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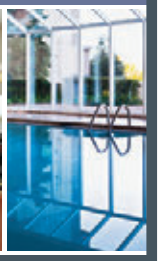

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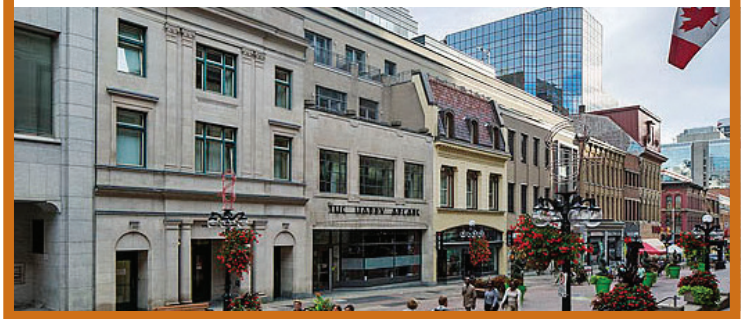

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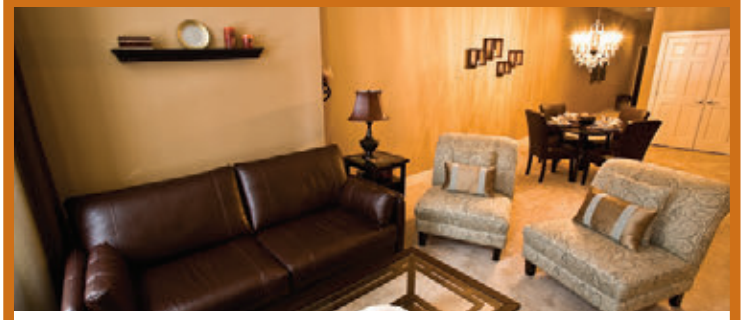

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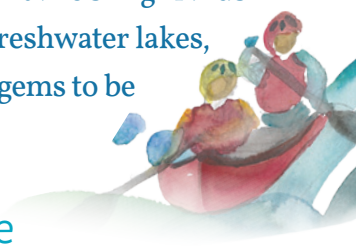

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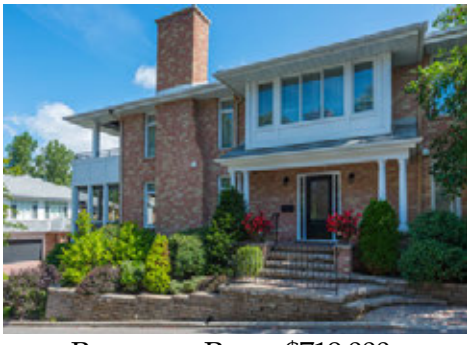

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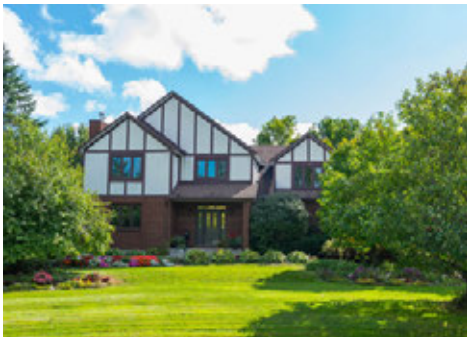

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Jennifer Campbell

Disturbing downturns in press freedom

Press freedom is under siege the world over. As our report from Reporters Without Borders indicates, two-thirds of the 180 countries the organization surveyed have seen their press freedom rating drop for 2015 compared to 2014. At the bottom of the pack were Turkmenistan, North Korea and Eritrea.

The countries with the most enviable press freedom were led by Finland (in first place for five years running), followed by Norway and Denmark. Even proud democracies witnessed press freedom slippage, with the U.S. coming in 49th place, down three spots from 2014 and Japan in 61st (down 2). China, not a democracy, but a country with growing economic influence, brings up the rear at 176th, just three spots ahead of North Korea.

The report features a colour-coded map showing each country's rating, ranging from "very serious" and "difficult" to "good situation." Those regarded as "very serious" include Iran, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sri Lanka and Sudan, to name a few not already mentioned.

Our Top-10 feature in this issue is a disturbing one, as well. It ponders the definition of terrorism and profiles some of the world's most dangerous terrorists. They are responsible for sowing the seeds of fear across the Middle East, and increasingly in Western countries such as the United Kingdom, Australia, Spain, Canada and the United States.

In our Dispatches section, we also tell the story — the history — of NATO, an alliance increasingly in the news as Russian forces continue to threaten Ukraine.

We also have a feature on the economy of Poland, one of Ukraine's neighbours, currently attracting multinational companies that want to take advantage of its cheap labour and its well-educated pool of talent.

Up front, columnist Fen Hampson teams up with Derek Burney, former Canadian ambassador to the U.S., to assess the legacy of former foreign affairs minister John Baird. Robert I. Rotberg, meanwhile, writes about how cellphones — the device that Canadian children fritter away their time on, texting friends and playing games — are revolutionizing Africa. Africans are using mobile phones for banking, for monitoring prescription drug intake, for tracking Ebola and for tackling corruption. The possibilities, he writes, are boundless and are at the fingertips of countless African citizens.

In our Delights section, George Fetherling gives his views on a book about relations between Turkey and Armenia, by Meline Toumani, an Iranian-born Armenian woman who grew up in the U.S. Mr. Fetherling calls the book, *There Was and There Was Not: A Journey through Hate and Possibility in Turkey, Armenia and Beyond*, "brave, revealing and moving." He also reviews *Midnight at Pera Palace: The Birth of Modern Istanbul* by Charles King. Further, he discusses books on British converts to Islam, the Trans-Siberian Express and John F. Kennedy.

Our residence feature was this time written by historian Martha Edmond, who features the residence of the Belgian ambassador. It's a stately home on Park Avenue in Rockcliffe and it provided a "soft landing" for the new ambassador, Raoul Delcorde, and his wife, Fati.

Wine columnist Pieter Van den Weghe writes about how New Zealand saved the storied grape, known as Sauvignon Blanc.

Our travel section features an interesting country indeed, and one that, incidentally, boasts a very free press: Norway. Ambassador Mona Brother's article takes us on an armchair journey through a land as rich in history and culture as in beauty.

Jennifer Campbell is *Diplomat's* editor.

UP FRONT

Our cover story in this issue looks at the state of press freedom worldwide, an institution that has seen a drastic decline, according to Reporters Without Borders. Our cover photo shows a 2011 protest against the stifling of press freedom in Turkey. The package starts on page 52.

CONTRIBUTORS

Ülle Baum

Ülle Baum is a cultural event planner and a passionate photojournalist. She has contributed photographs to *Diplomat* magazine, the *Ottawa Citizen* and *Embassy* newsweekly for eight years.

With her camera, she has recorded the visits of presidents, prime ministers and foreign dignitaries. She worked as a cultural representative at the Estonian embassy for three years and, for the past six years, she has organized the annual European Union Christmas concert.

She is a past-president of the Diplomatic Hospitality Group. Ms. Baum, who has a PhD in political science, also writes for *Estonian Life* newspaper in Toronto. Her articles have been published in Canada, Europe and Australia.

Martha Edmond

Martha Edmond is a historian and writer with an interest in Canadian architectural history and heritage. She has worked in museums and archives, and as an architectural historian with the federal government. She has a long-time interest in heritage issues and has researched and published on Canadian history. Ms. Edmond is a member of the Village of Rockcliffe Park's heritage advisory committee for the City of Ottawa. She has written a history of Rockcliffe entitled *Rockcliffe Park: A History of the Village*, published in 2005, and is currently working on a history of the community of New Edinburgh.

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Political commentary from around the world

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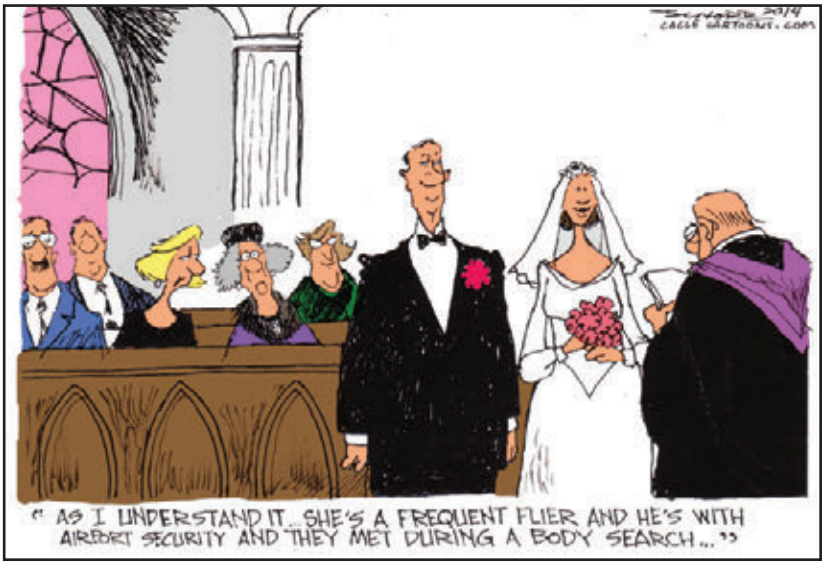
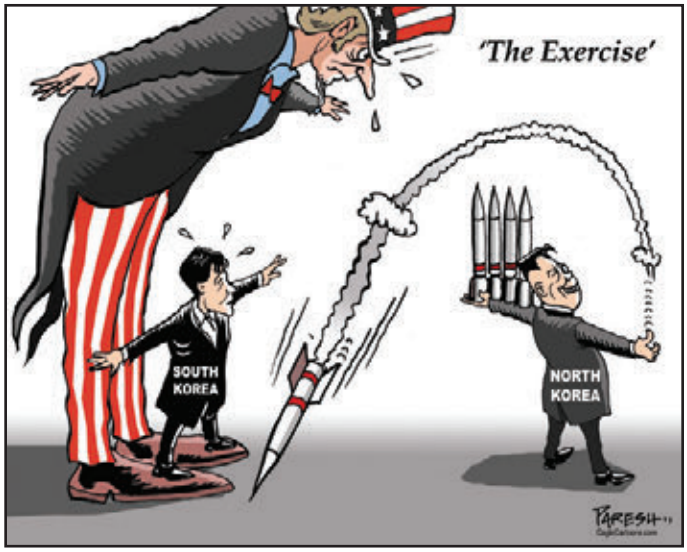
"Ukraine Ceasefire" by Riber Hansson, *Sydsvenskan,* Sweden

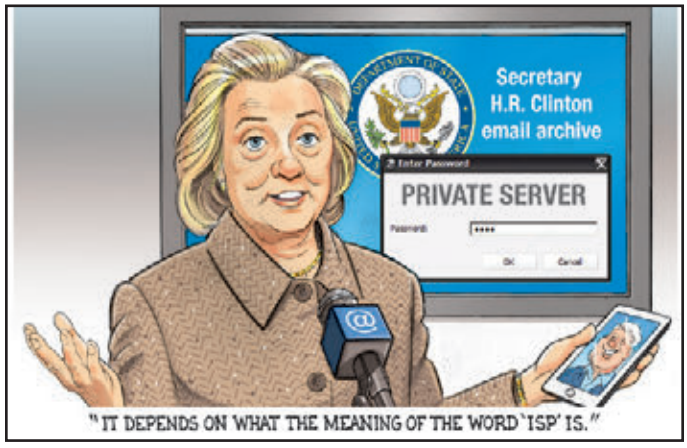


"Wedding Day" by Bill Schorr, *CagleCartoons.com*, U.S.

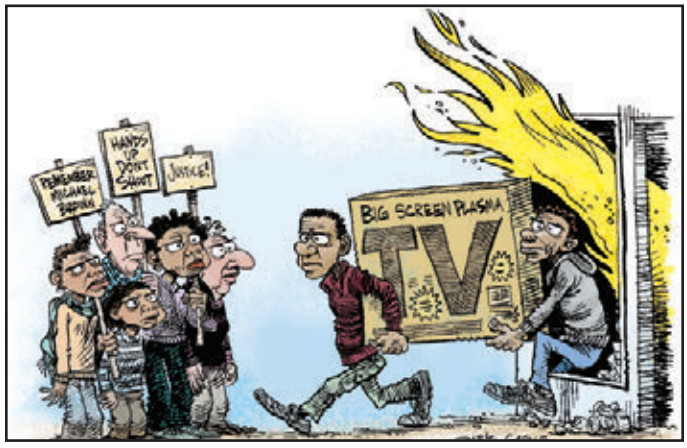
"Freedom of Expression" by Daryl Cagle, *CagleCartoons.com*, U.S.



"Military Exercise" by Paresh Nath, *The Khaleej Times*, UAE



"Hillary Clinton's Private Email Account" by R.J. Matson, U.S.



"Protesters and Opportunists" by Daryl Cagle, *CagleCartoons.com*, U.S.

"Wind Up Toy" by Cameron Cardow, *Cagle Cartoons.com*

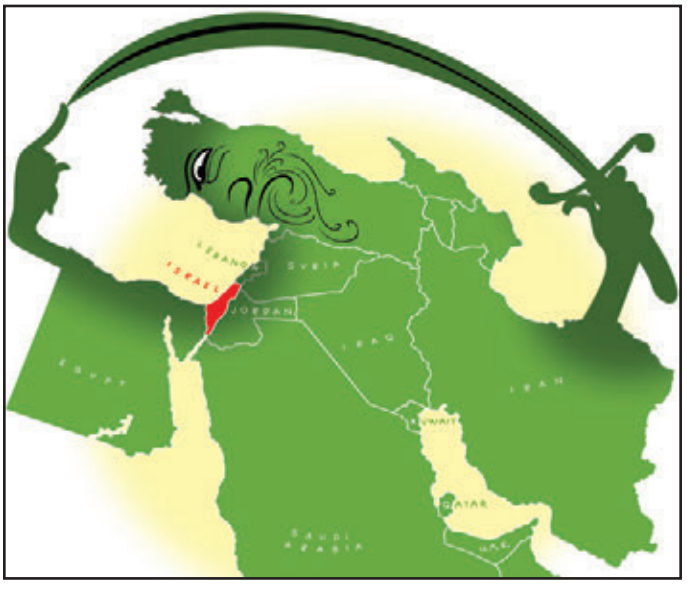
"BRICS Economies" by Paresh Nath, *The Khaleej Times*, UAE

"Putin Smash" by Sergei Elkin, *Rian News Service*, Russia

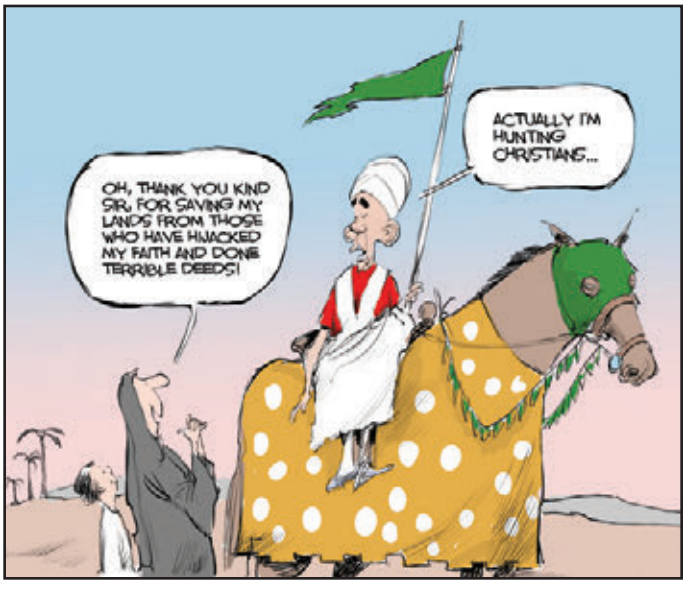
"ISIS Teenagers" by Emad Hajjaj, Jordan

"Just a Cartoonist" by Nate Beeler, *The Columbus Dispatch,* U.S.

"Human Rights and Conflict" by Paresh Nath, *The Khaleej Times*, UAE



"Israel Amidst the Middle East" by Deng Coy Miel, Singapore



"Hunting Christians" by Cameron Cardow, *Cagle Cartoons.com*

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"Brian Williams" by Cameron Cardow, *Cagle Cartoons.com*

"Drugs in Beef" by Angel Boligan, *El Universal*, Mexico City,

"Syrian Peace Talks" by Emad Hajjaj, Jordan

"Not Islam" by Cameron Cardow, *Cagle Cartoons.com*

"Spiral of Evil" by Joep Bertrams, The Netherlands

"Putin Invading Ukraine" by Patrick Chappatte, *globecartoon.com*, U.S.

John Baird: 'a pragmatic internationalist'

By Derek Burney and Fen Osler Hampson

Former Foreign Minister John Baird will be remembered for being a staunch defender of human rights, freedom and democracy in the world, our writers argue.

When he became foreign affairs minister in 2011, one of the first things John Baird did was to issue an edict to hang an oversized portrait of the Queen on the main wall of the lobby of the Pearson Building, Foreign Affairs' headquarters. He also ordered her portrait to be prominently displayed in all of the Canadian chancelleries abroad. Many members of the foreign service, as well as former Canadian diplomats, were aghast. There was a lot of sniggering in the corridors of the Pearson Building.

Mr. Baird's critics said Canada should not advertise the Queen as Canada's head of state with such blatant symbolism since we are no longer a colony, but an independent country. His rejoinder was that the Queen is Canada's sovereign. To pretend otherwise is *lèse-majesté* (the crime of violating the dignity of majesty).

He clearly believed we should not bury our history and heritage. As Canadians, we should be proud and sufficiently self-confident to celebrate it. The message was clear: No more hiding in the bushes in the name of multiculturalism, political correctness or cloistered republicanism.

It was vintage Baird: brash, impenitent and in your face. That was his political trademark.

However, he was far more conciliatory when his political armour was off. He listened to other points of view and consulted with members of the opposition, especially when key national interests were involved. That was certainly true when he invited NDP foreign affairs critic Paul Dewar and Liberal critic Marc Garneau to accompany him on a fact-finding mission to Iraq. Unlike the prime minister, Mr. Baird genuinely likes other people and, in turn, was liked by many — and not just his fellow MPs.

He was also a first-class retail politician, as his Ottawa West Nepean constituents will attest. He had bundles of bonhomie, energy and good humour. He named his cat "Thatcher" after Margaret Thatcher, a leader he greatly admired. Like any good politician, Mr. Baird always made the other person feel they were the most important person in the room. He also did not have an inflated sense of self-importance. As Mr. Baird admitted in an exit interview with the CBC's Peter Mansbridge, he had no delusions that his authority came from his persona rather than from the office itself. Still, he had many fans among foreign leaders and enjoyed close relations with former U.S. secretary of state Hillary Clinton and the foreign ministers of Australia, Mexico, Sweden and Poland. Such ties went beyond the usual niceties of diplomatic protocol.

Mr. Baird's critics, a handful of retired public servants, have gone out of their way to belittle his achievements. They have lambasted his unflinching support for the State of Israel, his opposition to Palestinian statehood (though what they don't say is that Canada's opposition is conditional on the successful conclusion of a peace treaty between Israelis and Palestinians), his decision to close Canada's

ASHLEY FRASER

With U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry at a press conference in Washington, D.C.

With former Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak.

Mr. Baird at the UN, where he advocated for reform and accountability.

embassy in Tehran and his tough stance on nuclear talks with Iran and on Russia's Vladimir Putin.

If he made enemies among the chattering classes for his stance on these issues, it was to the good, not just for him but also for Canada. To quote Winston Churchill: "You have enemies. Good. That means you've stood up for something, sometime in your life."

Mr. Baird will be remembered for being a staunch defender of human rights, freedom and democracy in the world. In Ukraine, he courageously took to the streets in support of the Maidan protesters and was one of the first Western leaders to do so. His support did not waiver after Russia's invasion of Crimea and Eastern Ukraine.

Like Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Mr. Baird also believed Canada should stand by its friends in the world. He admitted he regularly raised Canada's opposition to new Israeli settlements on the West Bank in his private conversations with Israeli leaders, but he also believed that friends do not criticize each other in public.

His strong support for Israel, however, did not come at the expense of closer ties with the Arab world, something that his critics conveniently overlook. As a frequent visitor to the Middle East, Mr. Baird oversaw new trade pacts with the Gulf States and a free-trade agreement with Jordan. He also went out of his way to try to strengthen relations with Turkey, a key NATO ally, notwithstanding Canada's reservations about the direction in which its current leadership has been moving.

On Iran, the jury is still out on the nuclear talks. However, he was in good company in voicing his skepticism about the proposals that are on the table. As two former secretaries of state, Henry Kissinger and George Shultz, who are also skeptics about the U.S. negotiating position, wrote in the *Wall Street Journal*, "Any final deal [with Iran] must ensure the world's ability to detect a move toward a nuclear breakout, lengthen the world's time to react and underscore its determination to do so. The preservation of the global nuclear nonproliferation regime and the avoidance of a Middle East nuclear-arms race hang in the balance."

Mr. Baird was a realist when it came to the United Nations. For too long Canadians have been uncritical, diehard supporters of an institution that has fallen victim to members who trumpet partisan causes in the UN General Assembly, and a Security Council that has reverted to Cold War deadlock. Both Mr. Harper and Mr. Baird were committed to a reform and accountability agenda for the UN and other multilateral institutions, which has been misinterpreted by critics as Canada somehow turning its back on the UN.

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With his beloved late cat, Thatcher.

His common-sense approach to diplomacy is one of the reasons Kevin Rudd, Australia's former Labor prime minister and foreign minister, approached him recently to serve on his independent commission on multilateralism. In Mr. Rudd's words, Mr. Baird is a "pragmatic internationalist," someone who is committed to "practical problem-solving, rather than having a seminar on castles in the air," and a consummate "realist" who wants to see international institutions such as the UN "function and function effectively."

He was instrumental in strengthening Canada's ties with the countries of the Asia-Pacific, including China, though his enthusiasm sometimes got the better of him. On his first trip, he referred to China as an "ally" of Canada. It was a gaffe, but one that actually endeared him to his Chinese hosts and helped smooth relations, which had been rocky in the early years of the Conservative government.

Mr. Baird and Trade Minister Ed Fast were also the first two ministers in any Canadian government to visit all 10 ASEAN countries and, in some cases, more than once. This, too, has been widely noticed in a region that has all too often been ignored by Canada.

Promoting gender and sexual equality were also priorities for Mr. Baird. He took Russia and several African states to task over their policies. His "dignity" agenda put him at odds with social conservatives within his party, but he refused to back off on what he considered to be a fundamental principle of human rights.

One of his biggest legacies when it comes to the machinery of government — in addition to the accountability legislation, which he introduced when he was head of Treasury Board — was the incorporation of the Canadian International Development Agency with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (which were amalgamated in 1982).

For years, Canada's overseas development assistance policies had been out of sync with its foreign policy priorities to the enormous frustration of our diplomats and those in the field. A succession of governments — Liberal and Conservative — had preached the virtues of a "whole-of-government" approach to Canada's international relations. But it was all rhetoric and precious little action until he came along and did the unthinkable by bringing CIDA into the fold.

Like any successful foreign minister, he had a smart, able and competent staff. It was another reason, too, why some in the department were resentful, preferring to be absolute custodians of wisdom.

John Baird's hasty and sudden departure from public life left many Ottawa pundits scratching their heads. They wondered why someone who was relatively young — 45 — would step down at the height of a highly successful political career. Were the reasons personal? Had Mr. Baird had a falling out with the prime minister? Had he, as he said publicly, simply had enough after 20 years of public life? Had the sudden death of his close friend, former finance minister Jim Flaherty, been an epiphany in his thoughts about his own future? Speculation abounds. But the truth of the matter is that Mr. Baird had been considering an exit from public life for some time and had discussed his options with some of his associates and close friends prior to his announcement.

John Baird will be remembered as an activist, but principled, foreign minister. He would be the first to acknowledge that he did not know all there was to know about foreign policy, but he did understand Canadian interests and values and was determined to defend and advance both.

Derek H. Burney is senior strategic adviser to Norton Rose Fulbright and was Canadian ambassador to the United States from 1989 to 1993. Fen Osler Hampson is a distinguished fellow and director of Global Security at the Centre for International Governance Innovation and Chancellor's Professor at Carleton University. They are the authors of *Brave New Canada: Meeting the Challenge of a Changing World.*

DYANNE WILSON

Foreign Affairs Committee chair:

You ask, 'How can we help?'

Photos by Dyanne Wilson

Dean Allison is the first MP for the riding of Niagara West-Glanbrook, which was created in 2004. He was re-elected in 2006, 2008 and 2011 and is now chairman of the standing committee on foreign affairs and international development. In response to Canada's sanctions against Russia, he has been sanctioned for travel to Russia, a distinction he says makes him proud. He spoke to *Diplomat's* editor, Jennifer Campbell.

***Diplomat Magazine*:** According to your mandate, you study and report on matters referred by the House of Commons or topics chosen by the committee itself. Would you name a few examples of each that are currently being studied?

Dean Allison: We're working on a couple of things. One is the protection of children and youth in developing countries. That's sort of been put off, because we're looking at what's going on in Syria right now. The study we're working on now is Canada's response to violence, religious persecution and dislocation caused by ISIL. A lot of times, we're working on a couple of things. The other thing is, because of our involvement, there will also be a couple of meetings coming up on what's going on on the ground in Iraq and Syria. It's always in flux. We tend to always have one or two longer-terms projects, but the news of the day will always circumvent a study that doesn't have to be done tomorrow.

DM: Are there deadlines on any of your studies?
DA: We do try to work around timelines, summer recess and breaks.

DM: Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development is the department principally under your scrutiny. What sorts of things are you concerned with there?
DA: There is a separate trade committee, so we concentrate mostly on foreign affairs, humanitarian response, what's going on in the world and humanitarian aid.

DM: Do you deal with refugees?
DA: Not so much. That's mostly done by the immigration committee. Our subcommittee on human rights has done some work on North Korean refugees, so there is some overlap.

DM: As you mentioned earlier, your responsibilities for trade were moved to a new trade committee in 2006. Did that division make sense?
DA: I think it does. For a period of time, I was chairing Foreign Affairs and sitting on International Trade. As a government, we made trade a bit more of a priority. The challenge is that we have so many topics the members want to cover, and we don't have time to do them all. If trade were in our [purview] we may never get to it.

DM: How does the committee encourage democratic development in the world?
DA: One study we did during this mandate was the role of the private sector in achieving Canada's international development interests. There are a number of Canadian companies all over the world that are doing things and we're already there with CIDA or DFATD. So we looked at how can we leverage these Canadian companies on the ground. If we're doing things already, is there something we could do to leverage our dollars in a bigger way? That's an oversimplification of the report — there are a number of recommendations in it. That is one example.

DM: Can you give me an example of a Canadian company with which you might partner? Mining comes to mind.
DA: An example of an organization is the Micronutrient Initiative that does a lot with vitamins and minerals and maternal and child health. They're looking for partners. There's a company called Tech Resources [a large Vancouver-based mining company] and they partnered in Senegal. It's just interesting to see, as we encourage mining companies to step up with corporate social responsibility, how some of these companies are actually doing a pretty good job and others could

On Canada and the U.S.: "There's always been a healthy tension."

On Russia and Ukraine: "Russia likes to keep that part of the world destabilized."

On the UN: "I don't believe the Security Council is always as effective as it could be."

become more involved. The work the Micronutrient Initiative does is outstanding. And Tech Resources had no mining interests in the countries in which they were partnering, so it was just something they thought they should do.

DM: What, in your opinion, is the state of relations between Canada and the U.S. at the moment?
DA: I think it's good. There's always a healthy tension. I don't think it's ever really mattered who's in government, whether it's a Republican or a Democrat. Whether it's softwood lumber or pipelines, it doesn't really matter. I think the U.S. typically will act in its own best interest, as I believe most countries do. Will we always agree? No, we won't. But I believe there are a lot of great relationships amongst parliamentarians and their legislators. And we see that in the Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Group. Groups of our guys and gals go down and meet theirs. I would say, by and large, we have a great relationship, even though we don't agree on every issue.

DM: Your committee studied Ukraine in 2012. What's your take on what's happening there now?
DA: We studied it in 2011 and 2012, but it's a recurring theme, for a couple of reasons, I think. First, Ukraine is so important in the region. They are at the stage where they require outside help to help them build their democracy and, of course, we have a large Ukrainian diaspora. These are all very important reasons we've spent some time on this. Our committee went to Ukraine. We send delegates all the time to their elections, through the OSCE. There's a tension in that they want to do more with Europe, but they are close to Russia. It's about where they're situated.

DM: What can Canada do?
DA: I think we can continue to do what we have been doing, which is to provide bodies, expertise, money. I'm pretty sure we've sent more than $100 million over the past few years trying to help them. Just the other day, I saw that we're sending winter coats for their military. Anything we can do to help them build capacity within their professional service or in terms of humanitarian aid — these are all important things. Anything we can do to make them rely less on Russia and help them turn to Europe.

DM: What's your sense of Russia's ambitions?
DA: I think Russia likes to keep that part of the world destabilized. There's never really been an opportunity or Ukraine has never taken the opportunity to leverage its natural resources — it has a bunch of them. The fact that they rely on Russian energy makes them really dependent.

DM: Your committee meets to address unfolding international crises. Can you name a few recent examples of this?
DA: The one we're currently working on is Canada's response to violence, religious persecution and dislocation caused by ISIL. That kind of thing changes moment by moment. I hope in 2015, we'll get a chance to talk more about what's going on in Iraq and Syria. The protection of children and youth in developing countries doesn't relate specifically to what's going on in Syria, but we'll continue [to watch those developments, too.]

