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IN FOREIGN WARS USING TERRORIST ALLIES

PLUS  
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A NEW WORLD ORDER  
AND  
RWANDA'S PAUL KAGAME:  
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Cover photo: Israel's Operation Guardian of the Walls, pictured on our cover, is charged with preserving the State of Israel, protecting its independence and foiling attempts by its enemies to disrupt normal life within it. Credit: IDF Spokesperson's Unit photographer

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## Watching Iran

**A**fter 16 months of COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions, things are finally starting to turn around. And as they do, we turn our attention to geopolitics and the latest hotspots from the world of defence. Our summer issue is usually full of lighter fare as we devote our cover to travel, but given that a lot of restrictions are still in place and the virus is still ravaging some parts of the world, we decided to take another year off from that tradition. Instead, our cover story looks at global pariah Iran, and the way it has been extending its reach beyond its borders by engaging in proxy wars, particularly the one between the Israelis and the Palestinians in May of this year. The recent election of President Ebrahim Raisi, a hardline judge who is under U.S. sanctions for human rights abuses, doesn't suggest Iran will simmer down anytime soon.

Another potential global hotspot is the Taiwan Strait. Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen is less tolerant of the "one country two systems" approach than her predecessor, Ma Ying-jeou, who stressed the importance of trade and business ties between Taiwan and China. Defence writer Joe Varner delves into the long-simmering tensions between the two foes.

We also get a first-hand account of the refugee situation in the Sahel, from United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees humanitarian worker Dominique Hyde. She writes about the situation after having visited Niger in her position as UNHCR's global head of external relations and she saw hope and despair during her recent travels, but it seemed as though despair

was gaining ground over hope in some cases.

Finally, in our Dispatches section, Africa columnist Robert I. Rotberg examines the two sides of Rwandan President Paul Kagame, who has instituted welcome reforms in the country after its devastating genocide in 1994, but he's also known to have opponents killed and is becoming more hardline as his endless term continues. Indeed, part of said hard line was to remove term limits on the presidency so he can now legitimately remain president until 2034.

Up front, Fen Hampson examines the D-10, a proposed extension of the G7 to include other democracies, such as South Korea, India and Australia and other possible alliances as we find ourselves at a turning point in world history in which this kind of deal is often struck.

We also have my interview with 10 of the diplomatic corps' 29 women ambassadors. I've long wanted to get several of them in a room to discuss their jobs, the obstacles they've encountered and the plight of women around the world. They were generous with their time, and also forthcoming with their stories and opinions. They also suggested we do a similar panel — on the same subject — with male diplomats since gender equality won't happen unless men get on board, too. So the gauntlet has been thrown.

In her books column, Christina Spencer writes about China's middle class, Canada's perhaps little-known roles in the Vietnam War and Bill Gates's new book on climate change.

Peter Simpson writes about the new National Portrait Gallery as well as the happenings at Ottawa's other institutions this summer and into the autumn.

Food columnist Margaret Dickenson offers three tasty recipes for summertime dining and Patrick Langston has ideas for summer outings that should all be COVID compliant. We also carry the story of a new initiative in diplomacy called Take Your Seat.

*Jennifer Campbell is editor of Diplomat.*

## CONTRIBUTORS

### Dominique Hyde



Hyde is responsible for partnerships with governments, civil society, UN agencies and the private sector, as well as communications and advocacy in support of the UN refugee agency's protection and assistance programs. She began her career working in the Canadian Senate, House of Commons and foreign ministry. She later joined the International Organization for Migration in Haiti.

She has worked for the United Nations World Food Programme in Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Iraq, Italy and Nepal and UNICEF as representative for Jordan as well as in New York as deputy director of the public partnership division. In 2017, she joined the World Health Organization in Switzerland before joining UNHCR.

### James Park



Dad, photographer and motorcycle enthusiast, James Park worked at the *Ottawa Citizen* as weekend photo editor, photographer, videographer and online editor before embarking on a freelance career. Park has a passion for documentary photography, but also enjoys shooting creatively challenging assignments.

In addition to *Diplomat* magazine, he has shot for *Bloomberg*, *Vice*, *The Globe and Mail*, *Postmedia* and various private corporations over the years.

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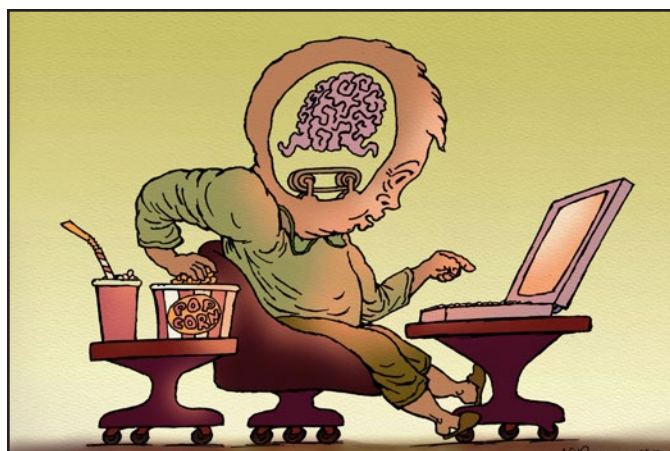
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## Political commentary from around the world



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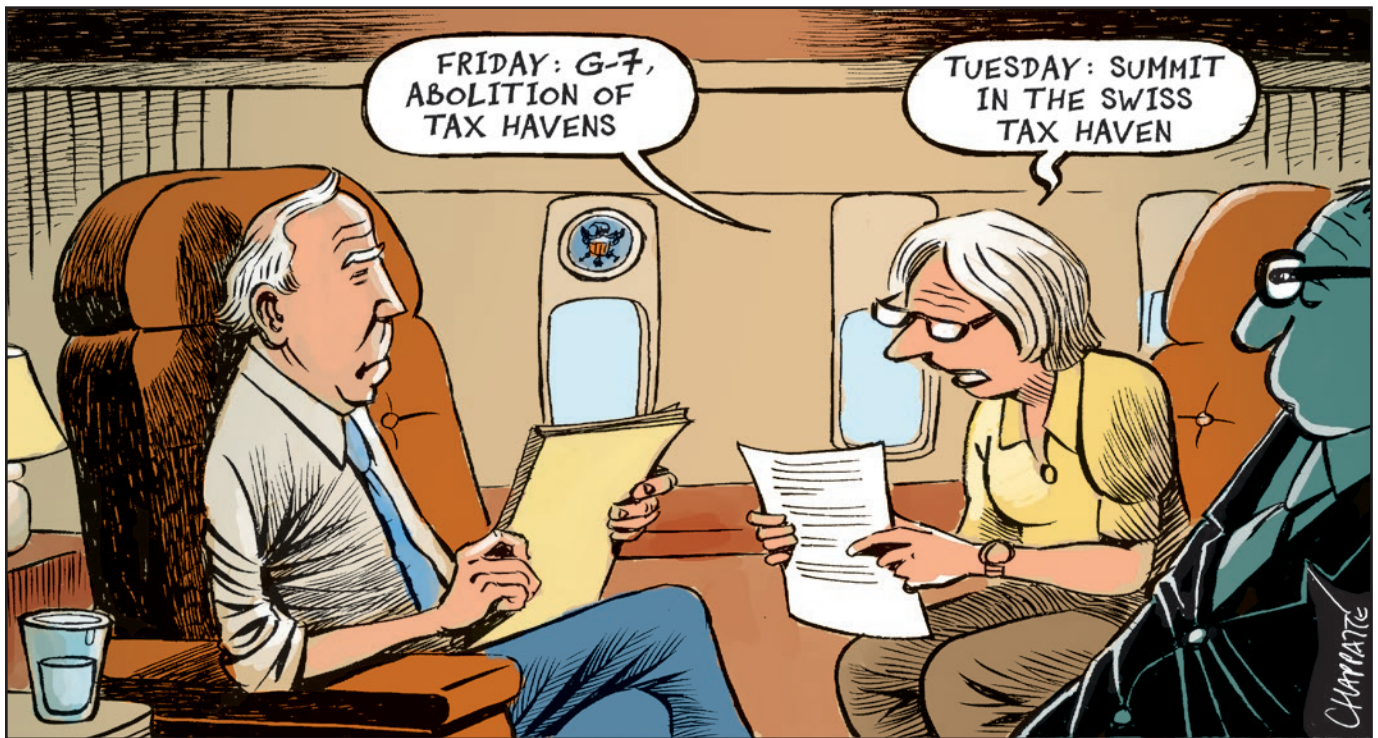


Children and the virtual world, by Vladimir Kazanevsky, *PoliticalCartoons.com*, Ukraine

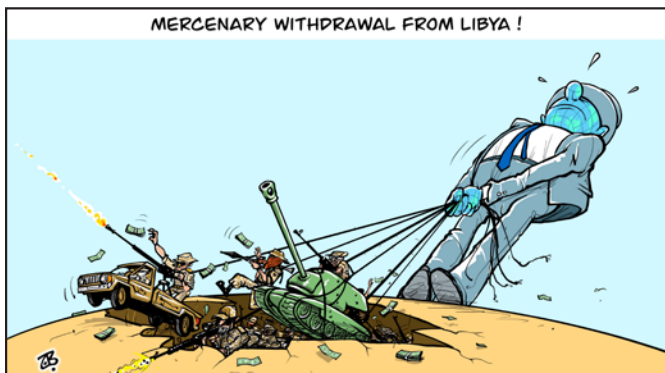


Middle East ceasefire, by Marian Kamensky, Austria

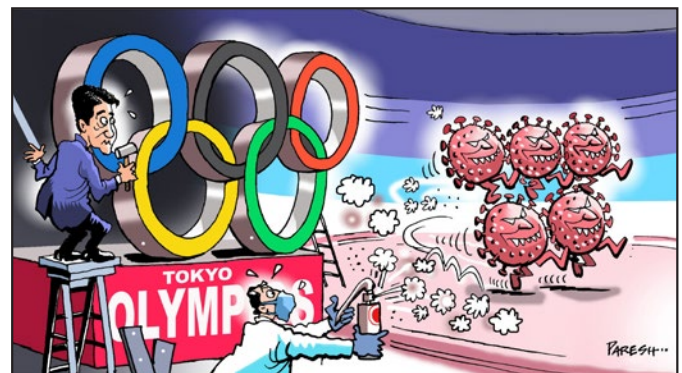




Biden starts his European tour, by Patrick Chappatte, *Le Temps*, Switzerland



Mercenaries withdrawal from Libya! by Emad Hajjaj, *Alaraby Aljadeed* newspaper, London



Tokyo Olympics and virus, by Paresh Nath, *U.T. Independent*, India

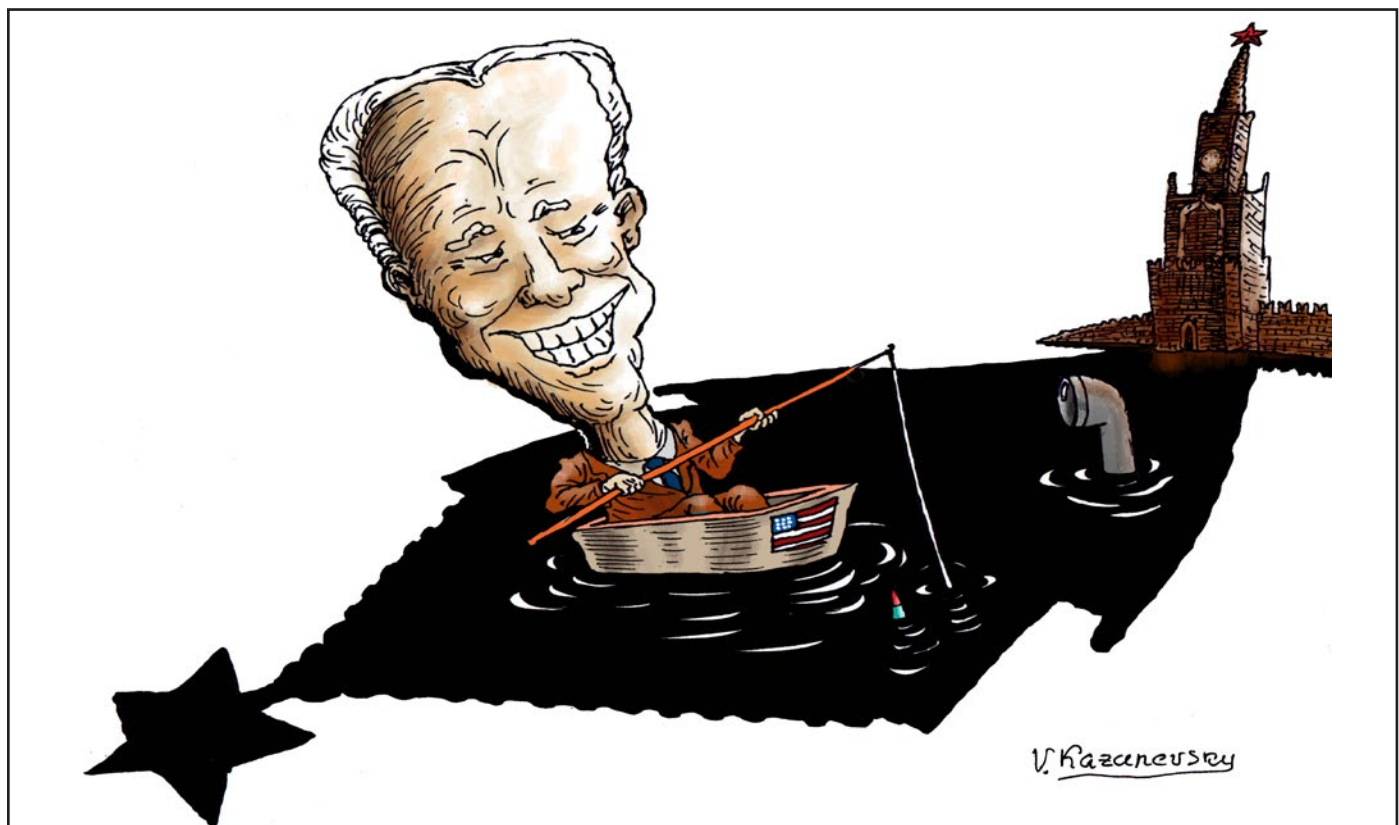


Biden and Putin meet, by Paresh Nath, *U.T. Independent*, India

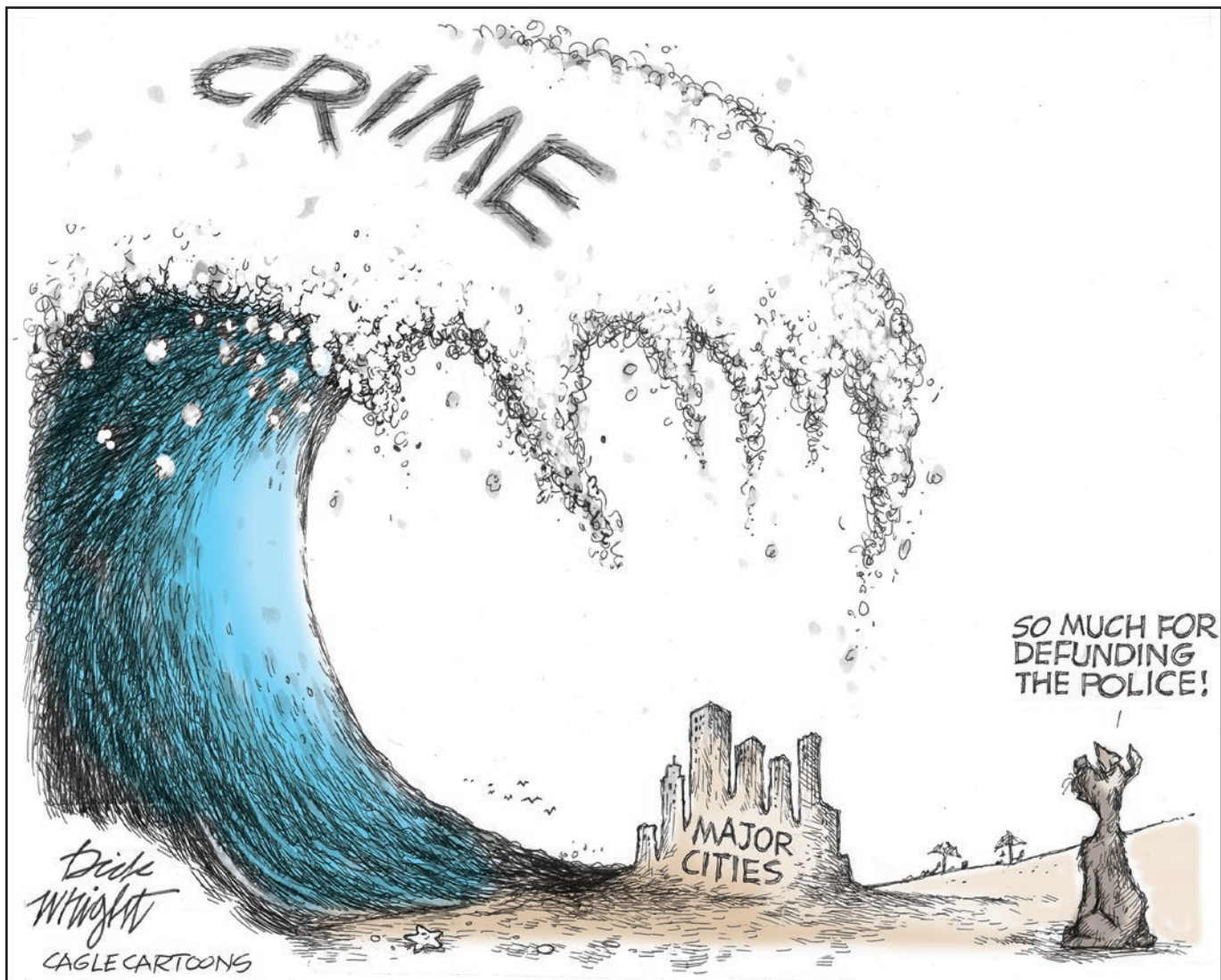


Iran presidential polls, by Paresh Nath, *U.T. Independent*, India



Dialogue between Russia and the U.S., by Schot, *De Volkskrant*, NetherlandsRelationship between Russia and U.S.A., by Vladimir Kazanovsky, Ukraine, *PoliticalCartoons.com*





Crime wave, by Dick Wright, *PoliticalCartoons.com*



WHO renames the variants, by Patrick Chappatte, *Le Temps*, Switzerland



Iranian election, by Emad Hajjaj, *Alaraby Aljadeed* newspaper, London

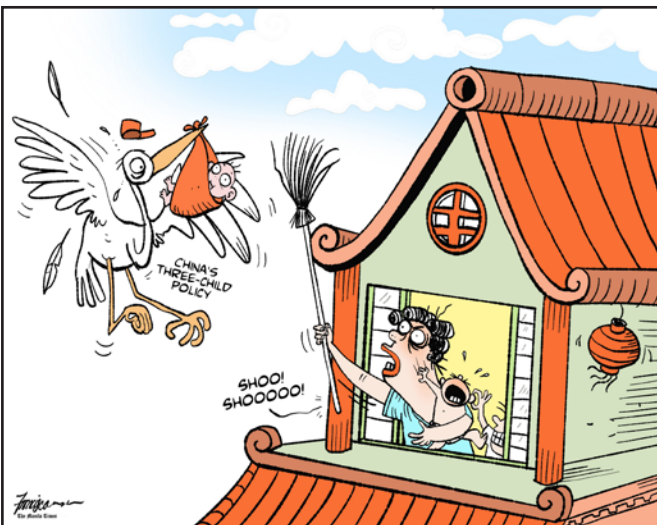




NATO summit and China, by Paresh Nath, *U.T. Independent*, India



Fishfight over Jersey waters, by Hajo de Reijger, The Netherlands



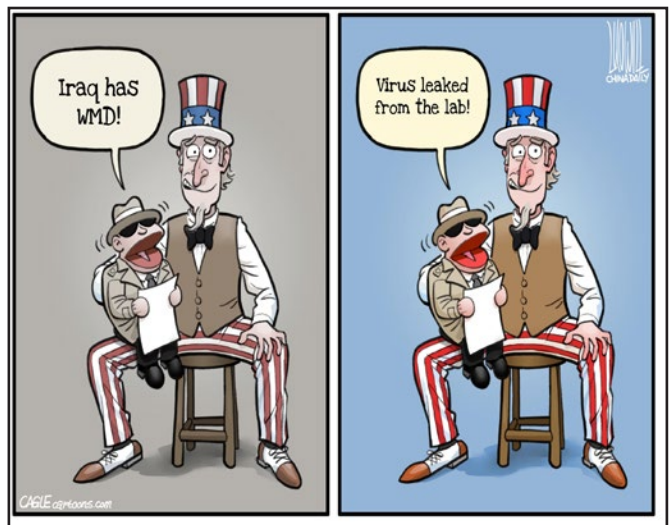
Three-child policy, by Manny Francisco, *The Manila Times*, The Philippines



Tiananmen and Hong Kong, by Paresh Nath, *U.T. Independent*, India



Middle East war, by Marian Kamensky, Austria



Déjà vu, by Luojie, *China Daily*, China





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## 21st-Century world order restored?



