people.” But in Shanghai opium was a kind of religion.

In the early 1930s, there were 20,000 beggars in the International Settlement. From time to time, the police would round up many of them and drive them through the countryside, tossing out a few at each town or village they encountered. “Disease and hunger often took care of the rest.” In 1935, the authorities had to deal with 5,960 corpses in the streets and lanes of the International Settlement. One year, a city-wide census of unclaimed bodies revealed 18,000 corpses. Shanghai was the location of the world’s biggest prison, the Ward Road Gaol. The city also had its own leper colony, at least until the Second World War — when almost everything else changed as well.

Japan invaded the northern reaches of China and by January 1932 was in open, large-scale warfare with Chiang Kai-shek’s



Shanghai’s Nanking Road (1912-1945)

Republican forces. Shanghai was at various times bombed and encroached on, but it didn’t fall to the Japanese army until 1937. By then it had a large population of Jewish refugees from Europe who saw it as “the port of last resort” after they had been refused entry to numerous other places. The Japanese, however, confined them to a new ghetto while leaving the foreign concessions more or less alone, at least for the time being. Asked about fears of what the Japanese might do, Mickey Hahn remarked, like a true Shanghai-

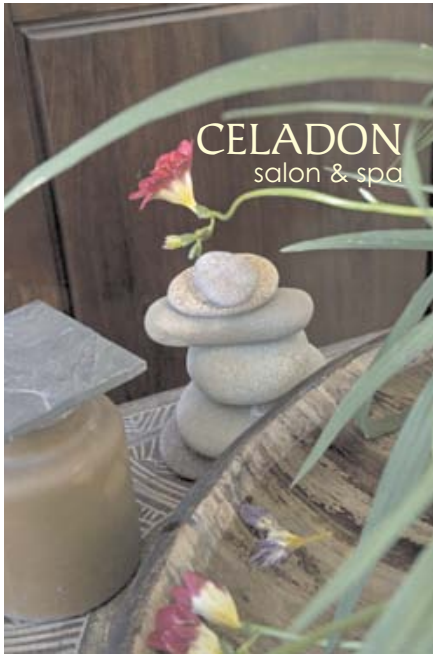


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lander, “I think the more scared you are, the better it is to go out dancing.” As Grescoe observes dryly, “The anesthetic qualities of opium almost certainly contributed to her nevertheless.”

The above events were part of the Second Sino-Japanese War, but by the very early 1940s they had become instead a section of the Second World War’s East Asian theatre of operations as Hong Kong, Singapore and other places fell to the Japanese, one after another. In 1943, a large percentage of Shanghailanders — those who hadn’t left town when the going was still good — found themselves interned. The International Settlement was shut down, followed by the French Concession in 1946. The final blow to the wide-open days came in 1949, of course, when Chiang and his nationalist government fled Mao Zedong’s takeover and relocated themselves on Taiwan (then called Formosa). It was a dark time for what the Chinese referred to as bad hats (“spies, turncoats, and dope dealers”). In Grescoe’s phrase, “What the world gained in probity, it lost in romance.”

Permanent nostalgia

The scent of the old days still lingers in western nostrils after all these years.

Grescoe is writing as a historian, a traveller and a chronicler, but also as a strangely strong-minded sentimentalist. Sir Victor, Mickey Hahn and Zau Sinmay are wonderful characters to recreate. So are a number of the others in *Shanghai Grand*, such as Morris Abraham (Two-Gun) Cohen. He was, among other things, the bodyguard of Sun Yat-sen, the revolutionary who overthrew the old Empire and became president of the new Republic. Cohen had once been a very minor political figure in Edmonton. While in China, he acquired a shipment of Ross rifles, the weapon given Canadian soldiers in the Great War that proved so dangerous that it became a scandal that rattled Sir Robert Borden’s government. Cohen had a nice sideline selling the damn things to Chinese warlords. “How did he get away with a con like that?” I once asked someone with knowledge of the period. “Well,” he answered, “Cohen did have a grounding in Alberta politics.”

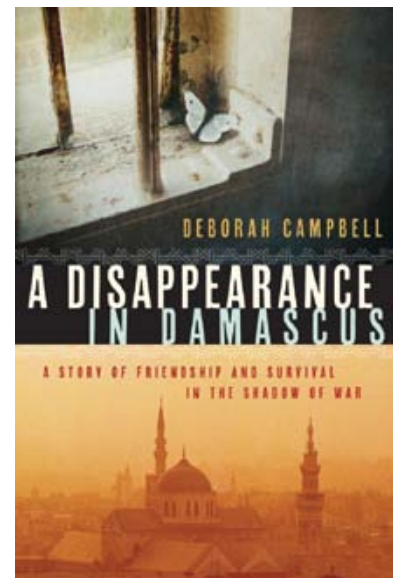
Yet, as the title of the book suggests without being blunt about it, the Cathay Hotel is Grescoe’s most important character. Renamed the Peace Hotel by the communists, it still dominates the Shanghai Bund, that exquisite row of 1920s skyscrapers that looks for all the world like the glory-days skylines of Cleveland

and Buffalo or of Batman’s Gotham City. The last time I stayed at the Cathay, there were two large signs in the lobby, resting on easels. One informed guests that the hotel is far-famed for its clean linen and attention to hygiene. The other read: “Due to necessary renovations, the jazz band, which normally is to be found in our lobby, may now be heard on the eighth floor temporarily. Our apologies for any inconvenience. You are thanked.”

Reporters in prison

Once upon a time, the popular image of a foreign correspondent was of someone who was, above all else, dashing. These days, the stereotype is becoming that of a person who has been dashed: abused, shot at, imprisoned. In the past dozen or so years, a significant number of books have appeared about journalists who have run into serious trouble for doing their jobs. Two of the recent ones are by Vancouver journalists with connections to the University of British Columbia.

Deborah Campbell is an independent reporter who has worked in eight or nine Middle Eastern countries (and also in Russia and parts of Latin America). She is fluent in a number of the relevant languages



and contributes to *Foreign Policy*, the *Economist*, the *Guardian* and other important periodicals. A decade after her student days at Tel Aviv University, she returned to Israel. The end result was her first book, *This Heated Place*, a controversial inquiry into the national psyche and the Israeli-Palestinian strife. It was published in 2002.

The following year saw the American-led invasion of Iraq, one consequence of

which was the flood of two million Iraqi refugees who poured into Syria. In 2007, Campbell was in Damascus, undercover, writing about them and their rocky existence in a neighbourhood referred to as Little Baghdad. She is the kind of journalist who learns from and lives with (rather than merely visits) the people she's covering. To help her get closer to her subjects, she hired an Iraqi woman named Ahlam. In the chaos of war and politics, the two became genuine friends, bonding through, for example, the discovery that the Syrian situation had greatly complicated their relations with their respective male partners. One day, Ahlam was grabbed by the secret police in front of Campbell's eyes, disappearing into a prison. When freed, she managed to make a new life in Chicago, but everything she had been through (including a kidnapping) could not be erased. Campbell, a fine stylist, tells the whole heartbreaking story in *A Disappearance in Damascus: A Story of Friendship and Survival in the Shadow of War* (Knopf Canada, \$32). It's a book that a reader will never forget — and one that deserves the awards it's already won.

A somewhat similar horror story, told every bit as well, though with a happier ending, is *The Marriott Cell: An Epic Journey from Cairo's Scorpion Prison to Freedom* by Mohamed Fahmy and Carol Shaben (Random House Canada, \$34.95). One fact that sets the book apart is that Fahmy, a dual Canadian-Egyptian citizen, came to be seen as a sort of living martyr within the international journalistic profession. He was an experienced pro who had covered the start of the Iraq war for the *Los Angeles Times* and later became a familiar presence on CNN. He was named the Cairo bureau chief of Al Jazeera's English-language arm in 2013. That was the year that Mohamed Morsi, the Egyptian president, was overthrown in a coup, an event that led to large-scale violence and mass arrests.

Among those jailed were Fahmy and two of his colleagues. They were accused of having been members of the Muslim Brotherhood, the political party that had been outlawed a few days earlier on the grounds of being a terrorist organization. The actual charge was electronic "defamation of Egypt" from a base the men rented in the Cairo Marriott hotel (hence the book's title). The authorities labelled them a terrorist cell. It was no coincidence that Al Jazeera is funded by the government of Qatar, which had also lent financial support to Morsi.

One of the three colleagues, an Australian, was pardoned and sent home, but

Fahmy and the third man, an Egyptian, remained in Scorpion Prison, a particularly horrific maximum security institution specializing in political prisoners and terrorists real and imagined. Under pressure from Britain, the U.S. and, of course, Canada (though the Harper government was criticized for doing so little), Fahmy was given a second trial. Found guilty once again, he received a sentence of three years. In the end, the redoubtable human rights lawyer Amal Clooney was able to do what John Kerry and others could not, and got him sprung. He, too, now teaches at UBC. The story that Fahmy and Shaben relate is stomach-turning in places. The writing is masterful. The book is being made into a feature film.

And finally ...

In *Spies in the Congo* (Publishers Group Canada, \$37.50) Susan Williams, a British academic, reveals what must surely be one of the very last secrets of the Second World War. In 1944, the U.S. needed to develop a reliable source of uranium for the Manhattan Project while also keeping the stuff out of Nazi hands. The best supply to be had was in Katanga province in the southeastern part of what was in those days (and until 1960) called the Belgian Congo. So Franklin Roosevelt's wartime intelligence organization, the Office of Strategic Services or OSS, set up a shop in the capital, Léopoldville, a place that was already full of spies because the region was exporting copper, iron and rubber — commodities in demand by the various warring states.

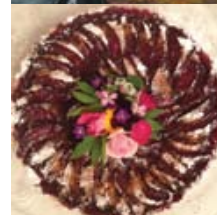
The OSS is known for having recruited many staff with little or no military experience and/or absolutely none whatsoever in espionage. The group that was sent to the city now called Kinshasa was led by a civil engineer who wrote pulp fiction and staffed by, for example, two ornithologists and a woman who had been a friend of novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald. The engineer proved particularly adept at surviving assassination attempts.

In 1947, the OSS was supplanted by the new Central Intelligence Agency, which became even more alert in the region when the Soviet Union got "the Bomb" in 1949. The revenue from uranium sales was a godsend for the Belgian economy. When the Congo became independent, the Belgians, or most of them, went home, but the Americans remained. Indeed the CIA was an active presence there as recently as the late '60s.

George Fetherling is a novelist and cultural commentator.