DM: What can you say about the study you just mentioned?
DA: I think we've learned a number of things. It's unbelievable just to hear some of the stories and I think we understand that we see an image of ISIL and it's almost like it's far worse in refugee camps. A lot of the people in these camps would love to go back to their homes, but it's obviously not that safe. It is interesting to see that no matter what's happened there, these people still view Iraq and Syria as their homes. We watch the evening news and we get some of it, but it's hard to imagine when you get a bigger picture. People are being slaughtered for their religious beliefs. All these things tug at your heartstrings. And you ask: How can we help?

DM: Is there an example of one atrocity that's stayed with you?
DA: We had a girl in committee who'd actually gotten away from Boko Haram. So we were getting to hear from a real survivor. Just to hear her story. She was on the truck, being taken away and she was able to escape, but some of her friends weren't. That's pretty amazing. It doesn't get any more real than that.

DM: Was she part of the 200 kidnapped by Boko Haram in April 2014?
DA: I believe she was, yes. There was an organization that wanted to give us an update. It was a situation where we just had one meeting on it. It tied into our protection of children and youth in developing countries, but it was more because it was timely.

DM: How do you think Canada should target its foreign aid?
DA: I think we've started a number of initiatives. We've untied our aid to make it a little more effective. There have been a number of things we've signed on to to make sure our aid is accountable and transparent. I like when we do countries of focus. When we're targeted, that's helpful. I think it's also helpful to deal with our allies on the ground. To make sure we're not duplicating things. I think we should continue to do that.

We obviously have a responsibility in terms of helping women and children live longer. That's important because it's something we can measure. There are

a number of foreign investment protection agreements being negotiated with African countries. Development dollars are important, but what's also helpful is foreign investment. I think we must look for ways to continually deal with the sustainability side of things. We need to help educate them and find them work. We can encourage more direct foreign investment by helping some projects be sustainable, so, for example, after some of these mining companies leave, these projects could continue that work on their own. Humanitarian aid and education are important, but we also need to make sure there are jobs and economic stimuli at the end of the day.

DM: How did you become chairman of the committee?
DA: My background is business. I started off as the seniors critic and then I was chairing HRSTC [Human Resources Skills Development Canada.] I was always interested in foreign affairs and international trade. They asked me after spending four years at HRSTC if I would chair international development. I said absolutely.

DM: How do you get along with your vice-chairmen, NDP MP Paul Dewar and Liberal Marc Garneau?
DA: Really well. I co-hosted a reception before the House rose, with Mr. Dewar and Mr. Garneau. I was just at a conference for Engineers Without Borders where I did a panel with Madame [Hélène] Laverdière and Mr. Garneau. We get along very well. I happen to also like them. Mr. [David] Anderson has a great knowledge of natural resources. Ms [Lois] Brown is a parliamentary secretary [to International Development Minister Christian Paradis]. Ms Laverdière has a PhD and was a professor before she joined the foreign service. Mr. Garneau, [the first Canadian astronaut to fly three missions], also has a PhD. I often say "we actually have a rocket scientist here." They've both committed their whole lives to public service. We all come at it from totally different angles and I think that makes it unique because everyone has different experiences. If we were all engineers or lawyers or doctors, it would be pretty boring.

DM: Were there lively discussions on Canada's role — military and advisory — in Iraq and Syria?
DA: It's always a lively discussion. We talk about what we can do in terms of humanitarian aid. Sometimes our opinions will diverge a bit.

DM: Is the committee agreed on Canada's current role?
DA: We haven't discussed it lately.

DM: Regarding your report on strengthening Canada's engagement in the Americas, what can Canada do to improve, as your report put it, the "quality of democracy" in member states? I'm thinking of countries such as Bolivia and Venezuela.
DA: It's more challenging with countries like that. If you look at what's happening in Cuba recently — I just got off the phone with the ambassador. I happen to have been in Cuba over the Christmas holidays and they always have so much respect for Canadians. They look to us as honest brokers. With recent developments with the U.S., there we were in the middle. That's one of the roles we can play. Always being there. I don't think we should ever shy away from trying to hold governments accountable.

DM: How often do you deal with diplomats — Canadian diplomats and those posted to Ottawa?
DA: All the time and I'm always so impressed with the quality of the people in our foreign service. I really believe that we have a great group of foreign service officers around the world. They have great jobs, but they also spend large amounts of time away from their families. I've never been disappointed by any of them, anywhere I've been.

Here in Ottawa, my door is always open to ambassadors. I've also hosted some round tables for them. We'll bring in seven or eight of them from various countries. I may not go to all the social things, but I always welcome ambassadors to my office and also reach out a couple of times a year by hosting round tables in the Parliamentary restaurant.

DM: There are several international organizations to which Canada is a member that come under your purview. I'll name each one and you can say how effective and important they are to Canada.
DA: Wow! You're going to put me on the spot! OK. Fire away.

DM: Let's start with the United Nations.
DA: I think it plays an important role, I don't believe the Security Council is always as effective as it could be, but there are organizations within the UN that do good work. It's a hugely bureaucratic organization, but that doesn't mean there aren't some bodies within it that don't do good work.

DM: Is it important that Canada be on the Security Council?
DA: I don't know that it's that important. I know that Canada is involved in a number of different committees. Not sure that one really matters.

DM: World Bank
DA: Yes, I think it's important. With what they do, I think we should have a seat there. They do good things, but because

of all the money that goes through there, it's always good to have a bit of an oversight.

DM: IMF
DA: I would say the same thing. It's good to be a part of what they do.

DM: OAS
DA: Again, it's one of the few ways we can interact with the Southern hemisphere, so while it may not be perfect, it still provides a forum for us to have dialogue.

DM: G7 and G20
DA: Once again, they're important because they have a handle on what's going on with the world. As we see with the prime minister and his Muskoka Initiative, there was a platform there to talk about an issue of focus on maternal and child health. And we continue to work on that issue.

DM: NATO?
DA: All these organizations are not without their faults, but I think that when we go to Poland, when we look at Eastern Europe, it's important to those countries to know that NATO is close by.

DM: The Commonwealth?
DA: The challenge of the Commonwealth is that they've gotten away from a bit of their mandate. The challenge is that there are a number of Commonwealth countries that aren't as democratic as they could be. I'm thinking Sri Lanka.

DM: La Francophonie
DA: It's very important due to the fact that we have such a large French-speaking population. And also particularly now that we have a Canadian who's running the organization. [Former governor general Michaëlle Jean was named secretary-general of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie in November 2014.]

DM: OSCE
DA: I didn't know a lot about it before I got involved. It's one of the few organizations — it doesn't happen with NATO or the Council of Europe — in which we actually have a relationship with Russia and the U.S. at the same table. With the exception of the UN, there's no other organization where that happens now. It gives us a mechanism to have that dialogue. It's an organization that not many people know about but it's important.

Helping after the Philippines' Typhoon Haiyan

By Patricia Erb

Typhoon Haiyan — the strongest storm ever to hit landfall — ripped through central Philippines in November 2013, killing more than 6,000 people and destroying more than one million homes. More than 14 million people were affected in some way. Typhoon Haiyan left complete devastation in its wake by sweeping away houses, uprooting coconut trees, destroying boats and taking away people's livelihoods in a few hours.

Save the Children was one of the first humanitarian organizations on the ground after Haiyan struck. A little more than a year later, we remain the largest aid agency in some of the hardest-hit areas.

I landed in Tacloban City shortly after the disaster. The devastation was unfathomable. After more than 25 years with Save the Children, I've responded to many emergencies and can quickly ascertain how a natural disaster will impact the future of its region's children. In the early days in Tacloban, however, I saw something in the men, women and children that would amend my first impressions. I saw the full power of resilience and determination that put them on the road to recovery.

Those I met moved me with their stories of disaster and determination to rebuild. One woman had given birth during the storm and demonstrated the ferocious strength only a mother can show to keep her newborn safe. An initial assessment of the damage on one community centre left a group concerned for its future. Staff from Save the Children said we would return the next day with the tools and equipment to start rebuilding. The following day, when we returned, members of the community had cleared mountains of debris and were ready to start reconstruction and get their children back into school. I was moved.

But, resilience and determination multiply with support. I'm proud to say that the international community has joined in to provide what it can. It has been one year since Typhoon Haiyan hit, and Save the Children has reached nearly 800,000 children and adults with life-saving aid, recovery and rehabilitation support. We have distributed food and water; provided medicine and health services through our mobile health clinics; repaired classrooms, health facilities and water systems; and provided shelter, household and hygiene items to keep children safe.

Save the Children was one of the first organizations on the ground after Typhoon Haiyan hit the Philippines.

Although children, families and communities are getting back on their feet, the needs on the ground are still immense. In some of the hardest-hit areas, thousands of families continue to live in temporary shelters and are struggling to recover their livelihoods. During a September visit, children from the affected region told us the greatest barrier to their recovery is the fact that their parents can't find work.

Save the Children is committed to helping the most vulnerable, who are often the poorest. We are now working with communities to diversify the ways in which they make money and providing cash grants and skill development training to help recover livelihoods, fuel the local economy and help families start their own businesses.

We've seen significant improvement, but this will not be enough. For the Philippines, future disasters are not only inevitable, thanks to its geography, they are expected to intensify because of climate change. Save the Children is therefore also helping communities prepare, to cope with and adapt for future disasters. This requires planning and policy change at the highest levels.

These are not just words. Let me explain how it works. With the goal of policy change in mind, Save the Children is working alongside key global partners on programming for sustaining livelihoods, maintaining shelter and reducing disaster risk. In addition, we've been advocating for the Filipino government to pass a law, known as HB5062, to protect children in future emergencies. The need for such a law was identified after our research in the Haiyan-affected areas. We interviewed 124 children and presented a report to members of Congress. Today, the bill has been filed and tomorrow, we plan for change.

However, again, like resilience and determination, change needs support. What we've achieved is in large part due to the support we've received — more than $80 million donated by generous Canadians to our Typhoon Haiyan response. A generation of children thanks you, but they need continuing support. Through resilience and determination, we can make a lasting change for the children impacted by the typhoon's destruction.

Patricia Erb is president and CEO of Save the Children Canada.

SAVE THE CHILDREN

Spouses band together to raise money for autism

When Florence Saint-Leger, president of the Heads of Mission Spouses' Association's (HOMSA), kicked off the group's annual fundraising event, she imparted some conventional wisdom: "It is more fun to give than to receive," Ms Saint-Leger, wife of the Haitian ambassador, told the group.

The event, hosted by Eleanore Wnendt-Juber, wife of the German ambassador, was in support of TIPES (Thinking in Pictures Educational Services), a program that helps children with "pervasive developmental disorders, such as autism spectrum disorders." The program delivers training and programming for such students using a team-based approach.

The group heard from a pair of energetic sisters, Jennifer and Deborah Wyatt, executive director and clinical director respectively, who said one in 80 children is on the autism spectrum and that there is limited funding to help those youngsters become "productive members of society."

Also speaking on behalf of TIPES' good work was board member Vlasios Melessanakis, whose son, George, is a client of the program. George was diagnosed at the age of three. He told his father that when he started school, "he felt lost, different." His parents felt uncertain and overwhelmed. As an academic, Mr. Melessanakis started reading, researching symptoms, causes, possible cures.

Government programs, he said, are lacking and they felt they had to go it alone. Until they found TIPES. Sending their son to TIPES has sometimes threatened to bankrupt the family, but, in the three years he's been there, George has learned to read, write and do math. "He's matured into a bright young man, with a passion for science, Lego and Star Wars."

Eleanore Wnendt-Juber, left, hosted a fundraiser for TIPES at her residence. The event was organized by (far right) Gillian Drake and (second from right) Maria de la Rica Aranguren. TIPES executive director, Jennifer Wyatt, and her sister, Deborah, who is clinical director are to the right of Ms. Wnendt-Juber.

"George wants to be a movie director; his imagination has reached heights we never thought possible," Mr. Melessanakis said as he described a detailed movie plot his son had invented that morning.

HOMSA hosts a fundraiser once a year. This year's event began with a presentation at the German ambassador's residence, with several speeches and a question and answer session. The formal presentation was followed by a reception featuring food prepared by the members of HOMSA or their staff members.

Instrumental in organizing this event were Gill Drake, wife of the British high commissioner, and Maria de la Rica Aranguren, wife of the Spanish ambassador, whom Mrs. Saint-Leger called "the busy bees." Ms de la Rica Aranguren confirmed the amount raised that afternoon for TIPES was $3,300, but even as she offered that total, other donations continued to come in during the event. Her difficulty getting a final total was a good problem to have.

In the end, $3,670 was raised and TIPES has big plans for it. "The money will go to our trust account, which is used to offset the cost of therapy for our families," Jennifer Wyatt said. "We are looking at running some social integration programs with some of the funds."

Children such as George will, no doubt, thank the diplomatic spouses for their kind contributions. D

Afghanistan: Opportunities for investment abound

By Sham Lall Bathija
Ambassador of Afghanistan

Afghanistan occupies a key strategic location, linking Central Asia with South Asia and providing China and the Far East with a direct trade route to the Middle East and Europe. Due to its strategic location as a "land bridge," our government believes strengthening regional co-operation will contribute to stability and prosperity. To that end, Afghanistan has joined several regional trade organizations, and has, with partner countries, signed more than three dozen agreements, protocols and memorandums of understanding on trade, commerce, regional co-operation, transit and transport.

Since the collapse of the Taliban government in 2001, we have established trade relations with North America, India, Pakistan, Iran, Turkmenistan, the EU, Japan, Uzbekistan and others.

The total value of imports from Canada to Afghanistan is approximately $41 million and includes meat, electronics, vehicles and non-alcoholic beverages. The value of exports from Afghanistan to Canada is between $3 million and $4 million and includes dried fruits, carpets and marble.

At the embassy, we aim to expand on existing trade relations. For example, Afghanistan bought its financial management information system from Ottawa's Free Balance Inc. Its government taxation software came from Quebec's CRS Sogema Inc.

But Canada and Afghanistan can do better. Afghanistan's private sector has introduced Canadian canola oil, a raw material used in everything from paper to pulses, but it is imported through secondary markets in Malaysia and Dubai.

Carpets are among the items Afghanistan currently exports to Canada.

There is potential for Canadian companies in Afghanistan's infrastructure plan for railways, airports and highways. These bids are mostly financed through the Asian Development Bank, World Bank and the international community.

The natural resources sector is another that Canadian companies can explore. The value of Afghanistan's natural resources is estimated at up to $3 trillion. It boasts extensive deposits of natural gas, petroleum, coal, marble, gold, copper, chromites, talc, barites, sulfur, lead, zinc, iron ore, salt, precious and semi-precious stones and many rare-earth elements. Geologists have also found indications of abundant deposits of coloured stones and gemstones, including emerald, ruby, garnet, lapis, kunzite and tourmaline.

In 2008, Afghanistan signed a copper mine deal with Metallurgical Corp. of China Ltd. for a $2.8-billion project and an annual income of about $400 million to the Afghan government. In addition, Hajigak iron-ore mine, 210 kilometres west of Kabul, is believed to hold between 1.8 billion and two billion metric tonnes of the mineral used to make steel.

Similarly, AFISCO, an Indian consortium led by the Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) and Canada's Kilo Goldmines Ltd., is expected to jointly invest $14.6 billion to develop the Hajigak mine. Afghanistan also has several coal mines, but they need to be modernized. New hydrocarbon and mineral laws, meanwhile, give generous incentives to those investing in the mining sector. Companies involved in training in mining and its safety are in particularly high demand.

Afghanistan has set up a good banking system that should rapidly boost the economy. The government recently passed anti-money-laundering laws and invites Canadian banks to open branches and work with local banks in capacity building.

Further, the government is committed to transforming Afghanistan's economy from one that consumes to one that exports. Economic policies aim to establish a sustainable relationship based on trust and continuous co-operation between government and the private sector. Private-sector competition is not enough and to that end, we have developed a comprehensive export strategy that will solve the challenges investors encounter.

The new government will improve the trade and transit relationship with regional countries and decrease the industrial operation costs, ensuring that capital is circulating inside the country.

So far, our biggest corporate investors have been Coca-Cola, Pepsi Co., ING, Standard Chartered, DHL, KPMG and Ernst & Young. Canadian investors include Kilo Goldmine, Ellis Don, Appleton Consulting Inc., Canaccord Financial Inc., Heenan Blaikie LLP and Canada Rail, which recently won the Afghanistan Rail project with Tajikistan.

There are many good reasons to invest in Afghanistan:

- The country offers a pro-business environment with legislation favourable to private investments, specifically the taxation regime;
- Afghanistan is rich in natural resources;
- It has one of the lowest customs tariffs in the region, low tax rates, freely exchangeable currency with stability (USD1=AFA57), liberal investment law that allows 100 percent foreign ownership and profits to be taken outside the country;
- Afghanistan is a gateway to investment in Central Asia.

Your investment is a business venture, and an investment in regional stability.

Sham Lall Bathija is ambassador of Afghanistan. Reach him at 613-563-4223.

Slovakia and Canada: Bilateral trade benefits both

By Andrej Droba
Ambassador of Slovakia

Bratislava is Slovakia's capital and business centre.

The Slovak Republic and Canada are close allies and partners. Despite the geographical distance, our countries have a lot in common. Our relations are built on common values and our two countries co-operate closely on many issues of mutual interest, bilaterally and multilaterally. As members of NATO and other international organizations, our co-operation in the areas of foreign and security policy, trade and investment, culture and tourism is intensive. We are also promoting people-to-people contacts and contacts between our researchers, academic communities and students.

As Slovak ambassador, I am pleased to see relations deepening. It is my priority to work towards their further development for the benefit of both countries.

Canada and Slovakia are also linked through the large community of Slovaks who call Canada home. My embassy works closely with numerous ex-patriot organizations and groups. We are happy to see that their bonds with Slovakia remain strong. Their interest in Slovakia is constantly growing, not only as the country of their ancestors, but also as a business and holiday destination.

In the area of bilateral trade, we have to stress, first of all, the fact that Canada represents the second most important export market for Slovakia in the Americas. Therefore, we are happy to see that Slovak exports to Canada have continuously grown for more than five years.

The total value of Slovak exports to Canada reached $200.2 million in 2013, marking 9-percent growth compared to the previous year. The commodity structure of Slovak exports to Canada does not exactly reflect our expectation, due to its high dependence on one product — automobiles — which accounted for 70 percent of all exports in 2013. Slovakia also exports furniture, engines, machinery products, footwear, motor vehicle parts and accessories, sporting goods and metal structures, but these products do not exceed 4 percent of total volume.

Canadian exports to Slovakia reached $127.1 million in 2013, which is a remarkable year-over-year increase of 82 percent. According to official Slovak statistics, iron ore and concentrates accounted for more than half of all Canadian exports (55 percent), followed by valves and fittings for pipes (10.7 percent), aircraft and associated equipment (5.1 percent), medications (3.4 percent), vegetables (2.0 percent) and food products (2.0 percent).

The total volume of trade between Slovakia and Canada is growing; this is good news for all of us. To keep it sustainable, Slovak companies have to diversify the commodity structure of their exports to Canada. It is risky for us to depend on one product in exports, especially when it is in the highly competitive automotive sector. Besides working on better promotion of traditional exports such as furniture, footwear or sporting goods, we would like to increase exports of other lesser-known commodities, among them electrical machinery and equipment for industrial use and various consumer goods, as well as household appliances and equipment.

While the Slovak market is relatively small (our population is 5.5 million), it is an integral part of the EU internal market, which boasts up to 500 million consumers. Slovakia can serve as a hub for distribution of a great variety of Canadian products within the EU market, sharing the same tariff and non-tariff rules for all imports from Canada.

We must not forget to mention one new, but very important trade tool: The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between the EU and Canada. It is expected to open new opportunities to businesses, thanks to the reduction of tariffs and the streamlining of trade, procurement and investment procedures. Slovakia considers CETA to be an important new element in relations between the EU and Canada, and fully supports its quick implementation.

Simultaneously with increasing the volume of bilateral trade, we would welcome more Canadian companies as investors in various sectors of our economy, be it automotive, machinery, electrical engineering, construction, food processing, infrastructure or information technology. Many Canadian companies are active on the European market and Slovak partners can offer local expertise, assistance in logistics and transport or marketing services.

Slovakia has a strong potential in attracting a considerably higher volume of Canadian investments, thanks to its skilled workforce with acceptable operating costs and the high-quality business and investment environment, combined with political and social stability. According to the World Bank's 2015 *Doing Business Report*, Slovakia ranked 37th, up significantly from its 2014 position of 45th.

Andrej Droba is the ambassador of Slovakia. Reach him at (613) 749-4442.

EMBASSY OF SLOVAKIA

The U.S.'s open invitation to Canadian investors

By Bruce Heyman
Ambassador of the United States

The U.S. and Canada share the world's longest undefended border.

The United States has never been more open for business and this is particularly good news for Canadian companies and investors. Our existing, vibrant economic and trade relationship — the largest in the world — and our geographic proximity make Canada uniquely poised to take advantage of investment opportunities in the United States.

Our investments in each other's economies are already among the most comprehensive in the world and, in 2013, reached $649 billion. The United States is Canada's largest source of foreign direct investment and Canada is the United States' third largest investor. These figures not only reflect the strength of our economic relationship, but they are a tangible result of the mutual success we have when our governments encourage cross-border investment.

In March, I accompanied a Canadian trade and investment delegation to the 2015 SelectUSA Investment Summit in Washington, D.C. The SelectUSA Summit brought together more than 2,500 international investors and economic development offices from more than 40 states to facilitate investment in the United States. Companies of all sizes participated, from multinationals to small- and medium-sized enterprises, and high-growth start-ups. A SelectUSA Academy provided the opportunity for small- and medium-sized businesses looking to expand beyond Canada to learn how to capitalize on the U.S. market. In 2014, Canada sent the second-largest delegation, 40 members, to SelectUSA and this year, that attendance doubled with an 84-member delegation.

In 2011, President Barack Obama launched the SelectUSA program to accelerate investment into the United States. SelectUSA facilitated more than $18 billion in new investment in its first two years alone.

Another way we seek to increase investment in the United States is through state-level trade visits to Canada. In 2014, we supported 11 trade and investment delegations from individual states. My goal is to increase that number this year. To that end, I wrote to all 50 state governors earlier this year, encouraging them to come to Canada to promote trade with and investment in their states.

These delegations are an excellent opportunity for Canadian suppliers, manufacturers and service firms to meet directly with state representatives and learn about specific investment opportunities, available resources, U.S. products and ways to expand existing business relationships.

With a GDP of more than $17 trillion and a population of more than 317 million, the United States offers a tremendous opportunity for Canadian companies seeking to expand their market. Our highly skilled and productive labour force, world-leading innovation and predictable legal and regulatory climate, all make the United States a natural destination for Canadian investment and business expansion.

In terms of what we trade, top categories for U.S. exports to Canada include: Vehicles, machinery, electrical machinery, mineral fuel and oil (oil and natural gas) and plastic. Canada's top exports to the U.S. are similar: Mineral fuel and oil (crude and natural gas), vehicles, machinery and plastic.

Innovation drives the U.S. economy and I invite you to take advantage of the innovation ecosystem we have developed. The United States has seven of the Top-10 ranked universities in the world, according to the *Times Higher Education World Rankings*. These institutions contribute directly to U.S. research and development and help the United States maintain its position as an international leader in innovation. In 2014, projections for research and development spending in the U.S. surpassed $465 billion, more than China and Japan combined. Our strong intellectual property rights ensure that benefits of innovation, whether patents, copyrights or trademarks, are protected.

Our joint work in the Beyond the Border and Regulatory Cooperation Council initiatives expedites cross-border business, minimizes red tape and reduces transaction costs. Programs such as NEXUS, preclearance, and trusted trader are showing real results and help Canadian companies do business in the U.S. every day.

Investment and expansion, to the U.S. in particular, have helped many Canadian companies become among the largest and most successful in the world. When Canadian companies consider expanding overseas, they should instead think of the United States as the prime destination for their investment.

Bruce Heyman is the ambassador of the United States. Reach him at ottawainfo@state.gov or on Twitter @BruceAHeyman.

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Colombia has a plan: How we negotiate with FARC

FIRST NAME: Nicolas
LAST NAME: Lloreda
CITIZENSHIP: Colombian
PRESENTED CREDENTIALS AS AMBASSADOR: Feb. 14, 2013
PREVIOUS POSTINGS: Washington

After many years of bad publicity, the news from Colombia in the international media is being framed in a much more positive light. At a time during which uncertainty and international crises abound, Colombia is, uncharacteristically, attracting good reviews. A strong economy, along with a dramatic reduction in the violence and insecurity that were present for decades, are some of the key ingredients contributing to the current status quo.

Finally, it seems, Colombia is doing all the right things. But, one big question remains unanswered: Will the latest peace negotiations with FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), the 50-year-old guerrilla group, bear fruit? Being able to exchange the armed struggle for a battle of ideas is an essential component for Colombia to succeed in the near future.

At press time, the question is still open. But reason for optimism remains as the parties have never been closer to an agreement. After several failed talks in the '80s and '90s between the government and FARC, this time, it seems there is more than a credible chance.

The agreement's main objective is to end armed conflict. Contrary to other failed processes, this time there are no territorial clearances and military operations by the government have not been suspended. President Juan Manuel Santos has said that if, and when, there is an agreement, it will be presented to the Colombian people, in the form of a referendum, for their approval.

Five-point agreement

Under the premise that "nothing is agreed until everything has been agreed," the talks, officially launched in November 2012, have already resulted in agreement on three of the five main points under discussion.

The first is a rural land development policy, which provides for access to land and land use for peasants with no, or unsufficient land, a historic grievance of FARC's, along with loans, technical assistance, irrigation and marketing support for crops. It includes a massive implementation plan, a new agricultural jurisdiction and an updating and upgrading of the national land registry (cadastre) and the rural real estate tax.

The second involves political participation for FARC. It facilitates the creation of new political parties and provides for special transitory electoral districts in the regions most affected by the conflict. The inhabitants of those regions will be able to elect, during a transitional phase, additional members to the House of Representatives. Measures to increase women's participation in the electoral process and to promote a democratic culture of tolerance will be implemented.

The third agreed-upon point is titled, "a solution to the illicit drug problem." On this point, FARC has specifically agreed to end any relationship with drugs. The agreement sets the basis for new, illicit crop substitution and alternative development programs. It includes a de-mining program through which FARC will provide information on mine locations.

Reparations and disarming

In 2014, the government and FARC began simultaneous discussions on the two remaining points on the agenda, in parallel working groups. The first is the rights of victims of the conflict, which includes reparation to victims and the elucidation of the truth behind so many deaths and disappearances. The second involves disarming FARC.

Additionally, the parties are also currently discussing how key aspects of the five sections will be implemented, verified and ratified.

Mr. Santos' experience in government has prepared him well for this, his biggest challenge to date. Having served as trade minister, finance minister and defence minister under three different governments, he has witnessed the failure of several peace talks. This is why, as soon as he was sworn into office in 2010, and before

Colombian military forces supervise territories where FARC guerrillas still operate.

the negotiations with FARC began, he submitted two bills to Congress that proved essential for the process.

A historic bill was passed in 2011, providing for land restitution and victim compensation with more than US $25 billion appropriated by the government to provide for reparations and the possibility of returning land to the many displaced victims.

Additionally, Mr. Santos sought and obtained a constitutional amendment that authorizes Congress, if presented with a peace agreement, to sanction a law providing for a "comprehensive transitional justice strategy." This will allow the independent office of the attorney general to apply different judicial and extra-judicial measures to satisfy the rights of the victims to truth, justice and reparations, but also allowing for the reintegration of former combatants into civilian life.

In hindsight, the democratic debate and all of these legal and congressional reforms demonstrate Mr. Santos' resolve and his planning capabilities to try to end a conflict that has lasted more than half a century.

Confronting human rights violations

As with every complex matter, the devil is in the details. Almost no one in Colombia is opposed to reaching peace with FARC. The debate centres around the legal treatment of those who have taken part in severe human rights violations during the armed conflict. The treatment such individuals receive under the application of transitional justice will depend on their willingness to recognize their responsibility, face their victims and actively participate in the truth and reparations mechanisms.

Colombian President Juan Manual Santos has promised that if, and when, his government comes to an agreement with FARC, he will put it to a referendum.

In Colombia, where we have to confront a legacy of massive human rights violations, the fight against impunity must acknowledge the limits of the ordinary criminal justice system. More than the number of prosecutions and years of imprisonment, the fight against impunity must focus on unveiling what actually happened and why; on acknowledging the victims and providing them with comprehensive and prompt reparations and on attributing the responsibility to those most responsible for international crimes.

Borrowing from successful peace agreements across the world, and observing the special characteristics of the Colombian conflict, it is evident that transitional justice is not an act of resignation or concession to those who committed crimes. Rather, it is an opportunity to face, once and for all, severe human rights violations and finally entrench the rule of law in the entire territory of Colombia.

Mobile phones propelling Africa's renaissance

Robert I. Rotberg

Africa's transformation is being propelled by the the mobile phone. Shops and charging stations such as this one in Uganda are seen everywhere, even across remote Africa.

Africa's latest renaissance is propelled in substantial part by the remarkable indigenous technological transformation of a hand-held computerized gadget — the mundane mobile telephone — into a powerful instrument for human advancement.

Africa pioneered gathering and transmitting merchandizing and market information. More recently, it invented and popularized banking and financial transmission by mobile device. Now people all over the continent receive medical reminders and diagnostic updates through the same medium. In many instances, too, the humble mobile phone is being used to preserve and strengthen democracy. The use of this technology for human advancement is much more innovative in Africa than anywhere else.

