

Diplomat &

INTERNATIONAL CANADA

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THE TOP 10
HOT SPOTS FOR
THE WORLD IN 2013

PLUS
THE SYRIAN FALLOUT:
AND WHY THE KURDS,
A PEOPLE WITHOUT A
COUNTRY, COULD EMERGE
AS WINNERS



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Fen Hampson on the inexorable rise in global crime

George Fetherling on the politics and diplomacy of opium

Margaret Dickenson on the exotic cuisine of Morocco

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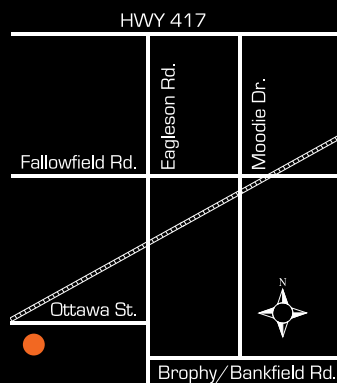


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JENNIFER CAMPBELL

Perils abound

Predictions are almost as prevalent as resolutions when the calendar rolls around to another year. In our cover story for this issue, writer Wolfgang Depner offers his version of this timely tradition. Mr. Depner takes a wide view of the world scene to come up with his Top 10 Hot Spots for 2013 — and when we say “hot spots,” we don’t mean tempting vacation destinations. We’re talking about those incendiary locales where violent conflict is almost certain to erupt, if it hasn’t already.

It’s no surprise that Syria, suppressed by civil war and the brutal regime of Bashar al-Assad, tops the list. But some of the others may surprise you. Turn to page 34 for the complete list, plus five runners-up Mr. Depner couldn’t ignore.

Our second feature in our Dispatches section takes a hard look at press freedom across the globe. Using reports by Freedom House and Reporters Without Borders as a starting point, writer Laura Neilson Bonikowsky tells a sobering story about press freedom today, and how dangerous life can be for journalists. A total of 946 journalists have been killed worldwide since 1992.

Up front, we have a series of cartoons from around the world to lighten our Diplomata section. In our Debate feature, former Canadian diplomat Harry Sterling analyzes the destabilizing influence of Syria’s civil war, especially on Lebanon and Jordan, and how the Kurds of Syria

might benefit the most, with consequences for Kurdish minorities in Iran, Iraq and Turkey as well.

Columnist Fen Hampson writes about the growing networks of organized crime across the globe. He helps readers get their minds around how much of the global GDP is caught up in software piracy, internet fraud and trafficking — in drugs, people, wildlife, counterfeit goods and currency, human organs, weapons, diamonds and other gemstones, oil, timber, fish, art and cultural property. Some analysts estimate it’s worth a total of \$7 trillion, or 10 percent of global GDP, in illegal business.

We also have my interview with Haitian Ambassador Frantz Liautaud. He’s the first envoy Haiti has sent to Canada in five years and he says Haiti’s new president, Michel Martelly, is serious about respecting diplomatic traditions. He also characterizes Canada as the world’s second-biggest supplier of aid to Haiti (the U.S. is first.)

On the trade front, we have reports from three heads of mission: Iceland, Indonesia and Qatar.

In our Delights section, books editor George Fetherling offers a few good reads about opium. Margaret Dickenson visits the kitchen of Moroccan Ambassador Nouzha Chekrouni, who shares her country’s complex and irresistible cuisine. Writer Margo Roston and photographer Dyanne Wilson visit the home of Korean Ambassador Cho Hee-yong, who arrived in Ottawa with his wife, Lee Yang, last summer.

Wine columnist Pieter Van den Weghe tells us about a federal private member’s bill that will allow us to buy wine from other provinces, outside the LCBO.

As for tempting vacation destinations, check out our piece by Ambassador Carlos Gomez-Mugica on the seductive lures of Spain.

Jennifer Campbell is Diplomat’s editor.

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Harry Sterling



Mr. Sterling is a former Canadian diplomat who served in Cuba, Venezuela, Zambia, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Turkey, Italy and Mexico. During his postings abroad, his responsibilities covered a wide range of subjects, with particular emphasis on analyzing the domestic and foreign policies of the countries in which he served.

Since leaving the foreign service, he has been writing regularly on international affairs, as well as Canadian foreign policies. His commentaries have been published in a number of Canadian newspapers, including the *Toronto Star*, *Vancouver Sun*, *Montreal Gazette*, *Ottawa Citizen*, as well as the *Washington Times* and *Los Angeles Times*.

Paul McKay



Mr. McKay has won Canada’s top journalism awards for investigative reporting, business and feature writing. He is also the author of seven books, a recipient of the Atkinson Fellowship in Public Policy and a past Pierre Berton writer-in-residence. His forthcoming book is titled *The Art of the Exposé*.

He is a music composer and jazz musician who lives in a restored log home near Kingston, where he directs a private foundation that assists other foundations in Latin America to reduce poverty and promote renewable energy. He recently became an honorary (unpaid) member of the Peabiru Institute international advisory board.

UP FRONT

Reuters photographer Goran Tomasevic took the image on our cover of a Free Syrian Army fighter taking cover during clashes with the Syrian Army in the Salaheddine neighbourhood of central Aleppo. Syria tops our list of the 10 Hot Spots for 2013 in a story that begins on page 34.



Political commentary from around the world



"Israel, Hamas and plucked dove" by Riber Hansson, *Sydsvenskan*, Netherlands



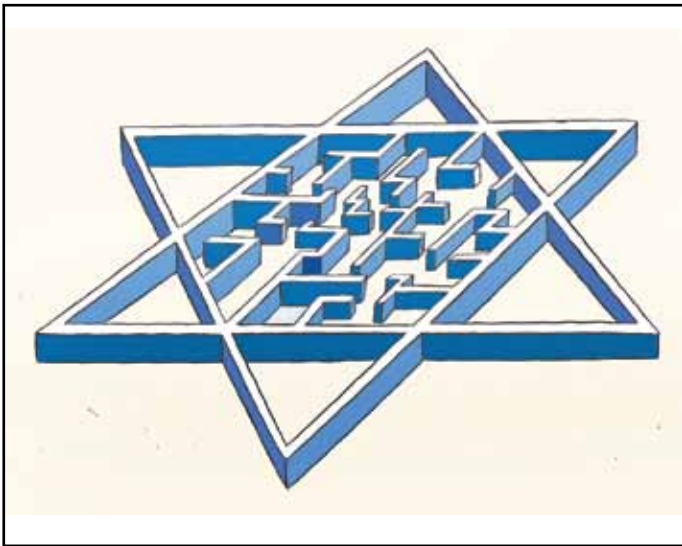
"Obama, Romney, Stars and Stripes" by Riber Hansson, Sweden



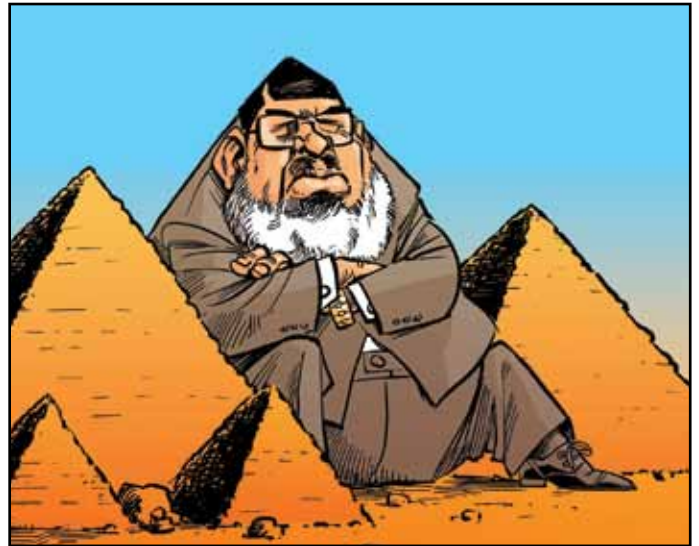
"Mohamad Morsi" by Daryl Cagle, CagleCartoons.com



"Israel's settlements" by Emad Hajjaj, Jordan



"Star of David Peace Maze" by Pavel Constantin, Romania



"Morsi" by Hajo de Reijger, The Netherlands



"Human organs trade" by Emad Hajjaj, Jordan



"Peace talks" Hajo de Reijger, Netherlands



"UN Status Palestine" by Tom Janssen, The Netherlands

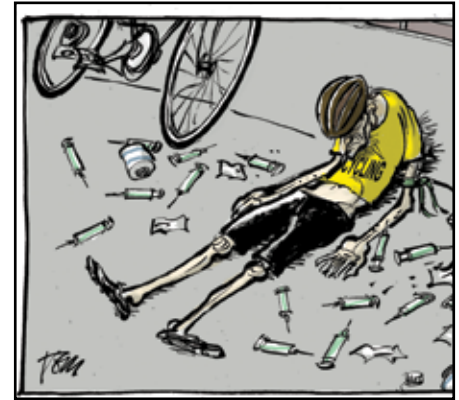


"Helping hand" by Luojie, China Daily, China



"Treaty of peace" by Pavel Constantin, Romania

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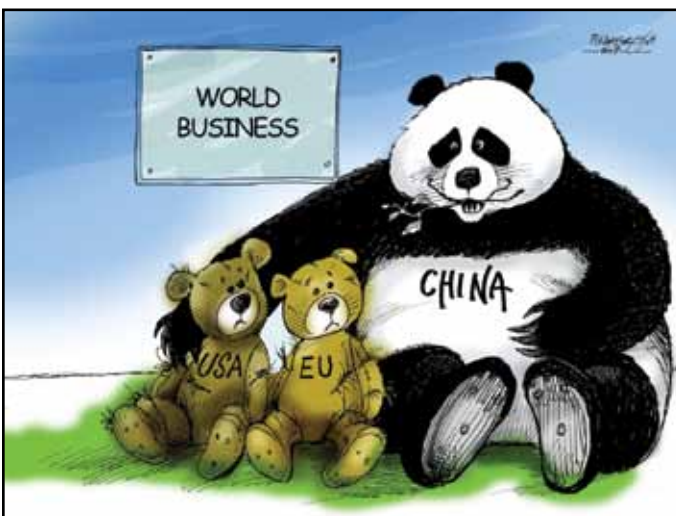


"Cycling" by Tom Janssen, Netherlands



"World focus on the Middle East" by Peter Broelman, Australia

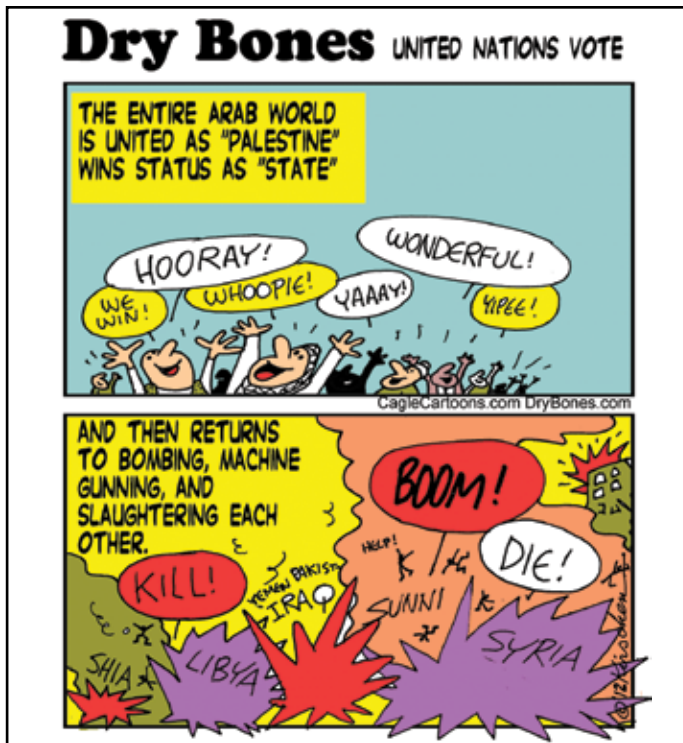
"Putin and Syria" by Emad Hajjaj, Jordan



"Teddy-bears" by Petar Pismestrovic, Kleine Zeitung, Austria



"Life of entitlements" by David Fitzsimmons, The Arizona Star, U.S.



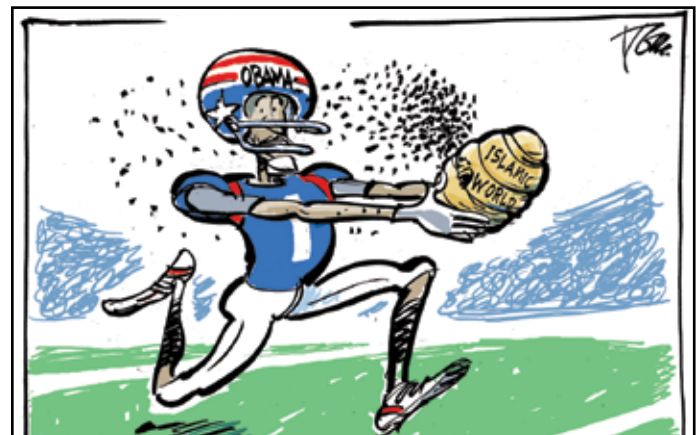
"Palestine" by Yaakov Kirschen, *Jerusalem Post*



"Xi Jinping with dragon" by Riber Hansson, Sweden



"Malala" by Rick McKee, *The Augusta Chronicle*, U.S.



"Obama and Islamic world" by Tom Janssen, Netherlands



"Greece and EU aid" by Luojie, *China Daily*, China



"Don't you dare" by Olle Johansson, Sweden

A world awash in crime



FEN OSLER HAMPSON

At a time when the global economy is foundering, there is one sector that isn't. It's called transnational organized crime and it's become a highly lucrative business.

Software piracy, internet fraud and trafficking in drugs, humans, wildlife, counterfeit goods and currency, human organs, small arms, diamonds and coloured gemstones, oil, timber, fish, art, cultural property and gold have grown, by some estimates, into a \$7-trillion business, accounting for roughly 10 percent of global GDP. That's huge and it's reshaping society, politics and the very world in which we live.

The rapid growth and sheer scale of these illicit markets, propelled by the forces of globalization and ICT (information communication technologies), is unprecedented in human history. It's driven by sophisticated criminal networks that now span continents and have been able to take advantage of the anonymity afforded by IT while simultaneously exploiting the secrecy and unfathomable complexity of modern banking and financial systems.

The notorious Los Zetas criminal syndicate in Mexico, for example, whose brutal tactics include beheadings, torture and the massacre of innocent civilians, is now one of the most highly sophisticated criminal operations in the world. Los Zetas are involved not just in trafficking cocaine and production of methamphetamines for markets in the U.S. and Canada but also in human trafficking, extortion and racketeering. Its operations, like those of many other criminal syndicates, extend throughout the Western Hemisphere from countries such as Colombia, Peru and Bolivia, where cocaine and other opiates are produced, to Central America, the



DEA officers and American soldiers take part in a hashish-burning operation in Afghanistan.

Caribbean and beyond. However, it's not just the Western Hemisphere that is being affected by the expansion of these illicit crime syndicates and drug cartels. West Africa is now a key transshipment hub for cocaine and heroin that is destined for lucrative European markets.

Trade routes for opiates produced in Afghanistan and Myanmar also now crisscross much of the globe, as do the criminal networks that sustain drug production and trade.

What is also striking about contemporary consumption patterns is that demand is no longer concentrated in the advanced industrialized economies of the West. In the case of heroin, for example, "emerging markets" (especially Russia, China, Pakistan, Iran, India and the countries of Southeast Asia) account for roughly two-thirds of total global consumption.

But it's not just drugs, human trafficking and trade in illicit goods that we have to worry about. Criminal activity on the internet is also a major factor in the global crime tsunami.

Brazil, Russia and the Ukraine, in particular, have become the great global incubators of cybercrime. In Russia, cybercriminals operate with the complicity of the government. They have been mobilized to launch attacks on countries such as Estonia and Georgia, which Russia views as adversaries. Even a developing country such as Kenya, which has

leapfrogged the computer age by going directly to handheld devices, has become a hotbed for criminals adept at hacking into new mobile technology. And China's role in supporting cybercrime and espionage is the world's worst-kept secret.

ICT growth is contributing 4 percent, or even more, to global GDP. That figure is even higher (10 percent) for developing countries. But online fraud, identity theft, intellectual property theft, online theft, and customer data losses are proving to be enormously costly. In 2009, AT&T's chief security officer, Ed Amoroso, testified before the U.S. Congress that global cybercrime was an eye-popping \$1-trillion business (or almost 2 percent of global GDP).

A recent estimate of the cost of cybercrime to the British economy alone put the figure at \$27 billion, or approximately 2 percent of Britain's total GDP. The Dutch have similarly put the losses from cybercrime to their economy in the 1.5-2 percent of GDP range.

Many criminal networks also work hand-in-glove with terrorist groups, such as al-Qaeda, Al-Shabaab, Hamas, Hezbollah, the Revolutionary Party of Kurdistan, Peru's Shining Path and the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia). They help deposit and launder monies through financial institutions and *hawala* (a money broker-based transfer of funds and other assets in the Middle East, South Asia, North Africa and the Horn of

Africa), including funds that can be spun off from "charitable" front organizations such as the Holy Land Foundation, which raised millions for Hamas until U.S. authorities closed it down.

The flourishing of transnational crime is not simply a law enforcement issue. It is also a development and security issue that threatens state and societal formation in much of the developing world.

The rapid increase in the volume of illicit flows coincides with institutional decline in many of the world's poor and medium-income fragile and failing states. A recent major OECD study on *Transnational Crime and Fragile States* (2012) argues that there are powerful incentives for security forces and state officials to develop close links with transnational organized crime because there is an absence of public scrutiny or transparency in state institutions.

Furthermore, the same study notes "the transition to competitive electoral democracy in Central America, the introduction of devolved municipal powers in Colombia, and the political rivalry of the elite and clans in post-Soviet Central Asian Republics such as Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have all resulted in atomized state structures, in which officials, politi-

cians and other power-holders vie for access to the additional resources provided by criminal activity."

External efforts by Western donors to build state capacity and strengthen local governance by promoting transparency and building better policing and judicial



Insignia of the crime gang Los Zetas: "The Zs"

systems are thus being undermined by organized crime. As law enforcement and criminal justice systems are eroded, the citizens of these countries are also being threatened by a rising tide of violence. In Mexico alone, drug-related violence has killed more than 55,000 people since 2006.

Although the issue of transnational organized crime has finally reached the UN, which has passed various resolutions on terrorist financing, small-arms trafficking and the effects of organized crime

on peace-building efforts, the response of the international community overall has been weak. The United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) is the poor sister of the UN Convention on Anti-Corruption. The UNTOC was opened for signature in 2000 and has been signed by 147 countries, including its associated protocols on human trafficking, smuggling and the illicit trafficking and smuggling of firearms.

However, efforts to create a proper implementation review mechanism are proving difficult because key states, including some prominent members of the G20 group of nations, are resistant to such review mechanisms.

Unless governments stop seeing organized crime as simply a law-enforcement problem and start working together to develop comprehensive solutions, there will be little progress in dealing with a problem that now threatens the very fabric of the modern world.

Fen Osler Hampson is Distinguished Fellow and Director of Global Security at the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) and Chancellor's Professor at Carleton University.



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Syria's fallout on Jordan, Lebanon and the Kurds

What happens to Syria's Kurds may have broader implications for Kurdish populations in Turkey, Iran and Iraq — and regional instability.

By Harry Sterling



Kurds from Italy, using a variety of Kurdish flags, including that of the Kurdistan Workers' Party at right, protest in Bologna, against the Turkish government.

"Revolutions have never lightened the burden of tyranny: they have only shifted it to another shoulder."

When author George Bernard Shaw uttered that pessimistic, certainly cynical, view more than a century ago in 1903, he could not have foreseen the dramatic uprisings that swept through much of the Middle East and North Africa in 2011 and resulted in the overthrow of authoritarian leaders in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen, as well as ongoing conflict in Syria.

Many of those who initially welcomed the so-called Arab Spring have become increasingly concerned about where it's now heading in some countries. Fearful extremist movements, including Islamist fundamentalists, are undermining the

early hard-won gains of pro-democracy groups, while non-democratic groups are determined to hijack such gains for their own narrow purposes.

Others are concerned about longstanding divisions erupting within societies, pitting rival religious and ethnic groups, clans, tribes and regions against one another, further undermining the stability of countries.

Paradoxically, one ethnic group that conceivably could actually benefit from the current tension between competing groups within society is the Kurds of Syria. And what happens to them could have even broader implications for Kurdish minorities in Turkey, Iraq and Iran.

During the initial phase of the uprising in Syria against the Alawite-dominated re-

gime of President Bashar al-Assad, Syria's Kurdish population, like most of Syria's Christian minority, essentially stayed on the sidelines, not wishing to take a stand that could endanger their own survival.

However, once the Syrian opposition forces strengthened their fighting ability, thanks primarily to Qatar and Saudi Arabia, President Assad's loyalist forces found it increasingly difficult to control vast areas of Syria, especially more remote rural regions, while trying to stop advances made by the Free Syrian Army in various cities, including traditional anti-government urban centres such as Homs and Hama.

This inability of government forces to maintain a firm control over rural areas ultimately forced the regime to effectively

withdraw from areas populated by the Syrian Kurdish community. It is a population whose fundamental human rights had been systematically denied by the Alawite-controlled central government in Damascus for countless decades, sparking sporadic anti-government incidents that were brutally quashed by the Baathist regime. Countless Kurds were imprisoned and tortured to terrorize that community into submission.

But the military successes of the Syrian opposition and the withdrawal of the government's presence in the northeast Kurdish region have been an unexpected blessing for the country's three million Kurds, which they have been quick to seize, though much of the present-day Kurdish population now lives in large cities such as Damascus and Aleppo.

Since October, the Kurds effectively started to replace the central government's infrastructure in the Kurdish areas, especially in Aleppo Province, establishing their own rule and political control, operating police stations and manning roadblocks.

Some Kurds have made it clear they intend to defend these recent gains and will insist on Kurdish autonomy within a federation system once the regime of President Assad is overthrown. Other Kurds dream of someday going beyond an autonomous status within Syria to establish a separate independent Kurdish state.

While many regard such a goal as extremely difficult to achieve, especially given Turkey's opposition, Kurds who disagree point to the situation in next-door Iraq, where the well-established and entrenched autonomous region of Kurdistan — with a population of three million — basically operates as a de facto independent state regardless of its ostensible status as part of Iraq.

Iraq's central government in Baghdad, led by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, has been powerless to impose its control over Kurdistan because it already has enough trouble coping with the never-ending terrorist attacks of Sunni extremists, including al-Qaeda, against the nominally Shiite coalition government led by al-Maliki.

Efforts by Baghdad to have federal military troops enter Kurdistan have resulted in tense showdowns, even requiring American officers to intercede during the period U.S. troops were still active in Iraq to prevent actual fighting between the federal forces and Kurdistan's Peshmerga fighters (Peshmerga meaning those who confront death.)

In fact, Iraq's Kurdistan clearly is being treated by non-Iraqis as if it were almost independent; several countries have established representative offices there and investment has poured in from several Arab and European countries. The capital, Erbil, is now served by direct commercial flights from abroad.

Even the Turkish government, which has opposed creation of an independent Kurdistan, primarily out of fear that this would work to the advantage of Turkey's own Kurdish insurgents of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), has established



Demonstrations in Istanbul after an F-16 fighter bombed the Sirnak area, killing 36 people in December 2011.

relatively pragmatic relations with the government of Masoud Barzani in Iraq's autonomous Kurdish region. The PKK has been carrying out a bloody insurgency since 1984, in which 40,000 to 45,000 reportedly have perished.

In fact, Turkey is one of the biggest investors in Iraqi Kurdistan and a channel for the export of petroleum from oilfields controlled by Kurdistan against the wishes of the al-Maliki government in Baghdad. Turkey's foreign minister, Ahmet Davutoglu, has visited Erbil for talks with Barzani and Turkey's prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, even invited Barzani to visit Turkey, a prospect that was once unthinkable.

Nevertheless, Turkey's concerns over developments in the Kurdish areas of Syria are a different matter.

The government of Prime Minister-

WHO ARE THE KURDS?

The Kurds are an Aryan Islamic people who speak a dialect of Persian. They historically inhabited a region called Kurdistan in West Asia and the present-day Middle East. The majority of Kurds, most Sunnis, now live in areas of Turkey, Iraq, Syria and Iran, though small populations of Kurds can be found in Azerbaijan, Armenia and elsewhere, including 300,000 Kurds living in Israel, who reportedly converted to Judaism. The Kurdish diaspora has spread throughout the world, many having emigrated to countries such as Canada. The Kurds have maintained their own culture and traditions for more than 3,000 years.

The Kurdish people, who number approximately 30 million, are one of the largest ethnic groups to never have had their own independent state, though Kurds living in Turkey and Iraq have been involved in uprisings seeking greater autonomy over the years. The Kurdistan Workers' Party, PKK, in Turkey launched a major uprising in Eastern Turkey in 1994 which, so far, has caused the deaths of more than 40,000. Following the overthrow of the Baath regime led by Saddam Hussein in Iraq, the Kurdish population there established the Kurdistan autonomous administration which, while technically still part of Iraq, is now operating as a quasi-independent political entity. It has been frequently involved in clashes with Iraq's central government. Kurds in Syria have indicated they will seek greater autonomy once the present regime of President Bashar al-Assad is overthrown.

Erdogan is keenly aware that the most powerful of Kurdish groups in Syria, the Democratic Union Party, PYD, has close links with the PKK insurgents operating from their Kandil Mountain base in northern Iraq. The PKK has increased attacks inside the Kurdish region in Eastern Turkey over the past year.

The fact that Masoud Barzani was able to get the PYD to join other smaller Kurdish groups in Syria in an alliance last summer made it possible for the Kurds to effectively replace the departing federal



DREAMTIME

Kurdish elders gather in Northern Iraq.

authorities in Kurdish regions. This is also worrisome for Turkey because of the PYD's close relations with the Kurdistan Workers' Party fighting inside Turkey.

The Turkish authorities are already convinced that President Assad is backing the PKK's escalation of fighting in Turkey in retaliation for Ankara aiding the Syrian opposition. There is also suspicion Assad is somehow linked to clashes in Aleppo Province between the PYD and the Free Syrian Army.

A further complicating factor is that the Kurds themselves have also been divided by factionalism. In Iraq, former leader Saddam Hussein was actually able to have rival Kurdish groups join him against their joint enemy, resulting in Kurds spilling the blood of fellow Kurds.

Barzani's main rival, Jalal Talabani, current leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), actually supported the PUK, aiding Saddam Hussein in his 1966 attacks against Barzani. Paradoxically, to ensure the support of Iraqi Kurds, Prime Minister al-Maliki agreed to have Talabani accepted as president of Iraq.

Although Iraqi Kurds are mostly affiliated with the Sunni branch of Islam, the majority Sunnis have not been willing to accept the controversial Yazidi minority in their region. This has resulted in Yazidis being attacked and killed.

The Kurdish dream of one day establishing an independent Kurdish state from the Kurdish populations of Turkey, Iraq, Syria and Iran — Armenia and Azerbaijan also have Kurdish minorities — still remains a distant goal.