In its original Atlantic Council-CIGI formulation, the D-10 was aimed to unify Western democracies in dealing with Russia. Then-U.S. president Barack Obama and allies such as Angela Merkel, shown here at the recent G7, worked on Russian incursions in Ukraine and its meddling with other neighbours.



Fen  
Hampson

**B**etween November 1814 and June 1815, Europe's leaders sat down at a diplomatic conference in Vienna to establish the foundations of a new political order, following the disruptions of the French Revolution and the massive carnage of the Napoleonic Wars. The new spirit of the international co-operation that was born out of the Congress of Vienna came to be known as the Concert of

Europe. It was called a concert because those who participated spent their evenings attending musical events. It was not so much a gathering of friends as a team of rivals who understood if they didn't co-operate, the world could disintegrate into anarchy. Importantly, it reflected a non-institutionalized approach to conflict management and maintenance of global order by the great powers of the day — a bit like a pickup musical group. Co-operation was driven by self-interest and a value system that was anti-revolutionary and anti-nationalistic. The Congress was nonetheless a watershed moment in world history that maintained the European balance of power until the outbreak of the First World War, as explained by former U.S. secretary of state Henry Kissinger in his great tome, *A World Restored: Metter-*

*nich, Castlereagh and the Problems of Peace, 1812-22.*

There is an active debate today about the future of world order and whether we are at a similar turning point in history. It has become quite fashionable in some circles to talk about a new alliance of democracies that can work to rebuild the liberal international order of the latter half of the 20th Century and, at the same time, promote democratic institutions and values. Others argue that we are witnessing a return to great power politics with the rise of China with its muscle-flexing under President Xi Jinping and resurgent Russia under President Vladimir Putin. In this scenario, great power competition is increasingly likely, and alliances will matter more than ever to counter those states that aspire to global supremacy. So, what



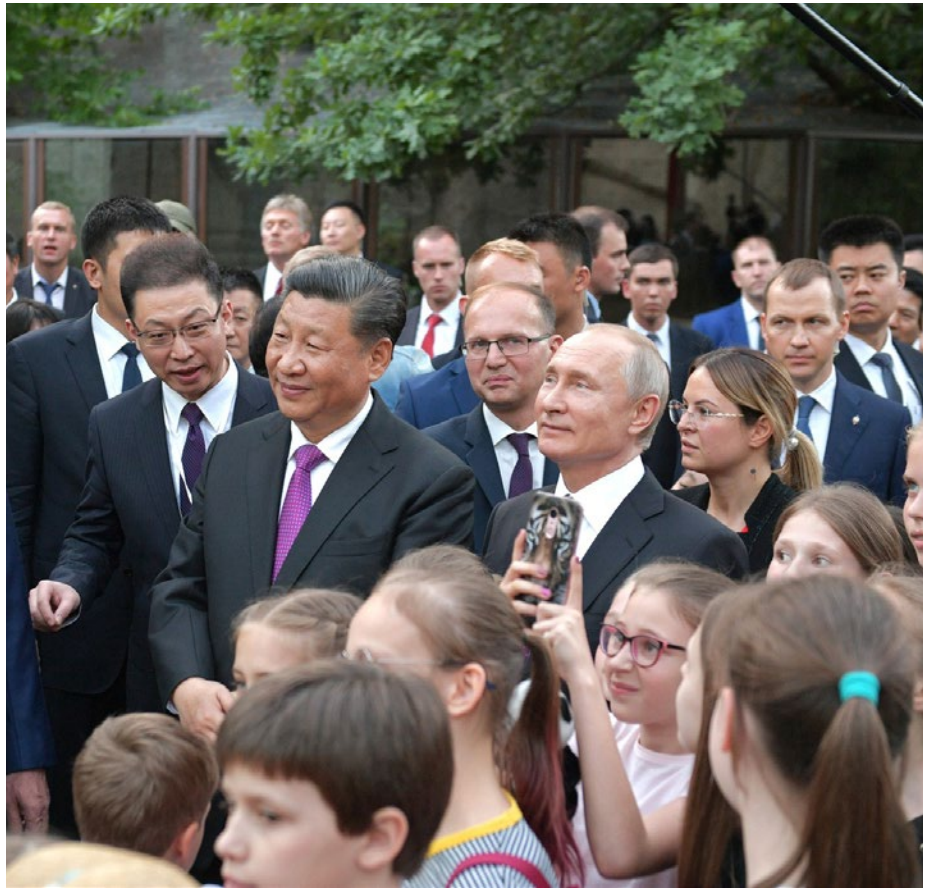
does the future hold?

We saw the glimmerings of what might be in the offing at the June 2021 G7 Summit, which was held in the picturesque small town of Carbis Bay in Cornwall on England's southwest coast. The new political narrative, as suggested by the title of the Summit's communiqué, was all about "Building Back Better" and restoring co-operation among the world's wealthiest and most powerful democracies after the tumultuous, tantrum-filled years of the Donald Trump presidency.

Trump had not hesitated to express his disdain for his G7 partners — a disdain that was on full display in June 2018 when Prime Minister Justin Trudeau hosted the summit and Trump lashed out at his host and abandoned the characteristic joint statement, which was endorsed by the other G7 leaders. This time around, with a newly installed Democratic president in the White House, it was all smiles and chummy COVID elbow bumps. Sending a clear signal that they thought the pandemic was ending, G7 leaders dispensed with mandatory facemasks at the "family photo" that was taken on an improvised boardwalk on the beach, making them look, as one journalist wag commented, like "pegs on a cribbage board." The press also ridiculed G7 leaders for ignoring COVID social distancing rules during an open pit beach barbecue where the menu was lobster, shrimp and scallops, even though Downing Street insisted everything was done in strict compliance with coronavirus rules.

#### A D-10 in the making?

A year earlier, when the 2020 G7 summit was cancelled because of the pandemic, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson had openly championed the idea of changing the format of these annual gatherings by enlarging the membership of G7 — the U.K., U.S., Italy, Germany, France, Japan and Canada — to include South Korea, India and Australia to form a new D-10 [Democracy 10] club. The idea was not entirely an original one. It had been promoted for a number of years in a series of meetings and reports conducted jointly by the Atlantic Council and the Global Politics Program (which I directed) at Canada's Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI). In fact, the first unofficial gathering of D-10 officials — the heads of policy planning departments in their respective foreign ministries and representatives of leading think-tanks in D-10 countries — took place in Ottawa in the summer of 2014. The group would



Some argue we are witnessing a return to power politics with Chinese President Xi Jinping's muscle-flexing and resurgent Russia under President Vladimir Putin. Putin and Xi are shown here.

meet annually thereafter until 2019 and riffed on the original 1941 Atlantic Charter by drafting a new one, titled *Defending Democracy and a Rules-Based Order: A Declaration of Principles*, that would serve as a template for the 21st Century.

The seven principles that were enunciated in the declaration were intended to "provide a clear and compelling statement of values, a 'north star' around which political leaders in democracies worldwide can coalesce to reaffirm their support for a rules-based order and generate concrete action to advance and defend these values; and provide a rallying cry to mobilize bipartisan public support in favour of shared values in the United States, Europe, Asia and leading democracies around the world." The principles were drawn on a wide canvass and covered the gambit of contemporary global problems on trade, climate change, migration, cybersecurity, human rights and freedom of speech.

Many of the same ideas and principles found their way into The New Atlantic Charter, which was signed by U.S. President Joe Biden and Johnson just before the G7 Summit. In it, the leaders

of the world's two oldest democracies reaffirmed their "commitment to work together to realize our vision for a more peaceful and prosperous future....and [work] closely with all partners who share our democratic values and to [counter] the efforts of those who seek to undermine our alliances and institutions."

In its original Atlantic Council-CIGI formulation, the D-10 was aimed at strengthening the resolve of Western democracies in their dealings with Russia at a time when there were significant divisions between the administration of then-U.S. president Barack Obama and its European allies, particularly Germany's Angela Merkel, about how to deal with Russian incursions in Ukraine and Russia's meddling in the affairs of its immediate neighbours. However, as the concept evolved, China assumed greater prominence in the group's deliberations.

Will a formal D-10 replace the G7 anytime soon? Probably not. Although Johnson was an early champion of the idea of a D-10 and clearly saw it as an opportunity to show that Britain in a post-Brexit world could still be a global player by working "with a group of like-minded democracies



to advance shared interests and tackle common challenges,” he got pushback — certainly no surprise there — from the Germans and the French, who oppose an enlargement of the G7 tent on the grounds that it is already big enough. There are also widespread reservations about including India, which U.S.-based Freedom House has downgraded from a free democracy to a “partially free democracy.” Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Hindu nationalist BJP government’s attacks on human rights groups and journalists and the government’s efforts to stifle its critics on social media are troubling signs that India is becoming an electoral autocracy.

Although Johnson invited the leaders of Australia, South Korea and India (the latter was a virtual participant at the meeting) to participate in the U.K.’s G7 summit, there is no guarantee that similar invitations will be extended the next time around.

But that doesn’t mean we won’t now see more co-operation among the world’s leading democracies. Accordingly, the June 2021 Cornwall Summit was notable for the commitments that were made on a variety of different fronts, especially if there is real follow-through. The Carbis Bay Health Declaration committed G7 countries to use “all their resources to prevent a global pandemic from happening again” and included concrete measures to reduce the time taken to develop and license new vaccines, strengthen global surveillance networks and genomic sequencing capacities and “support for reforming and strengthening the World

#### THE PROPOSED D-10 COUNTRIES

	CANADA (G7)
	FRANCE (G7)
	GERMANY (G7)
	ITALY (G7)
	JAPAN (G7)
	UNITED KINGDOM (G7)
	UNITED STATES (G7)
	EUROPEAN UNION (G7)
	AUSTRALIA (D-10)
	INDIA (D-10)
	SOUTH KOREA (D-10)

Health Organization.” G7 countries also pledged that together they would make one billion doses of vaccine available to the world’s poorer countries. At the same time, the meeting’s focus on pledging new monies to help poorer countries build better infrastructure to counter what some refer to as “China’s debt diplomacy” through its Belt and Road Initiative, was also an attempt to promote a new “Build Back Better World” narrative that, in the words of the G7 communiqué, is “values-

driven, high standard and transparent.”

The G7 has been divided about how to deal with China, with the Europeans favouring a softer approach that encourages economic and technological co-operation while the U.S. has taken a much tougher stance on trade, cyber and security. It was notable that the Group of Seven went out of its way to scold China over human rights in its Xinjiang region and demanded that Hong Kong be allowed to keep a high degree of autonomy. It also demanded a full and thorough investigation of the origins of the coronavirus in China, a notable show of solidarity. So, too, were statements in the final communiqué on Taiwan in which G7 leaders underscored “the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, and... peaceful resolution of cross-strait issues” and the need to reduce military tensions in the South China Sea.

During his visit to Brussels to attend the NATO summit of heads of government, Biden and EU leaders also agreed to bury the hatchet on their 17-year trade dispute over EU subsidies to the giant aircraft manufacturer, Airbus, and U.S. subsidies to Boeing. The trade dispute is one of the costliest in recent history and has seen payments of more than \$1 billion in tariffs since the duties were first levied. Both sides recognized that China, which is also now building commercial aircraft, may one day pose an existential threat to aircraft manufacturers on both sides of the Atlantic. As U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai remarked when the deal was announced, the U.S. and EU are now focused on “what is going to be best for competition between us in the context of a world where our industries and workers will be facing competition like we’ve never seen before.”

#### A new concert of nations?

As the world’s leading democracies decide to work more closely together, what does this mean for their future dealings with Russia and China? The return of geopolitical polarization and competition is not encouraging, but great power military confrontation, as some predict, would be devastating because it would likely escalate to a nuclear exchange that would make the destruction and loss of life of the two great wars of the last century look like a brawl at a Sunday picnic by comparison. There is always the risk of escalation of conflict when countries resort to brinksmanship as they flex their military muscles.

Maintaining global order and stability



U.S. President Joe Biden and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson signed the New Atlantic Charter just before the G7 Summit. It reaffirmed their commitment to work together and work closely with all partners who share their democratic values.



through diplomacy, though, may serve Russia's interests, history and the geopolitical situation. China's leaders may come to similar conclusions as the U.S. and its Western allies react to its own muscle-flexing and expansionist initiatives in trade, infrastructure and cyber technology. The fact that so much of China's recent economic growth and prosperity is intimately tied to its trade and investment with the rest of the world means that it has more to lose than gain through belligerent actions or consistently bucking the norms and rules of the post-Second World War international order from which it has so clearly benefited.

It is worth noting that the recent G7, U.S.-EU and NATO summits condemned Chinese actions and behaviour domestically and internationally — in the case of NATO, it was the first time that China was singled out as presenting a “systemic challenge.” However, the alliance also welcomed “opportunities to engage with China on areas of relevance to the alliance and on common challenges such as climate change.” In early June, Xi stunned political observers when he instructed the country's leaders in a speech to a Politburo study session to focus on cultivating

a “trustworthy, lovable and respectable” image for China and to adopt a “humble” approach in China's international relations.

There was also a discernible change in tone in U.S.-Russia relations after the Geneva Summit between Biden and Putin. Following the summit, Putin praised Biden for his professionalism and knowing his brief and went out of his way to say that Biden had been incorrectly portrayed in Russia's state-controlled media as a bumbler. The decision by the two leaders at the summit to launch arms control and cyber-security talks and to restore full diplomatic relations suggests that both countries want a more pragmatic approach to managing their bilateral relations, which had sunk to their lowest point since the Cold War.

It is still too early to tell, but there is some evidence that the world's great powers may be now considering a path that eschews “grandiose aspirations in favour of functional, practical and actionable co-operative activities,” in the words of Singapore-based international relations scholar See Seng Tan. We are still a long way off from anything resembling a concert, where there are clear rules of the road

and a shared commitment by great powers to maintain and not upset the global order. There also is no going back to the post-1945 world or the post-1989 world when, for a brief period, the U.S. was the world's last remaining superpower. But there are compelling incentives for the world's great powers to co-operate and work together on such issues as avoiding nuclear war, managing global pandemics, combating climate change and curbing cyber-attacks.

As Henry Kissinger said in an interview some years ago, “The world is in chaos. Fundamental upheavals are occurring in many parts of the world simultaneously, more of which are governed by disparate principles. We are therefore faced with two problems: first, how to reduce regional chaos; second, how to create coherent world order based on agreed-upon principles that are necessary for the operation of the entire system.” That is indeed today's foreign policy challenge for all countries and not just the great powers.

Fen Osler Hampson is Chancellor's Professor at Carleton University and co-author of *Diplomacy and the Future of World Order*.



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## Women Heads of Diplomatic Missions in Ottawa

# 'The picture used to be that men are diplomats, women are secretaries and that has changed a lot'

With the help of EU Ambassador Melita Gabric, *Diplomat* organized a panel for its usual Q & A with editor Jennifer Campbell. The group — all women heads of mission — has a formal organization, which Gabric chairs, and it meets regularly to discuss common areas of interest. Today, there are 29 women who are heads of mission in Ottawa; four more based in the U.S., but accredited to Canada, and six women chargé d'affaires. And, in recent years, major posts, including those of the ambassador of the U.S. and France and that of the British High Commissioner have been filled by women for the first time. *Diplomat* wanted to talk to these women about their unique careers, the proverbial glass ceiling women encounter in the workplace and the plight of women in their countries. What follows is a transcript edited for length. (Editor's note: Moroccan Ambassador Souriya Otmani wasn't able to join the panel because of timing, so she answered our questions the following day.)

***Diplomat* magazine:** Can you talk about a situation in your career where you met the proverbial glass ceiling and share what you did about it and how diplomatic training helped you to resolve it? And finally, what tips would you offer for women following in your footsteps?

**Melita Gabric (EU):** One thing I would say is that the glass ceiling is difficult to see, which is to say that it is difficult to pinpoint a situation where one was denied a promotion due to gender, or some other sexual discrimination or circumstance. I would say it is important that women pre-emptively empower themselves as much as they can. I would definitely put a premium on education, on developing skills and competencies, and that includes diplomatic competencies because this helps with resilience, freedom of choice and manoeuvring space and, at the end of the day, it can help with moving that ceiling further up and ideally, down the road, removing it altogether.

**Hanne Eskjaer (Denmark):** I was think-



Melita Gabric is the chairwoman of the Women Heads of Diplomatic Missions in Ottawa.

ing about a personal experience and was inspired by an example where I think we managed to break the glass ceiling. It was a few years ago and I was four months pregnant and posted in New York and I was up for a change in position. I really wanted to become the deputy in Prague because [it was joining] the EU. Everyone told me, 'Who would hire a four-month-pregnant woman for a deputy position?' I went for it and I applied. It was an old ambassador, it was his last post, a very

proud man from the old school. Everyone said this was not going to work. But he decided to invest in the long term. He said, 'Yes, I see your talent, I want you on board. I know that you won't be there in the beginning, but I want you on the team.' It was a combination of him looking in the long term and it was me believing I was the right choice for him. And the last thing was that my husband and I decided we would split the leave into two so when half of it was over, I went back



to work and my husband took parental leave. This is not just our personal choice for a family. This is because the system facilitates the husband taking part. It's a mixture of personal choice, education and the systems in place to facilitate this equal distribution of parental leave.

**Natasha Smith (Australia):** There's a phenomenon that I call the lonely room. Rather than glass ceilings — which I have observed and seen and had some women reach down through that ceiling and pull me up, and one or two who put their stiletto on my forehead — there's the phenomenon of being the only woman in the room, or one of very few. I think we focus on the ceiling; it's a very good metaphor, but I think the challenge of when you get there, how lonely it can be is [worth noting.] I certainly experienced this at various stages in my career and frankly, among my memories of where I was more junior, I was often the only woman and the youngest in the room as well. That can be very intimidating and I don't think it's only women. Indigenous colleagues say the same thing. Be true [to] yourself and you've got to feel intimidated on the inside, not the outside. I worked on water and sanitation in Indonesia and I was often the only woman and I can still remember a formal dinner with the Dutch ambassador and I was youngest and the only woman and they didn't know what to do with me so they sat me next to the host and it was brilliant. If I'd been a man, I would have been down by the door to the kitchen and I was able to use that [seat] to my advantage. I think we can get hung up on the glass ceiling. I think it's also the lonely room we need to think about.

**Romy Vasquez (Panama):** I'm the only one here who's not a career diplomat. I was in the same situation in 2004, when we were 8 per cent [of 56 head of mission positions in Panama's diplomatic corps] but today we're not much better at only 22 per cent and they're not the best positions or destinations. When we become the first woman at the White House, that will be a change. When I went for the interviews, I had the approval of the ministry and the president and they asked me to go to every government department to show what I could offer. This was an internal decision because they wanted to see how I would respond as a businesswoman to the diplomatic environment. I managed to introduce myself as an asset [because of my negotiation skills.] I think you have to learn to deliver

the message of what it is that you can really do well.

**Maria Vass-Salazar (Hungary):** I think there's a larger picture. Looking at diplomacy and women in diplomacy back 20 or 30 years, the picture used to be that men are diplomats, women are secretaries and that has changed a lot. There are more women altogether on our staff than men. [For me,] starting in the foreign

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service, the key elements were competence and confidence. In situations that are overwhelmingly male, you need the confidence without the arrogance. It's a skill diplomats should acquire to really excel. I didn't really experience difficulty or discrimination, but that's the evolution of acceptance of female diplomats in the diplomatic service.

**Josefina Vidal (Cuba):** I haven't had to overcome any obstacles during my professional career. The Cuban foreign service has done a great job in the last 25 to 30 years. We come from a past when the ministry was predominantly male for many years. Now 44.6 per cent of all officials at the foreign ministry are women. We still have some work to do in terms of decision-making positions, where we are just 29 per cent. In the head of mission

positions, only 31 per cent are women. We don't have a system of quotas, but there is a policy. Anytime a minister makes a proposal about who he believes is the best person to be appointed as a director-general or ambassador, he has to propose at least two names, and the balance of gender and race has to be included. This policy has been offering important results. My advice [is] study a lot, work very hard, become an expert in an area of specialization. Defend with conviction and confidence your points of view, but at the same time, listen to others and respect your colleagues.

**Konstantina Athanassiadou (Greece):** I agree with what has been said. I was thinking what sort of [story I could share]. There are many, but I tried to find one that was a bit funny. I knew from Day 1 when I entered the ministry that it was very competitive. I was always trying to do my best. I had to do a double effort in order to become the very best.

Now I'll tell you the funny episode. I was in Geneva and Greece was going through a review concerning the position of women in Greece. I was not present, but the permanent representative was. I was at the WTO, dealing in quotas in sugar and transport and things like that. At a certain point, there was an alarm on my mobile asking me to come over. I asked if I could just text them or send a note; he said no. So I went there and when I entered this committee, the permanent representative said, 'Here is an ambassador,' because the point of the committee [was to charge us with not having] enough women in top positions. I [felt like] I was a bear in a circus. I said, 'This is me, this is a Greek ambassador, you can't say we don't have women ambassadors.'