Since texting is cheaper than talking, Africans initially used mobile phones to gather information quickly and systematically by a few thumb movements instead of by travelling laboriously and randomly on foot, and then only learning about individual markets. A farmer could obtain the best returns for his agricultural produce or his animals if he knew the current prices for wheat, maize, bananas, millet, cassava, tef, cattle, or goats in near as well as far markets. Texting made that possible. Farmers would not need to travel to those markets until prices were right, and they would always know in which markets to sell their farm products. Productivity and efficiency could thereby be enhanced.

Mobiles for banking

Subsequently, especially in Kenya, where the first breakthroughs occurred, Africans began using their mobile phones to deposit and withdraw savings from special banking accounts. Now they pay bills and receive their wages. They borrow money; they donate to charity through their phones. They pay taxes, too. They invest their savings, trade shares on stock exchanges and transfer large sums locally and internationally to relatives. Sending remittances in that manner avoids large fees. In a part of the globe where very few had standard bank accounts or means of shifting sums to kin or providers, the texting function of mobile phones has now made it much easier for people everywhere, even those living in remote villages, to enter the monetary universe.

Thanks to their numeric keypads, it is easy to see how mobile phones have become financial instruments as well as information accumulators. But what is equally transformative for sub-Saharan Africa, where the dissemination of ideas and knowledge has traditionally been slow and limited, is that the text message capacity of mobile phones has made it possible for governments and officialdom generally to be much more interactive than ever before, producing a more enlightened and responsive citizenry.

A tool of democracy

Even the deaf can now communicate — by text. Likewise, citizens have been able to complain, to exercise their civil rights and — using mobile phone photographic capabilities — to document their reports of official error.

In urban KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa), for example, one angry petitioner used text messages and attached videos finally to persuade a lagging municipality that sewage outflows were inundating his house and small plot. The evidence was irrefutable and a hitherto unresponsive set of bureaucrats acted. In other cases, governments replaced missing street lights and road signs, thanks to proof from mobile phone photographs.

Now people can get licences and permits of all kinds more easily, as well. No longer are bureaucrats behind imposing grilles able to interpret regulations arbitrarily; empowered citizens learn their rights by text and proceed to exercise them, if necessary by documenting abuses.

Africans may soon embrace a startup information-gathering and transmission method from India. There, an enterprising radio reporter and producer realized that large populations lacking literacy and access to reliable sources of national and local information would benefit from receiving news on their mobile phones, by text. His new service supplies the millions in India's Chhattisgarh State, currently embattled by a Maoist rebellion. Africans will doubtless emulate his innovation, region by region or country by country.

MOONGATECLIMBER

Reaching out medically

There is a burgeoning medical dimension to the embrace of mobile telephone technology, especially significant in a part of the world that suffers routinely from rampant diseases and a shortage of medical personnel. For instance, whereas Europe boasts 3.6 physicians per 1,000 people, poor places, such as Malawi, count 0.02 physicians per 1,000 and even South Africa's numbers are no better than 0.77 per 1,000. Thus, whereas North Americans can rapidly run down to an emergency room or a trauma centre, Africans who are ill, or who are carrying a seemingly comatose baby, must trudge miles on foot to a barely staffed clinic.

For those reasons, outgoing and incoming text messaging abilities are a godsend. Women in Ghana regularly receive lactation advice through text messages. Tuberculosis patients are monitored and reminded to take their medicines via text messaging. A flashing light on a smart phone can remind someone to keep an appointment. Rwanda has distributed free mobile phones to thousands of community health workers so they can keep track of pregnant women, send emergency alerts, call ambulances and offer updates on emerging health concerns. In Uganda, "Text to Change," enables very similar capabilities.

Even more dramatically, in Nigeria, mHealth, a mobile telephone-based application developed by a Nigerian research company, played a very significant role in preventing the spread of Ebola after it was first discovered in Lagos and Port Harcourt. Use of the mHealth app reduced reporting times from 12 hours to six hours, and then almost to zero hours. As Nigerian health workers attempted to trace individuals who had had contact with a person who had arrived from Liberia, they entered tracing details into their phones and transmitted the data derived from nearly 19,000 visits.

UNICEF has launched RapidPro, a free, open-source platform. In Liberia, it helps trace cases of Ebola, reports on new cases, circulates messages about care and prevention and shares training information. It has effectively bolstered co-ordination between the Liberian ministry of health and outreach health workers.

Similarly, in Zambia, U-Report, another UNICEF tool, employs text messages to link patients to the resources of the local national HIV-AIDS council. Since 2012, more than 50,000 young people have, by such anonymous means, been referred to counselling services. Voluntary testing among those who use the U-Report tool has reached 40 percent, nearly double the national average.

Africans have embraced mobile phone technology and it's being used in many innovative ways on the continent.

M-Pedigree, in Rwanda, Kenya, Nigeria and Ghana, is a drug-monitoring system that permits consumers and health workers to send a text code to a central hotline quickly to verify whether about-to-be-purchased medicine is genuine or counterfeit.

Smart phones are also capable of acting as sensors and diagnostic assistants. Health-care workers are harnessing the computing power of such phones to take blood pressures, monitor blood sugar levels, hear heartbeats, and even (using photography) to peer down throats, look into ears and examine body lesions from afar. No matter how remote the patient, he or she can thus tap into ready-made medical support systems; such do-it-yourself medicine is uploaded to smart phones and sent on to health providers in a distant city.

There are new ways of obtaining almost instantaneous verification of suspicions of malaria. One method uses a slide smeared with blood that is put under a special attachment for mobile phones. A British innovator has designed a mobile-phone-powered surface acoustic wave device to diagnose malaria remotely. Another ingenious researcher in Africa has demonstrated how an otoscope can be fitted to a mobile telephone so that the ears of babies can be investigated and the results read in a distant clinic. In some places, stethoscopes and smart phones have been paired to listen to and assess heart conditions.

Tackling corruption

Text-messaging brings about social change. In some countries, mobile phone reporting by text message has alerted civil society organizations to bribe-taking in real time, rather than days later. Mobile phone photographs have also been available to document the extent of peculation and other corrupt behaviour. Incidents of bribery have been transmitted to the authorities in such a manner that they could not be denied and action could not be avoided. This is not to suggest that corruption can be cured via mobile telephonic surveillance; rather, the existence of corruption can at least be made more visible and middle-class countervailing forces aroused. (In Africa, the growing middle-class is connected to the global village and aware nowadays of how Africa needs to catch up to Asia and Latin America, especially with regard to curbing corruption.)

A number of recent election results (Senegal, Ghana, Kenya and Zimbabwe, among others) have been monitored by various local civil society organizations for accuracy by "quick counts" transmitted to central aggregating stations in capital cities or externally, for fear of local interference. More and more, NGOs are verifying the validity of election returns in this manner, with mobile phones providing the medium and presenting results in real time. Doing so makes it harder for illicit regimes to rig votes or otherwise interfere with outcomes.

SWIATOSLAW WOJTKOWIAK

Boundless potential

Nothing is so powerful a force for positive change in sub-Saharan Africa as the embrace of mobile phone technology and mobile phones as primary sources of information and human interaction. Fortunately, at least two-thirds of sub-Saharan Africa's nearly one billion people use mobile phones daily. About the same proportion of persons in sub-Saharan Africa have ready access to mobile coverage — to a signal (even if 2G rather than 3 or 4G).

Originally, the adoption of mobile phones occurred because traditional landlines were few, expensive and hard to access in Africa. But once the potential of mobile telephony was appreciated, it quickly became the medium of choice for all communicators. It had the enormous advantage of requiring few fixed installations; only cell towers were necessary instead of costly copper wires strung from pole to pole and exposed to the natural elements and theft.

A second revolution was the bright decision by early mobile telephone entrepreneurs in Africa to discard traditional billing systems, replacing them with an insertable SIM (subscriber identity module) card that individuals could buy at shops across the continent. With SIM cards available in almost any reasonable amount, even poor Africans were able to buy air time without large investments. The companies were able to avoid costly and worrying accounting systems, and so the new medium proliferated.

The mobile phone is now sufficiently powerful and inexpensive, and coverage across most sub-Saharan African countries sufficiently extensive, that Africans are able to benefit from a means of communication and a mode of sharing that had largely passed the continent by. Every day, mobile phones are used even more creatively than the day before. As "smart" phones become more available and less expensive, so this spread of technology will continue, almost superseding the need for heavy broadband widths. Personal computers are more efficient, but more cumbersome and more expensive to purchase.

Entering the global village

For Africa, what is accessible through the mobile phone truly, for the first time, makes the global village a meaningful concept. Africans understand each other, and the vagaries of the world, in ways not possible before the arrival of mobile phones. These phones also give Africans the means to do more on a daily basis than ever before. Their household productivity has soared, as has their ability to demand more services from hitherto unresponsive governments or local bureaucracies.

Using the letters on the keys, Nigerien teachers have used mobile phones to teach reading and drill basic arithmetical skills. Children as well as adults therefore learn through the mobile telephone. In these and in so many other ways, the mobile telephone has transformed the lives of all Africans for the better. But these transformative endeavours are early signs of what is to come through the full use by more and more Africans of mobile phones. As they harness the capacity for change presented by these devices, what Africans hold in their hands makes their lives better and more enriching.

Robert I. Rotberg is fellow, Woodrow Wilson International Center; senior fellow, Centre for International Governance Innovation; fellow, American Academy of Arts and Sciences; president emeritus, World Peace Foundation; and founding director of Harvard's Kennedy School program on intrastate conflict.

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The Khobar Towers bombing was a terrorist attack on a housing complex in Khobar, Saudi Arabia, located near the national oil company. At that time, the building was being used as quarters for foreign military personnel.

U.S. DEPT. OF DEFENSE

10 dangerous men

As the threat of terrorism becomes ever more present in Canada, we examine the lives and motives of some of the world's most perilous men.

By Wolfgang Depner

What is terrorism? James D. Kiras, an American expert on asymmetrical warfare, describes the term as a "complex phenomenon open to subjective interpretation."

His ambivalent interpretation of the word "terrorism" could be applied to an actor such as Iran and Syria-backed Hezbollah, a militia and political party representing Shia interests in Lebanon. According to the United States, Canada and Israel, all of Hezbollah (including its elected parliamentary faction) qualifies as a terrorist organization. According to the European Union and Australia, only the militia qualifies as a terrorist organization. They deem the political wing of Hezbollah as legitimate.

Hezbollah's large-scale attacks include the 1983 truck bombing at the U.S. Embassy in Beirut, the 1984 hijacking of a Kuwait Airways plane and the murder of two U.S. passengers, the 1992 suicide bombing at the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires and the 1996 truck bombing at the U.S. section of the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia. Hezbollah has and continues to play an important role in Lebanese politics and society to the point where it has become a state within a state that offers and operates a multitude of social services. Indeed, Hezbollah's militia serves as Lebanon's de-facto army. Hezbollah's fundraising networks operate in North America, Latin America, Europe, Africa and Asia.

Historically, the term terrorism refers to the Reign of Terror, a phase of the French Revolution during which the Committee of Public Safety under Maximilien Robespierre arrested and executed thousands to protect the revolution from its enemies, real or imaginary. Robespierre, for his part, justified this violence by the state against its citizens as follows: "If the mainspring of popular government in peacetime is virtue, amid revolution it is, at the same time, virtue and terror: virtue, without which terror is fatal; terror, without which virtue is impotent. Terror is nothing but prompt, severe, inflexible justice; it is therefore an emanation of virtue. It is less a special principle than a consequence of the general principle of democracy applied

to our country's most pressing needs." Ultimately, Robespierre's approach proved unsustainable and damaged the credibility of the revolution in creating the conditions that led to the rise of Napoleon and the eventual return of the Bourbons.

Contemporary theories of terrorism have reversed the relationship just described. Whereas Robespierre's theory of terrorism sees it as a legitimate tool with which the state may protect itself against its enemies, modern theories focus on terrorism as the last resort of small groups who see the state as their enemy and aim to achieve sweeping political change through violence. Indeed, modern states now have to consider the possibility of "lone wolves" who act on their own, with little help, if any, from others. Within this context, the role of technology is important. New information technologies are helping to radicalize individuals and greatly enhance the murderousness of their actions.

On the whole, these larger perspectives on terrorism are not mutually exclusive. Consider Iran, a state with its own fair share of Robespierre-like figures. Its government has a well-documented history of committing acts against its own civilian population to maintain order inside its borders — Iran's Revolutionary Guard crushed an uprising by ethnic Kurds soon after the revolution — and it has sponsored terrorist acts outside them. The United States considers Iran the world's "most active state sponsor of terrorism," and the U.S. Department of Defense estimates Iran supports Hezbollah with roughly $100 million to $200 million annually. U.S. officials also suspect Iran provided training and arms to Taliban fighters.

Ultimately, both perspectives point to the inherently political nature of terrorism and terrorist acts. This pertains to excluded or persecuted groups seeking remedy for ideological, ethnic or religious grievances, or for ideologues pursuing religious and/or territorial goals.

Different groups may air multiple grievances, change their agendas over time and compete against each other for resources and support. The current conflict between the Islamic State (IS, also known as ISIL, ISIS and DAESH) and al-Qaeda is a case in point. And it goes without saying that the targets of terrorism will deny it any legitimacy. Overall, Kiras, the American expert, concludes that terrorism is a form of irregular warfare, but arguably the weakest form, because those who practise it often lack broad support for their political objectives. Absent this support, "they must provoke drastic responses that act as catalysts for change or weaken their opponent's moral resolve."

The following list recognizes some of terrorism's most dangerous practitioners, chosen with two main criteria. First, they believe warfare is first and foremost a matter of motivation and organization. Accordingly, all but one of the figures on this list are considered senior leaders. Second, the list aims for a degree of regional diversity in recognizing that terrorism comes in many local forms. This said, each of the individuals on this list is a member of the Muslim world and each but one is committed to some measure of Islamic jihad, with some more sincere than others. Through their rejection of democratic values and demands for theocratic government, these individuals stand apart from the majority of peace-loving Muslims.

As such, these individuals do not appear as representatives of a religion nominally practised by 1.2 billion. If anything, they are using religion as a veneer to legitimize their grievances with the secular dictatorships that have historically dominated most of the Middle East and their western enablers, whom they accuse of corrupting Islam and its values.

Be that as it may, scholars such as Yuval Noah Harari, who teaches history at the University of Jerusalem, will note that terrorism is a military strategy of the weak, designed to spread fear, as he recently wrote in the *Guardian*. "Of course, every military action spreads fear," he writes. "But in conventional warfare, fear is a by-product of military losses, and is usually proportional to the force inflicting the losses. In terrorism, fear is the whole story, and there is an astounding disproportion between the actual strength of the terrorists and the fear they manage to inspire."

1. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi may consider himself Caliph of the Islamic State (IS) and he may command several thousand men in a space that stretches across northern Syria and Iraq. Yet the entity that al-Baghdadi claims to govern might be more a metaphysical construct whose major purpose consists of convincing followers he is capable of historic feats. Despite the fact that al-Baghdadi has managed to transform parts of two independent states into a laboratory of theocratic governance, it is highly unlikely that he will be able to consolidate that space into a viable state.

Ideas, however, still matter and ideas have their consequences. Since IS fighters captured large swaths of northern Iraq and Syria in June 2014, they have massacred thousands and threatened entire groups of people with genocide. Despite this wholesale aggression, they are likely best known for their horrifying beheading of Westerners (such as James Foley, Steven Sotloff, David Haines, and more recently, Haruna Yukawa and Kenji Goto Jogo) and non-Westerners alike. Notably though, IS appears to reserve the most gruesome forms of execution for Muslims, as was the case for Muath Al-Kasaesbeh, the Jordanian pilot IS burned alive.

But if the depravity of IS appears well documented, we know little of the man who conceived it. Al-Baghdadi might be the current face of global jihad, but information about him does not go far beyond basic biographical information. Born in 1971, in the Iraqi city of Samarra, as Awad Ibrahim al-Badri, al-Baghdadi trained as an imam and claims to be a direct descendant of Muhammad. Following the American invasion of Iraq in 2003, he joined the resistance against the infidel invaders, who eventually arrested him.

But al-Baghdadi regained his freedom in 2004 after an American commission reviewing his case urged his immediate release — a fateful decision in retrospect. While in prison, he had made contact with local al-Qaeda, whom he eventually joined to fight under the leadership of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the founder of the Islamic State in Iraq. Following al-Zarqawi's violent death in 2006 during the U.S.-led "surge" against Islamist groups, al-Baghdadi eventually assumed leadership of the group.

Al-Baghdadi's foray into the Syrian civil war dates back to 2012 when he dispatched troops to fight the regime of Bashar al-Assad. As part of this move, al-Baghdadi sought to merge his organization with the local al-Qaeda affiliate, al-Nusra Front. Al-Qaeda's leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, however, forbade the merger, a decision that led to a break between

AL-FURQAN MEDIA

A bus parked near a terminal in central Baghdad, Iraq, was destroyed by two car bombs in a 2005 attack orchestrated by Sunnis stepping up their insurgency in protest of the Shi'ite government.

al-Baghdadi and al-Zawahiri. As Magnus Ranstorp, a research director at the Swedish National Defence College, told *Der Spiegel* last year, this split can be read as a larger generational conflict between competing types of jihadists. Eventually, al-Baghdadi's mixture of barbarism, brutality and bribery carried the day as much of al-Nusra switched sides.

This approach also paved the path for a series of victories against the poorly organized Iraqi army, culminating in the capture of Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city. Whether IS will be able to retain this prize remains to be seen in light of recent military setbacks. Michael Weiss, co-author of *ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror*, predicted last year that IS would serve as a catalyst for a civil war in Iraq whose worst-case outcome would be the creation of separate states for the Kurds, Sunni and Shia of Iraq and Syria. Or, there is the alternative view, described by Netschirwan Barsani, premier of the autonomous Kurdish region in northern Iraq, to *Der Spiegel* last year: There will be "an Iraq before Mosul and an Iraq after Mosul."

Conventional accounts frame the emergence of IS as a sudden, unforeseen development, a narrative that German author Bruno Schirra recently challenged in his 2015 book *ISIS - Der globale Dschihad* (jihad). Mr. Schirra argues that al-Baghdadi and IS arose in the slipstream of al-Zarqawi. As such, IS appears as a legacy of the U.S. invasion and its various failures, chief among them not establishing a competent government that could reconcile the majority Shia and minority Sunni interests. Instead, the Shia-dominated government went out of its way to anger Sunnis, thereby creating a recruiting tool for al-Baghdadi.

Unlike Osama bin Laden, al-Baghdadi has remained behind the scenes, a choice that has allowed him to acquire mythical status, at the expense of Ayman al-Zawahiri, whose style has appeared too rigid and hierarchical in the eyes of many young jihadists. Al-Baghdadi also operates differently than bin Laden. He has shown himself to be far more brutal than bin Laden in focusing on specific military goals, such as the acquisition of territory and material wealth. Indeed, some debate whether IS even qualifies as a terrorist organization in the vein of al-Qaeda. Writing in the *Atlantic Monthly*, Graeme Wood offers considerable support for this argument. Whereas bin Laden's al-Qaeda was flexible in operating as a geographically diffuse network of autonomous cells, IS requires territory to remain legitimate and a top-down structure to rule it. Al-Qaeda appears, in the words of Wood "ineradicable because it can survive, cockroach-like, by going underground." Of IS, he says: "If it loses its grip on its territory in Syria and Iraq, it will cease to be a caliphate." Drawing on the available literature, Wood notes that the modern secular world contributed to the creation of bin Laden, who "corporatized terror" in franchising it out. As he says, bin Laden requested specific political concessions such as the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Saudi Arabia. In short, al-Qaeda was confident in the modern world, notwithstanding its religious veneer. The same cannot be said of IS. "The reality is that the Islamic State is Islamic," Wood writes. "*Very* Islamic." Within this context, Wood makes the following observation: "Muslims can reject the Islamic State, nearly all do. But pretending that it isn't actually a religious, millenarian group, with theology that must be understood to be combatted, has already led the United States to underestimate it and back foolish schemes to counter it."

2. Abubakar Shekau

The same day terrorists attacked the offices of satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris, Nigerians were also mourning

U.S. DEPT. OF DEFENSE / BOKO HARAM

Oslo, Norway, immediately after the 2011 terrorist attack perpetrated by Anders Behring Breivik. He killed eight people by setting off a van bomb amid government buildings and then opened fire on a summer camp, killing 69 participants.

the victims of multiple terror attacks in northeastern Nigeria by the Abubakar Shekau-led Boko Haram that had claimed hundreds, if not thousands, of victims around the same time as the Paris attacks.

The origin of Boko Haram — which roughly translates, as "Western education is sin" — stems from concerns over poor governance and sharp inequalities in Africa's most populous country, which possesses one of the world's poorest populations, despite a wealth of natural resources. These grievances are particularly grave in the country's Muslim north, where Boko Haram operates. Writing for the New York-based Council on Foreign Relations, Nigerian expert Chris Ngwodo frames this relationship as follows: "The emergence of Boko Haram signifies the maturation of long-festering extremist impulses that run deep in the social reality of northern Nigeria. But the group itself is an effect and not a cause; it is a symptom of decades of failed government and elite delinquency finally ripening into social chaos."

Events in the Middle East, and elsewhere, however, have overshadowed this chaos, an unfortunate development. Boko Haram's brutality is only comparable to the level displayed by the Islamic State and Boko Haram has matched IS's tactics, if not its territorial acquisitiveness. According to an estimate by the British newspaper *The Telegraph*, Boko Haram controls an area the size of Costa Rica or Slovakia that is home to 1.7 million people, no small accomplishment for a diffuse group, whose active membership ranges in the hundreds to low thousands, according to estimates from the U.S. State Department.

Other parallels between the two groups have also appeared. Both are bent on carving out political space governed by Sharia law. Both have managed to overwhelm local security. Despite some recent successes, the Nigerian army has been no less feeble in stopping Boko Haram than the Iraqi army in dealing with IS. Indeed, Nigeria has followed Iraq in accepting foreign assistance. Finally, both Boko Haram and IS are led by individuals about whom the global community knows little beyond whatever propaganda messages they release for consumption.

For example, the U.S.-based National Counterterrorism Center seems to be guessing about Shekau's age in listing multiple birth years (1965, 1969, 1975). For his part, Shekau claims he has trained as an Islamic cleric. But details of this sort almost represent the full extent of the available information. Indeed, Nigeria's military has claimed, on three occasions, that it has killed Shekau, most recently in September 2014. Shekau — or at least a person who claims to be him — has since mocked this news and the U.S. State Department continues to offer a bounty of $7 million on his head. So is he still out there? Some suggest that this question is not important. John Campbell, of the Council on Foreign Relations, wrote recently that "Boko Haram is more than Abubakar Shekau, alive or dead."

Meanwhile, his sermons, one of which included the following lines, live on: "You will now really understand the person called Shekau. You don't know my madness, right? It is now that you will see the true face of my madness. I swear by Allah's holy name that I will slaughter you. I will not be happy if I don't personally put my knife on your necks and slit your throats. Yes! I will slaughter you! I'll slaughter you! And I'll slaughter you again and again."

3. Ayman al-Zawahiri

If we accept the premise that al-Qaeda is a multinational enterprise with subsidiaries around the world, a case can be made that its current CEO, Ayman al-Zawahiri, has revived a global brand that appeared to some to be spent after its founding leader, Osama bin Laden, died at the hands of American Navy SEALs in May 2011.

What appears even more remarkable is the fact that the person responsible for this revival once suffered the stigma of being a symbol of the malaise that had gripped al-Qaeda following the violent death of its figurehead. While various al-Qaeda affiliates had been making names for themselves in North Africa, the Middle East and around the world, the core of al-Qaeda found its operational freedom increasingly limited by American military and security forces. The days of striking highly symbolic western targets were long gone when al-Zawahiri, the group's

AL-QAEDA

ideological mastermind, assumed operational command. This reality must have particularly riled al-Zawahiri. The 63-year-old Egyptian-born surgeon had, after all, organized the 9/11 attacks, the apex of al-Qaeda's global influence. Since then, the group has experienced a creeping, but inexorable decline and al-Qaeda's entire agenda of redeeming the Arab world by returning it to glory days of the 7th Century seemed done after young, western-oriented protesters had toppled the likes of Tunisia's Ben Ali and Egypt's Hosni Mubarak during the Arab Spring. Subsequent events have since shown that this ephemeral moment in the history of the Arab world has actually allowed al-Qaeda to recover its momentum.

In a tragic turn of fate, the incomplete revolutions that roiled the Arab world left behind uncertainty and chaos, fertile ground for al-Qaeda's message. Granted, other groups, such as IS, have copied and further radicalized this message, drawing away al-Qaeda's resources and recruits. But al-Qaeda remains a player, thanks in part to al-Zawahiri and his institutional knowledge. While al-Zawahiri has taken a public backseat to more charismatic figures inside and outside the al-Qaeda fold, his influence remains evident by the number of groups who choose to affiliate with the organization. Indeed, al-Zawahiri took to the air himself last September to announce the creation of a new branch called Qaedat al-Jihad in the Indian Subcontinent. And if we were to read the U.S. State Department's Reward for Justice program as a *Forbes*-like list of the world's most infamous terrorists, al-Zawahiri would top it. Only he commands a bounty of up to $25 million.

4. Nasir al-Wuhayshi

NADEEM AWAN

It is not entirely clear what, if any, role al-Wuhayshi's al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) played in the attacks that killed 17 individuals in Paris in early January.

One, possibly both, of the Kouachi brothers who massacred 12 individuals in and near the offices of the French satirical magazine, *Charlie Hebdo*, on Jan. 7 had travelled to Yemen in the summer of 2011 to receive some form of weapons training. Indeed, *Inspire*, AQAP's English-language online magazine had published a 'Wanted dead or alive' graphic last spring that included the name of *Charlie Hebdo*'s editor, who was known simply as "Charb." He was shot to death during the attack. Various reports citing Western intelligence sources have generally dismissed the possibility of a direct link between the Paris attacks and AQAP. For one, it is not consistent with recent al-Qaeda behaviour. As the *Economist* has noted, al-Qaeda and its affiliates are focusing their energies on "the near enemy, not the far enemy." While attacks on Western targets might be inspiring, the magazine noted, al-Qaeda's over-arching aim remains the establishment of a caliphate across the Islamic world based on Sharia law. By that standard, al-Wuhayshi must surely rank among the most competent al-Qaeda franchisees.

Considered an apprentice of Osama bin Laden, al-Wuhayshi served as his personal secretary before Iranian authorities captured him. Extradited to Yemen, he eventually escaped a maximum-security prison in 2006. Since then, he has committed himself to the cause of creating a caliphate. While efforts to overthrow the Saudi government have failed, the group has made a global name for itself both by attacking Western targets in Yemen and by AQAP's online magazine *Inspire*. In 2009, it even attempted to bring down a plane bound for Detroit by way of a suicide bomber who had stuffed explosives in his underwear and was unable to detonate them beyond causing a small fire. And in 2010, it shipped bombs from Yemen to synagogues in Chicago.

But al-Wuhayshi's biggest achievements so far have been of a local nature. The 38-year-old Yemeni has managed to destabilize his place of birth by entrenching his organization deep into its society and stands to be one of the central beneficiaries of the chaotic conditions that have

The 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center, pictured here as United Airlines Flight 175 hit the south tower, was the most deadly act of terrorism of many orchestrated against the West by al-Qaeda.

IS released photos such as this one to show journalist James Foley with his IS assassin, thought to be Mohammed Emwazi, a British man born in Kuwait. Prior to his identification, the British media referred to him as "Jihadi John."

gripped the country since Shia rebels, known as Houthis, chased away its Western-backed government in January 2015.

While AQAP is deeply hostile towards the Houthis, AQAP's capture of the capital city of Sana'a has only deepened the fissures that threaten to fracture Yemen. In turn, the absence of any government will allow al-Wuhayshi to consolidate his gains and create what many would consider to be a horror scenario: a large training group and operating base for terrorists from around the world near one of the most important global shipping lanes and the Saudi-Arabian oilfields.

It is no wonder then that the United States has invested considerable effort and energy in denuding al-Wuhayshi's group. According to *The Long War Journal*, published by the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, a self-described non-profit, non-partisan American policy institute, the United States has conducted 111 covert airstrikes against terrorist targets in Yemen since 2002, with enemy deaths numbering 546 and civilian deaths numbering 105, as of Feb. 21. As for al-Wuhayshi personally, he is among the six individuals who rank behind Ayman al-Zawahiri on the U.S. State Department's Reward for Justice program, with a bounty of $10 million on his head.

5. Sirajuddin Haqqani

If the nature of terrorism reflects the intellectual tenor of the times during which it occurs, we can easily make the case that most of the men on this list exist almost exclusively within the context of a radicalized Islam that seeks to redeem a world corrupted by foreign ideas. To be clear, this commentary does not attempt to absolve them of their actions. It instead aims to place them into a larger tableau.

Sirajuddin Haqqani comes by his place on this list via family ties. In the 1970s, Pakistan's Inter-services Intelligence Agency (ISI) started to sponsor Sirajuddin Haqqani's father, Jalaluddin, in opposition to Daoud Khan, the Soviet-backed leader of Afghanistan. This sponsorship intensified after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and ISI eventually made Haqqani's militia one of the main recipients of American-made weapons to be aimed at Soviet occupiers. A capable and courageous mujahedeen during the 1980s, Jalaluddin eventually joined the Taliban government that assumed power in the early 1990s following the humiliating departure of the Soviets.