Nevertheless, the Kurds themselves

are bitterly aware that such a homeland for the Kurds has always faced unrelenting opposition from the four countries in which they are significant minorities, especially Turkey and Syria, where their basic rights have historically been denied. In Syria, even citizenship was denied to many Kurds.

In Turkey, for instance, authorities have refused, until recent years, to acknowledge that there was a separate group known as Kurds. Instead, they were called Mountain Turks. They also were not allowed to operate schools in the Kurdish language or radio or television in Kurdish. Kurds running for office in parliamentary elections were prohibited from identifying themselves as Kurdish. A Kurdish female deputy was imprisoned for addressing the Turkish parliament in Kurdish.

To his credit, once his Justice and Democracy Party, AK, took power in 2002, Erdogan did make some initial efforts to permit greater use of the Kurdish language in schools and the media, though in recent months the PKK's escalation of attacks has undermined efforts to improve relations with the Kurdish population.

The most recent escalation of PKK attacks within Turkey — along with a hunger strike by imprisoned PKK militants — was linked to demands that Turkish authorities improve conditions for the PKK's founder, Abdullah Ocalan, who is imprisoned on the isolated island of Imrali without regular contact with outsiders, including his family.

In November, Prime Minister Erdogan said there was widespread support amongst Turkish citizens for reinstating

the country's death penalty, which was abolished in 2004 to meet requirements for Ankara eventually to be admitted to the European Union. Some see this comment as an implied threat that his government wouldn't be blackmailed into releasing Ocalan, as the PKK demanded.

While many Kurds obviously would favour the eventual creation of an independent Kurdistan, they realize existing governments in Turkey, Iraq, Syria, as well as Iran, simply have no intention of letting their Kurdish minorities establish Kurdish independence. (Interestingly, there are also reportedly between 300,000 and 500,000 Kurds living in Turkish-speaking Azerbaijan, some in critical positions, including the all-important petroleum industry.)

Such Kurdish independence would not only have highly negative economic consequences for existing governments, but also could open a Pandora's box for other minorities in the immediate region and beyond.

And few countries would willingly accept losing part of their territory, regardless of the wishes of a significant proportion of their population that insists on separating, as happened when Kosovo's Albanian-speaking majority proclaimed its unilateral independence.

Although Canadian governments have indicated they would accept the results of a referendum in which Quebecers voted by a clear and unequivocal majority to separate from Canada, other nations around the world would not tolerate such a separation, as graphically demonstrated by China's refusal to tolerate independence for Tibet or authentic autonomy for

the Turkish-speaking Uighurs in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region.

In the case of Kosovo, even now, less than half of the United Nations' 193 members have recognized its independence and five of the European Union's 27 nations have not recognized Kosovo either. One of them, Spain, is obviously concerned about the separatist movement in its own rich Catalonia region.

The conflict in Syria vividly indicates just how fragile and tenuous many societies in the Middle East and North Africa are when authoritarian and despotic leaders are driven from power.

The overthrow of the Alawite-controlled regime of President Bashar al-Assad has been of particular concern because of the spillover onto neighbours, such as Jordan and Lebanon. Both have been extremely vulnerable because of their own deeply divided societies.

The fallout from the Syrian conflict was vividly demonstrated in October in Lebanon when pro-Assad Lebanese militias, predominantly Shiite or Alawite, fought Sunni supporters of the Syrian opposition movement in Tripoli.

Lebanon has always had to live with deep religious divisions, not just between Sunnis and Shiites, but also Christians and other minority sects. For its part, Syria has historically regarded Lebanon as part of Greater Syria, with Damascus constantly interfering in Lebanon's affairs, even stationing 15,000 troops there during Lebanon's bloody 1975-1990 civil war. Syria only withdrew its troops in 2005 following international pressure after the assassination of Lebanese prime minister Rafic Hariri, whose murder is blamed on Syria and Hezbollah.

What happens in Lebanon in the post-Assad period could have profound and extremely dangerous repercussions for Lebanon's continued stability. The assassination in October of its interior minister is indicative of the tenuous situation in that violence-plagued nation.

The spillover effect of the Syrian fighting also has the potential to destabilize the situation in Jordan, which has been swamped by more than 100,000 Syrians fleeing the conflict, creating incredible strain on the tiny nation, including the pro-Western Hashemite monarchy led by King Abdullah.

Until recent times, King Abdullah could normally count on the loyal support of Jordan's traditional Bedouin tribes, whose leaders' continued goodwill rests on the various advantages granted them by the



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king. Their loyalty has been critically important because half of Jordan's population is Palestinian, most of whom are opposed to King Abdullah's moderate policy towards Israel.

Tribal support can no longer be taken for granted. Some of the more important tribal groups have been demanding major constitutional changes. Anti-Israeli sentiment has also increased, with one of the largest tribes disowning a prominent tribe member for agreeing to be Jordan's ambassador to Tel Aviv.

In such an increasingly uncertain time for Syria and its neighbours, some fear the situation could deteriorate to the point where Syria itself could fragment, with some regions, including the areas peopled by Kurds, seeking to undermine the centralized control and power of Damascus. Others hypothesize that in a worst-case scenario, the minority Alawites, rather than accept domination and potential threats to their very lives from a triumphant Sunni majority, might withdraw to the traditional homeland of many Alawites in the Antakya region along the Mediterranean coast, effectively dismembering that region from the rest of Syria.

As questionable as that might seem

to outsiders, during the early stages of France's mandate over Syria following the Ottoman defeat in the First World War, the French established six autonomous administrations in what eventually became Syria. Regional power bases and tribal loyalties still remain strong.

To complicate matters further, the civil war in Syria has become a magnet that attracts a plethora of militants and extremists from numerous backgrounds and movements, including seasoned fighters from such places as Kosovo, Chechnya and beyond, not to mention al-Qaeda. And each comes with competing goals and a sense of its own righteousness.

There is fear that the increasing presence of so many dubious groups, particularly Jihadists, many funded by Islamist organizations or fundamentalist-inclined Arab governments, introduces even greater uncertainty over where Syria will be heading. This is especially so once there no longer is any single powerful force in place to keep the lid on the totally unpredictable and dangerous developments that may be unleashed.

It also must be borne in mind that even though Bashar al-Assad's father terrorized the Muslim Brotherhood into submis-

sion when he systematically destroyed its stronghold in the city of Hama in 1982, reportedly killing nearly 30,000, the fundamentalist-minded Brotherhood remains a force to be reckoned with in Syria and many of its members will want revenge on their oppressors.

It's precisely because of understandable concerns over Syria's deeply divided society that many have called for some form of outside intervention in Syria, whether by the United Nations, NATO or others to contain an even greater conflagration within Syria and beyond its borders.

In such an unstable and unpredictable environment, the future of groups such as Syria's Kurds is far from clear. Nor is the future of present-day Syria itself. As one Jihadist extremist bluntly expressed it, Jihadists are not fighting in Syria for democracy or simply the removal of Bashar al-Assad. They are fighting for the imposition of Sharia Law and the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate, in which democracy and elections are alien concepts.

Harry Sterling, a former diplomat, is an Ottawa-based commentator. He served in Turkey and writes regularly on Middle East issues.

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Canadian lawyers go to court for human rights

By Jillian Siskind

Many Canadians cling to Canada's past international reputation as a broker of peace, as an important middle power and as a protector of human rights. These sentiments stem from as far back as the 1950s, when then foreign minister Lester Pearson won the Nobel Peace Prize for defusing the Suez Crisis. Yet we also have more recent interventions and contributions to peace and security for which to be proud.

Canadian Lawyers for International Human Rights (CLAIHR) is dedicated to encouraging the pursuit of these objectives.

CLAIHR represents Canadian lawyers and students interested in international human rights. We promote and protect these rights within Canada and in relation to Canada's actions abroad. While there are many larger organizations that deal with human rights abuses around the world, CLAIHR is the only Canadian organization to focus its energies exclusively on issues that arise within Canada, relate to its residents, or by Canadians abroad.

Over the years, CLAIHR has been involved in many initiatives, such as sending Canadian lawyers into the refugee camps of Western Sahara, where they assisted the peace process. It has also worked with rights-based organizations in South and Central America. CLAIHR has also helped Canadian law students pursue human rights internships abroad. It is also active in litigating cases involving international human rights and international crimes.

For example, in 2011, CLAIHR successfully made arguments at the Supreme Court of Canada in a case that has the potential to assist victims of torture who are attempting to hold their tormentors accountable in Canadian courts. CLAIHR will also be intervening in early 2013 in the Quebec Court of Appeal in a case involving the first prosecution and conviction under the Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Act.

In this case, the defendant, Desiré Munyaneza, was a key perpetrator of the 1994 Rwandan genocide in one of Rwanda's prefectures (provinces). One of the charges was related to his involvement in the mass slaughter of 500 Tutsi civilians who had been seeking shelter in a church. Mun-



Canadian Lawyers for International Human Rights has sent Canadian lawyers into refugee camps in Western Sahara, where they assisted in the peace process.

yaneza was found guilty of the charges and sentenced to life imprisonment. He has appealed the conviction and sentence and CLAIHR has been granted status as an intervener in this appeal.

As an organization run exclusively by volunteers, CLAIHR devotes most of its energies to educating the public, lawyers, students and judges on issues relating to international human rights. In October, CLAIHR completed a symposium commemorating the 10th anniversary of the Responsibility to Protect doctrine (R2P). This doctrine was spearheaded by the Canadian delegation to the United Nations in 2001 and was put to the test with the recent military intervention in Libya.

The Responsibility to Protect doctrine attempts to strike an appropriate balance between state sovereignty and the protection of vulnerable people. It also emphasizes the use of non-military means to reach peace before the big guns are brought to bear. This doctrine is arguably the most important contribution Canada

has made to international affairs since the Suez Crisis.

To commemorate this, CLAIHR hosted two sold-out events, starting in 2011 with an evening with Michael Ignatieff, who was part of the Canadian delegation to the UN when the doctrine was formulated, and concluding with a panel discussion with senators Roméo Dallaire and Art Eggleton and former MP Martha Hall Findlay. The panellists covered issues such as child soldiers, Canada's role in the NATO action in Kosovo in 1999 and whether regime change should even enter the discussion of the R2P at all.

In 2013, CLAIHR will continue with the public education and advocacy campaigns it has started to encourage debate and policy decisions.

Jillian Siskind is the president of CLAIHR. For more information on CLAIHR's work or to get involved, please visit the website at www.claihr.ca and follow them on Twitter @CLAIHR.

Fostering global friendship through music

The Canadian Music Competition (CMC) was the beneficiary of two unique fundraisers in the fall, both hosted by diplomats.

In October, outgoing British High Commissioner Andrew Pocock and his wife, Julie, hosted a cocktail reception at Earncliffe for music fans who get to enjoy a diplomat's hospitality and appreciate hearing young people perform beautiful music. The competitors, in turn, get a chance to practise their pieces and perform in front of others.

In November, C.K. Liu, Taiwan's representative in Canada through the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (Taiwan's equivalent of an embassy in countries with a one-China policy), hosted a buffet dinner.

Gilberte LeClerc is married to a former Canadian diplomat and she came up with the idea of the fundraising event a few years ago. Several diplomatic missions have participated, some of them, such as Taiwan, more than once. The CMC sells tickets — \$60 per person — and, aside from the expense of bringing instruments, such as a piano, to the residence, printing programs and buying flowers for the participants, all proceeds go to the competition.

"It's appreciated very much," Ms LeClerc said of the generosity of diplomats.

For Mr. Liu, it was a chance to meet 60 members of Ottawa's music-loving



Dr. Chih-Kung Liu, representative of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Canada, and his wife Huey-Pyng Liu, right, hosted a fundraising dinner that featured the music of violinist Maria Kristic, left, among others.

community and share some of Taiwan's culture at the same time.

"We've been sponsoring this kind of activity for a decade," Mr. Liu said. "We gain a great friendship and we are able to provide a platform for young musicians to practise, but also to cultivate a relationship with Taiwan. The more people understand my country, the more they will care about it."

At the Taiwanese event, ticket-buyers were treated to cocktails and a dinner featuring Chinese food. Three young music

students, including one young woman whose ancestry is Taiwanese and who came all the way from New Brunswick for the opportunity, performed before dinner.

"It was the biggest event I've hosted here yet," said Mr. Liu, who arrived in Canada last summer.

Mr. Liu said his mission is happy to consider hosting fundraisers for NGOs or charities in need.

"If an NGO or charity is looking for a location, we're more than happy to provide one," he said. ■



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Brazil's rise as a 'soft power' on the world stage



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BECAME AMBASSADOR TO CANADA:
 February 2011
PREVIOUS POSTINGS: New York,
 Ottawa, Geneva, London,
 Caracas

Since the emergence of the BRIC as a group to be reckoned with in the global economy, Brazil's economic, social, political and diplomatic actions have drawn added attention from governments, think tanks and the media. Not being a military power (it has no nuclear weapons), unlike most of its BRIC partners (Russia, China and India), Brazil's profile has, nonetheless, risen as a player capable of influencing the outcomes of negotiations or giving an authoritative voice on many important issues. In that sense, Brazil's stances and actions on international issues have qualified it as a soft power.

In fact, Brazil's participation in multilateral and regional institutions and in bilateral initiatives has been recognized as instrumental in enabling decisions and steering the discussions towards balanced results. Such capacity can be attributed, first, to the rise in Brazil's economic standing.

Today it is the 6th largest economy in the world. It is a major producer and exporter of various agricultural and mineral commodities. It has a diversified economy and industrial base and is becoming a major energy producer. These economic assets attracted US\$67 billion of foreign direct investments [FDI] in 2011, making Brazil the second largest recipient of FDI among developing countries, after China.

Second, the country has made large strides domestically in addressing long-standing problems of income inequality, poor social indicators, human rights and political instability. The persistence of those problems had impaired the

country's profile in world affairs and the prospects for its economic growth. The solutions that Brazil has found in addressing those problem areas have enhanced its international reputation and made it a valuable

interlocutor in major discussions.

Much of the country's recent economic development can be credited to policies that have improved social inclusion. This has been achieved by, among others: better access to education, real increases in the minimum wage, credit expansion to consumers, universal access to health services, universal coverage of social security benefits and the implementation of conditional cash transfers, such as the *Bolsa Família*, a social welfare program aimed at those at the bottom of the income pyramid.

Though Brazil still has a long way to go in establishing a socially just society, it has been successful in improving certain social indicators. It has reached the first and fourth of the UN Millennium Development Goals, respectively, halving the population ratio living on less than one dollar a day, and making a two-thirds reduction in child mortality. About 30 million to 40 million people have been lifted out of poverty and have become part of the middle-class in the last decade.

More important, the lowest strata of the population has seen its income raised at a higher rate than that of the top echelons on the social chart.

Third, Brazil has shown greater capacity to articulate positions in various international negotiations and to influence their outcome, as well as to promote bilateral or regional initiatives. In the WTO Doha Round, for instance, Brazil has played a critical role in creating a third force in the negotiations on agriculture. It has also helped strengthen the hand of developing countries in withstanding the pressures from developed countries that

could have demanded higher concessions from their developing counterparts, particularly when it comes to other sectors under negotiation (tariffs and services, for example).

Brazil's foreign policy has of late shown a new facet. It has evolved from the traditional position of strict observance of the principles of non-intervention and national sovereignty to also comprise that of "non-indifference." Following this principle, Brazil has fostered peaceful settlement of disputes, reconciliation and acceptance of different political perspectives. In 2010, it joined hands with Turkey to convince Iran to agree to exchange enriched uranium, thus ensuring the civilian purposes of the Iranian nuclear program. Though immediately superseded by the UN Security Council resolution authoriz-



Rio de Janeiro

DREAMSTIME

ing sanctions against Iran, the Turkish-Brazilian endeavours have remained a positive attempt at peace by middle powers and have given some leeway for further negotiations between Iran and the P5+1 (China, France, Russia, U.K., the U.S. and Germany.)

In the Latin-American region, Brazil has presented itself as a staunch advocate of democracy and solidarity. It has championed strengthening regional institutions. It has also opposed *coups d'états* perpetrated or attempted against constitutionally elected presidents in some Latin-American countries. Also, it has joined forces with other countries of the region to put an end to the unjustifiable embargo to which Cuba is subjected. In Haiti, Brazil has assisted Haitians to keep their reconquered democracy, to consolidate political stability and to restore conditions for sustained development by means of bilateral and multilateral co-operation with the United Nations and other partners, such as India, South Africa, Cuba and Canada.

In Africa, Brazil has led the UN Peacebuilding Commission talks on Guinea-Bissau and the efforts of the international community to bring peace and stability to that Portuguese-speaking African country.

Likewise, it has expanded its co-operation to help many African countries improve their agriculture, education and health, and has set up strategic partnerships with Angola and South Africa.

On the environment, Brazil has played a prominent role in negotiations on climate change. In joining South Africa, India and China to form what's known as the BASIC group of countries, it has helped to avoid a demands for disproportionately higher commitments from emerging countries in terms of CO2 emission reductions at the Copenhagen Conference in 2009. Brazilian leadership was also key in arriving at the consensus document on sustainable development adopted at last summer's Rio+20 Conference. Attended by 45,000 official and non-governmental delegates, the event brought together, for the first time, governments, civil society and the private sector in agreement on the summit's main objective, namely: a plan that commits all to the eradication of poverty as an imperative element of sustainable development. It also highlighted sustainable development to stakeholders when they were making decisions on economic, social and environmental issues.

Brazil reasons that the concerns and

interests of the international community will be better addressed by strengthening multilateral and regional institutions. This explains its active participation in discussions pertaining to, among other things, the environment, trade, law of the sea, disarmament and human rights. In addition, it believes that multilateral and regional efforts can more adequately ensure international peace and security and provide legitimacy and efficacy to the resolution of conflicts.

That is why Brazil continues to call for reform to the United Nations Security Council, with the inclusion of new permanent and non-permanent members. Such change is necessary to make the Council more representative and its decisions more legitimate and efficient in reflecting the views of a wider and more geographically diversified spectrum of the international community.

In conclusion, Brazil, emboldened by a growing economy, a more socially inclusive society and an ability to broker constructive diplomatic initiatives, has raised its profile in all global and regional fora, and has become an important partner in the quest for solutions to the main issues of the contemporary world. ▣



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Frantz Liautaud is Haiti's first ambassador to Canada in five years. The son of a diplomat, he comes to diplomacy from the world of business. Prior to his appointment as ambassador, he was president of the Haitian-Canadian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The former property developer — has a civil engineering degree from the School of Public Works in Paris and also studied at the University of California in Los Angeles. He feels his business background should provide a big hint about why Haitian President Michel Martelly ("Sweet Micky") nominated him to head up the Canadian mission. He spoke with *Diplomat's* editor, Jennifer Campbell.

Diplomat magazine: You're the first ambassador from Haiti in a long time. Why the large gap?

Frantz Liautaud: Every Haitian, and certainly a lot of the diplomatic people here, are asking why. The former president — President [René] Préval — never nominated any ambassadors anywhere. So if you were ambassador, you stayed there. He would have recalled one or two, which he did when he came back into power in 2006. He recalled the person who was my predecessor, Mr. [Robert] Tippenhauer. So when I came and presented my credentials, I was replacing Mr. Tippenhauer, who left Ottawa five years ago.

DM: So Mr. Préval had a policy of not appointing ambassadors?

FL: Well, yeah. By our constitution, the president nominates the ambassador, but it has to be ratified by a special commission in the Senate, which interviews candidates. Very often, this is a matter of negotiation between the executive and the legislative branch of government. Mr. Préval didn't want to subject himself to that kind of wheeling and dealing, so it was status quo.

He wouldn't handle his foreign policy through the ambassadors accredited in each country. He communicated with foreign countries through their representative in Haiti. It's unconventional. The idea

of having a diplomatic relationship is that I send a representative and you send one.

DM: Are you a political appointee?

FL: You could say that because I'm not a career diplomat, but the notion of a political appointee isn't very well known in Haiti. I was the president of the Haitian-Canadian Chamber of Commerce and President Martelly and his prime minister [Laurent Lamothe], wanted to focus their diplomacy on trade and commercial exchanges, investing into Haiti. And they were looking for people who had the ability to promote that kind of idea.

I'm not as young as I look, probably — I'm 71 years old. My father was a diplomat, he was the first ambassador of Haiti in Washington. He passed away when I was very young, but my mother remarried and her second husband was also a diplomat. I got used to the diplomatic circles. As a teenager, I was in Spain with my stepfather when he was posted there and besides my professional career, I was very much involved with sports in Haiti. I was a member of the Olympic committee and president of the tennis federation and I've been involved in regional sports organizations.

DM: How important is Canada to Haiti?

FL: It's probably the most important country to Haiti and has been for a long time. Diplomatic relations with Canada are almost 50 years old, but since the turn of the century, Canada has really stepped up its involvement and right now, I would say Canada is probably the second biggest supplier of support to the Haitian government. [In 2010/11, Canada sent \$252.94 million in development aid to Haiti. The U.S. provided \$380.3 million in development aid in 2011 and \$357.2 million in 2012.]

For a number of years, Afghanistan and Haiti were the two major countries receiving Canadian aid and with the drop of Afghanistan, we became the first country for Canada. So it's important for Canada and therefore very important for us, too.

DM: As your background is business, is it one of the priorities of your tenure in Canada?



LOGAN ABASS/UNDP GLOBAL

Haiti's presidential palace partly collapsed in the January 2010 earthquake.

FL: As I explained, that's the new Haitian government's priority. Haiti needs to put Haitians to work so that it can jumpstart its economy. Through the past 20 years of political traumas and embargoes and what have you, Haitian capital has been depleted totally. So we're not able to raise from within what it takes to jumpstart the economy.

Now that we've had elections, there's some kind of political stability. There's no economic development anywhere in the world if you don't have political stability. But that's not enough. You need the capital to do it. We know that Haiti offers opportunities in many areas. In the late '40s and early '50s, Haiti was one of the five biggest tourist destinations in the Caribbean, next to Cuba and Puerto Rico. People barely knew about Jamaica and Dominican Republic back then. In 1954, Port-au-Prince was celebrating its 250th anniversary and at the same time, it was the 150th anniversary of our independence. In the Bay of Port-au-Prince, there would be five or six cruise ships. Then, we had the Duvalier regime, that started in '57 and Haiti was wiped off

the tourist map [because of the political situation.]

Haiti was back on the map in the early '80s with Canadian tourism from Quebec because of the language association. Then we had the HIV problem — they linked it to Haiti. They later retracted it, but it was too late. In 1986, they overthrew the dictatorship, but Haiti, ever since, has gone into a long period of political instability. Tourism shied away.

But the beaches are there and we have the historical aspect. We were the first black independent country in the whole world and there's all the history tied up with that. It's the second place that Christopher Columbus landed. Then you have the whole French colonization aspect of our history, our war of independence in 1903. Then the Americans occupied Haiti for 15 or 16 years. There's a bad and good side to that.

People will be overwhelmed by the power of history in Haiti. Tourism has been a priority and now we have a minister of tourism. Her name is Stephanie Villedrouin and she's super dynamic. She was in Montreal recently and I saw

her talking to the biggest tour operator in the city. Within one hour, she had the president of the company convinced that in 2013, they will include Haiti on their tourist destination list.

DM: What about trade?

FL: In the horror of the January 2012 earthquake, the capital city, Port-au-Prince, was 80-per-cent destroyed. So you have huge opportunities for rebuilding. Infrastructure is still very important. To develop tourism, you have to continue the work that was done by the previous president.

With the mining industry, there are a lot of talks, a lot of prospecting and exploration has gone on in the northern part of Haiti and we have just about reached the point where we should go into mining in copper, gold and so on. What is needed to get to that step is to modernize the legislation in Haiti and we're in the process of doing that, and to make sure that the proper protocol of agreement is reached between these companies and the state so that we take lessons from what was done well elsewhere.

DM: What about agriculture?

FL: If you want to have tourism, you have to develop agriculture. Haiti is a country of mountains. [Traditionally], we produced sugar cane and coffee and that was it. We still export a little bit of coffee; sugar cane has more or less disappeared. Modernized agriculture to feed a strong tourist industry would give a lot of opportunities to people. I know Canada is working very closely with the IICA (Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture). They are very much involved in developing agriculture in Haiti. Less than a year ago, there was a sizable fund allocated to promote agriculture entrepreneurs.

DM: Citizens of your country continue to endure extreme poverty. What does President Martelly intend to do about that?

FL: Last October / November, we were declared the most impoverished country in the world. [The average per capita annual income, according to the *CIA World Factbook* is \$1,200. The unemployment rate is an estimated 40 percent [though more than 66 percent of the working population is either unemployed or underemployed.] You're dealing with a high-density (population of 9.8 million), a low level of education, plus the rate of unemployment. These are priorities for President Martelly. That's why I'm here. I want to attract investors.

DM: He appointed you quickly after the election, didn't he?

FL: I was among the first four ambassadors he appointed. I think it was important to get someone here because he



Haiti's new president, Michel Martelly, is focussed on attracting investment to his country.

felt it was unjust that you didn't have an ambassador for so long.

DM: What will he do to tackle this poverty?

FL: Attract investment. Lack of education is a problem for any impoverished country and education was the first priority of President Martelly. When he was running for president, he said he knew of half a million Haitians who had never set foot in a classroom. His first decision was to develop a program to get these kids off the street and into a classroom.

This program now has more than a million young kids in it. That doesn't mean it will solve all the problems. Getting them in the classroom is one thing. Giving them quality education is something else. A lot of effort's being expended to try to revamp the education system from the bottom to the top. There is a protocol that was signed between six Haitian universities and six Canadian universities. They've agreed to work together to revise the structure of higher education. This is a good step as well.



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Haitians wait for water and supplies being delivered by helicopters as part of relief efforts in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake

President Martelly and the government team understand that you have to attract people back into Haiti. You have to attract the diaspora back. They left for economic and political reasons. I feel that part of my mandate is to make sure the relationship between the embassy and the Haitian nationals living in Canada is as good as it can be. It wasn't in the past because during the hard time of the dictatorship, people were leaving because of political reasons. Even after 1986, that attitude lingered on for a very long time. Habits are difficult to set in, but very difficult to set out. But so far, my experience getting in touch with Haitians here has been a very good one. They like the fact that I'm coming to them.

DM: Can you tell Canadians what happens to the aid money we send there?

FL: First, I don't know one Haitian who didn't recognize the actions of Canada for Haiti have always been well intentioned — and usually in areas that were very much needed, such as education. The problem, not just with Canada, is at the time that Haiti needed most the solidarity of the international countries,

the decision was made that because the state was weak, because the structures of the state were non-existent, they bypassed the government structures and most of the aid was channelled through NGOs with no co-ordination, one with the other. Canada always tried to at least get the blessing of a ministry or some element of government, but the work is not conceived so that you can make sure what you started is finished. This is an adjustment that needs to be made. I know President Martelly is driving that idea. It's a matter of trust and trust is not very easy to come by when you have a past history that gives reason to be skeptical. But the past is the past.

DM: Can you talk about Michaëlle Jean's connection to Haiti?