**Josefina Martinez Gramuglia (Argentina):** I remember being at the United Nations and I was part of the Security Council team when Argentina was a member and I was very much pregnant, so I couldn't fit into the seats at the informal meetings. At some point, I had to ask for a special seat on the side. They had these little desks and I couldn't fit. Talk about trying to modernize structures [laughs.] I've had a couple of [glass ceiling] situations, most commonly when you work for a long time on strategic files and it's finally the time to pitch to the authorities. From time to time, I faced the doors closing for me, being the most experienced with the issue at hand, but I wasn't able to pitch to the authorities. I tried to persuade my colleagues of



the importance of being heard and my perspective and it didn't work. How did my diplomatic training help me? I did quite the opposite of what diplomatic training would say and I challenged the norm. I couldn't accept the status quo of being the lower rank, and not able to present my ideas. At some point, I decided to be deliberately an advocate for change and as many of my colleagues mentioned, I worked harder, I worked better and put together fresh ideas.

It was kind of a risky move, but it worked. If there are any tips for women, I would say never settle, keep pressing for inclusion, don't wait for men to invite us into the foreign policy process. We have to look for affirmative action, look for special training programs, seek mentors for advancement in our careers and seize every opportunity that presents itself to you because you miss 100 per cent of the shots you don't take.

**Michelle Cohen (Dominican Republic):** We are here because we have seen that glass ceiling at some point. I've broken that ceiling every single time I've been a candidate for a position or a place in power.

There are two things [required] — dedication and extensive training. I was born in a very small insular country in the Caribbean and Antilles. The pace of life was very slow. The Dominican Republic was a country that had 5.2 million inhabitants who were isolated from the rest of the world with very few opportunities for growth, especially for girls. The chances of being something or getting to be someone were very [slim] and you were trained to be a perfect housewife. I had a bigger view because I grew up outside the island. I went away very early. When I got back, after finishing high school, I was clear on what I wanted to do. When I was 21, I ran for a position at the United Nations Development Program. I faced being a woman and a young person. I got the position, partly because one of the [interviewers] who was an older, respected lady, decided to give me the opportunity. She decided that my energy was the reason I would be able to do the job.

**Romy Vasquez (Panama):** Regarding tips, all of you have mentioned so many and I would add to become a mentor for another colleague. Also, in order to break that ceiling, we need more women at the centre of the international agenda. If we don't have more women, we will not be able to push the necessary policies and implement the changes. We need to be-

come speakers and move forward and talk about it on social media and share that idea.

**Souriya Otmani (Morocco):** I consider myself a lucky woman who didn't face any challenges of that kind in my whole diplomatic career. It doesn't mean I didn't face any difficulties during my professional past. Every day, women ambassadors and diplomats in general are confronted with a lot of challenges and unusual situations. I think what helps us overcome and react and solve those issues is our personal experience, our diplomatic training and also our female instincts. Women in general and women diplomats specifically have a proper way to deal with challenges. With all due respect to our male colleagues, we manage in a different way than them to smooth a tough situation and find appropriate solutions.

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For young women who are thinking about starting a diplomatic career, I firmly encourage them to not hesitate and to go ahead. It will be a lot of work, but it's enriching and fascinating. When you deal with bilateral or multilateral diplomacy, you live in an amazing world and it will widen your personal horizons. It will deepen your knowledge. Diplomats should communicate and be able to talk about all subjects. It will bring a lot of satisfaction and contribute to your personal development, but these women should know they need to make sacrifices when it comes to taking care of families and their personal life. It's also a matter of passion and dedication. It's demanding, but it

brings a lot of satisfaction.

**Diplomat magazine:** In your opinion, what is the single most important women's issue we need to address globally at this moment? Violence against women, child marriage, genital mutilation, human trafficking all come to mind. And do you have any ideas as to how to do it?

**Melita Gabric (EU):** I would say that the EU and its member states have been putting a lot of attention and resources in supporting women and girls worldwide. Almost one third of the total EU funding is for supporting gender equality and the empowerment of women. We have to do more and we have pledged to do more. We know women and girls are disproportionately hit by the social and economic crisis of the pandemic and this is why we decided to enforce support for gender equality in development around the world. We really do need to promote participation of women and girls in all spheres of life. We've seen that a lot of the ground gained for women and girls was lost during this pandemic.

One priority that I would single out is women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship and promoting access to finance. [They are] worthwhile goals in themselves, but they also have positive effects on other crucial issues, such as gender-based violence or reproductive health and rights. Economically independent women have a much better chance to make decisions for themselves and their families. I would also say that once women are economically empowered, this also contributes to economic growth and prosperity of society in general. Rising waters help raise all boats. We [also] need to help girls to get enrolled in school and also to stay in school despite all the challenges that have been very much exacerbated by the COVID pandemic.

**Natasha Smith (Australia):** I think economic empowerment is crucial to addressing all the other issues. You see that as much in Australia and Canada as you do anywhere else in the world. We've put women and girls at the centre of our aid program and pivoted the entire aid program to COVID response and recovery, but still with a strong focus on gender equality.

Regarding solutions: If we all had the solutions, we'd all trot off and get our Nobel Prizes. But I think education is absolutely fundamental. I have a very long development background and there is so much evidence that the most important



## OUR PANEL

*Diplomat* invited all 29 woman ambassadors to participate in a question-and-answer session with editor Jennifer Campbell. These nine women, along with Melita Gabric, who chairs the group, agreed to participate.



Josefina Martinez Gramuglia  
Ambassador of Argentina



Natasha Smith  
High Commissioner for Australia



Josefina Vidal  
Ambassador of Cuba



Hanne Eskjaer  
Ambassador of Denmark



Michelle Cohen  
Ambassador of Dominican Republic



Konstantina Athanassiadou  
Ambassador of Greece



Maria Vass-Salazar  
Ambassador of Hungary



Souriya Otmani  
Ambassador of Morocco



Romy Vasquez  
Ambassador of Panama



thing you can do for someone is education. Data is also very important because what is measured gets addressed. You need the data to make the business case and [that's] how the solution gets the votes. Nutrition is also fundamental, as are reproductive health rights. Affordable child care is important to women's economic development and leadership. I agree entirely in terms of the No. 1 concern being how we build back fairer and make up the lost ground, particularly in terms of meeting the [United Nations] sustainable development goals because I

UNDER COVID, WE SAW THAT THERE WAS A RISE IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND THE ONLY CASES WE HAVE SEEN WERE THE CASES THAT WERE BEING REPORTED. COVID BARED MANY ELEMENTS. THE REAL IMPEDIMENT OF WOMEN VIS-À-VIS MEN IS THE LACK OF EQUAL STRENGTH AND THAT APPEARED IN THE RISE IN THE NUMBERS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE [INCIDENTS] WITH NO WITNESSES.

think we're behind. All of the things you listed are critical, but if we get economic inequality sorted, hopefully by the week-end [laughs], then I think addressing other areas becomes a lot easier.

**Maria Vass-Salazar (Hungary):** I couldn't agree more. My choice for key issues in the global picture includes education, which is essential for any further progress in women's empowerment, but I think the real challenge is how you make all these possibilities available for women in a culture that doesn't accept these

parameters. To get ownership in an environment where women learn their role from a very early age, how do you get through that barrier within the society? We should reach out, but what if it's not safe? That's the biggest challenge — to get leaders from within those societies to make changes.

The other issue from a different angle is the balance — how women in leadership roles need more assets so they can strike the right balance between their family life and professional life. That's also a factor that holds women back from progressing because they can't find a way to do both equally well.

**Konstantina Athanassiadou (Greece):** Under COVID, we saw that there was a rise in domestic violence and the only cases we have seen were the cases that were being reported. COVID bared many elements. The real impediment of women vis-à-vis men is the lack of equal strength and that appeared in the rise in the numbers of domestic violence [incidents] with no witnesses.

[Generally,] I would agree with what was being said on economic empowerment and programs around the world and I very much agree with whatever is being decided in the European Union because it goes to the right direction. But now we need something that is a product of extraordinary circumstances. We should have something binding on the part of progressive governments to include women's [voices] in the decision-making on post-COVID recovery. This will create real empowerment.

**Josefina Vidal (Cuba):** I agree that education and empowerment are important, pressing issues, but I agree also with my Greek colleague that we have to address in a very significant way gender violence because it has become worse during the pandemic. I don't have a magic solution to offer, because it expresses itself in different forms and in different places. For example, you have countries where physical violence is very visible, but you have others where economic violence happens, or psychological violence also exists. Those are most common in my country. We've been adopting measures and our new constitution gives expression not just to non-discrimination against women and [to] gender equality, but also the issue of gender violence in general.

Another issue is educational programs and media campaigns. We have a very strong emphasis on these specific issues,

including violence and gender equality, in the curriculum at all levels of our educational system. [This is also happening in professional settings.]

**Romy Vasquez (Panama):** In my country, domestic violence has increased, but it has also become open because basically, all the women had the worst jobs. They were taking care of children, elders and working at home. They became more vulnerable. But when I talk about violence against women, I want to become disruptive. When we were making decisions, women were not taken into account and that's another form of violence for me. We have a country where we have institutions. We have more women with degrees than men, but they are not getting the jobs, so that's another form of violence. In terms of the question itself, when we talk about genital mutilation or child marriage, even though we don't have those issues in my country, I think that all of those are a form of violence. The problem globally to me is that there's a market

THE LACK OF EDUCATION ON A GLOBAL SCALE IS REALLY ONE OF THE MOST CRUCIAL STARTING POINTS FOR GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN AND WOMEN IN GENERAL IN SOCIETY. IT'S REALLY LOSING A KEY OPPORTUNITY FOR A MORE EQUAL FUTURE AND IT'S REALLY LINKED TO THE PANDEMIC WHEN 250 MILLION KIDS AND YOUTH DIDN'T HAVE ACCESS TO EDUCATION.

of transactions where the product depends on acts of violence against women. Therefore, internationally, this is linked to organized crime and this becomes the most important issue to me. So this is the moment to act.



**Hanne Eskjaer (Denmark):** It's very difficult to choose one topic. What my colleagues have shown is that it's so interconnected so where do you start unravelling these systemic challenges? One thing that sifts through all our discussion is education. The lack of education — maybe not in some of the countries we represent, but on a global scale — is really one of the most crucial starting points for girls and young women and women in general in society. It's really losing a key opportunity for a more equal future and it's really linked to the pandemic when 250 million kids and youth didn't have access to education. The UN has estimated that during the pandemic, 90 per cent of all kids have lost access to education. The key issue when we talk about recovery is, will the girls be allowed back? When girls aren't going to school, the risk of them facing domestic violence, being forced into early marriage, teenage pregnancy, lack of hygiene and lack of access to one meal a day, is lost. If we can't grasp that now, as part of the key post-pandemic recovery, we really expose our girls to a huge challenge that we will feel for generations.

What is to be done? I don't think we get a Nobel Prize for any of the suggestions we came up with today, but we need a global response to this. We have UN organizations, UNICEF — they are asking for core funding for the programs. We need to invest in education. It doesn't come for free. I think we have to look at our teaching methods. Digital online learning — some of it will stay, but in some countries, there's a total lack of connectivity, so girls will face additional challenges. We need to ensure education is inclusive and equal. We are behind, but we've all committed to the sustainable development goal of education. We have a golden opportunity to work with Canada.

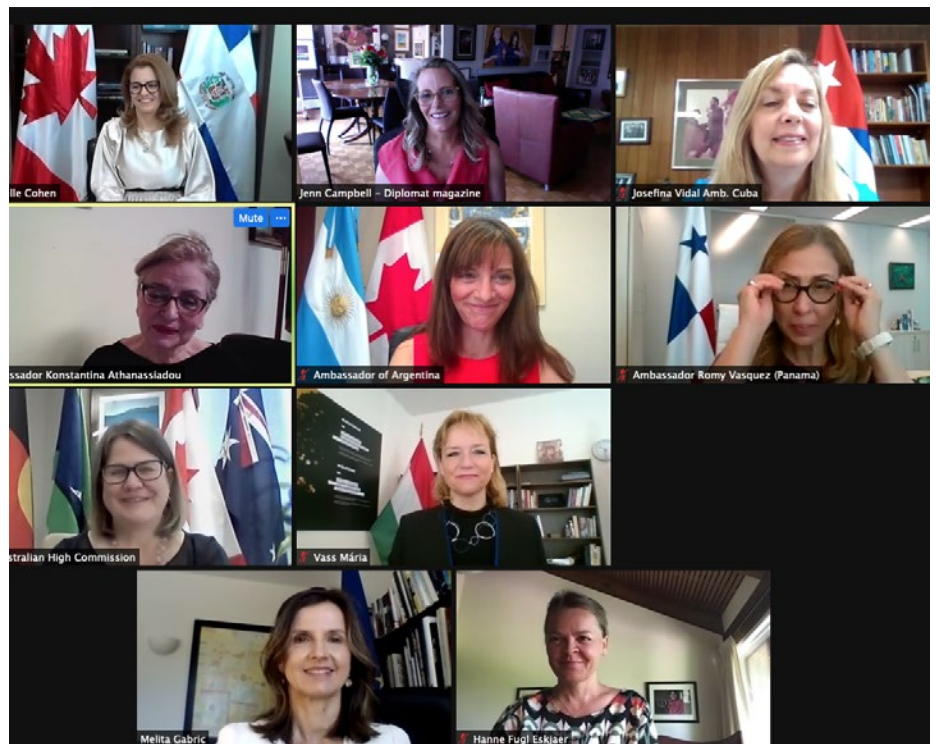
**Michelle Cohen (Dominican Republic):** I agree with Romy when she was saying all of those issues are mainly one, which is violence against women. My mom has worked her whole life on this topic. She had the opportunity to work with Congress so I [watched] her advocate for human rights and women's rights specifically. It is a challenge and child marriage is still an issue. When we put together the lack of education and research, it drives families into giving away their girls to someone who can take care of them because they can't. With lack of education from both sides, there is an abuse of power by men who put girls and women into a situation of weakness. That's where

the state has to come in with public policy to [create a more equal] society.

**Josefina Martinez Gramuglia (Argentina):** I completely agree with many of the issues, including education as a main priority. Regarding the main issues women face in Argentina, we've seen the struggle for equality and empowerment of women in all fields and we all acknowledge that this relates to power imbalances. It's reasonable to say we've come a long way and we're certainly on a track of change. At the same time, I have to agree with those who believe we have to augment women's power. It's no longer enough to advocate for women's rights, it's time to stand

23 per cent of high-ranked positions are held by women; of the 160 representations abroad, 26 per cent are led by women and in higher ranks of ambassadors and ministers, only 24 per cent of our diplomatic [representatives] are female. They're not impressive numbers, but there is hope. I remember when I entered the foreign affairs institute, women were 20 per cent of my cohort and that number is now almost 40 per cent on average. More women are entering the field, more are assuming leadership roles and, in a way, breaking centuries of tradition.

We have several measures to correct this imbalance. There was the creation of the bureau for women and gender af-



up and strengthen women's power. The diplomatic world has its own particular challenges and bringing more women into diplomacy is a symbol of hope and modernization, but as many of my colleagues already mentioned, in Argentina, we're also still underrepresented in senior diplomatic positions.

This is one of the main challenges we are facing. Again, it has already been mentioned, but we believe we should be included at every table where decisions are made, involved in the decision-making process to bring our perspective for better results. The feeling is that there is a need to remedy the imbalance of power that exists all around. At headquarters, only

fairs, there was a decision to establish a focal point dealing with gender-based discrimination and violence at work and it's actually working. And most important, last year, there was an express decision to appoint more women.

**Hanne Eskjaer (Denmark):** I think this is one of the areas where we are proud. We've had several women prime ministers, we've had several good role models so the trend is right, but the pace is way too slow. One of our main problems is that we need more women in leadership positions, where decisions are made. This is in the public sector and diplomacy, but also in the private sector and on corporate



boards. In Denmark, we don't have mandatory quotas, but a lot of people adopt them on a voluntarily basis. If you don't have a measurable target, it's difficult to see if you're achieving anything. Targets are important to make a change.

In our ministry, you cannot put forward any candidates for a leadership position without women being part of it. That makes people think who is out there. We have to work on our pipeline and strategically see the young talent and nurture it with mentorship, education and programs to start early on. Then you need the systems, [such as] parental leave. How do you make it easy for fathers and partners to take their share?

**Natasha Smith (Australia):** I think we're going a bit off piece from your question, so I'll stay over in the trees with everybody else. Like Denmark, I can't agree more on the importance of systemic change. We have seen a deliberate approach to getting more women into leadership positions. We have a strategy in our department. We are now over 40 per cent of heads of mission and we have a pipeline, but we had a problem where the pipeline seemed to break once you got to a certain level and that's now being very deliberately looked at and we have data and regular reviews and there's a governance process around our women and leadership strategy.

But reflecting on how a number of colleagues have said we have to work harder and be smarter, [I'd say] no. That's actually not the solution. I think that's how a lot of us have had to work, but that's not how it should work and I really do think it's fundamentally systemic change [that's needed] and I know that's much easier to say coming from Australia than it would be coming from many other places. But think of any women's issue — whether it's domestic violence, sexual assault in workplaces, gender pay gap — we have it all. No country has actually addressed all of this. From my perspective, I think the solutions have to be political, but also [approached] from a policy perspective. They've also got to be practical. And dare I say it — men are fundamental to the solution. I would actually like to see this panel with our male colleagues. This is with all due respect to my very dear colleagues here, but women talking about gender equality isn't going to fix gender equality. Of course, we're part of it, but we need to have our male colleagues and hear what they think and how they think the system can change. I think that's partly about parental leave, but also flexible work. One

of the catchphrases of the women's movement is that we hold up half the world and I think that's absolutely true, but we have to remember that there's someone holding up the other side. In Australia, we have a group called the Male Champions of Change. It's an incredibly powerful franchise now that started within government and it's in [sports,] an area where

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we've seen real progress. Some of our best advocates against gender-based violence are sports people.

As a member of two diversity groups in our department, I also really worry that we don't do enough to actually promote diversity writ large because we're all fighting for the same sort of rights and representation. We all need to be working together.

**Josefina Vidal (Cuba):** You were asking about the situation of women in our countries. Cuba has achieved remarkable results in terms of gender equality in the last 60 years. Cuban women now play a decisive role in Cuban society. We have attained important rights like salary [parity], maternity leave for one year. And now, sexual and reproduction rights and abortion. There is a national action plan on the advancement of women. But of course, like everyone else, we face challenges, even though 67 per cent of professionals in Cuba are women, 82 per cent of teachers and professors are women, 71 per cent of

health professionals, including 62 per cent of doctors are women, 53 per cent of the Cuban parliamentarians are women. [But] we still have work to do. We need more women in decision-making positions, not just in the state and government entities, but also in enterprises. We have cases of women heading huge state enterprises, but we need more women entrepreneurs and there are still manifestations of discrimination, of violence against women as a result of sexist stereotypes. We need more training, more knowledge preparation about gender issues among decision-makers and at the community level.

**Michelle Cohen (Dominican Republic):** This is the combined effort and active involvement of empowerment that leads communities to make our nations thrive. Even under the predominant male leadership, women are the largest group outside government responsible for driving social initiatives. In the case of Dominican Republic, we haven't achieved numbers in parliament, government and diplomacy. We are 54 per cent of the population of the country, but we still occupy less than 10 per cent of top cabinet positions. We've not yet had a woman president, but we've had three women vice-presidents, which is a milestone for a country like ours. But it's a pity to say that 10 per cent in the senate are women, 25 per cent in the lower chamber of Congress are women. So there is a job to do. If we haven't been able to occupy those positions, it is because we haven't done all we have to do. Once again, it's about us supporting each other.

**Maria Vass-Salazar (Hungary):** I think we have to think about how can we — with all this experience and thoughts [on the panel] — really make an impact? I'd like to refer back to Hanne's previous point about the global aspect of challenges that women and girls have. I think there is good momentum as the world and the largest international organizations are focusing on post-COVID recovery and there are major focuses on the economy and there's an incredible movement to include the environment in the recovery, but I think it's equally important to put this on the table, and very high on the agenda in post-recovery. How [do we] address the challenges that women have, particularly in the education area? There is good momentum for that and although the challenges are bigger because of the pandemic, there is an opportunity to really make a difference without trying to force any sort of ideas. The process is only



successful if it comes from within and there's ownership. I think the post-COVID recovery effort could be a great way to channel in these ideas in meaningful ways to make a difference.

**Romy Vasquez (Panama):** I think all of the comments are so important because we do have these challenges. Evidently, we need to work from within, promoting women becoming leaders in their community, we need more women in politics. We need to educate everybody and we need to educate women to participate in the community so they can become part of the decision-making process. Women participating in order to generate public policies, that is breaking the ceiling, too.

**Souriya Otmani (Morocco):** All the issues [listed in the question] represent various forms of physical and psychological violence against women. Violence against women worries me a lot. It is something unacceptable and any civilized and respectable society should fight against it. Recent United Nations figures on violence against women are alarming and in times of lockdown, the numbers have been multiplied by 10. Government and society should work together to bring to an end

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violence against women. It's not an easy task. All of us, on a daily basis, should talk to our fathers, brothers, husbands and sons and make them understand that when violence is exerted, the whole society is shaken and our family could be broken. It's really an issue of society and it is vital. We should really do our utmost to solve this issue and bring it to an end.