Efforts to win Jalaluddin over to the Western cause, following the events of 9/11 and the arrival of American troops in Afghanistan, failed and his militia eventually joined the resistance against the U.S.-led coalition. Experts estimate that the Haqqani Network (as the militia is known) controls about 10,000 men. They rank it among the most effective of the anti-Western forces that have sought to destabilize Afghanistan as part of efforts to establish a nationalistic government based on Sharia law. One reason for the group's effectiveness is its ethnic cohesion. Control of the group has remained within a small circle of Haqqani family members, all of whom are Pashtuns. In this sense, Sirajuddin is only one of the many Haqqanis who has followed the family patriarch, Jalaluddin, into a life of combating foreign armies and ideas via terror.

Washington holds Sirajuddin, who was born circa 1973, according to the U.S. State Department, responsible for several deadly attacks against coalition forces and the attempted assassination of Afghan president Hamid Karzai in 2008. Designated a global terrorist, Sirajuddin maintains close ties with the Taliban and al-Qaeda, ties first developed by his father. And like his father, Sirajuddin may have also successfully resisted and outlasted a superpower. The United States has placed a bounty of $10 million on his head.

6. Abu Musab Abdel Wadoud

Algeria, Libya, Mali, Mauritania and Niger: These are just some of the countries where Abu Musab Abdel Wadoud has

IS / U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT

made his influence felt. Also known as Abdelmalek Droukdel, Wadoud currently leads al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), an al-Qaeda franchise that emerged out of the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), an Algerian terrorist group whose roots reach back to that country's civil war.

Wadoud's central contribution consists of transforming what was once a domestic terror group into a regional player. His actions have caused considerable consternation in several African and European capitals. This process began in 2004, when Wadoud assumed leadership of GSPC. Fewer than three years later, the group had changed its name to AQIM after affiliating itself with Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda.

This move earned AQIM access to previously unavailable resources and increased its lethality as it adopted terror techniques traditionally associated with al-Qaeda, including suicide bombings.

Hezbollah posters such as these went up in the aftermath of the 2006 Lebanon War, also known as the Israeli-Hezbollah War.

JULIEN HARNEIS

The founding basis of this arrangement between Wadoud and bin Laden was their mutual desire to replace the authoritarian, but secular governments of North Africa (including Algeria's) with Islamic regimes. But this agenda suffered a serious setback in 2011 when pro-democratic forces toppled repressive regimes in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya during the Arab Spring.

Bin Laden's death the same year only added to the annus horribilis for global jihadists. But al-Qaeda and its various affiliates, including AQIM, have proven themselves to be far more resilient than believed. Indeed, they have profited from the political instability that followed the Arab Spring. AQIM, for example, has been a direct beneficiary of the chaos that gripped the Sahel region following the collapse of Libya's Gadhafi regime in 2011. With much of the region ungoverned, Wadoud's group has been able to expand its operational footprint.

This development also proved to be profitable for the bottom line of AQIM, already said to be the wealthiest of al-Qaeda's franchises. Current revenue sources include an extensive network of trans-Saharan smuggling routes and the kidnapping of Western foreigners for ransom. European governments, especially France, have tried to restore order in the region, but efforts so far have met with only modest success. Alluding to the ungovernable border region between Afghanistan and Pakistan, some experts have come to describe the region as Sahelistan. If so, the 44-year-old Algerian-born Wadoud may well be its emir.

And if we are to believe various experts, Wadoud's group is also capable of striking in Europe, where AQIM can count on 500 sympathizers in various European countries, including France, Spain and Germany.

7. Hafiz Muhammad Saeed

For a man with a multimillion-dollar bounty on his head, Hafiz Muhammad Saeed seems rather sanguine about his status as one of the most wanted terrorists in the world.

Head of Lashkar-e-Taiba, Saeed is the person many believe to be responsible for the terrorist attacks that killed more than 160 and injured more than 300 people in the Indian city of Mumbai in 2008. Before this attack, the group had focused its activities on the Kashmir region. Saeed currently occupies a middle-class home in the Pakistani city of Lahore and makes regular appearances on Pakistani talk shows. Indeed, it would not be a stretch to suggest that Saeed, who holds two master's degrees and specialized in Islamic studies and Arabic, lives rather an ordinary life — at least by the standards of the other individuals on this list. Saeed's mundane existence certainly mocks Washington, which has offered $10 million for tips leading to his conviction.

This dollar figure does not seem to faze Saaed. "I move about like an ordinary person — that's my style," he told the *New York Times* in 2013. "My fate is in the hands of God, not America." Such expressions of humility, however, diminish the far-reaching influence that Saeed has had on Earth, especially on the section across which India, Pakistan and Afghanistan stretch. As founder and reputed leader of Lashkar-e-Taiba, Saeed sits at the very top of a tightly hierarchical organization that is more than just a terrorist or militant organization.

While its official rhetoric articulates familiar refrains about global jihad, its actual agenda appears more local. According to the British newspaper *The Guardian*, the group aims to unite the contested territory of Kashmir with Pakistan by changing the dynamics of India, Pakistan and Afghanistan through destabilizing attacks against civilian targets that specifically exclude Muslims. But this method is only one of many in the group's arsenal. It operates a range of social services, maintains ties with multiple political parties and enjoys tacit support from the Pakistani military.

As *The New Yorker's* Steve Coll says, Saeed's group is "a three-dimensional political and social movement with an armed wing, not merely a terrorist or paramilitary outfit." Recent years have seen the group shift towards political rather than violent means, but it still possesses significant resources, with terrorist camps spread across Pakistan. And despite statements to the contrary, the Pakistani military still seems to see value in what *The Times* calls "good jihadists" such as Saeed. His ability to freely roam the streets

of Lahore says as much. Naturally, it goes without saying that India would scarcely use the same adjective to describe Saeed.

8. Mohammed Deif

Is Mohammed Deif, the commander of Hamas's military wing, still alive? A letter bearing his signature and posted in late January on the website of Hezbollah-run Al-Manar TV claims as much. Israeli bombs targeted Deif on Aug. 20, 2014 during Operation Protective Edge, the Israeli military operation in the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip that officially took place between July 8 and Aug. 26, 2014.

The operation itself, which responded to Hamas rocket attacks following the death of a Palestinian teenager at the hands of three Israeli youth, claimed a conflicting number of deaths. The United Nations says at least 2,104 Palestinians died, including 1,462 civilians, of whom 495 were children and 253 women, according to a BBC report. According to this same report, 66 military personnel died.

Rockets and mortars fired from Gaza also killed six Israeli civilians and one Thai national. According to Israeli sources, Hamas fired at least 4,591 rockets with the Iron Dome defence system, claiming 735 intercepts. But if these metrics aim to give some measure of certainty to what was only the latest military engagement involving Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and Palestinian militants, they say nothing about the fate of Deif. Leader of the Izz a-Din al-Qassam Brigades since 2002, Deif has ranked near or at the top of every Israeli enemy list.

As *The Washington Post* wrote in early August, Deif is "enemy number one" for Israelis. "Deif has tormented the Jewish state for three decades, deploying suicide bombers and directing the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers," it notes. According to the *Post*, Israeli officials believe Deif has been the mastermind of Hamas's strategy of firing rockets at civilian targets and building up the network of tunnels with which Hamas could supply the isolated Gaza Strip and infiltrate Israel. Experts note that Operation Protective Edge has severely denuded Hamas, both in terms of materiel and personnel.

But it is not clear whether Deif was among those killed. Over the years, he has survived several assassination attempts, earning him the nickname "the cat with nine lives." Whether he had one of those left on Aug. 20 remains a matter of speculation. Khaled Mashal, the political head of Hamas, told *Vanity Fair* in an interview that Mohammed Deif is alive. "Israelis failed to kill him … he will continue to fight the Israeli aggression and occupation. We have proof." Mashal, however, failed to offer this proof, noting that Deif is a "military man who hardly ever turned up in public, even before the war." Indeed. Born in 1965 in a Palestinian refuge camp, Deif has remained a shadowy figure of whom little is known. Indeed, the *Post* notes that "no one even knows whether Deif is his real name" and rumours place him in a wheelchair following an Israeli assassination attempt in 2006 that also cost him an eye and an arm. The fact that we still know little of Deif after the last assassination attempt suggests, though, that he is still alive.

9. Muhammad Ahmed Al-Munawar

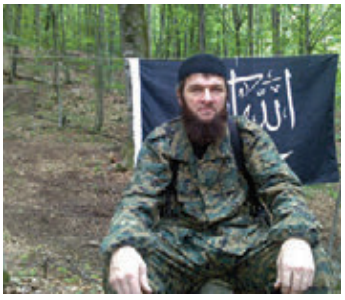
Compared to the other terrorists listed here, Al-Munawar ranks in the third tier of individuals for whose conviction the U.S. State Department has offered a reward — in this case, a figure of up to $5 million. Al-Munawar earned this status, which he shares with 46 other individuals, for his part in the hijacking of Pan Am Flight 73 in the Pakistani city of Karachi in 1986.

Because of this attack, the U.S. government holds him responsible for the death of at least 20 passengers and crew (including two U.S. citizens) and the attempted murder of 379 passengers and crew, among them 89 U.S. citizens. Al-Munawar's life on the run began in the morning hours of Sept. 5, 1986, after he and three accomplices stormed the stairway of the plane. Disguised as security guards and armed with assault rifles, grenades and explosives, the men acted on behalf of Abu Nidal, the nom-de-guerre of Sabri al-Banna, a Palestinian militant who opposed any form of moderation towards Israel in the struggle for a Palestinian state. A successful entrepreneur, Nidal switched fields in 1974 by founding the Fatah Revolutionary Council (FRC), which the U.S. State Department described in 1989 as "the most dangerous terrorist organization in existence."

Unlike contemporary terrorist groups, the FRC did not draw inspiration from a radical interpretation of religious doctrine. It was secular and it struck targets — Western airplanes and airports, among others — that today's terrorists have either abandoned or been foiled from executing since a post-9/11 security revolution.

But if Al-Munawar's agenda and actions reflect an earlier era of terrorism, his biography reaches deep into the present. Pakistani security forces apprehended Al-Munawar and his comrades 16 hours after they stormed the plane in 1986, and then a Pakistani court sentenced the four, plus a fifth man, to death. All, however, eventually gained their freedom, beginning in 2001 with ringleader Zayd Hassan Abd al-Latif Safarini, who was arrested again in Thailand on his way to Jordan after his release. Sentenced to 160 years in prison in Colorado, Safarini reiterated during his U.S. trial what the group had revealed during their trial in Pakistan, namely that they wanted to use the aircraft as a pawn to secure the release of imprisoned comrades and eventually launch it as a missile against a high-profile Israeli target — in short, stage 9/11 before 9/11. As for Al-Munawar himself, he remains at large.

10. Ali Abu Mukhammad



More than one year after Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, Ukraine remains a grinding fault line of international tensions. Pinched by the unacceptable territorial drift of its large Russian neighbour, Ukraine has sought shelter in the Western world, only to find out that many of its leaders have remained rather coy about welcoming the country into their fold, notwithstanding their supportive rhetoric. With no immediate resolution in sight following failed peace talks in early February, the unsettled status of Ukraine threatens to divert attention away, if it has not already, from the geopolitical complexities of the Caucasus region, a chaotic crossroad of ancient hatreds and new ambitions where Europe and Asia collide.

One small, but potentially disruptive player in this unique political ecosystem is Ali Abu Mukhammad, the self-styled Emir of the Islamic Caucasus Emirate. Mukhammad was born as Aliaskhab Kebekov in Dagestan, a Russian republic that borders the former Soviet republics of Georgia, to its west, Azerbaijan to its southwest and the Caspian Sea to its east. Home to a multitude of ethnic groups that speak a mélange of languages, this southernmost region of Russia has been the site of an Islamic insurgency since at least the late 1990s and Mukhammad is only the latest militant leader who has declared jihad against the Russian infidels.

In fact, Mukhammad's public profile has been rather low since he replaced Doku Umarov, whom Russian security forces killed in March 2014. But if Mukhammad himself has been lying low, it would be a mistake to question the reach and ruthlessness of the Islamic Caucus Emirate. According to Stanford University's Mapping Militant Organizations website, the group first emerged in 2007 when Mukhammad's predecessor resigned from his position as president of the Republic of Ichkeria, the secessionist government of the neighbouring Russian republic of Chechnya. Drawing inspiration from Salafism, the group seeks to establish a Sharia-governed territory that stretches across southern Russia. It has since expanded this nationalistic agenda by joining the global jihad movement in 2009 following a leadership meeting. This move ended feuding with the Riyadus-Salikhin faction that had staged attacks in Moscow (2002) and Beslan (2004) and extended institutional ties with al-Qaeda. Briefly, the former attack saw 40 armed Chechens storm the Dubrovka Theatre, where they took 912 hostages. A rescue staged three days later led to the deaths of all hostage takers, but also 130 hostages. The latter attack, meanwhile, led to the deaths of 331 people, including 186 children, after Chechen separatists held more than 1,000 children and adults hostage. In both cases, Chechens were responding to Russia's heavy-handed response to Chechen independence.

But if this relationship suggests a subordinate role, the Islamic Caucasus Emirate found its own deadly way of garnering headlines on Dec. 29, 2013, when it staged two separate suicide bombings in Volgograd, Russia, killing 34 people. The attacks occurred just weeks before the start of the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in the Russian Black Sea resort town of Sochi and prompted condemnation from countless quarters, including then-NATO secretary-general Anders Fogh Rasmussen, who promised that NATO and Russia would stand together in the fight against terrorism. In light of the current Ukraine crisis, Rasmussen's promise reads like an artifact from a long-past era of Russian-Western relations.

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From autocracy to awakening?

How governance, political economy and conflict are playing out in the Middle East and North Africa — and what the future may hold

By Joe Landry

Egypt's protests in Tahrir Square in January 2011 led to a revolutionary shift that was soon overturned by yet another military coup.

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has captured the world's attention in the 21st Century. The Arab Spring of 2011 illustrated how dynamic, grass-roots political movements, ignited by discontent and fuelled by social media, can completely transform societies in the blink of an eye. These events (resulting in revolutionary political shifts in places such as Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, and Libya; along with major protests in Bahrain, Jordan, Iraq, Kuwait, Israel, Sudan, Algeria and Morocco) propelled the region into a period of unforeseen turmoil and transition, the effects of which are still being felt. Add to these developments the consistent threat of conflict and instability, extremism and terrorism, corruption and cronyism, along with an often indecipherably complex array of back-door politics, and we are only beginning to scratch the surface of what is currently happening in the MENA region. (The area comprises nearly 20 countries, depending on the definition being used. These countries are home to approximately 381 million people. The list generally includes Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Yemen, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Tunisia).

The region is a critical player in the global economy due to the massive petroleum and natural gas reserves to which it is home. In addition, the MENA countries have the distinction of having the highest levels of authoritarianism in the world. A complex picture emerges within this grouping of how forms of governance have influenced, and been influenced by, the political economy of the region.

While some states are undergoing violent conflicts, both internally and externally induced (for example Syria, Yemen, Libya, Iraq, Palestine), others remain stable, strong economic and political forces in the region (Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar.) Conflict diffusion and spillovers into Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and others threaten regional peace and the stability of the international economic system.

While it is certainly difficult to make generalizations, an analysis of the political and economic trends characterizing the MENA region is useful to better understand why and how problems such as extremism, civil-war, refugee flows, state fragility and other forms of instability proliferate here. Because of the strongly interconnected global economy, such an analysis provides insight into the best ways in which local leaders and the inter-

national community can engage in order to push for the best possible path of development for a highly volatile (and highly diverse) region.

Governance in the Middle East and North Africa region

According to the World Bank, the majority of MENA's population lives in middle-income countries that are doing relatively well, economically speaking. At the same time, there are certainly several outliers including, for example, Egypt, Morocco, Sudan, Yemen, Jordan and Sudan. Moreover, even if a country is doing well with regards to GDP, it does not follow that the average citizen enjoys his or her share of that wealth. The 2008/09 global financial crisis didn't hit the region as hard as it did many other areas of the globe, largely due to the well-trained and highly skilled youth population and strong resource base. Yet, at the same time, the MENA region still sits as an authoritarian outlier when it comes to governance. For instance, Freedom House, a well-respected NGO that conducts research and advocacy on democracy, political freedom and human rights, has ranked the MENA countries as a whole in dead last position in their level of freedom since the 1980s; other popular indices agree. Moreover, MENA countries have undergone fewer political transitions than any other region; these countries are hence both unusually undemocratic and unusually stable.

Scholars and analysts have been continually stumped by this puzzle: What is it about the MENA countries that drives the propensity towards autocratic governments? Is there something inherent in the DNA of the region that predisposes such political systems to success? Or is it merely an accident of history? To what does MENA owe this extraordinary resistance to democracy?

The resource curse: rentier states and democracy

While it is doubtful there will ever be a singular "magic bullet" explanation for this complex, context-dependent phenomenon, it still holds that there seems to be some particular set of forces that have served to entrench authoritarian systems of governance in the MENA region. One possible explanation relates to the political economy of the region. Note that a number of prominent studies have validated the linkages presented here. As previously mentioned, a number of the MENA countries are oil-rich (termed in the academic world as "rentier states" because they derive a substantial portion of revenues from the rent of indigenous resources to external clients). This means that leaders and elites with access to natural resource rents are able to act more autonomously than they would if they were reliant on a wider tax base for revenues. The general satisfaction of the people is therefore less important than it would be in a liberal democratic society.

In addition, the capacity of the state to employ strategies that crack down on dissent is also greater. Hiring police and security forces, running a state media conglomerate, banning alternative media and shutting down online social networks are all tactics that require significant resources. Without oil proceeds, MENA governments would be unable to engage in these types of repressive activities, which act to control and mitigate subversion within the populace. In addition, rentier states have little incentive to diversify economically. With such high rents pouring in through the trade of oil products, other industries are stifled, leading to shallow economic development and growth. This theory ties into the modernization effect, which supposes that as new industries mature, education levels will rise and specialize, leading to improved organization, communication and bargaining power in society.

Finally, some rich Arab governments use this wealth to appease their populations through incentives. For example, free higher education, subsidies to travel and study abroad, low tax rates and other forms of patronage are strategies commonly employed by resource-rich governments. In turn, these incentives keep the population happy and even docile, lessening the desire for political change. All of these mechanisms help explain how the political economy of the MENA countries directly influences governance and keeps in power rulers who seemingly should not remain, given the global trends seen over the past few decades.

The MENA region, shown in brown, has been in a period of unforeseen turmoil and transition.

Gender inequality persists in the region. In Yemen, for example, studies show that women, who comprise only 12 percent of the labour force, earn an average 30 percent of men's wages.

The Arab Spring: democratic desires or doubling down

If the entrenched authoritarian governments of MENA needed a push towards reform, the Arab Spring in 2011 provided that and more. No one — not political scientists, intelligence analysts, conflict early-warning researchers and certainly not the leaders of these countries themselves — saw the tidal wave of uprising, protest and instability approaching. Nevertheless, the spark that infused the tinderbox happened on an innocuous December 2010 day in Tunisia. A minor

disagreement between a street merchant and a municipal street officer led a fruit vendor to set himself on fire. His self-immolation protest sparked some of the largest pro-democracy protests in history, and galvanized people across the region to take action against autocracy.

But have the events of the Arab Spring really represented a boon for democratic liberalization and reform in the MENA region? Perhaps not. Out of all the countries where real reform took place, only Tunisia still resembles a democratic system. Parliamentary and presidential elections in 2014 were remarkably peaceful and represent an historical achievement in the history of the country and the region. Democratic ideals have been enshrined within the new constitution and embody the pioneering role Tunisia has played in the region after the revolution. Despite relative peace within the country, terrorism and extremism still represent a threat, as evidenced by the attacks at the National Bardo Museum on March 18 this year, which killed at least 24 people, mostly foreign tourists. This target is just metres away from the Tunisian Parliament, demonstrating the ability of terrorists to hit the heart of this new democracy.

So even here, the transition has been rocky (as has almost every major political transition in history, this is one thing many forget or choose to ignore.) Recent polls show Tunisians do not see their country as a success story and that they would prefer more economic growth under a dictator over less economic growth in a democracy. On the other hand, Tunisia has made some advances, with the lifting of certain travel restrictions, greater academic freedoms and the establishment of new labour unions. The remainder of states have either reverted to autocracy or rolled back any measurable gains that were made.

The situation in Egypt — wherein the Muslim Brotherhood were voted to power only to be swiftly displaced by a military coup — encapsulates the larger trend. That trend was the quick rollback of democratic gains in the region with the help of security forces, past governments, ruling families and other political elites. Indeed, this trend was seen throughout the MENA region, with aspirations for free and fair democratic elections consistently suppressed through intimidation, violence, arrests and imprisonments.

Of all the countries where protests overthrew autocratic governments, only Tunisia, whose 2014 elections are shown here, now resembles a democratic system.

Turning to the other countries where dictatorial leaders were cast away does not paint a rosier picture. Yemen was undergoing a contentious transitory process when Houthi factions deposed the president and took over the capital. Libya without Gadhafi has spiralled into low-level civil war, with deep-seated regional and tribal rivalries backed by autonomous militias ruling the day. In Bahrain, there was no change in leadership, but now all public opposition has been crushed. The government here has dissolved the Islamic Scholars Council of Bahrain and banned contact between political organizations and foreign officials. Clearly these new laws are aimed at preventing an organized opposition movement from developing. And finally there is the "neighbourhood of fear" effect — populations of MENA countries have observed how poorly revolutions in these places have turned

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After these protests in Bahrain, there was no change in leadership, but now all public opposition has been crushed.

out and fear ending up as the next Syria or Libya. Opposition movements in countries such as Jordan have retreated, preferring their monarchical system to the unknown.

One consequence of these developments is a move to extremism and terrorism. Radicalization broadly speaking — has been shown to be born out of isolation, helplessness and persecution. These risk factors are further exacerbated in the Middle East by the lack of jobs, anger at leaders for stifling of economic growth and the religious justification for violence based on a narrow interpretation of Islam pushed by radical Imams and other leadership figures. If MENA states continue to quell dissent, opposition groups may resort to guerrilla tactics as a means of forcing political change. Moreover, as the wars in Syria, Iraq, Libya and elsewhere rage on, more and more foreign fights are flowing to the area as masses of refugees flow in the opposite direction. Both have destabilizing effects and can exacerbate already precarious situations in neighbouring countries. The "bad neighbourhood effect" is well established and having neighbouring states in conflict increases the chances of state failure exponentially.

Another under-examined dynamic is the proxy wars which are fought covertly (and not so covertly) in the region. For example, in Syria we have the Assad regime propped up by support from Shia Iran and Hezbollah, and the rebels supported by the West and its Sunni allies such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Here, then, we see the Shiite-Sunni conflict playing out with powerful states on both sides funding destabilization in some cases and repression in others. In addition to Syria, countries such as Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain all suffer from sectarian tensions along this divide. Moreover, a number of the Gulf Cooperation Council states are involved in undermining any momentum towards democratic reform in states that are on the brink of change; they provide training and resources to their allies in these battles, hoping to continue their grip on power in the region.

The future of a region in flux

So what does all of this mean for the future stability of authoritarian governments in the MENA region? From the above analysis, cynicism appears to be the best bet. However, I would argue instead for cautious optimism going forward. The democratic transitions that occurred in other regions of the world were as messy, if not more, as what we are witnessing now in the MENA region. Furthermore, the underlying structural conditions that gave rise to the Arab Spring are not going away any time soon. These conditions include gender inequality (such as the inability of women to work outside of the home, drive, vote and participate in daily life as we know it in the West); an eschewing of modernism, economic development, and democracy; and the large youth bulge — where highly educated young people are unable to find work related to their training — is only growing, and along with it so, too, is resentment. For example, unemployment rates in the region at the time of the Arab spring were about 25 percent overall and about 40 percent for women. Since then, these statistics have not improved: 27.2 percent of youth under 25 are unemployed in the Middle East and 29 percent in North Africa; this is more than double the global average. These youth are generally well educated and remain expectant of good jobs with fair wages; something that has yet to materialize for reasons discussed elsewhere in this article.

The growth and spread of information technology, in particular social media, is having an unprecedented effect on these societies as well. Much ink has been spilled on how the Arab Spring was a "social media revolution," which may or may not be an exaggeration. Yet it is inarguable that communication technology is having an effect on the spread of democratic ideals, fuelled by a desire to shake off decades of oppression, injustice, corruption and broken promises by autocratic governments. As younger generations become more aware of how others in the world are living and their relative deprivation in terms of freedom of expression and political dissent, they will strive all the more for better and more equitable systems.

To be sure, the current mechanisms through which authoritarian governments keep control will not last forever. Policymakers in the West have little influence on the complex dynamics at play in the MENA region; however, Western nations must be positioned to encourage and support such transitions through the will of the people who are struggling for democratic ideals.

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LEWA' A ALNASR

Marches and vigils took place across the globe after 11 people were gunned down at the offices of satirical magazine, *Charlie Hebdo*.

Drastic decline

Press freedom declined substantially worldwide in 2014. Two thirds of the 180 countries surveyed have lower scores this year, owing to everything from killing and jailing journalists to state censorship.

CLAUDE TRUONG-NGOC

The Reporters Without Borders *World Press Freedom Index* ranks the performance of 180 countries according to a range of criteria that include media pluralism and independence, respect for the safety and freedom of journalists, and the legislative, institutional and infrastructural environment in which the media operate.

Top of the list, as so often, are three Scandinavian countries: Finland, which has been in first place for five years in succession, followed by Norway and Denmark. At the other end of the scale, Turkmenistan, North Korea and Eritrea, in last place, were the worst performers. France is ranked 38th (up one place), the United States 49th (down three places), Japan 61st (down two places), Brazil 99th (up 12 places), Russia 152nd (down four places), Iran 173rd (unchanged) and China 176th (down one place).

The 2015 World Press Freedom Index highlights the worldwide deterioration in freedom of information in 2014. Beset by wars, the growing threat from non-state operatives, violence during demonstrations and the economic crisis, media freedom is in retreat on all five continents.

The indicators compiled by Reporters Without Borders are incontestable. There was a drastic decline in freedom of information in 2014. Two-thirds of the 180 countries surveyed for the 2015 World Press Freedom Index performed less well than in the previous year. The annual global indicator, which measures the overall level of violations of freedom of information in 180 countries year by year, has risen to 3,719, an 8-percent increase over 2014 and almost 10 percent compared with 2013. The decline affected all continents.

The European Union-Balkans region is in the lead by far, but nonetheless recorded the biggest fall between the 2014 and 2015 editions. This disturbing trend reflects a two-fold phenomenon: the excesses of some member countries on the one hand and the inability of EU mechanisms to contain them on the other. The region that is bottom of the freedom of information list, North Africa and the Middle East, this year once again contained information "black holes." Comprising entire regions, these are controlled by non-state groups in which independent information simply does not exist.

The most striking developments for 2015

The fallers

Andorra (32nd), the sharpest fall, has paid the price for the lack of independence of its media from financial, political and religious interests. It fell by 27 places as a result of many conflicts of interest and the great difficulty experienced by journalists in covering the activities of Andorran banks, coupled with the lack of any legal protection for freedom of information, such as the confidentiality of journalists' sources.

In Asia, East Timor (103rd) fell by 26 places. The creation of a press council and the adoption of a code of ethics in October 2013 have been a disappointment. In 2014, the government proposed a tough new media law, which has led to widespread self-censorship.

In sub-Saharan Africa, Congo (107th) fell 25 places after a difficult year for independent news outlets. The government stepped up its witch-hunt of critical journalists, at times resorting to extreme violence. Journalists who refuse to keep quiet are forced to flee the country or are expelled.

Western Europe saw numerous countries in decline. Italy (73rd) fell 24 places after a difficult year for journalists for whom threats from the Mafia, among others, and unjustified defamation suits, skyrocketed. Iceland (21st, down 13) paid the price of worsening relations between politicians and media. The drop was an alarm call for this "model of democracy."

In South America, Venezuela (137th) fell 20 places. The National Bolivarian Guard (national army) opened fire on journalists during demonstrations, although they were clearly identified as such. In Ecuador (108th, down 13), the promising Organic Law on Communication soon revealed its limitations. Forced corrections became a means of institutional censorship.

Journalists working in Libya (154th, down 17 places) have lived through a chaotic period since the fall of Moammar Gadhafi, during which Reporters Without Borders recorded seven murders and 37 kidnappings of journalists. Faced with such violence, more than 40 people working in the media decided to leave the country in 2014. Reporting on the activities of the militias that have carved up the country is an act of heroism.

In South Sudan (125th, down six places), gripped by civil war, the radical polarization and constant harassment of news organizations caused it to fall down the rankings. Press freedom was suspended "because of civil war," as a Reporters Without Borders headline said in July last year on the third anniversary of the country's birth.

Pressure on independent media continued to intensify in Russia (152nd, down four), with another string of draconian laws, website blocking and independent news outlets either brought under control or throttled out of existence. The repressive climate encouraged some local despots to step up their persecution of critics.

In the Caucasus, Azerbaijan (162nd, down 2) suffered an unprecedented crackdown on critics and registered the biggest fall in score among the index's 25 lowest-ranking countries. With media freedom already limited by one-sided regulation and control of the advertising market, the few remaining independent publications were either collapsing under the impact of astronomical damages awards or were simply closed by the police. The number of journalists and bloggers who were jailed turned Azerbaijan into Europe's biggest prison for news providers.

In the Americas, the United States (49th, down three places) continues its decline. In 2014, *New York Times* journalist James Risen came under government pressure to reveal his sources. Although the Obama administration backed away in that case, it continues its war on information in others, such as WikiLeaks.