FL: Let me tell you about my own experience. She became governor general at the same time as President Préval was elected. They had the same five-year term [by coincidence.] On one of her first trips abroad, she came to Haiti in May 2006 for the inauguration of President Préval. I was president of the Haitian-Canadian chamber of commerce and I organized

breakfast in one of the big hotels in Haiti. There were about 500 people in attendance. I introduced her and after her speech, of the 500 people in attendance, there wasn't one dry face in that hall. When she finished, the prime minister stood up and said "I really have nothing to say." He sat down and was applauded for 10 minutes. He was well known as someone who, when he started talking, he would never stop!

That was her first trip and I think she made one or two more.

DM: What did she talk about that was so moving?

FL: She talked about her relationship with Haiti, how we have to break with bad habits of the past, how Haitians have to get together. Things that everyone says, but no one says it the way she did. She really has a way of talking to people. I made a few missions to Canada while I was president of the chamber and on one or two occasions, I had the honour to see her at Rideau Hall.

She has a way to communicate her passion for Haiti that no one has. She was a very good ambassador for Canada as

governor general. When I was nominated for this job, I met a businessman who was in Nigeria when she visited. Even the local officials talked about how incredible she was. He said no one ever mobilized so many people. No matter where she went, you find people who are fans.

DM: One more question: How is the rebuilding going in Port-au-Prince?

FL: When I left Port-au-Prince on March 22, 2012, we still had more than a million people in tents. I went back on a business mission organized by EDC [Economic Development Canada] and DFAIT [De-



VICTORIA HAZOU, UN/UNJUSTAH

Michaëlle Jean, special envoy to Haiti for UNESCO, visits Haiti in 2011.

partment of Foreign Affairs and International Trade] and I was there to receive the mission. There were about 18 business people exploring possibilities. And when I landed back in Port-au-Prince, I saw a difference, in the good sense.

Things are moving. When you are [there all the time], you don't see it, but things are moving. In early January 2012, [former CIDA minister Bev] Oda came for the anniversary of the earthquake. Before she left, she signed a protocol in which Canada allocated \$20 million to solve the tent problems around the palace. The plan was, that over 12 months, we should be able to solve the problem.

In July, almost all the tents were cleaned — certainly around the palace — and it was almost six months ahead of schedule. Why? It was one program that was channelled through the government to the executive. We can make better use of our Canadian dollars by working through proper protocol with the government. ▀

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Indonesia and Canada: boosting relations



By Dienne H. Moehario
Ambassador of Indonesia

In its relations with Canada, Indonesia's priority is enhancing bilateral relations between our two countries. The year 2012 was an important one because Indonesia and Canada celebrated the 60th Anniversary of diplomatic relations, in October 2012. The spirit of the celebration was maintained throughout the year.

Highlighting the anniversary was the joint declaration by Canada and Indonesia, which promises to enhance bilateral consultations. It was signed in Ottawa in August by Indonesian Foreign Minister Marty M. Natalegawa and his Canadian counterpart, John Baird. In addition, there was the signing of the joint declaration between the Indonesia-Canada Parliamentary Friendship Group and the Canada-Indonesia Parliamentary Friendship Group in Quebec City on Oct. 24, and the visit of the 59-year-old Indonesian tall ship, *Dewaruci*, in St. John's, Nfld. in July. The vessel drew close to 700 locals who came to tour it.

Indonesia and Canada continue to strengthen their educational co-operation. Several memorandums of understanding were signed in 2012, namely a memorandum of understanding on health sciences and English teacher training between the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia and CEGEP John Abbott College; a memorandum of understanding on higher education and arts co-operation, between the Indonesia Institute of the Arts, Yogyakarta and CEGEP John Abbott College, in Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue; and a memorandum of understanding on education, tourism and event management, between Sekolah Tinggi Pariwisata Bandung and CEGEP John Abbott College.

Bilateral trade remains central to the



Indonesia's capital, Jakarta, at dusk.

relationship. The trade figures between Indonesia and Canada have shown a positive trend in recent years. In the last three years, Indonesia's exports to Canada totaled \$1 billion (2009), \$1.26 billion (2010) and \$1.43 billion (2011) — all in Canadian dollars. Likewise, Indonesia's imports from Canada were \$970 million (2009), \$1.06 billion (2010) and \$1.64 billion (2011). The main goods imported by Indonesia from Canada are fertilizers, wheat, wood pulp, chemical products and aircraft. Indonesia's main exports to Canada are natural rubber, textile-related products, furniture, electronic parts and coffee.

Some Canadian companies are doing well in Indonesia, but I expect to see more as trade between Indonesia and Canada has abundant potential to be further developed. Indonesia sees Canada as an important market for various Indonesian products, such as rubber-based products, garments, agricultural products, computers and accessories, furniture, medical instruments, electronics and jewelry, which I believe can meet or even exceed the requirements of Canadian users. Likewise, Indonesia is a huge market for Canadian goods and services. With a population of more than 250 million people and an increasing middle class, Indonesia is a market on which to focus. The current GDP per capita stands at approximately \$3,500 and the Indonesian government expects

it will increase to between \$14,250 and \$15,500 in 2025. Meanwhile, the current GDP is approximately \$855 billion and is expected to reach between \$4 trillion and \$4.5 trillion by 2025.

Indonesia is a resource-rich country like Canada. Indonesia has an abundance of renewable (agricultural products) and un-renewable (mining and minerals) natural resources. Since 2010, Indonesia has been one of the world's major producers of a broad range of commodities. It is the largest producer and exporter of palm oil in the world. It is the world's second-largest producer of cocoa and tin. For nickel and bauxite, it ranks 4th and 7th respectively in the world's reserves. It is also one of the largest producers of steel, copper, rubber and fishery products.

Indonesia is a sprawling archipelago and the government puts great importance on developing the nation. The Indonesian government introduced a "masterplan for the acceleration and expansion of economic development 2011-2015," known in the Indonesian acronym as MP3EI. It provides the building blocks to transform Indonesia into one of the 10 major economies in the world by 2025. To achieve this, economic growth must reach between 7 and 9 percent per year on an ongoing basis.

The implementation of MP3EI includes eight programs, that consist of 22 main economic activities, including ICT, shipping, animal husbandry, mining, fishery, food and agriculture, tourism and transportation equipment. These economic activities provide investment opportunities for Canadian companies. It is my wish that Canadian companies will be one of major sources of foreign investment in Indonesia. It is important to note that Indonesia's Investment Law No. 25 of 2007 guarantees equal treatment to foreign and domestic investors; and investors shall be granted the rights to transfer and repatriate in foreign currencies. To conclude, Indonesia and Canada are ready to take further steps in deepening and widening economic, trade and investment ties, and promoting educational and cultural exchanges as well as people-to-people interaction.

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Iceland: Loonie or no loonie, we want to trade



*By Thordur Aegir Oskarsson
Ambassador of Iceland*

Four years ago, Iceland became the first victim of the global recession that was starting to crawl over the globe. The situation was magnified due to the recklessness of the domestic banking sector. GDP fell by 10 percent; the krona (Iceland's currency) was depreciated by 50 percent; unemployment surged from 1 to more than 10 percent and inflation jumped to more than 18 percent.

But happily, after drastic economic measures and an agreement with the IMF, Iceland is well on its way to full recovery and has graduated from the IMF program with solid marks.

Today, the country's efficiently managed fishery provides 40 percent of export revenues. Renewable energy sources, together with resource-based industries such as aluminum production, earn 35 percent of export revenues. Tourism, Iceland's most promising industry, thanks to world-famous volcano Eyjafjallajökull, made an unparalleled leap forward, producing 25 percent of export revenues.

Economic indicators also show solid promise. Growth in 2012 is expected to exceed 3 percent, with similar results predicted for 2013. The unemployment rate is down to 4.5 percent and the inflation rate hovers between 4 and 5 percent.

Iceland, with a population of 320,000 and a landmass the size of Newfoundland, must make its economic and trade relations with other countries a priority.

My country is a member of all major multilateral organizations (UN, NATO, OSCE, OECD and WTO) and, along with Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland, it is part of the European Single Market through the European Economic Area Agreement (1994). Negotiations for EU membership are under way and Iceland



Downtown Reykjavik, Iceland's capital.

is a member of the European Free Trade Association (again with Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) that concluded a Free Trade Agreement with Canada in 2009, one that will soon be updated to include financial services.

Trade between Iceland and Canada is currently sparse. In 2011, only 0.43 percent of Iceland's total exports went to Canada (\$20.7 million.) For the same year, Canada's share of the total imports by Iceland was 1.25 percent (\$51.2 million.)

About half of 2011's exports to Canada were fisheries products — lobster, pollock and cod. The other half were manufactured goods, fishing gear, high-tech machinery for food processing and bottled water.

The Canadian items sent to Iceland have mostly been food and fisheries products. Frozen shrimp come to Iceland for further processing while fossil fuels, manufactured goods and machinery make up the largest share of Iceland's imports from Canada.

Iceland would like to expand trade relations with Canada, particularly in tourism. My country has experienced an explosion in tourism in recent years and that could well become our No. 1 industry. For 2012, the number of tourists was projected to have grown by 17 percent. Canadians wishing to visit can take our main air carrier, Icelandair, which has direct flights to Halifax and Toronto between April and November. An air services agreement with Canada will come fully into play at the end of 2013. Icelandair wants to expand services to other Canadian cities when the agreement is fully implemented. In 2011,

almost 18,000 Canadians visited Iceland, a 33-percent increase from 2010. This year's numbers will be higher still.

Opportunities for expansion also exist in the fisheries industry. Efforts are already under way to stimulate interest in Iceland's fishery. An Icelandic shipping company, Eimskip, has been active in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia for 40 years, but its expansion is constrained by local regulations.

Iceland also has a strong competitive advantage in energy-intensive industries, thanks to its relatively cheap and renewable clean-energy resources — hydro and geothermal. This sector attracts much-needed foreign investment. Indeed, Rio Tinto Alcan owns an aluminum smelter and is one of the largest industrial companies in Iceland. Canadian investments are also found in the geothermal-energy sector.

Finally, one mustn't forget the Arctic. Iceland's economic well-being and livelihood are shaped by the natural riches and climatic conditions of the North. Iceland and Canada share vested interests in the Arctic. The pending exploitation of Iceland's newly discovered offshore oil resources offers the opportunity to strengthen ties with Canada's dynamic oil industry. Iceland sees ample scope for developing such bilateral and regional co-operation with Canada on economic and cultural issues involving the North.

In essence, the framework for robust trade is in place with the agreement between Canada and EFTA (2009), a bilateral agricultural agreement between Iceland and Canada (2009), the air-services agreement (2007) and the agreement to avoid double taxation (1997). This is the framework for better trade relations between Iceland and Canada. In spite of massive headwinds, Iceland is still a modern society with a liberal business climate, an open economy and a strong young, educated and innovative workforce.

More strategic cultivation of Icelandic-Canadian economic, trade and business co-operation is my goal. Since the loonie is no longer an option to replace our krona, the abundant diplomatic energy can now be directed to more profound trade issues.

Thordur Aegir Oskarsson is Iceland's ambassador to Canada. He can be reached at thordur.aegir.oskarsson@utn.stj.is or (613) 482-1944.

Qatar: per capita, the world's richest country



*By Salem Mubarak Al-Shafi
Ambassador of Qatar*

The Qatar government is using its vast oil and gas resources and the funds flowing from it to develop the country's infrastructure, education and health facilities and modern hydrocarbon operations. With proven gas reserves of more than 900 trillion standard cubic feet in its North Field, and oil reserves of more than 25.38 billion barrels, it makes sense that this Arab Gulf emirate, with a population of approximately 1.7 million, has the distinction of calling itself the world's richest country per capita.

Qatar has secured one of the fastest-growing economies in the world, governed by a far-sighted reform policy implemented by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, the Emir of the State of Qatar.

OPEC 2011 findings show that Qatar's GDP per capita is US\$98,144 and the GDP at market price is US\$73.52 billion. From 1970 until 2011, Qatar's GDP averaged US\$23.4 billion, and then peaked dramatically by December 2011. Even though growth forecasts for the economy are known to fluctuate, most estimates have put Qatar's economic growth at 10 percent per annum for at least the next five years. According to a report published by the World Bank, the GDP value of Qatar is roughly equivalent to 0.28 percent of the world economy.

Qatar's dynamic growth is due in part to rising energy prices and higher exports of liquefied natural gas (LNG). In fact, Qatar has one third of the world's total gas reserves. The country's oil exploration began in 1935 at the Dukhan Field, while commercial exportation began in December 1949. Oil and natural gas account for more than 60 percent of the country's GDP, around 85 percent of export earnings



The skyline of Doha.

and 70 percent of government revenues.

Established in 1984, Qatargas pioneered the LNG industry in Qatar. Today Qatargas is exporting 26 million tons of LNG per year, and its customers are spread throughout the world, including Japan, Spain, the United Kingdom, Canada, China, Thailand and others.

In Canada, Qatargas supplies LNG to Repsol Energy's Canaport LNG facility in Saint John, N.B., with its Q-Flex and Q-Max ships. The Q-Max and Q-Flex vessels are the largest LNG tankers in the world, able to carry the equivalent of approximately 5.6 billion and 4.6 billion cubic feet of natural gas, respectively. Canaport is one of the few terminals worldwide with the capacity to dock these ships.

Economic growth has been further strengthened due to Qatar's very open and competitive economic conditions, including respect for the rule of law, stability, encouragement of private enterprise and the promotion of foreign investment.

On June 29, 2011, Qatar Airways added Canada to its global reach with the launch of the Montreal-Doha route. These flights are most useful for the more than 6,000 Canadians who live and work in Qatar.

Trade relations between Qatar and Canada are expected to expand significantly as Qatar's economy grows, and as Canadian exporters and investors learn about the infrastructure-based opportunities in Qatar. Bilateral merchandise trade between Qatar and Canada has fluctuated significantly in recent years, but remains substantial at \$162 million, according to Export Development Canada. In 2011,

bilateral trade reached a record high of \$459 million, of which \$398 million, or 86 percent, was imports of liquefied natural gas from Qatar.

Canada's top merchandise exports to Qatar in 2011 were iron-ore, aircraft and machinery equipment. Qatar's service imports from Canada consist primarily of engineering, architecture and education services.

Health and education remain the most rewarding areas of co-operation between Qatar and Canada. For instance, in 2002, a technical college in Doha operated by Newfoundland and Labrador's College of the North Atlantic (CNA), opened its doors and has brought more than 1,000 Canadians and their family members to Qatar. Approximately 500 Canadians are currently working at CNA. Meanwhile, in 2007, the University of Calgary established a nursing program in Doha, geared to educate and train nurses to fill the huge demand for the profession in Qatar. The program has grown exponentially in the past five years. In 2010, Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children signed a historic agreement to create a state-of-the-art children's hospital with Hamad Medical Corporation, the leading provider of non-profit health care in Doha, Qatar.

Furthermore, prestigious companies such as Norsk Hydro ASA, Forrec Ltd., and SNC-Lavalin ProFac have established operations in Qatar, along with other well-known companies in the high-tech and service sectors.

In 2005, the Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) was founded with the goal of strengthening Qatar's economy by diversifying it into new asset classes. Its growing portfolio of long-term strategic investments is helping to balance the state's huge wealth in natural resources.

Qatar is a multicultural nation whose goal is to achieve multiple global partnerships with various industry sectors. To make that happen, the Emir has created an environment that facilitates the needs and lifestyles of expatriates who wish to live and do business in Qatar. Indeed, Qatar is a country designed with expatriates in mind.

Salem Mubarak Al-Shafi is the ambassador of Qatar to Canada. He can be reached by email at amb.office@qatarambassy.ca or by phone at (613) 241-4917.

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Afghanistan, pictured here, is No. 5 on our list of hot spots for 2013.

The top 10 hot spots plus 5 runners-up

The wars and rumours of war that will shape 2013

By Wolfgang Depner

This piece opens with a proviso. Efforts to predict the future course of human events, no matter how sophisticated they might be, enjoy a less-than-satisfactory record, notwithstanding the recent accomplishments of poll aggregator Nate Silver in forecasting the outcome of the presidential election of 2012.

Just visit any self-respecting academic library. Many of its shelves are buckling under the weight of bulky books filled with grandiose, but ultimately glaringly false, predictions about the inevitable end of this era or the impending emergence of some other. Start with the historical works of Karl Marx, then proceed into the present, where Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man* has become a contemporary synonym (if not punch-line) for this form of quackery.

And yet, we continue to seek out seemingly wise sages whose powers of prophecy seem to be nothing less than gifts granted by Providence itself. Consider the lucrative cottage industry that laments the decline of the United States in prose so profitable it challenges the very narrative of its modern-day Cassandras. What explains this obsessive urge to pierce through the fog of the future? Part of the explanation lies in the human need for comfort, if not consolation. But such genuine desires should not distract us from focusing on the here and now.

With this concession in mind, this list identifies the most troubled regions in the world. Admittedly arbitrary by nature, it seeks to acknowledge the complex nature and causes of human conflict. Notable omissions that could have easily made this list include the ongoing conflict in the Congo, the plight experienced by indigenous people around the world and the environmental devastation wreaked upon the planet. This list also runs the risk of being overtaken by current events. Developments — such as the clash between Israeli forces and the Palestinian organization, Hamas, controlling the Gaza Strip in November 2012 — speak to this point. This said, this review of the world's Top Ten 2013 Hot Spots (with five runners-up) is confident in its findings.

1. Syria

Contrary to Marxist teachings, history does not repeat itself. But, to paraphrase Mark Twain, it frequently rhymes.

The civil war in Syria might unfortunately confirm this insight because its broad contours are starting to resemble those of the Spanish Civil War of the 1930s. Both conflicts quickly attracted foreign actors who have subsequently come to see their involvement in an otherwise local conflict as part of a multi-dimensional confrontation that cuts across geographical, religious and ideological barriers.

The most obvious fault line runs through Syrian society itself. On one side, we find the ruling minority of Alawites centred on Syrian President Bashar Hafez al-Assad, who also enjoys support from the country's Christian and Druze minority. Opposing this coalition is Syria's Sunni population, which has long chafed under al-Assad's despotic clan.

Taking a broader view, the Syrian civil war appears as the most recent clash between the minority Shia and majority Sunni branches of Islam. While al-Assad enjoys political and logistical support from Shia-dominated Iran and its allies in Iraq and Lebanon, the Sunni rebels opposing him draw support from Saudi Arabia and Qatar, Sunni-dominated states

concerned about Iranian influence in the region.

In fact, the support from these countries for the Syrian rebels has caused concern in the United States, which fears it will ultimately end up in the hands of Islamist terrorists who are arriving in the region from elsewhere. Their agenda, meanwhile, is clear: topple the current regime as the necessary prelude to the establishment of a religious state, an unacceptable prospect for neighbouring Turkey and Israel, albeit for different reasons.

Whereas Turkey supports the uprising against al-Assad, it opposes the fracturing of Syria into sectarian domains, for such a development threatens Turkey's territorial integrity by encouraging Kurdish nationalists within its own borders and beyond. Israel, meanwhile, already borders territories controlled by radicals — the southern strip of Lebanon and Gaza Strip, each dominated by Iranian clients, Hezbollah and Hamas respectively.

In short, the eventual outcome of the Syrian civil war threatens to re-draw the borders of the Middle East and set the stage for future conflicts. Yet its ramifications go far beyond. Moscow and Beijing, for their part, see al-Assad as an anti-western ally. Russia, in particular, fears that it stands to lose global influence if al-Assad departs the scene, be it by force or other-

wise, for he currently guarantees Russia strategic access to the Mediterranean. Washington and its allies, meanwhile, see Syria as a testing ground for the yet to be proven thesis that the Islamic Middle East can be made safe for western-style democracy.

One thing already appears certain. The Syrian civil war has revealed the institutional inadequateness of the United Nations. This failure bears a striking similarity to the ineptness of the League of Nations during the Spanish Civil War. Let us hope the historical parallels stop there.

2. Iran

In their book, *Why the United States Must Come to Terms with the Islamic Republic of Iran*, Flynt Leverett and Hillary Mann Leverett attack the myth of the mad Mullahs. Briefly summarized, this fiction put forth by people such as neo-conservative



DANIELA ZALCMAN

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

columnist Charles Krauthammer reads like this: Iran is in the grips of Shia radicals eager to acquire nuclear weapons because their eventual application against Israel would hasten the appearance of the Mahdi, the twelfth Imam, in setting the stage for God's final judgment.

As Middle East scholar Bernard Lewis recently opined in the *Wall Street Journal*, for these people, "mutually assured destruction is not a deterrent — it's an inducement."

Is this a dangerously self-fulfilling prophecy that may indeed lead to the apocalypse? As the Leveretts note, "stereotypes depicting Iran as an aggressively



UN PHOTO

A shell in the middle of the street in Homs, Syria, is a remnant of the heavy attack levelled on the city last year.



Members of North Korea's military at the 65th anniversary of North Korea Labor Party.

radical country are not just wrong but worse, dangerous, because they skew western thinking towards the inevitability of confrontation." It is precisely this threat that endows an already unstable region with additional explosiveness.

This commentary does not deny Iran's complicity in supporting regional actors stoking instability. Nor does it dismiss the genuine concerns about the potential proliferation of nuclear weapons throughout the region. But it would be a fatal mistake to see these actions through a lens that assumes Iranian irrationality. No regime would openly invite its own demise by indulging in metaphysical fantasies. It would likely seek shelter behind shields of various sorts, as long as they remain sustainable.

Recent developments suggest that this calculus has increasingly turned against the regime. Harsh economic sanctions have so far achieved what hubristic military actions would make impossible: rob the regime of cohesion and eventually, legitimacy. Granted, this approach will take longer, but has already shown some results. Whether the international com-

munity will continue to be patient is an entirely differently question.

Recent developments, however, suggest otherwise. Bellicose blustering from western and Israeli leaders inspires Iranian responses no less strident and both sides are letting the other know what might lie ahead. *Der Spiegel* recently wrote that Germany has helped Israel create a floating nuclear weapons arsenal: submarines equipped with nuclear capability. Iran, meanwhile, could be planning to create a giant oil spill in the strategic Strait of Hormuz in retaliation for an attack. The pieces are starting to move.

3. Korean Peninsula

Kim Jong-un, the new man in charge of North Korea, has always remained optimistic and cheery in the face of adversity. Yes, his regime might have suffered public humiliation when western experts identified the country's new intercontinental ballistic missiles as fakes. And granted, it is never nice to disappoint the family, as happened when a rocket carrying a celebratory satellite into space on the occasion

of his late grandfather Kim Il-sung's 100th birthday crashed back to earth shortly after liftoff.

But Kim Jong-un has gotten right back on the horse — literally, as he recently rode out with members of North Korea's elite cavalry unit. His late father, Kim Jong-il, would have never stooped to such low levels of self-promotion. But Sunny Boy is nothing like his dad, at least when it comes to charming the masses. The Old Man growled at the world in grey overalls, but Kim Jong-un is turning up the smiles while getting down to some real fun by taking his wife on a tour of Pyongyang's brand new amusement park, where the young couple rode the roller-coaster. On top of it all, he might soon experience the joys of fatherhood for himself.

If only this fictitious façade were not so absurd — North Korea remains a fixed point of global instability.

For one, North Korea continues to baffle the international community through provocative actions that practically invite punishment. In February 2012, it promised to suspend the testing of nuclear weapons and opened its facilities to international

inspectors as part of a broader agreement that also placed a moratorium on the launch of long-range missiles, which have, in the past, raised military tensions in South Korea and Japan. North Korea also promised to resume six-party talks with the United States, China, Japan, South Korea and Russia towards a long-term agreement to bring stability to the Korean Peninsula.

In exchange, the country was to receive extensive food shipments. Weeks later, it cancelled the agreement after the international community condemned North Korea for testing a missile. Western fears that North Korea might test a nuclear weapon for the third time after 2006 and 2009 have since escalated in the face of new evidence that points towards such an outcome. Granted, North Korea has frequently vacillated between co-operation and confrontation in extracting more concessions. But its behaviour has become increasingly unpredictable since Kim Jong-un has assumed control. Even China, North Korea's staunchest and increasingly solitary ally, has reached this troubling conclusion.

4. Pakistan

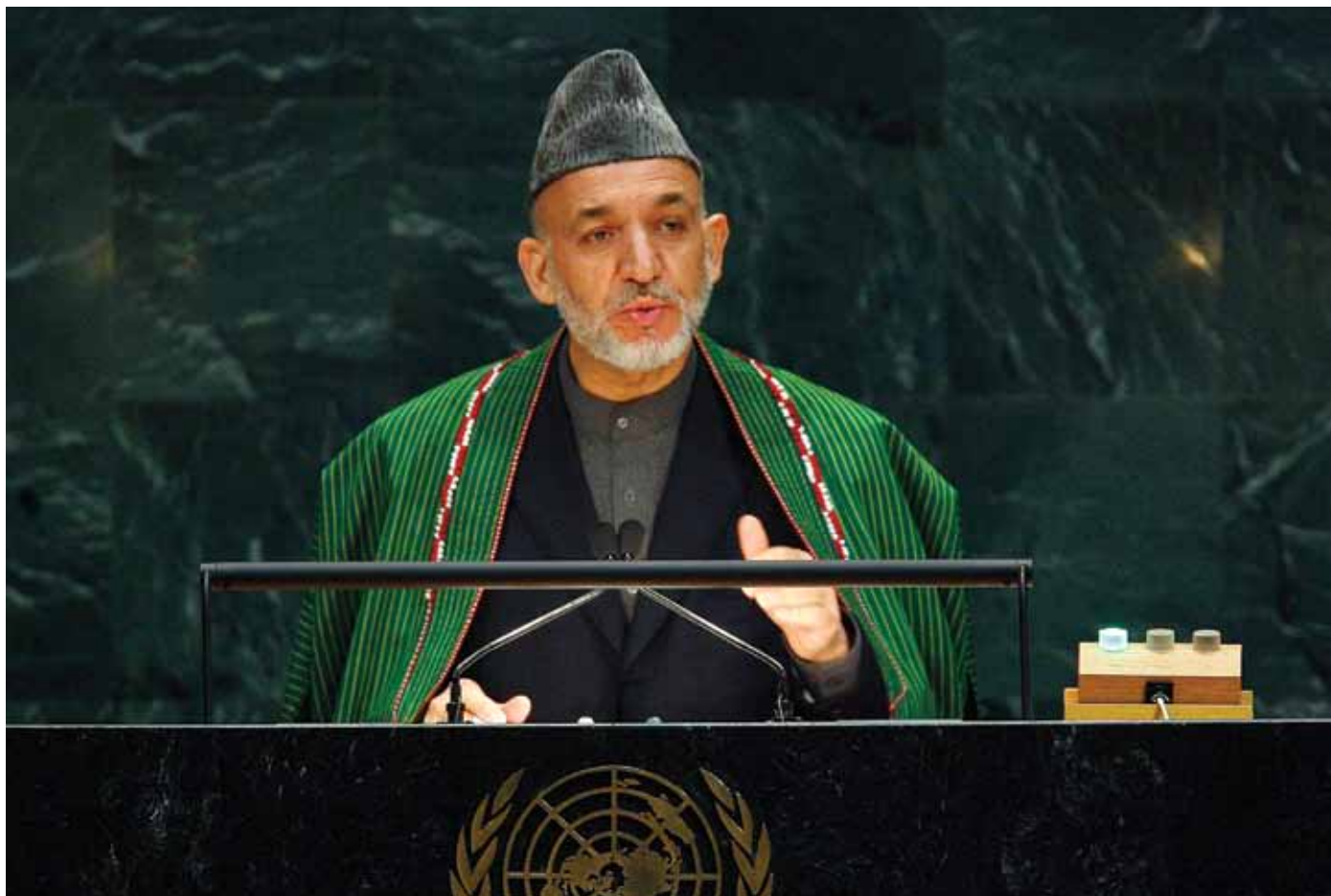
In 1897, a young British journalist by the name of Winston Churchill "embedded" himself with a British expeditionary force fighting rebellious Pashtun tribal warriors along the northwestern frontier of British India, now the northwestern border area between Afghanistan and Pakistan. While coloured by the prejudiced attitudes of British colonialism, his account nonetheless resonates with modern audiences, for it features familiar themes: the harshness of the rugged terrain, only tinged by colourful touches of exotic romanticism; the elusiveness of the unseen enemy; the savagery of guerrilla warfare fought with modern weapons in a seemingly medieval setting. Churchill is even incensed about the indifferent treatment an injured veteran is likely to receive upon his return home.