There are plenty of issues and challenges that women face every day. Regarding Morocco, I'm very proud about what's been achieved with respect to women. Mohammed VI really believes in Moroccan women's abilities. He's a promoter of women's condition. In my country, 25 years ago, having women in diplomacy wasn't thought about. Today, Morocco is represented by 30 women ambassadors and consuls-general on a total of 105 missions. It's a good proportion and those women are not only appointed ambassadors, but ambassadors in prestigious countries, such as the United States. We have a woman ambassador in Madrid and Ottawa. I'm not saying everything is perfect. We still have to improve our efforts in terms of diplomacy, education, health, empowerment and we should work on the patriarchal culture that is still prevailing. Moroccan women are strong. ▣

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# Ex-pats helping children in their native Uganda

By Jimmy Sebulime

Located in the Ugandan village of Kamengo, The Agnes Zabali Boys and Girls Club is dedicated to helping children living in poverty remain in school and have the opportunity to reach their full potential. The mission of The Agnes Zabali Boys and Girls Club (AZBGC), which partners with the Canada Africa Community Health Alliance, is to support orphans, vulnerable children and emerging young leaders with education, health care, skills training, capacity building, sports, leisure programs and projects that provide employment to members of the club.

The organization is named after founder Jimmy Sebulime's mother, in her memory. Agnes Zabali and her three sons emigrated to Canada when Sebulime was 12. She continued to support families in her native Uganda, and she was often joined by Sebulime. In 2012, when the two were returning to their village, they were in a car accident that took her life. AZBGC carries on her mission.

One of Zabali's proudest accomplishments was the AZBGC community centre, which was designed to provide a safe and supportive place where every child and adult is respected and valued in an environment of inclusion and acceptance. All children and youth in the project learn the value of hard work, honesty, fair play, a positive attitude, co-operation and respect for self and others. Children and youth are the centre of everything AZBGC does. By supporting education, basic health and through field trips and recreational activities, it encourages and empowers young people to develop healthy lifestyles, a lifelong passion for learning, leadership skills and a sense of social responsibility. This support also reduces poverty and inequalities. It is an organization with no political or religious affiliations that serves children of Kamengo regardless of their ethnicity, race or religion.

COVID-19 has challenged AZBGC. Young people in the project remain at home without the ability to go to school and are fearful, hungry and confused due to the strict measures put in place to prevent the spread of the virus. Nevertheless, AZBGC has been able to keep its various facilities, such as the community centre, library, women's resource centre



AZBGC supports orphans, vulnerable children and emerging young leaders with education, health care, skills training and sports and leisure programs in Uganda.

and outdoor sports courts open. When these facilities are open, youth have access to resources and a few young graduates are able to work.

There are several exciting recent developments, including the installation of a privacy fence at the Women's Resource Centre. The fence has enhanced safety and security for the young women and girls, and increased unity amongst them. This newfound sense of unity has empowered the young women to start their own basket-making business, catering-supply rental and cake-baking business. They will soon have a small non-electrical portable washing machine inside the women's resource centre — the first washer in the entire village, and it will generate employment for a number of youths.

Another initiative, in light of the pandemic, involved distributing food and hygiene products to members of the club and 86 households in the community. The need for basic hygiene supplies such as soap is great in the community due to unemployment.

AZBGC also purchased new cultural dance costumes in the hopes members of the club will be hired to perform at various local functions. It has also stocked up the community centre library, since most children remain out of school due to COVID.

The club also has a farm where it has planted beans, corn, green bananas and sweet potatoes as well as 300 trees to contribute to the fight against climate change.

Finally, to encourage good health, the club provides individual sports training at its outdoor sports courts. The recent training resulted in an invitation for eight girls to try out for the Ugandan National Basketball Team. In addition, there were scouts from various local schools at the tryout and it is AZBGC's hope that a number of girls will make the team, and some will earn sports and academic scholarships to schools that are outside their community. Sports have improved teamwork, empowered girls and created remarkable opportunities for many members of the club.

Education remains expensive for all members of the club and the organization hopes to continue assisting students with school fees, school supplies and accommodation for senior students so they can complete their studies. To support AZBGC's education and sports programs, contributions of any amount are welcome. Donations can be made through [azbgc.ca](http://azbgc.ca).

Jimmy Sebulime can be reached at [azboysandgirlsclub@gmail.com](mailto:azboysandgirlsclub@gmail.com) or call (613) 290-6118.



# Puppy love from Honduran diplomats

**F**our years ago, Honduran Ambassador Sofia Cerrato and her two sons decided to adopt a dog and what followed was a long-time devotion to the Ottawa-based Freedom Dog Rescue and its work.

“When we decided to adopt a dog, we started looking into rescue organizations and we ended up adopting two little girls,” Cerrato says. “After that, we decided to support any activities they were doing.”

Alexandro, her younger son, started volunteering on weekends for any activities Freedom Dog Rescue held, including adoption drives and fundraisers, such as photos-with-Santa events at Christmas.

“During the pandemic, everyone was struggling for funding,” Cerrato says. “They started asking on social media for bottle donations, so we went out and collected bottles and I invited my colleagues to help us all to collect some bottles, too, and we were able to donate them all to the Freedom Dog Rescue.”

They also raised some money for Ottawa’s Little Ray’s Nature Centre, the largest animal rescue in Canada, specialized in reptiles over the years. Its website says it also boasts an award-winning live travelling museum exhibit program, which it tours for birthday parties and children’s events in the region.

“We decided to organize a bottle drive and we collected a lot of bottles for them,” Cerrato says.

The family has continued to organize bottle drives for Freedom Dog Rescue, too. In addition, because the Ottawa Diplomatic Association couldn’t do its annual ball last year, Cerrato asked some embassies that had contributed items for the silent auction if she could pass them on to the Freedom Dog Rescue for its silent auction fundraiser to rescue 100 dogs from the Caribbean and bring them to Canada. All said yes.

And, at the end of June, Cerrato was organizing what might be the first of many backyard “puppy yoga” fundraisers. Because of continuing COVID restrictions, they had to keep the group small, but were still able to have some fun while raising money for the rescue. 🐾



Honduran Ambassador Sofia Cerrato and her son, Alejandro, 16, have been raising money for Freedom Dog Rescue.



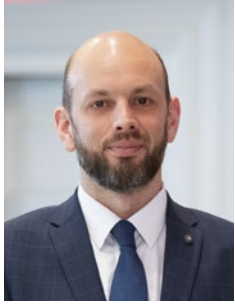
Molly, left, is a 13-year-old Shih Tzu and Maltese mix, and Stella is a 10-year-old Shih Tzu. Stella has been the family’s long-time pet and they adopted Molly and Misty from Freedom Dog Rescue during



The black and white pup, Misty, is a 15-year-old Shih Tzu.



# Lithuania: A gateway to EU market



By Darius Skusevicius

**W**hat could a small European country by the Baltic Sea and a G7 country that's more than 150 times larger and spans the Atlantic and Pacific oceans possibly have in common? Plenty, as it turns out, with innovation being one.

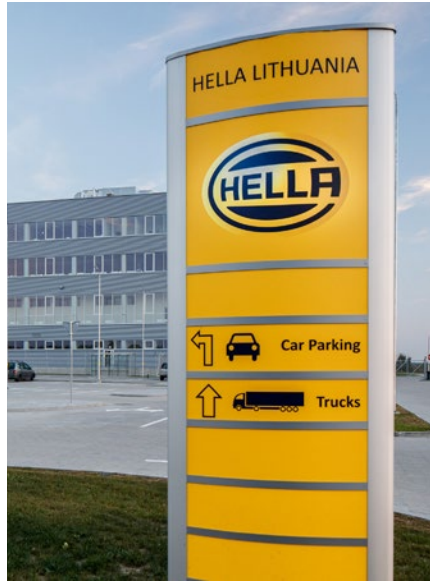
But let's start at the beginning. Lithuania and Canada have been close partners for decades — this year will mark the 30th anniversary of restored diplomatic relations between the two countries. We have many bilateral cultural and political ties, too, but for now, we'll turn to trade, which is relatively low, but diversified and constantly growing.

In 2020, the trade turnover with Canada reached \$213.5 million, with total Lithuanian exports to Canada amounting to \$180.6 million, and imports from Canada at \$33 million. The CETA agreement has opened new corridors for collaboration and Lithuania is a strong contender to become an entry point for Canadian companies to trade in the European Union.

The current bilateral trade landscape does not reflect the existing potential and possible future of bilateral economic co-operation. Traditionally, Lithuanian exports to Canada consist mainly of mineral fuels, oils and bituminous materials, wood and products — primarily furniture — timber, bedding and other fabrics, while Canada exports ground vehicles, airplanes, electrical machines and parts.

Untapped potential remains in the innovation sectors of fintech, ICT, cybersecurity, life sciences, defence technologies and startup ecosystem development.

Lithuania is a reliable member of the EU and part of the NATO and OECD family. In other words, Shakespeare's to be precise, it is "small but mighty."



Electronics manufacturer Hella was attracted to locate in Lithuania by the country's tax incentives and fast-track incorporation program.

For the past several years, the country has been ranked in the Top 10 on European and world indexes for ICT, fintech and other innovative sectors. While the population is comparatively small at three million, the talent pool has been recognized by foreign companies establishing in Lithuania and it offers the benefit of flexibility and fast adoption of innovations.

Lithuania is a recognized fintech hub and among the most attractive jurisdictions in the EU. The Lithuanian fintech sector grew by 45 per cent in 2018, with 230 fintech companies operating in the country. Our regulatory environment and the benefits it offers have been acknowledged by startups and world-class fintech companies. A fast-track licensing program by the Bank of Lithuania has attracted big-name players such as Revolut, Google and TransferGo. The Bank of Lithuania offers the fastest licensing processes in the EU and additional supports for foreign companies, namely our Newcomer program, Regulatory and Blockchain sandboxes, RegTech and SupTech solutions.

Lithuania's life sciences industry has been skyrocketing over the past two decades and is now regarded as one of the most advanced in Central and Eastern Europe, registering 25-per-cent annual growth within the biotechnology and

pharmaceutical research and production sector, with about 90 per cent of the production being exported. Indeed, \$923 million worth of goods were exported in 2020. Life sciences constitute approximately two per cent of GDP, which is six times more than the EU average, with a goal to reach five per cent of GDP by 2030, with investments from the government. Lithuania is a perfect place to discover state-of-the-art scientific infrastructure and investor-ready startups in the Baltics. The success of the Lithuanian biotechnology industry starts with the well-developed educational system involving professional academic institutions and 16 open R&D centres. This year, Life Sciences Baltics 2021 Digital Forum, the largest life sciences event in the Baltic countries, will take place in our capital of Vilnius, and will bring together the brightest minds in the field from across Europe and beyond to put ideas into motion and turn connections into impactful projects.

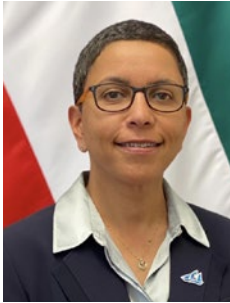
Lithuania is also active in ensuring an attractive bureaucratic environment for foreign investors to establish in the country. Newly adopted legislation — the Green Corridor — offers significant tax incentives and dramatically cuts red tape, making it quicker and easier for international businesses to establish and grow large-scale operations in Lithuania. The new rules will reduce the administrative burden on business and the number and duration of required steps and will create favourable conditions for starting and developing activities and attracting domestic and foreign large-scale investment projects. For manufacturing companies, a wide network of Free Economic Zones provides tax incentives and fast-track incorporation. It's a program that attracted companies such as Hollister Incorporated, Hella and Continental, among others.

In many cases, Lithuania should be considered as the best entry point to the EU market. With many opportunities aligning with Canadian federal as well as provincial interests, the opportunities for collaboration are plentiful.

**Darius Skusevicius is Lithuania's ambassador to Canada. Reach him on LinkedIn, by email at [amb.ca@urm.lt](mailto:amb.ca@urm.lt) or by phone at (613) 567-5458.**



# Kuwait: Turning to the private sector



By Reem Alkhaled

**A**s a resource-rich country, Kuwait is diligently looking into steering the economy towards more private-sector activities, as well as exploiting other potential markets.

Kuwait relies almost solely on its energy sector, with oil being the main product of export. In 2018, the nation sold approximately \$79.2 billion worth of the commodity, which accounted for almost 90 per cent of export revenues. In addition to crude oil, exports include a number of oil-related products, such as petrochemicals, as well as non-oil exports, including manufactured fertilizers, ethylene products and re-exported goods.

Kuwait imports a significant percentage of products consumed by the local population. In 2018, product imports totalled around \$34 billion, mainly comprised of industrial equipment, machinery and capital equipment, durable and semi-durable goods and pharmaceuticals.

In 2020, Canadian merchandise exports to Kuwait reached a value of \$96.3 million, and imports from Kuwait stood at \$277,095. Canada's top merchandise exports to Kuwait included machinery, cereals and motor vehicles, while imports from Kuwait contained crude and refined petroleum, fertilizers and food products.

One of Kuwait's key objectives is to position the country as a global centre for the petrochemical industry. A Kuwaiti Petroleum Corporation subsidiary, the Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company (KUFPEC), invested in Canada by acquiring 30 per cent of Chevron's working interest in the Kaybob Duvernay shale formation in late 2014. The Kaybob project is KUFPEC's first onshore unconventional liquids-rich tight gas asset. This project provides employment opportuni-



In 2019, Kuwait exported \$59.8 billion worth of goods, making it the world's 49th largest exporter.

ties for qualified locals and has allowed multiple secondment assignments to Kuwaiti nationals, enabling enhanced experience in shale development with tier-one international operators in the areas of hydraulic fracturing, best practices and KPC subsidiary collaboration. Moreover, the Kaybob project has assisted KUFPEC with establishing an unconventional centre of excellence, which is recruiting world-class staff, working with Canadian technology partners and Canadian R&D. To date, 214 wells have been spudded [begun the drilling process], 199 wells completed and 190 have been tied into production.

Kuwait is looking for other ways to diversify its economy. It plans to formulate a new energy strategy, combined with a plan to foster economic diversification and reduce fossil fuel dependency.

With foreign investment steadily increasing, the nation is ready for the opportunities that emerging markets in Canada could bring. Our two countries have always shared good economic relations. In 2019, a Kuwait Canada Economic Forum was held under the chairmanship of Kuwait's finance minister, which fostered opportunities for investment and discussed the government's concrete steps towards achieving its ambitions to boost private-sector investments in various areas.

The structural modifications made to the market, alongside changes to the legislative framework governing it, have paved the way for foreign investment.

Kuwait currently has a free trade policy under a free economic system where customs duties do not exceed 5 per cent for most goods imported from outside the customs union of the Gulf Co-operation Council. More than 400 types of goods are exempted from customs duties, mostly foodstuffs.

While non-Kuwaitis can own shares in Kuwaiti joint-stock companies, and share in companies, under the Kuwaiti investment rules, a foreign investor can also establish Kuwaiti companies with a foreign capital share of 100 per cent. And, they can transfer the ownership of their investment to another foreign or national investor. Foreign investors have the right to transfer their profits and capital abroad. To create more sustainable opportunities for investments, foreign investors can be exempt from income tax and any other taxes for up to 10 years and have full or partial exemption from customs duties on imports required by the project.

Kuwait is keen on creating a safe and attractive environment for foreign investors and provides all the necessary incentives to facilitate the needs for successful investment in line with the State of Kuwait's 2035 Vision.

This vision, which stems from the leadership of Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, aims to transform the nation into a regional, commercial and financial hub. This ambitious plan intends to position the country as a centre for trade and finance and would see its economy, health care, infrastructure and public administration become world-class leaders of innovation and prosperity. It will also seek advancements in education, youth training and overall development by bringing into focus the critical role of scientific research and digitalization in economic development and overall prosperity. Taking advantage of its balanced international foreign policy, legislative system and distinguished strategic location, Vision 2035 will chart a path of progress and prosperity that will benefit Canadians, foreign investors and Kuwaitis alike.

Reem Alkhaled is Kuwait's ambassador to Canada. Reach her by phone at 613-780-9999 and by email at [ambassadoroffice@kuwaitembassy.ca](mailto:ambassadoroffice@kuwaitembassy.ca).



# Finland and Canada: Few barriers to trade



*By Roy Eriksson*

**F**inland and Canada are similar countries in many respects. We have cold winters and share the same values, such as gender equality, democracy and human rights, and are passionate about ice hockey. Finland and Canada see climate change as one of the most pressing issues to tackle. The climate is warming twice as fast in the North and that is why Finland has a goal of being carbon neutral by 2035 and being an example for others to follow.

Finland and Canada have had relations for more than 100 years through migration, but official relations were established much later. In fact, next year we will celebrate the 75th anniversary of official diplomatic relations between our countries. Our trade has developed favourably and now it's almost in balance. According to Finnish statistics, in 2020, Finland sent \$803.7 million worth of goods to Canada, and imported \$797.2 million worth of goods from Canada. The three biggest categories in our exports to Canada were machinery, electronic equipment and pharmaceutical products. Likewise, the three biggest import categories from Canada were ore and scrap metal, motor vehicles, coal and coke. Finland has an advantage in selling equipment and machinery to Canada, as our products are designed to function in wintry conditions — an important selling point for the Canadian buyer.

Finland is the most forested country in Europe, with three quarters of its surface covered by forests. The forestry sector has been the most important industry in Finnish economic history. It started with tar that was used in sailing boats from the medieval times onwards to keep the vessels watertight. In the 19th Century, we started to produce lumber and pulp,



Forestry is Finland's most important sector. Ponsse Oyj is a company based in Finland that manufactures forestry vehicles and machinery.

as well as modest amounts of paper. After the Second World War, we were a major paper exporter and Canada was one of our strongest competitors. Today, the importance of exporting printing paper has declined in both countries, as the demand is declining due to digitalization. The forest industry has had to reinvent itself and through research and development, it has come up with new products that can also help fight climate change. There are already new products based on wood material, including plastics, composites, liquid fuel, nano cellulose, lignin, medicines and textile fibres.

More than 83 per cent of all renewable energy sources in Finland are wood-based, using the side streams in lumber production, as well as byproducts of chemical processes in pulp production. Canada is looking into how to introduce similar customs in its forest industry and thus getting more renewable energy from this industry. As Finland is one of the leading countries in sustainable forestry, there is an exchange of knowledge also in this field with Canada. If this could help in preventing large forest fires in Canada, this would have an immense effect on carbon emissions, as these forest fires release more carbon than all cars on Canada's roads combined.

The common fight against climate change plays a big role in our bilateral

relations with Canada. The Finnish Embassy is looking into co-operation in fields that could cut emissions or enhance the effective use of energy and resources. A good example of this is the above-mentioned co-operation in the forestry sector. This also ties in nicely with the themes of bio-circular economy, where both countries are looking for sustainable solutions.

A new and exciting opportunity for co-operation is battery technology and minerals. Canada aims to become a leader in the production of electric vehicles and batteries in the medium term. Finland has decided to become a leader in Europe in battery technology — from lithium production to battery recycling. After initial contacts, I hope this will develop into fruitful partnerships between enterprises on both sides of the Atlantic.

Trading between Finland and Canada falls under the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between the EU and Canada. Most goods have low tariffs or are tariff-free, so, from a trading perspective, there are very low barriers. The EU and Finland offer ample opportunities for Canada to diversify its trading partners.

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This iconic view of Jerusalem was the site of some of the fighting between Israelis and Palestinians in May, some of which was facilitated by Iran supplying the Palestinians with arms. The Al-Aqsa Mosque, shown here, is considered to be the third holiest site in Islam and behind it is The Dome of the Rock, another sacred Muslim site.

# Iran's starring role in the May 2021 conflict

Arming Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad essentially gave Iran a proxy war with Israel. It's not over yet.

*By Joe Varner*

**T**he very recent fighting between Israel and the terrorist organizations Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) — both banned in Canada as foreign terrorist entities — is not about age-old grievances between Israel and Palestinians. It is about Iran.

During Quds celebrations last year, according to the Associated Press, Iran's supreme leader Ali Khamenei called Israel a "cancerous tumour" that "will undoubtedly be uprooted and destroyed." In January 2021, Iranian lawmakers drafted legislation that would obligate the Iranian government to initiate steps for the "destruction" of Israel by 2040. Ali Shirazi, Khamenei's representative in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' (IRGC) Sar-Allah Headquarters in Tehran, on Quds Day in May, warned that the IRGC was fully ready to act: "If Israel pursues adventurism, we can destroy the forged regime in [fewer] than 24 hours."



He stressed that Iran had the missile capability to reach Israel. Shirazi went on to promise that young Iranians would one day “witness a world without Israel.” The recent fighting between Israel and the Gaza terrorist factions is about Iran wanting hegemony over the Middle East. It is about pushing the U.S. from the region and destroying Israel through Iran’s proxies. In this case, it is Hamas and the PIJ [Palestinian Islamic Jihad] that Tehran funds, trains, equips and directs.