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Exploring the cuisine of Madagascar



Margaret Dickenson

In the beginning, Madagascar was physically part of Africa, as were the islands of Seychelles, Mauritius and the Comoros. Some 165 million years ago, a cataclysmic earthquake set Madagascar free on a 45-million-year 400-kilometre northeastern journey to its current location.

For millions of years, Madagascar, the fourth largest island in the world, has been teeming with an abundance of exotic wildlife, from wide-eyed monkey-like lemurs, giant tortoises, hundreds of species of reptiles and dozens of bats to rabbit-like jumping rats, colourful birds and so many more unique creatures.

Recent archeological surveys reveal settlements dating back more than 4,000 years, but the general consensus is that seafarers from Borneo and Austronesia were the first true settlers on the island between AD 100 and 500, and that today's population is descended from Indonesian and Malay migrants. The seafarers arrived in outrigger canoes laden with food staples from their homelands, including rice, plantain, taro, water yams and probably sugarcane, ginger, coconut, bananas, pigs and chickens. Immediately, they established a "slash-and-burn" type of agriculture, clearing virgin rainforests to grow crops. To supplement their domestic food supplies, they also became gatherers (honey, wild fruits, edible seeds and nuts, mushrooms, crocodile and bird eggs) and hunters (birds, lemurs, wild boar, hedgehogs, tortoises, frogs, snakes, lizards, insects and larvae). These early settlers probably indulged in the eggs and the meat of *aepyornis maximus* (the elephant bird), the world's largest bird, which continued to survive in large numbers across the island until the 17th Century.

Unfortunately, the hunting of game, together with the slash and burn agricultural practices, eventually led to the extinction of almost two dozen of the



Margaret Dickenson's Madagascar Shrimp with Island-Spiced Sauce.

original irreplaceable species, including dwarf hippos and giant lemurs. Despite the fact that hunting lemur has been illegal since 1964, the practice continues for personal consumption in rural areas and to meet the demand for exotic bush meat from some urban restaurants.

Immigrants add their cuisine

Around AD 1000, East African migrants brought with them a type of humped-back cattle known as *zebu*, plus other new sources of food that included sorghum, bambara groundnuts and goats. Recognized as symbols of wealth, cattle were rarely eaten except after being sacrificed at important spiritual events such as funerals. Rather, fresh *zebu* milk and curds made up a principal part of the pastoralists' diets. Some *zebu* escaped from their herds and established themselves in the highlands where inhabitants believed them to be inedible until the 16th Century

when King Ralambo, ruler of the central highland kingdom of Merina, declared the cattle could be eaten.

Stories of King Ralambo, auspiciously born on the first day of the new year, portray him as a near-mythical hero for his great military victories plus significant and enduring political and cultural contributions, including to food culture. He popularized the consumption of meat and celebrated it by establishing a New Year's festival. This festival involved an ancient ceremony called the Fandroana (the Royal Bath) where beef confit, or *jaka*, was prepared by putting beef in a decorative clay jar sealed with suet and storing it for a year in a subterranean pit where it was later shared with fellow royals and subjects.

For dessert, festival-goers enjoyed rice boiled in milk with a honey drizzle. As time went on, traditional foods were enhanced and became the seven royal

dishes, known as *hanim-pitolha*, and the basis of what is regarded today as Malagasy cuisine. Indeed, food played an important role in Madagascar's culture. Previously, Ralambo's father had introduced the marriage tradition of "rump of the sheep," wherein the groom presented his future bride's parents with the hind-quarters of a sheep — the most desirable part of the animal — at the engagement

apparently, became an export commodity. Trading ships took Malagasy rice to Charleston, S.C., forming the basis for plantation rice production there.

Trading ships travelling back from South Carolina, brought sweet potatoes, corn, tomatoes, lima beans and peanuts to Madagascar. Islanders soon began cultivating these products themselves — first in coastal regions adjacent to ports of ar-

Indian traders who had established a port on the northwestern coast, expanded to 4,000 within only three decades and popularized curries and rice-based *biryani*s in addition to the street food, such as Indian samosas, throughout the region. With French colonial rule beginning in 1896, well-embraced French baguettes, pastries and desserts as well as foie gras and cold macaroni salad mixed with blanched vegetables came along. French also became the country's official language. Madagascar didn't achieve independence until 1960.

Traditional Madagascar food

In Madagascar, food has always been cooked using simple methods and techniques, such as roasting over a fire, grilling over hot stones or coals and boiling, first in containers made of green bamboo, then in clay pots and metal vessels. Food preservation techniques included smoking, sun-drying and salting. Smoked dried beef, known as *kitoza*, salted dried fish and many other foods are still prepared in a similar manner today. The process of fermentation was adopted early in the history of Malagasy cuisine to produce curds from milk, to amplify the flavours of particular fresh and dried tubers and to make alcoholic drinks.

The food of Madagascar is charming in its simplicity. A traditional Malagasy dish features an unusually large amount of rice — the cornerstone of Malagasy cuisine — accompanied by a modest portion of chicken or fish, usually in a sauce, and vegetables. Some claim they face a sleepless night if they have not had rice at least once a day. Rice's prevalence remains in contemporary cuisine across the entire island; however, farmers in the arid south and west often substitute corn, cassava or curds made from fermented *zebu* milk for the rice. A bowl of only rice is considered a very acceptable meal. Red rice for breakfast is ubiquitous throughout the country, often made with extra water, producing a soupy rice porridge, known as *sosoa*. The latter is sometimes eaten with *kitoza* (smoked strips of *zebu* meat). A traditional porridge, *vary aminanana*, includes white rice, meat and chopped greens.

As for meat, the principal source remains *zebu* cattle. The Malagasy people enjoy better cuts served as *zebu* steaks or *zebu* stew, while less tender pieces, cut into small cubes, are boiled until very tender in salted water along with garlic and onions, shredded and finally roasted. Islanders also consume chicken (frequently in a curry) and goat; but pork, although avail-



Madagascar produces 75 per cent of the world's vanilla. Here, harvesters are transporting it through the jungle.

ceremony. Madagascar Ambassador Constant Horace confirms that such a tradition prevails in Malagasy society, but symbolic coins are usually substituted for the meat, except in some rural areas that remain true to tradition.

Trade with Arab and Indian merchants resulted in migrants who further enriched Madagascar's culinary traditions coming from those areas. And even though the inhabitants lived in tribes, the Africans, Indians and Arabs were assimilated into the Malagasy-speaking society, thus avoiding segregation. The first Europeans to land in Madagascar were Portuguese explorers in 1500. News of their discovery resulted in several attempts by the French and British to establish settlements. These proved unsuccessful due to disease and local hostility.

The 17th Century saw the beginning of the transatlantic slave trade, which intensified maritime trade with Malagasy ports, initiating a "domino-effect" that brought new food products and agricultural practices to Madagascar. The new food and practices were quickly adopted by locals and incorporated into the country's food culture. By that time, terraced, irrigated rice paddies had become so productive, not only could they fulfil islanders' needs as a primary food crop, but they also,

rival. From there, they spread throughout the country. With sailors' need to ward off scurvy during long voyages, the introduction and cultivation of citrus fruits (oranges, lemons and limes) quickly followed.

The New World's prickly pear cactus — known as *sakafon-drano* or "water food" — rapidly became an essential crop across the semi-arid southern region, where consuming six pieces of fruit per day eliminated a pastoralist's need for drinking water. Further, their cattle were nourished and hydrated by the stems. In fact, the prickly pear cactus allowed these farmers to become better herdsman with much bigger herds.

The 19th Century witnessed a dramatic evolution in Malagasy cuisine — Madagascar farmers started importing and then planting cloves, as well as coconuts and vanilla. Ambassador Horace points out that today, Madagascar produces 75 per cent of the world supply of vanilla.

More newcomers added other dimensions to the culinary mix. The first major influx of Chinese migrants, responding to requests for workers to build a northern railway, introduced their own specialties, including fried rice, fried noodles, noodle soup and egg rolls. Heading into the 20th Century, an original community of 200

able, is taboo in many areas of the country. Vegetables are served simply boiled or with spices to boost flavour. The other primary element of a traditional Malagasy dish, the sauce, derives its flavours from onion, garlic, tomato, ginger, curry, vanilla, coconut and, at times, herbs and spices. Sauces vary by region. Generally, one finds tomato-based sauces in the highlands and coconut-based sauces on the coasts.

Flavourings of dishes also vary by region. Coconut-based seafood and crustaceans appear on the northeast coast; thyme, basil and lemongrass-scented dishes in the central plateaus; clove, pepper, cinnamon, ginger and lemongrass-infused recipes in the eastern part of the island; kaffir lime and lemon-flavoured specialties in the drier western areas and into the south; and dishes infused with aromatic plants in the north along the Antsirah and Amber mountain ranges. The term *bredes* refers to particular plants and vegetables that are classified in two categories defined by flavour — *many bredes* are mild leaves while *anamolaho* are spicy; however, the food of Madagascar exhibits delicious tastiness without being hot and spicy. Those preferring extra zip in their rice or accompaniments cautiously add touches of chili relish (*satay*) that comes in strengths from hot to fiery spicy, or spicy mango, vinegar-preserved carrots, lemon pickles or hot curry oil. These condiments are served on the side to be incorporated according to personal taste.

Other specialties

Ro, a Malagasy traditional dish, is typically a broth-based soup cooked with leafy vegetables. It may be served as an accompaniment or to add flavour and moisten rice. Many variations exist, including the inclusion of chicken and ginger, shrimp and beef, but *romazava* consists of a broth with zebu beef, *bredes*, including *anamaloha* flowers, and other ingredients, such as onion, tomato and ginger, to boost the complexity of flavours. Along with *ro*, Malagasy folks enjoy *ravitoto*, a rice-based dish with beef or pork, ground or shredded cassava leaves and, at times, with coconut milk served on the side. They also like other traditional meat dishes: *varanga*, which is beef simmered, shredded and braised with onions; *vorivorin-kena*, which is beef tripe; *khimo*, a curried ground beef; and *hena kisoasy voanjubory*, which is pork with cape peas.

Fish and crustaceans thrive in coastal waters. Coral reefs swarm with crab, octopus and squid, while mangroves harbour

oysters and giant shrimp. Among the specialties would be tilapia, fried in oil with garlic; rock lobster, boiled, combined with a sauce of tomato, shallots, garlic, ginger and cloves and served with rice cooked in coconut oil; and *amalona*, an eel split lengthwise, stuffed with pork, garlic, ginger and onion, and then sewn closed.

Ambassador Horace confirms that traditionally, food is served steaming hot, adding that “cold food lacks popularity.”