The risers

There are few of these. Mongolia (54th) rose 34 places, the Index's biggest jump. It had few violations in 2014, while the benefits of legislation on access to information began to be seen. Problems remain, however, including on the legislative front, but there has been a clear improvement.

Tonga (44th), which held its first democratic elections in 2010, strengthened its position thanks to an independent press, which has established its role as a counterweight to the government. The Polynesian nation has risen an enviable 19 places.

The long-running political crisis in Madagascar (64th) came to an end with the election of Hery Rajaonarimampianina as president in January 2014 and the departure of the information minister. This democratic transition eased the previous polarization and boosted the country by 17 places. Yet some subjects remain taboo, such as the financial monopolies in the hands of leading political figures.

In Europe, Georgia (69th, up 15) continued to rise for the third year running and is now close to where it was before the 2008 war. It is enjoying the fruits of reforms undertaken after a change of government through elections, but it continued to be handicapped by the extreme polarization of its news media.

In 86th place, Ivory Coast (up 15 places) continued to emerge from the political and social crisis that plunged the country into full-scale civil war in 2010. The results are still mixed in a country where the broadcasting sector is expected to be opened up in 2015, although there are some fears that this might usher in institutional censorship.

Nepal (105th) was up 15 places thanks to a drop in violence by the security forces against journalists, especially at demonstrations. This improvement remains to be confirmed in 2015.

Tunisia (126th) rose seven places, a relative increase although, in absolute terms, the country stagnated. However, the fact remains that political stabilization in 2014 had benefits for news and information. On the other hand, the number of attacks on journalists remains too high and the implementation of measures to ensure freedom of information has been long in coming.

A cause for satisfaction was Brazil (99th, up 12 places), which rose above the symbolic 100 mark thanks to a less violent year in which two journalists were killed compared with five in the previous year.

Still in the Americas, Mexico (148th) managed to pull itself up four places. In November, which is not included in the 2015 Index, journalists were attacked during demonstrations about the disappearance of 43 trainee teachers in the southwestern state of Guerrero. Reporters Without Borders recorded three cases in Mexico of journalists killed as a direct result of their work, compared with two in 2013.

Regimes seeking ever more information control

You might have thought that the world's most despotic and closed states would be satisfied with keeping news and information under control. Instead, they have continued to reinforce and improve their methods of censorship and repression. Despite apparently stagnating at the bottom of the press freedom index, 15 of the 20 worst-ranked countries have actually seen their scores fall in the past year. How do they manage to keep getting worse?

Reinforcing news monopolies

In North Korea (179th), Eritrea (180th), Turkmenistan (178th) and Uzbekistan (166th), the government's absolute control of news and information is challenged by just a handful of reporters, who risk everything to pass snippets of information to media based abroad. Although relatively rare, such "information black holes" seem to be a model that many other governments would like to copy.

In Djibouti (170th), the employees of the only independent news outlet, *La Voix de Djibouti*, are systematically hounded. In Equatorial Guinea (167th), the few privately owned newspapers are nowadays published only sporadically. In Sudan (174th), 2014 was marked by arbitrary arrests of journalists and the seizures of around 50 newspaper issues, even issues of pro-government newspapers.

Not content with such draconian measures, the Sudanese government has introduced prior censorship, creating a special commission under the information ministry's supervision with the job of examining all proposed articles about corruption to decide whether or not they can be published.

Prior censorship is also back in Kazakhstan (160th), where it takes effect for all the media in cases of riots, strikes or major demonstrations. After banning all the main opposition media two years ago, the Kazakh authorities seemed bent on preventing any re-emergence in 2014, closing three new newspapers critical of the government one by one within months of their launch.

Azerbaijan (162nd) has also managed to eliminate almost all traces of pluralism, forcing the few remaining independent newspapers to close one by one by throttling their sources of income, prosecuting them on trumped-up charges and hounding their employees. In China (176th), the Communist Party has published a new list of prohibitions that include a ban on journalists making "unauthorized criticisms."

Police officers, emergency vehicles and journalists at the scene two hours after the shooting at French satirical magazine, *Charlie Hebdo*.

Reining in the Internet

With complete control of the traditional media assured, reining in the Internet is the next big task. Initially unprepared for dealing with the Internet, an excellent tool for circumventing censorship, the most despotic regimes are now quickly making up for lost time and, with the help of surveillance technology sold by leading western companies, are realizing all of the Internet's potential for state control.

Thanks to its "Great Firewall," China continues to be one of the pioneers of online censorship. Hong Kong's "Occupy Central" pro-democracy movement and commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre were the targets of skilfully orchestrated informa-

THIERRY CARO

Demonstrators gather at the Place de la République in Paris the night of the *Charlie Hebdo* attack. Vigils took place across the globe.

tion blackouts. All terms relating to the anniversary were censored on search engines at the start of June and micro-blogging sites were regularly "cleaned." All Google services including Gmail were subjected to massive blocking to a level of around 90 percent.

Despite technical difficulties and a certain reluctance due to the economic benefits expected from the digital sector, Iran (173rd) has not abandoned the idea of creating a "national Internet." And the Islamic Republic's cyber-police showed it had access to messages exchanged on certain mobile apps when it arrested 12 people in connection with their messaging on WhatsApp, Viber and Tango.

Although the ALBA-1 fibre-optic cable linking Cuba (169th) to Venezuela (137th) is now operational, Internet access in Cuba is still very limited and the cost is prohibitive. The Internet continues to be closely controlled and independent news sites based abroad are still inaccessible except in a few hotels for foreign tourists.

Blocking websites without a court order is becoming routine in many countries, and most cyber-police forces now know how to block sites that change their IP addresses and sites that offer censorship circumvention tools such as Virtual Private Network software. After cracking down in an arbitrary manner, most authoritarian regimes are now legislating with a vengeance in order to impose ever-tighter legal constraints on online activity.

In Kazakhstan, the government has given itself the power to disconnect any network or means of communication whenever it feels the need. Following Russia's example, the Uzbek authorities have imposed draconian criminal constraints on bloggers, while the Belarusian authorities have given the information ministry control over social networks and micro-blogging platforms. "Cyber-crime" charges are often used in Saudi Arabia (164th) and Bahrain (163rd) to pass long jail sentences on netizens who criticize the authorities.

A readiness to legislate does not stop the most repressive regimes from acting outside the law to wage a cyber-war. *Uznews*, a leading news site in Uzbekistan (166th), had to cease operating after hackers broke into the editor's email account and posted documents online that put its network of correspondents in danger. Independent news sites such as *64 Tianwang* in China and *Nuba Reports* in Sudan are often the victims of cyber-attacks. The North Korean regime is said to have doubled the size of its army of hackers in the space of two years.

Jailing all outspoken dissidents

Highly repressive regimes feel obliged to imprison the few leading dissidents still at large. In China, for example, the famous journalist Gao Yu, the cyber-dissident Xu Zhiyong and the leading Uyghur blogger Ilham Tohti joined the hundred or so other news and information providers already in detention.

The imprisonment of Khadija Ismayilova, one of the pioneers of investigative journalism in Azerbaijan (162nd), showed that Ilham Aliyev's autocratic regime has reached the point of no return. Arbitrary arrests, which drove dozens of journalists into exile in 2014, turned the country into Europe's biggest prison for news providers. Arrests of citizen-journalists and bloggers continued in Vietnam (175th), Bahrain and Saudi Arabia.

In Iran, China and Eritrea, the world's biggest prisons for journalists and bloggers, why they are arrested and where they are being held often remain unknown. Many detainees are ill and are denied treatment in Iran's jails. Held in an unknown location on unclear charges and subjected to long spells in solitary, Jason Rezaian has lost around 30 kilograms since his arrest in July.

Dawit Isaac and most of the other journalists detained in Eritrea have never been tried. Instead of cells, they are sometimes locked up in shipping containers in the middle of the desert in which the overcrowding and lack of hygiene are appalling. Islamic State's atrocities should not make us forget that at least 30 journalists and netizens languish in Syrian (177th) government jails where torture is system-

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atic. They include Mazen Darwish, the winner of the Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Prize in 2012, now in his fourth year in detention.

Criminal violence by police

Police violence is very worrying in Vietnam. Independent journalist Truong Minh Duc was still in an intensive care unit three weeks after being attacked by eight police officers on Nov. 2.

Extreme violence is one of the methods used against critical journalists and bloggers in Azerbaijan. Ilgar Nasibov, one of the few independent journalists and human rights defenders in Azerbaijan's Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, was the target of a brutal attack while working in his office on Aug. 21. In Vietnam and Azerbaijan, the police increasingly use criminal thugs to do their dirty work and sometimes co-ordinate operations with them.

In Iran, dozens of detainees, including journalists and bloggers, were badly beaten and placed in solitary confinement when they objected to a major search operation that was being conducted in an irregular manner in Section 350 of Tehran's Evin prison.

Charlie Hebdo editor Stéphane Charbonnier, wasn't a stranger to terrorism. Here, he answers questions after a firebombing of *Charlie Hebdo* offices in 2011.

Stopping at nothing, archaic or sophisticated

Repression is happy to take medieval forms in Saudi Arabia and Iran. Raif Badawi, one of the founders of an online discussion group called the Liberal Saudi Network and winner of the Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Prize in 2014, was sentenced to 10 years in prison and 1,000 lashes for suggesting that the Saudi authorities should respect fundamental freedoms.

Flogging is just as common in the Islamic Republic of Iran, where more than 50 journalists and netizens have been subjected to this form of punishment in the past five years. The latest victims include photojournalists Khalil Emami and Abass Alipour, who were sentenced to 25 and 50 lashes respectively in August at the request of a local official they had criticized. In China, TV stations are broadcasting forced "confessions" again. Following Chen Yongzhou in November 2013, independent journalists Gao Yu and Xiang Nanfu were forced to make televised "self-criticisms" in May 2014.

In Sri Lanka (165th), hundreds of soldiers surrounded the newspaper *Uthayan* on May 18, when it published a supplement to mark the army's massacre of Tamil civilians in 2009. The newspaper *Thinakkural* was also surrounded. Sri Lanka's government also attacks the foundations of journalism by systematically obstructing the activities of NGOs that support the media. The Azerbaijani authorities went one step further this past summer, completely disbanding the main media-supporting NGOs.

Blasphemy: political use of religious censorship

While 2014 saw a fall in the number of journalists being arrested or convicted for covering religious issues, more and more countries are using prohibitions on blasphemy and sacrilege to censor political criticism. Some leaders go so far as to use these prohibitions to pass laws banning any criticism of themselves or their political actions.

In nearly half of the world's countries, journalists and bloggers constantly face censorship in the name of religions, prophets or God. If an article involving religion is deemed to be "insulting" or a violation of "moral standards," the consequences can be dramatic for the author. In countries where laws are so severe that they may even include the death penalty, news and information providers have had to censor themselves for years.

Sometimes journalists have less to fear from the law than from their more radical compatriots, who may be ready to resort to violence to "render justice" to their religion. The permanent danger hanging over those who cover religious issues has increased the need to alert the international community about the criminalization of certain opinions and the prohibitions on blasphemy, "defamation of religion" and "offending religious feelings" that such bodies as the Organization of Islamic Conference are promoting.

Heavy sentences

The countries that are most intransigent about blasphemy, including Saudi Arabia (164th) and Iran (173rd) continued to crack down harshly on outspoken journalists and bloggers in 2014. As mentioned, Raif Badawi was sentenced on May 7 to 10 years in prison, 1,000 lashes and a fine of one million riyals (230,000 euros).

Badawi was accused of creating and moderating a website that insulted religion and religious officials, including the committee for the promotion of virtue and prevention of vice, and violated Sharia's basic rules. Despite an international outcry, he was publicly flogged on Jan. 9, in what was scheduled to be the first of 20 sessions of 50 lashes.

Mohammed Al-Ajmi, a human rights activist and blogger from Kuwait (90th) known by the blog name of Abo3asam, was similarly arrested on a blasphemy charge on Aug. 27 in connection with a controversial tweet on Aug. 11 that accused members of the Salafist group Al-Jamiya of blindly following its religious leader, Hamad al-Uthman. It was not his first run-in with the authorities. He was previously accused in April of defaming Kuwait's emir, Sheikh Sabah al-Sabah, before finally being acquitted. And he was also briefly arrested on July 6.

In the Islamic Republic of Iran (173rd), one of the ways the regime punishes dissidents is to define political criticism of the country's leaders and Supreme Leader as sacrilege. A Tehran revolutionary court sentenced eight netizens on May 27 to a total of 123 years in prison on charges of anti-government propaganda, sacrilege and "insulting the Revolution's Supreme Leader."

A young Mauritanian blogger, Mohamed Cheikh Ould Mohamed, was sentenced to death on an apostasy charge on Dec. 27 for criticizing the inequality of the country's caste system. It was the first death sentence for apostasy in Mauritania (55th) since independence. In the offend-

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Speakers at a World Press Freedom Day event at the UN, observe a minute of silence in honour of those who have given their lives defending the right of people everywhere to be informed. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon is second from the left.

ing article, posted on the *Aqlame* website, he said Mauritania's social order was as archaic as that prevailing in the Prophet Mohammed's time.

For this, he was accused of making "flippant references to the Prophet," "violating the divine order" and blasphemy. Apologizing for the post, the blogger denied that he had wanted to attack the Prophet or Islam and said he only wanted to defend the lowly "maalemine" (blacksmith) caste, to which he belongs. Now on death row, he hopes his sentence will be overturned on appeal.

Violence by "believers"

It is not just authoritarian governments that target journalists and bloggers. Some religious groups also issue violent threats and "sentences," which their members arbitrarily try to execute to the indifference of the authorities, whose sole concern is restoring order.

Under popular pressure, Jitendra Prasad Das, a sub-editor with the regional daily *Samaj* in Cuttack, in India's (136th) eastern state of Odisha, was arrested on a charge of offending religious feelings on Jan. 15, a day after Mohammed's birthday, when he published a picture of the Prophet accompanied by a short text. His arrest followed attacks on *Samaj's* offices in Cuttack and other cities in Odisha by members of the Muslim community, who smashed printers and computers in its Balasore office and torched its Rourkela office, although the newspaper published an apology.

In Bangladesh (146th), a previously unknown Islamist group calling itself Ansar al Islam Bangladesh (Defenders of Islam) posted a message online in November claiming three murders, including that of Rajib Haider, a blogger whose throat was cut in February 2013, and naming other future victims, including Asif Mohiuddin, a blogger who narrowly survived a January 2013 stabbing that the group also claimed. In his blog "Almighty only in name, but impotent in reality," Mohiuddin often expressed skepticism about religion and the teachings of Islam in particular.

Extending protection of religion in the law

Encouraged by widespread adoption of self-censorship in response to laws severely penalizing any attack on state religion, the authorities in some countries are trying to extend the scope of prohibitions by passing laws under which leaders are regarded as sacred and any criticism of them is therefore forbidden.

This is the case in Kuwait (90th), where the government has clamped down on coverage of the emir, Sabah al-Ahmed al-Jabir al-Sabah. After two citizen-journalists, Badr Al-Rashidi and Ourance Al-Rashidi, were convicted of insulting him in 2013, a draconian bill was unveiled with heavy fines for criticizing the emir or crown prince and sentences of up to 10 years in prison for "insulting God, the Prophets of Islam or the Prophet Mohamed's wives or companions." Although it was not adopted, Kuwaiti news providers have little freedom and the use of lèse-majesté charges acts as a major deterrent.

The same trend has been seen in some North African countries such as Tunisia (126th), where the National Constituent Assembly adopted a new constitution in January that enshrines freedom of information and guarantees respect for freedom of expression. Despite declaring Islam to be a "state religion," it recognizes the "freedom of belief and thought," making it impossible to criminalize apostasy. However, although sacrilege cannot be punished by imprisonment, an amendment declares the state to be the "guardian of religion" and "protector of the sacred" and "forbids attacks on what is sacred."

A "public morality" amendment that can restrict freedom of expression (article 49 of the Tunisian constitution) is also a source of concern. The judicial persecution of Jabeur Mejri, a blogger convicted in 2013 in connection with cartoons of the Prophet, shows why such concern is justified. As blasphemy is not a crime, he was charged with offending accepted standards of good behaviour, public decency and propriety. He is still being persecuted by the authorities, who have charged him with embezzlement to keep him in prison.

The same tendency was seen in the three media reform bills — on "press and publishing," the "status of professional journalists" and the "National Press Council" — that Morocco's communication ministry unveiled in November 2014. While a big improvement on the existing legislation, the reforms fail to dismantle the red lines forbidding criticism of Islam, the king and other members of the royal family, leaving Morocco (130th) in violation of article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Article 19 says any restriction on freedom of expression must be the subject of a law and must be necessary for the purposes specified in paragraph three of the article, which include "protection of national security or of public order, or of public health or morals." In other words, the authorities must demonstrate that the "restricted" information threatens national security or satisfies one of the other criteria specified in the covenant.

In its general comment No. 34 on the covenant, the UN Human Rights Committee said that any restriction "must be proportionate to the interest to be protected." It also said: "Prohibitions of displays of lack of respect for a religion or other belief system, including blasphemy laws, are incompatible with the covenant except in the specific circumstances envisaged in article 20." These are war propaganda and "advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence."

Excerpted with permission from Reporters Without Borders' *2015 World Press Freedom Index*. Visit http://en.rsf.org/ to read more about Reporters Without Borders.

UN PHOTO

How the Press Freedom Index correlates with other indicators

Oil exports, per capita GDP, economic stability…is there a correlation between such economic indicators and a country's ranking in the Reporters Without Borders *World Press Freedom Index*? Are media freedom and independence linked to economic development?

Media freedom, rich country's privilege?

Per capita GDP correlates positively with media freedom (a correlation coefficient of 0.41). Norway and Denmark are good examples. They are among the 20 countries with the highest per capita GDP in the world and are ranked 2nd and 3rd respectively in the *2015 Press Freedom Index*. At the other end of the scale, the world's poorest countries, such as Ethiopia, Gambia and Eritrea, are ranked 142nd, 151st and 180th. In these countries, poverty and authoritarianism go hand in hand, and information is suppressed in favour of state propaganda.

But there are contrasting examples that show that media freedom is not a prerogative of the rich. Niger, the world's least developed country according to the United Nations Development Program, is ranked 47th out of 180 countries in the *2015 Press Freedom Index*. Despite a challenging economic environment, Niger's media have been diverse and outspoken since president Mamadou Tandja's departure in 2010. But, while the creation of democratic space has been positive, Niger's poverty continues to be a structural handicap limiting media development and the introduction of better educational standards in journalism.

A link between economic stability and media freedom

There is a 0.59 correlation coefficient between the Reporters Without Borders *Press Freedom Index* and the Institute for Economics and Peace's political stability indicator, which measures the ability of countries to satisfy the needs of businesses and investors.

Countries that are renowned for their economic stability, such as Germany (12th in the *Press Freedom Index*), Finland (1st) and New Zealand (6th) also guarantee media freedom in a durable manner. On the other hand, in South Sudan (125th) and Afghanistan (122nd), economic instability and media freedom fragility go together. Africa's newest country is torn by civil war and has an extremely polarized press. In Afghanistan, it is the state's ability to guarantee media safety that is lacking.

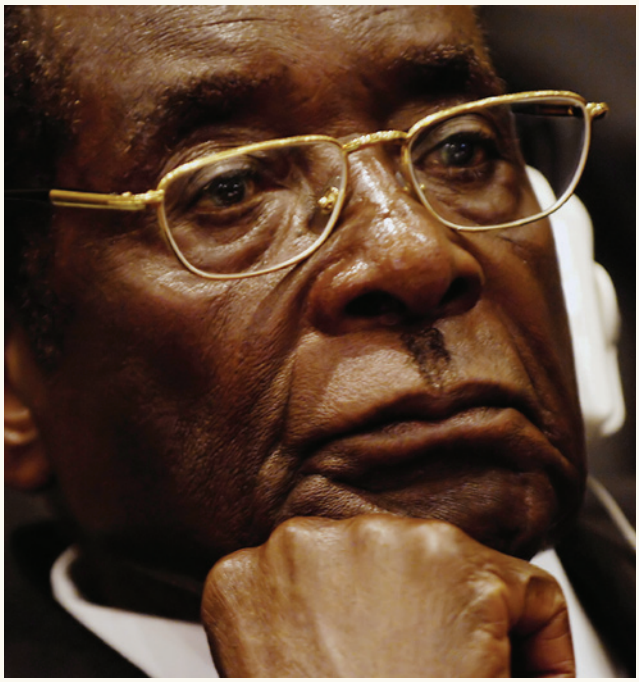
However, this correlation is not systematic. The cases of China (176th), Malaysia (147th) and Mexico (148th) serve as a reminder that some countries may offer stability to investors while performing terribly as regards freedom of information.

Black gold rather than ink

The oil-exporting countries are not guardians of freedom of information. Wealth does not guarantee a free press. A comparison of the *Press Freedom Index* with figures in the *CIA World Factbook* shows that the oil-exporting countries are an average of four points behind those that are not (32.63 as against 36.64).

Saudi Arabia is the best example. The world's biggest oil exporter (7.5 million barrels per day), the kingdom is ranked 164th in the *2015 Press Freedom Index* and got the worst score for legislation governing media and information, as seen in the sentence of 1,000 lashes and 10 years in prison that was imposed on the blogger Raif Badawi.

The world's second and third biggest oil exporters, Russia and Iran, are also good examples. Russia has fallen four places to 152nd, while Iran is unchanged at 173rd. With a total of 50 journalists and netizens currently detained, Iran is one of the world's five biggest prisons for news and information providers. Russia cracked down on independent media in 2014 and added new draconian laws to the many adopted in recent years.



Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe pumped 11 percent of the country's GDP into arms in 2013, a world record for a country not involved in any conflict and one that still awaits criminal code reforms that would protect freedom of information.

Arms and media independence do not go together

The countries that spend the most on weapons in relation to GDP have the least free press (correlation coefficient: 0.29). The best example is North Korea (179th), which invests an inordinate amount on its military and tolerates absolutely no media independence.

But it is not alone. In Zimbabwe (131st), the eternal dictator and predator of media freedom, Robert Mugabe, pumped an insane 11 percent of the country's GDP into arms in 2013. This is a world record for a country not involved in any conflict and one that still awaits criminal code reforms that would protect freedom of information

UN PHOTO

Country by country

Press freedom worldwide has seen some significant declines in the past year. While there were some good news stories — take a bow, Scandinavia — two thirds of those examined slipped in their rankings from the previous year. Criteria for the rankings include media pluralism, respect for journalists and positive environments within which they operate.

RANK	COUNTRY	Diff. 2014
1	Finland	0
2	Norway	+1
3	Denmark	+4
4	Netherlands	-2
5	Sweden	+5
6	New Zealand	+3
7	Austria	+5
8	Canada	+10
9	Jamaica	+8
10	Estonia	+1

#3 Denmark

Denmark illustrates how per capita GDP correlates positively with media freedom (a correlation coefficient of 0.41). Denmark is among the 20 countries with the highest per capita GDP in the world and is ranked 3rd in the *2015 Press Freedom Index*.

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

Seven criteria have been used since the 2013 index:

1 Pluralism: Measures the degree to which opinions are represented in the media

2 Media independence: Measures the degree to which the media are able to function independently of sources of political, governmental, business and religious power and influence

WORLDWIDE IN 2014

3 Environment and self-censorship: Analyses the environment in which journalists and other news and information providers operate

4 Legislative framework: Analyses the impact of the legislative framework governing news and information activities

5 Transparency: Measures the transparency of the institutions and procedures that affect the production of news and information

6 Infrastructure: Measures the quality of the infrastructure that supports the production of news and information

7 Abuses: Measures the level of violence and harassment during the period assessed

#6 New Zealand

New Zealand, whose newspaper, *The New Zealand Herald*, is pictured here, is an example of a country renowned for its economic stability. It's also a country that guarantees media freedom "in a durable manner," according to the *2015 Press Freedom Index*.

11	Ireland	+5
12	Germany	+2
13	Czech Republic	0
14	Slovakia	+6
15	Belgium	+8
16	Costa Rica	+5
17	Namibia	+5
18	Poland	+1
19	Luxembourg	-15
20	Switzerland	-5
21	Iceland	-13
22	Ghana	+5
23	Uruguay	+3
24	Cyprus	+1
25	Australia	+3
26	Portugal	+4
27	Liechtenstein	-21
28	Latvia	+9
29	Suriname	+2
30	Belize	-1
31	Lithuania	+1
32	Andorra	-27
33	Spain	+2
34	United Kingdom	-1
35	Slovenia	-1
36	Cape Verde	-12
37	Eastern Caribbean	-1
38	France	+1
39	South Africa	+3
40	Samoa	0
41	Trinidad and Tobago	+2
42	Botswana	-1
43	Chile	+15
44	Tonga	+19
45	El Salvador	-7
46	Burkina Faso	+6
47	Niger	+1
48	Malta	+3
49	United States	-3
50	Comoros	+3
51	Taiwan	-1
52	Romania	-7
53	Haiti	-6
54	Mongolia	+34
55	Mauritania	+5
56	Papua New Guinea	-12
57	Argentina	-2
58	Croatia	+7
59	Malawi	+14
60	Republic of Korea	-3
61	Japan	-2
62	Guyana	+5
63	Dominican Republic	+5
64	Madagascar	+17
65	Hungary	-1
66	Bosnia and Herzegovina	0
67	Serbia	-13
68	Mauritius	+2
69	Georgia	+15
70	Hong Kong	-9
71	Senegal	-9
72	Republic of Moldova	-16
73	Italy	-24
74	Nicaragua	-3
75	United Republic Of Tanzania	-6
76	Cyprus North	+7
77	Lesotho	-3
78	Armenia	0
79	Sierra Leone	-7

#54 Mongolia

Mongolia rose 34 places, the index's biggest jump. It had few violations in 2014, while the benefits of legislation on access to information began to be seen. Problems remain, however, including on the legislative front, but there has been clear improvement.

80	Togo	-4
81	Guinea-Bissau	+5
82	Albania	+3
83	Panama	+4
84	Benin	-9
85	Mozambique	-6
86	Côte d'Ivoire	+15
87	Kosovo	-7
88	Kyrgyzstan	+9
89	Liberia	0
90	Kuwait	+1

#64 Madagascar

The long-running political crisis in Madagascar came to an end when Hery Rajaonarimampianina, pictured here, was elected president in 2014. This democratic transition boosted the country's rating by 17 places. Some subjects, however, remain taboo for journalists.

91	Greece	+8
92	Peru	+12

NEW ZEALAND HERALD / MIKE E MESSER / UN PHOTO

93	Fiji	+14
94	Bolivia	0
95	Gabon	+3
96	Seychelles	+7
97	Uganda	+13
98	Lebanon	+8
99	Brazil	+12
100	Kenya	-10
101	Israel	-5
102	Guinea	0
103	Timor-Leste	-26
104	Bhutan	-12
105	Nepal	+15
106	Bulgaria	-6
107	Republic of the Congo	-25
108	Ecuador	-13
109	Paraguay	-4
110	Central African	-1
111	Nigeria	+1
112	Maldives	-4
113	Zambia	-20

#125 South Sudan

South Sudan is gripped by civil war and the radical polarization and constant harassment of news organizations caused it to drop by six places on the *2015 Press Freedom Index*. These disturbing developments come on the third anniversary of the country's birth.

114	Montenegro	0
115	Qatar	-2
116	Tajikistan	-1
117	Macedonia	+6
118	Mali	+4
119	Algeria	+2
120	United Arab Emirates	-2
121	Brunei Darussalam	-4
122	Afghanistan	+6
123	Angola	+1

#148 Mexico

Mexico pulled itself up four places on the *2015 Press Freedom Index*. However, in November, which is not included in the index research, journalists were attacked during demonstrations about the disappearance of 43 trainee teachers in Guerrero.

124	Guatemala	+1
125	South Sudan	-6
126	Tunisia	+7
127	Oman	+7
128	Colombia	-2
129	Ukraine	-2
130	Morocco	+6
131	Zimbabwe	+4
132	Honduras	-3
133	Cameroon	-2
134	Thailand	-4
135	Chad	+4
136	India	+4
137	Venezuela	-21
138	Indonesia	-6
139	Cambodia	+5
140	Palestine	-2
141	Philippines	+8
142	Ethiopia	+1
143	Jordan	-2
144	Myanmar	+1
145	Burundi	-3
146	Bangladesh	0
147	Malaysia	0
148	Mexico	+4
149	Turkey	+5
150	Democratic Republic Of The Congo	+1
151	Gambia	+4
152	Russian Federation	-4
153	Singapore	-3
154	Libya	-17
155	Swaziland	+1
156	Iraq	-3
157	Belarus	0
158	Egypt	+1
159	Pakistan	-1
160	Kazakhstan	+1
161	Rwanda	+1
162	Azerbaijan	-2
163	Bahrain	0
164	Saudi Arabia	0
165	Sri Lanka	0
166	Uzbekistan	0
167	Equatorial Guinea	+1
168	Yemen	-1
169	Cuba	+1
170	Djibouti	-1
171	Lao People's Democratic Republic	0
172	Somalia	+4
173	Islamic Republic of Iran	0
174	Sudan	-2
175	Vietnam	-1
176	China	-1
177	Syrian Arab Republic	0
178	Turkmenistan	0
179	Democratic People's Republic of Korea	0
180	Eritrea	0

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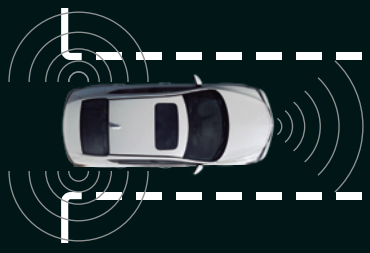

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Canada and the birth of NATO

By Laura Neilson Bonikowsky

The first session of the North Atlantic Council was held on Sept. 17, 1949, in Washington, D.C.