For Iran, this is also a chance to split Israel from its new-found Arab friends in the Abraham Accords — UAE, Bahrain, Sudan, Morocco and Oman — that have essentially formed a coalition against Iran. The problem for Iran is that many of these Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia, hate and have outlawed the Mus-

more cash. Iran is likely a year and mere months away from producing nuclear weapons for delivery from its ballistic missiles.

The Iranian regime may have had reason to believe, based on diplomatic negotiations with the Biden administration, that the flare-up in violence with Israel might be overlooked. The Biden administration, after promising to consult with allies, ignored Israeli and other regional partners’ concerns and entered new negotiations with Iran about its nuclear program to reinvigorate the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) that former U.S. president Barack Obama struck in 2015 and Donald Trump killed in 2018. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani’s spokesman cautioned that the new nuclear deal, even if agreed to by state representa-

the Yemeni Civil War and then delisted the Houthis as a terrorist organization.

#### Offering Iran sanction concessions

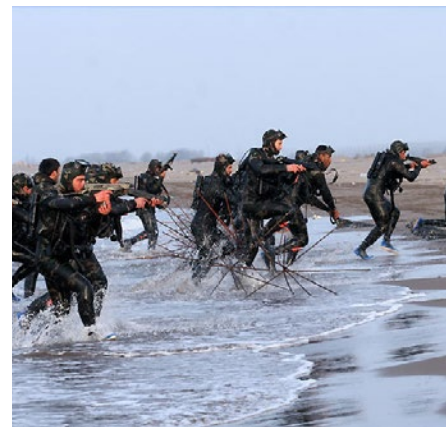
The Biden administration has given as much as \$200 million to the Palestinian Authority (PA), and a new Iran nuclear deal would remove sanctions, giving Iran tens of billions of dollars to spend on international terrorism. The Obama administration eased sanctions in its 2015 nuclear deal with Tehran, only to witness well-armed, trained, funded and motivated Iranian proxy militias pop up across



Iranian Air Force F-14 Tomcats fly in formation. Iranian officials have stressed that their country has the missile capability to reach Israel.

lim Brotherhood and Hamas found its origins in the Muslim Brotherhood. While Arab countries support the Palestinian people and Palestinian Authority, they are prepared to turn a blind eye to Israel, degrading a strong point of the Muslim Brotherhood in Hamas and a major client of Shia Iran. Tehran also wants to push U.S. President Joe Biden for a new nuclear deal, an easing or end of sanctions and

tives, would still have to be approved by “higher-up” in Tehran, giving Khamenei the ultimate veto. Not surprisingly, Iran has admitted it has already surpassed the limits on its nuclear program set by the JCPOA and several areas of cheating have been reported by a variety of international sources. The Biden administration removed support from Saudi Arabia’s fight with the Iranian proxy Houthi militia in



Navy members of the IRGC commandos take part in exercises in the Persian Gulf’s Strait of Hormuz.

the region. It has been reported that the Biden administration has offered Tehran even more money and concessions on 1,000 sanctions outside the nuclear realm, including the ransom of U.S. citizens held by Iran. American Democrats have seized upon Palestinian and Arab propaganda and now possess large vocal pro-Arab, pro-Palestinian and even pro-Iran lobbies that threaten to splinter party unity, forcing Biden to take a more measured tone than previous U.S. presidents. Finally, there is evidence that the Iranian leadership views the new Biden administration, and Turkish condemnation of Israel, along with Russia and China and Iran growing in power, as evidence that time is shifting against Israel and that it is losing Western support.

Iran wages war through proxy militias throughout the region and through rocket and drone attacks, so it has plausible deniability, in an attempt to avoid all-out war. Hamas was formed in the 1980s as a Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood with the goal of destroying Israel. In 2006, Hamas won the absolute majority in Gaza’s general elections and, in 2007, it seized Gaza by force of arms





The Biden administration, after promising to consult with allies, ignored Israeli and other regional partners' concerns and entered new negotiations with Iran about its nuclear program. Shown here is U.S. President Joe Biden in conversation with then-Israeli president Benjamin Netanyahu, during which Biden reaffirmed his strong support for Israel's right to defend itself against rocket attacks from Hamas.

in a coup. Since then, the West Bank has been controlled by the moderate Fatah Party of the old Palestine Liberation Organization under Mahmoud Abbas and the Palestinian Authority, while Gaza has remained under Hamas control. Palestinian elections were supposed to take place in 2009, but due to the prospect of a Hamas win, Abbas has steadfastly refused to call elections, with the result that both groups have been in power in their own fiefdoms without democratic elections for 16 years. According to the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) respected *Military Balance*, Hamas is estimated to be between 15,000 and 20,000 strong with one commando unit, 27 battalions and 100 companies of paramilitary troops. It should be noted that Hamas has anti-tank and anti-aircraft missiles, largely of Russian origin, and a variety of light and heavy arms, in addition to Iranian-designed Fajr-5 ground-to-ground rockets and Shehab kamikaze drones. The Shehab drones closely resemble the Iranian Ababil drones, which

**IN 2008, HAMAS  
ANNOUNCED THAT IT  
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ENTITY WENT TO  
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WAS IN 2014 WHEN  
IT LAUNCHED 4,000  
ROCKETS IN A MONTH  
AT THE JEWISH STATE.**

have also been sent to the Houthi militia in Yemen.

Palestinian Islamic Jihad is based out of Damascus and was formed in 1981 with the goal of destroying the Jewish state. Like Hamas and six other Palestinian terrorist factions operating in Gaza, it is opposed to the 1993 and 1995 Oslo Accords and a two-state solution. PIJ has approximately 8,000 lightly armed troops, but it is armed with rockets designed and/or provided by Iran. Unlike Hamas, it offers no humanitarian aid to the Gaza population, nor does it engage in any form of diplomacy.

In 2008, Hamas announced that it would only strike Israeli military targets. The last time the terrorist entity went to war with Israel was in 2014 when it launched 4,000 rockets in a month at the Jewish state. Meanwhile, in 2018, PIJ fired 800 rockets at Israel and, in 2019, it fired another 600 while Hamas generally stayed clear of the fighting.

This time, there have been more than





U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and then-Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu delivered statements to the press at the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem, May 25, 2021.

4,360 rockets launched in a week at Israeli civilian targets by PIJ and Hamas at an estimated cost of \$175 million to Hamas. In some cases, Hamas and PIJ fired rockets in salvos of 72 or more in just minutes. According to the Gatestone Institute, an official with the PIJ reportedly said, "the rockets we use to pound Tel Aviv, our weapons, and our food are provided by Iran." Iranian news media reported that Brig.-Gen. Esmail Ghaani, commander of Iran's IRGC-Quds Force, spoke by phone with Ismael Haniyeh, chairman of Hamas' political bureau, to discuss developments

**IRAN HAS PROXY  
MILITIAS IN GAZA,  
LEBANON, SYRIA AND  
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amid its conflict with Israel. Iran's IRGC has warned that the Houthis in Yemen, another proxy militia, may soon have missiles with the range to strike Israel. IRGC Aerospace Forces Commander Brig.-Gen. Amir Ali Hajizadeh warned: "Don't be surprised if you hear in a near future that Yemen acquires missiles that can target the Zionist regime." Iran has proxy militias in Gaza, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen to bracket Israel with rocket fire, and they are prepared to do it. The Lebanese daily *Al-Akhbar* reported that Iran, Hezbollah and Hamas had set up a joint command



headquarters for the fighting. Iran used a drone flown from a base in neighbouring Syria to attack Israel in 2018, and Hezbollah was directed by Tehran to send a “killer drone” team to an area near the Golan in 2019, with both attacks failing to reach their targets.

Meanwhile, according to the International Institute for Strategic Studies’ *Military Balance 2021*, the Israeli Defence Force (IDF), despite still relying on national service conscripts, is one of the best-trained, led, equipped, motivated, funded and strategically and operationally innovative militaries in the world. The regular Israeli military, including conscripts, is 169,500 troops strong and has 465,000 reservists to call upon in times of crisis. It is said to possess a robust, but modest, nuclear force that can be deployed by land, sea and air forces. The IDF is without a regional peer and is geared to operations in and near Israel’s borders within the Middle East and to counter asymmetric military threats

with its military forces. It has a decided advantage in precision-strike and missile-defence capabilities.

#### **Palestinians’ David to Israel’s Goliath**

Israeli military superiority has led to the ‘David versus Goliath’ comparisons with its Palestinian adversaries, once said to use rocks, small arms and suicide bombs in backpacks and vests. Today, the David versus Goliath myth of Hamas activists throwing stones at Israeli soldiers armed with tanks still exists in the minds of those with notions of anti-Semitism, oblivious to the fact that Palestinian terror groups are now armed with Iranian designed-rockets, suicide drones and Russian air defence systems and anti-tank rockets. Iran’s Revolutionary Guards said in a statement: “The intifada [Palestinian uprising] has gone from using stones to powerful, precise missiles ... and, in the future, the Zionists [Israel] can expect to endure deadly blows from within the occupied territories.” Hamas has shown the capabilities of

its multiple launch rocket systems during the fighting, and its new unmanned submarines and naval suicide squads.

The most recent Gaza violence was



Ismail Abdel Salam Ahmed Haniyeh is a senior political leader of Hamas.



Esmail Qaani is a brigadier general of the IRGC.



On Quds Day in May — pictured here — Ali Shirazi, Ali Khamenei’s representative in the IRGC headquarters in Tehran, warned that the IRGC was fully ready to act.

initiated on May 10, 2021, by Israeli police raids on the al-Aqsa Mosque compound and clashes with Palestinians during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. Stalemate in negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority on Jewish settlements, the return of Palestinian refugees, evictions of Palestinians from disputed areas, the status of East Jerusalem and the Temple Mount are decades-old problems that provide tinder for the fighting, but have not ignited into war in a long time. Even when former U.S. president Donald Trump announced the move of the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, strengthening Israel’s claim to the entire city as its capital, there were not salvos of rockets fired at Israeli cities. Palestinians and Israelis want to live in peace. On May 17, Iran’s Khamenei said that “liberating Palestine” is the “No. 1 goal of the Islamic ummah [religious group],” warning that even a new “nuclear deal” will not end the clash of civilizations in the Middle East.



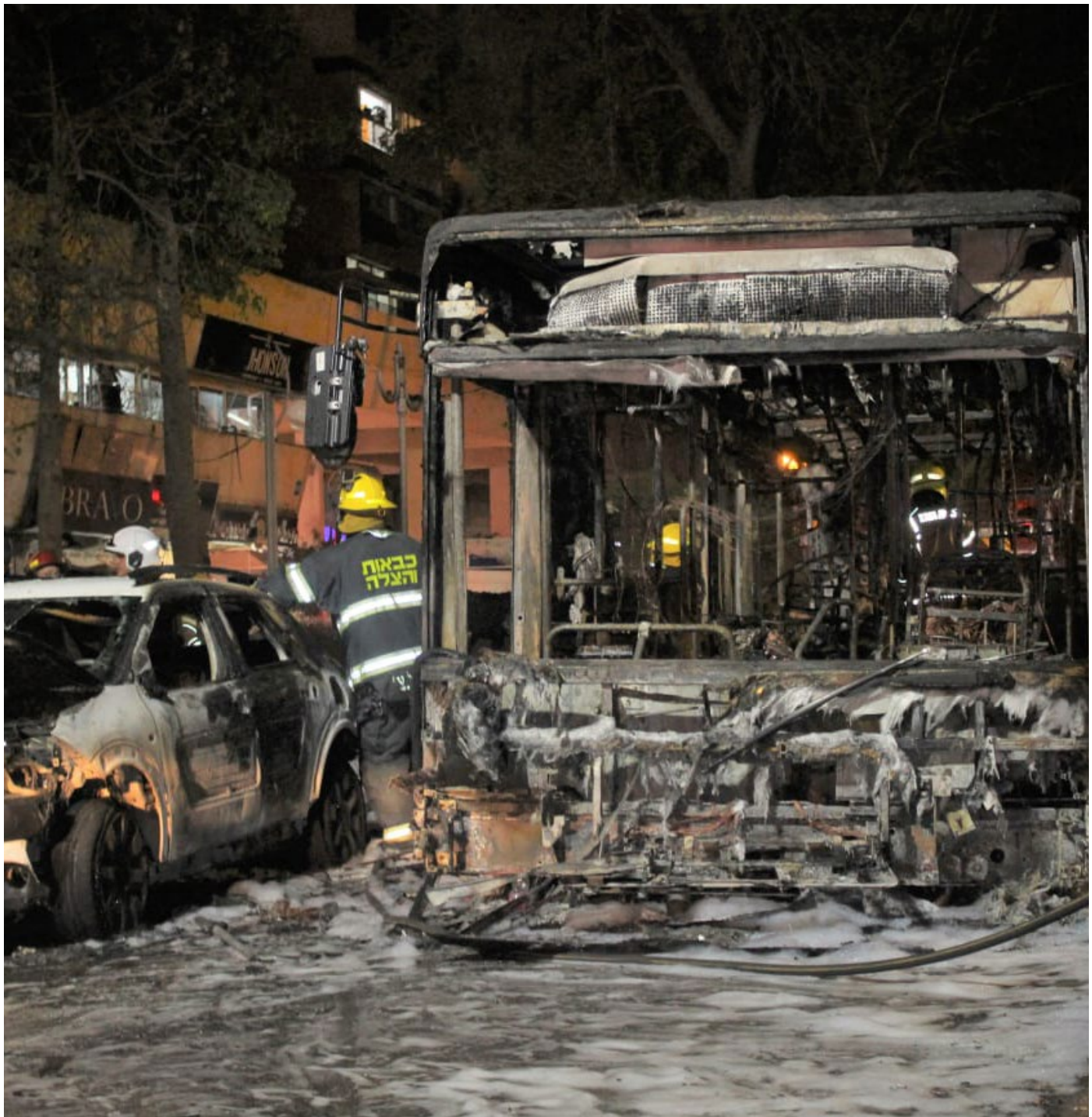
According to Palestinian and Israeli sources, Brig.-Gen. Esmail Qaani, commander of the IGRC Quds Force, sent a letter to Mohammed Deif, the supreme commander of Hamas's military wing and pledged that Tehran would not abandon the Palestinians. As well, in May, IGRC Maj. Gen. Hossein Salami pledged Iran's unwavering support for the Palestinians. In a TV statement, Ismail Haniyeh, Hamas leader and a former prime minister of

the Palestinian Authority, thanked Iran for providing weapons to attack Israel. It was later reported that Tehran had sent an armed drone from either Syria or Iraq to attack Israel, but it was shot down by Israeli defences near Beit She'an.

#### Israelis warn civilians

Israel has made every effort to avoid civilian casualties, even as it increasingly stands accused of being reckless and

overly aggressive in prosecuting war against its terrorist enemies and critiqued on the proportionality of Palestinians killed and wounded compared to the number of Israelis killed and wounded in the fighting. Hamas and PIJ violate the rules of war by hiding their military facilities among civilians, hoping to avoid attack. IDF has done all it could to ensure minimum loss of civilian life by selecting targets where the lowest levels of civil-



This bus and car were hit by rockets in Holon, a central coastal industrial city in Israel, during the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians in May.



ians would be harmed. It has made radio broadcasts in Arabic, sent SMS messages and even phoned civilians inside the strip to warn them of impending strikes, a fact confirmed by interviews between Gazan civilians and the Associated Press. The Israelis drop a non-explosive device on the roof of targets as a warning 15 minutes before they launch a strike against the building, to warn people to evacuate. Gaza is a territory under the control of Hamas, which has created a terrorist pseudo-state much like ISIS, and one that has engaged in the ethnic cleansing of Gazan Christians. Hamas has funds to build huge underground tunnel networks, but does nothing to protect the civilian population in Gaza because it needs to be able to hide military facilities among civilians.

In fact, at least 680 Hamas-fired rockets came down in Gaza, causing civilian ca-

**AT LEAST 680 HAMAS-FIRED ROCKETS CAME DOWN IN GAZA, CAUSING CIVILIAN CASUALTIES AMONG PALESTINIANS WHILE ISRAEL'S DEFENCE SYSTEM WAS 90 PER CENT SUCCESSFUL IN DEFENDING ISRAELI TARGETS.**

sualties among Palestinians while Israel's defence system was 90 per cent successful in defending Israeli targets.

Canadians will have read and heard much about a building housing AP and Al Jazeera being destroyed by Israeli fire, but likely will not have heard that they were co-located, again, with Hamas's offices. The fact of Hamas presence in the media building attack was confirmed by intelligence provided to the U.S. by Israel and members of the former Obama administration familiar with the facility. It later emerged that the target was home to Hamas military research offices attempting to find a way of defeating Israel's criti-



Israeli police patrol the streets of Lod in the central district of Israel during the conflict in May.



Riots occurred in the city of Lod, a suburb of Tel Aviv that is home to Jews and Arabs.





Hatzor Israeli Air Force Base: A ceasefire took hold on May 21 after 11 days of fighting and with U.S. intervention and support from the United Nations, Egypt and Qatar to the then-Netanyahu government in Tel Aviv.

cal Iron Dome system. According to the *Arab Weekly* and ABC News, the elites of Hamas live abroad in four- and five-star hotels with their families to avoid Israeli attack and suffering experienced by the rest of the residents of Gaza.

For Hamas and PIJ, this is an opportunity to outmanoeuvre the Palestinian Authority and the old Palestine Liberation Organization, headed by Mahmoud Abbas, who has been in power without democratic election since 2009. A ceasefire took hold on May 21, after 11 days of fighting and with U.S. intervention and support from the UN, Egypt and Qatar to the then-Netanyahu government in Tel Aviv and even then, after agreeing to the ceasefire terms, Hamas fired one more salvo at Israeli cities. *Reuters* reported 143 Palestinian civilians killed in the fighting, including 65 children. A total of 1,900 were wounded and 90,000 displaced. Israel saw

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12 civilians and 1 soldier killed and at least 100 wounded in the battle with Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. The Israeli military attacked and destroyed Hamas's extensive metro tunnel network in Gaza, its rocket factories, weapons laboratories, storage facilities, suicide submarines, suicide squads and anti-tank missiles, and killed more than 200 militants, including 25 senior figures in Hamas and PIJ.

#### **Israelis exploiting Hamas**

We now have a ceasefire under which Hamas and PIJ have stopped firing rockets at Israeli cities, and Israel has halted its counter-attacks. This is very simple. But that is not what Tehran wants in the long run because the Iranian leadership believes time is on its side. Hamas and PIJ are very happy to act on Iran's behalf as that is what they are paid, trained and armed to do. Samir Ghattas, former





International Quds Day is an annual event held on the last Friday of Ramadan and initiated by Iran in 1979 to express support for the Palestinians and oppose Zionism and Israel.

Egyptian parliamentarian and head of the Egyptian Middle East Forum for Strategic Studies, said, “Iran exploited Hamas and the Islamic Jihad for its own benefit only, and if it wanted the interest of the Palestinians, it would have contributed to the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip.... Tehran has not contributed or made donations for humanitarian or reconstruction projects in Gaza....” Arab journalist and media commentator Amjad Taha said, “the Hamas militias in the Gaza Strip belong to Iran. What these militias recently did was serve Iran’s Revolutionary Guards Corps.” Meanwhile, Tehran goes about its determined way to destroy a Western liberal democracy in Israel and to settle accounts with its Arab Sunni neighbours for the greater glory of a new Persian Empire and the triumph of the Shia sect over the dominant Sunni branch of Islam.

Wars, insurgencies and terrorism

are ended through political means, not through the barrel of a gun, not through rocket attacks or precision air strikes. This ceasefire represents a temporary break. Hamas and PIJ had an estimated 15,000 rockets before this bout of fighting. Hezbollah could rain 8,000 rockets a day down on the Jewish state. This spring, Iran displayed a new domestically developed and produced combat drone called the “Gaza” that it said had a range of 2,000 kilometres. According to Iranian authorities, the new drone could fly for 35 hours and carry 13 bombs and 500 kilograms of electronics equipment. It is an ominous warning of things to come and a political solution looks all but impossible now and in the distant future. Ultimate power in Iran rests with Khamenei and the Iranian president serves at his pleasure and direction. Iran’s new president-elect, Ebrahim Raisi, — nicknamed “the butcher of Tehran” —

is the Islamic Republic’s hardline chief of the judiciary and as such chief executioner known for mass murders of his own people. For his part, Israel’s new prime minister, Naftali Bennett, warned in June that Raisi’s election heralded the birth of a “regime of brutal hangmen.” Bennett went on to further caution that Raisi’s election was “the last chance for the world powers to wake up before returning to the nuclear agreement and to understand who they’re doing business with. These guys are murderers, mass murderers: a regime of brutal hangmen must never be allowed to have weapons of mass destruction that will enable it to not kill thousands, but millions.”

Joe Varner is the author of *Canada’s Asia-Pacific Security Dilemma*, a former director of policy to the minister of national defence and an adjunct scholar at West Point’s Modern War Institute.