Contemporary cuisine

Today, Malagasy cuisine more robustly blends the influences of many culinary traditions, including those brought by migrants from Southeast Asia, Africa, the Arab world, India, China and Europe. These migrants arrived in Madagascar after it was first inhabited by early seafarers from Borneo and Austronesia.

Outside the home, traditional Malagasy cuisine is available at eateries and roadside stands, while upscale restaurant menus offer a wider variety of foreign dishes and traditional specialties, influenced by foreign preparation techniques, ingredients and presentations. Street food is popular and can include samosas, spring rolls, brochettes, grilled or steamed cassava, sweet potatoes, rice cakes known as *mofogasy*; steamed cakes with ground peanuts, mashed bananas, honey in brown sugar wrapped in banana leaves known as *koba*; deep-fried wonton-type strings of dough called *kakapizon* and yogurts.

Please enjoy my version of Madagascar Shrimp with Island Spiced Sauce. *Mazotoa Homana! Bon Appétit!*



Madagascar Shrimp with Island Spiced Sauce

Makes 4 servings

1 lb (450 g) very large shrimp, not peeled (count: 16 to 20 per lb)

1 tbsp (15 mL) coconut oil*

To taste, salt and crushed black peppercorns

To taste, fresh cilantro

Island Spiced Sauce

1 stalk fresh lemongrass

1 tsp (5 mL) chicken bouillon powder

3/4 cup (180 mL) hot water

2 tsp (10 mL) coconut oil*

1/2 tsp (3 mL) minced fresh garlic

1/3 tsp (2 mL) peeled and grated fresh gingerroot

2 tbsp (30 mL) Pernod

3 oz (85 g) soft unripened goat cheese

1/3 tsp (2 mL) curry powder

1. Peel shrimp, leaving tails attached and set aside.

2. To make the Island Spiced Sauce, remove the tough outer layers of the lemongrass, cut 3 inches (7.5 cm) off the bottom of the stalk, split it vertically into long slices before pounding to release flavours. (Discard the rest.)

3. In a small saucepan, dissolve instant chicken bouillon powder in hot water, add lemongrass and allow to simmer until reduced to 1/2 cup (125 mL). Remove from heat, strain through a sieve and discard lemongrass.

4. In a small cast-iron skillet over medium-low heat, heat 2 tsp (10 mL) of coconut oil. Add garlic and ginger; sauté for less than one minute, stirring constantly.

5. Add Pernod, then the goat cheese and chicken bouillon mixture, stirring constantly until sauce comes to a boil. Reduce heat to a gentle simmer.

6. Add curry powder and continue stirring constantly, until the sauce is thick enough to coat the back of a spoon (i.e., reduced to 3/4 cup or 180 mL).

7. Heat 1 tbsp (15 mL) of coconut oil in a large non-stick skillet over medium-low heat. Sauté shrimp briefly on both sides, seasoning with salt and crushed black peppercorns, just until pink with centres barely approaching opaque.

8. Serve shrimp immediately on a smear of Island Spiced Sauce and garnish with fresh cilantro leaves. Serve with rice and vegetables of choice.

* Note: There are two additions of coconut oil.

Margaret Dickenson is a cookbook author, TV host, menu/recipe developer, protocol, business and etiquette instructor. (www.margaretstable.ca)

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Building a perfect wine cellar — and what to put in it



Pieter
Van den Weghe

It's quite natural for those who enjoy wine to develop some nesting tendencies. Things start off innocently enough, with a glass of wine when out and about, or perhaps a bottle bought to be enjoyed at home. Then, some hoarding begins. Whether it's stashing a few bottles in the closet or building a designer wine room, the result is still your own collection. Now, you can indulge in a glass of wine at a moment's notice or pour something special for guests. And, with some patience, an investment in the present will not only provide a delicious wine in the future, but reward you with the fascinating experience of following a wine's development.

Generally speaking, building a wine collection can take two paths. A collection can be as extravagant and no-expenses-spared as its architect's wildest dreams: stacked with famous producers, high-scoring vintages and rare bottles. Or, if space, time and funds are not in large supply, the collection can be more casual, without losing the benefits of cellaring. The quality of wine in a collection, particularly if aging is a goal, isn't defined by the attractiveness of the cellar. As long as the bottles are stored horizontally in a cool dark area that is a little humid and devoid of vibrations or strong odours, a wine of any pedigree will develop and age.

If cellaring is a new practice, much can be learned with a little experimentation. Purchase wine that you expect will be a good candidate for aging in three-bottle lots. Open one bottle immediately, a second a couple of years after that and the third a few years after that one. With proper note-taking, this practice helps you determine at what age you enjoy your wines. It will also help set expectations for what aged wine tastes like.

Classic wines and their price tags can help form a solid foundation for your collection, and Tarlant's Cuvée Louis (\$96 through Vintages) can be a great place to start. This heady and rich Extra Brut style

of Champagne is creamy on the palate and has generous flavours of nut and spice. It will be great to open for any occasion as it develops over the next three to five years.

Wines from great vintages, such as Bordeaux's fantastic 2010, can also round out a collection. The 2010 Château Malartic-Lagravière from Pessac-Léognan (\$134 through Vintages) is a perfect example. Ample and tremendously enjoyable now, this complex and hugely expressive red will drink amazingly well over at least two decades, if not more.

Some less-hyped vintages can still be sources of quality, age-worthy wines. Although 2013 was challenging in France's Southern Rhône, Domaine de la Vieille Julienne's Les Hauts Lieux Châteauneuf-du-Pape (\$104 through Vintages) would be a great addition to any cellar. Laden with dark fruit, licorice and minerality, it also has the concentration and structure necessary for at least 15 years of cellar aging.

Again, expense doesn't make a quality

wine collection. For their price, Niagara Rieslings can be tremendous for aging. While several of the region's wineries produce great Rieslings, Charles Baker's 2013 Picone Vineyard (\$35 through Vintages or directly from the winery) is a particularly delicious example. Sourced from vines that are more than 35 years old, this Riesling's purity and energy will bring much drinking pleasure anytime over the next five years.

Big bucks need not also be spent on a great red for the cellar. Tenuta di Ghizzano's 2012 Veneroso (\$30 through Vintages) is an excellent value for a mini super-Tuscan from an organic family-run estate winery with only 20 hectares under vine. A blend of Sangiovese and Cabernet Sauvignon, Veneroso is perfumed, spicy and very expressive, and will also easily provide up to 10 years of development.

Pieter Van den Weghe is general manager and sommelier at Beckta.



Building a wine collection — whether in a specialized cellar, or a cool, dark closet — will help you determine at what age you most enjoy your wines.



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Pakistan's welcoming home abroad

By Patrick Langston

Photos by Ashley Fraser



The Rockcliffe residence of the Pakistani high commissioner was built in 1929 and acquired by Pakistan in 1949. Its modified Georgian style features deep red bricks on the exterior and spacious rooms and generous halls inside.

That the Islamic world has long produced stunning carpets isn't exactly breaking news. Indeed, discerning Europeans were scooping up fine specimens as early as the 14th Century. But what tickles Pakistani High Commissioner Tariq Azim Khan are the occasional irregularities in carpets such as the deep red one that adds warmth and texture to the expansive sitting room of his official residence in Rockcliffe.

"When you see the imperfections, you know it's made by hand," Khan says, running an admiring eye over it. A large

carpet such as this would be made by a family and take at least a year to produce, he explains. "They get good at a pattern and do it over and over again."

Like high commissioners before him, he has outfitted his residence with items — tall, ornate metal tea pots, a warm painting of women in shawls with their midribs bare and water jugs on their heads — that, like the carpet, speak to his personal pride in Pakistan's people and culture and that help transform the residence, a four-square, red brick home built in 1929 for a Canadian industrial family,

into a reflection of his homeland.

The building became Pakistan's official residence in Ottawa in 1949. Set in the heart of Rockcliffe, it shows Georgian architectural influences in the symmetry and restraint of the exterior elevation. Inside, the central hall leads on one side to the sitting room, on the other to the dining area with kitchen beyond. Straight ahead is a wide staircase with curving banister that rises to the high commissioner's private quarters. The home is gracious, but not overwhelmingly grand. There are heavy white mouldings around windows and



The smaller dining room, which sits next to the larger one. The residence's quiet elegance is heightened by deep, white mouldings and panelled wainscotting.



High Commissioner Khan says one takes a picture when a car goes by in Rockcliffe Park because it's such an event in the sleepy neighbourhood.



Khan stands on one of the intricately designed carpets, handmade by Pakistani families.



Art in the spacious living room includes two large paintings by the late acclaimed Pakistani artist Sadequain. Between the two paintings hang framed samples of calligraphy.



doors, panelled wainscoting on the staircase and in the dining area, and a cheery fire burning in the sitting room, where one can imagine groups of official visitors and colleagues chatting and occasionally sparring, albeit civilly, over events of the day.

When Khan moved into this home in 2015, he brought with him a couple of exquisite reproduction miniatures depicting men and women in Pakistan during the Mogul Empire. These works hang above a couch in the sitting room. "They're colourful," he says. "There are very few quality paintings available from those days (around) the 16th Century."

On the end wall of the same long, rectangular room with its bright red and patterned throw cushions on creamy sofas, hang two framed pieces of calligraphy spelling out Islam's 99 names for God. On either side of those, floor-to-ceiling paintings by the celebrated Pakistani artist Sadequain, who died penniless in 1987, adorn the walls. They were brought to the residence by the previous high commissioner.

One of the paintings spotlights a lithe dancing girl, a less limber man swaying behind her. The other celebrates agricultural labour in the form of a mother, father and child holding implements. Behind



The main dining room, with a display cabinets and two large paintings depicting traditional scenes from Pakistan.

them is a team of bullocks. Khan says he likes the piece because "when I look at it, I see more things in it. There's a man driving the team that I didn't notice at first."

In the hallway hangs a reproduction of the seal the prophet Mohammed used to stamp letters of introduction given to his emissaries when they set off on missions.

The adjacent living space comprises two rooms separated by a square archway over a large passageway. One contains bookshelves, replicas of ancient statuary, a fireplace and a table for six. "I have breakfast here," the high commissioner says.

The other dining area comfortably seats 10 and has glass-fronted, built-in cabinets.



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Their contents include decorative plates collected by the high commissioner in Hawaii, Niagara Falls and elsewhere.

The outside yard, too, is hospitable; in more temperate weather, guests gather under marquees for informal events. A walnut tree towers in one corner. It began life as a seed planted by Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan's first prime minister, in 1951.

The high commissioner notes that 2017 is the 70th anniversary of his country's independence. It's being marked in part by an exhibition of Pakistani arts and culture at the Horticultural Building at Lansdowne Park on Aug. 16 and 17.