Churchill is particularly attuned to the social and religious attitudes of the Pashtun tribes along the border region, where tribes frequently feud with each other, only to unite against outsiders. "Every man's hand is against the other, and all against the stranger." The region, he continues later, remains under the "tyranny of

a numerous priesthood" including "wandering Talib-ul-ILMs" seeking to "strike a blow for insulted and threatened Islam." While made more than a century ago, this historical assessment nonetheless helps explain why the northwestern region of Pakistan remains the least stable region in a country increasingly unstable.

Efforts by the Pakistani state to effectively control the region have met with little success. Consequently, the area has festered into a haven for Afghan and Pakistan Taliban; from which they can stage attacks against Afghan or Pakistani institutions. Worse, the route that helps supply western forces in Afghanistan runs through the region. Responding to Pakistan's inability (or unwillingness) to pacify the region, the United States increased its own involvement in the area in 2010 by intensifying unmanned drone attacks.

While these drone attacks have produced some successes, they have also caused considerable civilian casualties and worsened the already complex relationships between the United States and nuclear-armed Pakistan, which many western officials have accused of aiding



Afghan President Hamid Karzai at UN Headquarters in New York.

UN PHOTO

Islamist terrorists while nominally acting as an ally of the United States against the same groups. Such charges only compound the complexity of governance in Pakistan, whose society has experienced a growing split between those who favour some form of western-style rule and those who prefer the tyranny of the priesthood.

5. Afghanistan

Diagnose assessments of Afghanistan and you will come to the conclusion that the people in charge of the western mission suffer from a case of cognitive dissonance. While top political leaders continue to insult the intelligence of even the most gullible observers by incessantly praising the incompetent government of Afghan President Hamid Karzai, their intelligence services are sounding the alarms behind the scenes.

Consider this conclusion from a recently leaked U.S. intelligence report: It states that Karzai will not survive the formal withdrawal of American forces scheduled for the end of 2014, because his own forces will not be able to withstand the Taliban, which remains committed to regaining control of the country, even as it continues to take part in peace negotiations which experts predict will likely fail. Much of the blame belongs to those western governments that have consistently refused to revise their relationship with Karzai for the general betterment of Afghans. Yes, Karzai's tenure terminates in 2014. But he is already making arrangements to keep his kin in power.

Indeed, German intelligence recently concluded that Karzai would rather appease militants than change his corrupt ways if such an arrangement were to benefit him and his supporters. Such a trade-off would not only destroy the minimal improvements the international community has achieved in Afghanistan; it would also bring dishonour to the legacy of those who sacrificed blood and treasure for the cause of a better Afghanistan, as metaphysical as it might be.

It would be the height of naiveté to assume that Afghanistan could be turned into some model state. But shall we then conclude that the world's most powerful and richest nations, starting with the United States, can neither find the means nor the motivations to supply even an appearance of stability? For better or worse, the answer is no. NATO countries have already made plans for troops to stay in Afghanistan beyond 2014, not as active

combatants, but as advisers.

Notwithstanding such verbal trickery, this ongoing commitment confirms the larger significance of Afghanistan. That said, this mission, as needed as it might be, would quickly lose its legitimacy (if it has not already) if western leaders continue to insist that things are improving in Afghanistan and that Karzai is a friend of democracy. Citizens throughout the western world might be weary of this war, and rightly so. But their leaders should at least tell them the truth.

6. South China Sea

Said to be rich in energy resources trapped beneath the ocean floor, the region threatens to emerge as the central theatre of geopolitical tensions between an increasingly ambitious China and a correspondingly anxious western alliance centred around the United States.

This dynamic revealed itself most recently in September 2012 during the dispute over five uninhabited islands named Senkaku in Japanese and Diaoyu in Chinese. Claimed by Japan, China and Taiwan, the islands gained global attention when the Japanese government agreed to purchase the three islands remaining in private possession from their debt-heavy owner, who had also been negotiating with a fiery Japanese nationalist. Chinese reactions to this perceived nationalization of private property was prompt. Government-tolerated protests outside Japanese diplomatic buildings called for "war" and Chinese patrol boats approached the disputed islands.

Taiwan also sent ships into the region. The United States, fearful of worse and mindful of its relationship with Japan, showed strength as well by sending an aircraft carrier into the region, a display of force set against the background of growing tensions between China and the United States. While the current odds of an outright military conflict are low, disputes of this kind can develop their own dangerous dynamic.

Political leaders in Beijing, Tokyo and Taipei have each promised their respective constituencies that they would not retreat from asserting national interest. But this rhetoric risks the risk of turning all actors into prisoners of their own uncompromising demands.

Once they have drawn their respective lines, it will be hard for any one of them to retreat without losing credibility in the face of self-generated pressure. That



Protesters who claim the Diaoyu Islands for China protest at the Japanese consulate in Hong Kong in September 2012.

said, any future conflict over the islands — be it armed or of an economic nature — would be costly for all involved. All three countries have strong economic ties with each other. A more realistic scenario would likely see all actors remain highly alert about developments without being aggressive.

Brinkmanship does not automatically descend into disaster. In Europe, the United States and the former Soviet Union faced off across each other for decades, each brandishing massive arsenals capable of destroying the other side (and the world) several times over. Yet this stare-off along the Iron Curtain never started anything. Tellingly though, it was the "periphery" of the Cold War that pushed the globe to the precipice of thermo-nuclear war. Ominously, this incident also involved a contest over the geo-strategic ownership of an island — Cuba.

7. Iraq

The deadly sectarianism that devastated Iraq between 2005 and 2007 appears to have found a second life. And this time, it may lead to something far worse. For one, the formal departure of the former American occupiers has freed radicals on either side of the Sunni-Shia fissure from the pretense of (relatively) peaceful politics.

Without American GIs acting as would-be peacekeepers and political pressure from Washington, Sunni and Shia extremists have had a far easier time of indulging in their worst instincts towards each other. Prominent Sunnis have faced trumped-up legal charges and ordinary Iraqis have

CPL ANTHON R. BLANCO, U.S. MARINE CORPS



A Marine Corps battle tank fires in Iraq during the U.S. invasion in 2003.

experienced a degree of daily violence that approaches the ferocity of the mid-2000s.

This sectarian schism naturally favours the Shia. They make up about 60 percent of the population and control key levers of the state under the leadership of Nouri al-Maliki, who is criticized for acting

increasingly authoritarian towards his political enemies. Moderate Iraqis, including Shia, fear he is leading Iraq towards a dictatorship friendly towards Iran, which has used its neighbour as a transit route to supply Syrian ally Bashar al-Assad with weapons.

UN PHOTO



The UN evacuates the wounded in the aftermath of bombings in South Sudan in 2012.

This relationship reveals the second major source of concern: The al-Maliki regime sees the Sunni uprising against the regime of al-Assad as a proxy attack on itself. It sympathizes with al-Assad's governing Alawite from a religious angle. More important, the disintegration of Syria also threatens the integrity of Iraq. Its northern Kurdish region already enjoys significant autonomy from Baghdad's central authority and any Kurdish successes on the Syrian side of "Kurdistan" would reverberate on the Iraqi side.

And even if this threat to the territorial integrity of Iraq were to dissipate, its societal cohesiveness remains tenuous, and not just because of the sectarian strife described earlier. Iraq remains a place where population groups live apart from each other, divided by blast walls, but united through the misery of living in a land that frequently fails to provide basic services as electricity.

8. Sudan/South Sudan

While recent developments suggest that the two Sudans are finding ways to work with each other after their troubled divorce of 2011 turned nasty in 2012, such positive signs ignore the deeper tensions bubbling beneath the surface of this tortured region and its people.

For one, Sudan has entered the crosshairs of Israel, where one senior military official recently called Sudan "a dangerous terrorist state" whose "regime is supported by Iran and it serves as a route for the transfer (via Egypt) of Iranian weapons to Hamas and Islamic Jihad terrorists." Notably, this statement appeared after Israel had apparently bombed a weapons factory in the Sudanese capital of Khartoum on the premise of the country's role as a weapons transit route.

While Sudanese officials have denied such involvements, their denials stretch credulity. Iran has joined China in supplying the Sudan with weapons and Iranian ships visited the country shortly after the alleged Israeli attack for the purpose of building, in the words of one Sudanese official, "amicable relations."

The international community would likely appreciate such diplomatic efforts towards South Sudan after the countries stood on the verge of an all-out war over a disputed oil-rich region.

Tensions rose to a particular high point in late April 2012 after Omar al-Bashir ordered his air and ground forces to expel South Sudanese forces from the contested



U.S. MILITARY

The stark contrast of two nations on either side of the border fence that separates Tijuana, Mexico, and San Diego, U.S.

territory. Whether this attack amounted to a declaration of war, as argued by South Sudanese President Salva Kiir Mayardit, is beside the point. The fact remains that both countries continue to challenge the terms of the settlement that has governed their tenuous co-existence since the creation of South Sudan in 2011.

The list of ethnic and economic grievances dividing both sides is unlikely to get shorter any time soon and each side accuses the other of undermining it by supporting local insurgencies in their respective territory. Yes, the leaders of both countries have started to call each other “brothers.” But some bromides barely dilute the deep reservoir of bellicosity they harbour towards each other. The historical legacy of two brutal civil wars between Muslims and Christians and the Darfur genocide remain as raw as ever.

9. U.S.-Mexican Border Region

This is the story of a grim bargain that has brought misery to millions well beyond the boundaries of human decency along the border that separates the United States from Mexico. As porous as it is long, this

dividing line has united both countries in a partnership of suffering that may well attract additional subsidiaries.

The source of this sorrow lies on both sides of the Rio Grande. Americans continue to demand illicit drugs despite the prospect of harsh penalties, and Mexican cartels, coddled by corrupt officials, continue to supply them. Once this exchange has taken place, cartel members will use their illegal gains to legally buy readily available weapons in the United States, then ship them across the frontier, often using the same route and vehicle used to smuggle narcotics north. The cartels then turn these guns against each other or the Mexican state in defending their territory and share of illicit profits against would-be competitors.

Not surprisingly, this violence has spilled into the United States and beyond, including Canada. Officials on both sides of the international line have tried to dam this deluge of drugs and guns — so far with questionable success. In 2006, now former Mexican president Felipe Calderón tasked the army with launching an all-out assault against the cartels. The consequences of this escalation have been sobering. As of May 2012, drug-related violence has claimed more than 50,000

lives across Mexico, including in regions said to be safe.

Yet this campaign has hardly weakened the cartels. In fact, three prominent Mexican generals worked for the cartels, which their comrades were confronting in gruesome places like Ciudad Juárez, perhaps the most infamous cartel citadel near the U.S. border. But if Mexicans have seemingly accepted this carnage as part of their daily lives, American efforts to deal with this problem suggest a certain level of denial. While the United States has stepped up controls to stop the illegal flow of goods across the southern border as part of measures designed to curb illegal immigration, they have remained haphazard. And efforts to extinguish the flow of weapons from the United States into Mexico must ultimately receive the approval of America’s powerful gun lobby, an unlikely development. Is this the reason neither Mitt Romney nor Barack Obama discussed this subject during their debate on foreign policy?

10. Mali

Once a model of democratic stability in a region renowned for turmoil, this former French colony has fractured into com-

peting fiefdoms, each home to a unique design of human depravity. While Taliban-like Islamists rule the north, the south remains under the control of a repressive military regime, perhaps no less brutal than its northern opponents.

This duopoly of despair emerged in March 2012, when mutinous but desperate members of the Mali military revolted against the civilian government for its failure to defeat the rebellious Tuareg, a nomadic desert people once in the employ of the late Libyan dictator, Moammar Gadhafi. The consequences of this coup were predictable. As forces loyal to the civilian government fought off the mutineers, Tuaregs equipped with weapons from the abandoned arsenals of their former Libyan patron seized the occasion to occupy large

capitals, where fears are growing that Mali might become an African Afghanistan, a staging ground for terrorists striking targets in Europe and elsewhere.

What caused this “Mess in Mali,” as *Foreign Policy* described it? Ironically, it might have been the decision of NATO to topple Gadhafi. By saving Benghazi, NATO lost Timbuktu, Columbia history professor Gregory Mann told *Der Spiegel*. This observation can also be read as an ominous omen, as western nations are already preparing plans for a regional intervention.

11. Nigeria

With the exception of some notable organizations, most western media shroud African affairs behind a veil of indifference that frequently betrays their ignorance. Yet developments in the most populous country of the continent might soon lift this self-imposed screen.

For one, Nigeria’s growing population, predicted to hit 300 million in 25 years, previews a planetary future, in which more than one-third of the global population will reside in Sub-Saharan Africa by 2100. This prospect, with its myriad problems inside and outside Africa, promises to deepen the divisive tensions roiling Nigeria.

These encompass the emergence of Boko Haram, an Islamist insurgency haunting the predominantly Muslim region of northern Nigeria. Deemed defeated in 2009, the shadowy group has regained strength in recent years.

Using methods that suggest sympathies, if not specific links with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the group has staged several attacks against perceived opponents of Islamic law: representatives of the United Nations, Nigerian police and military forces, and more recently, ordinary Nigerians of the Christian faith, who live primarily in the southern section of the country. This choice of tactic has threatened to fray the already fractious relations between Christians and Muslims who make up nearly equal population halves.

And yet sectarianism is hardly the only source of conflict in Nigeria. More than half of its 160 million people must survive on less than \$2 a day, while its small but privileged political elite can access billions of dollars in oil revenues. Though this stark stratification of society hardly differentiates Nigeria from any other African (or Middle Eastern) petroleum kleptocracy, it is nonetheless kindling for societal strife.

However bolstered by its oil reserves, its economy is structurally precarious:



H. GROBE

A member of the Tuareg tribe of Mali.

swaths of northern Mali, which they declared their own state.

But the Tuareg’s moment of triumph did not last long, as Islamists sympathetic to al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) quickly seized control in the region, where they have since ruled with religious fervour and fanaticism. Their harsh interpretation of Islam has subsequently inspired more than 300,000 to risk their lives by crossing the sweeping deserts of the Sahel for refuge in neighbouring countries.

Survivors of this ordeal have since shocked the world with tales of public stonings and amputations, all ostensibly administered in the application of Sharia law. This “reign of the terror,” in the words of French President François Hollande, has not gone unnoticed in western



DANNY MCL

An oil platform supply vessel in Port Hartcourt, Nigeria.



Egyptians demonstrate in Alexandria in January 2012.

According to the World Bank, some 50 million youths in Nigeria are unemployed. Add to this the chance that ambitious global actors may also light fires that may burn out of control.

While Nigeria currently possesses strong relations with the western world as one of its largest oil suppliers, China has increasingly invested in the country's infrastructure — political and otherwise. Beijing, for example, has recently expanded its material support for Nigeria's military, as part of a broader, ongoing effort to expand its influence in resource-rich Africa. This 21st-Century version of the Scramble for Africa is bound to earn Nigeria, arguably one of the biggest "prizes," more attention, some of it unwanted.

12. Egypt

If the roots of the Arab Spring are well known, its eventual outcomes are correspondingly uncertain. Stripped of any remaining romance since the start of Syrian civil war, its fervour has faded long ago, replaced by the realization that it might be far easier to topple tyrants than to replace them with new leaders true to the spirit, if not the intentions, of the initial revolution.

This concession to reality was inevitable. No human endeavour, regardless of its righteousness, can maintain its momentum without exhausting itself or encountering would-be enemies. Such conditions certainly prevail in the emotional epicentre of the Arab Spring. While bourgeois Egyptians risked their young lives chasing Hosni Mubarek out of office by occupying Tahrir Square, the fruit of their courageous but dangerous labour has fallen into the hands of the religious Muslim Brotherhood, an organization older and more organized than the ancien régime it has now replaced as the nominal government.

This commentary does not mean to draw any equivalencies — Mubarek's inhumane state brutalized the Muslim Brotherhood in unimaginable ways. Nor does it dare to deny the elected legitimacy of Mohamed Morsi though not his recent presidential power grab, which has again filled Tahrir Square with protesters. But it does aim to amplify the voices of Egyptians — be they Coptic Christians or secular Muslims — who fear that their country is drifting towards an Islamist dictatorship under the guidance of the Muslim Brotherhood despite contrary assurances. Perhaps nobody personalizes this uncertainty

more powerfully than Morsi himself. During the recent clash between Hamas and Israel, western observers have praised his mediation efforts, only to condemn his hubristic attempt to seize more powers himself days later.

Simply put, Egypt's first democratically elected president has remained an enigma for everybody, Egyptians included.

Educated in the United States, Morsi "learned politics with the Brotherhood." This diversity of experiences rings through his rhetoric. Sometimes, he has presented himself as a proponent of peace and democracy who promises to respect Egypt's historical treaties with Israel. Yet he has also echoed the critiques of militant Islamists.

While such political calculation place Morsi in the same category as Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, it remains to be seen whether he will emulate Erdogan's successes in reforming bureaucratic institutions, while trimming the influence of the generals. The Egyptian economic ship of state continues to take on water and any attempts to right it with harsh measures could reawaken the streets well into 2013. And spirits might be far from friendly.

13. Caucasus Region (former Soviet Union)

More than two decades after the demise of the Soviet Union, most of its fragments have fallen under the heels of despots who rule their domains with the shameless audacity once claimed by the European monarchs of history.



US NAVY/LT. JIM HOEFT

Rubble in Gori, which was occupied by the Russians during the 2008 South Ossetian War between Russia and Georgia.

Only the three Baltic states possess genuine democratic cultures and institutions, which respect certain political, legal and economic rights that Canadians and other western citizens likely take for granted. The remaining former Soviet republics, meanwhile, cover the whole continuum of undemocratic rule, from outright dictatorships (Belarus, the Central Asian republics) to pseudo-democracies (Russia) to failing democracies (Ukraine).

The Caucasus country of Georgia occupies a special place within this scheme. On one hand, its recent parliamentary election marked a rare moment in post-Soviet history. For the first time since independence, Georgians changed their government through the polls rather than through a putsch. While the western-educated Mikhail Saakashvili remains president, he must now share power with his former political friend, Georgian billionaire Bidzina Ivanishvili, who became prime minister after his party, Georgian Dream, won a substantial parliamentary majority.

On the other hand, Georgia's institutions have increasingly exhibited characteristics found among its neighbours. Georgian security forces are corrupt if not prone to torture, while its media are openly partisan.

The central protagonists of Georgian

politics — Saakashvili and Ivanishvili — have taken to tearing each other apart verbally, both at home and abroad, where each employs high-profile lobbyists to eviscerate the other in currying favour with foreign governments and investors.

And therein lies the trouble. Georgia can ill afford political instability at home, for it lies in a most sensitive region. It already ranks among the most volatile after Georgia and Russia fought a short but sharp war in 2008 over the contested territories of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Their status will remain unresolved for the foreseeable future, especially as Russia prepares to host the 2014 Olympic Winter Games in Sochi near the disputed regions.

Then there is the matter of Iran. While Georgia ranks as the most significant American ally in the region, it also shares an ambivalent history but increasingly prosperous future with Iran. Will Tbilisi be able to thread the line between Washington and Tehran? An answer to this question will eventually become urgent as tensions between Iran and the West continue to escalate. Israel — fearful of a nuclear-armed Iran — has apparently purchased access to airfields in Azerbaijan, one of the former Soviet Republics that physically separates Georgia from Iran. While officials in Azerbaijan have refuted such reports, they will not improve tense relations in the region, which also happens to be a major transit route for current and proposed oil and natural gas lines.

14. Greece

Much has been said about Greece, and no doubt more will be said, for the country will continue to be the cause of global concern for years to come.

Naturally, one cannot help but wonder if the current state of affairs would be different if the direct and indirect custodians of the current crisis had acted differently at any point in the distant or recent past. But the benefit of hindsight is more or less perfunctory, if not powerless in this unprecedented crisis whose conclusion remains uncertain. It is nonetheless instructive to sketch two possible broad scenarios for the future of Greece, Europe and ultimately, the rest of the world.

One foresees the current Euro crisis as the catalyst for the creation of a federated Europe. While this entity may emerge through several steps, it will eventually grant all its citizens, regardless of where they might reside, genuine decision-making powers in continental affairs. While the European Union already possesses some continental institutions capable of effective governance, they lack democratic legitimacy. Consequently, citizens across the European Union currently see its political and bureaucratic leadership with a level of suspicion out of sync with the belief that Europe is — above all — a community of values, including, but not exclusively, democracy and social solidarity.

Nowhere does this dissonance manifest itself more dramatically than in Greece,



GGIA

A Greek protester clashes with riot police in Athens in June 2011.



UN PHOTO

An estimated one million Somalis have fled their country in search of food and safety; another 1.3 million have been displaced in the turmoil.

whose citizens had to swallow one imposed indignity after the other. Yes, much of the blame for the current crisis belongs to the country's political class and a broader culture of corruption and tax evasion that has starved the Greek state and its institutions of resources.

But if ordinary Greeks are to absorb the crushing terms of austerity as conceived by the international community, they deserve, at the very least, an explanation and some empathy. Otherwise, they and others may well settle for political choices, whose philosophies are as unfeasible as they are radical.

We have already seen glimpses of this trend in the emergence of marauding Greek proto-fascists. The current crisis has also strengthened the centrifugal forces of separatism in several European countries. In doing so, it points to the second broader scenario, a Europe fractured, divided into increasingly irrelevant domains, each lacking the strength to sustain its contemporary prosperity in the face of shrinking populations and growing competitors whose political practices are far from benign. And this choice, in broad terms, will hinge on what happens in Greece.

Whatever happens there could well determine whether Europe will speak in the world with one voice or with none, to borrow a phrase from Germany's former finance minister, Peer Steinbrück.

15. Somalia

A pastiche of former Italian and British colonial possessions stretching along the

Horn of Africa, Somalia has, to many, become a synonym for the term 'failed state.'

The country has remained an unceasing source of human misery, ever since the last effective government collapsed more than two decades ago at the hands of rival clan militias. By one measure, more than one million Somalis have fled their country in search of minimal nutrition and security in the last 10 years. Only the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan have forced more people to flee their homes during the same period.

Notably, this measure of suffering does not include the 1.3 million Somalis classified as internal refugees. Their needs would likely overwhelm the newly established government (whose influence barely extends beyond the capital of Mogadishu), were it not for foreign assistance from the European Union and regional African powers.

In fact, German historian Ralph Klein suggests it might be charitable to call Somalia a 'state' of any sort. Pasted together after the Second World War, Somalia is the state that never was, according to Klein, who calls Somalia a "pure post-colonial myth," whose governing institutions were never present across Somalia, especially absent among the nomadic regions.

"Somalia is therefore not even a failed state, for what had never existed in the first place, cannot fail later," he concludes. Perhaps. The region has certainly remained a source of global instability. Most notably, it has become the operating base of pirates, threatening some of the world's

most important shipping lanes.

It is possible to overstate the economic significance of the problem in the absence of reliable numbers. According to a 2009 report by the United States Institute, estimates measuring the direct and indirect global costs of Somali piracy range from \$1 billion to \$16 billion, a paltry number when held up against total global trade. In fact, the report states that these costs can be readily, if unfairly, absorbed through higher insurance rates. Indeed, evidence suggests that the problem is abating, a development undoubtedly related to the stepped-up efforts of the international fleet, including Canada's navy, patrolling off Somalia's coast since 2009. Nevertheless, in the first nine months of 2012 alone, according to the International Maritime Bureau, pirates attacked 80 commercial cargo ships and hijacked 19 of them.

Somalia's piracy has a genuine human cost for those who make an honest living on the seas. And while it would be inappropriate to sympathize with the pirates (as Klein seemingly does), their existence surely confirms the myriad failures of the international community to grant the country a semblance of a chance to succeed through basic economic development and help in governance. Yes, they are positive signs that the country is heading in the right direction. But the world has glimpsed such signs before, only to see them dashed.

Wolfgang Depner is a doctoral candidate at the University of British Columbia-Okanagan.

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Press freedom: the right to raise hell

Only a fraction of the world's population experiences a free press

Laura Neilson Bonikowsky



Journalists in Istanbul demand the release of arrested colleagues and better protection for press freedom in March 2011.

It is a newspaper's duty," *The Chicago Times* observed in 1861, "to print the news and raise hell." It is much easier to "print the news," with or without hell-raising, when journalists are free to do their jobs. In North America, we may be shocked to learn the alarming statistic that only 14.5 percent of the world's population live in countries with press freedom, as reported in *Freedom of the Press 2012*, published by Freedom House, an American non-governmental organization that monitors and measures the freedom of global media.

This Washington, D.C.-based organization rates countries by assigning points and gives grades of Free, Partly Free and

Not Free. Reporters Without Borders, a Paris-based organization, that monitors and scores press freedom around the world, reaches similar conclusions.

Freedom of the press determines what people can know about their own country and, indeed, about the world. It measures the limits a country has placed on its government. In practical terms, it defines the freedom of journalists to present news without government interference — the ability to gather information from a range of sources and to broadcast that information to the public without state restraint.

A free press is essential to democracy. Informed people are empowered people; their knowledge shapes their

actions and decisions. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) makes this very clear: "Free media transform societies by enlightening the decision making process with information, and thus empowering individuals to take control of their destinies."