# China's options to seize Taiwan

Chinese President Xi Jinping's legacy goal is to make Taiwan part of China again. **Joe Varner** reviews the methods it might use.



In a recent white paper offering guidance for the People's Liberation Army, China warned that, "to solve the Taiwan question and achieve complete reunification of the country is in the fundamental interests of the Chinese nation and essential to realizing national rejuvenation."

There is much in the news lately about an increase in tensions between China and Taiwan. Beijing sees Taiwan as a renegade province that must be reunited with the mainland. This has been a cornerstone of Chinese national security policy since Mao's Communist Party's victory over the Nationalist forces of Chiang Kai-Shek in 1949 and their subsequent withdrawal to the Island of Formosa, now Taiwan.

The change in China's tone toward Taiwan comes as no surprise. In July 2019, China published its latest defence white paper, *National Defence in the New Era*, outlining its strategic guidance for the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in what China termed a "new era." In the document, China used unprecedented language not seen in previous defence white papers, warning that, "to solve the Taiwan question and achieve complete

reunification of the country is in the fundamental interests of the Chinese nation and essential to realizing national rejuvenation. China adheres to the principles of 'peaceful reunification,' and 'one country, two systems,' promotes peaceful development of cross-strait relations and advances peaceful reunification of the country. China has the firm resolve and the ability to safeguard national sovereignty and territorial integrity and will never allow



the secession of any part of its territory by anyone, any organization, or any political party by any means at any time. We make no promise to renounce the use of force and reserve the option of taking all necessary measures.”

In terms of its vital national security interests, Beijing warned in the same paper that, “China reserves the right to defend its overseas bases and interests and will not rule out being the first to use force to do so.”

The reunification of Taiwan and all so-called lost territories with the mainland has become the political legacy piece of Chinese President Xi Jinping. He called for reunification with Taiwan to begin in 2020 and to be completed no later than 2050. In January 2021, Xi ordered that the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) move to “full-time combat readiness” and that it must be ready to “act at any second.” Later in January, Wu Qian, spokesman of China’s ministry of national defence, warned that “Taiwan independence” means war. In March 2021, the *People’s Daily* reported that Xi warned: “We should persist in using combat to guide our work; step up preparations for war ... as well as developing a top-level strategic deterrent and joint forces combat system” in response to fears of Taiwanese independence. Chinese nationalism and public support for merger appears at an all-time high, hyped by the Chinese Communist Party and its state-run media.

Meanwhile, Taiwan’s Kuomintang (KMT), or the Republic of China’s Nationalist Party, still maintains a hollow and unrealistic claim to the Chinese mainland. While governing President Tsai Ing-wen and her Democratic Progressive Party won a landslide victory during elections in January 2020 based on a platform of standing up to China and what amounted to independence, public opinion in Taiwan has largely been consistent since 2000 in supporting the status quo or independence. In 2020, a report by The Jamestown Foundation examined public opinion in Taiwan on reunification and independence. The report showed that more than 77 per cent of Taiwanese favoured independence under peaceful conditions, while 60 per cent support independence in the face of a Chinese attack. Support for reunification under ideal conditions was in decline while most Taiwanese supported the status quo, meaning a political solution on Beijing’s terms is unlikely.

Former U.S. president Donald Trump’s pushback at Beijing over what the American administration viewed as China’s

aggressive behaviour in the region and bellicose statements aimed at its neighbours, while at the same time seeking closer ties with Taiwan, inflamed an already raw situation. China’s failure to deal with the early stages of the COVID-19

the “One China” policy to the limit in Beijing’s mind.

If we take the Chinese government at its word, what are Beijing’s strategic options for the seizure of and reunification with Taiwan? At present, Xi has three op-



Writer Joe Varner sees three options for the mainland to impose its will on Taiwan. They include, but aren’t limited to, a nuclear, a conventional and an unconventional or hybrid approach.

pandemic, thus putting the world at risk of a public health crisis, seemingly eroded much of Beijing’s soft-power influence. It also increased support and sympathy for Taiwan, which successfully fought off the first wave of the virus in a particularly admirable manner. China reacted with surprise and considerable frustration to the Biden administration’s furthering of the Trump policy toward China’s activities in the Indo-Pacific region, the South China Sea and Taiwan. American weapon sales to Taipei, high-level exchanges at the diplomatic level, increased bilateral trade and co-operation with the U.S. and pushes to increase Taiwan’s presence in international organizations, have tested

tions to impose the mainland’s will. They include, but are not limited to, a nuclear, a conventional and an unconventional or hybrid approach to its central strategic challenge.

#### Nuclear option

The most unlikely option would involve a Chinese nuclear strike, in some form, to conquer Taiwan, but this strategy presents high risk and potentially very high cost to Taiwan, China and others, including the U.S. China has a declared policy of “no first use” of nuclear weapons that might be tested in an all-out war with Taiwan. China possesses air, sea and land-based rocket forces to subdue Taiwan in the





Beijing now has the world's largest navy of 250,000 sailors and 355 warships that it can focus on Taiwan should it choose to do so, but it is important to note that half its tonnage is in smaller ships.

event of a military conflict that spins out of control. A nuclear strike in Taiwan with its major cities and high population density would be horrific, to say the least, and may very likely negate any Chinese military gains.

According to the International Institute of Strategic Studies' *Military Balance 2021*, China's Eastern Theatre Command maintains Rocket Base 61 with seven missile brigades, two of which are armed with nuclear-tipped, road-mobile, medium-range ballistic missiles (MRBMs), while the other five brigades are made up of small dual-capable, short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs), and MRBMs. There are also reports that with its hypersonic glide vehicle that flies at an estimated Mach 5 to its target, China has deployed dual-capable MRBMs to the region. Taiwan does not possess nuclear weapons, although it has some short-range and cruise missiles that could play havoc with Chinese coastal cities in war and, instead, relies on the United States for nuclear deterrence of Beijing.

Chinese nuclear strategy hinges on

being able to threaten U.S. bases and allies in the region with theatre-level forces while using its strategic nuclear forces to hold American cities hostage. But a Chinese nuclear strike on the island nation might escalate into a nuclear showdown with the U.S. and its British and French allies, and this is something that may give Beijing pause in time of war with Taipei. As well, Beijing does not possess ballistic missile early warning radar or satellite systems, leaving it blind to a potential nuclear counter strike until it is too late. China could employ a lower risk nuclear strategy with a nuclear warning shot at Taiwan in the form of detonating a nuclear device over Taiwan, causing an Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP) attack that would shut down unprotected infrastructure and defences on the island, leaving it vulnerable to follow-on attack. EMP plays a role in numerous Chinese doctrinal documents geared to surprise attack in war. Similarly, Beijing could float nuclear weapons into Taiwan's major port cities on commercial ships and hold the country hostage in an attempt to force a surrender in a form of

hybrid warfare, but both limited nuclear-focused strategies carry huge risk of escalating into a nuclear confrontation with the U.S., something Beijing wants to avoid at this point.

#### Conventional option

Second, China has the world's largest military machine of more than two million troops that might be turned on Taipei at any time and with little warning. But China continues to suffer from doctrinal and organizational problems that hamper its effectiveness. The People's Liberation Army has also not seen real combat since its border war with Vietnam in 1979 and skirmishes with India in the Himalayas. The PLA has an increasingly modern military, featuring strategic nuclear and conventional rockets and ground, sea and air forces. The Chinese Communist Party has an army of 975,000 troops to call on in defence of Chinese interests, with huge potential reserves and substantial paramilitary forces numbering about 660,000. Beijing now has the world's largest navy of 250,000 sailors and 355 warships that





China has the world's largest military machine of more than two million troops that might be turned on Taiwan at any time and with little warning.

it can focus on Taiwan should it choose to do so, but it is important to note that half its tonnage is in smaller ships. Its air force is 395,000 strong with a fleet of older and newer Russian-designed bombers, fighter and ground attack aircraft, with newer combat aircraft mixed in.

Currently, Beijing has 25,000 marines and 50,000 to 60,000 mechanized infantry, trained for amphibious warfare. It also has 27 special operations and 2 air assault brigades for operations against Taiwan in an invasion scenario. The island is only about 140 miles from China's coast at its widest point and 81 miles from the mainland at its narrowest point. The PLA navy has 4 modern amphibious dock vessels, and 2 amphibious helicopter assault ships, supported by 50 older and smaller ships. The navy, to support amphibious operations against Taiwan, has 2 aircraft carriers, 1 cruiser, 32 destroyers, 49 frig-

ates and about 125 smaller corvettes and missile craft of various capabilities. The 2 operational aircraft carriers are of modest capability with a larger third under construction, but the surface combatants are peers or near peers to their Western counterparts. China can amass as many as 500 different types of MRBMs, SRBMs and ground launched cruise missiles (GLCM) against the island nation. Forces set aside for a Taiwan operation would likely include three regiments of strategic bombers, fighter bomber and ground attack aircraft brigades and combat aircraft. Two brigades have the most advanced Chinese variants and one brigade has the J-20A Chinese stealth fighter, likely roughly equivalent to the US F-22 Raptor.

To defend against this sizable force, on paper, Taiwan and its 100 offshore islands have a 163,000-person regular military with 1.6 million reservists that

are well trained and exercised regularly. The army is 88,000 strong and generally well-equipped to defend the main island from attack. Taipei's navy has 40,000 regular and 67,000 reserve sailors and an aging fleet of 4 submarines, 26 destroyers, 22 frigates, 44 coastal defence fast attack craft and 10,000 marines. The air



The Taiwanese military is geared to defend Taiwan and its offshore possessions until the U.S. and allied naval and military forces arrive to relieve the pressure of a Chinese assault.

force has 35,000 regular air crew backed up by 90,000 reservists, with 3 squadrons of French Mirage 2000 fighter aircraft and 6 squadrons of American-upgraded frontline F-16 fighter aircraft as well as approximately 8 squadrons of older fighter planes. Taiwan has a large stock of air defence, anti-tank and conventional-tipped GLCM.

The Taiwanese military is geared to defend Taiwan and its offshore possessions until the U.S. and allied naval and military forces arrive to relieve the pressure of a Chinese assault. While Chinese capabilities on paper appear overwhelming and are growing in strength and capability, they do not ensure victory on the ground in Taiwan. While China has no allies, the U.S. has a great deal of dependable, well-trained, well-equipped and well-led allies such as Japan that would complicate Chinese ambitions for forced reunification with Taipei, should these allies be willing to intervene in a desperate fight. Taiwan is as important to Japanese security and interests in the Indo-Pacific as Japan is to U.S. interests and security in the region.

In preparation for an attack on Taiwan, Beijing would unleash cyberattacks geared to threaten and disrupt Taipei's financial





In happier times, U.S. president Dwight D. Eisenhower visited Taiwanese president Chiang Kai-shek in Taipei in June 1960.



Taipei's navy has 40,000 regular and 67,000 reserve sailors and an aging fleet of 4 submarines, 26 destroyers, 22 frigates, 44 coastal defence fast attack craft and 10,000 marines.

system and power grid. In a first round of attacks, Taiwanese leaders would be killed in a decapitation strike on the Taiwanese political leadership. The Chinese battle plan rests on air power to destroy Taiwan's air and naval defences in the opening round of hostilities using manned aircraft and conventional missiles, while its naval forces hold the U.S. at bay and land their marines and mechanized infantry trained in the amphibious mode of battle. They would be supported by air assault and PLA special forces. A major complicating factor for Beijing is that Taiwan has 11 beaches unsuitable for landings within its rugged coastal terrain, and all are largely adjacent to hardened defences and built-up urban areas, limiting the ability of an aggressor to grab a beachhead and to manoeuvre. Also, fighting in built-up areas against hardened

**A MAJOR COMPLICATING FACTOR FOR BEIJING IS THAT TAIWAN HAS 11 BEACHES UNSUITABLE FOR LANDINGS WITHIN ITS RUGGED COASTAL TERRAIN AND ALL ARE LARGELY ADJACENT TO HARDENED DEFENCES AND BUILT-UP URBAN AREAS, LIMITING THE ABILITY OF AN AGGRESSOR TO GRAB A BEACHHEAD AND TO MANOEUVRE.**

defences is not the strong suit of [the Chinese] army, which has not really fought a war since 1979. The wisdom of the Cold War was that for effective offensive operations to succeed, an attacking force needed as many as three to five times the forces of the defender. Given simple math, it appears that China would have to deploy





A Taiwanese operation would likely include three regiments of strategic bombers, fighter bombers, ground attack aircraft brigades and combat aircraft. Shown here is the Chengdu J-20 fighter aircraft.

a million-plus troops to have any chance of real success on the ground if Taiwan fought back.

#### Unconventional or hybrid option

Third, China has an option similar to Russia's political war or hybrid warfare doctrine of subverting and degrading its enemies' capabilities as a forerunner to war and the use of conventional military power. In fact, that is the approach Beijing is currently taking towards Taipei and Taiwan. Hybrid warfare combines political, economic, informational and cyber assaults against a target nation to achieve strategic objectives while falling below the threshold of a military response. Tactics include, but are not limited to, infiltrating social media, spreading propaganda, weaponizing information and using other forms of subversion such as infiltrating political parties and front groups, foreign interference in democratic elections and espionage. More violent tactics include terrorism, assassination, coups, military backing of separatist movements/insurgency and full-scale invasions by paramilitary, mercenary and military forces as part of "hybrid warfare." Hybrid warfare takes a whole-of-government approach to confrontation and employs both hard and soft power across domains and boundaries between peace and war.

To date, Beijing has used its shadowy maritime militia of hundreds of large- and medium-sized trawlers, crewed by PLA retirees or reservists with light weapons,

to intimidate and assault its neighbours in the South China Sea and Taiwan, and to seize territory it does not own in a series of salami tactics. It sends giant dredgers to Taiwanese waters to test and wear down its coast guard and destroy the seabed and food-rich fishing grounds that it cannot access otherwise. China sends fighter planes into the Taiwanese air defence zone to wear down Taiwan's air defences without a fight. It carries out missile tests and war games near Taiwanese offshore islands, such as the Pratas, to stress Taiwanese defences. China has deployed its Belt and Road Initiative to blackmail sovereign nation states into dropping diplomatic recognition of Taiwan in exchange for Chinese investment and infrastructure. Beijing has used economic warfare and cyberwarfare to attempt to bully Taiwan into submission. The future could see more missile tests to intimidate Taiwan. As well, we could see China attempt in many ways to interfere in Taiwanese elections and government to gain a governing party more inclined to reunification and to use any means at its disposal to do so. This political warfare or hybrid warfare continues on a daily basis like a war of attrition aimed at pressuring and wearing down Taiwan until it accedes to defeat at the hands of Beijing's Chinese Communist Party and time is on China's side. Russia's "little green men" and hybrid tactics resulted in the seizure of Crimea and a good portion of the Donbass and may soon be successful in the seizure of Belarus

and Moldova. Hybrid warfare is not to be underestimated.

#### Good men doing nothing?

Beijing wants reunification with Taiwan on its terms and Taiwanese public opinion appears firmly in favour of maintaining the status quo as long as possible. But in the end, the majority of the country wants independence. Xi's politics of chasing his political legacy, and Taiwan's drift further and further away from China are unlikely to change. Xi does not want to lose face, meaning reunification by force is quickly becoming the strategic option for him to maintain his control of the Chinese Communist Party. The nuclear option is a poor, high-risk and likely high-cost path for all sides, including Taiwan, China and the United States and her Pacific allies. While China has built up considerable conventional power and modern assets, an invasion remains unlikely, with a good likelihood of failure, forcing China to give up or move to the unthinkable nuclear option. But Beijing's political will, focus and defence spending mean that this option is not off the table for long, and time is on Beijing's side without substantial military aid and new equipment for Taiwan from the U.S. and its allies. Making the U.S. defence commitment or guarantee to Taiwan harder and less ambiguous may not improve the West's deterrence stance on Taiwan and may press Beijing to further desperation. Beijing has used unconventional and hybrid warfare to great effect in the South China Sea and with India in the Himalayas.

Day in and day out, the PLA continues to press and attempt to wear down Taipei with a whole-of-government hybrid or asymmetric approach to warfare, hoping the island state gives up and rolls over. And again, time without Western intervention is on Beijing's side. In March of this year, Admiral John Aquilino, American commander of the United States Indo-Pacific, warned before the Senate Armed Services Committee during his nomination hearing that, "My opinion is this problem is much closer to us than most think." Aquilino's view is that within six years, without U.S. assistance and outside support, China will move to seize Taiwan. To quote Edmund Burke, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."

Joe Varner is the author of *Canada's Asia-Pacific Security Dilemma*, a former director of policy to the minister of national defence and an adjunct scholar at West Point's Modern War Institute.



# Hope and despair coexist in Niger

By Dominique Hyde



Forcibly displaced people in Oullam, Niger, receive non-food items such as soap, sleeping mats, blankets, kitchen utensils, buckets and/or jerry cans for water, among other items.



**N**iger is a country of 22 million people in Africa's Sahel — a region that stretches for thousands of miles south of the Sahara across several countries. One of the poorest countries in the world, it has for decades provided refuge to people forced to flee their homes to escape devastating violence.

The Sahel is home to one of the world's fastest growing displacement and humanitarian crises today. Violence and insecurity have displaced 3.8 million people across the region. Food insecurity, climate-related disasters and extreme poverty exacerbate the conflicts and plunge the population further into despair.

Violence in the Sahel began after the 2011 revolution in Libya and the 2012 uprising in Mali. Non-state armed groups, such as Boko Haram, Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) and Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA), organized crime

**ON JUNE 5, GUNMEN  
ATTACKED THE VILLAGE  
OF SOLHAN IN BURKINA  
FASO'S NORTHEAST  
NEAR THE BORDER WITH  
NIGER. ASSAILANTS  
STORMED THE VILLAGE  
IN THE MIDDLE OF THE  
NIGHT AND EXECUTED  
138 MEN, WOMEN AND  
CHILDREN. HOUSES  
AND THE MARKET WERE  
SET ABLAZE.**

syndicates and ordinary thugs now operate across the region, exploiting ethnic tensions, weak governance and widespread poverty.

On June 5, gunmen attacked the village of Solhan in Burkina Faso's northeast near the border with Niger. Assailants stormed the village in the middle of the night and executed 138 men, women and children. Houses and the market were set ablaze. Fearing for their lives, more than 3,300

people fled to nearby villages, among them more than 2,000 children and more than 500 women. Since the beginning of the year, more than 7,000 Burkinabé have made it across the border into Niger. Recently, gunmen shot at vehicles belonging to UNHCR as well as those of its partners. Thankfully, no one was hurt.

This year, in Burkina Faso alone, 150,000 people have been internally displaced. Of those who had to flee, 84 per cent were women, who face a high risk

soudure." Fortunately, when food distributions were carried out, host populations were included.

But Niger's position at the centre of one of the world's most violent regions is untenable. Its own population is no longer safe, and violence against refugees and Nigeriens alike is rising.

I met Fati Idé and her baby daughter at a UNHCR centre in Oullam. Armed groups attacked her village, which borders Mali, killing women, men and children.



In a classroom in a newly built school in Oullam, Niger, children from displaced and local communities attend school together.

of gender-based violence and rape. Half of the children who fled were reportedly subject to physical abuse.

Roughly 237,000 refugees from the region have sought safety in Niger. During a visit, I saw both the cruelty — and kindness — humans are capable of.

People in Niger give what little they have to welcome newcomers into their communities. During the 2019 influx into the Maradi region of Nigerians who were fleeing widespread violence in northern Nigeria, our colleagues witnessed this generosity. People in villages along the border opened their land and even homes to refugees. In some cases Nigerian men spent nights in mosques, schools and even under the trees together with male refugees so they could leave their homes to refugee women and children. Families shared the little food they had, running the risk of not being able to make it through the lean period, "période de

Idé ran to seek help from the village chief. Armed assailants later assassinated the chief. Idé managed to escape with nine other family members, including her sister, who was pregnant. Her sister went into labour as they fled, and she gave birth to stillborn twins.

Idé told me of the many rapes she had seen. She held her baby girl in her arms and said to me, "If my daughter had been a boy, the armed groups would have murdered her. They are killing all boys, even babies."

Organizations such as UNHCR provide food, shelter and mental health support to many families. But when I looked into Idé's vacant stare, I thought, "I don't know if this family will ever recover." It was one of the first times in my 25 years as a humanitarian worker that I experienced such acute doubt. In humanitarian work, we focus on hope. We share stories of the power of humans to survive, overcome





Author Dominique Hyde looks at plans for the construction of social housing and one-stop shops to assist and protect Malian refugees in the Tillabery region of Niger.

and rebuild. Otherwise, why should we continue our work at all? We must have faith that things will get better or we will have no reason to go on.

#### Hope and despair live side by side

In one school, I saw an equal number of girls and boys studying. It shouldn't be noteworthy, but given that most girls in Niger don't go to school, it is, in fact, extraordinary. It reminded me of what I, and most humanitarian workers, love most about our work — seeing the impact of what we do and imagining the better future it could lead to for the people we serve.