The high commissioner, who spent years in private business and then served as a minister in the Pakistani government and member of the senate before joining the diplomatic corps, chats easily and with quiet certitude about everything from the quality of Pakistani soccer balls ("we make the best sporting goods in the world") to long-ago events that helped make his country what it is today (at one point, he fires up his phone to show a photo of a little dark-haired, apple-cheeked girl from northern Pakistan, where people are said to be descendants of Alexander the Great's soldiers).

He mentions that his two sons, Rafi



A quiet corner in the smaller dining room with statuary and books.

Azim Khan and Amir Azim Khan, are both lawyers like their mother, Adline Azim Khan, who died in 2016. Rafi lives in London, England, while his younger brother is based in Tokyo. They haven't been able to visit their father since his move to Rockcliffe, a neighbourhood where an evening stroll often means bumping into other members of the diplo-

matic community.

The high commissioner enjoys living where he does. "It's very quiet," he says. "When you see a car pass by, you take a photograph because it's a rare event."

Patrick Langston writes about homes, the arts and sundry other topics in the National Capital Region. .

 An advertisement for Elite Home Decorating. The top left features the company logo, a stylized 'E' and 'H' in a square, with 'EST. 1963' below it and 'ELITE HOME DECORATING' in a gold serif font. The background is a photograph of a living room with a purple patterned sofa, a white armchair, and yellow patterned curtains. In the bottom right corner, contact information is provided:

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New arrivals

Stefan Pehringer
Ambassador of Austria



Ambassador Pehringer joined the foreign ministry in 1996 after completing studies in law at the University of Vienna and the University of Göttingen.

In his first job, he worked in the press and security policy departments before being sent to Luxembourg as an exchange diplomat. He returned a year later to the human rights department before doing an exchange with the German foreign ministry in Bonn in 1999. Later that year, he was posted as first secretary to Austria's mission in Berlin for four years before going to Denmark as deputy chief of mission for three years.

Back at headquarters, he worked in the Americas' department and the Eastern Asia and UNESCO units before becoming ambassador to Latvia in 2011. From 2014 to 2016, he was the diplomatic adviser to the chancellor and later, the speaker of parliament.

Pehringer is married and speaks Austrian, English, French, Italian and Russian.

Denis Fontes De Souza Pinto
Ambassador of Brazil



Ambassador De Souza Pinto joined the foreign service in 1979 and then did a two-year stint at the Trade Promotion Department (1980-1981). In 1983, he was posted to

Germany and three years later, he was transferred to Ecuador. In August 1989, he began a two-year posting in China.

Back at headquarters, he worked in administration services before working under the deputy minister of foreign affairs.

In 1995, he was posted as a counsellor to Paris (1995-1998) and Pretoria (1998-2001). Back in Brasilia, he was the general co-ordinator for budget and finances from 2001 to 2003 and deputy chief of mission to the European Union in Brussels from 2003 to 2006.

After returning to headquarters, he headed the foreign service department and served as its undersecretary. Between 2013 and 2017, he was ambassador to the Vatican, during which time he accompanied Pope Francis to Brazil.

Lu Shaye
Ambassador of China



Ambassador Lu joined China's foreign service in 1987 and one year later, he was sent to Guinea on a three-year posting as an attaché. He returned to headquarters in 1991 and

held several titles over the next seven years, including deputy division director, first secretary and division director, all in the African affairs department. In 1999, he was named a counsellor in the same department and two years later, he was sent to France on a two-year posting. When he returned to headquarters, he became deputy director-general in the African Affairs department for two years, before being posted to Senegal as ambassador for four years.

When he returned to the African Affairs department he was named director-general, a position he held for five years. In 2014, he became vice-mayor of Wuhan, in Hubei province, for one year before becoming director-general in the bureau of policy research of the Communist Party of China.

Lu is married with one son.

Vikas Swarup
High Commissioner for India



High Commissioner Swarup joined the Indian foreign service in 1986, but his bigger claim to fame is as the author of *Q&A*, a novel that was adapted into the Oscar-winning

film, *Slumdog Millionaire*.

In a career spanning more than 30 years, he has served in diplomatic assignments in Ankara, Washington D.C., Addis Ababa, London, Pretoria and Osaka-Kobe. At headquarters, Swarup has served as the desk officer for Southern Africa, the U.S. and Canada, director for Pakistan, Nepal and Bhutan and director in charge of the office of the minister of external affairs.

After serving as joint secretary of the United Nations, he was appointed the official spokesman for the ministry of external affairs in April 2015.

Swarup's wife, Aparna, is an artist whose work has been featured in several exhibitions in India and abroad. They have two sons.

Nimrod Barkan
Ambassador of Israel



Ambassador Barkan is a 40-year veteran of bilateral and multilateral Israeli diplomacy and policy-making.

Barkan served as senior assistant to the foreign minister and the director general. At the ministry of defence, he ran and rebuilt the centre for policy research during and after the second Lebanon war in 2006. He previously headed the world Jewish and interreligious affairs bureau at the foreign ministry, and he has represented Israel in various positions, including as ambassador to the United States, Egypt and Paris.

The ambassador, who is married and has two daughters, also taught international relations while on the faculty of the national defence college and the department of international relations at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

Nguyen Duc Hoa
Ambassador of Vietnam



Ambassador Nguyen is a career diplomat. He joined the foreign ministry in 1981 as a desk officer in the department of Chinese affairs, after which he was posted to Beijing

for four years.

He returned to headquarters for eight years, first as a desk official for the department of Chinese Affairs. In 1998, he was named deputy director-general of the policy planning department.

In 2002, he was named minister-counsellor and deputy chief of mission at Vietnam's embassy in Britain, where he stayed for four years. From 2006 to 2009, he returned to his old job as deputy director general of the policy planning department. In 2010, he was named ambassador to Sweden for three years, then became director-general of policy planning.

The ambassador completed a bachelor's degree in international relations at the diplomatic academy of Vietnam. He studied international relations at the University of California and Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics and also studied at the National Academy of Public Administration in Vietnam.

He is married to Tran Nguyen Anh Thu and has two children.

Non-heads of mission

Albania

Viktor Kalemi
Minister

Argentina

Juan Martin Muda
Second secretary
Agustina Maria Alvarez Vicente
Second secretary

Australia

Michelle Dianne Manson
Deputy head of mission

Brazil

Maria Elisa Maia
Minister

Bulgaria

Georgi Ivanov Ovcharov
First secretary

Chile

Miguel Waldo Jara Quezada
Attaché

China

Yanqun Wang
First secretary
Kun Lou
Attaché
Deqi Xu
First secretary

Xue Dong
First secretary
Yiwei Chen
Attaché

Colombia

Maria Fernanda Forero Ramirez
First secretary

Croatia

Ivica Olujic
Defence, naval & air attaché

European Union

Maria Caridad Vicen Enguita
Attaché

Germany

Marion Fuss
Attaché

Greece

Stefanos Ampouleris
Defence attaché

India

Narender Singh
Attaché

Indonesia

Nadia Amalia
Third secretary

Japan

Keisuke Kubo
Attaché

Jordan

Ismael Maddallah Suliman
Maaytah
Minister and chargé d'affaires

Korea

Kyungsoo Lee
First secretary

Nigeria

Mac Ogom Okwechime
Minister

Portugal

Monica Maria De Magalhaes
Moutinho
First secretary

Qatar

Mohammed Khalifa H. Alnasr
Third secretary

Russia

Vladimir Proskuryakov
Minister-counsellor
Dmitry Dzyuban
First secretary
Anton Pichugin
Attaché

Saudi Arabia

Fawzy Abdulghani Q. Bukhari
Attaché

Senegal

Salifou Diadiou
First secretary

Tanzania

Fortunata Charles Ngoli
Counsellor

Ukraine

Oleh Khavroniuk
First secretary
Oleksii Liashenko
Counsellor

United Kingdom

Natalie Louise Hearn
First secretary

United States of America

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1. Finnish Ambassador Vesa Ilmari Lehtonen and his wife, Pirjetta Julia Manninen, hosted an independence day reception at their residence. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 2. The Chinese Embassy hosted a reception for the Canada-China Friendship Society of Ottawa in celebration of the society's 40th anniversary. The event included dinner and a short film presentation. From left, Luna Yap, founding member CCFSO, Lolan Merklinger, past president, CCFSO; Wang Wentian, China's chargé d'affaires, Roy Atkinson, co-president of CCFSO, and Lv Yongjiu, wife of the minister-counsellor for culture at the embassy of China. (Photo: by Ülke Baum) 3. The European Union's annual holiday concert took place at Notre Dame Cathedral. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 4. Qatari Ambassador Fahad Mohamed Kafoud hosted a national day celebration at the Fairmont Château Laurier. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 5. Latvian Ambassador Kārlis Eihenbaums paid a visit to Mayor Jim Watson, right. (Photo: City of Ottawa) 6. Mayor Jim Watson, right, received a visit from Kosovar Ambassador Lulzim Hiseini. (Photo: City of Ottawa)



1. Kazakh Ambassador Konstantin Zhigalov and his wife, Indira Zhigalova, hosted a reception for the 25th anniversary of Kazakhstan's independence day at the Fairmont Château Laurier Hotel. From left, Maria Yeghian, Zhigalov, Zhigalova and Armenian Ambassador Armen Yeghian. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 2. Austrian Ambassador Stefan Pehringer and his wife, Debra, hosted a reception on the occasion of his presentation of credentials. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 3. Barbadian High Commissioner Yvonne Walkes, left, hosted a reception at City Hall to mark the 50th anniversary of the independence of Barbados. Roy Norton, Chief of Protocol of Canada attended. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 4. Bangladeshi High Commissioner Mizanur Rahman and his wife, Nishat Rahman, were guests of honour at the annual gala of AlivEducation, which took place at Overbrook Community Centre. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 5. The British High Commission hosted a holiday drinks event. Colin Horton, left, trade officer in the defence and security sector, chatted with defence adviser Brig. Jonathan Calder-Smith. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 6. Japanese Ambassador Kenjiro Monji and his wife, Etsuko, hosted a chamber concert followed by a buffet dinner at their residence as a fundraiser in support of the Friends of the National Arts Centre Orchestra. Here, the ambassador is showing off his instrument cufflinks. (Lois Siegel)