Within the countries that are considered the worst long-term transgressors of press freedom (Belarus, Cuba, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), media cannot operate independently of the state. The press must function as the voice of the state and the population has very limited access to unbiased information; opposition

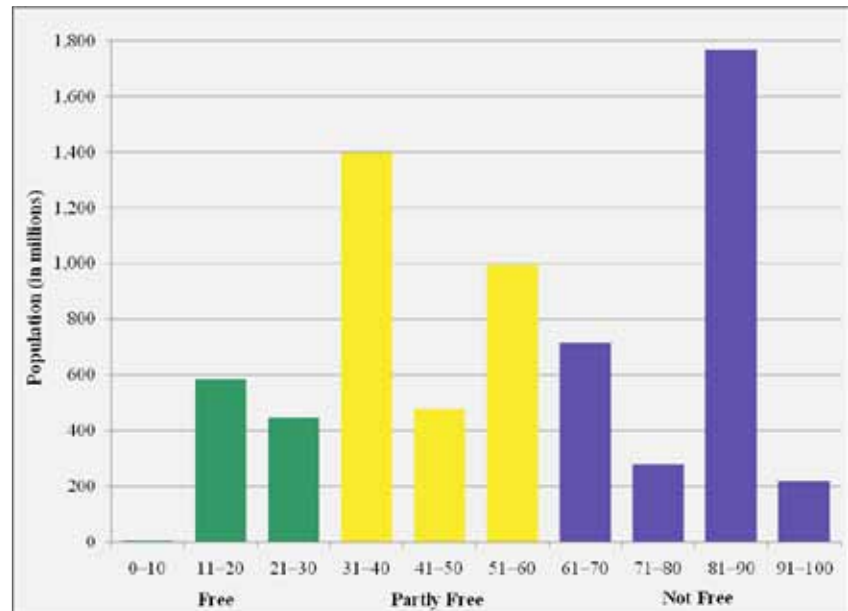
by the media is suppressed through imprisonment and torture. But the countries of most importance in state control of newspapers are the countries with the largest populations and largest economies — China (population 1.344 billion), Russian Federation (population 141 million) and India (population 1.241 billion) according to the World Bank's 2011 figures.

China, already the site of what, in 2012, Freedom House called “the world’s most significant system of media repression,” increased its hold on the media with arrests and censorship in 2012 during the lead-up to the 18th Party Congress and an expected change in leadership. China is “the world’s largest poor performer” among countries with dismal records of press freedom. During the Arab Spring uprisings, China suppressed coverage of events, blocked social media platforms such as Twitter, and imposed tighter controls on investigative reporting and entertainment programming. Party directives delivered daily to media organizations restricted coverage concerning public health, foreign policy, environmental accidents and deaths in police custody. Writers and activists with significant online followers disappeared, were abused in custody and, in many cases, were sentenced to lengthy prison terms.

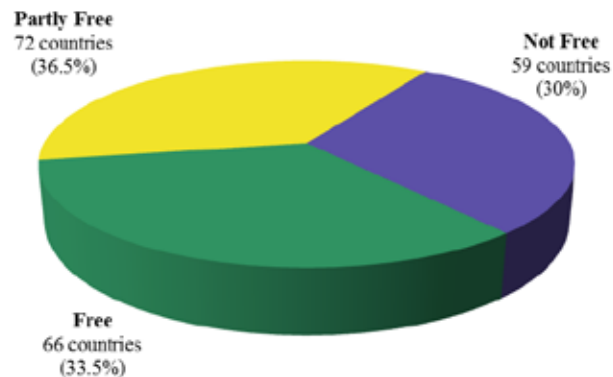
Prior to clamping down on the press further, China imprisoned at least 34 journalists in 2011 for breaking ambiguous laws such as “inciting subversion” and “revealing state secrets,” according to *Human Rights Watch* (January 2012). Those who were jailed include investigative journalist Qi Chonghuai, who had been sentenced in August 2008 to a four-year prison term for “extortion and blackmail” after exposing corruption among party officials in the city of Tengzhou, in his home province of Shandong. In July 2011, he was two weeks away from release when the court that originally convicted him retried him on the same charges and extended his sentence to eight years. He was subjected to torture and hard labour in a prison coal mine. Human rights advocates at the time described China’s legal process as “flawed” and declared the second conviction a flagrant violation of Chinese law.

In another example of China’s deteriorating regard for journalistic freedom, *Southern Metropolis Daily* editor Song Zhibiao was sidelined in May 2011 for writing a commemorative piece on the 2008 Sichuan earthquake in which he criticized the government’s recovery efforts. The China Media Project at the University of

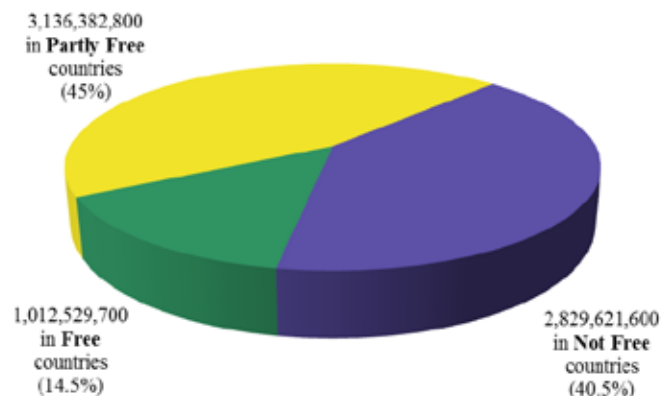
World Population in 2011 According to Total Press Freedom Score



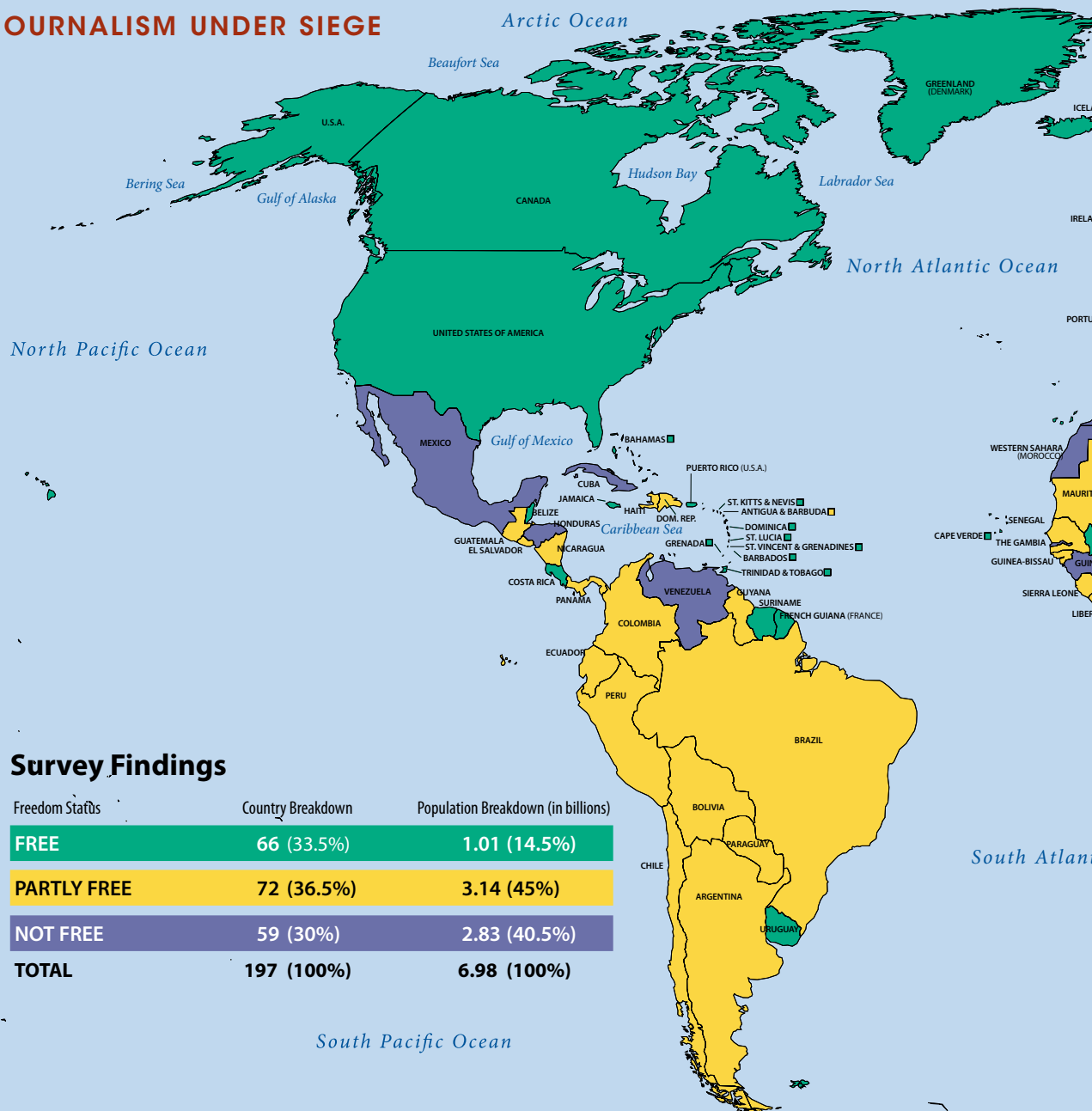
Status Breakdown by Country



Status Breakdown by Population



SOURCE: FREEDOM HOUSE



Rank	Country	Rating
FREE		
1	Finland	10
	Norway	10
	Sweden	10
4	Belgium	11
5	Denmark	12
	Luxembourg	12
	Netherlands	12
	Switzerland	12
9	Andorra	13
10	Iceland	14
	Liechtenstein	14
12	St. Lucia	15
13	Ireland	16
	Monaco	16
16	Palau	17

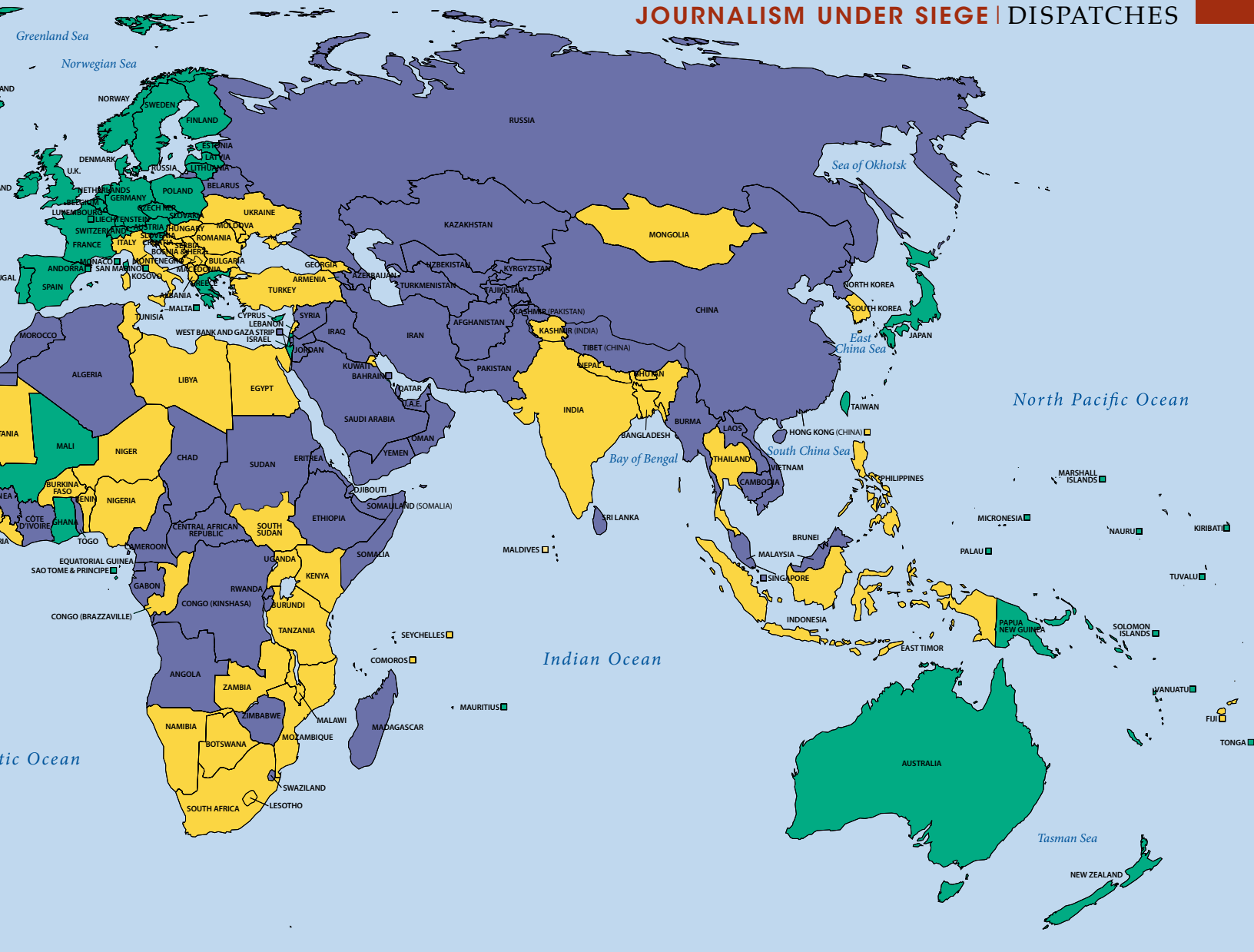
Rank	Country	Rating
	Marshall Islands	17
	New Zealand	17
	Portugal	17
	San Marino	17
	St. Vincent and Grenadines	17
22	Estonia	18
	Jamaica	18
	United States of America	18
25	Barbados	19
	Canada	19
	Costa Rica	19
	Czech Republic	19
29	Bahamas	20
	St. Kitts and Nevis	20
31	Australia	21
	Austria	21
	Belize	21

Rank	Country	Rating
	Micronesia	21
	Slovakia	21
	United Kingdom	21
37	Cyprus	22
	Japan	22
	Malta	22
40	Dominica	23
	Lithuania	23
	Suriname	23
43	France	24
	Grenada	24
	Mali	24
	Spain	24
47	Poland	25
	Slovenia	25
	Taiwan	25
	Trinidad and Tobago	25

Rank	Country	Rating
51	Tuvalu	26
	Uruguay	26
	Vanuatu	26
54	Cape Verde	27
	Kiribati	27
	Latvia	27
	Papua New Guinea	27
58	Ghana	28
	Nauru	28
	Solomon Islands	28
61	Mauritius	29
	Samoa	29
	São Tomé and Príncipe	29
	Tonga	29
65	Greece	30
	Israel	30
PARTLY FREE		

Rank	Country	Rating
67	Chile	31
68	Namibia	32
	South Korea	32
70	Guyana	33
	Hong Kong	33
	Italy	33
73	Benin	34
	South Africa	34
75	East Timor	35
	Montenegro	35
	Serbia	35
78	Bulgaria	36
	Hungary	36
80	India	37
	Mongolia	37
82	Antigua and Barbuda	38
83	Botswana	40

Rank	Country	Rating
	Croatia	40
	El Salvador	40
86	Dominican Republic	41
	Romania	41
88	Burkina Faso	42
	Philippines	42
90	Mozambique	43
91	Brazil	44
	Peru	44
93	Panama	46
94	Bolivia	47
95	Bosnia and Herzegovina	48
	Comoros	48
97	Indonesia	49
	Kosovo	49
	Lesotho	49
	Nicaragua	49



Rank	Country	Rating	Rank	Country	Rating	Rank	Country	Rating	Rank	Country	Rating	Rank	Country	Rating	Rank	Country	Rating
	Niger	49		Congo (Brazzaville)	55		Malawi	60		Qatar	67	168	Swaziland	76		Somalia	84
	Sierra Leone	49		Nepal	55		Paraguay	60		Singapore	67		Venezuela	76		Vietnam	84
	Tanzania	49		Senegal	55		Thailand	60	153	Cameroon	68	170	Sudan	78	187	Burma	85
104	Argentina	50		Turkey	55		Zambia	60		Morocco	68	171	Tajikistan	79		China	85
	Haiti	50	122	Seychelles	56	NOT FREE			155	Iraq	69	172	Azerbaijan	80	189	Syria	89
	Nigeria	50	123	Egypt	57	139	Algeria	62		Kyrgyzstan	69		Russia	80	190	Cuba	91
107	Albania	51		Guinea-Bissau	57		Central African Republic	62		Togo	69		Zimbabwe	80		Equatorial Guinea	91
	Lebanon	51		Kuwait	57		Guinea	62	158	Côte d'Ivoire	70	175	Ethiopia	81	192	Iran	92
	Maldives	51		Uganda	57		Honduras	62		Gabon	70		Kazakhstan	81	193	Belarus	93
	Tunisia	51	127	Bhutan	58		Mexico	62	160	Oman	71		The Gambia	81	194	Eritrea	94
111	Bangladesh	52		Ecuador	58	144	Cambodia	63	161	Burundi	72	178	Rwanda	82	195	Uzbekistan	95
	Georgia	52		Fiji	58		Jordan	63		Sri Lanka	72	179	Congo (Kinshasa)	83	196	Turkmenistan	96
	Kenya	52	130	South Sudan	59		Madagascar	63		United Arab Emirates	72		West Bank and Gaza Strip	83	197	North Korea	97
	Mauritania	52		Ukraine	59		Malaysia	63	164	Afghanistan	74		Yemen	83			
115	Macedonia	54	132	Guatemala	60		Pakistan	63		Djibouti	74	182	Bahrain	84			
	Moldova	54		Liberia	60	149	Armenia	65	166	Brunei	75		Laos	84			
117	Colombia	55		Libya	60	150	Angola	67		Chad	75		Saudi Arabia	84			

AP PHOTO/PAVEL GOLOVKIN



A woman places flowers before a portrait of Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya, shot to death in her Moscow apartment building in 2006.

Hong Kong confirmed that Song would be “prevented from writing editorials for an unspecified period of time.” Shortly after, Xu Zhiyong, a Beijing lawyer and activist known for his blogs, disappeared. Dozens more activists and writers were detained or simply disappeared ahead of the 18th congress, following citizens’ appeals for a “Jasmine revolution.”

China is ranked 174th out of 179 countries in the 2011/2012 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index and is on the Reporters Without Borders list of “Enemies of the Internet,” which is updated every year. Despite China’s censorship capability, its journalists and Internet users continued to test their boundaries by drawing attention to scandals or launching campaigns on blogging platforms.

India also does not figure well in press freedom reports, exhibiting a worrisome tendency to try to control Internet content and, despite being the world’s largest democracy, has seen 17 journalists murdered since 1992. India’s scores from Freedom House and Reporters Without Borders dropped in the past two years. With China and India poised to become juggernauts in the world economy, their poor record of press freedom is of tremendous con-

cern and an indication of other issues. Although competition for newspaper sales is less about informing people than selling news that will attract people’s attention, a free press is closely associated with a free market. A record of abuse in one area is an indication of similar abuse in the other.

Russia, Iran and Venezuela have used a range of strategies to strangle their media, detaining critics, closing media organizations, shutting down blogs, and filing libel or defamation suits against individual journalists. In October 2006, Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya, special correspondent for the *Novaya Gazeta* newspaper, strident critic of President Vladimir Putin and the war in Chechnya, and a prominent human rights advocate, was found shot to death in her apartment building. A 9-millimetre pistol had been left at her side, the signature of a contract killing. Days after the murder, Putin declared that it was an overseas plot to discredit Russia and essentially told investigators not to look at government officials as suspects. After an investigation best described as sketchy, 11 suspects were arrested by August 2007. In 2009, several defendants were acquitted while Russian authorities insisted they were conducting

a thorough second investigation. In July 2012, a retired police official was indicted on charges of complicity, charges that were downgraded several times until investigators made a deal with him to reveal the murder’s mastermind.

In October 2012, the investigation was closed without identifying the person who ordered the killing, although five people suspected of involvement, including the alleged gunman, were expected to go to trial. On Nov. 6, 2012, the *New York Times* quoted the lead investigator, Petros V. Garibyan, as saying that the killer, “first and foremost ... sought a demonstrative and resonant act aimed at intimidating all of you — journalists — as well as society and the authorities.” The investigation showed that the killer had stalked Politkovskaya for five days, waiting to kill her on Oct. 7, Vladimir Putin’s birthday.

In Pakistan, which the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) considers the deadliest country in the world for journalists, threats against the press from a range of agencies have reached unprecedented levels of violence against reporters. (The CPJ promotes press freedom and investigates the causes of suspicious deaths of journalists.) Such

danger impels journalists to self-censor, particularly on sensitive subjects such as blasphemy laws and the country's notorious security forces.

The lack of a free press does not necessarily mean people have no access to information in the age of the Internet, nor does access to information begin and end with the traditional press. In the digital age, people have unlimited access to empowering information from a range of sources. In a free society, that is.

A phenomenon of the Arab Spring was the role of citizen journalists in the midst of protests and civil uprisings. While organizations such as Al-Jazeera could not gain entry into Syria, citizens witnessed events and used their cellphone cameras to record and publicize atrocities in order to bring global scrutiny and outrage to oppressive governments.

New media and bold citizenry made significant contributions to the uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia and played a vital role in creating a new dynamic in Russia. However, although new media, especially when augmented by mass media, provide effective means for informing citizenry of government abuses and rallying civic action against intolerant regimes, they are less effective in creating democracy. This is particularly true in countries where access to public information is controlled by the state.

Repression of news about the Arab Spring ranged from information blackouts in state media in Zimbabwe and Ethiopia to China's sophisticated filtering of the Internet and text messaging. In Uganda, Angola and Djibouti, where anti-government protests broke out, journalists reporting on the demonstrations were harshly, sometimes violently, reprimanded.

The state of press freedom around the world is fluid, with often small but measurable gains in what the press can do, and losses when governments impose restrictions on their press. For example, Thailand was downgraded to Not Free in 2010 by Freedom House, but regained Partly Free status in 2011 due to a calmer political situation that enabled expanded reporting on elections and "greater space for dissent and coverage of sensitive topics," as well as less violence directed towards reporters.

But the changed rating begs the question. If reporters are free to report when everything is hunky-dory but not when the political situation is inflamed, are they actually free of government intervention? It would appear that they are not. Despite

Thailand's better rating, the country's judicial environment deteriorated through the year with the *lèse-majesté* law, which forbids criticism of the monarchy — a law applied more frequently and harshly by a new Internet security agency that can

and made public by mobile technology and social media, where it went viral.

The desperate act of a seemingly insignificant and poor man ignited long-simmering anger over injustice, poverty and political greed, and ultimately led to



Journalists march in Istanbul in early 2011, demanding better protection for press freedom.

implement shutdowns more quickly and with less oversight.

According to the Freedom House report, 2011's Arab Spring uprisings resulted in "potentially far-reaching gains for media freedom in the Middle East and North Africa," regions where autocratic leaders exert stringent control over the media. The entire region continues to have the world's poorest record. The catalyst for the positive changes initiated by the Arab Spring was the suicide in December 2010 of Mohammed Bouazizi, a vegetable peddler in Tunisia. He set himself on fire after a police officer confiscated his vegetable cart and humiliated him in public, with the whole horrible incident caught on camera

the fall of the Tunisian government and the naissance of the Arab Spring. Tunisia turned out to be ground zero for transformation brought about by technology and frustrated citizens; the "wave of revolution," as the media have described it, rippled across northern Africa.

The improvements in the Arab world were the most significant conclusions reached in *Freedom of the Press 2012* and came at the end of eight successive years of declining press freedom around the world, reflecting a phenomenon that affected most regions. The uprisings early in 2011 were accompanied by encouraging changes outside of the Middle East and North Africa, in countries such as Indone-

sia, the Philippines and Zambia. Progress was also registered in Georgia, Nepal, Niger, Sierra Leone and Togo. Among the countries with significant gains in press freedom were Myanmar, Libya and Tunisia, all of which had had media environments that were among the most oppressive in the world.

Libya and Tunisia made single-year leaps that were unheard of in the three-decade history of the report. Such changes, however promising, must be viewed with as much concern as optimism; South Africa passed the Protection of Information Bill in 2011, which allows government and state agencies to withhold information across a range of topics considered to be in the national interest or on the grounds of national security.

Several democratic countries, particularly Chile and Hungary, have experienced a decline in press freedom, according to Freedom House and Reporters Without Borders. Because of the decline in the past few years of the status of countries that had previously had free press, the global population in countries with press freedom — 14.5 percent, or one in six people — is the lowest in more than a decade.

Disturbingly to us in Canada, Britain and the United States were not exempt from threats to a free press. Britain lost ground due to injunctions filed by celebrities and wealthy individuals that prevented the media from reporting targeted information and even acknowledging the injunctions themselves. Additionally, there were attacks on journalists covering riots; and the police used the Police and Criminal Evidence Act, established in 1984, to force media organizations to submit unedited footage of rioting in London and Northern Ireland. The American press was adversely affected by detentions and police manhandling of journalists covering protests involving the Occupy movement.

We would like to think that Canada has a completely free press, so it comes as a shock that Canada is ranked 19th globally by Freedom House and 10th out of 179 by Reporters Without Borders. Finland and Norway share first-place ranking in both indexes. By comparison, the countries are quite similar; they are democracies with a range of newspapers and magazines, and with high Internet use; they protect linguistic, religious and minority rights and freedom; and in recent years they have noted increasing instances of racism or xenophobic behaviour. While media freedom is generally satisfactory in Canada,

where we fall short is in the area of access to information. It has become harder for the media to access official data and judicial harassment has become the main form of violation of a free press. Journalists have been prosecuted for refusing to reveal sources.

A report by Canadian Journalists for Free Expression (CJFE) notes that government agencies now exceed the legislated 30-day response time 44 per cent of the time. The report claims that access has become more difficult since Stephen Harper became prime minister, although the report does not state if the change is due to policy or budgetary restrictions that have reduced staff in some government departments.

The means by which people receive their news today is significant; as Marshall McLuhan famously said, “the medium is the message.” Television remains a powerful messenger. Among authoritarian leaders who control the television news in their countries are the leaders of Russia, Venezuela, Zimbabwe, most Eurasian states, China and Vietnam. Those with access to mobile technology in combination with cable and satellite television have greater opportunities to receive news.

According to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), more than 60 percent of the world’s households do not have a computer and only 35 percent of the global population describe themselves as Internet users. Television is still a powerful medium for news dissemination but, while the last decade saw increased media diversity in many countries due to significant growth in the availability of cable and satellite television, state control over broadcast media remains a key method of restricting information.

Freedom House’s analysis and rankings, it says, are based on universal criteria. “The starting point is the smallest, most universal unit of concern: the individual. We recognize cultural differences, diverse national interests and varying levels of economic development. Yet Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers.”

“The operative word for this index,” says Freedom House, “is ‘everyone.’”

Laura Neilson Bonikowsky is a writer from Alberta.

A DEADLY BUSINESS

By Laura Neilson Bonikowsky

The practice of journalism is increasingly a deadly business. In 2012 alone, more than 90 journalists and 20 media staff were killed; more than 50 of them have been confirmed as targeted killings motivated by the individuals’ activities as journalists.

The deadliest country for the press in 2012 was Syria, where nearly 30 media personnel were killed, according to the International News Safety Institute (INSI). The worst countries, rated by INSI, were Syria, Somalia, Nigeria, Mexico and Brazil.

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), which examines the motives behind journalists’ deaths, the five deadliest countries in 2012 were Syria, Somalia, Pakistan, Brazil and Thailand. Historically, according to CPJ, the deadliest countries overall are Iraq (94 murders), Philippines (70), Algeria (58), Colombia (40) and Russia (33). CPJ reports that 946 media personnel have been killed since 1992; no charges or convictions were made in 583 of those cases.

It is difficult to determine exactly how many reporters are targeted and killed each year; incidents are covered up, the news is withheld. Most cases are not prosecuted.