On April 4, 1949, Canada and 11 other countries signed the North Atlantic Treaty in Washington, D.C., to form the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), its mandate to "safeguard the freedom and security of member countries through political and military means."

After the Second World War, Canada had a strong economy and new confidence. It had come out of the war resilient and strong and with some international influence, a middle, rather than a major, power.

The war and its devastation of Europe and the West's fear of the Soviet Union persuaded Canada that it needed to have a voice internationally.

Additionally, the revelations by Soviet spy Igor Gouzenko that a spy ring was operating in Canada and had penetrated the Department of External Affairs underscored Canada's position between two large hostile neighbours.

Post-war U.S.S.R.

The pre-war tension between Soviet and Western powers had resurfaced, manifesting as disputes over peace agreements and reparations. The Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (U.S.S.R.) focused its post-war reconstruction on heavy industry rather than agriculture and consumer goods, with limited credits from Britain and Sweden, and machinery and raw materials from Soviet-occupied Eastern Europe. The Soviet people suffered the hardships of a devastated economy while Joseph Stalin expanded Soviet military power, tightening domestic control and citing the threat of war with the West as the rationale for the peoples' repression. Stalin wanted to create a buffer zone of the eastern European countries that the Red Army had occupied during the war and worked to help local communist parties gain power. By 1948, seven eastern European countries were under Communist rule. Soviet power in Eastern Europe created concern that the ideology and authority of the U.S.S.R. could spread into western European countries such as France or Italy. However, the war had weakened the Soviet Union as well, and the Soviet threat may have been overestimated. Nonetheless, it impelled decisions among Western nations.

The wreckage in Western Europe, increasing American isolationism, and the perceived Soviet threat revived the doctrine of collective security that had been raised by the League of Nations. However, in September 1936 in Geneva, then-prime minister William Lyon Mackenzie King had renounced the idea, asserting that the league should be devoted to conciliation and mediation, not punishment. Canada had been a founding member of the league, established at the end of the First World War with the goal of keeping peace internationally through arbitration. It failed to meet that goal and was replaced by the United Nations in 1945.

NATO

The alliance's 28 member states are shown in green. Candidate members are shown in orange.

United Nations: Prelude to NATO

The UN Charter created five permanent member states on the Security Council with the "right to veto": the U.S., the U.K., China, France and the U.S.S.R. (succeeded by the Russian Federation in 1990). This special status was granted because the permanent members had played key roles in establishing the UN and would continue to be important to its mandate. A veto right allows each permanent member to cast a negative vote in the Security Council, thereby blocking the adoption of substantive changes to council resolutions, regardless of international support. Tensions between the U.S. and the Soviet Union were escalating and as long as the Soviet Union could exercise its veto power, the UN, whose many members had their own ideologies and interests, could not be a vehicle for ensuring collective security.

Within the UN, Canada's new feeling of independence was bruised by the assertion of Andrei Gromyko, the Soviet delegate, that Canada was only "the boring second fiddle in the American orchestra." The remark stung, being so close to the truth. Canadian diplomats looked for ways to give Canada options in its own right.

Western governments had begun to demobilize in 1945, repatriating weary troops and reducing defence establishments. The U.S., which had emerged from the war as a superpower, was not interested in assuming the international burdens that Britain and France could no longer carry. it would agree to provide military support only for a united Europe able to demonstrate it could initiate its own defence. In March 1947, then-president Harry Truman, addressing Congress and clearly sending a message to the Soviets, committed the U.S. to supporting "free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure."

The U.K., France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Belgium signed the Brussels Treaty in March 1948 to create the Western Union. The Brussels Treaty provided the evidence the U.S. wanted and became the foundation for the North Atlantic Treaty (also known as the Washington Treaty). Despite historically having refused to become entangled in such alliances, the U.S. Senate adopted the Vandenberg Resolution, allowing the U.S. to participate constitutionally in a mutual defence system in times of peace.

A promising proposal

In August 1947, at the annual Couchiching Conference held by the Canadian Institute on Public Affairs, the possibility of a collective security alliance among North Atlantic democracies was raised by Escott Reid, chief aide to Lester B. Pearson, under-secretary of state for external affairs (now Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development). Reid saw such an alliance as "a providential solution" to many of Canada's concerns. Prior to the Couchiching Conference, Reid had suggested in a memorandum to the top level of External Affairs that the North Atlantic countries should "band together, under the leadership of the United States, to form 'a new regional security organization' to deter Soviet expansion."

Besides protecting Europe, this defensive alliance would involve the U.S. fully in world affairs and provided potential economic benefits for Canada by linking its trade partners.

Reid envisioned an organization that could be joined by "any state willing to accept the obligations of membership" in which "each member state could accept a binding obligation to pool the whole of its economic and military resources with those of the other members if *any* power should be found to have committed aggression against any one of the members" [Reid's emphasis]. Reid's presentation at Couchiching was hardly listened to and barely made the papers. On Pearson's advice, the crucial details of the anticipated organization were left out of the handouts given to reporters, who apparently didn't listen to Reid with much comprehension. The full speech was reprinted by External Affairs the following month, too late to be newsworthy.

Then-external affairs minister Lester B. Pearson signs the NATO treaty for Canada.

Although Reid's perspective was not widely accepted within External Affairs — in fact, many opposed it — Pearson and Louis St. Laurent, secretary of state for external affairs, promoted the idea. St. Laurent delivered Reid's message to the UN General Assembly in September 1947, noting that the "veto privilege…may well destroy the United Nations because it will destroy confidence in the ability of the Security Council to act internationally, to act effectively, and to act in time."

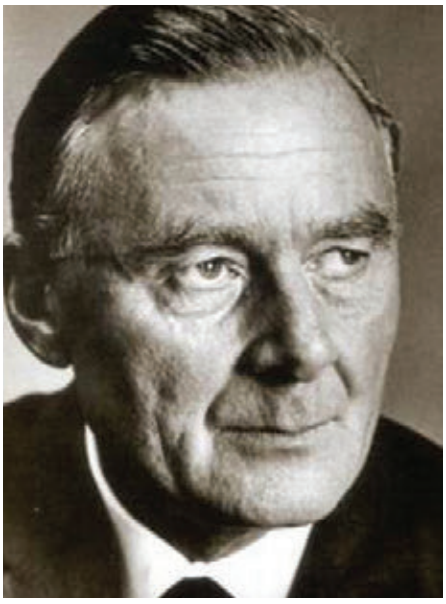
Collective security was soon discussed in London and Washington. In November, the U.S., Britain and Canada began informal and confidential discussions in Washington and New York about collective defence. In January 1948, then-British prime minister Clement Attlee sent a top secret telegram to Mackenzie King outlining the need to stop the Soviet advance into Europe. Reid later called the telegram "the opening gun of the successful British campaign" leading to the North Atlantic Treaty.

The North Atlantic Treaty

In January 1948, in the British House of Commons, British foreign secretary Ernest Bevin introduced the idea of a "treaty of alliance and mutual assistance" within the framework of the UN Charter. The talks that led to the North Atlantic Treaty were held among the U.S., Canada and the powers of the Brussels Treaty (Luxembourg was represented by Belgium). Representatives from Canada, the U.S. and the U.K. made up the core drafting team. Other countries contributed to the initial discussions, assisted by a working group. The Washington Paper, issued on Sept. 9, 1948, outlined the possible articles for the final treaty. Formal treaty negotiations began on Dec. 10, with participants agreeing that collective defence would be at the heart of the alliance. However, there were other issues, such as geographic scope, membership, and rights and responsibilities, to be resolved.

The treaty, among the shortest of such documents, includes only 14 articles. It gets its authority from Article 51 of the UN Charter, which allows that nothing in the charter will impede the "inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security." Under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, the collective defence article, an aggressor takes up a game of "you fight me, you fight my gang." An attack on one NATO country is considered an attack on all.

Some members of the drafting group wanted more than military co-operation



Escott Reid called the NATO alliance a "providential solution."

within the alliance. They envisioned social and economic co-operation, but could not reach a consensus on what that would look like. Canada was represented at the treaty negotiations by Hume Wrong, ambassador to the U.S., who had served in the League of Nations and who believed that Canada should be treated like a ma-

NATO / MCGILL UNIVERSITY PRESS

jor power in areas in which its greatest resources — food, minerals and air power — were required. He believed, as did many, that the treaty's mandate should be defence alone. But the Canadian government saw the potential for a broader scope, and Pearson and Reid pushed him to argue for a clause to eliminate economic conflicts among members.

Although he had misgivings, Wrong managed to secure Article 2, nicknamed the "Canadian article," which called on alliance members to improve themselves and each other politically, socially and economically — to be nicer and better. The argument behind this niceness clause was the necessity of a North Atlantic community if the alliance were to endure and to find the higher ground necessary to create a safer world.

The Canadian Article

Article 2 is the foundation of NATO's political and non-military work. It is reinforced by Article 4, which encourages consultation among NATO members when, "in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the Parties is threatened."

The Canadian article was intended to balance NATO's military aspects, despite there being no consensus on how NATO would operate outside its military mandate.

Signing the treaty did not signify the completion of Article 2, nor was it only a Canadian concern. As John Milloy concludes in *The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 1948-1957: Community or Alliance?*, other countries, including the U.S. and Britain, were interested as well. In the fall of 1949 and the following spring, the alliance examined its structure and sought to address international problems. West Germany had yet to be reintegrated into the West, Britain remained reluctant to deepen its ties to Europe and the Organization for European Economic Co-operation was proving ineffective. It seemed possible that an alliance linking North America and Western Europe economically and politically could create a stable structure for addressing the problems, and even possibly replace the OEEC.

Neither Canada nor the U.S. could visualize how to develop the treaty's non-military side. Britain embraced the idea of an Atlantic union and advocated for Article 2, particularly its economic aspects, at NATO meetings in May 1950. However, France feared that West German involvement with the non-military parts of the treaty would lead to Germany's rearmament. As an alternative, France successfully proposed giving the U.S. and Canada associate status in the OEEC. Britain could not be persuaded to accept this new twist as a good idea. The beginning of the Korean War in 1950 strengthened the British position.

Bid to add economics to defence

Involvement in the war diverted key resources, leading to shortages and straining budgets. The U.K. hoped that NATO would assume some of the work of the OEEC and pushed for NATO to assume a greater role in economic co-ordination. Others saw greater advantages in the two organizations co-operating, and although informal links were created in the fall of 1950, the matter remained unresolved through 1951.

Concurrently, many NATO members felt that the organization was too militarized and little more than a tool for the U.S. to advance its own needs; alliance members seemed in danger of becoming mere members of "America's orchestra," as Gromyko had charged. Fuelling this fire, the U.S. was pressuring the alliance to admit Greece and Turkey, using the non-military side of the alliance as justification. Washington urged that a Committee of Five foreign ministers be established to suggest how Article 2 could be implemented.

There being few ideas for how it should work, the committee focused on identifying areas where NATO activity was considered inappropriate because it interfered with, or overlapped, the work of other international organizations. Alliance members disagreed on where to maintain NATO headquarters, were unwilling to make the sacrifices necessary for collaboration in the areas of labour mobility and cultural programs, and could not reach a consensus on foreign policy consultation to develop the Atlantic community. Enthusiasm waned and the idea of an Atlantic economic community and the working groups dissolved.

Despite NATO's continuing claim that the Canadian article forms the basis of collaboration in the interest of peace, little has come of it. At the treaty's signing ceremony, Lester Pearson said that the treaty born of "fear and frustration" was "a pledge for peace and progress." The abiding importance of Article 2 today is that pledge, the fact of its existence and its potential.

Laura Neilson Bonikowsky is an Alberta writer and lifetime student of history.

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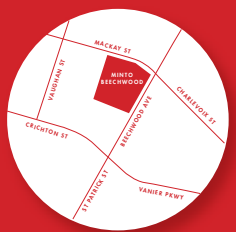

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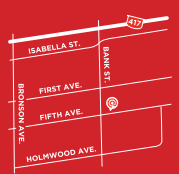

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Poland's resurgence

A nation that embodies resilience, Poland is now a leader in Europe and is quickly becoming an economic powerhouse.

By Jennifer Campbell

"In the resigned faces of the people of Tarnopol, I felt a tragic knowledge I could not quite understand, but which touched me deeply. They knew that the Polish state was crushed. More accurately than all the 'intelligentsia' of Warsaw, than my friends with connections, than my highly educated fellow officers, they knew what was happening — that Poland had fallen."

So writes Jan Karski in *Story of a Secret State*, a dramatic first-person account of his important role in the Second World War.

That realization is just one of many tragic happenings in the history of Poland. The word tragic is appropriate, yet it seems unfair in the face of the resilience of the Polish people. This tenacity can be seen in the Karski book; it can be seen in the incredible hope mustered by the Polish Jews during the war and particularly at Auschwitz; it can be seen in members of the resistance and Solidarnosc, the movement through which the fall of the Berlin Wall really began, and in Poland's Nobel Prize-winning leader, Lech Walesa.

This is a country that was divided and ruled by occupiers for 150 years and, was, during the Second World War, attacked from both sides, the Nazis and Stalin. And yet, 50 years after it slipped behind the Iron Curtain, it rose again, first to regain independence and then, in 2004, to join the European Union as part of a historic 10-country expansion.

The resilience that led to those victories can still be seen today, as a thoroughly modern European country takes its place as an economic leader on its own continent and beyond. Just 25 years ago, Poland was emerging from decades of communism, inflation was hitting unthinkable highs and the future was uncertain. Since then, there has been a remarkable rebound and today, its economic strength is considerably more secure. It's just one of the many success stories seen over and over again in Polish history.

Democratic Poland has several strong economic indicators, not least of which is GDP growth. From 2008 — yes, the year of the global economic downturn — to 2013, GDP growth has topped 14 percent compared to GDP growth of -1.3 percent for the EU as a whole over the same period. The inflation rate, which was stratospheric in March 1990, growing by 1,211 percent compared to the same month in 1989, has been under control for decades and came in at -1 percent in January 2015.

Between 2008 and 2013, Poland's GDP soared by 14 percent, compared to growth of -1.3 percent for the whole of the EU.

Poland's projected GDP growth for 2014 was 3.2 percent — well ahead of its neighbours, including Germany (1.8 percent in 2014), Czech Republic (2.0), Slovakia (2.2), Romania (2.5) and Bulgaria (1.7). While comparable stats for the other countries weren't available at press time, Poland's actual GDP growth for 2014 outperformed expectations slightly, at 3.3 percent, while Germany's came in at 1.6 percent.

Weathering the financial crisis was part luck and part sound economic practice, according to Ryszard Petru, economist, author and former adviser to the finance minister. Mr. Petru boils it down to three essential elements. First, the country wasn't as leveraged as other countries, the banks were not so exposed and the mortgage loans as a percentage of GDP were 15 percent, versus 76 percent in the U.S. Second, three factors combined to save the country's economic bacon: a flexible exchange rate meant currency easily depreciated; exports dropped by 30 percent, but the profitability of the remaining exports increased and, with such a weak currency, there wasn't much interest in importing. That shifted the balance to higher net exports, which contributed significantly to growth.

The fact that Poland hadn't joined the Eurozone — its currency is the zloty — and could therefore control its fluctuations, was another lucky break. Joining the Eurozone is, of course, something Poland must do as an EU member, and it's lagging behind many of its counterparts that also joined in 2004 — namely Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Cyprus, Malta, Slovakia and Slovenia. Polish President Bronisław Komorowski is a strong proponent of joining the Eurozone, but to do so, he needs to enact a constitutional change, something that requires a two-thirds majority.

And then there was a little good timing that also could be called luck: At the moment the crisis started, Poland was receiving the first wave of funding from the European Union, a move that has greatly increased its fortunes for many reasons, not least of which has been its ability not only to effectively access discretionary EU funds, but also to spend those funds wisely.

"The EU funding was spent relatively well because it was easy to spend," Mr. Petru said matter-of-factly. "We don't have the problem that mature economies have on how to spend money wisely. If you need a motorway from Berlin to Warsaw, it's obvious. It was mostly infrastructure, but it was very needed. All these factors contributed to growth in 2009, but led to significant deficit and debt."

Still, he notes, compared to the collapse of other economies around the world, Poland fared well.

"Compared to many other countries, one can say that nothing terrible happened," he said. "[Thanks to the flexibility of the currency], companies still managed to keep their profits high, so they were not forced to shut down." More than that, Poland became more attractive for business. Polish companies taking advantage of the fact that many of their global competitors were weaker, started expanding to Western Europe. There weren't hundreds of companies, but there were dozens and the fact is, such international expansion had never happened before.

Today, the favourable business climate that made Poland stand out during the crisis and beyond is also attracting investment. What attracts business giants such as IBM, 3M, Volkswagen, Capgemini and GE, not to mention Canadian companies such as Bombardier, Magna, Pratt & Whitney, Apotex and VAC Aero?

For those in the aviation sector, such as VAC Aero and Pratt & Whitney, it's Aviation Valley, a geographic region and an industrial cluster whose Aviation Valley Association was launched in 2003 with 15 member companies, one technical university and two regional development agencies. Today, 12 years later, Aviation Valley has 120 companies on its roster.

The aviation industry has actually been in the Rzeszow region since the 1930s, when the Polish government decided to locate a central industrial region between the east and west of the country. The idea was that 50 state-owned businesses would locate there and a few did, principally those creating aircraft engines and their components, but the Second World War disrupted their operations and, because of its strategic location and resources, the parts of Rzeszow that weren't completely destroyed were used by the Nazis for their own purposes.

In 1976, Pratt & Whitney Canada asked to become a supplier to Poland of simple components for its aircraft engines. The Communist authorities didn't like the idea, but eventually acquiesced.

"Today, many well-known Western brands have decided to locate here because of the good environment, the skilled people and the economic zones," said Andrzej Czarnecki, spokesman for WSK PZL-Rzeszow S.A., which began as a state-owned company in 1936 and is now owned by Pratt & Whitney. "Because of the tough situation after the Eastern markets disappeared, there was a very strong need to define the roles. The economic zone looked for a certain area with good investment potential. The special economic zone means we're offering you land, brownfield [investment] and certain tax relief."

Aviation Valley is an economic driver for Poland, said Andrzej Rybka, the association's managing director.

"[Since the transformation in 1989], we've been able to recover to the point where we are a very important part of the global supply chain," Mr. Rybka said. "There's virtually no passenger airplane without critical parts or modules produced here, especially their engines and landing gear. This is our strength and our uniqueness."

The business services sector is another of Poland's success stories. Eleven years ago, when French multinational Capgemini established itself in Poland, there were between 2,000 and 5,000 Poles working in the sector. Today, there are 130,000 and that number jumps by between 15,000 and 20,000 every year.

"And yet, there's still a fantastic talent pool," said Marek Grodzinski, vice-president of business process outsourcing at Capgemini. "The Polish education system has certain pluses. People have quite wide perspectives. If your major is

Marek Grodzinski, a vice-president at Capgemini, says Poland has a "fantastic talent pool."

CAPGEMINI

A factory worker at VAC Aero International Inc. in Rzeszow works on the company's landing gear components for aircraft.

accounting, you still study macro- and micro-economics."

Tellingly, Capgemini moved to Krakow one year after Poland joined the European Union, a move that assured the company that the economy was stable.

"Poland joining the EU brought stabilization," Mr. Grodzinski said. "It's a stamp that the country is secure, a confirmation that you aren't going into a wild economy. Plus, let's be honest, Poland has received a lot of money from the EU."

Besides the stabilizing economy, the company was drawn to Poland because while salaries are growing, they are still low, and they aren't growing by the same percentages as they are in other cost-efficient markets such as India.

For Capgemini, there's also a good cultural fit, Mr. Grodzinski said, and added that most of his employees speak three to four languages. In addition, he said, "Western people generally like to work with Poles — they travel a lot and know many languages."

Finally, there's fire in the bellies of Polish workers. "Maybe Western Europe is getting a bit lazy and the new economies, like Poland and the Czech Republic, are very hungry for success. We haven't had many chances in the past to become managers and directors. Now people have those opportunities."

IBM's reasons for establishing offices in several Polish cities, but principally in Krakow, were similar. "Twenty-five years ago, when transformation started, a lot of energy was released," said Krzysztof Fafara, director of IBM's Krakow Delivery Centre, which offers business process outsourcing. "When the free-market economy started, this energy came out. Poland offers a pool of candidates with skills and resources and that enabled IBM to come here. Since joining EU, the Polish economy grew by 40 percent, whereas the European average was 10 percent, Germany was 12 percent. So this wealth of candidates and these skills enable us to grow as a company."

When he started at IBM eight years ago in business process outsourcing, there were 40,000 people working across Poland. Today, the city of Krakow alone has close to that number. "Krakow is special because of universities, students and its beauty," Mr. Fafara said, and added that in its 2015 report on the top 100 cities for global outsourcing, Tholons consulting rated Krakow No. 9, well ahead of Dublin, which is now No. 12, but was, for years, a leader. "The proper flow of candidates enables us to build good teams and good structures. This is the main driver for why companies develop in this area."

For the salaries they pay in Poland, it's unique to find such skilled workers, particularly workers who can speak more than one or two languages, apart from English, and who also know accounting. Salaries are about 50 percent below the European average. "It's a good mix," Mr. Fafara said.

Writing in Project Syndicate last fall, Günter Verheugen, former European commissioner for enlargement and for enterprise and industry, saluted Poland's successes and drew attention to three significant anniversaries. In 2014, there was the 25th anniversary of Poland's democracy, the 15th anniversary of its membership in NATO and the 10th anniversary of its accession to the EU. He also noted that former Polish prime minister Donald Tusk was appointed president of the European Council, making him one of Europe's three top leaders and putting another feather in Poland's cap.

"The Polish people deserve a bright future," Mr. Verheugen wrote. "Their lesson for the rest of Europe is that dreams can come true if we fully engage in realizing them. And, just as [Mr.] Tusk promised to polish his English as he moves to the centre of the European stage, perhaps the rest of us should start brushing up on our Polish."

Jennifer Campbell is *Diplomat's* editor. She visited Poland in November 2014.

JENNIFER CAMPBELL

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An Iran-born Armenian-American in Turkey

Khor Virap Monastery in Armenia, on the border between Turkey and Armenia, faces Mount Ararat.

George Fetherling

Meline Toumani is a young Iranian-born Armenian who grew up in New Jersey and began her writing career as an editorial assistant at the *New York Times*. So it was one day that she was in Times Square, a block from the office, when she saw the annual street protest of Turkish people with signs reading "Armenians Are Killers of Children" and "Armenians! You're Guilty of Genocide!" Continuing on a very short distance, she ran into Armenian demonstrators with placards that said "Turkey Guilty of Genocide." In her book, *There Was and There Was Not: A Journey through Hate and Possibility in Turkey, Armenia, and Beyond* (Raincoast, $32.50), she writes: "That day I stood among the Turks. I wanted to see how it would feel."

Like the majority of Armenians, both the diaspora and those living in the country, she was educated to believe that the Muslims who ruled the Ottoman Empire a century ago murdered so many Armenian Christians as to almost exterminate that part of the population in certain areas (today there still 50,000 Armenians in Istanbul). Her brave, revealing and moving book is the story of one who was brought up to share that belief — indeed, had it pounded into her brain — but has slowly found closure of sorts by trying her best to learn about the other side. The process began in 2005 when, age 30, she went to Turkey, a place about which she confesses to knowing less "at that point than the average backpacker [but having] a strong urge to seem like I belonged." She spent most of the next four years in Istanbul (which many Armenians called Bolis).

What Armenians know as the great genocide, but Turks interpret in terms that are less stark, began in the early spring of 1915. Since the start of the Great War the previous August, the Ottomans had been aligned with Germany, fighting against the British Empire (Gallipoli, remember — and Lawrence of Arabia). Militarily they were not doing well and came to believe that the Armenians among them were undermining the war effort and even supporting Russia, which fought with the West until Lenin came to power and pulled his country out of the conflict altogether.

On April 24 (the date is now the Armenian day of national protest) more than 200 Armenian intellectuals, politicians and community leaders in Istanbul (then still called Constantinople) — some of them already refugees — were arrested by Turkish paramilitary forces and sent to the Anatolian countryside. This was followed by large-scale deportations, forced marches, abuse, torture and, of course,

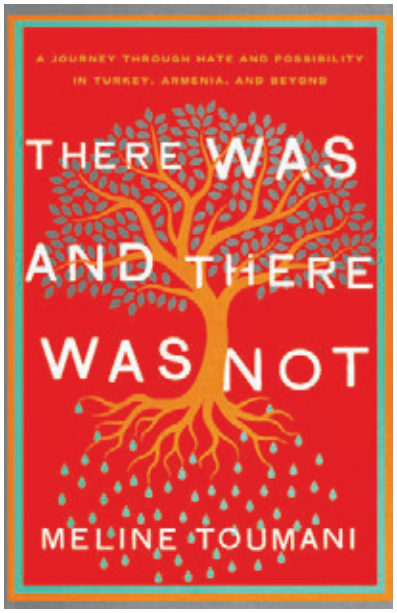
ANDREW BEHESNILIAN

death on a horrific scale that went on for several years. Armenians put the total number of their dead at 1.5 million; the Turks, a smaller figure. Armenians interpret the events as what we would now call ethnic cleansing. The Turks called the dead casualties of a civil war and spoke of the Armenian point of view as "Allied propaganda."

Ms Toumani terms what took place on April 24 "a kind of Kristallnacht in the way it foretold the years of deportation and massacre that would follow." Some commentators less careful than her compare the anti-Armenian actions to the Holocaust, citing what Hitler said when asked how history might view the extermination of Jews ("Who today remembers the extermination of the Armenians?"). But it proves nothing to say that four or five times as many people perished in the Holocaust than in the Ottoman horrors or that far fewer Chinese, maybe 600,000, were killed by the Japanese in 1937 during what's called the Rape of Nanking. Comparative totals are less important to remember than the intent and the unspeakable immorality of such events.

"I had been reading tragic memoirs and gruesome eyewitness accounts from the genocide survivors since I was old enough to read Dr. Seuss," the author writes. Elsewhere, she says she "could no longer live with the idea that I was supposed to hate, fear and fight against an entire nation and people […] Do I sound like I'm exaggerating? Is there such a thing as nationalism that is not exaggerated?" The heart of her argument is that Armenians continue to fixate on long-ago events rather than simply memorialize them sadly. Armenians use the word recognition to explain their goal: universal acknowledgement of the genocide and, in some people's view, reparations as well. To these ends, they continue an unceasingly strenuous lobbying effort. To date, for example, 43 American states have officially acknowledged the Armenian point of view, but the federal government has not.

For a time, Ms Toumani believed that such efforts contributed to the slow economic development of her ancestral homeland (just as Turkey's recalcitrance has hindered its wish to join the European Union). She concedes, however, that her "argument about the effect of the diaspora's genocide recognition campaigns on Armenia's economy was probably flawed, or at the very least incomplete. But it was as close as I could come to finding an argument that would justify a feeling that I didn't know how else to defend: that our obsession with 1915 was destroying us."



Istanbul, mon amour

As Ms Toumani's book draws to a close, she writes this of Istanbul, a gateway to both Europe and Asia: "Yes, it was East and West; yes, it was a bridge between worlds; yes, it was oriental and exotic while still being modern and glamorous. All the clichés were spot-on. For me, it was all these things, too, but it was ultimately a place where this single dimension of my life, my being Armenian — this feeling of fatigue with the clannishness and conformity of Armenian life — I had come to Turkey hoping to escape, or at least to broaden — had become more a fact of my existence than it had ever been before."

That is to say that, while probably remaining ambivalent about Turkey as a whole — the pivotal state where, who knows, the future of the Middle East could very well be decided — she nonetheless has fallen under the spell of Istanbul, and who doesn't? Well, another who certainly has done so is Charles King of Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., whose book, *Midnight at Pera Palace: The Birth of Modern Istanbul* (Penguin Canada, $32.95), is an exciting study of how Constantinople became, under its new name, the capital of the Turkish republic. This change came about in 1923 once what the author calls "the most over-anticipated event in diplomatic history" — the Ottoman collapse — finally came to pass. He goes on: "Arguing over how other countries and empires might profit from its end was one of the fixtures of great-power diplomacy for much of the 19th Century."

The outcome was that Britain and France took over large sections of the city for themselves, with special courts for their citizens and so on. These actions can be seen as a continuation of the events immediately after the Great War when the same two Western powers created the state of Iraq, drawing up boundaries that are only now starting to be erased and replaced. From today's standpoint, it's difficult to imagine how widely, and how recently, the Middle East was hospitable to westerners. For example, a late friend of mine, a poet, passed the late 1960s in Iran, writing a nightclub column called "Tehran after Dark" in the local English-

language newspaper. But Istanbul was different in the extent of its cosmopolitanism and the width of his wide open arms. Only in Shanghai before the Second World War, and possibly Tangier afterwards, did foreign communities have such personal freedom and such a good time. But then Istanbul had always inclined that way.

As Mr. King states admiringly, "A Greek shipper, a Jewish cloth merchant, an Arab pearl diver, a Kurdish caravan master and an Armenian financier could all regard themselves as subjects of a single sovereign, the Ottoman sultan." The Pera Palace of his book's title was (and is) a famously posh hotel that, when built in 1892, "was meant to be the last whisper of the Occident on the way to the Orient, the grandest Western-style hotel in the seat of the world's greatest Islamic empire." Once the Turks, "in one of modern history's most profound exercises in political self-creation, made a purposeful break with their Ottoman past, rejecting an Islamic and multi-religious empire and declaring in its place a secular, more homogeneous republic" — the Istanbul known to readers of such novelists as Graham Greene, Eric Ambler and Ian Fleming — the sophistication remained, though it was tinged with nationalism. Which brings us back to the Armenian question.