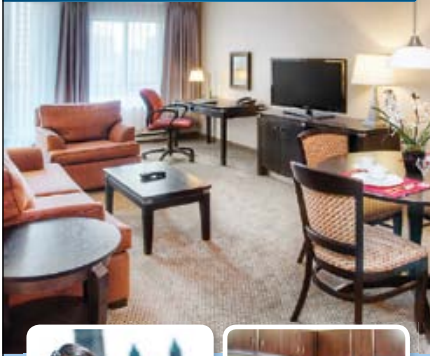


1. UAE Ambassador Mohammed Saif Helal Alshehhi hosted a national day reception at the Fairmont Château Laurier Hotel. He's shown here with Capt. Aysha Al Hamili, the UAE's permanent representative to the International Civil Aviation Organization. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 2. Sami Haddad, counsellor and chargé d'affaires for Lebanon, and his wife, Nadia, hosted a national day reception at the St. Elias Centre. Geoff Regan, Speaker of the House of Commons, right, attended. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 3. Ice dragon-boating made a debut this year at Winterlude. Shown here are the Polar Pandas, a team made up of Global Affairs Canada employees and diplomats from the Chinese embassy. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 4. Pakistani High Commissioner Tariq Azim Khan and his press officer, Nadeem Haider Kiani, hosted a dinner at the high commissioner's residence for members of the press. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 5. Cuban Ambassador Julio Antonio Garmendia Peña, centre, and his wife, Miraly, hosted a national day reception. They were joined by Fisheries Minister Dominic LeBlanc. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 6. The launch for the 7th edition of Bright Nights: The Baltic Nordic Film Festival took place at Arts Court Theatre. Tom McSorley, left, executive director of the Canadian Film Institute, and Latvian Ambassador Karlis Eihenbaum attended. (Photo: Ülke Baum)



1. The Ottawa Diplomatic Ball, produced by the Ottawa Diplomatic Association, took place at the Hilton Lac-Leamy. It opened with a five-course meal and dancing. From left: Thai dancers Prim Natasha Isarabhakdi, daughter of the ambassador of Thailand; Nam Benjarat Apiwattananon; Dianna Khenmanisoht and Sasi Phaewtakhu. (Photo: Ülle Baum) 2. Mahmoud Eboo, Ottawa's resident representative of the Aga Khan, and his wife, Karima, attended the ball. (Photo: Ülle Baum) 3. Venezuelan Ambassador Wilmer Omar Barrientos Fernandez, who is on the executive of the Ottawa Diplomatic Association, attended the ball. He's seen here with fellow guest, Senate Speaker George Furey. (Photo: Ülle Baum) 4. Borden Ladner Gervais LLP hosted a roundtable discussion with the Embassy of China titled "The four comprehensives, strategy and China's development." Guo Yezhou, vice minister of the central committee of the Communist Party of China's international department, is shown with Marc Jolicoeur, left, Ottawa regional managing partner of Borden Ladner Gervais. (Photo: Ülle Baum)

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1. Slovak Ambassador Andrej Droba and his wife, Daniela Drobova, hosted a reception and art exhibition, featuring the work of Slovak native Susan Kundstadt, right. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 2. Italian Ambassador Gian Lorenzo Cornado and his wife, Martine, and daughter, Julia, hosted an Italian Christmas dinner buffet at their residence in Aylmer. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 3. Philippines Ambassador Petronila P. Garcia hosted a cocktail party at her embassy to celebrate the New Year. She's shown with deputy head of mission Francisco Fernandez. (Photo: Lois Siegel) 4. Carleton University hosted a conference titled "Canada-Russia: Dialogue and Co-operation in the Arctic." From left, Vladimir Barbin, ambassador-at-large for Arctic Co-operation for Russia's ministry of foreign affairs and Russia's senior Arctic official at the Arctic Council; Alison LeClaire, director-general, Global Affairs Canada and senior Arctic official and Russian Ambassador Alexander Darchiev. (Photo: Ülke Baum)



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TEL 613-563-4223 FAX 613-563-4962
contact@afghanemb-canada.net
www.afghanemb-canada.net

ALBANIA

His Ex. Ermal Muça
Embassy of the Republic of Albania
130 Albert Street, Suite 302
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5G4
TEL 613-236-4114 FAX 613-236-0804
embassy.ottawa@mfa.gov.al

ALGERIA

His Ex. Hocine Meghar
Embassy of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
500 Wilbrod Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N2
TEL 613-789-8505 FAX 613-789-1406
www.embassyalgeria.ca/eng.htm
info@embassyalgeria.ca

ANGOLA

His Ex. Edgar Gaspar Martins
Embassy of the Republic of Angola
189 Laurier Avenue East
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6P1
TEL 234-1152 FAX 234-1179
info@embangola-can.org
www.embangola-can.org

ARGENTINA

His Ex. Marcelo Gabriel Suárez Salvia
Embassy of the Argentine Republic
81 Metcalfe Street 7th Floor
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6K7
TEL 613-236-2351 FAX 613-235-2659
ecana@mrecic.gov.ar
www.ecana.mrecic.gov.ar

ARMENIA

His Ex. Armen Yeghanyan
Embassy of the Republic of Armenia
7 Delaware Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0Z2
TEL 613-234-3710 FAX 613-234-3444
armcanadaembassy@mfa.am
www.armembassycanada.ca

AUSTRALIA

His Ex. Tony Negus
Australian High Commission
50 O'Connor, Suite 710
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6L2
TEL 613-236-0841 FAX 786-7621
www.canada.embassy.gov.au

AUSTRIA

His Ex. Stefan Pehringer
Embassy of the Republic of Austria
445 Wilbrod Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6M7
TEL 613-789-1444 FAX 613-789-3431
ottawa-ob@bmeia.gov.at

AZERBAIJAN

Mr. Ramil Huseynli
Chargé d'Affaires
Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan
275 Slater Street, Suite 1203
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5H9
TEL 613-288-0497 FAX 613-230-8089
azerbaijan@azembassy.ca
www.azembassy.ca

BAHAMAS

His Ex. Calsey Johnson
Bahamas High Commission
50 O'Connor Street, Suite 1313
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6L2
TEL 613-232-1724 FAX 613-232-0097
ottawa-mission@bahighco.com
www.bahamas.com

BANGLADESH

His Ex. Mizanur Rahman
High Commission for the People's Republic of Bangladesh
350 Sparks Street, Suite 1100
Ottawa, Ontario, K1R 7S8
TEL 613-236-0138 FAX 613-567-3213
bangla@rogers.com
www.bdhc.org

BARBADOS

Her Ex. Yvonne V. Walkes
High Commission for Barbados
55 Metcalfe St., Suite 470
Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 6L5
TEL 613-236-9517 FAX 613-230-4362
ottawa@foreign.gov.bb

BELARUS

Embassy of the Republic of Belarus
130 Albert Street, Suite 600
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5G4
TEL 613-233-9994 FAX 613-233-8500
canada@mfa.gov.by

BELGIUM

His Ex. Raoul Delcorde
Embassy of Belgium
360 Albert Street, Suite 820
Ottawa, Ontario K1R 7X7
TEL 613-236-7267 FAX 613-236-7882
ottawa@diplabel.fed.be
www.diplomatie.be/ottawa

BENIN

His Ex. S.E.M. Pamphile C. Goutondji
Embassy of the Republic of Benin
58 Glebe Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario K1S 2C3
TEL 613-233-4429 FAX 613-233-8952
ambaben@benin.ca

BOLIVIA

His Ex. Pablo Guzmán Laugier
Embassy of the Republic of Bolivia
130 Albert Street, Suite 416
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5G4
TEL 613-236-5730 FAX 613-236-8237
bolivianembassy@bellnet.ca
www.emboliviacanada.com

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Her Ex. Kovička Špirić
Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina
17 Blackburn Avenue,
Ottawa, Ontario, K1N 8A2
TEL 613-236-0028 FAX 613-236-1139
Email: info@bhembassy.ca
www.ambasadabih.ca

BRAZIL

His Ex. Denis Fontes De Souza Pinto
Embassy of the Federative Republic of Brazil
450 Wilbrod Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6M8
TEL 613-237-1090 FAX 613-237-6144
mailbox@brasembottawa.org

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

His Ex. Pg Kamal Bashah Pg Ahmad
High Commission for Brunei Darussalam
395 Laurier Avenue East
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6R4
TEL 613-234-5656 FAX 613-234-4397
bhco@bellnet.ca

BULGARIA

His Ex. Nikolay Milkov
Embassy of the Republic of Bulgaria
325 Stewart Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6K5
TEL 613-789-3215 FAX 613-789-3524
embgottawa@hotmail.com

BURKINA FASO

His Ex. Amadou Adrien Koné
Embassy of Burkina Faso
48 Range Road
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 8J4
TEL 613-238-4796 FAX 613-238-3812
burkina.faso@sympatico.ca
www.ambaburkina-canada.org

BURUNDI

Mr. Emmanuel Niyonzima
Chargé d'affaires
350 Albert Street, Suite 410
Ottawa, Ontario K1R 1A4
TEL 613-234-9000 FAX 613-234-4030
ambabottawa@yahoo.ca
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CAMEROON

His Ex. Solomon Azoh-Mbi Anu'a-Gheyle
High Commission for the Republic of Cameroon
170 Clemow Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario K1S 2B4
TEL 613-236-1522 FAX 613-236-3885
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CHAD

His Ex. Mahamat Ali Adoum
Embassy of the Republic of Chad
350 Sparks Street, Suite 802
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Embassy of the Republic of Chile
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Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6L2
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www.chile.ca

CHINA

His Ex. Lu Shaye
Embassy of the People's Republic of China
515 St. Patrick Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 5H3
TEL 613-789-3434 FAX 613-789-1911
chinaemb_ca@mfa.gov.cn
http://ca.china-embassy.org

COLOMBIA

His Ex. Nicolas Lloreda-Ricaurte
Embassy of the Republic of Colombia
360 Albert Street, Suite 1002
Ottawa, Ontario K1R 7X7
TEL 613-230-3760 FAX 613-230-4416
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His Ex. Vesa Ilmari Lehtonen
Embassy of the Republic of Finland
55 Metcalfe Street, Suite 850
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6L5
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High Commission for the Republic
of Guyana
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His Ex. Bálint Ódor
Embassy of the Republic of Hungary
299 Waverley Street
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0V9
TEL. 613-230-2717 FAX 613-230-7560
www.mfa.gov.hu/emb/ottawa
mission.ott@kum.hu

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His Ex. Sturla Sigurjónsson
Embassy of Iceland
360 Albert Street, Suite 710
Ottawa, Ontario K1R 7X7
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His Ex. Vikas Swarup
High Commission for the Republic
of India
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TEL. 613-744-3751 FAX 613-744-0913
hicomind@hciottawa.ca
www.hciottawa.ca