Sadly, unless a journalist is a prominent Western correspondent, little to no attention is paid. In 2002, people around the world were horrified when the *Wall Street Journal*’s Daniel Pearl was kidnapped and beheaded by terrorists in Pakistan; four months later, when Globo TV’s investigative reporter, Tim Lopes, was kidnapped and brutally murdered by drug traffickers in Brazil, there was no outcry at all.

The single deadliest event carried out against journalists since 1992 was the 2009 massacre of 32 media personnel and 26 others in the town of Ampatuan, Maguindanao province, Philippines. The victims, in a convoy travelling to a political event, were ambushed by 100 men. The aftermath of the Maguindanao massacre (aka Ampatuan massacre) was a fiasco of contaminated evidence, intimidated witnesses, charges of corruption, threats and violence, and the replacement of several lead prosecutors, most recently in October 2012.

What follows is a list of some of the journalists killed in 2012 whose deaths have been confirmed as, or are suspected of being, targeted murders reported by INSI, CPJ and Reporters Without Borders.



Gilles Jacquier, a French journalist, was among eight killed by hostile fire during a pro-regime rally in Homs, Syria, January 11. Although most foreign journalists have been banned from

Syria since March 2011, the award-winning journalist and cameraman for France 2 TV was one of 12 invited to Homs on a government-authorized trip.

Wisut "Ae Inside" Tangwittayaporn, editor and owner of *Inside Phuket* newspaper, was shot three times, Jan. 12 on the island of Phuket, Thailand, by gunmen on a motorcycle as he drove with his wife along a busy street during rush hour. *Inside Phuket* had been reporting on illegal land titles.

Marie Colvin, American journalist with the *Sunday Times*, was killed in Homs, Syria, Feb. 22, along with French photojournalist **Rémi Ochlik**, when their makeshift press centre was shelled by Syrian forces loyal to President Bashar al-Assad. Despite the ban on foreign journalists, many smuggled themselves into Syria to cover the country's conflict.



Ali Ahmed Abdi, a reporter with Radio Galkayo and contributor to the pro-government website *Puntlandi*, was shot in the head near his home in Galkayo, Somalia, March 4.

Radio Galkayo is one of the few outspoken critics of the insurgent group Al-Shabaab, which has fought the Puntland administration since 2007 and is suspected of shooting another reporter and throwing a grenade into the station.

Regina Martinez Pérez, a reporter for *Proceso* magazine known for her in-depth reporting on drug cartels, was found dead in her home in Xalapa, Mexico, April 28. She had been brutally beaten and strangled. In the week before her murder, she had covered stories involving the activities of various drug cartels.

Farhan Jeemis Abdulle was gunned down on his way home from work at Radio Daljir in Galkayo, Somalia, May 2. He started as a reporter with the station and became a producer, editor and host. He was also a correspondent for Simba Radio, Mogadishu. He had been threatened a few days before the attack; the suspects are Al-Shabaab insurgents.

Jamal Uddin, a reporter for the Bengali-language *Gramer Kagoj*, was attacked by a group of men wielding machetes and other sharp weapons in a tea stall in Kashipur village, Bangladesh, June 15. A suspect told police they had drugged Uddin and attacked him when he passed out; the attack was in reprisal for his reporting on the local drug trade.

Valério Luiz de Oliveira, host of a radio sports program known for his critical commentary on the local soccer team's management, was shot at least four times outside the Radio Journal offices in Goiânia, Brazil, July 5. He had been banned from the team's headquarters.

Mika Yamamoto was killed in clashes between rebels and Syrian government forces in Aleppo, Syria, Aug. 20. She was a video and photojournalist for *Japan Press* and was among a group of journalists travelling with the rebel Free Syrian Army to a bombed out area when a group of government soldiers opened fire on them.



Abdirahman Yasin Ali, director of Radio Hamar (Voice of Democracy), was among three journalists killed by suicide bombers in a café in Mogadishu, Somalia, Sept. 20. Two men

entered the café, which was frequented by the press and civil servants, and detonated bombs, killing 14 people and injuring 20.



Ahmed Farah Ilyas was killed by three gunmen in Las Anod, Somalia, Oct. 23, hours after reporting on a bombing that authorities blamed on Islamic insurgents. Ahmed was a

correspondent for London-based Universal TV and had been detained with two other journalists on Oct. 12, in connection with coverage of Las Anod residents who supported the new prime minister.

Julius Cauzo, a radio journalist, was fatally shot by a gunman on a motorcycle in Cabanatuan City, Philippines, Nov. 8. He had received death threats prior to the attack, but the motive was unclear. Cauzo was an outspoken critic of local politics and corruption.



The grave of Anna Politkovskaya at the Troyekurovskoye Cemetery in Moscow.

WIKIPEDIA

BY THE NUMBERS

The Committee to Protect Journalists began keeping records in 1992; 946 journalists have been killed worldwide since that date.

473 journalists were held in captivity at the end of 2012.

Annual stats:

1992: 44 killed

Deadliest country: Tajikistan (9 killed)

1997: 26 killed

Deadliest country: India (7 killed)

2002: 21 killed

Deadliest country: Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory (3 killed)

2007: 70 killed

Deadliest country: Iraq (32)

2012 (as of November 26): 55 killed

Deadliest country: Syria (22)

Note: These figures relate to journalists known to have been killed because of their work and do not include media workers or those who have been killed with unconfirmed motives.

A sobering report on UN goals

There are still 2.5 billion people without toilets and sewage systems.



Jon Lane is the former executive director of the UN's Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council. WaterCan presented him with the Michael Lubbock Award in October in Ottawa for his contributions in the field of international water and sanitation. The following are excerpts from his acceptance speech.

I started work in water and sanitation in developing countries in 1987, the same year WaterCan was founded.

It was a very exciting time to come in. I was one of a cohort of people attracted to this work by the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (1981 to 1990).

A lot of organizations were formed in that decade and a lot of professional people were inspired to become part of that work. We are still fortunate that some of that decade's innovations and ideas have been of great help to us over a long time. For example, it was the decade that changed the way we looked at water and sanitation, which had previously been thought of as a utility, a municipal duty, and brought in the concept of what was originally called "community participation," then "community management." Now we would use the phrase "people-centred approaches," but the idea that the most important people, when we are looking at improving lives, are the people themselves is a thought that took root during that decade.

Something else was the invention or development of different technical solutions in water and sanitation that were designed to be maintained by people



Misrak Dida Primary School students and headmaster stand before the newly constructed latrine facilities at their school.

themselves. Whether that would be in water or sanitation, these are some of the fundamentals of our trade to this day. That was an important milestone in getting our work going.

The year at the end of the decade, 1990, subsequently became adopted as the base year for the Millennium Development Goals. The MDGs raised the political profile of development issues in general. [They] also gave us not just the targets, but the measures against which we have been carrying out our work ever since.

A couple of thoughts on how we are getting on using the MDGs as our benchmarks:

If we look at water, we are not doing badly. There are lots of organizations that work in water. It is an attractive subject and something we're passionate about, but it is also something we can communicate relatively easily. It is something politicians love. Every politician likes to have their photo taken working a tap and nice clean water comes out. We are exceeding population growth, so, as the

world's population increases, the number of people still without water is decreasing, and that is great. We are moving in the right direction.

There have been a couple of blind alleys over the last 20 years. Perhaps the big one is an idea that was very strongly pushed about 15 years ago — that the private sector would come in to developing countries with new investment and would be the answer to our water problems. That never happened. It just got started and kind of fizzled out.

There are a couple of things that are still bothering me. One is that in the future, we are going to have huge problems in maintenance and replacement of water supply systems. Everybody loves to do something new, and when we are doing our fundraising or whatever, it's great to be able to say, "here are some people who do not have water and as a result of what we are doing they will have water." But in terms of the numbers, of people and amounts of money, the really big tasks are much less glamorous — maintenance, operation and

replacement of water infrastructure.

The other one, the biggest challenge, is that, behind those numbers and that headline of “we’ve achieved the MDG target,” don’t forget that the MDG target is reducing the people unserved by half, which is a pretty pathetic target.

What really bothers me are the people who don’t have water, because you can bet they are the poorest; the excluded; the minorities. They are the neglected in their own societies and globally. The important thing we have to do is make sure those people are the ones we put at the centre, to catch up with the good fortune of others. There is a really strong issue here about the equitable provision of water services.

Sanitation and hygiene have traditionally been badly neglected. Sanitation is a much less attractive subject. I have not met many politicians who want to have their photos taken [while] opening toilets. We’ve all struggled with sanitation and you can see it in the MDG numbers. We are not even keeping pace with population growth. There are still 2.5 billion people without sanitation and that is the task.

Hygiene has also been neglected. If you look at the numbers, one thing that stands out is that in terms of reducing diarrhea in children, for example, it is simple hygiene measures, such as washing hands, that actually [cut] the numbers of diarrhea cases and deaths.

I do see three positive points with sanitation. The first [involves] the methods of work in the field. We’ve seen various great ideas and, for a year or two, we thought, “oh yeah, this is it,” and then “oh, actually no, that didn’t really work.” But there is one that is now proving to be the most exciting single idea in sanitation that I’ve seen. It is the community-led sanitation philosophy that was born in Bangladesh 12 years ago from work done by Robert Chambers at Sussex University.

[It created] a whole range of methods, of working with communities to help them analyse their own situations, make informed judgments for their futures and apply that philosophy. We want to have that right, that opportunity to make our own decisions about our futures. [It was in] applying those ideas that this methodology was born and it has spread like wildfire. That’s a real plus in achieving enormous, rapid progress on sanitation.

The second point is on the more political level — the designation of the International Year of Sanitation in 2008. The idea for that came from your first Michael Lub-



Residents played an active role in planning and implementing the new Kaberni Village well in Siyaya District, Uganda.

bock laureate, Maggie Catley-Carlson.

That year really moved us forward in a number of ways, because it brought sanitation to the attention of political leaders all around the world who previously had not been interested. We, the sanitation enthusiasts, were able to agree on some common messages on sanitation and the benefits it can bring, not only in social development, but also in economic development. Those clear messages are standing us in good stead, and the International Year of Sanitation has given us a huge boost.

The third one was last year’s resolution by the United Nations that not only water, but also sanitation, are human rights. In the case of water, that had been sort of presumed, but the sanitation part of it was contentious. I think it is enormously exciting that this has been done.

It means that the work we do is not some sort of charitable gesture; it’s actually serving people’s rights and supporting and enabling them to stand up for their rights. That is a total switch of mindset and is immensely powerful.

In terms of future issues in sanitation, the point about equity that I mentioned in water also applies in sanitation. We do have some technical difficulties to overcome, notably in urban areas. With more than half the world’s population now urban, the next three billion who will join that population will almost all be living in

urban areas in developing countries. That is a shockingly huge sanitation problem we need to deal with.

There is a great deal to do. The optimism I have as I look to the future is that we are now getting better in knowing how to communicate with politicians and what we need to do. Now that the MDG time scale is coming to an end in 2015, politicians are already thinking about how they want to shape the post-2015 global development agenda.

What we need to do is to communicate to those political leaders and decision makers that water and sanitation are essential for the whole framework of global development post 2015. They are not to be thought of as little topics in isolation, but are a fundamental part of the aspirations we have for the world in social and economic development beyond 2015. We also need to be persuading other people that water and sanitation can help them achieve their goals – for example, people who work in health, education or economic development, or in so many other different areas. If we can explain to them that water and sanitation are tools that can help them achieve their aims, that is going to be extraordinary and extremely powerful.

Jon Lane is the former executive director of the UN’s Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council.

Biodiversity in a bottle

To combat deforestation in Brazil, scientists have enlisted an unlikely ally: wild bees

By Paul McKay

Utterly unperturbed, Lili Ana Rodrigues gently pries open the roof of a handmade wooden bee box, slices off paper-thin peaks of miniature mountains made of charcoal-coloured parchment, and carefully inserts a plastic syringe into what should be the dangerous, inner domain of several hundred wild bees.

The inner hive is, in fact, pulsating with tiny yellow-and-black *Melipona* bees. Humming squadrons quickly take formation to alight on her hand and hair. As nectar is drawn up into her chef's syringe, then dabbed onto a spoon for strangers to taste, more *Meliponas* arrive and seem poised to attack the invaders.

But instead, the stingerless bees merely tickle as they crawl across human arms and eyebrows, apparently foraging for some new exotic blossom to savour and pollinate. No doubt they are dismayed to taste only salty sweat, since they lose interest and disappear quickly.

By contrast, the amber gold nectar they produce glides across the palate like liquid silk. More fluid than honey made from domestic bees, it transmits a translucent sparkle, has a unique lemony finish and a tart hint of acidity to temper the natural sugar. Only a single drop is needed to ignite a delighted grin.

Nobody knows this better than Richardson Frazao, a 32-year-old Brazilian biologist who has become a leading scientific authority on the wild bees of the Amazon. He is also the field manager of an innovative program to protect the *Meliponas* and the biodiverse habitat they both depend on and sustain.

Ms Rodrigues' 70 wild bee boxes, built in a grove of tropical fruit and nut trees about 200 kilometres from the equatorial port of Belém, serve as the most successful pilot project within a dozen poor, remote communities in the eastern Amazon. Each hive produces about one litre per year, which she bottles and sells as nectar. She also uses the wax-like propolis to make distinctly scented soap, shampoo and cos-



PAUL MCKAY

Meliponas nectar from wild Amazon bees is carefully extracted. Almost 80 species per hectare have been found in pristine tropical forests.

metic products.

The annual income this generates for her family is modest by Brazilian standards, and meagre by North American or European standards. But in a region ravaged by high unemployment, such self-generated income is a domestic godsend.

More strategically, Ms Rodrigues' income from wild nectar husbandry is higher — and more sustainable — than the only alternative: being paid low wages to slash, burn and raze the tropical forests for lumber and cattle interests. To date, 70 million hectares have already fallen in Amazonia, and her small land holding is on the northern front of approaching clear-cuts (see map).

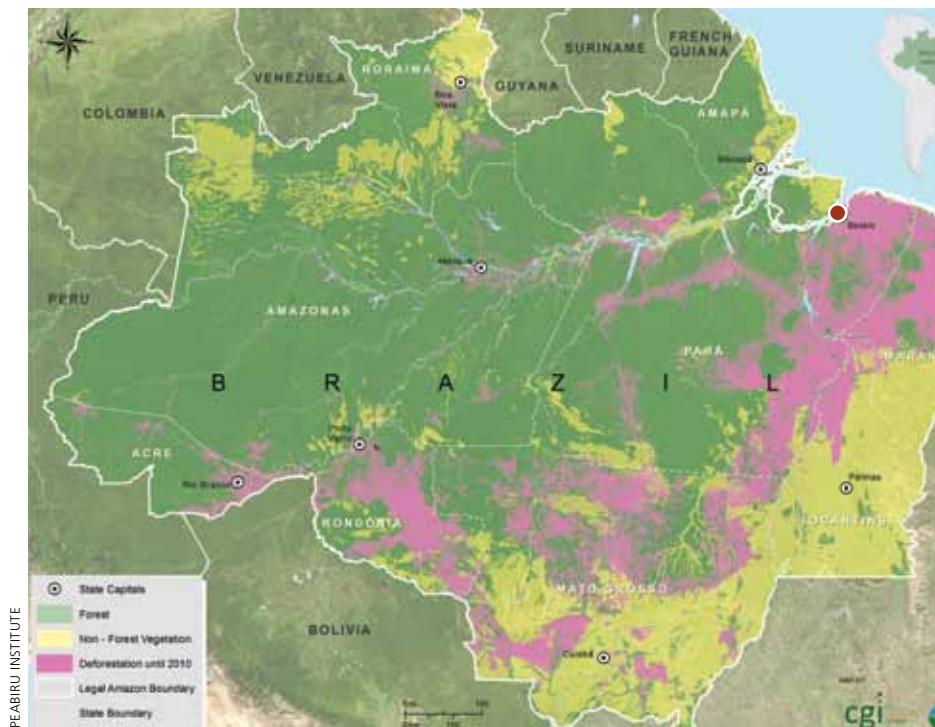
The bulwark against this, Richardson has calculated, will be rural communities that replicate Ms Rodrigues' example and discover they can earn higher, more enduring incomes by protecting their for-

ests rather than being temporarily hired to help destroy them.

His daring plan has the backing of the Peabiru Institute (a science-oriented foundation based in Belém), the Netherlands' Royal Tropical Institute, Conservation International and The Nature Conservancy. All agree that Richardson's wild bee initiative may be the most effective way to protect remaining Amazon forests, restore biodiversity and promote economic equity among some of Brazil's poorest peoples.

That is a lot of weight to rest on the delicate wings of an insect barely bigger than a fingernail. But the saving grace is that there are billions of them, in hundreds of species, each of which evolution has selected to pollinate distinct trees, flowers and shrubs. That means they are the lynchpin of biodiversity.

In the most-dense parts of still-intact Amazonia forests, Richardson has



This map shows the scale and location of Amazonia deforestation, and the collateral damage in lost biodiversity. Belém (marked by a red dot) is located in the northeast.



Brazilian artisans make soap, shampoo and cosmetic products, which earn them higher incomes than would clearing Amazon forests for farming or palm-oil production.

recorded up to 79 different species of Melipona bees in a single hectare. This confirms a jaw-dropping level of indigenous forest biodiversity there, but it is by no means an isolated example.

Of the 20,000 wild bee species globally,

there are 400 known species of Melipona bees in the Amazon basin, which extends into Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador. About 10 new species are discovered each year. Richardson himself may soon be credited with one if independent tests verify his discovery.

Shy with strangers, but quick to flash a genial smile – especially within tasting distance of Melipona nectar – he hopes to maximize community bee projects by combining science and social engagement.

“I get lots of pleasure from identifying wild bees, and from doing pure science,” the PhD candidate says during a translated interview in his Peabiru Institute office. “But science is only part of the solution. The other part is to show communities the real value of biodiversity, and to empower them to protect it.”

To that end, Peabiru and global foundations have, since 2006, helped finance more than 2,000 remote bee box placements with 350 families in 16 remote communities. There, typical cash incomes average less than \$3 per day. The recipients include indigenous tribes, Afro-Brazilian slave descendants called Quilombolas, and the rural poor.

In each setting, Richardson looks for entrepreneurial champions, such as Rodrigues, to ignite community interest with bottom-line economics. A typical bee box costs \$25 to make with local labour and

materials, but yields nectar worth up to \$90 each production season. The bee pollination also increases the nearby yields of edible fruits and nuts, which can be harvested for subsistence food or sold for cash.

As with domestic bees, Melipona hives that thrive in biologically rich forests, can be split and transplanted to new bee boxes, which in turn can be divided again. So, in the manner of bank bonds paying compound interest, Richardson and the Peabiru Institute hope to soon see their original investments (jointly shared by Peabiru and community associations) accelerate in scale and value.

They have plans to enlist Brazil’s network of embassies and globally famous chefs to promote the “Amazon Amber” Meliponas nectar; sell the scented soap and cosmetics under special labels; and scale up production by using solar-powered extractors where power grids don’t exist. Long-range goals include a portable, commercial-grade honey processing unit that also refrigerates the nectar so it does not crystallize or ferment before it can reach outside markets.

However, Richardson cautions, the health of the wild bees and the forests they sustain will remain the highest priority. Their plan includes carefully confining each Melipona species to its endemic location, not mixing species in adjacent bee boxes or districts and not trying to torque production beyond the natural limits defined by evolution.

“As more poor communities join in wild nectar production, they will fight to protect and even begin restoring native tropical forests,” predicts Joao Meirelles, a noted Amazon scholar, author and founder of Peabiru. “The numbers are on our side. Every hectare saved can support 50 to 80 Melipona species, and up to 500 bee boxes with a foraging range of 600 hectares.”

Richardson nods, adding:

“My dream is that these Amazon communities can position themselves in a market where they are paid proper value for their work and unique, high-quality product, while at the same time protecting their forest and biodiversity.”

And does the scientist who works with bees all day dream of otherworldly Melipona nectar at night? A surprised, faintly guilty grin telegraphs his answer.

Paul McKay is an award-winning journalist. More project details can be found at: www.peabiru.org.br

Opium as product and policy

By George Fetherling



Thomas Dormandy, a retired British pathologist who knows whereof he speaks, has a great deal to tell us about opium as well as morphine and heroin, the two even more powerful painkilling drugs derived from it. His exhaustive, but not exhausting, new book, *Opium: Reality's Dark Dream* (Yale University Press, US\$40), is a splendidly informative and enjoyably written social history of the subject.

Naturally it is full of information on the use of opiates in medicine and the role they play in crime, but it also deals quite substantively with opiates in art, literature, pop culture, myth, politics, business and war. For example, Dr. Dormandy offers frightening statistics about addiction levels among U.S. military personnel during the Vietnam War, when heroin was North Vietnam's most effective weapon. I was halfway through this intriguing book, having just passed a photo of U.S. soldiers spraying insecticide on Afghan poppy fields in 2008 ("Eradicating the poppy was later recognized as incompatible with the winning of hearts and minds") when I paused to pick up the morning newspaper and spotted a pertinent story.

By a large margin, Afghanistan is the world's biggest producer of opium (a title long held by India during the days of the Raj). The paper reported that the white poppy harvest in Afghanistan — the red variety, which grows wild, has no narcotic effect — peaked in 2007 and in the past several years has been declining, despite its importance as the primary cash crop of the country's poor and one of the main sources of revenue for insurgent fighters. Now, the news story reported, a new plant disease is blighting the crop. This led to "heroin droughts" in some places, apparently causing many users to turn to drugs



UN PHOTO

Afghanistan is, by far, the world's biggest producer of opium (a title long held by India during the days of the Raj).

made, not from the poppy, but rather, like cocaine, from the coca plant.

The report put particular emphasis on desomorphine (the street name is "krokodil"): "a crude codeine-based drug that users inject." What all the above says to me is that opium, unlike methamphetamine and the other man-made drugs that are

quickly eroding opium's market share internationally, has often been bound up with classical economics and with social and foreign policy and hence, sometimes, with diplomacy as well.

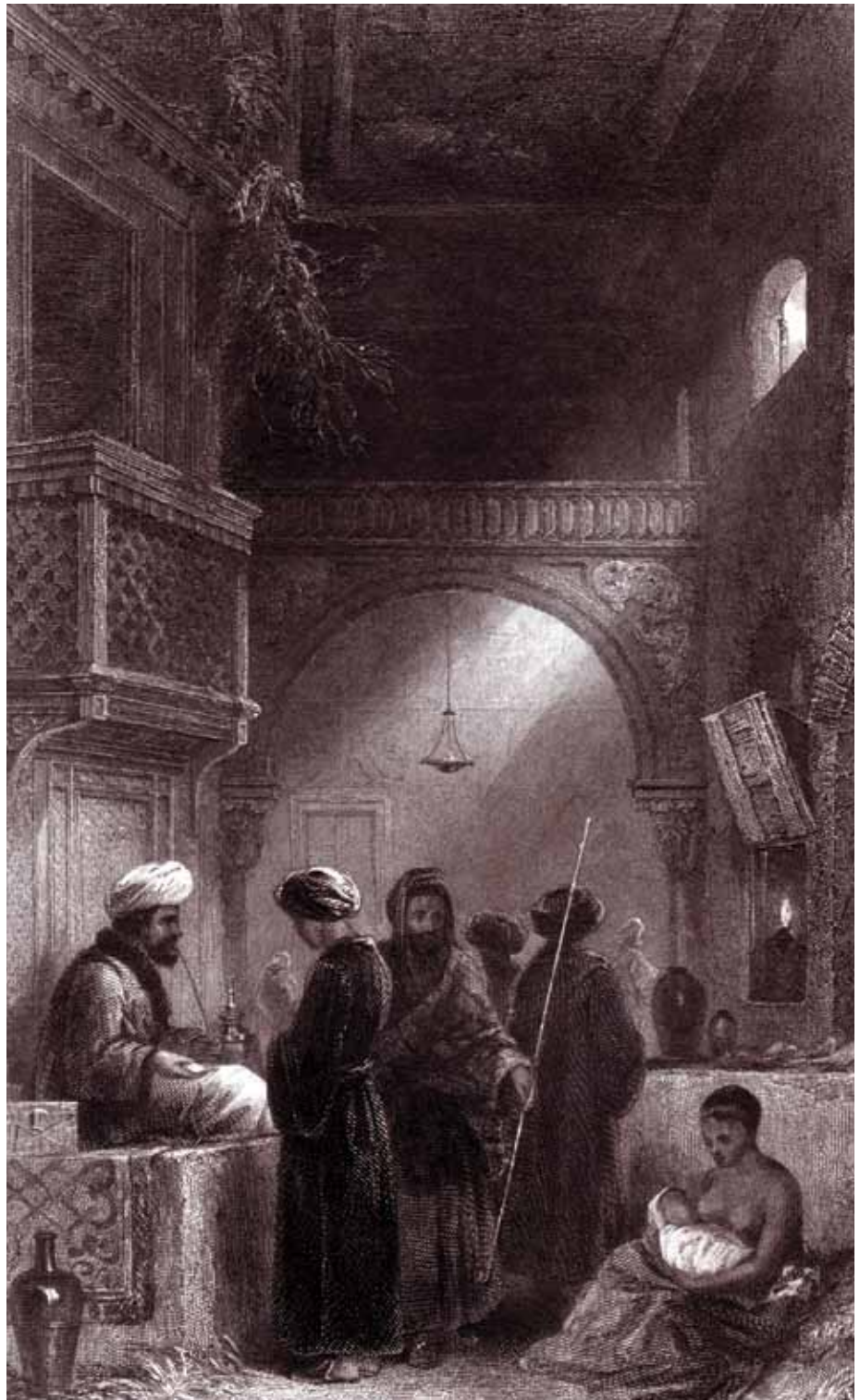
The most famous physician of the 19th Century, Sir William Osler of McGill University and later Oxford, called opium

“God’s own medicine,” for it certainly eliminated pain and did so quickly. In Switzerland, there is archeological evidence of opium use during the Stone Age, long before it spread to the ancient Assyrians, the Sumerians (who called it Hul Gil or “plant of joy”), the Persians, the Egyptians, and so on, down into Greek and Roman times. In those last two civilizations, it took the form of a hard cake mostly for consumption at home. Arab traders introduced what they called *affyon* (also romanized as *af-yum*, *ufian* or *asium*) to India and China.

The stuff had uses even when not smoked, taken as a tincture or (later on) mixed with alcohol to make laudanum. Early Arabic sources, Dr. Dormandy tells us, indicate that it “could also be used in diplomatic bargaining.” Certainly it could be taxed, becoming thereby a multi-purpose treatment for political and social woes as well as relief of human suffering. In time, its use spread almost everywhere, especially to Europe, Britain and the young American republic. Franklin Roosevelt owed his family fortune to his ancestors, the Delano clan, who prospered in the opium business. But it was only when the two Asian giants, India and China, were forced into two-way trade on an unheard-of scale that opium became a major international epidemic.