Niger — which achieved independence in 1960 in the midst of a devastating drought — had been making progress on sustainable development goals, including improving education. But now, many gains the country made have been erased by COVID-19 and mounting insecurity. COVID-19 is, in many ways, a pandemic of poverty, amplifying and worsening existing vulnerabilities, weakening the worldwide effort to end inequality.

We know that addressing these in-

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equalities and vulnerabilities in social, political and economic systems is key in helping the people of Niger and the Sahel have a chance at a brighter future.

This is especially true in rural areas, where a feeling of impunity and abandonment reigns. Armed groups across

the region are exploiting frustrations of rural populations. Reduced education and economic opportunities are fuelling the recruitment of young men into armed and criminal groups, or pushing them towards perilous journeys to leave the Sahel. Women and girls face the threat of widespread rape and gender-based violence. Unfortunately, we have also heard about security services' alleged involvement in very serious human rights violations, blurring the lines between being agents of protection and agents of persecution. All of this, combined with an absence of basic services, has eroded the social contract between the people and central authorities.

UNHCR and our humanitarian partners are increasingly combining emergency response with an approach that supports local authorities so they can better serve the population. This includes basic services in remote and rural areas such as schools, health services and civil documentation; inclusive political and socio-economic development with a balanced representation of the different ethnic groups; and ensuring that human rights are respected.





A refugee family — who fled Boko Haram attacks in Nigeria — sit in front of their shelter at the Sayam Forage Refugee Camp in Niger.

To do this, we need funding. Unfortunately, humanitarian programs serving the region are severely underfunded. UNHCR's own appeal for the Sahel is only 19 per cent funded. The international community must give more. Humanitarians and local governments must also expand partnerships with development organizations, international financial institutions and regional institutions.

As a key member of the international Francophone community, and with its commitments to women's rights and education, Canada is well placed to help expand these partnerships and mobilize increased political and financial support to the Sahel.

One way Canada can do this is through its role as a founding member of the International Organisation of La Francophonie (OIF). Established in Niger's capital, Niamey, in 1970, the OIF represents 1 billion people on all five continents and has convened conferences on the most important issues of the day. An upcoming Summit in Djerba, Tunisia, in November could be a key moment for Canada and the OIF to make the case for increased solidarity and

support for the Sahel, including Niger.

Recognized as a leader in education, Canada can also use a recently launched campaign, "Together for Learning," to increase access to education for refugees and forcibly displaced youth — as well as the communities that have taken them in — across the Sahel.

Finally, Canada can continue leading the way in refugee resettlement, offering more spaces to refugees who want to rebuild their lives.

In Niger, I was able to see first-hand what a critical lifeline resettlement can be for refugees. At the emergency transit mechanism (ETM) that UNHCR established in partnership with Niger's government, where refugees await resettlement, I met a mother and her two children who fled atrocities in Eritrea. Their journey took them through Sudan and then Libya, where smugglers held them captive. With help from the ETM, they were pulled out of Libya and brought to Niger so resettlement procedures could be processed.

The next day, they were flying to Halifax to start a new life.

The 19-year-old son, a huge soccer fan,

couldn't wait to live in the same country as soccer phenom Alphonso Davies — a former refugee and UNHCR goodwill ambassador who was resettled to Canada with his family after fleeing the civil war in Liberia. The daughter, 15, could not wait to go to school.

As a mother, I'm always struck by the familiar desire young refugees have for the simple yet reassuring daily routines school and sports provide — the same routines many children in Canada crave (even if many would never admit it).

Most people in Canada, my home country, or in Europe, where I live, don't hear these important stories of hope and despair. Yet we must continue telling them, because they are not just about the Sahel or Niger. They are human stories of people who, despite the terrible ordeal they have gone through, persevere.

That's why I went to Niger — to draw attention to a country and a region on the precipice of a critical moment — where hope can still prevail against all odds.

**Dominique Hyde is UNHCR's global head of external relations.**



# Paul Kagame: Rwanda's despot?

As he starts his 21st year in power, Kagame wavers between benign law giver and ruthless predator.



Rwandan President Paul Kagame's reforms in the country have been praised, but they've come with limitations on the rights of Rwandans and suggestions that he'll hire thugs to threaten or even kill his opponents.



Robert I.  
Rotberg

**L**uring Paul Rusesabagina, the hero of *Hotel Rwanda*, to Kigali to be tried for “treason” for opposing the regime of President Paul Kagame is hardly the first “clever” Lukashenko-like entrapment of Rwandans who dare to criticize the tight-fisted manner in which Kagame has run his otherwise oft-praised African government. Much earlier, thugs sent by Kagame to South Africa enticed Patrick Karegeya, the autocrat’s one-time close friend and intelligence chief, into a Johannesburg hotel room, where he was

brutally strangled. A journalistic critic was gunned down in 2011 in Uganda and Gen. Faustin Kayumba Nyamwasa, the former head of Rwanda’s armed forces, was wounded in 2010 during a botched murder attempt, also in Johannesburg. Attacks on dissidents roiled Stockholm, too, and Rwandan exiles were menaced in London, Russian style.

All of this “off the books” Mafia-reminiscent activity reflects murderously on the positive aspects of Kagame’s governmental enterprise in Rwanda, where,



deep in the troubled heart of Africa, a strict autocracy masquerades successfully as a benevolent democracy. Rwanda is widely regarded as one of the best-run and best-governed countries of Africa in terms of service delivery. Yet Rwandans may not freely speak or assemble, or criticize their ruler. There is no free press or media. And it ranks close to the bottom on the global happiness index. Rwandans have traded (or been compelled to trade) basic freedoms in a Faustian way for compulsory conformity, low crime, low corruption and improved standards of living. In 1994, Rwanda's GDP per capita was \$205. It rose to \$698 in 2014, to \$765 in 2017 and to \$819 in 2019. Possibly questionable statistical reporting aside, Rwanda's GDP per capita has been growing at eight per cent in recent years, but those improvements may depend on fraudulent statistics.

The man behind this compromised political arrangement is Kagame, a tall, stern, bullying, tight-lipped, heavy-lidded former American-trained intelligence officer and general who rescued Rwanda from the Hutu-led genocide of Tutsis in 1994 and has run Rwanda ever since. He also scrapped term limits, which means that he can legitimately remain Rwanda's chief until at least 2034. Kagame, 64, tolerates dissent as little as he tolerates incompetence. Disloyalty, or opposition of the mildest kind, is often punished with death.

For all of these reasons, Kagame's leadership in tiny Rwanda — a poor, congested African country half the size of Nova Scotia, with a swelling population of 13 million — provides a remarkable model that merits examination. Can a Platonic case be made for excellent results achieved by mostly dreadful means? Most of the world — as indicated by French President Emmanuel Macron's recent visit of apology and reconciliation to Kagame and Rwanda for the 1994 Tutsi genocide — appropriately acclaims all that Rwanda has achieved under Kagame's rule.

Much of the rest of Africa is less effective than Rwanda in reducing corruption, improving educational opportunities, upgrading public health facilities, gradually boosting GDP per capita, despite few natural resources, and providing the key political goods of safety and security. Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia, Cape Verde and the Seychelles are all democratic nations that offer excellent outcomes to their citizens — what we term good governance. But three of those countries are island states and all are thinly popu-

lated, with fewer than three million inhabitants.

Three of the medium-sized African countries like Rwanda — Ghana, Malawi, and Senegal — are democratic, with high levels of governance performance. But according to the *Corruption Perceptions Index*, those places are more corrupt than Rwanda, and, Ghana excepted, their educational and health systems are no more advanced. South Africa rates better than Rwanda on the *Index of African Governance* (which I created.) But South Africa is wildly corrupt, whereas Rwanda has mostly eliminated corruption — a major burden lifted off the backs of Rwandans.

Unlike Botswanan presidents Seretse Khama, Ketumile Masire, Festus Mogae, and Mokgweetsi Masisi, Kagame can hardly claim to be a democrat, or even a consensus-building quasi-democrat. He is a naked authoritarian, but with substantial legitimacy as a genuine modernizer. What truly distinguishes him and his long reign as the head man of Rwanda is his close attention to improving the public good and the daily lives and outcomes of his densely-packed constituents.

Kagame responded to the horrific 1994 genocide in Rwanda by invading Rwanda at the head of a Tutsi army, in order to save as many remaining Tutsi lives as pos-

sible and to restore order in his country. Initially that meant imprisoning Hutu perpetrators of genocide or pursuing them and their ethnic compatriots into the nearby forests of the Congo. Subsequently, after Kagame had become vice-president, under a titular but powerless president, he focused on rebuilding, stabilizing and pacifying the desperate land that had lost at least 800,000 Tutsis and had seen 200,000 Hutus flee into the Congo, Burundi, Tanzania, and Uganda, and overseas. It also meant invading Zaire/the Congo twice, with great losses of life.

Kagame was no mere military leader with rudimentary ideas about organizing a reborn state and a responsible government. By 2000, when Kagame acceded to his nation's presidency, he had articulated a vision for the emergence of war-damaged Rwanda as the Singapore of Africa. Rwanda lacks most of Singapore's advantages: its perfectly positioned harbour, its geographical location at the crossroads of a good third of the globe's commerce, its well-educated and advanced-skilled population and its greatly appreciated wealth per capita. Kagame nevertheless became determined — at least by 2005, if not before — to transform a very poor state with natural resources no more promising than shade-grown coffee (subject as it is to fluc-



Rwandans have better schools, even if schoolchildren know that complaining about governmental edicts would be unwise.





Life for Rwandans has generally improved since Kagame came to power. He has all but eliminated corruption over 12 years of his leadership, maternal and infant mortality have dropped and life expectancy has risen slightly.

tuating world prices) into a well-functioning, promising, potentially middle-income jurisdiction in the heart of Equatorial Africa. Kagame has been favourably termed a “developmental patrimonialist, with considerable wealth derived from the mineral resources of the Congo.”

What Kagame presumably admired most about Singapore, the city-state that had been willed into modern existence by prime minister Lee Kuan Yew from 1965, was the careful and disciplined manner in which Lee had transformed a pirate-infested, gang-influenced, wildly corrupt, unruly port city into a thriving metropolis obedient to and willing to be compelled into conformity by the vision of Lee and the centralized way in which he and his government made decisions. They took those policy initiatives in the public interest, as defined by Lee, but were punctilious about not stealing from the people. Most of all, in Singapore, innovations such as shifting the Malay- and Chinese-speaking populace to English as a common language, the compulsory mixing of ethnic groups in highrise housing estates (to prohibit ghettos and ensure comity) and the introduction of air conditioning through-

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out the city, had a modernizing purpose. Lee's government delivered progress, as enunciated from above, but also gave the

city-state the stability, the rule of law, an emphasis on education, attention to medical services and the prosperity that attracted international investment and soon increased the per capita GDP of its citizens many times over. In 1965, that number was US \$250 per capita and it has grown to \$85,000 per capita today (numbers not adjusted for inflation.)

Kagame's goal, since about 2005, has been to bring first-world educational opportunities to Rwanda, along with major improvements in life expectancies and other medical outcomes. Following a Brazilian model, Kagame pioneered cash transfers to the poorest in the country. He also promoted major infrastructural improvements. Non-Rwandans have been assisted in their efforts to upgrade health care in rural areas. Pioneering technological initiatives include drone deliveries of blood plasma to rural clinics. From 2005 to 2017, Rwanda experienced falling rates of maternal and infant mortality. Educationally, primary school persistence or completion rates have climbed from low levels to 57 percent in 2017. Life expectancy rose remarkably, from 48 in 2000 to 69 in 2020.

Kagame has thus performed as a strong



leader across several dimensions. He has also echoed Lee, and Botswana's presidents, by greatly lowering crime rates in Kigali, Rwanda's capital city of 921,000. Newly professionalized police even pursue litterers, making Kigali a compulsorily pristine locale by the standards of African cities. Kagame and his city officials outlawed street vending and imprisoned persistent offenders, a unique curtailment of the informal sector that is otherwise unknown in Africa. Pascal Nyamulinda, the former mayor of Kigali and a Kagame appointee, asserts that Kagame's laws "must be respected." Moreover, a decision to stamp out informal "hawking" could stand as a central motif for Kagame's regime: "If you have to choose between a mess and discipline," the obedient mayor once said, "I will choose discipline."

Kagame reduced what had been a casual epidemic of corruption throughout the country by preaching against its evils — there were billboards throughout Kigali forbidding such behaviour: "He Who Practises Corruption Destroys His Country" — mercilessly prosecuting alleged offenders; removing from office any corrupt elected or appointed public officials, even associates of the president; and — most of all — remaining untainted himself by accusations of improper enrichment. Even so, Rwanda is still perceived as more corrupt in Africa than Botswana, the Seychelles, and Cape Verde (and less corrupt than Namibia, Mauritius, South Africa and all of the other sub-Saharan African states.) Its rating by the *Corruption Perceptions Index* rose from 83rd place in 2005 to 49th place in 2020 — a remarkable jump in perceived probity and one unprecedented in Africa.

When Kagame's great reform program had begun to accelerate after 2005, he copied former Georgian president Mikheil Saakashvili and significantly downsized the civil service, finding ghost workers and existing bureaucrats who were inefficient or deemed superfluous. Competitive tests were introduced for the first time to improve competency and make merit appointments. Rwanda has also raised civil service salaries consistently.

In order to improve Rwanda's ratings by the World Bank's *Doing Business* reports, Kagame reduced bureaucratic controls and the number of permits required to open commercial concerns. His government minimized regulatory burdens and red tape. His aim was to produce a more investor-friendly and Singapore-like corporate environment, but also to make it at least conceivable that isolated and remote

Rwanda could boast some of the advantages that accrued to Singapore.

As a result of all of these and many other innovations and initiatives, not least the careful subordination of Rwanda's peoples to the clear-minded edicts of its president, the country's governance ratings have risen, its civil service is better motivated than others in its African neighbourhood, its peoples are relatively prosperous compared to past decades, and Kagame can assert that he has brought stability and improved living standards to his disciplined polity.

But Kagame's version of good government comes with high doses of coercion. The instincts of his people are held very much in check by fear of the state, fear of informers and fear of breaking rules. Rwandans, enjoying their positive quality of government, nevertheless do so knowing that they have paid a price. Instead of freedom of expression, one kind of positive political good, they benefit from



Kagame is credited with rescuing Rwanda from the Hutu-led genocide of Tutsis in 1994 and he has run Rwanda ever since. Shown here is an exhibit in the Nyamata Memorial Site.

physical deliveries of medicine and blood plasma to remote regions of the country by drone aircraft. They have better schools, even if schoolchildren know that complaining about governmental edicts would be unwise. Nor would competing for political office without permission, or arguing policy too loudly with the president or his colleagues.

There is no question about who is the boss. As Stalin eliminated Trotsky in distant Mexico City, so Kagame pursues those who are either deemed disloyal, such as Karegeya and Kayumba, or persons such as Rusesabagina, whose prominence shades Kagame's lustre. In late 2018, the government banned "humiliating" cartoons of politicians and officials.

Rwanda is tightly regimented, but Kagame would argue that his leadership abilities have produced more and better personal and national outcomes for his people than those supposed deficiencies would imply. Kagame also says his decision to rewrite constitutional prohibitions against becoming a virtual president for life was essential if Rwanda were to keep moving ahead on its developmental trajectory, and continue to provide good returns to its citizens. These are high-flown rationalizations, of course, but Kagame has nevertheless remained popular among his people. Like Lee, he has produced the returns he said he would produce.

As an uncompromising, if profoundly paranoid leader, Kagame's tenure demonstrates the importance of an ambitious vision, the virtue of mobilizing behind such a vision, the importance of self-mastery in pursuing visionary objectives, the relevance of legitimacy and the personal integrity that supports legitimacy, and the attributes that flow from the construction of a national edifice and a nation of which its citizens can be proud.

All of these conquests, including Kagame's esteem among opinion-makers across the globe, makes his avid, spiteful pursuit of opponents in distant hotel rooms, and the entrapment of someone such as Rusesabagina, who poses no real threat, hard to understand or accept except as a matter of personal venom.

Benevolent autocrats occasionally have their uses. But the cases of Botswana, Cape Verde, Mauritius, today's Ghana and the new dispensations in South Africa and Malawi demonstrate that excellent qualities of government can be achieved in developing countries by fully democratic means, employing the usual political stratagems of consensus-building, compromise, accommodation, and — where necessary — healthy competition. They benefit less from fear, oppression, intimidation and killings.

Human and national development can best be realized in an environment of freedom and open dialogue.

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# China: A hidden workforce and education crisis



Christina  
Spencer

*Invisible China: How the urban-rural divide threatens China's rise*

Scott Rozelle and Natalie Hell

University of Chicago Press, 2020

242 pages

Kindle: \$29.39

Hardcover: \$35

One recent, pre-COVID-era Christmas, I searched out the neighbourhood Canadian Tire for an instant-read thermometer, a gift for the cook in the family. There were several types on display, and out of curiosity, I started to scan the “Made in ...” labels to see if I could find one not manufactured in China. No luck. I widened my informal survey to other kitchenalia in the store. Again, all made in China.

This would not surprise anyone: China is a global powerhouse of manufacturing. Fully 95 per cent of the world's major companies have based some of their supply chain there. As a result, China has enjoyed a huge growth spurt in recent decades. But its dominance of low-cost manufacturing is waning, and this may cause severe disruption to the world's second-largest economy in the medium and long term. This, in turn, will ripple globally.

That's the warning offered in *Invisible China*, based on decades of exhaustive on-the-ground research by the Rural Education Action Program (REAP) at Stanford University. Partnered with institutions in China, its mission is to understand poverty in rural China and propose solutions. Its huge web of researchers has travelled and talked to hundreds of thousands of people, focused not in the booming cities of Shanghai or Guangzhou, but in the countryside, where REAP experts strive to understand the lives of the two thirds of Chinese who are not part of the country's successful urban elite. What they



China's dominance of low-cost manufacturing is waning, which may cause major disruption to the world's second-largest economy in the medium and long term, according to a new book on the urban-rural divide in the country. Shown here is very urban Shanghai.

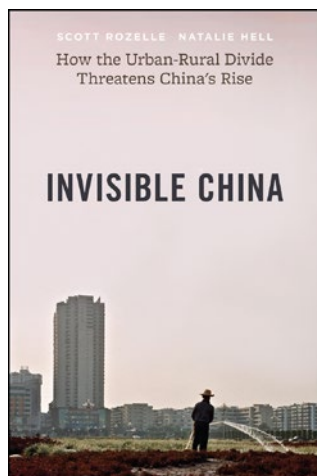
have found over time prompts concern for China's economic and social future.

China is firmly among what are called middle-income countries — where the aggregate economy is huge, but actual average incomes are still low. The country miraculously and rapidly climbed from poverty into middle-income status through its supply of cheap labour.

Unskilled workers — which is what China's rural population is mostly made up of — were able to shift from subsistence living to better wages through the assembly-line work available as major international companies located production in countries with low costs. But as this plentiful workforce gradually became employed, there was less cheap labour on



offer and wages began to rise as a result of simple supply and demand. These same international companies began to either automate to save money, or shift operations out of China. “Samsung has moved hundreds of thousands of jobs from China to Vietnam. Nike is now making most of its tennis shoes elsewhere ... That exodus is occurring across the board — in textiles and toys and tools and Christmas decorations,” the authors warn. “Ten years ago, almost every product for sale in an American Walmart was made in China. Today



that is no longer the case.”

China’s huge rural workforce is poorly prepared to evolve and thus participate in the higher-skilled jobs now needed to look after individual families and sustain economic growth more broadly. While the country’s highly educated urbanites can fill any number of innovative jobs — think of Chinese companies such as Alibaba “which handles more business than eBay and Amazon combined,” or Tencent, whose social media app WeChat “has earned such a reputation for innovation that Western companies such as Facebook, Snapchat and WhatsApp now try to copy its features” — China’s 800 to 900 million rural people have nowhere near the education needed to do so.

This leaves the country at a crossroads: It can either find ways to help its huge rural population and boost its economy — emulating, say, South Korea or Taiwan — or it can sink into unemployment and economic chaos — think Mexico or Brazil. In brief, argue the authors, its continued upward trajectory is nowhere near guaranteed. The income gap between rich and poor is vast, and widening, a recipe for destabilization domestically and economic uncertainty globally.

A few demographics illustrate the danger. In China, 36 per cent of the population is urban, while 64 per cent is rural, and one’s urban or rural status is cemented in law. “To understand the depth of this divide,” say the authors, “think of China as two separate countries.” To bring them together, China must invest in the rural population. “Human capital” in the rural areas is in dismal shape.

Education of rural Chinese is the solution, but that will be a very tall order, based on what REAP’s studies in the countryside show. For example, only 12.5 per cent of China’s total labour force has a college education: 44 per cent of the labour force in urban areas has at least high school, while only 11 per cent of those in rural areas do (as of 2010.) Bringing the required education to rural Chinese is hugely complicated.