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Ottawa, Ontario K1Y 1E5
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info@indonesia-ottawa.org
www.indonesia-ottawa.org

IRAN

Embassy of the Islamic
Republic of Iran
245 Metcalfe Street
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 2K2
TEL 613-235-4726 FAX 613-232-5712
executive@iranembassy.ca
www.salamiran.org

IRAQ

His Ex. Abdul Kareem Kaab
Embassy of the Republic of Iraq
215 McLeod Street
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0Z8
TEL. 613-236-9177 FAX 613-236-9641
www.iqemb.ca
media@iqemb.ca

IRELAND

His Ex. Jim Kelly
Embassy of Ireland
130 Albert Street, Suite 1105
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5G4
TEL. 613-233-6281 FAX 613-233-5835
Ottawaembassy@dfa.ie
www.embassyofireland.ca

ISRAEL

His Ex. Nimrod Barkan
Embassy of Israel
50 O'Connor Street, Suite 1005
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6L2
TEL 613-750-7500 FAX 613-750-7555
information@ottawa.mfa.gov.il
www.embassies.gov.il/ottawa

ITALY

His Ex. Gian Lorenzo Cornado
Embassy of the Italian Republic
275 Slater Street, 21st Floor
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5H9
TEL 613-232-2401 FAX 613-233-1484
ambasciata.ottawa@esteri.it
www.ambottawa.esteri.it

JAMAICA

Her Ex. Janice Miller
Jamaican High Commission
151 Slater Street, Suite 1000
Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5H3
TEL 613-233-9311 FAX 613-233-0611
executiveassistant@jhcottawa.ca

JAPAN

His Ex. Kenjiro Monji
Embassy of Japan
255 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 9E6
TEL 613-241-8541 FAX 613-241-2232
infocul@ot.mofa.go.jp
www.ca.emb-japan.go.jp

JORDAN

Embassy of the Hashemite Kingdom
of Jordan
100 Bronson Avenue, Suite 701
Ottawa, Ontario K1R 6G8
TEL. 613-238-8090 FAX 613-232-3341
www.embassyofjordan.ca
ottawa@fm.gov.jo (embassy)
ottawa-consular@fm.gov.jo (consular)

KAZAKHSTAN

His Ex. Konstantin Zhigalov
Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan
150 Metcalfe Street, Suite 1603-1604
Ottawa, Ontario, K2P 1P1
TEL 613-695-8055 FAX 613-695-8755
Email: kazakhembassy@gmail.com
www.kazembassy.ca

KENYA

His Ex. John Lepi Lanyasunya
High Commission for the Republic
of Kenya
415 Laurier Avenue East
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6R4
TEL. 613-563-1773 FAX 613-233-6599
kenyahighcommission@rogers.com
www.kenyahighcommission.ca

KOSOVO

His Ex. Lulzim Hiseni
Embassy of the Republic of Kosovo
200 Elgin Street, suite 501
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 1L5
TEL: 613-569-2828 FAX 613-569-4848
embassy.canada@rks-gov.net
www.mfa-ks.net

KOREA, REPUBLIC

His Ex. Daeshik Jo
Embassy of the Republic of Korea
150 Boteler Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 5A6
TEL 613-244-5010 FAX 613-244-5034
canada@mofa.go.kr
http://can-ottawa.mofa.go.kr

KUWAIT

Abdulhamid Alfaiakawi
Embassy of the State of Kuwait
333 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, Ontario, K1N 1J9
TEL 613-780-9999 FAX 613-780-9905
www.embassyofkuwait.ca

LATVIA

His Ex. Karlis Eihenbaums
Embassy of the Republic of Latvia
350 Sparks Street, Suite 1200
Ottawa, Ontario, K1R 7S8
TEL. 613-238-6014 FAX 613-238-7044
embassy.canada@mfa.gov.lv
www.ottawa.mfa.gov.lv

LEBANON

Embassy of Lebanon
640 Lyon Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1S 3Z5
TEL 613-236-5825 FAX 613-232-1609
info@lebanonembassy.ca
www.lebanonembassy.ca

LESOTHO

Her Ex. Mathabo Theresia Tsepa
High Commission for the Kingdom
of Lesotho
130 Albert Street, Suite 1820
Ottawa, ON K1P 5G4
Tel 613-234-0770 Fax 613-234-5665
lesotho.ottawa@bellnet.ca

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His Ex. Fathi Baja
Embassy of Libya
Suite 1000, 81 Metcalfe Street
Ottawa, Ontario, K 1P 6K7
TEL 613-842-7519, 613-680-2009
FAX 613-842-8627
info@embassyoflibya.ca
www.embassyoflibya.ca

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150 Metcalfe Street, Suite 1600
Ottawa, ON K2P 1P1
TEL 613-567-5458 FAX 613-567-5315
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www.lithuanianembassy.ca

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Embassy of the Republic
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ottawa@mfa.gov.mk

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Embassy of the Republic of
Madagascar
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High Commission for Malaysia
60 Boteler Street
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TEL 613-241-5182 FAX 613-241-5214
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Her Ex. Ala Belevschi
Embassy of the Republic of Moldova
275 Slater Street, Suite 801
Ottawa, ON K1P 5H9
TEL 613-695-6167 FAX 613-695-6164
ottawa@mfa.md
www.canada.mfa.md

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His Ex. Altangarel Radnaabazar
Embassy of Mongolia
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TEL 613-569-3830 FAX 613-569-3916

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Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco
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Embassy of the Republic of the Union
of Myanmar
336 Island Park Drive
Ottawa, Ontario, K1Y OA7
TEL. 232-9990
FAX. 232-6999
meottawa@rogers.com

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His Ex. Kali Prasad Pokhrel
Embassy of Nepal
408 Queen Street
Ottawa, ON K1R 5A7
TEL 613-680-5513 FAX 613-422-5149
secretary_nepalembassy@rogers.com

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Embassy of the Kingdom of the
Netherlands
350 Albert Street, Suite 2020
Ottawa, Ontario K1R 1A4
TEL 613-670-6038 FAX 613-237-6471
Ott-cdp@minbuza.nl

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His Ex. Daniel Mellsoy
New Zealand High Commission
150 Elgin Street, Suite 1401
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 1L4
TEL 613-238-5991 FAX 613-238-5707
info@nzhcottawa.org
www.nzembassy.com/canada

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Her Ex. Natalia Quant Rodriguez
Embassy of the Republic of
Nicaragua
Ottawa, Ontario

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High Commission for the Federal
Republic of Nigeria
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Ottawa, Ontario K2P 1R9
TEL 613-236-0521 FAX 613-236-0529
www.nigeriahcottawa.ca

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Her Ex. Anne Kari Hansen Ovind
Royal Norwegian Embassy
150 Metcalfe Street, Suite 1300
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TEL 613-238-6571 FAX 613-238-2765
emb.ottawa@mfa.no
www.emb-norway.ca

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High Commission for the Islamic
Republic of Pakistan
10 Range Road
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 8J3
TEL 613-238-7881 FAX 613-238-7296
parepottawa@rogers.com

PALESTINE

Mr. Nabil Maarouf
Chief representative
Palestinian General Delegation
18 The Driveway
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 9C6
TEL 613-736-0053 FAX 613-736-0535
palestinegd@gmail.com

PANAMA

His Ex. Alberto Arosemena Medina
Embassy of the Republic of Panama
130 Albert Street, Suite 300
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5G4
TEL 613-236-7177 FAX 613-236-5775
embassyofpanama@gmail.com

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Embassy of the Republic of Paraguay
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Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5H3
TEL. 613-567-1283 FAX 613-567-1679
embassy@embassyofparaguay.ca

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Her Ex. Marcela Lopez Bravo
Embassy of the Republic of Peru
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TEL 613-238-1777 FAX 613-232-3062
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Philippines
30 Murray Street,
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 5M4
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embassyofphilippines@rogers.com

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ottawa.info@msz.gov.pl
www.ottawa.mfa.gov.pl

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His Ex. José Fernando Moreira da
Cunha
Embassy of Portugal
645 Island Park Drive
Ottawa, Ontario K1Y 0B8
TEL 613-729-0883 FAX 613-729-4236
embportugal@ottawa.dgaccp.pt

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His Ex. Fahad bin Mohamed Y.
Kafoud
Embassy of the State of Qatar
150 Metcalfe Street, Suite 800
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 1P1
TEL 613-241-4917 FAX 613-241-3304
amb.office@qatarembassy.ca

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Embassy of Romania
655 Rideau Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6A3
TEL 613-789-3709 FAX 613-789-4365
Romania@romanian-embassy.com
http://ottawa.mae.ro

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Ex. Alexander N. Darchiev
Embassy of the Russian Federation
285 Charlotte Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 8L5
TEL 613-235-4341 FAX 613-236-6342
info@rusembassy.ca
www.rusembassy.ca

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High Commission for the Republic
of Rwanda
294 Albert Street, Suite 404
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Phone: 569-5420/22/24
Fax : 569-5421/5423
ambaottawa@minaffet.gov.rw
canada.embassy.gov.rw

SAUDI ARABIA

His Ex. Naif Bin Bandir Alsudairy
Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia
201 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, ON K1N 1K6
TEL 237-4100 FAX 237-0567
caemb@mofa.gov.sa
www.saudiembassy.ca

SENEGAL

His Ex. Ousmane Paye
Embassy of the Republic of Senegal
57 Marlborough Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 8E8
TEL 613-238-6392 FAX 613-238-2695
Info@ambsenCanada.org

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His Ex. Mihailo Papazoglu
Embassy of the Republic of Serbia
21 Blackburn Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 8A2
TEL 613-233-6289 FAX 613-233-7850
diplomat@serbianembassy.ca
www.ottawa.mfa.gov.rs

SLOVAK REPUBLIC

His Ex. Andrej Droba
Embassy of the Slovak Republic
50 Rideau Terrace
Ottawa, Ontario K1M 2A1
TEL 613-749-4442 FAX 613-749-4989
emb.ottawa@mzv.sk
www.mzv.sk/ottawa

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His Ex. Marjan Cencen
Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia
150 Metcalfe Street, Suite 2200
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 1P1
TEL 613-565-5781 FAX 613-565-5783
vot@gov.si
www.ottawa.embassy.si

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His Ex. Membathisi Shepherd Mdladlana
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South Africa
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Ottawa, Ontario K1M 1M8
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rsafrica@southafrica-canada.ca
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His Ex. Ahmed Afel Jawad
High Commission for the Democratic
Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka
333 Laurier Avenue West, Suite 1204
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 1C1
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slhcit@rogers.com
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High Commission of St. Kitts &
Nevis
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Ottawa, Ontario, K1N 6B9
TEL 613-518-2447 FAX 613-695-2449
info@hcsstkittsnevis.ca