Chinese physicians had been prescribing medicinal opium for ages when, in the late 17th Century, Dutch and Portuguese sailors introduced the population to tobacco — and to the maritime practice of adding a touch of opium to the bowl of the pipe. Tobacco addiction became so widespread that the emperor banned it — but not opium, which became the new addiction, at least for the wealthy. Then, in 1793, the East India Company, the London-based joint-stock company that had taken over much of the Indian subcontinent — operating its own army and navy, even issuing its own coinage — sent an emissary to the Manchu court in Beijing, which had banned foreign opium 14 years earlier. A long and maddeningly complex series of diplomatic initiatives brought the British no satisfaction, though opium still got through.

In 1839, the emperor began publicly burning stocks of imported opium. The following year, two British frigates arrived and destroyed the Chinese fleet, igniting what has gone down in infamy as the First Opium War (to distinguish it from the Second Opium War of 1853, another one-sided victory for the British). Foreign



An engraving depicting an Ottoman opium seller by London's F.W. Topham, circa 1850.

traders had long been limited to one small section of Canton (Guangzhou). The British and others demanded and got free “treaty ports” and fat reparations. Opium from British India now floated into China almost to the point of drowning it.

China’s opium problem lasted into the first half of the 20th Century. Chi-

ang Kai-shek’s dictatorship was backed up by opium taxes as well as American aid money. Whatever else they did, the communists under Mao Zedong banned opium effectively, italicizing their point by executing tens of thousands of addicts and suppliers. The sudden availability, in the 19th Century, of syringes for subcuta-



UN PHOTO

Afghan women smoke opium. Author Pierre-Arnaud Chouvy writes that the price of one kilogram of Afghan opium rose from between US\$95 and US\$120 to US\$500 after American troops arrived.

neous injection had given medical people and self-medicating individuals a new and faster way to deliver the drug to the brain. The device was especially useful in wartime. Florence Nightingale not only used it to treat her wounded charges but regularly injected herself as well. By then, and for several generations afterwards, opium was an element in all manner of quack remedies and patent medicines. One especially popular American elixir named Mother's Friend was given to infants who cried more than their parents could tolerate. Some of the babies died of an overdose.

Opium was legal in North America until the early 20th Century, by which time more dangerous souped-up opium products had long been available. As long ago as 1827, Merck, now one of the largest drug companies in the world, began

marketing morphine. Although many unsupervised individuals would become addicted to it as time wore on, the drug was under the control of medical professionals to an extent that plain old opium never was. But this "medicalisation," to use Dr. Dormandy's term, was double-edged. While many physicians expressed concern about use of the drug for purposes other than surgery, many others were themselves recreational users. Dr. Dormandy cites an American physician who proclaimed in 1885 that one-third of all medical doctors in New York City were addicted to morphine.

This was not the case with heroin, which was made available in 1898 by the German firm that is now the worldwide purveyor of Aspirin and such, Bayer AG (pronounced BY-er in German). Heroin had five times the power of morphine.

The medical community respected its potential to harm and kill, even though, paradoxically, heroin in its early days was not thought habit-forming and indeed was considered a cure for morphine addiction. The 1930s American gangster, Lucky Luciano, was, so to speak, the marketing genius behind the spread of heroin to his nation's back alleys and other dark urban spaces.

Opium, which requires enormous labour, skill and patience to cultivate and harvest, has been fighting a losing battle for decades now with drugs that any smart chemistry grad student might concoct: ecstasy, crystal meth, and so on. Yet, as Pierre-Arnaud Chouvy shows us in his book, *Opium: Uncovering the Politics of the Poppy* (Harvard University Press, US\$27.95), opium and its two main derivatives still command attention and

warrant great concern, partly because they are very much victors and victims in geopolitics and the policies of various governments.

First, there was the area of northernmost Thailand and Myanmar that became known as the Golden Triangle, because opium middlemen would trade their commodity to other middlemen in exchange for ingots of 99-percent pure gold. (So claimed Bertil Lintner from Sweden, one of the world's most skilled reporters, who for years somehow managed to file from inside Myanmar when being a journalist there was, to say the least, a felony.) The Triangle lost much of its importance by the late 1990s, but continues to provoke thoughtful books such as a recent work by Thein Swe and Paul Chambers titled *Cashing in across the Golden Triangle: Thailand's Northern Border Trade with China, Laos, and Myanmar* (University of Washington Press, US\$20 paper). Such works have a slightly historical ring to them now that attention has turned instead to the Golden Crescent in Central Asia.

The Crescent's rise was slow at first, owing to politics and war. For example, when the last shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, banned opium in 1955, he opened the door for increased production in Pakistan and Afghanistan, which, by the time of his death in 1980, were flooding the market — Afghanistan especially. This has been the pattern: as one supplier nation has been forced to cut back, another rises to prominence.

On the one hand, opium exists, or doesn't, at the whim of various governments. One suspects that the U.S. will force the newly liberalized Myanmar to suppress opium — as a trade-off, one might say, for the office towers, luxury hotels and Starbucks that will begin popping up there before too long. But drug suppliers worldwide are skilled manipulators, as sensitive to economic change as any foreign-exchange arbitrageur. Mr. Chouvy, who is a fellow of the Centre national de la recherche scientifique of Paris, points out that a kilogram of Afghan opium sold for between US\$95 and US\$120 once the Taliban drove down the market price, but rose to US\$500 after American troops arrived.

Mr. Chouvy has written a thorough book. If not nearly so readable as Dr. Dormand's, it has a section of useful maps and a fine bibliography — from which we learn that the fellow author Mr. Chouvy quotes most often is A.W. McCoy, who wrote *The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia* (1972, later revised), a work that stands

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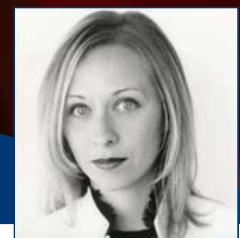
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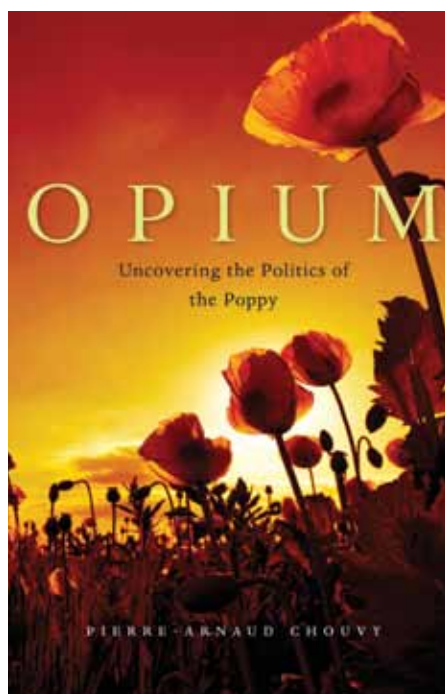
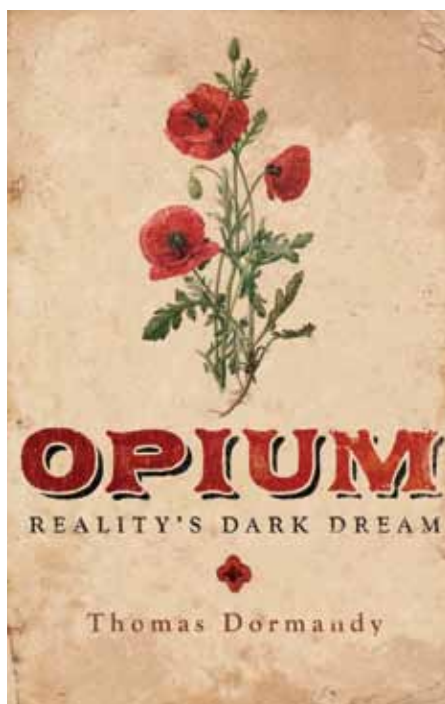
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alongside Mr. Lintner's own classic in the field, *Burma in Revolt: Opium and Insurgency since 1948* (1994).

Are there still opium addicts here in the West when chemical opioids and other not entirely organic drugs have sopped up the market? Unfortunately, yes, on the basis of Steven Martin's dramatic-sounding book, *Opium Fiend: A 21st Century Slave to a 19th Century Addiction* (Random House of Canada, \$31 cloth). Mr. Martin was an expat American and naval veteran when



US MARINES/ISAF

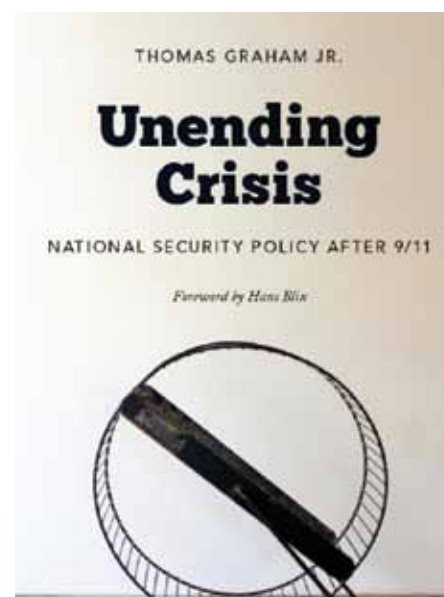
American soldiers in Helmand province, Afghanistan, greet children working in the farmlands near their base.

he worked in Thailand as a travel writer and freelance reporter. He became fascinated with opium pipes and the other paraphernalia used in opium smoking in earlier times. He built an important collection of these artifacts, which he then drew on for his first book, *The Art of Opium Antiques*. Unfortunately, he was also using them for the purpose for which they were intended. His new book describes how he underwent a successful withdrawal. It is every bit as horrifying as Thomas De Quincey's famous *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* but, needless to say, far more readable. Near the beginning he writes, "I began to dwell on morbid visions of my corpse being discovered, the centerpiece of a room that looked as though it had been ransacked by a madman." You get the idea.

AND BRIEFLY...

More than once I've written in this space about Robert D. Kaplan, the virtually unique combination of foreign policy analyst, defence and security consultant, travel writer extraordinaire and all-round public

intellectual. His new book *The Revenge of Geography* (Random House of Canada, \$34) puts the emphasis on *geo* in the word *geopolitics*. It's astonishingly wide-ranging if also a trifle familiar, as it reprints much material from four of Mr. Kaplan's previous books, albeit four of his lesser known



ones, not *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey through History or Ends of the Earth: A Journey at the Dawn of 21st Century*.

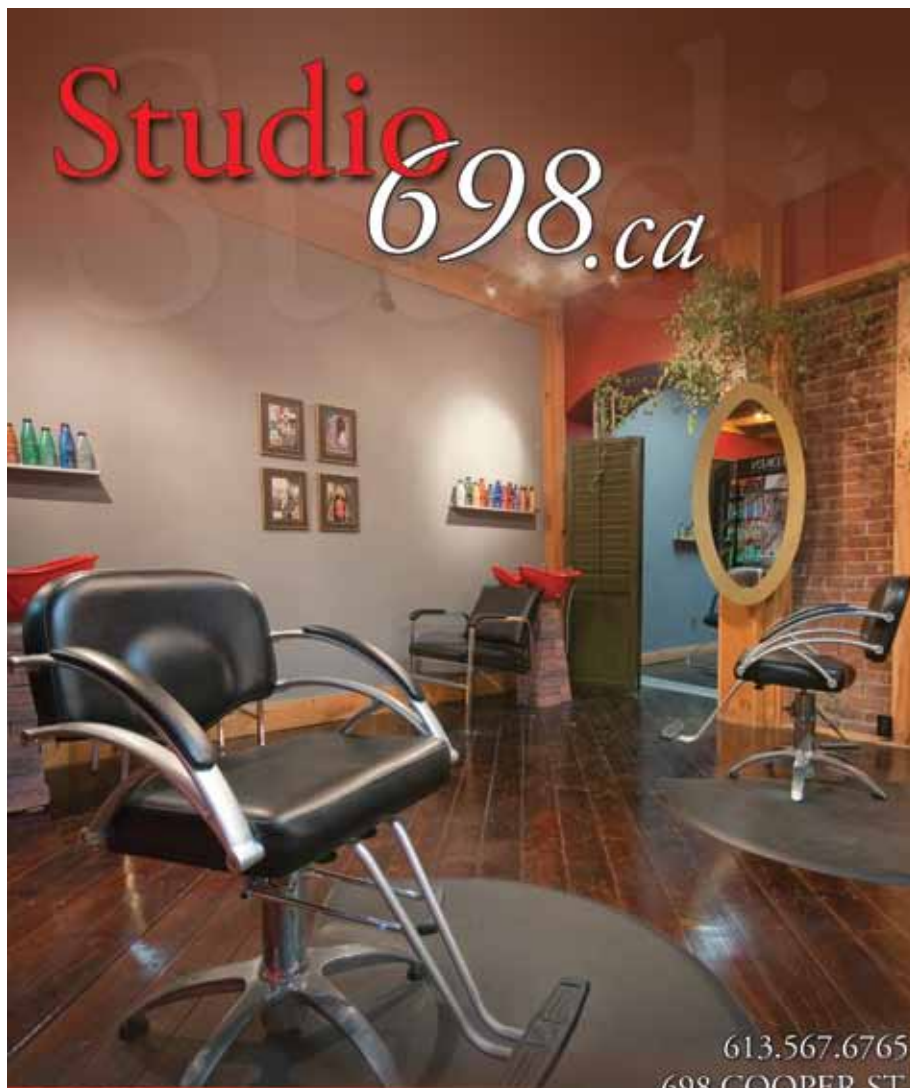
Timothy Wilford's book, *Canada's Road to the Pacific War* (UBC Press, \$37.95 paper), is the latest work of scholarship to further the growing interest in Canada's Asia Pacific role in the mid-20th Century. "Intelligence, Strategy, and the Far East Crisis" is its subtitle.

One of the more topical new books of interest is Thomas Graham Jr.'s *Unending Crisis: National Security Policy after 9/11*, focusing on North Korea, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and other hot spots. Another is *Contagion: Health, Fear, Sovereignty*, in which Bruce Magnusson and Zahi Zalloura assemble recent thinking on biological warfare and naturally occurring

epidemics. Both books are University of Washington Press paperbacks (US\$24.95).

As for humanitarian disasters, they are the subject of *Africa's Deadliest Conflict* (Wilfrid Laurier University Press, \$38.95 paper), in which Walter C. Soderlund and three others examine the sorry story of the media's coverage of — and the United Nations' role in — the war in the Congo. These events figure prominently in Ian McKay and Jamie Swift's *Warrior Nation: Rebranding Canada in an Age of Anxiety* (Between the Lines, \$26.95 paper), a study of rising militarism.

George Fetherling's book *The Writing Life: Journals 1975–2005* will be published in April by McGill-Queen's University Press.




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Morocco's exotic cuisine



MARGARET DICKENSON

Morocco's culinary roots can be traced back to nomads, known as Berbers, who lived off the land. Subsequently, traders and conquering nations introduced a myriad of food customs, but the most profound impact came with the 7th-Century Arab invasion, which brought a wide variety of exotic spices (cumin, cinnamon, saffron, ginger and caraway).

Today, the cuisine of Morocco, a coun-

try located on the northwest coast of Africa, is one of the richest and most highly appreciated in North Africa. Recipes combine not only a broad range of exotic spices, but other flavours, thanks to common home-grown ingredients such as garlic, onions, honey, almonds, olives, olive oil, cilantro, mint, lemons and other fruits.

Popular, too, are macerated products including preserved lemons, olives, peppers and eggplant as well as a very rich nutty oil derived from the pits of the fruit of the argan tree, found in the arid region of southern Morocco. Add the historical mixing of sweet and savoury dishes that combine meat with fruit, and the result is a gastronomy characterized by subtle scents and delicate flavours, frequently augmented with a zip of pungency. And one must not ignore the elegant presentations.

The staple of Moroccan cuisine is couscous, made of durum wheat or semolina, which is made into the shape of a grain — indeed many people mistake it for a grain.

The preparation of couscous requires a series of time-consuming steps, so is often only on a family's menu on Fridays (or Saturdays and Sundays in some situations) and on Muslim holy days, or for special occasions. Although many Moroccan home cooks still employ the traditional technique of making couscous, there are excellent quality pre-cooked versions available, which take a matter of minutes to prepare.

To find out more about the cuisine, I visited Moroccan Ambassador Nouzha Chekrouni, who explained that there are four main types of couscous: a "seven-vegetable" couscous, a rather sweet *Tfayer* couscous with caramelized onions and raisins, a sweet cinnamon couscous dusted with icing sugar, and a sweet and savoury tiered couscous with a layer of cooked meat or poultry arranged between two layers of cooked couscous, then finished with cinnamon and a dusting of icing sugar. All four are served as entrées.

The ambassador emphasized that cous-



LARRY DICKENSON

Moroccan Chicken Pastilla

cous is a dish intended to be shared with others, whether at a reunion of family and friends or at the mosque where worshippers (regulars or visitors), regardless of status, share platters of it.

Bread is another staple. *Khubza*, a round, flat, crusty, yeast bread, is part of every family meal. Only left to rise once, this bread is airy enough to facilitate the absorption of *tajine* sauces, yet compact enough to carry food to the mouth, which is important because Moroccans don't traditionally use cutlery.

Moroccan cuisine boasts world-renowned *tajines*. All sorts of meats, poultry and fish (sometimes beef and lamb brains or calves' feet) are cooked with vegetables, dried fruits and olives in a covered, cone-shaped pottery vessel, also called a *tajine*, from which the dish gets its name.

Among the national dishes is *harira*, a thick Moroccan soup eaten at breakfast, lunch or dinner. Lentils, chickpeas, pieces of lamb and a final addition of rice make up this nutritious dish. During the holy season of Ramadan, when Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset, a bowl of *harira* is served with dates both at home and in restaurants to break the fast.

For Eid-al-Fitr, which marks the end of Ramadan, a customary feast would surely include *pastilla* (also known as *b'steeya*). This sweet and savoury pie ranks among the most decadent and elegant of Moroccan dishes. Layers of tissue-thin phyllo pastry (usually 8 to 10) are delicately and skilfully manipulated to enclose a filling, historically consisting of pigeon, almonds, cinnamon, sugar, eggs, parsley, cilantro and a sprinkle of orange-flavoured water. Today, chicken, fish or seafood are common alternatives to pigeon. There are even dessert *pastillas* filled with pastry cream.

Seventy days after Ramadan, Muslims celebrate Eid-al-Kabir. On this occasion, they cook *michoui*, a whole lamb on a spit over a fire or in an oven and serve it in its entirety at the table. Pieces are cut off, one at a time, and dipped into a dish of ground cumin. Many Moroccans enjoy a glass of tea with their *michoui* to cut the fat of the roasted lamb.

When it comes to everyday family meals, Moroccans sit on benches and eat at low, round tables. In many homes, the thumb, index and middle fingers of the right hand or pieces of bread are used to pick up food to carry to the mouth.

For Moroccans, the day typically begins with a breakfast of *mlawi* (galettes) or *grachel* (brioches), *beghrir* (pancakes) or bread, butter and jam. Except during the holy



Tajines are served in conically shaped pottery such as this.

month of Ramadan, the principal meal is served at midday, but again, that custom is changing with time. For most families, this meal consists of only one main dish, such as a *tajine* or a couscous dish, or a hearty soup served with bread, salad, cold vegetables and perhaps rice on the side. Fresh fruit is the usual family dessert.

On special occasions, the meal would begin with a series of hot and cold salads, next a *tajine* or a hearty lamb or chicken dish, then a plate of couscous crowned with meats and vegetables. For dessert, the menu would include rich pastries made with almond, dates, sesame seeds and honey.

Generally speaking, all meals conclude with a glass of sweetened mint tea. Indeed, tea figures prominently in Moroccan culture. In stores and shops, merchants frequently offer tea to their clients.

Not to be forgotten are the many street vendors tempting passers-by with a tantalizing array of foods from kebabs, soups and salads to complete meals and light snacks. And who could resist a "string of doughnuts?" A leaf of the gingerbread tree (similar to a palm tree) is passed through the centre of the doughnuts and the ends are knotted together. They can be purchased by the half-kilogram, kilogram, or just by the handful.

Now, travel with me to Morocco and enjoy my very own addictive and unorthodox version of *pastilla*. The recipe may appear long, however the ingredients are simple, and the cooking and assembly are straightforward. Although optional, I always serve it with a light orange cream sauce, slivered poached dried apricots and, if available, fresh figs. Bon appétit.

Moroccan Chicken Pastilla

Makes 6 servings

3/4 cup (180 mL) butter, divided
 1/2 cup (125 mL) finely chopped onion
 1 tsp (5 mL) minced fresh garlic
 3 cups (750 mL) shredded, cooked, roasted chicken (skin included)
 1 1/4 tsp (7 mL) ground cinnamon, first addition
 1/2 tsp (3 mL) turmeric
 To taste, salt and crushed black peppercorns
 1/2 cup (125 mL) chopped fresh parsley
 1/3 cup (80 mL) chopped fresh cilantro
 3 eggs
 3 tbsp (45 mL) icing sugar, first addition
 1/2 cup (125 mL) toasted slivered almonds
 1 tsp (5 mL) lemon zest
 1/4 cup (60 mL) slivered poached* dried apricots
 8 sheets phyllo pastry

Flour paste:

1 1/2 tbsp (23 mL) all purpose flour
 1 tbsp (15 mL) cold water

Dusting powder:

1 1/2 tsp (8 mL) icing sugar, second addition
 1/4 tsp (2 mL) ground cinnamon, second addition

1. Over medium-low heat, melt 2 tbsp (30 mL) of butter in a large non-stick skillet. Add onions and garlic, sauté until onions are soft and slightly golden in colour.
2. Remove skillet from heat. Add chicken, cinnamon, turmeric, salt and crushed black peppercorns; toss gently. Add parsley and cilantro, toss; return skillet to heat and warm mixture through (about 2 minutes). Remove skillet from heat.
3. In a bowl, whisk together 3 eggs and 3 tbsp (45 mL) icing sugar. In a medium-size non-stick skillet, over lowest heat possible, melt 2 tsp (10 mL) of butter. Add egg mixture and stir almost constantly until eggs are soft-scrambled (about 4 minutes).
4. Add scrambled eggs to the chicken mixture, toss gently to evenly distribute eggs.
5. Add toasted almonds, lemon zest and slivered apricots. Toss gently.
6. In a small bowl (e.g., ramekin dish) prepare a "flour paste" by mixing together flour and water until smooth. Set aside.
7. Lightly butter all interior surfaces of an 8-inch (20-cm) springform pan.
8. Melt remaining butter and place in a small bowl (e.g., ramekin dish). Keeping



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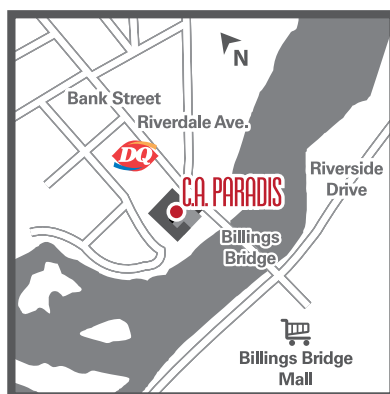
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phyllo sheets in a stack**, lightly brush top sheet with melted butter before transferring to the prepared pan with one end of the phyllo sheet covering the bottom of the pan and the other end hanging over the rim. Cautiously, press pastry into pan. With your finger, spread a touch of the flour paste only around the circumference of the inside bottom portion. (Note: This is done to stick the layers of phyllo together.) Repeat the process with 7 more buttered phyllo sheets while rotating the pan ensuring all inner sides are evenly covered.

9. Spoon chicken mixture into phyllo-lined pan and level the top.

10. One by one, lift the overhanging sections of each phyllo sheet in reverse order (i.e., sheet # 8 first; sheet #1 last) and fold to enclose filling. (Note: Tuck in and under any extra portions of pastry; do not cut them off.)

11. Lightly brush top surface of pastilla with melted butter.

12. Loosely lay a piece of aluminum foil over top of the pastilla and place it in the bottom third of a 375°F (190°C) preheated oven. After about 15 minutes, remove foil*** and continue baking (e.g., another 10 to 15 minutes) until top crust is golden.

13. Transfer to cooling rack. After about 15 minutes, release the spring on the spring-form pan. After 30 minutes remove the ring.

14. Prepare a "dusting powder" by mixing together 1 1/2 tsp (8 mL) of icing sugar and 1/4 tsp (2 mL) of ground cinnamon. Place in a small, very fine meshed sieve and dust surface of pastilla evenly.

15. Transfer pastilla to a serving platter. With a sharp knife, cut it into wedges. Serve warm or at room temperature.

* To poach the dried apricots, place whole dried apricots in a non-stick skillet with a touch of water; cover and place over low heat. Once they begin to simmer, turn them over, remove skillet from heat, cover and set aside until apricots cool.

** To prevent phyllo sheets from drying out, keep them covered with a lightly dampened clean tea towel.

*** It may be that the top circumference of the *pastilla* browns more quickly than the centre. In that case, carefully place strips of aluminum foil (shiny side out) around the top rim of the pan but only to cover those browned areas.

Margaret Dickenson wrote the award-winning cookbook, *Margaret's Table — Easy Cooking & Inspiring Entertaining*, and she hosts the Rogers TV series, *Margaret's Table* (www.margaretstable.ca).

A short, chilly history of Canadian winters

By Laura Neilson Bonikowsky

How often in winter do we cringe at hearing the dreaded question, “Is it cold enough for ya?!” True, it is a conversation opener, and we Canadians do speak volumes about our weather. In Canada, winter is a part of our community to the extent that it defines us in the global consciousness. It also fills our personal consciousness during those long months of short days when we go to work and return home in the dark.

Richard Adams, in *Watership Down*, said, “Many human beings say that they enjoy the winter, but what they really enjoy is feeling proof against it.” He must have been thinking about Canada. Our national hardiness is proof against our often-harsh winters and we delight in gloating about our ability to withstand our situation, which is invariably colder/wetter/more inclement than anyone else’s.

Like our often-fractious politics, we curse and praise winter with equal vehemence. We might even say that winter is as much a part of the Canadian psyche as hockey and the maple leaf. Each winter seems to bring something noteworthy — extreme cold or record snowfalls and sometimes unusually mild temperatures that we welcome warily, knowing what is sure to follow.

We are, in most parts of the country, regrettably and resignedly accustomed to our inconvenient winter weather and its extremes. Our weather history is full of winter extremes, from rain to snow to sub-zero temperatures. Annual freezing rain averages range from the Prairies’ 20-35 hours to 50-70 hours in the Ottawa Valley and southern Quebec. Even Victoria averages a few hours of freezing rain per year, but the champ is St. John’s, Nfld. with 150 hours. Many of us will recall the 20th Century’s worst ice storm, which hit Ontario and Quebec from Jan. 4 to 10, 1998, causing an estimated \$1 billion in damage.

Though we may get our longjohns in a bunch when others see Canada only as a land of cold and snow, we must concede our frosty reputation. Canada has the world’s lowest average daily temperature, -5.6° C. North America’s coldest recorded temperature, in February 1947 in Snag, Yukon, was a bone-chilling -63°C. It was so cold that an exhaled breath made a hissing sound as it froze. Despite Canada’s nippy



Niagara Falls in the winter.

statistics, we do not hold world records for all cold extremes. Ottawa is only the world’s second-coldest national capital, after Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

Winter means snow, as any Canadian knows, and often lots of it. The worst blizzard in Canadian railway history occurred between Jan. 30 and Feb. 8, 1947, when 10 days of blowing snow buried towns and trains from Calgary to Winnipeg. Some Saskatchewan roads and rail lines remained impassable until spring. Children stepped over power lines on their way to school and people dug tunnels to their outhouses.