Being himself neither Turkish nor Armenian, Mr. King takes a broader view of the events leading up to the genocide. In the last few years of world peace before the Great War, military officers known variously as Young Turks or Unionists organized a coup to create a constitutional monarchy and then had to fend off a counter-coup. When the big war finally broke out, they blamed, in addition to the sultan, those whom they believed were sympathetic to Germany and those who sided with it.

This meant Armenians primarily, some of whom had been running revolutionary groups for years. They "operated openly in Istanbul and, in 1896, had staged a spectacular raid on the Imperial Ottoman Bank, just down the hill from the Grande Rue." In eastern Anatolia, military units and militias organized the roundup and deportation of entire villages of Armenians and other Eastern Christians who were thought to be potentially loyal to Russia." Armenian groups "had in fact organized uprisings in Armenian areas of the empire" and the Unionists "responded with a campaign of death." One of the important Unionist leaders, a civilian called Talât Pasha, fled the country on a German submarine. Three years later, an Armenian assassin killed him in Berlin as payback for his role in the genocide, which, in Mr. King's broad estimate, took the lives of between 600,000 and one million men, women and children.

A footnote to the above: There has been a sudden surge of interest in the architecture, costumes and minor arts of the Ottoman Empire. *Ottoman Chic* by Serdar Guigun (Assouline, $47.50) is one example. The almost equally lavish *Turquerie* by Haydn Williams (Penguin Canada, $46.50) is another.

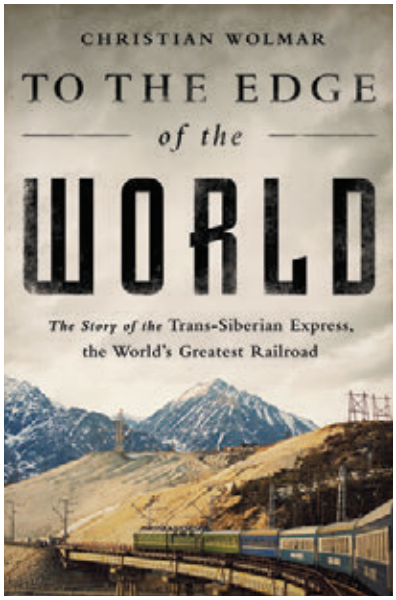
Peaceful converts to Islam

One can scarcely read the newspapers today without finding references to Europeans, and North Americans, too, who have gone to the Middle East and embraced Islam. Jamie Gilham's book *Loyal Enemies: British Converts to Islam 1850–1950* (Oxford University Press, $20) deals with many others who did the same, but with peaceful intent. Of course, there were a great many Britons who settled in the region without leaving much of a historical footprint: for example, seamen and others who adopted Islam after being captured by Islamic enemies. Mr. Gilham, a journalist who is also a publisher of travel books about the Middle East, has ferreted out whatever information about such unfortunates as can be found, but goes into far greater detail on prominent personages who also became Muslims: scholars, politicians, and so on.

The third Baron Stanley (1827–1903), no relation to Lord Stanley of the Stanley Cup, converted in 1862. He became the first Muslim to sit in the House of Lords (and as such closed down all the public houses on the vast lands he had inherited). William (later Abdullah) Quilliam (1856–1932) was a Liverpool lawyer who opened England's first mosque and Islamic centre. Lady Evelyn Cobbold (1876–1963), a Mayfair socialite, was the first British woman to undertake the Hajj to Mecca. She was a friend not only of T.E. Lawrence, but also of Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall (1875–1936), who made a famous English translation of the Koran, and of St. John (pronounced Sinjin) Philby, the great Arabist scholar who was also a British spy. Pickthall served in the Great War on the stipulation that he would not have to fight any Turks. As for Philby, he was the father of Kim Philby, the British spy who turned out to be a double agent and fled to the Soviet Union, where he died. Mr. Gilham shows that all these people were shunned and at least looked down upon in Britain for their Islamic beliefs.

Eastward by rail

In *Midnight at the Pera Palace*, discussed previously, Charles King tells of how the Orient Express, the famous luxury railway train of the Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-Lits et des Grands-Express Européens, finally reached Istanbul in 1883. He writes that until the firm was established, in 1876, people had never "imagined that a single rail company could operate lines running across the entire [European] continent." Metaphorically at least, it may have given those building the Canadian Pacific



a morale boost. Nowadays, China has the world's longest and fastest rail lines, which it intends to extend beyond Asia. But that still leaves the Trans-Siberian railway across Russia. It "is not some little meandering rural railway with occasional chundering trains, but rather, one of the world's great arteries, a piece of infrastructure that transformed not only the region in which it was built, but also the entire nation that built it."

So writes Christian Wolmar in *To the Edge of the World: The Story of The Trans-Siberian Express, The World's Greatest Railroad* (Publishers Group Canada, $31). Actually the Trans-Sib is a tangle of different lines, including one that runs through Mongolia to the Chinese capital, though the most famous route is the first, completed in 1916 and stretching from Moscow to Vladivostok, a distance of 9,288 kilometres. Mr. Wolmar, a full-time railway historian (his previous book was a history of the London Underground), tells of the lines' military, political and diplomatic history as he travels along as passenger, happily for the most part. My own experience was somewhat different. More than 25 years ago, I was in Moscow watching the Soviet Union collapse when my editor expressed a wish for me to be in Beijing instead. I spent nine days on a train containing four days' worth of food.

And lastly…

New books about John F. Kennedy never stop appearing — ever. Some of those with the most interesting perspectives aren't always the best executed. For example, *Dallas 1963* by Bill Minutaglio and Steven L. Davis (Hachette Canada, $31) goes beneath the president's assassination to reveal the level of political hatred in the city that was the scene of the crime. Unfortunately, it's written much too casually and takes a plodding minute-by-minute approach to narrative. If you want to see how such a tactic can be used expertly, read *Two Days in June* (McClelland & Stewart, $34) by Andrew Cohen, whose transition from the *Globe and Mail* to Carleton University

was the newspaper's loss and the school's gain. He reconstructs a 48-hour period in June 1963 when Kennedy gave two of his most meaningful, if not necessarily his most famous, addresses — the first on nuclear disarmament ("We are all mortal…"), the other on civil rights (challenging his audience to investigate the content of their own hearts). This is excellent historical writing in the manner of Barbara Tuchman and Margaret MacMillan.

George Fetherling is a novelist and cultural commentator.

RICHARD CATON WOODVILLE

Cuba's cuisine: tasty and diverse

Photo by Larry Dickenson

Margaret Dickenson

Margaret Dickenson's Spinach Crêpes with Chicken. See page 82 for the recipe.

Last winter, my husband and I flew to Cuba, the Caribbean's largest country. Located on the northern margins of the region (not far from Southern Florida), the Republic of Cuba consists of one large and several small islands.

Basically, half of the large island features flat lands or rolling hills while a more hilly and mountainous topography makes up the remaining portion, with some swampy and lowland areas along the southern coast. Excluding the mountainous regions, Cuba's climate can best be described as semitropical or temperate.

As with many countries, Cuban cuisine reflects its history, which began in 2000 BC with the hunters and gatherers of the Stone Age. Later, the Ciboneys (a pre-ceramic culture) introduced small-scale farming and fishing. But it wasn't until about AD 1100 that the peace-loving Tainos (originally from present-day Venezuela) arrived, after centuries of island-hopping from the Lesser Antilles, and a sophisticated and complex society with a participatory government took hold. The Tainos were skilful weavers, ceramists, shipbuilders, as well as farmers. Indeed, reports claim that 60 percent of crops grown today in Cuba were introduced by the Tainos. These include cassava, (a starchy root, also called yucca and manioc, used to make tapioca and cassareep), maize, beans, squash, sweet potatoes, *ajies* (peppers) and annatto seed (used for colouring butter, cheese and smoked food).

By pre-Columbus, the Tainos population had grown to about 100,000; however, as Ambassador Julio Antonio Garmendía Peña notes: "Harsh Spanish colonizers wiped out 90 percent of the Tainos within 30 years. Therefore, the Spanish who dominated Cuba's colonial period turned to the importation of African slaves in the 1520s to work on sugar plantations and in mines."

Although slavery regrettably endured for 350 years, until it was abolished in 1886, Spanish and African ways of life blended and evolved over these centuries into what has proven to be a strong foundation for today's highly distinctive Cuban culture — including its food culture. Spanish colonists brought oranges, lemons, rice and an array of vegetables. African slaves, who were unable to bring much with them, quickly acquired a taste for local fruits and vegetables. Several popular dishes in Cuba today reflect this melding of the two cultures. The most prominent example would be *arroz congri*, also referred to as "Christians and Moors." Made with white rice and black beans, the name refers to the Spanish Christians' (white rice) and African (black beans) heritage of Cuban culture and cuisine. However, ongoing waves of mainly French (starting with those fleeing the 1791 bloody slave rebellion in Haiti) and Chinese immigrants, all contributed their own culinary traditions to the mix. In terms of Caribbean cuisine, Cuban food is not typical, although the ambassador admits that "the food of Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic does bear some resemblance to that of Cuba."

Cuban cuisine tends to be hearty, rather high in calories, frequently heavy and does not make use of the exotic spices normally associated with Caribbean cooking; nor is it spicy. Onions and garlic, the two principal flavouring ingredients, are omnipresent in local dishes. They are essential in making *sofrito*, a type of sauce made with onions, garlic, peppers, tomatoes and oregano sautéed in olive oil. Sofrito is not to be served on its own, but to be used as a flavour base for other dishes. Indeed, sofrito and olive oil hold the distinction of being the secret ingredients in cooking black beans, meat, fish, stews — more or less everything.

Root vegetables (particularly potatoes and yucca) tend to be flavoured with *mojo*, a mixture of olive oil, onions, garlic, cumin and lemon juice. Blanched yucca left marinating in mojo before serving, is said to be exquisite — "a national dish." *Naranja agria* (sour orange) or lime juice, garlic and salt serve as a marinade for poultry and meat. Even though slow cooking and sau-

téing are the traditional styles of cooking, Cubans also enjoy fried or grilled chicken and pork chops. But only certain foods are deep fried: *tostones* (plantain), *vaca* (beef), *pescado frito* (fried fish), *frituras de bacalao* (cod fish fritters), *masitas de puerco fritas* (pork rinds), *yucca frita, empanaditas,* and *croquetas*.

Beef, pork, chicken and fish represent the staple protein foods in the Cuban diet. (Cubans love meat, especially pork.) Black beans and rice, the primary source of carbohydrates, can be cooked together; however, the beans are frequently a thick soupy-like mixture of beans, onions and garlic, and presented separately. Local markets sell fresh fruit and vegetables, but unfortunately, the selection remains limited.

Traditional main course dishes include *arroz con pollo* (rice with chicken), *ropa vieja* (shredded beef, directly translated, means "old clothes"!), *ajiaco* (meat, garlic and vegetable stew), *pollo con quimbombo y platanos* (chicken with okra and plantain served over rice), *picadillo* (Cuban beef served over rice or as a filling for empanadas (fried or baked stuffed bread or pastry) and *fu-fu* (mashed plantain or boiled mashed green bananas mixed with pieces of fried pork). Eggs are served as omelettes or fried (sometimes deliciously over rice with fried plantain). Ambassador Garmendía Peña says that although many types of sandwiches may be referred to as "Cuban sandwiches," the authentic version consists of slices of Cuban bread (similar to French bread) spread with butter before adding slices of cold roasted pork and frequently pickles, and finally cutting it diagonally in half.

And for a traditional dessert, the choice ranges from flan (baked custard), *tres leches* cake (3 milk cake), *arroz con leche* (rice pudding), *pastillas* (pastries filled with guava) to sweet and salty combinations such as poached guava cups (with the interior scooped out and the remaining cups cooked in a sugar syrup) or shaved fresh coconut in sugar syrup (*coco rallado con queso*) — both of these desserts are eaten with simple white cheese. Popular as these are, ice cream (made more decadent when drizzled with chocolate or caramel sauce) has eclipsed them as Cuban's favourite dessert these days.

When it comes to street food, snack food stalls offer mainly pizzas and sandwiches, while carts fry up syrupy pastries on the spot. Some locals also sell take-out food directly from the windows of their homes

Holidays call for special foods. For example at Christmas, Cubans celebrate with open-fire roasted pig (marinated in garlic, salt and sour orange juice) served with black beans and yucca, then rice pudding or flan for dessert. Normally, a Cuban breakfast consists of *tostada* (grilled Cuban bread) and *cafe con leche* (espresso with warm milk). Some locals enjoy dipping their *tostada* into their coffee much like one might do with a biscotti. Lunches, too, tend to be something simple such as some variety of a Cuban sandwich or *pan con bistec* (a thin slice of steak on Cuban bread, lettuce, tomato and fried potato sticks), generally served with *mariquitas* (thin plantain chips). However, in rural areas, Cubans typically prefer a hearty soup, or cornmeal with milk topped with a fried egg. Dinner features meat, chicken or fish dishes accompanied by white rice, black beans, fried plantain and perhaps a salad (e.g., lettuce, avocados, tomato and onion).

Although this nation has felt the sting of the U.S. trade embargo, imposed in 1961 and now being reconsidered, and later, in 1991, the sudden withdrawal of Soviet subsidies, Cubans today are resiliently rebuilding — even in terms of their food culture. This applies to both government-run restaurants as well as

The Cuba Libre is a highball made of cola, lime and dark or light rum.

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small family *paladares*.

Quite understandably, government-run restaurants did not tend to inspire the concept of "celebrity chefs." However, the opening up of the private sector in 2011 sparked a new and dynamic culinary revolution, particularly in paladares, many of which have chefs offering first-class dining experiences, serving unique dishes or giving traditional fare an exciting innovative twist. It was most impressive, as our own evening of superb and romantic dining confirmed.

Yes, the dilapidated mansion, now more of a tenement building, in a rather uninviting area of Havana, caused us to hesitate, but not to be discouraged. At the top of a dusty, bleak, old-world, marble staircase, we opened the door to discover a gem — the paladare La Guarida. The ambiance of old Cuba, the spectacularly creative and beautifully presented food on mismatched antique china plates, a very good Pina Colada and great service will forever endure in our memories and on our palates.

The following recipe represents my interpretation of "Spinach Crêpes Stuffed with Chicken," an example of New Cuban cuisine served at La Guarida and executed with international flair. Note: La Guarida gained worldwide fame as the setting for *Fresa y Chocolate* (Strawberries and Chocolate), the 1993 award-winning Cuban film. Bon appétit! Buen provecho!

Spinach Crêpes with Chicken
Makes 5 appetizer servings

Chicken filling:
Makes 1 cup or 250 mL

½ tsp (3 mL) minced fresh garlic
2 tbsp (30 mL) chopped onion
1 tbsp (15 mL) butter
2 tbsp (30 mL) diced (1/4 inch or 0.6 cm) orange sweet bell peppers
2 tbsp (30 mL) diced (1/4 inch or 0.6 cm) yellow sweet bell peppers
½ cup (125 mL) diced (1/4 inch or 0.6 cm) fresh mushrooms
To taste: salt and crushed black peppercorns
5 oz (150 g) seasoned and roasted/cooked chicken
3 tbsp (45 mL) chicken broth
½ tsp (3 mL) corn starch
3 tbsp (45 mL) heavy cream (35 percent fat)
½ tsp (3 mL) ground cumin
½ tsp (3 mL) crushed dried tarragon leaves

1. In a medium non-stick skillet over medium-high heat, sauté garlic and onion in melted butter, stirring constantly, until onions begin to appear golden.
2. Add mushrooms and sweet peppers; season with salt and crushed black peppercorns to taste, and stir continuously for 2 minutes.
3. Add chicken and sauté for 2 minutes. Add chicken broth and stir for another 2 minutes.
4. Whisk cornstarch into cream to form a smooth mixture. Add to skillet, stirring constantly until mixture thickens and bubbles.
5. Add cumin and dried tarragon leaves; season to taste with salt and crushed black peppercorns.

Spinach crêpes:
Makes 1 ½ cups or 375 mL batter

1 cup (250 mL) baby spinach leaves, tightly packed
3/4 cup (180 mL) milk
1 egg
½ cup (125 mL) all-purpose flour
1 tbsp (15 mL) butter, melted
Pinch of salt

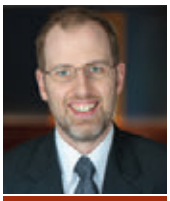
1. In a blender, process spinach and milk until smooth. Add egg and blend.
2. With blender on low, gradually add flour. Add melted butter and salt, and process to form a smooth batter.
3. Place a non-stick crêpe pan (or skillet) over medium-low heat and rub surface with a touch of butter (extra). Pour 1/4 cup (60 mL) of batter into centre of pan; tip and swirl pan to make a 6-inch (15 cm) diameter crêpe.
4. When top surface is no longer moist, carefully peel crêpe from the pan, flip crêpe over and cook the second side for just 15 seconds or so.

Assembly: Chive stems and sour cream.

1. Place crêpes on a clean surface; add a 3 tbsp (45 mL) mound of chicken filling to centre of each. Gather edges of each crêpe up and over chicken mixture to make a "purse-like" effect. Tie with a chive stem.
2. Serve crêpe purses on a streak of sour cream and pass extra sour cream at the table.

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

New Zealand rescues a storied grape



Pieter Van den Weghe

Over the last 40 years, New Zealand has done something amazing in the world of wine. It has redefined a grape varietal and, along the way, established itself as one of the world's great wine-producing nations. The grape is Sauvignon Blanc, and, for many wine drinkers, the New Zealand expression of this French grape has become the modern benchmark of the varietal.

Granted, much of the credit lies with Sauvignon Blanc itself. When made properly from appropriate regions, the varietal produces vibrant white wines, bursting with aromas and flavours of citrus, mineral and all things green. And besides being unabashedly refreshing, the wines are food-friendly and so easily quaffable.

New Zealand's achievement cannot be overlooked. Its efforts and success in a variety of markets have led to the marrying of the words Sauvignon Blanc and New Zealand. However, the popularity of one country's expression of this delicious grape varietal is but one of the latest chapters of Sauvignon Blanc's story.

While Sauvignon Blanc was long thought to have originated in France's Bordeaux region, its origin is now generally accepted to be in the Loire Valley. It's from a Loire Valley text dating to 1534 that Sauvignon Blanc is first mentioned by one of its alternate names, Fiers. Over the centuries, references to the grape continued using other synonyms such as Sauvignon Fumé and Blanc Fumé. The word Sauvignon itself is thought to be derived from the word "sauvage" (French for wild) as the leaves of Sauvignon Blanc are similar to those of wild grape vines.

Evidence points towards Sauvignon Blanc being the offspring of another older French grape varietal, Savignin. If this is correct, Sauvignon Blanc is the half-sibling of such white varietals as Grüner Veltliner, Silvaner and Verdelho. DNA analysis also suggests that Sauvignon Blanc is related to its fellow Loire Valley grape, Chenin Blanc, and is genetically similar to its Bordeaux companion, Semillon.

However, Sauvignon Blanc's most profound relationship may be to a rather famous red varietal. After spreading to Bordeaux's Gironde region, Sauvignon Blanc spontaneously crossed with the red varietal Cabernet Franc to produce what many believe is the world's greatest red grape: Cabernet Sauvignon.

Sauvignon Blanc's success in France came in both the Loire Valley and Bordeaux. The former being known for vivacious wines rich with smoke and mineral, while, in the latter, Sauvignon Blanc was typically blended with Semillon to craft fascinatingly elegant, yet rich, wines. It was also in Bordeaux that Sauvignon Blanc's small compact bunches of berries and subsequent high susceptibility to the noble rot of botrytis led to the birth of Sauternes' legendary sweet wines.

Outside France, other regions that have seen success with the grape include Collio in Italy, coastal regions in South Africa and Chile and Ontario's Niagara region.

A great version of New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc that doesn't veer off into aggressive grassy qualities is Framingham's 2013 Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc. The wine shows generous aromas and flavours of citrus while retaining balance and poise. This very good wine is available from Vintages for $17.95.

Another excellent expression of New World Sauvignon Blanc is Casas del Bosque's 2013 Reserva Sauvignon Blanc from Chile's Casablanca Valley. Very pungent with aromas of citrus and herbs, it's intensely flavoured and finishes with strong savoury notes of mineral. This wine is available at Vintages for only $13.95.

Going to France's Loire Valley, Pascal Jolivet's 2013 Sancerre provides an excellent expression of Sauvignon Blanc that is strongly flavoured with mineral. The fruit profile is that of citrus, and the wine has vibrant fresh acidity. This Sancerre can be found at Vintages for $29.95.

The 2010 Château Larrivet Haut-Brion is an excellent Bordeaux representation of Sauvignon Blanc. Here, Sauvignon Blanc is blended with about 20 percent Semillon to produce a fascinating wine that is well balanced between richness and finesse. It will be at its best in a couple of years and can be purchased from Vintages for $64.85.

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

Ties that bind at home and abroad

By Martha Edmond

Photos by David Kawai

The Belgian ambassador's residence is a Colonial Revival house formerly owned by the first governor of the Bank of Canada.

There is more to Belgium than chocolate, beer and diamonds, the country's new ambassador to Canada, Raoul Delcorde, reminds us. Not only do our countries have commercial links; they are both federal states with more than one official language and they share much history through two world wars. Many Canadian soldiers died on Belgian soil in the liberation of Belgium in the First and Second World Wars. They are remembered in iconic place names such as Ypres, Passchendaele, and Flanders, and, most poignantly, with the poem *In Flanders Fields*, written by Canadian John McCrae.

These historic bonds are apparent at his Ottawa residence as well. Belgium preserves Canada's wartime history in the homeland, and the Belgian mission in Ottawa has owned two nationally significant houses with deep histories and a storied past. In 1937, Baron Robert Silvercurys arrived in town as Belgium's first minister appointed to Canada. A seasoned diplomat with a knowledge of architecture, and a man of taste, he cleverly negotiated the purchase of one of Ottawa's finest residences, Stadacona Hall, in Sandy Hill — befitting Belgium's role as one of the earliest countries to recognize Canada's entry onto the world diplomatic stage. Home to national figures such as prime minister Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir Frederick Borden, it had long witnessed a steady stream of cultural, diplomatic and political activity.

But the sprawling mansion proved too expensive to maintain. Forced to downsize in 1995, the Belgian ambassador relocated

EMBASSY OF BELGIUM

The home features plenty of space for entertaining, including this main drawing room, which features an antique Kerman rug, a reminder of Mrs. Delcorde's Iranian heritage.

Raoul Delcorde and his wife, Fati Delcorde, arrived in Canada in August 2014.

The home's front hall has grand features, including a floor-to-ceiling antique gold mirror.

A dining room addition has created a bright and sunny room — cozy regardless of season — with views over the expansive gardens.

to Rockcliffe Park, to a Colonial Revival house formerly owned by Graham Towers, the first governor of the Bank of Canada. It was built in 1937 for businessman Howard Vail by architects Roper and Morin, experts in classically designed residences. The exterior still appears much the same, with local grey limestone cladding on the base, and white pine clapboards above.

While lacking the obvious grandeur of Stadacona Hall (which now houses the Brunei high commission) this house, too, had a storied past. In its day, the Towers' home at 260 Park Rd. was a notable address. Towers and his wife, Mollie, entertained on a lavish scale, courting the leading figures and power brokers of the era. Towers was one of Canada's famed mandarins, those who steered the nation through a Depression and a world war, launched Canada on the diplomatic world stage and created a sophisticated economic policy for the country. The house was a gathering point for many influential minds during the war and afterwards. The wood-panelled library on the second floor offered privacy for wartime tête-à-têtes and the occasional cigar and game of poker.

Since the Delcordes moved into the residence last fall, they have enjoyed the house and the neighbourhood. The quiet is appealing, the ambassador says, as is the large garden. "It is a very comfortable house," echoes his wife, Fati. In the estimation of the ambassador, it was unfortunate to have to sell the former residence, although being in Rockcliffe Park more than compensates: "I only wish we had the former residence here," he says. Indeed, the house is in an ideal location on one of Rockcliffe's grandest streets, set back from the road on a generous lot with a large semi-circular driveway.

Additions to the living and dining rooms have created three light and airy rooms, allowing for expansive views of the rear gardens and terrace. Visitors are ushered into a foyer that opens on one side to a formal salon and on the other to a large dining room. The family spends time in the sunny sitting room and enjoys quiet moments in the library where the mandarins once gathered.

"It was a soft landing," recalls the ambassador of their arrival.

Mr. Delcorde has also served as Belgium's ambassador to Poland and Sweden, and as a representative in Washington. His was a cosmopolitan upbringing. His father, a mining engineer, took the family to many parts of the world for work and this greatly influenced his son's career choice.

Throughout the house, there are reminders that while this may not be the Stadacona Hall of older days, it is their home. There are many memories of Belgium in the 18th-Century Flemish tapestry that hangs on one wall and the numerous paintings by Belgian artists, including

The dining room, which can seat 18, is decorated with artwork by Belgian artists.

one by the ambassador's distant cousin, which form part of their own collection. And there are symbols of Mrs. Delcorde's Iranian heritage: elegant Persian rugs, furniture and artifacts, each with its own history. An antique Kerman carpet dominates the living room, and a specially commissioned Persian plate from England is displayed alongside other objects from former postings, including a beautiful inlaid desk bought in Sweden.

The ambassador has arrived at an opportune time. He recently launched a publication marking the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Canada and Belgium and opened a Canadian War Museum exhibit on Flanders. In the coming months, he will preside over many important commemorative events to mark the Great War centenary and Allied presence in occupied Belgium.

Our war memorials and grave sites of fallen soldiers are carefully tended by Belgian citizens, who still honour Canada's contribution to winning the war. Every night, as Ambassador Delcorde relates and as many visiting Canadians have witnessed, a Last Post ceremony takes place in Ypres to express their gratitude. Canada's military history is preserved abroad; so is Ottawa's history when historic houses are taken over and maintained as diplomatic residences. Belgium, to its credit, has done both.

Martha Edmond is an Ottawa writer and historian. She is the author of *Rockcliffe Park: A History of the Village.*

The costs of war on women

By Anthony Wilson-Smith

Historica Canada's new *Heritage Minute*, pictured here, pays tribute to the heroism of military nurses.

Measured against many countries, Canada has been fortunate when it comes to war. Unlike other nations founded in violence, our 1867 Confederation was peaceful. Since then, the fighting we have engaged in has been almost entirely on foreign soil. Unlike, for example, many European countries, our buildings and landscapes are untouched by bombs and battles.

This does not mean Canadians are immune to the effects of war up close — and that is true of women as well as men. We celebrate the heroism and mourn the sacrifices of our military through two world wars, and assorted other foreign conflicts and peacekeeping missions. Yet less attention has been paid to the related efforts of women — in particular, the nurses who have built their own proud tradition of service and sacrifice.

The first Canadian nurses to join with a military unit did so in 1885, serving, in this rare instance, amid fighting in Canada during the Northwest Rebellion. The first foray of nurses into foreign conflict was fewer than two decades later, when they participated in the Boer War in South Africa, wearing uniforms supplied by the Canadian Army. Shortly after, in 1904, the Canadian Army Medical Corps was established. Four years later, Georgina Fane Pope became its first matron.

From the outset, the importance of the nurses' role, and the excellence with which they performed it, was clear to the men with whom they worked. That praise was couched in the language and attitude of the times. In *War Story of the Canadian Army Medical Corps*, a work published around the time of the First World War, author J. George Adami wrote, "the nursing profession in Canada has… a higher status than it possesses in the old country [Great Britain]." About 3,000 Canadian nurses served in that war, attaining officer rank in the Canadian Army Medical Corps, which gave them unique and elevated status on the Allied side. Adami added that Canadian nurses received a higher level of training than counterparts elsewhere, with the result that "a remarkably large proportion of the matrons of the great hospitals in the United States are of Canadian birth and training."

Of those who served, 53 died on active duty — 20 in enemy attacks and 33 from disease. The nurses, often stationed in field hospitals close to the front, suffered from many of the same conditions as the troops, including fleas, rats and poor hygiene. They treated the wounded and dying under often-primitive conditions in the face of bombing and shelling attacks. For their actions, eight nurses were awarded the Military Medal for bravery. In recognition of that, and the overall importance of nurses during the First World War and other wars, our organization, Historica Canada, is releasing a new *Heritage Minute* paying tribute to their heroism (www.historicacanada.ca). It tells the story of a specific incident for which two nurses received medals.

Since 1926, the Nursing Sisters' Memorial has been on display in the Hall of Honour on Parliament Hill, remembering the sacrifice of the forerunners to today's nurses. Between the Regular and Reserve Forces, more than 340 people currently serve as nursing officers under the Canadian Forces Health Services. There are also more than 250 civilian nurses working at CFHS centres across the country. For those who want to understand first-hand the role that women played in more recent conflicts, our Memory Project Speakers Bureau has more than 180 women, and our Memory Project archives offer audio recordings of more than 400 women recounting their experiences (www.thememoryproject.com). And today, more than ever, we understand the truth of Adami's understated, but entirely accurate description of Canada's nurses in fields of combat: by their actions, he concluded, they "have abundantly 'made good.'" No one is more aware of that than the patients they have treated.

Anthony Wilson-Smith is president of Historica Canada.