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Embassy of the Republic of the Sudan
354 Stewart Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6K8
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www.sudanembassy.ca/

SWEDEN

His Ex. Per Sjögren
Embassy of Sweden
377 Dalhousie Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 9N8
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sweden.ottawa@gov.se
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His Ex. Beat Nobs
Embassy of Switzerland
5 Marlborough Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 8E6
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SYRIA

Embassy of the Syrian Arab Republic
46 Cartier Street
Ottawa, ON K2P 1J3
TEL 613-569-5556 FAX 613-569-3800
culture@syrianembassy.ca
www.syrianembassy.ca

TAIWAN

Mr. Chung-chen Kung
Taipei Economic & Cultural Office
45 O'Connor Street, Suite 1960
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 1A4
TEL 613-231-5080 FAX 613-231-7112
publicaffairs@on.aibn.com
http://web.roc-taiwan.org/ca_en/
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TANZANIA

His Ex. Jack Mugendi Zoka
High Commission for the United
Republic of Tanzania
50 Range Road
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 8J4
TEL 613-232-1509 FAX 613-232-5184
contact@tzrepottawa.ca
www.tanzaniahighcommission.ca

THAILAND

His Ex. Vijavat Isarabhakdi
The Royal Thai Embassy
180 Island Park Drive
Ottawa, Ontario K1Y 0A2
TEL 613-722-4444 FAX 613-722-6624
contact@thaiembassy.ca
www.thaiembassy.ca

TOGO

His Ex. Ekpao Nolaki
Embassy of the Togolese Republic
12 Range Road
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 8J3
TEL 613-238-5916 FAX 613-235-6425
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His Ex. Riadh Essid
Embassy of the Republic of Tunisia
515 O'Connor Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1S 3P8
TEL 613-237-0330 FAX 613-237-7939
ambtun13@bellnet.ca

TURKEY

His Ex. Selçuk Ünal
Embassy of the Republic of Turkey
197 Wurtemberg Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 8L9v
TEL 613-244-2470 FAX 613-789-3442
embassy.ottawa@mfa.gov.tr
www.turkishembassy.com

UGANDA

His Ex. John Chrysostom Alintuma
Nsambu
High Commission for the Republic
of Uganda
350 Sparks Street, Suite 1210,
Ottawa, Ontario, K1R 7S8
TEL 613-789-7797 FAX 613-789-8909
uhc@ugandahighcommission.com
www.ugandahighcommission.ca

UKRAINE

His Ex. Andriy Shevchenko
Embassy of Ukraine
310 Somerset Street, West,
Ottawa, Ontario, K2P 0J9
TEL 613-230-2961 FAX 613-230-2400
emb_ca@ukremb.ca
www.ukremb.ca

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Mohammed Saif Helal Al Shehhi
125 Boteler Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 0A4
TEL 613-565-7272 FAX 613-565-8007
Consulate FAX 613-565-1444
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Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5K7
TEL 613-237-1530 FAX 613-232-0738
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www.unhcr.ca

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Embassy of the United States of
America
490 Sussex Drive
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Embassy of the Oriental Republic of
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350 Sparks Street, Suite 901
Ottawa, Ontario K1R 7S8
TEL 613-234-2727 FAX 613-233-4670
embassy@embassyofuruguay.ca

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His Ex. Wilmer Omar Barrientos
Fernandez
Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic
of Venezuela
32 Range Road
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 8J4
TEL. 235-5151 FAX 235-3205
embve.caotw@mppre.gob.ve
www.misionvenezuela.org

VIETNAM

His Ex. Nguyen Duc Hoa
Embassy of the Socialist Republic of
Vietnam
55 MacKay Street
Ottawa, K1M 2B3
TEL 613-236-0772 FAX 613-236-2704
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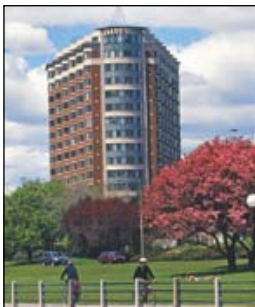
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Al-Sallal
Embassy of the Republic of Yemen
54 Chamberlain Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario K1S 1V9
TEL 613-729-6627 FAX 613-729-8915
yeminfo@yemenembassy.ca
www.yemenembassy.ca

ZAMBIA

High Commission for the Republic
of Zambia
151 Slater St., Suite 205
Ottawa, Ontario
K1B 5H3
TEL 613-232-4400 FAX 613-232-4410
zhc.ottawa@bellnet.ca

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Her Ex. Florence Chideya
Embassy of the Republic of
Zimbabwe
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Visit Slovakia: 'A good idea'



Glacier Lake of Štrbské Pleso is a picturesque mountain lake and a top tourist attraction in Slovakia.



By *Andrej Droba*
Ambassador of Slovakia

Set behind the former Iron Curtain that divided Europe for 40 years sits Slovakia, a country whose modern history only began in 1993. That year marked the “Velvet Divorce,” a peaceful dissolution of Czechoslovakia.

Slovaks inherited a land of extraordinary natural beauty, where fertile plains in the south rise to Alpine mountains in the north. A land with a 180 medieval castles and romantic castle ruins (the

highest number per capita worldwide), it has 1,200 mineral springs and a number of destinations listed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Slovakia is still a lesser-known travel destination, where you will find high-quality hotels, fine wining and dining, cultural institutions and sport venues, all available with a smaller price tag than many alternative travel destinations, and without stressful tourist crowds.

Located in the geographical heart of



The UFO-style observation deck in Bratislava offers great views of the old town with its castle as the central attraction.

Europe, Slovakia spans an area of 49,035 square kilometres. It shares borders with Austria and the Czech Republic to the west, Poland to the north, Ukraine to the east and Hungary to the south. Slovakia is a member of the European Union and NATO and, since 2007, has also been part of the Schengen Area. In 2009, the country adopted the euro as its currency.

The main mountain ranges are the Tatra and Fatra mountains, with 29 peaks higher than 2,500 metres. The principal river is the Danube. The capital city of Bratislava stands at an historical trade crossroads on both banks of the Danube, being the world's only national capital that borders two states — Austria and Hungary. The proximity of Bratislava to Vienna is also noteworthy, at just 65 kilometres.

Slovak rural architecture is largely inspired by its folk heritage, a fact most apparent in the mountain regions of Orava, Liptov and Spiš, where entire villages either still exist in their original beauty or were carefully re-created to form splendid open-air museums. The most precious buildings, however, are the wooden churches with their nail-less construction and intricate ornamentation — unique in Europe. There are also nearly 700 castles, castle ruins, chateaus and manor houses in Slovakia. The historical city centres of Bratislava, Košice, Banská Bystrica, Trnava or Bardejov date back to the 13th Century or earlier.

Our ancestors also discovered the heal-

ing effects of many springs, now an attraction at 25 spas scattered across the country. Modern-day sport enthusiasts flock to the Tatra Mountains to enjoy great skiing. Many of us return there or to other highlands from April onwards to enjoy cycle paths or hiking trails.

Slovakia in five days

Getting to Slovakia is easy. There are daily flights operating between Toronto and Vienna, Austria. Once in Vienna, trains and buses leave for Bratislava every hour throughout the day. Because Slovakia uses the euro as its currency, it minimizes the hassle of adding one more country to your itinerary once in Austria, since the money is the same and there is no border-crossing check. The prices are more attractive than anywhere in Western Europe and huge tourist crowds are a rarity. Besides being accessible, all the four- and five-star hotels, restaurants with fine foods and wines, spa treatments and museums and galleries are affordable.

Although the following tour is only five days, we hope you stay much longer.

Day 1: Bratislava, Červený Kameň, Trnava and Piešťany

Leave Bratislava and head north along the scenic small Carpathian wine route through small towns nestled between centuries-old vineyards. In about 45 minutes, you will arrive at Červený Kameň (Red Stone), one of the best preserved Slovak

castles. Tour this meticulously restored medieval residence of the noble Pálffy family, with displays of precious decor and furnishings, porcelain, armour and the largest wine cellars in central Europe.

For lunch, head to the nearby village of Dubová. In this region, you will find many excellent wine producers, along with good restaurants, in a striking setting. Take the country road cutting through the picturesque fields to Trnava, one of Slovakia's oldest towns. Once headquarters of the Church of Hungary, the town features numerous churches, monasteries and chapels, thus becoming known as the "Slovak Rome." After about a 30-minute drive, you will reach the spa town of Piešťany, your final destination for tonight.

Day 2: Piešťany, Bojnice and Banská Štiavnica

Over the past 200 years, Piešťany has evolved from a small village with several mineral hot springs into a world-famous spa destination, offering treatments for rheumatic and arthritic conditions. Composer Ludwig van Beethoven, Art Nouveau painter Alfons Mucha and numerous members of European aristocracy contributed to the town's glory. About 20 minutes after you leave, you'll come across Kúria Beckov, a tastefully renovated manor house set directly below a striking ruin of the 13th-Century Beckov Castle. Consider a short lunch break here. Continue to Bojnice, another spa town famous also for its castle, which ranks among the most romantic castles in Europe. Take a guided tour of the castle interior and then head to Banská Štiavnica.

Day 3: Banská Štiavnica, Vlkolínec and Demänovská Dolina

Spend the morning exploring Banská Štiavnica, a UNESCO World Heritage town, which was one of Europe's main gold- and silver-mining centres between the 13th and 18th Centuries. After lunch, drive north to Vlkolínec, another UNESCO World Heritage Site. Scenically located amid the dense forests of the Fatra Mountains, this small village has been left intact for centuries and its wooden houses are a living museum. Make Demänovská Dolina your next stop. On the way, you might want to stop briefly in Kremnica, another medieval mining town. It is famous for continuous coin production since the 14th Century.

Day 4: Demänovská Dolina and the High Tatra Mountains

Start your day in Demänovská Dolina by



Vlkolínec has been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1993. The village is a unique example of countryside architecture and the region's most complete group of traditional log houses, which are often found in the mountainous areas.



The area of Mount Chopok (2,023 metres) in the Low Tatras is one of the best skiing and winter sports destinations in Slovakia and is gaining recognition all across Europe.

visiting one of Slovakia's most famous ice caves, Demänovská ľadová jaskyňa, the entrance to which is about five minutes from the popular hotels. Finish your morning in the Low Tatra Mountains by taking a brand new cable car to the summit of Chopok (2,023 metres). The Rotunda Restaurant offers magnificent 360-degree views and modern cuisine inspired by traditional Slovak recipes. If you have good weather, you will be able to glimpse the High Tatra Mountains. After about a 50-minute drive, you will reach Glacier Lake of Štrbské Pleso (1,346 metres). You have ample choices for accommodations where you can relax or, if you're still feeling energized, rent a rowboat on the lake before sunset.