February, the shortest month measured by the calendar but the longest measured by shivers, claims many winter weather superlatives. They include a deadly snowstorm in St. John’s in 1959; a 1961 ice

storm that left parts of Montreal without power for a week; a 1979 blizzard that isolated Iqaluit, Nunavut, for 10 days; a blizzard in 1982 that marooned Prince Edward Island for a week; the *Ocean Ranger* disaster on Feb. 15, 1982; the warmest Winter Olympics — 1988, in Calgary — when 18.1° C on Feb. 26 was just a tad below Miami’s 19.4° C; and the greatest single-day snowfall of 145 cm at Tahtsa Lake, B.C., on Feb. 11, 1999.

As we endure whatever the latest annual freakish storm brings our way, we remain engaged, even as we are challenged, by our winter weather, with our national identity closely aligned with the natural forces around us.

Laura Neilson Bonikowsky is an Alberta-based writer.

A welcoming Korean residence

By Margo Roston



ALL PHOTOS BY DYANNE WILSON

The residence of the ambassador of Korea, on Acacia Avenue in Rockcliffe Park, is known as "Greystone."

Two large, fierce *haetae* guard the entrance to the stunning stone residence of Korean Ambassador Cho Hee-yong and his wife, Yang Lee. The strange creatures sitting on their plinths in front of the large circular driveway serve a purpose. In traditional Korean mythology, they are said to discern good and evil, prevent natural disasters and bring good luck and happiness.

These creatures lead the way into one of embassy row's more charming Rockcliffe homes, an eye-catching building on Acacia Avenue, located on an international corner surrounded by diplomatic neighbours from Spain, India, Japan and Austria.

Although the house looks as though it might have been built earlier, it was erected in 1928 for Dr. Frederick W.C. Mohr. One of the city's most influential architects, Werner Ernest Noffke, was in charge of the design and created the grey stone mansion in a combination of Gothic style, with its emphasis on natural light, and Tudor Revival with a gabled roof line, tall mullioned windows and a prominent chimney. Small wrought iron balconies decorate the second floor. The house is still known by the nickname inspired by its exterior, "Greystone."

We were fortunate to arrive shortly after the house had been dressed up by a florist for the Hospice at May Court's

fall fundraiser, "Home for the Holidays." Hundreds of visitors spent the weekend touring the main reception rooms, admiring dining room tables with traditional Korean tableware and gorgeous dark purple orchids, frozen red roses and little cotton balls and wicker stars, all festive symbols of the season. Mrs. Cho admits she has chosen a soft mauve Hanbok, a traditional Korean dress, to match the floral arrangements.

Guests enter from the front door into a bright foyer with a circular wood and wrought iron staircase and a tall mullioned window. To the left is the original dining room and sitting room, while on the right is a bright, windowed living



Korean Ambassador Cho Hee-yong and his wife ,Yang Lee.

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A photograph showing the interior of an ambassadorial residence, featuring a large living room with a piano, a chandelier, and a large rug.

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The fearsome haetae who guards the entrance to the residence.

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The dining room is located in a lower-level addition and affords more entertaining possibilities.



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Clockwise from top left: The grand stairway at the entrance; seasonal flowers; a quiet sitting room; the residence's formal place setting.

room. Walls and curtains are cream, accented with soft, subtle upholstered chairs and sofas. Since Korea is a country where most people sit on the floor, Mrs. Cho points out the room's only "made in Korea" furniture, a low, square, wooden dining table with a carved peony design.

The walls are hung with Korean art, the most interesting an abstract by one of Korea's best-known artists, Lee Shik-doo. Its bright reds, blues and yellows reflect the most common colours in Korea, Mrs. Cho says.

The diplomatic duo has only been in Ottawa a few months, but they love their new home and want to share it with friends, particularly Canadian veterans of the Korean War.

"It's a beautiful house," the ambassador says, and its Canadian flavour and feeling is a symbol of the good relations between Canada and Korea. The Korean government bought the house in 1979 and later added a large addition on the south side. The extension matches the original style and only the slightly darker colour of the new stone tells the tale of a new, large second dining room for entertaining and a lower-level TV and karaoke room that opens onto the garden.

The residence has three bedrooms and a study on the second floor and comes with a talented Korean chef who presents his homeland's specialties for guests. A recent luncheon to honour Korean War veterans and their spouses featured a starter called *gujeolpan* or "nine delicacies" — a small lacquer box divided into sections containing small pancakes to be filled with fresh vegetables and meat — followed by steamed lobster, *bulgogi* (grilled sliced beef with rice) and for dessert, lime tarts, sweet rice cakes and fruit.

Each year at the end of June, the embassy holds a huge garden party for Canadian veterans of the Korean War and hundreds of guests spill onto the stone patio at the back and around the swimming pool on the well-manicured corner lot.

The ambassador admits this is a good time to be in Canada as two memorable events will be celebrated in 2013 — the 60th anniversary of the Korean armistice and 50 years of Canada-Korean diplomatic relations. "We never forget Canadians protected our peace and freedom," Ambassador Cho says.

Anyone fortunate enough to receive an invitation should give a big smile and a wave to the *haetae* at the entrance.

Margo Roston is *Diplomat's* culture editor.



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New legislation great for Canadian wine consumption



PIETER VAN DEN WEGHE

Canada has a great and evolving home-grown wine culture. More wineries are being established; grape growers and wine-makers continue to hone their craft and Canadian wine drinkers are aware and justifiably proud of our fantastic wines. And, with a little luck and a touch of patience, wine drinkers from one end of our nation to the other will soon have one more reason to rejoice.

Until last summer, our access here in Ontario to wines produced in other provinces was limited to what we could find at the LCBO and what we could buy

from consignment agencies. However, a private-member's bill that passed quietly through the House of Commons last summer is the first step in changing that.

The bill, introduced by Dan Albas, MP for Okanagan-Coquihalla, represents the largest change to Canada's wine law since Prohibition. C-311 has made it legal, from a federal point of view at least, for an individual to import wines from one province into another as long as it's for personal consumption, and not for resale or other commercial use. It also gives provincial governments the ability to establish the rules to permit residents to transport wine home from another province or have it shipped to them directly. These laws might include the collection of taxes on these "imported" bottles of wine.

However, provincial governments and liquor monopolies such as the LCBO and the SAQ may feel threatened by this change in the law. Purchasing wine directly from a winery in another part of the country bypasses a province's control of what its population can drink and the

usual mark-ups and taxes that can be applied. However, supporters of C-311 believe its impact upon provincial monopolies should be minimal as it only allows for the sale of wine for personal consumption. Direct cross-border sales to bars and restaurants will still be prohibited. Also, the vast amount of wine purchased by private individuals will continue to be in-store, thanks to the sheer convenience of not having to endure a delivery time.

Currently, only Alberta, Manitoba and British Columbia, allow residents to import wine produced in other provinces. Alberta and Manitoba also allow importation of non-Canadian wine with no limit in quantity. Ontario's provincial law is relatively silent and ambiguous about what is considered "legally imported." Nevertheless, the LCBO has issued a policy statement which states wine imports from other provinces are restricted to nine litres per out-of-province trip. However, there is some debate as to whether this policy statement has any legal effect. Perhaps, with liquor sales privatization re-entering provincial politics, a clearer declaration by the province can be expected. Regardless, one hopes that, as the dust of this big change settles, all Canadians will experience a freer trade of awesome wines.

In the meantime, there are more than a few delicious and somewhat uncommon expressions of Canadian wine (legally) available in Ontario. First off, there's a delicious wine from Nova Scotia. This would be the 2011 Nova 7 from up-and-coming sparkling wine house Benjamin Bridge (available from Vintages for \$25.95). It's highly aromatic, slightly effervescent and a sheer pleasure to drink.

The Okanagan Valley makes the exciting Burrowing Owl's 2009 Syrah, available from Vintages for \$41.95. It's big, rich and hugely expressive with flavours of chocolate, anise and dark fruit.

Last, there's Huff Estate's 2009 Zero de Gris from Prince Edward County (available directly from the winery). This bottled version of the Frontenac Gris grape is an intense dessert wine with flavours of candied citrus, raisin and baked apple. The sweetness is balanced with a strong seam of acidity. This is an incredible pairing with briny robust blue cheeses. Enjoy.

Pieter Van den Weghe is the sommelier at Beckta dining & wine.



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Celebration time

A listing of the national and independence days marked by countries

January		
1	Cuba	Liberation Day
1	Haiti	Independence Day
1	Sudan	National Day
4	Myanmar	Independence Day
24	Maldives	National Day
26	Australia	Australia Day
31	Nauru	National Day
February		
4	Sri Lanka	National Day
6	New Zealand	National Day
7	Grenada	Independence Day
11	Iran	National Day
15	Serbia	National Day
16	Lithuania	Independence Day
17	Kosovo	Independence Day
18	Gambia	Independence Day
22	Saint Lucia	Independence Day
23	Brunei Darussalam	National Day
23	Guyana	Republic Day
24	Estonia	Independence Day
25	Kuwait	National Day
27	Dominican Republic	Independence Day
March		
3	Bulgaria	National Day
6	Ghana	National Day
12	Mauritius	National Day
17	Ireland	St. Patrick's Day
20	Tunisia	Proclamation of Independence
23	Pakistan	Pakistan Day
25	Greece	Independence Day
26	Bangladesh	National Day
April		
4	Senegal	Independence Day
15	Israel	National Day
16	Denmark	Birthday of Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II
17	Syria	National Day
18	Zimbabwe	Independence Day
19	Holy See	Election Day of Pope
26	Tanzania	Union Day
27	Sierra Leone	Republic Day
27	South Africa	Freedom Day
27	Togo	National Day
30	Netherlands	Birthday of Her Majesty Queen Beatrix

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New heads of mission

Arno Riedel Ambassador of Austria



Mr. Riedel completed an MBA from the University of Economics in Vienna before studying at Vienna's diplomatic academy.

He began his foreign service career in 1980 as a desk officer, and, within five years, was first secretary at the embassy in Budapest. He was counsellor in Jakarta and then Tehran, where he also served as director of the Austrian Cultural Institute. He returned to headquarters for three years before becoming minister-counsellor at the embassy in Rome and vice-governor to the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

His first post as ambassador was to Albania. He then returned to the ministry for several years before becoming ambassador to Thailand with dual accreditation to Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar. He was director for Central, Western and Northern Europe before being posted to Canada.

Kamrul Ahsan High Commissioner for Bangladesh



Mr. Ahsan is an engineer by training and a career diplomat by profession. He has a bachelor of civil engineering from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology and worked in the field for four years before joining the foreign service as an assistant secretary.

His first posting was as second secretary, and then first secretary at Bangladesh's embassy in China. He then served at the mission in Britain, as both first secretary and counsellor (political).

At headquarters, he was director of personnel, director for South Asia and the director of the foreign secretary's office. Between 2001 and 2003, he was political counsellor in Washington before becoming consul-general in Dubai. Just before coming to Canada, he was high commissioner to Singapore.

He is married to Madam Saira Nazneen Ahsan and has two sons.

Alexander Latsabidze Ambassador of Georgia



Mr. Latsabidze joined the ministry of foreign affairs in 1998 and was appointed consul in Iran one year later. From 2002 to 2003, he returned to headquarters as counsellor, first in the Middle East section and later, the Asia, Africa, Australia and the Pacific Rim section. He then became responsible for China, Japan and the Far East before taking on Eastern affairs.

In 2006, he was appointed consul in Washington with responsibilities in Canada and Mexico. He became chargé d'affaires at the embassy in Canada in 2011 before going to Argentina as ambassador, with accreditation to Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay.

He became ambassador to Canada and permanent representative to the International Civil Aviation Organization in 2012.

Mr. Latsabidze speaks Georgian, English, Persian, Russian and Japanese. He is married with one daughter.

Cho Hee-yong Ambassador of Korea



Mr. Cho is a career diplomat who joined the foreign ministry in 1979 after completing a bachelor's degree in economics from Seoul National University.

Mr. Cho's first posting was to Japan, as second secretary between 1984 and 1987. Next, he went to China as first secretary for six years (1990-1996). He also had accreditation to Taiwan during that period.

From 1996 to 2000, he returned to headquarters as director of the protocol division and then director for planning and budget. He then spent three years as counsellor at the mission in Washington and another year as minister and consul in the Philippines.

In 2008, he became ambassador to Sweden, with dual accreditation in Latvia.

Mr. Cho is married with a son and a daughter.

Fadjimata Maman Sidibe Ambassador of Niger



Ms. Sidibe comes to diplomacy after a long career in education, which culminated in a brief foray into politics when she served as Niger's education minister for one year.

Ms. Sidibe began her career as a professor of physics and then moved on to teach at a French-Arab school. She went on to become an educational consultant and then director of teaching for the ministry of secondary education. Following that, she became minister of education.

The ambassador is a graduate of scientific studies (physics) from the University of Niamey in Niger. She also studied educational consultation and inspection at the University of Abdou Moumouni in Niamey.

She speaks seven languages including French, English, Kanuri, Haoussa, Toubou, Djerma and Bambara. Ms. Sidibe is married and has five children.

Jorge Hernan Miranda Corona Ambassador of Panama



Early in his career, diplomat Jorge Hernan Miranda Corona was an attaché in Washington, counsellor at the permanent mission to the OAS, consul general in Seville, Spain

and later, chargé d'affaires at the embassy in Madrid. He also spent four years as his country's representative to the Inter-American System.

Between 2008 and early 2012, he was ambassador and representative to the general secretariat of the Organization of American States (OAS) in Honduras, which, during his time, negotiated the Tegucigalpa / San José Agreement and established the Commission for Truth and Reconciliation in Honduras.

He also has experience in election monitoring, having organized observation missions to Nicaragua (1990), Honduras (2008) and El Salvador (2009).

He is married to Esther Arias Vargas and has two children.

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Second secretary

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Domingas Pedro José De C. Teixeira
Attaché

Australia
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Second secretary

Toy Johnson
Second secretary

Bangladesh
Muhammed Muksud Khan
First secretary

Bulgaria
Desislava Petrova Dragneva
Second secretary

Cameroon
Elie Banbara
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Xinxin Kong
Second secretary

Boyong Wang
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Cuba
Adrian Betancourt Maden
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Egypt
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Maria Alexandra Georges
Second secretary

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Shireen Taher Shhbaz Al-Haideri
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Anne Nyambura Mbugua
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Hakim Sherif
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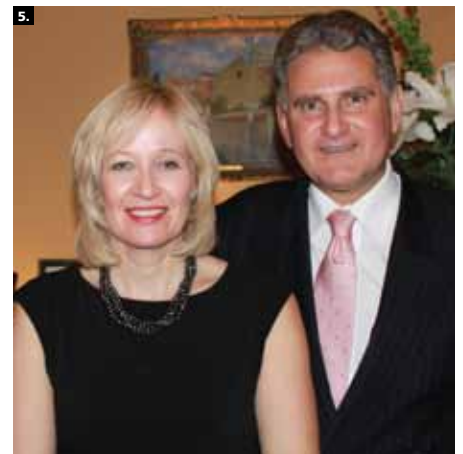
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1. The embassy of Poland hosted an event celebrating the anniversary of the commencement of the papacy of Pope John Paul II with a mass at Notre Dame Basilica. (Photo: Embassy of Poland) 2. Chilean Ambassador Roberto Ibarra hosted a reception to mark the 202nd anniversary Chile's independence and the 15th anniversary of the Canada-Chile Free Trade Agreement. Chilean Dancers performed. (Photo: Ulle Baum) 3. French Ambassador Philippe Zeller appointed Monique F. Leroux, of the Desjardins Group, to the rank of Chevalier of the Ordre national de la Légion d'honneur. From left, Mr. Zeller, his wife, Odile, Monique Leroux and Marc Leroux. (Photo: Embassy of France) 4. Cih-Kung Liu, head of mission for the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office, and his wife, Huey-Pyng Liu, hosted a reception at the Chateau Laurier to mark the 101st national day. (Photo: Ulle Baum) 5. Outgoing Romanian Ambassador Elena Stefoi hosted a farewell reception at the Chateau Laurier. Irish Ambassador Ray Bassett attended. (Photo: Lois Siegel) 6. Trinidad and Tobago High Commissioner Philip Buxo, right, hosted a republic day reception, which Kenyan High Commissioner Simon Wanyonyi Nabukwesi attended. (Photo: Sam Garcia). 7. In celebration of the birthday of the Emperor of Japan, Ambassador Kaoru Ishikawa and his wife, Masako, hosted a reception at the Westin Hotel. (Photo: Ulle Baum)



1. Outgoing Saudi Ambassador Osamah AlSanosi Ahmad hosted a farewell reception at the embassy. He's shown with Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird, right, and Deepak Obhrai, secretary of state for foreign affairs, left. (Photo: Sam Garcia) 2. Shortly after arriving in Ottawa, Norwegian Ambassador Mona Brother paid a courtesy call on House of Commons Speaker Andrew Scheer. (Photo: Embassy of Norway) 3. German Ambassador Werner Wnendt and his wife, Eleonore Wnendt-Juber, hosted a the Day of the German Unity at their residence. (Photo: Ulle Baum) 4. Slovakian Ambassador Milan Kollar and his wife, Sona, hosted a national day reception at the embassy. (Photo: Ulle Baum) 5. Outgoing British High Commissioner Andrew Pocock hosted a farewell reception at his residence, which Laureen Harper attended. (Photo: Ulle Baum) 6. The Korean embassy hosted a cultural event featuring three dance pieces from the Seoul International Dance Festival in Korea. (Photo: Sam Garcia)



1. Turkish first counsellor and chargé d'affaires Gulcan Akoguz, third from left, hosted a national day reception at the residence. Joining her from left, French Ambassador Philippe Zeller, Moroccan Ambassador Nouzha Chekrouni and Algerian Ambassador Smail Benamara. (Photo: Sam Garcia)

2. Korean Ambassador Cho Hee-yong, far left, and his wife, Yang Lee, far right, hosted a national day reception at the National Gallery of Canada. They were joined by Trade Minister Ed Fast (left) and DFAIT assistant deputy minister Peter McGovern. (Photo: Embassy of Korea)

3. The embassies of Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador and Costa Rica hosted a reception at the National Arts Centre to celebrate their independence days. From left, Salvadoran Ambassador Oscar Mauricio Duarte, Costa Rican Ambassador Luis Carlos Delgado Murillo, Honduran Ambassador Sofia Lastenia Cerrato and Guatemalan Ambassador Georges de La Roche. (Photo: Sam Garcia)

4. Czech Ambassador Karel Zbrakovsky hosted a national day reception at the NAC. He's pictured with MP Robert Sopuck. (Photo: Sam Garcia)

5. South African High Commissioner Membathisi Mdladlana hosted a reception at the Westin Hotel to mark the presentation of his credentials. He's shown with Rwandan Ambassador Edda Mukabagwiza. (Photo: Sam Garcia)

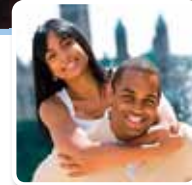
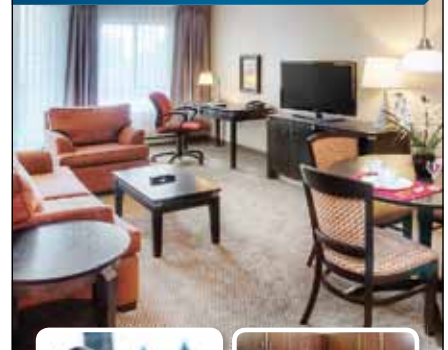
6. Ukrainian chargé d'affaires Marko Shevchenko and his wife, Olesia Shevchenko, hosted a national day reception at the embassy. (Photo: Sam Garcia)

7. Indonesian Ambassador Moebari hosted a national day reception at the Chateau Laurier, which Defence Minister Peter MacKay attended. (Photo: Sam Garcia)



1. Several ambassadors attended the launch of Holocaust Education Month at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre. From left, Czech Ambassador Karel Zbrakovsky, Israeli Ambassador Miriam Ziv; event keynote speaker Robert Rozett, director of the Yad Vashem Libraries; Mina Cohn, Chair of the Shoah (Holocaust) Committee of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa; Hungarian Ambassador Laszlo Pordany; and Swedish deputy head of mission David Linderquist. (Photo: Howard Sandler) 2. At right, Afghan Ambassador Barna Karimi and his wife, Storai, hosted a national day reception. Former chief of defence staff Walter Natynczyk and his wife, Leslie (at left) attended. (Photo: Bruce MacRae) 3. Spanish Ambassador Carlos Gomez-Mugica, left, hosted a national day reception at his residence. From left, former prime minister Jean Chrétien, Ecuadoran Ambassador Andres Horacio Teran Parral, Angolan Ambassador Agostinho Tavares Da Silva Neto, Chilean Ambassador Roberto Ibarra and Portuguese Ambassador Pedro Baptista Moitinho. (Photo: Sam Garcia)

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TOURSPAIN

Plaza Mayor, in Madrid, dates back to the 17th Century.



*By Carlos Gómez-Múgica
Ambassador of Spain*

To write about my country is something that I love, especially to invite readers to visit Spain and to see it from a different perspective. Tourists, on their first visit especially, express amazement at Spain's diversity. Not by chance has Spain been labelled a mosaic of history and cultures.

The many civilizations that have left their mark on the country through its history have made Spain a unique place — a place that welcomes visitors, not only with its rich history, but also with its diverse animals and plants, to say nothing of a delicious and varied gastronomy.

Madrid, the country's capital, is one of the main gateways for visitors from Canada. The city combines the most modern infrastructure with an important cultural, artistic and historical legacy. Some of the highlights include the Plaza Mayor (a square that dates back to the 17th Century), the Royal Palace and the Prado Museum.

While visiting Madrid, it is a must to enjoy some "chocolate with churros," a very popular dish made with fried dough. Remarkably, Madrid is home to the oldest restaurant in the world, the Casa Botin, which has specialized in traditional Castil-



Windmills in La Mancha, an historic area south of Madrid.

ian cuisine since 1725.

The other main gateway to Spain is the city of Barcelona, a cosmopolitan Mediterranean city that incorporates Roman remains and medieval districts within its urban streets, along with world-famous modernist buildings by both Antoni Gaudí and Luis Doménech I. Montaner, many of which have been declared World Heritage sites by UNESCO. One of the main arteries of the historic quarter, La Rambla, leads to the city's sandy beaches.

While visiting these two cities, I would suggest making a trip to some of their municipal markets, such as the Mercado de San Miguel in Madrid or the Mercat de la Boqueria in Barcelona. Both are fine examples of historic markets, where you can mix with the locals while getting fresh produce and also taste some tapas at their specialty stalls — a unique culinary experience. Tapas — small plates — is popular throughout Spain and very different in each region, so don't miss the opportunity to try them while you are there.

Apart from these two vibrant cities, Spain is also home to 13 UNESCO World Heritage cities, the second highest number in a single country.



The Sagrada Família, a Roman Catholic church designed by Antoni Gaudí, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It's still incomplete, 130 years after construction began.

One of them, not far from Madrid, is Alcalá de Henares, known for being the birthplace of famous writer Miguel de Cervantes, author of the classic *Don Quixote*. His home now serves as a museum.

Other UNESCO-protected cities are Ávila, a romantic medieval walled city that can be easily accessed by car, train or bus from Madrid, and Segovia, home to one of the finest examples of Roman engineering in Spain. It features an impressive aqueduct from the 1st Century that still dominates the entrance to the historic quarter.

Some other UNESCO heritage gems are Salamanca, a quaint town with one of the oldest universities in Spain (it still welcomes students from all around the world every year), and Cuenca, famous for its "hanging houses" from the 14th Century, medieval homes that literally hang from a cliff above a gorge and are still used as restaurants and museums.

Another city that richly deserves a visit is Toledo. Located south of Madrid, this town played a crucial role as a cultural centre for many centuries. Although its origins date back to the Neolithic period, it was during the 2nd Century BC that the



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TOURSPAIN

Ibiza is one of the jewels of the Balearic Islands, in the Mediterranean.

sorts). From both locations, the Camino will take you to Logroño, capital of La Rioja (famous worldwide because of its wines, but with a historic legacy also of the highest quality), and then through Castilla y León before ending in Galicia. It comprises not only an enormous artistic and religious heritage with its cathedrals, monasteries and pilgrimage hospitals, but also exceptional samples of civil architecture, with palaces and ancestral homes all along the way.

Moving to the east, we reach the appealing Mediterranean coast with the famous Costa del Sol, but also with the Murcia coast, boasting some of the most beautiful beaches of the area, as does its northern neighbour, Alicante. If you are in the area, you need to visit Valencia, a must for its splendid historic buildings as well as for its modern innovative architecture, which includes the breathtaking City of Arts and Sciences, a monumental compound built by one of the most outstanding architects in the world, Santiago Calatrava.

And since you are in Valencia, you may hop over to the unique Balearic Islands. These five Mediterranean jewels include the popular Mallorca, Menorca and Ibiza. They offer a variety of experiences, from relaxing in secluded clear water coves (Menorca) to visiting a World Heritage city (Ibiza), to biking through quaint towns and natural parks (Mallorca). The possibilities are endless.

Spain has another island region, the Canary Islands, located in the Atlantic Ocean. This archipelago comprises seven islands, the four biggest being Gran Canaria, Tenerife, Fuerteventura and Lanzarote. These islands are blessed with vast sandy beaches full of bays and reefs and each offers very distinctive landscapes. From greyish moon-like scenery in Lanzarote to white dunes ecosystem in Fuerteventura, they are all bathed in a warm spring-like temperature all year round, almost guaranteeing a lovely holiday in the sun.

With so much to see, one might wonder about the best way to visit different destinations. It's easy to move around,

thanks to the vast infrastructure network. There are plenty of flight connections offered by multiple local and international air carriers, with many low-cost carriers offering flights at very competitive prices. Air Canada and Air Transat offer direct seasonal flights from Canada to various cities in Spain.

Land transportation within Spain is also easy, thanks to a complete highway system that eases the driving experience around the country and also enables convenient bus connections among all the provinces.

The train is also highly reliable and links all main cities in Spain. The major cities are not only accessible by regular train, but also by high-speed trains (the AVE train network). As an example, Barcelona and Madrid, which are located 625 kilometres from each other, are connected by the AVE train in little more than two and a half hours. This high-speed train network currently connects Madrid with many main cities on the Mediterranean coast and southern Spain (including Barcelona, Valencia and Malaga, among others), and it is currently being expanded to link Madrid with several cities in northern Spain.

Although I have tried to provide a handful of possibilities, I am well aware that I have left out many wonders. It is hard to describe the immense possibilities and variety that Spain has to offer in a limited space. I would be very pleased if I have awakened the curiosity of readers to go to Spain and to explore their dreams in my country.

For more information, please contact the Embassy of Spain Tourism Section, 2 Bloor Street West, Suite 3402, Toronto, M4W 3E2, (416) 961-3131, www.spain.info/ca.

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