New arrivals

Hocine Meghar
Ambassador of Algeria

Mr. Meghar started his career at the foreign ministry in 1972, after graduating from the National School of Administration in Algeria.

He has held various positions within the ministry. He was director-general of European socialist countries (1984-1987), director-general of consular affairs (2000-2004) and director-general of national communities abroad (2010-2015).

He was ambassador to Uganda from 1987 to 1990 and, after returning to headquarters, became ambassador to Ghana from 1993 to 1997. Between 2004 and 2009, he was ambassador to Italy, Malta, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Germany.

Mr. Meghar has also served as Algeria's permanent representative to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). In that capacity, he participated in a series of international conferences.

Mr. Meghar is married with two children.

Roberto Dormond Cantu
Ambassador of Costa Rica

Mr. Dormond Cantu studied law at the University of Costa Rica and completed a master's in law at Georgetown University Law Centre. From 1994 to 1995, he was adviser and deputy chief of staff to the president of Congress. He began his career as a professor in communications at the University of Costa Rica.

He joined the law firm Zurcher, Montoya & Zurcher as associate in 1997 and partner in 1999. In 2000, he left to become general counsel to CitiGroup Costa Rica. From 2001 to 2008, he worked as chief counsel for Kraft Foods International's Latin America branch. In 2009, he co-founded DMA Instituto Ciudadano, a consulting firm specializing in corporate affairs, communications, government and stakeholder relations, market research and public opinion.

Mr. Dormond Cantu is married and has three children.

Nicolás Fabian Trujillo-Newlin
Ambassador of Ecuador

Mr. Trujillo-Newlin comes to diplomacy from the world of business. He joined the foreign ministry in 2010 as ambassador to Korea and was appointed to Canada in late 2014, but before that, he was an entrepreneur.

He began his career as CEO and vice-chairman of the board of directors of Equiflor Corporation, based in Miami. He served on several corporate boards before becoming a member of the senior management committee at Ecuador's ministry of production, employment and competitiveness from 2009 to 2010. At the same time, he was a member of the board of Chimborazo Cement Company and director-general of InvestEcuador, at the National Investment Attraction Agency.

Mr. Trujillo-Newlin has a bachelor of business administration and is a licensed real estate agent. He speaks Spanish and English.

Nicolas Chapuis
Ambassador of France

Mr. Chapuis has spent much of his 35-year career in China. His first posting was to Beijing as press attaché in 1980. He then joined the political section at that embassy and stayed until 1986.

Following that, he completed a year of study at Harvard University's Centre for International Affairs and, after returning to headquarters briefly, went back to Beijing as cultural affairs counsellor.

In 1992, he became deputy chief of mission in Singapore. In 1998, he was consul-general in Shanghai, leaving for Britain as first counsellor in 2002.

He became ambassador to Mongolia in 2003 and deputy chief of mission in Beijing in 2005. He was chief co-ordinator of the WikiLeaks task force in 2010 and chief information officer from 2011-2015.

Mr. Chapuis is married to Sylvie Camia. He speaks English, French, Mandarin and Mongol.

Sulley Gariba
High Commissioner for Ghana

Dr. Gariba is a policy analyst and governance specialist with more than 30 years experience in advising governments and international institutions on development policy, governance, evaluation and international relations. He is the longest-serving member and senior adviser of Ghana's National Development Planning Commission (NDPC), having served from 2001 to 2014. From 2000 to 2010, he headed a leading think-tank in Ghana, the Institute for Policy Alternatives (IPA-Ghana).

In the academic world, Dr. Gariba, who has a PhD in political science and who lectured in Canada for 15 years, was a senior lecturer in political science at the University for Development Studies (UDS) in Northern Ghana. He was the lead resource person on cultural adaptation training for Canadian development workers posted to Africa under the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) from 1981 to 1990.

Saramady Touré
Ambassador of Guinea

Mr. Touré has had a varied career, most recently as a member of Guinea's government as environment, water and forestry minister and minister of agriculture between 2011 and 2014.

From 2005 to 2010, he worked with the United Nations Development Program as a national co-ordinator for conservation and biodiversity in Mount Nimba. He also worked for UNDP in Guinea, evaluating environmental assessments and, in the 1980s, he worked for the National Agricultural Research Institute.

He has attended and participated in several conferences over his career, including the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development Rio+20 in 2012.

Mr. Touré has an agro-chemistry engineering degree and did post-graduate studies at the University of Bordeaux III in France. He speaks French, Spanish and English.

Teuku Faizasyah
Ambassador of Indonesia

In addition to being ambassador to Canada, Mr. Faizasyah is Indonesia's permanent representative to the International Civil Aviation Organization.

Prior to coming to Canada, he was the presidential spokesman and special staff for international relations. From 2008 to 2010, he was the foreign minister's chief of staff.

He was counsellor for information and cultural affairs in South Africa from 2003 to 2004 and prior to that, he was presidential adviser and special envoy.

From 1995 to 1998, he worked in an economic affairs portfolio at the embassy in Washington.

He has a doctorate in political science and public policy from the University of Waikato in New Zealand.

Janice Miller
High Commissioner for Jamaica

Prior to being appointed to Canada in late 2014, Janice Miller was Jamaica's under-secretary for multilateral affairs in the foreign ministry.

Mrs. Miller is a career diplomat. She was a deputy permanent representative for the permanent mission of Jamaica to the International Seabed Authority and served on the board of directors of the Maritime Authority of Jamaica and the Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO.

Prior to being under-secretary, Mrs. Miller was director of the economic affairs department. She has served as counsellor (political affairs) at the United Nations in New York and worked briefly as a regional civil servant, starting her career at the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat in Georgetown, Guyana.

She has a master's in international relations from the University of the West Indies at St. Augustine in Trinidad and Tobago.

She is married to Donald Miller and they have two daughters, Rachel and Rianna.

John Lepi Lanyasunya
High Commissioner for Kenya

Mr. Lanyasunya began his career in 1994 as a deputy principal at Kenya Utalii College in Nairobi. He spent three years in that job before being appointed Kenyan ambassador to Germany, with concurrent, non-resident accreditation to Austria, Romania and Bulgaria.

He returned to headquarters for two years before becoming co-ordinator of the IGAD's (Intergovernmental Authority on Development) Somalia peace process. In 2004, he was appointed high commissioner to Australia, where he spent five years and had concurrent accreditation to New Zealand. During his time there, he became dean of the African diplomatic corps in Australia.

From 2009 to 2014, he was director of the Asia and Australasia directorate at headquarters before being appointed to Canada.

Mr. Lanyasunya is married with three children.

Kali Prasad Pokhrel
Ambassador of Nepal

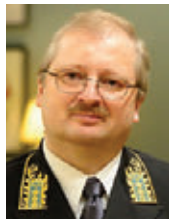
Before being sent to Canada, Mr. Pokhrel was chief of protocol at the foreign ministry in Nepal.

He joined the foreign service in 1990, and began his diplomatic career working with the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation. He then spent a year studying in Oxford University's foreign service program before becoming assistant to the deputy prime minister and foreign affairs minister.

His first posting was to New York, and then he was sent to Cairo as first secretary and deputy chief of mission. At the ministry, he worked in the Europe-America division and, later, the UN and international organizations and law division. He served as chargé d'affaires in Washington for two years between 2007 and 2011.

Mr. Pokhrel has a master's in public administration. He is married with three children.

Alexander N. Darchiev
Ambassador of Russia



Mr. Darchiev studied history at Moscow State University and did post-graduate work in U.S. and Canada Studies at the Russian Academy of Sciences.

He joined the foreign ministry's North American division in 1992 and was soon named first secretary and head of section. Five years later, he became counsellor at the embassy in the United States.

From 2003 to 2005, he was deputy director of the North American department. And from 2005 to 2010, he returned to Washington as deputy chief of mission. From 2010 to 2014, he was director of the North America department before being appointed ambassador to Canada.

In addition to Russian, Mr. Darchiev speaks English and French. He is married and has one daughter.

Jack Mugendi Zoka
High Commissioner for Tanzania

Mr. Zoka joined the government service in 1977 after graduating from the University of Dar es Salaam. He later pursued a master's in diplomatic studies at Keel University in Britain.

Mr. Zoka's diplomatic career dates from 1984 when he joined the foreign ministry. He was subsequently posted to Zimbabwe. He rose through the ranks from second secretary in 1984 to minister-counsellor in 1997. Mr. Zoka also served as minister plenipotentiary in Belgium between 2001 and 2006.

Prior to his posting in Ottawa, he was deputy director general in the office of the president in Tanzania.

Mr. Zoka is married to Esther Nyanzila. They have four children.

Vijavat Isarabhakdi
Ambassador of Thailand

Mr. Isarabhakdi has a doctorate in international relations and a master's in law and diplomacy, both from Tufts University.

Prior to coming to Canada, he spent two years as ambassador to the U.S. and before that, he was deputy permanent secretary at the foreign ministry. He also served a term as ambassador to the UN office in Geneva.

Other positions over a 25-year career in diplomacy have included two stints as a congressional fellow for a senator and a congressman. He was also first secretary in Washington from 1993 to 1997. At headquarters, he worked as a Malaysia desk officer, personal assistant to the foreign minister and foreign affairs co-ordinator in the office of the prime minister. From 2011 to 2012, he was director-general of international organizations.

In 2000, he won an award for outstanding civil servant of the year.

Wilmer Omar Barrientos Fernandez
Ambassador of Venezuela

Mr. Barrientos Fernandez had a long and successful career with the Bolivarian Army, achieving the rank of major general after 30 years of service. When he retired in 2013, he was operational strategic commander of the armed forces. He also worked as the forces' comptroller general and as the rector for the Polytechnic Experimental University of the Bolivarian National Armed Forces.

Most recently, he worked as minister for the office of the president and minister for industries.

Mr. Barrientos Fernandez studied military arts and science at the Military Academy of the Bolivarian Army and completed a master's degree at the War College of the army. He is currently pursuing a doctorate.

He is married and has one daughter.

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Angola
Sebastiana Napoleao Angola Terra
Third secretary

Australia
Louise Murray
Second secretary and consul

Calum James Logan
Attaché

Damon Rhys Keogh
First secretary

Burkina Faso
Zakaria Gyengani
Attaché

China
Zihua Li
Attaché

Yuanrui Guo
Attaché

Ming Li
First secretary

Guoli Su
Second secretary

China
Wentian Wang
Minister-counsellor and deputy head of mission

Colombia
Miguel Angel Castro Riberos
Counsellor

Germany
Elisabeth Hornung
First secretary

Honduras
Nadia Giselle Aguilera Funes
First secretary and consul

Hungary
Peter Orosz
Third secretary

Indonesia
Pujo Wahyono
Defence attaché

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Rezal Akbar Nasrun
Minister-counsellor

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Robert Antony Kinyua Kobia
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Ma. Teresa Benitez-Bragais
Attaché

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First secretary

Anton Soloviev
First secretary

Russia
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First secretary

Tunisia
Said Nbikha
Attaché

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Nadiia Vozdigan
First secretary

United States
Elizabeth Kay Mayfield
Minister-counsellor


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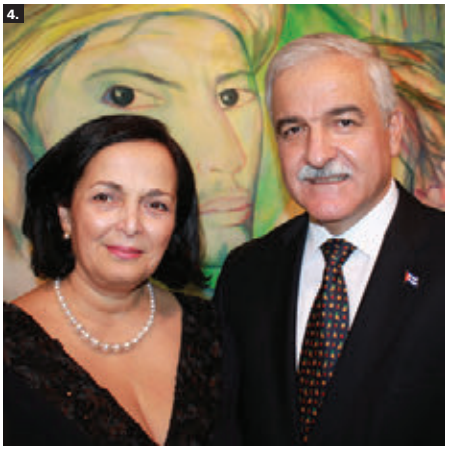
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1. The embassy of Hungary hosted a reception to mark the 58th anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution of October 1956. From left: Hungarian Ambassador Balint Odor; Peter M. Boehm, associate deputy minister of Foreign Affairs; EU Ambassador Marie Anne Coninsx and Péter Szijjárto, Hungary's minister of foreign affairs and trade. (Photo: Ülle Baum) 2. Performers at a "By Youth For Youth" benefit concert, which was presented by the Ottawa Chinese-Canadian University Alumni, raised money for the Ottawa Snowsuit Fund. (Photo: John Zhang) 3. Albanian Ambassador Elida Petoshati hosted a national day celebration Nov. 25 at Ottawa City Hall. (Photo: Ülle Baum) 4. Ambassador Julio Antonio Garmendía Peña and his wife, Miraly Gonzalez, hosted a reception in celebration of Cuba's national day at the embassy. (Photo: Ülle Baum) 5. Korean Ambassador Hee Yong Cho and his wife, Yang Lee Cho, hosted a reception for their national day and armed forces day at the Château Laurier. (Photo: Ülle Baum) 6. UAE Ambassador Mohammed Saif Helal M. Al-Shehhi hosted a reception at the embassy to celebrate his country's national day. (Photo: Ülle Baum)

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1. Turkish Ambassador Selçuk Ünal and Polish Ambassador Marcin Rafal Bosacki hosted a concert and exhibition at the Turkish residence to mark the 600th anniversary of establishment of Polish-Turkish relations. From left, Mr. Ünal, James Bezan, parliamentary secretary to the minister of national defence, and Mr. Bosacki. (Photo: Ülle Baum) 2. Lithuanian Defence Minister Juozas Olekas spoke at Carleton University. (Photo: Ülle Baum) 3. On the occasion of the national day of Spain, Ambassador Carlos Gomez Mugica and his wife, Maria de la Rica Aranguren, hosted a reception at their residence. (Photo: Ülle Baum) 4. Germany's Wild Bakers, Jörg Schmid and Johannes Hirth, pose with their heart-shaped bread after an extreme baking demonstration at the German embassy's Winterlude show. (Photo: Ülle Baum) 5. Gov. Gen. David Johnston, shown with Norwegian Ambassador Mona Brother, hosted a winter celebration at Rideau Hall. Participating embassies included Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, Slovenia, Sweden, and the EU delegation. (Photo: Ülle Baum) 6. At Gov. Gen. David Johnston's annual winter celebration Jan. 24, Asmund Baklien, husband of Norwegian Ambassador Mona Brother, led the competition on Norwegian skis that were eight metres long. (Photo: Ülle Baum)


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1. Julio Alejandro Rodriguez Velez, counsellor at the embassy of the Dominican Republic and his wife, Natalia Cacho, took to the dance floor at the Ottawa Diplomatic Association's annual ball. (Photo: Ülle Baum) 2. Former governor general Michaëlle Jean and her husband, Jean-Daniel Lafond, attended the ODA ball. (Photo: Ülle Baum) 3. Colonel (Retired) Pg Kamal Bashah Pg Ahmad, ambassador of Brunei, at centre, hosted a national day reception. He's shown with Susan Gregson, assistant deputy minister for the Asia-Pacific, and MP Bernard Trottier, parliamentary secretary to the foreign minister. (Photo: Sam Garcia) 4. Italian Ambassador Gian Lorenzo Cornado and his wife, Martine Laidin, were greeted at the Snowflake Ball by Brigitte Lalonde from Models International Management, left. (Photo: Ülle Baum) 5. To mark the national day of Austria, Ambassador Arno Riedel and his wife, Loretta Loria-Riedel hosted a reception at their residence. (Photo: Ülle Baum) 6. Japanese Ambassador Norihiro Okuda and his wife, Keiko, hosted a reception at the Westin Hotel to celebrate the birthday of the Emperor of Japan. Mrs. Okuda is shown with Trade Minister Ed Fast. (Photo: Ülle Baum) 7. Lebanese Ambassador Micheline Abi Samra hosted a national day reception at St. Elias Centre. She's shown with former P.E.I. premier Robert Ghiz. (Photo: Ülle Baum)

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1. To commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Open Skies Conference, German Ambassador Werner Wnendt hosted a reception to unveil a painting by Canadian-German painter Horst Maria Guilhauman depicting the historic breakfast of the four foreign ministers who met that day. From left, French chargé d'affaires Alexandre Aaron Vulic, U.S. deputy chief of mission Richard M. Sanders, Mr. Wnendt and British High Commissioner Howard Ronald Drake. (Photo: Ülle Baum) 2. To mark International Women's Day, the Chinese embassy hosted an event featuring cultural performances presented by female diplomats as well as musicians, singers and dancers. Jiang Yili, wife of the Chinese ambassador, centre, leads the one of the dances. (Photo: Ülle Baum) 3. From left, Ralitsa Tcholakova, vice-president of the Ottawa Region Bulgarian Foundation; Nevena Nikolaeva Mandadjieva and Bulgarian Ambassador Nikolay Milkov at the opening of the Days of Bulgarian Culture and Art show at Ottawa City Hall on Oct. 14. (Photo: Ülle Baum)

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Celebration time

A listing of the national and independence days marked by countries

April		
4	Senegal	Independence Day
16	Denmark	Birthday of Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II
17	Syria	National Day
18	Zimbabwe	Independence Day
19	Holy See	Election of the Pope
23	Israel	National Day
26	Tanzania	Union Day
27	Sierra Leone	Republic Day
27	South Africa	Freedom Day
27	Togo	National Day
27	Netherlands	King's Day
May		
1	Marshall Islands	National Day
3	Poland	National Day
9	European Union	Schuman Day
15	Paraguay	Independence Day
17	Norway	Constitution Day
20	Cameroon	National Day
22	Yemen	National Day
24	Eritrea	Independence Day
25	Argentina	May Revolution
25	Jordan	National Day
26	Georgia	Independence Day
28	Azerbaijan	Republic Day
28	Ethiopia	Downfall of the Dergue
June		
1	Samoa	Independence Day
2	Italy	Anniversary of the Foundation of the Republic
4	Tonga	Independence Day
6	Sweden	National Day
10	Portugal	National Day
12	Philippines	National Day
12	Russia	National Day
14	United Kingdom	Her Majesty the Queen's Birthday
17	Iceland	Proclamation of the Republic
18	O/of Eastern Caribbean States	OECS Day
18	Seychelles	Constitution Day
23	Luxembourg	Official Celebration of the Birthday of His Royal Highness Grand Duke Henri
25	Croatia	National Day
25	Slovenia	National Day
25	Mozambique	Independence Day
26	Madagascar	Independence Day
27	Djibouti	National Day
29	Holy See	National Day
30	Congo, Democratic Republic	Independence Day

Norway's natural wonders

Mountain biking is a popular sport around Tennesvatnet Lake in Lofoten.

By Mona Brother
Ambassador of Norway

Norway is a land of contrasts — a modern nation with strong ties to its history and traditions. We can offer wild, impressive and untouched nature, but also refined cultural expressions and innovative architecture. Regardless of how long you visit, you will have the opportunity to see these for yourself. Every part of our geographically long country has something unique to offer, and rural and urban settings both offer a combination of the modern and historic, the rugged and the sophisticated. For centuries, Norway has attracted visitors from around the world, people who would like to experience this natural beauty up close.

Even as a girl from the capital Oslo, I grew up in close proximity to nature. From our parents we learned to camp outdoors, ski, swim and fish. We picked berries in the autumn and marinated fish for Christmas. Being outside was, and is, a natural part of daily life, no matter the season. When people visit Norway, they soon understand why this is the case. Our nature is highly accessible. Whether it is hiking in the mountains or sailing in the fjords, it is all outside your door.

The national tourist routes

Over the past 20 years, the Norwegian Public Roads Administration has been working on an ambitious project to build a network of National Tourist Routes in Norway. Eighteen stretches of road run through some of Norway's most outstanding nature and attract visitors from far and wide.

Norway's beautiful and varied natural surroundings are the main attraction, and the pillars of the National Tourist routes are mountains, fjords, waterfalls and the

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picturesque coastline. But the project also highlights modern design and architecture along the way. Top designers and architects were invited to create innovative lookouts, rest stops, museums and visitor centres, thereby adding a unique element to the travel experience. Well-groomed rest stops along the roads offer the opportunity for up-close experiences in nature. Creative and functional architecture constitutes an exciting attraction in itself and leads users out into nature, down to the seashore, up to the mountain heights or out towards breezy panoramas.

The use of modern architecture in harmony or in contrast with the landscape and surroundings is the distinctive feature of these attractions and leaves traces of our time. The architects and designers, both Norwegian and international, responsible for the construction have followed strict esthetic standards in a way that harmonizes with the surroundings and reinforces travellers' appreciation of the great outdoors and unspoiled countryside. All 18 tourist routes offer a wonderful view of the surrounding landscape and would be worth a visit, but I have chosen to share a couple of my favourites with you here. And let me add: The very best is to cruise these roads in an open car, no matter the weather.

Aurlandsfjellet Mountain Road

This route on the west coast of Norway runs from fjord to fjord across high mountains where snow remains most of the summer. Stegastein on the Aurland road (the snow road) has always been an attractive viewing point. As part of the project, a new viewing platform was designed by Todd Saunders, a Canadian architect working in Bergen, and Norwegian architect Tommie Wilhelmsen. The viewing platform built in 2006 at Stegastein is light, dynamic and lofty and a perfect complement to its surroundings. It is constructed of linden wood and lifts you 30 metres out into the air and 650 metres above the fjord. This offers a magnificent view of the stunning fjord landscape.

The Atlantic Highway

Between the western cities of Kritiansund and Molde, we find another great example of how humans and nature interact successfully. The Atlantic Highway stretches across the archipelago with a series of cleverly designed bridges that let you island hop on wheels. The seven bridges that arch between the islets and skerries on the edge of the ocean not only present a magnificent view, they are also an outstanding feat of engineering. This highway is known as the world's most beautiful car journey. Britain's newspaper *The Guardian* called it the best road trip in the world.

The Northern Lights and the midnight sun

Northern Norway is a spectacular destination, especially in the summer and winter. Here, you can experience natural beauty in extreme forms. In the winter, the sun disappears after only a few short hours, and the polar night sets in. The polar night is widely referred to as the season of colour due to the array of beautiful blue tones as the light fades.

The winter marks the season of another spectacular phenomenon — the Northern Lights or Aurora Borealis, which translates to "the red of morning in the north." The Sami, the indigenous people of the north, call it "the light that can be heard." (Scientists think they've unlocked the secret of the mysterious clapping sound the Northern Lights produce: The same type of electrically charged particles from the sun that cause the Northern Lights also create the sound when they collide with gases in the Earth's atmosphere.) The Northern Lights play a special role in shaping the Norwegian imagination and identity.

In summer, you can see or feel the sun's presence at all hours of the day. The promise of never-ending light gives you extra energy to enjoy new experiences. You might find that you want to play golf or go fishing in the middle of the night, or feel the bracing wind in your face as you kayak from island to island.

Northern Norway is the closest mainland to the North Pole. The areas bordering Sweden, Finland and Russia are still a natural and unspoiled paradise, and the breathtaking combination of sea and mountains you find in Lofoten, Vesterålen and the Lyngsalpene peaks are unparallelled in Europe.

The people of Northern Norway enjoy the freedom of living their lives to the rhythm of nature. The Sami have lived at one with nature and developed their culture since settling in the Arctic areas of Norway more than 11,000 years ago. Tromsø, known as the Arctic capital, is bustling with activity during the summer. National and international artists perform at summer festivals, adding musical colour to the long well-illuminated nights.

Stegastein Viewpoint overlooks the Aurland Fjord from 650 metres. It was designed by Canadian architect Todd Saunders with Norwegian architect Tommie Wilhelmsen as part of the National Tourist Routes initiative.

PER RITZLER- NATIONAL TOURIST ROUTES.

The city of Ålesund was completely rebuilt in the Art Nouveau style after a devastating fire in 1904 that left 10,000 people homeless.

The nearly 1,000-year-old Borgund Stave Church features Viking-age woodcarvings and building methods.

The fjords: a living landscape

You do not travel to the attractions in Fjord, Norway. You travel through them. Whether you travel by car, bike, on a coastal steamer cruise or by foot, the journey itself is the experience. The ever-changing landscapes with majestic mountains and glittering white glaciers, offer new views around every corner. In the picturesque towns dotting the coastline, you can taste the local delicacies. It could be freshly caught cod or salmon, or freshly picked apples or cherries, depending on your location and the time of year. Along the road, you will also come across farm stores that carry local products, foods and crafts and where you will meet friendly locals who are more than happy to share information about what to see or do in the area. They might tell you about a little-known hiking trail, show you a good fishing spot, or offer you room and board in a redecorated boathouse overlooking the water and the mountains across the other side.

The fjords are not as much a place in Norway as they are a place in the world. Geirangerfjord and Nærøyfjord received UNESCO World Heritage status as a cultural landscape. *National Geographic* has called the fjords the world's most well-preserved World Heritage site. But why? Because Fjord Norway is not a scenic backdrop, but a community — a living landscape where humans and nature live in mutual dependence. And still, roads meander their way through all of this.

In the footsteps of the Vikings

For many visitors, Norway is the ultimate Viking destination. Vikings seem to be emerging stronger than ever in today's film and television and Norway offers people a chance to experience that culture. In Norway, you are never far from history — it surrounds us in our buildings, our infrastructure and our cultural traditions. Remnants of the Viking era are found across the land. It can be a grave mound, a stone cross or a wooden stave church that dates back almost 1,000 years. Throughout the country, several museums detail how our ancestors lived. It is thrilling to think that the Viking routes to North America connected us more than 1,000 years back, and that trade routes between the Norsemen and the population of Baffin Island may have existed even before that.

The Vikingship Museum in Oslo is a given for anyone with an interest in the Vikings. Many festivals and open-air historical plays will also give you a taste of Viking life. Traces of the Vikings' first seat of power may be found at Avaldsnes, in Haugesund, where this period is well documented. Here, you can visit one of Norway's replica Viking settlements complete with longhouses and Viking ships.

City life

For those who like a more urban experience, Norway has some vibrant and exciting cities, each with its own distinct identity.

My hometown of Oslo, our nation's capital, is our largest city. It also dates back to Viking times, and represents a unique blend of history and culture. Oslo is home to many of our major cultural institutions,

such as national museums, the National Gallery, theatres and concert halls. This is where you come to see Edvard Munch's painting, *The Scream*, take in the Henrik Ibsen theatre festival or perhaps have a picnic on the roof of our iconic waterfront opera house. Numerous music and art festivals will keep you entertained and the diverse neighbourhoods will offer a taste of a more multicultural Norway.

In Stavanger, the oil capital of Norway, you will find white wooden houses and coastal traditions combined with the hustle and bustle of a dynamic international oil industry. This "global" city is full of life. This is also Norway's food capital and where you find the Norwegian Culinary Institute and where New Nordic Cuisine is emerging and taking shape.

The Hanseatic city of Bergen is perhaps our most distinct city. Its Hanseatic heritage (part of the Hanseatic League trading alliance of northern European cities roughly from the 1300s to the 1700s) is clearly visible in the architecture of the historic waterfront (another UNESCO World Heritage Site), and the world-famous open-air fish market offers locals and visitors alike amazing treasures from the sea. Bergen is saturated with culture, with something to please everyone — from music to contemporary art. Not only is Bergen the hometown of famous composer Edvard Grieg, its philharmonic orchestra is the oldest orchestra in the world. And to add to that, the concertmaster is an Ottawa native, master violinist David Stewart.

Norway's cities are not very big in size or population, but they are huge on personality. One of my personal favourites is Ålesund on the northwestern coast. It was voted most beautiful town in Norway in 2007 and again in 2009 by the British newspaper *The Times*. The story behind Ålesund is quite dramatic. On a stormy winter night in 1904, a devastating fire raged through the streets of Ålesund. After 16 hours, 850 houses were burned to the ground, leaving 10,000 people homeless.

After a remarkable effort, the town was rebuilt just three years later in 1907. The architects in charge were young Norwegians, influenced by national romantic ideals as well as the popular style of the time: "Jugendstil" or Art Nouveau. When a whole town is built over the course of three years, all in the same style, it creates a unique appearance. The buildings are decorated with towers, turrets and imaginative and colourful ornaments. When you walk around Ålesund and take the time to look around you, you will notice all the small details that make these houses so beautiful. Today, Ålesund is renowned nationally and internationally for its architecture and is a member of Rèseau Art Nouveau Network, a European network of Art Nouveau cities that includes, among others, Glasgow, Barcelona and Vienna.

Culinary delights

No vacation would be complete without good food. Traditional Norwegian food is wholesome and rustic, with fresh ingredients and natural flavours at the centre. Salmon, cod and mutton, fresh, cured or smoked, all play an important part in our culinary identity. However, as part of the "new Nordic food" movement, Norwegian restaurateurs and chefs are constantly using their creative minds to take Norwegian food traditions in new directions. This is reflected in our success at the "World Culinary Championship" Bocuse d'Or, where Norway has won gold five times, most recently in January 2015, when chef Ørjan Johannessen brought home the win. The freshest and best of ingredients can be found locally and natural flavours are still at the centre of Norwegian food. Yet these young innovative chefs are combining ingredients or presenting the food in completely new ways, while making sure quality and taste remain absolutely top notch. And do not forget the Aquavit — the water of life — the flavoured potent liquor that can help against the most extreme cold. For a truly gourmet experience, enjoy a taste of Norway.

Modern Norwegian cuisine attracts food lovers from around the world. Norwegian seafood is also a major export.

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These courting ospreys were captured at sunrise in Myakka River State Park, southeast of Sarasota, Florida. Ospreys are a fish hawk that have the unique ability to dive underwater to capture fish with their talons. Once the eggs are hatched, after about 35 days' incubation, the parents will fish from dawn to dusk to feed the hungry mouths of the chicks in the nest. Ospreys are found on lakes, river systems and tidal coastlines throughout many parts of the world.

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