Day 5: High Tatra Mountains, Spišský Hrad and Košice

The High Tatra Mountains, the highest mountain range in Slovakia, can be easily explored for a week, yet you can make the best of your visit by taking a cable car from Tatranská Lomnica to Lomnický Štít (2,634 metres) and gradually descending on a fairly easy and well-marked walking trail. Your two-hour hike will reward you with beautiful vistas. You can stop for lunch at the traditional Zamkovského cottage, known as *chata*, and end your hike in Starý Smokovec, from which a modern tramway will bring you back to your hotel. After checkout, head eastwards to the largest castle in Central Europe, UNESCO-listed Spišský hrad. This 11th-Century marvel can be visited on your own, at your own pace.

During summer, several Renaissance tournaments and fairs take place here for families with children. Košice, a mere one-hour drive from Spišský hrad, is Slovakia's second largest city. Largely walkable and dominated by the Gothic masterpiece of St. Elizabeth's Cathedral, this city is a jewel, tracing its roots to the 12th Century. Wine lovers should consider a side trip to the Tokaj wine region, where world-famous wine is produced.

Bratislava

Bratislava's charming Old Town is quite compact in size and very walking-friendly, which makes exploring it on foot easy and enjoyable. Try to avoid visiting on Mondays when public museums and galleries are closed. Instead, schedule your visit to include Saturday, when many extra activities are offered by cultural institutions or the municipality itself.

Start your day at the Bratislava Castle, a true symbol of the city dating back to the

13th Century. Quite massive in structure, the castle was never conquered throughout its long and complicated history. Descend the castle stairs to St. Martin's Cathedral, the coronation church of the Habsburg monarchs, who reigned from 1563 to 1830 and enjoyed the rarity of a female ruler. Holy Roman Empress Maria Theresa reigned from 1740 to 1765 and as co-regent with son Emperor Joseph II until her death in 1780. Marie Antoinette was among her 16 children.

Visit the renovated Gothic interior and admire the colourful stained-glass windows, or the pipe organ, once played by Franz Liszt himself. Continue via Panská, Ventúrska and Michalská streets, which are lined with former palaces of Austrian and Hungarian nobles. When you reach St. Michael's Gate, the only remaining medieval gateway to the city, climb up its tower for another lovely view of the Old Town. After that, take Michalská Street towards the colourful Main Square. Small coffee shops offer many opportunities for a break.

The city's most traditional coffee house, Kaffee Mayer, which dates back to 1873, serves fresh house-made cakes, the kind once delivered from here daily to the Habsburg royal court in Vienna. A prominent part of the square is occupied by the Old Town Hall. Enjoy your afternoon by promenading along the Danube River, even crossing to the right bank to admire the town from the opposite side. A great idea is to take a 60-minute boat ride to Devín, Bratislava's second medieval castle. Devín is one of the most important historical and archeological locations in Central Europe. It exudes rugged beauty and offers great views of the confluence of the Danube and Morava rivers.

Come and discover beautiful Slovakia, a unique country in the heart of Europe. Whether you are a nature lover who enjoys the splendid beauty of untouched mountains or an urbanite who seeks vibrant cities, rich in history and culture; whether you fancy winter sports or prefer summer activities, whether you seek out world-class spas or enjoy great wines and delicious cuisine, a holiday in Slovakia is simply always a good idea.

Should you consider Slovakia as your next travel destination, my team is pleased to assist and answer any questions you might have. Visit www.slovakia.travel for detailed information.

Andrej Droba is Slovakia's ambassador to Canada.



Bratislava Castle, built in the 9th Century, sits above the Danube River and offers magnificent views of Bratislava. Visitors can stroll in the gardens or visit the Slovak National Museum (www.snm.sk).



Bratislava's charming Old Town is compact in size and walker-friendly, which makes exploring it on foot easy and enjoyable.



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(613) 830-2509

lois@siegelproductions.ca
siegelproductions.ca

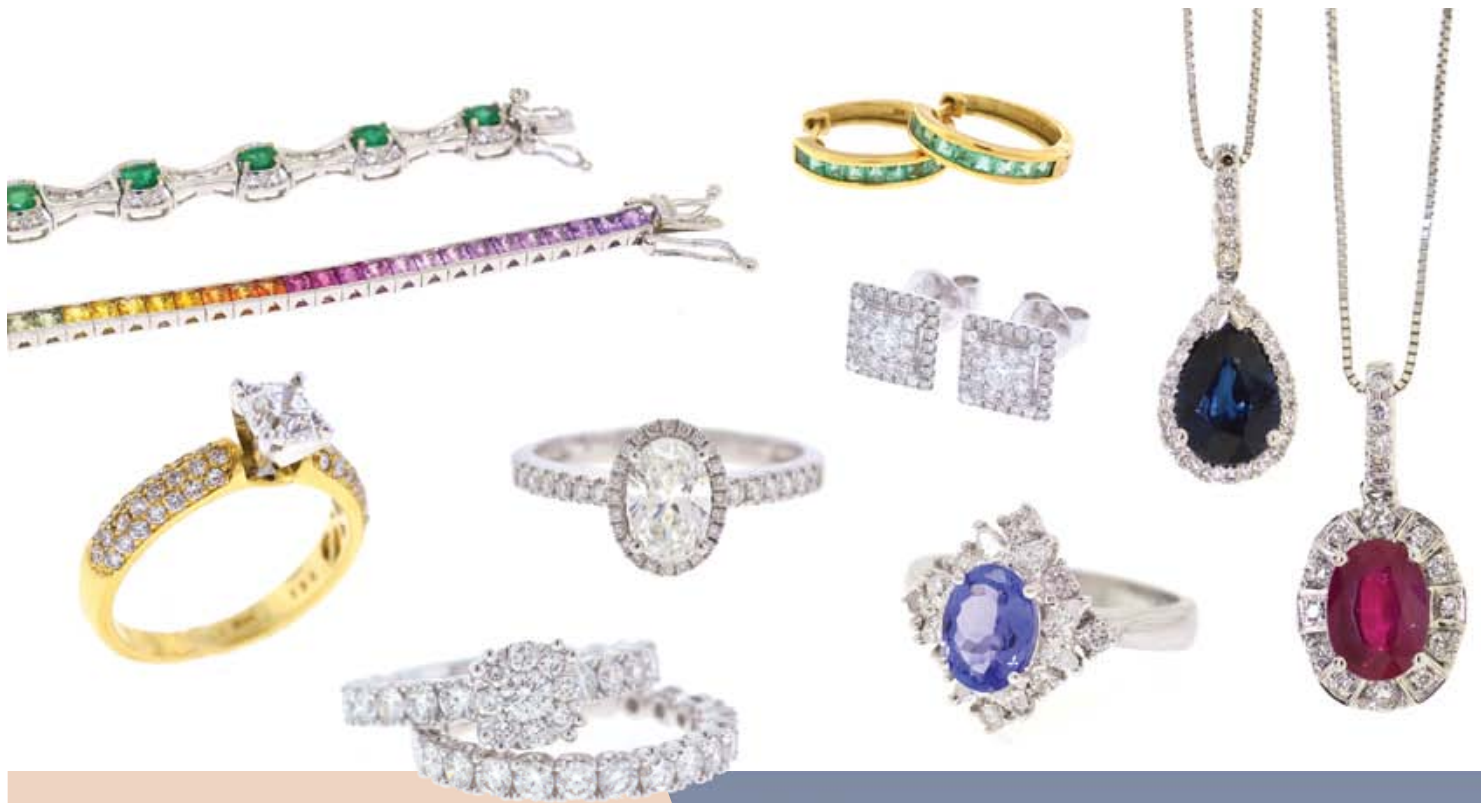


Photo by Bill Blackstone

Celebration time

A listing of the national and independence days marked by countries

April		
4	Senegal	Independence Day
16	Denmark	Birthday of Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II
17	Syria	National Day
18	Zimbabwe	Independence Day
19	Holy See	Election of the Pope
26	Tanzania	Union Day
27	Sierra Leone	Republic Day
27	South Africa	Freedom Day
27	Togo	National Day
27	Netherlands	King's Day
May		
1	Marshall Islands	National Day
2	Israel	National Day
3	Poland	National Day
9	European Union	Schuman Day
17	Norway	Constitution Day
20	Cameroon	National Day
22	Yemen	National Day
24	Eritrea	Independence Day
25	Argentina	May Revolution
25	Jordan	National Day
26	Georgia	Independence Day
28	Azerbaijan	Republic Day
28	Ethiopia	Downfall of the Dergue
June		
1	Samoa	Independence Day
2	Italy	Anniversary of the Foundation of the Republic
4	Tonga	Independence Day
6	Sweden	National Day
10	Portugal	National Day
12	Philippines	National Day
12	Russia	National Day
14	United Kingdom	Her Majesty the Queen's Birthday
17	Iceland	Proclamation of the Republic
18	O/of Eastern Caribbean States	OECS Day
18	Seychelles	Constitution Day
23	Luxembourg	Official Celebration of the Birthday of His Royal Highness Grand Duke Henri
25	Croatia	National Day
25	Slovenia	National Day
25	Mozambique	Independence Day
26	Madagascar	Independence Day
27	Djibouti	National Day
29	Holy See	National Day
30	Congo, Democratic Republic	Independence Day



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MIKE BEDELL WWW.MIKEBEDELLPHOTO.CA

Photographer Mike Beedell: "I met these adorable southern elephant seal pups on South Georgia Island in the sub-Antarctic. They had recently been abandoned by their mothers, which is the natural course of an elephant seal's life. The pudgy pinnipeds, each weighing about 113 kilograms, were molting. They were crying and bleating with heart-wrenching wails followed by frolicsome play in the surf. They were yearning for their mother's milk, which they had happily suckled for the past 30 days. But now it was time to grow up — and fast — because no one would be catching their food for them. When I sat on the beach amongst scores of them, they would come galumphing down the beach to visit me and suck on my hands and clothing. They would even crawl up on my legs and stare into my eyes, hoping I had some way of feeding them. These creatures were hunted to the brink of extinction in the early 1900s, but there is now a healthy population of 740,000 animals. Males grow to six metres and weigh up to 4,000 kilograms, while females average 770 kilograms."



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A woman with long brown hair, smiling, stands in front of a brick wall and a large wooden door. She is wearing a long white coat over a grey top and a floral skirt. The door has two small windows with metal grates.

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