For one thing, Mao Zedong made it his business to suppress higher learning, replacing it instead with Mao Zedong Thought. Until recently, his successors were indifferent to the need to rectify this. For another, high schools in China charge tuition (often prohibitive for poor rural families). Considering the nation’s communist roots, it is an odd problem to have. But other, even graver crises beset rural Chinese families who want to educate their young. Over decades of exhaustive study, REAP has found:

- More than 50 per cent of rural babies are undernourished and under-stimulated, at the very time when their brains are beginning to develop. “More than half of toddlers are so developmentally delayed that their IQs may never exceed 90,” the researchers conclude;
- Students are often beset with parasites: “40 per cent of schoolchildren in many rural communities in southern China attend school every day with intestinal worms quietly sapping their energy.” When researchers asked why the children weren’t treated, they found an array of inaccurate beliefs, even among rural doctors — for example that deworming might reduce fertility in females;
- Of the thousands of youngsters studied, “More than 30 per cent of rural students (in grades four to eight) have vision problems, but do not have glasses.”

In short, “one source of China’s persistent rural-urban education gap has become clear: rural students in today’s China are sick. They are anemic, they can’t see the blackboard, and they have worms.”

It is a startling conclusion about a country most of us see as churning out a

sophisticated, highly intelligent, educated and globalized workforce. But that is the point. This is the “invisible” China the rest of the world does not glimpse. The sheer size of this invisible population and the time and effort it will take to bring it up to the educational and health standards of the urban sector is what so alarms the authors.

Fundamentally, however, they believe China can fix this and avoid the “middle income trap” and they stress that the country’s current leadership is trying. This book, the researchers say, is “written in the spirit of hope” about a country that has often surprised the world with its accomplishments. The global economy may depend on it doing so again.

*The Devil’s Trick: How Canada Fought the Vietnam War*

John Boyko

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246 pages

Hardcover: \$29.45

Kindle: \$15

Canadians’ collective memory of Vietnam tends to focus on two images: anti-war protests in the United States and draft-dodgers seeking refuge here. These images only scrape the surface of Canada’s much deeper involvement in that conflict.

“There were Canadians in Vietnam fighting and dying in American uniforms,” John Boyko writes. “Others were working in Canadian-run hospitals; and there were Canadian diplomats in Vietnam who tried to stop the war before it began, and then monitored its carnage. There were Canadian weapons in Vietnamese cities, villages and jungles and falling from the sky.” Canadians weren’t just bystanders.

In the 1950s, Vietnam was viewed through the lens of the larger Cold War dominating Western thought. That, mixed with French colonial ambitions and the region’s own long history, made Vietnam a complex geopolitical problem, a “civil war, nationalist war of liberation and European colonial war.” Canada, which had emerged from the Second World War flush with pride at its own diplomatic “golden age,” had shed much of its lingering dependence on Britain and entered the U.S. orbit. It would inevitably be drawn into attempts to stop a larger conflict in Indochina.

Boyko, a gifted storyteller, conveys Canada’s involvement from the perspective of six “guides”: two diplomats; a hospital administrator; a draft dodger; a





The Vietnam War involved many Canadians. Those who think Canada was just a haven for draft dodgers need to read *The Devil's Trick: How Canada Fought the Vietnam War*.

Canadian who fought in the Vietnam war; and a Vietnamese refugee who arrived in Canada. Each illuminates a particular facet of Canada's Vietnam war.

The two extraordinary Canadian diplomats were Sherwood Lett and J. Blair Seaborn, whom Canada sent off on separate occasions to the ill-fated International Commission for Supervision and Control, charged with monitoring the uneasy ceasefire between the French and the Vietminh in 1954, with elections planned for 1956. The ICC, as it became known, was made up of India, Poland and Canada. It had no power to enforce peace or to interfere as the former adversaries clashed over resources, prisoner transfers, the migration of people from the country's North to South or even ownership of leftover military equipment. The work was dangerous and frustrating. In the end, no election was permitted, as the West (read the U.S.) feared it would end in a Communist takeover. Lett believed that if an election did not unite North and South, the North would invade to bring about that result. Sadly, his was a neglected voice.

By the early 1960s, a fragile peace

somehow still existed and the Americans, who had been actively and clumsily trying to subvert a Communist takeover were searching — or so Canada thought — for a way out of Vietnam. There was no American ambassador in Hanoi and no back channel of communication, so Seaborn, Canada's new ICC commissioner, was pressed into service as the U.S.'s go-between, meeting with the highest echelons of the North Vietnamese leadership on behalf of president Lyndon Johnson's team. Boyko's description of Seaborn's role — and how both this gifted diplomat and his government were used by the U.S. in a futile bid for an American-dictated outcome — is illuminating. Equally so are his chapters devoted to the other Canadians:

- Claire Culhane, who worked as an administrator in a Canadian hospital in Vietnam, only to discover that the head doctor was sharing patient files with the CIA to help it identify Viet Cong or their sympathizers. She would return home to become a vocal and effective anti-war activist;

- Joe Erickson, the American war resister who journeyed north as one of up

to 100,000 U.S. citizens who left friends, family and prospects for Canada rather than serve in a war they did not support. They formed a modern day "underground railroad" to help other draft dodgers immigrate. He later learned that his relatives still in the U.S. were repeatedly harassed by the FBI for his actions;

- Doug Carey, the Canadian who enlisted in the Marines at age 19, serving two tours in Vietnam. Anywhere from 12,000 to 40,000 Canadians fought in the Vietnam War;

- Rebecca Trinh, one of thousands of ethnic Chinese in Vietnam who, fearful of persecution after the fall of Saigon, made the tough decision to leave. With her children, she was among 160,000 Vietnamese who fled their country between 1978 and the mid-1980s, a harrowing journey that, in the Trinh's case, included being attacked by pirates on the open sea, swimming frantically to Malaysian shores and, eventually, being accepted from a refugee camp by Canada. By the end of 1980, Canada had accepted 60,000 refugees, more per capita than any other country.

Boyko draws lessons from each story of



this war — how it affected our diplomacy, our economic interests, our emerging identity as a separate nation, our humanitarian policy and our international reputation. His eloquent summary is tinged with hope and warning: “... the lies and lessons of the Vietnam War will forever colour our national story. They will be among the sparks igniting our perpetual desire to more clearly understand who we are and to somehow, hopefully with grace, make ourselves a little better tomorrow than we are today.”

*How to Avoid a Climate Disaster: The Solutions We Have and the Breakthroughs We Need*

Bill Gates

Alfred A. Knopf Canada

272 pages

Kindle: \$17

Paperback: \$33.15

do not endear him to some environmentalists.

So *How to Avoid a Climate Disaster* may not get the respect it should. Yet, as a simple user guide to the second-most pressing problem of our time (COVID being No. 1 for now), it fills an important niche: laying out the dangers of climate change; explaining where greenhouse gas emissions come from; discussing the individual and policy challenges of achieving “net zero” emissions and offering potential solutions.

A brief excerpt, to get your attention: “Did you brush your teeth this morning? The toothbrush probably contains plastic, which is made from petroleum, a fossil fuel. If you ate breakfast, the grains in your toast and cereal were grown with fertilizer, which releases greenhouse gases when it’s made. They were harvested by a tractor that was made of steel — which is made with fossil fuels in a process that releases carbon — and ran on gaso-



Children march down University Avenue in Toronto as part of the Global Strike for Climate Justice. Bill Gates’s new book outlines how hard it is to address this monstrous problem.

Bill Gates thinks nuclear power is essential to solving climate change. He’s a big fan of plastics too. Also, he’s a rich and powerful man who adores technology. These views

line. If you had a burger for lunch, as I do occasionally, raising the beef caused greenhouse gas emissions — cows burp and fart methane — and so did growing

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and harvesting the wheat that went into the bun. If you got dressed, your clothes might contain cotton — also fertilized and harvested — or polyester, made from ethylene, which is derived from petroleum. If you've used toilet paper, that's more trees cut down and carbon emitted."

All of this before you even jump into your gas-guzzling SUV, turn on your air conditioner or crank the furnace.

Gates's point is that even the most mundane acts of everyday life are underwritten by fossil fuels. Why? Because they're affordable, "cheaper than a soft drink." Add up all that cheap fuel and you get a planetary total of 51 billion tonnes of greenhouse gases added to the atmosphere every year. Cue the rising thermometer.

The solution, Gates says, is not just about cutting our energy use, for we will never be able to cut it enough. His evidence: the dip in greenhouse gas emissions worldwide during COVID in 2020. With economies slowing, that reduction amounted to about five per cent of GHGs worldwide — putting us at 48 or 49 billion tonnes of carbon, instead of 51. To get even that modest reduction, "a million people died, and tens of millions were put out of work," he writes. "To put it mildly, this was not a situation that anyone would want to continue or repeat."

Another complication is that a large swath of the planet, still struggling with poverty, will need more energy in future, not less, in order to thrive like the rest of us. We cannot hold people from developing countries in poverty. So for Gates, the central question is: How do we produce more energy but ensure we release fewer "net" GHGs in the process?

Our worldwide emissions come from five different activities: How we plug in (that is, where we get our electricity) — 27 per cent of 51 billion tons per year; how we manufacture (everything from steel to concrete to clothing) — 31 per cent of 51 billion tons per year; how we farm — 19 per cent of 51 billion tons a year; how we move around (and how we move things around) — 16 per cent of 51 billion tons a year; and how we warm or cool our buildings — seven per cent of those 51 billion tons.

Gates, who has an engineer's love of numbers, supplies several discouraging facts, such as:

- Making one ton of steel produces about 1.8 tons of carbon dioxide. And cement? "Make a ton of cement, and you'll get a ton of carbon dioxide."
- The one billion cattle raised world-

wide burp and fart out enough methane each year to have the same warming effect as two billion tons of carbon dioxide (about four per cent of all global emissions).

- Reforestation is no panacea. "You'd need somewhere around 50 acres' worth of trees, planted in tropical areas, to absorb the emissions produced by an average American in her lifetime."

- Gallon for gallon, gasoline is less expensive than "Dasani bottled water, yogurt, honey, laundry detergent, maple syrup, hand sanitizer, latte from Starbucks, Red Bull energy drink, olive oil" and so on.

- Given how long today's furnaces last, "if we had a goal of getting rid of all the gas-powered ones by mid-century, we'd have to stop selling them by 2035."

Clearly, solutions need to involve all aspects of human activity, and Gates dutifully examines many, explaining how he thinks both individuals and governments can reduce greenhouse gas use, and where technology must play a role. He walks readers through everything from solar to wind power and even geoengineering — radical technology through which scientists actually change the atmosphere's temperature by techniques such as seeding the upper atmosphere with extremely fine particles or brightening clouds to reflect rather than absorb heat.

As a technology fan, he's open to considering solutions many others would dismiss.

Plastics, for instance, pollute and hurt marine life, but are not making climate change worse, Gates says. Indeed, an inconvenient truth is that plastics are "what allow fuel-efficient cars to be so light; they account for as much as half of a car's total volume, but only 10 per cent of its weight." And because they take so long to degrade, the carbon used in their manufacture doesn't leak into the atmosphere easily. If manufactured with clean energy in future, "plastics could one day become a carbon sink — a way to remove carbon rather than emit it," Gates muses.

Meanwhile, back to nuclear power, which Gates calls "the only carbon-free energy source that can reliably deliver power day and night, through every season, almost anywhere on Earth, that has been proven to work on a large scale." The U.S. currently gets around one-fifth of its electricity from nuclear, and it already runs aircraft carriers and military subs using nuclear power. France gets 70 per cent of its electricity from nuclear, the highest proportion of any country.

This doesn't mean that nuclear power isn't dangerous, but Gates sees the hazards as a solvable problem. Acknowledging Three Mile Island, Chernobyl and Fukushima, he says "real problems led to those disasters, but instead of getting to work on solving those problems, we just stopped trying to advance the field.

"Imagine if everyone had gotten together one day and said, 'Hey, cars are killing people. They're dangerous. Let's stop driving and give up these automobiles.' That would've been ridiculous, of course. We did just the opposite: We used innovation to make cars safer." We can do the same with nuclear power, Gates argues. "It's hard to foresee a future where we decarbonize our power grid affordably without using more nuclear power."

Not all environmentalists will like this message. But given Gates's exhaustive exposition of the sources, problems, costs and strategies for climate change to-date, they'll need to come up with better — and achievable — ideas.

#### SHORT TAKES

*How Iceland Changed the World: The Big History of a Small Island*

Egill Bjarnason

Penguin Random House, May 2021

288 pages

Kindle and paperback: \$13.96

"The Icelanders are the most intelligent race on Earth, because they discovered America and never told anyone," Oscar Wilde said. The glory for that, of course, would be left to other Europeans centuries later. But Iceland has had global impact in other important ways: in this light-hearted and entertaining history (which starts with a ship hitting an iceberg — no, not that ship), Egill Bjarnason lays it all out.





For instance, world chess greats Boris Spassky and Bobby Fischer played their “match of the century” in Iceland in 1972. Iceland doubled as the lunar landscape for much of NASA’s astronaut training for the moon landings. Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev met in Reykjavík in 1986. And don’t forget the 2010 volcanic eruptions in Iceland that halted air traffic all across Europe. Plus, fun fact: Iceland contributed the word “saga” to the English language.

Who knew that an island half the size of the United Kingdom, referred to by the author as an early “hot spot for Viking sprawl” had such an eclectic story? Iceland has, indeed, changed the world.

***Brexitland: Identity, Diversity and the Reshaping of British Politics***

**Maria Sobolewska and Robert Ford**  
Cambridge University Press, 2020

408 pages

Kindle: \$12.94

Paperback: 24.12

Five years ago, when Britons unexpectedly voted to leave the European Union, a headline in *The Daily Mirror* shrieked: “What the hell happens now?” The rest of the world, meanwhile, was asking how the hell it had happened at all.

The authors of *Brexitland* confront both questions by going back not months or years, but decades to identify the demographic trends and identity conflicts that

they conclude, is only a small taste of what lies ahead for the United Kingdom — major disruption “for many years to come.”

***Global Taiwanese: Asian Skilled Labour Migrants in a Changing World***

**Fiona Moore**

University of Toronto Press

184 pages

Kindle: \$45.58

Hardcover: \$46.33

184 pages

Taiwan is a successful democratic state of about 23.4 million people, sitting uncomfortably close to a rapidly expanding superpower that threatens it economically, politically and militarily based on a deep shared history. Yet the island state has another interesting characteristic, highlighted by Fiona Moore: an effective transnational network of skilled migrants living and working across borders.

As the author points out, the “idea of a network society has been around for 20 years,” but study of it still skims the surface. An examination of its members in London, Toronto and Taipei goes beyond observations on skilled-worker migration



and the role of diasporas to explore how Taiwanese at home and abroad identify themselves and act on those identities.

Christina Spencer is the editorial pages editor of the *Ottawa Citizen* and the inaugural recipient of the Claude Ryan Award for Editorial Writing at the 2017 National Newspaper Awards. She has a master's in international affairs from the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs at Carleton University.



led to the startling results of the EU referendum, and explaining how these finally cut through more traditional dividing lines of class, income and political ideology.

They wonder, for instance, why the tensions that drove Brexit didn't break into the open much earlier than 2016. Brexit,

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# Portraits of Canada



Visitors will virtually be swimming in the paintings of Vincent van Gogh in this immersive digital production by Montreal's Normal Studios, and presented by RBC and Ottawa Bluesfest at Lansdowne Park.



Peter Simpson

*Note: Given the continuing uncertainty of public-health lockdowns, be sure to check with museums and galleries before visiting, as dates listed here could change.*

It's been a long time coming," sang the Tragically Hip's Gord Downie, "it's well worth the wait."

It seems appropriate to use the Tragically Hip — a band that wrote lyrical portraits of Canadian life — to introduce the Portrait Gallery of Canada, which truly has been a long time coming. Now, with its first exhibitions, we start to see what we've been waiting for.

The Portrait Gallery spent its early years as a political football, firstly booted downfield by the Chrétien Liberals in 2001, then grabbed by the Harper Conservatives and carried around the field in a series of erratic moves that pleased the

base, but accomplished nothing else. By 2009, the idea was dead, or at least comatose.

The death of art by partisan antics left many people disgusted, and a couple of years ago a group of private citizens — led by lawyer and Ottawa Art Gallery chairman Lawson Hunter — resurrected the idea, albeit much changed from the original. Prime minister Jean Chrétien had promised the former United States Embassy building on Wellington Street, but in 2021, the privately funded, not-for-profit gallery organization says that "no site has been identified." However, the gallery says on its website, "Our plan is to



*But There's No Scar* by Catherine Blackburn is part of The Portrait Gallery of Canada's *Keeping with Myself*, which opens Aug. 19 and features 21 lens-based or digital media artists from across Canada.





Esmaa Mohamoud's exhibition *To Play in the Face of Certain Defeat* "focusses on the sports world's suppression of identity," at the Ottawa Art Gallery.



The large photographs in Geneviève Cadieux's *Barcelone* adorn the outer walls of the National Gallery of Canada.





Spectacular moments in photojournalism, including a former U.S. Marine at home with his gun collection, make up the World Press Photo of the Year exhibition at the Canadian War Museum.

locate the Portrait Gallery of Canada in a dynamic museum in the National Capital Region, where national and international visitors of all ages will draw inspiration from its world-class collection of historical and contemporary portraits.”

Accordingly, for now the exhibitions are online only, including *Keeping With Myself*, which opens Aug. 19 and features 21 lens-based or digital media artists from across Canada.

“On a large scale, the exhibition looks primarily at self-portraiture as a method of healing,” writes guest curator Darren Pottier, who otherwise works as gallery director at SPAO (School of Photographic Arts Ottawa). “More specifically, the exhibition explores how artists create spaces in order to overcome internal struggle or transition and fully enact themselves.”

Also online is the exhibition *Personae: Indigenous and Canadian Portraits 1861–2020*, curated by the artist and Portrait Gallery board member Robert Tombs. It’s an eclectic selection of portraits, spanning decades and cultures and communities, from Christine Fitzgerald’s recent and defiant portraits of Indigenous women, to

Thaddeus Hollownia’s mid-1970s arresting image of a man and his automobile. See [portraitcanada.ca](http://portraitcanada.ca) for more.

#### Outdoor art

From online to outside — the pandemic lockdown isn’t a problem if you want to go to *Barcelone*, the exhibition by Quebec artist Geneviève Cadieux at the National Gallery of Canada.

Nine large photographs of two lovers are mounted on the exterior wall of the gallery, and it’s up to passersby to interpret the air of tension between the two figures, to read their expressions and body language.

“*Barcelone*, whose title plays with the French and English words ‘seul’ and ‘alone,’ speaks to a state of detachment and distance, as well as a longing for moments of connection and embrace,” the gallery says on its website. See [gallery.ca](http://gallery.ca) for more.

#### World Press winners

Over at the Canadian War Museum, the annual exhibition of nominees for the World Press Photo of the Year award is



Blue faience, New Kingdom, 19th Dynasty, reign of Seti I (1290–1279 BC) in Queens of Egypt at the Canadian Museum of History.





One of the installation views in Shaya Ishaq's *The Library of Infinities* at SAW Gallery.



*Icons of Beauty - Chantal*, (oil on canvas, 91.5 x 91.5 cm) by Jerry Grey at Jean-Claude Bergeron Gallery.

Benoit Genest-Rouillier's exhibition *Portraits and Pesticides* is at St-Laurent + Hill Gallery Aug. 19 to Sept. 14.

scheduled for summer, but was waiting for public-health permission to open. Check the museum for dates.

The exhibition will be dramatic and dynamic, with dozens of nominees for photojournalism awards in categories of news, sports, environment, nature and portraits. They range from heart-breaking to thrilling, with a former U.S. Marine in his Louisiana backyard with his dozens of automatic weapons and a flamethrower; a mother panther leading her kitten through barbed wire in Florida; and a man literally fighting his way through a cloud of locusts in Kenya. There are, as always, many photos of violence and its victims, from around the world. Watch warmuseum.ca for more details.

#### Arts Court double take

There are two exhibitions on Black history and experience at Arts Court, one in the Ottawa Art Gallery and one in SAW Gallery, with one set in the world of sports and the other installed as a library.

At the OAG is Toronto artist Esmaa Mohamoud's large-scale exhibition *To Play in the Face of Certain Defeat*. The exhibition "focuses on the professional sports world's suppression of identity, and the separation/categorizing of bodies in ways that transcend competition to overtly embody societal inequality."

*To Play in the Face of Certain Defeat* opens Sept. 18 and runs to March 2022.

At SAW Gallery is Shaya Ishaq's installation, *The Library of Infinities* (formerly exhibited under the title *Black Libraries Matter*.) It will be a functioning library, with structures and seating, and "full of books, music and created soundscapes that have helped us navigate our world(s) recommended by over 100 Black folks living in different parts of Canada," say the notes on Ishaq's website. "In this space, we acknowledge the erasure of our stories as a tactic enforced by the settler-colonial project," the notes say. "What does a Canadian afro-futuristic utopia that does not uphold black violence look like?"

*The Library of Infinities* will be part of SAW's grand reopening, tentatively scheduled for Aug. 5, but check with the gallery — saw-centre.com — to confirm dates.

#### Also showing . . .

*Beyond van Gogh*: Visitors will virtually be swimming in the paintings of Vincent Van Gogh in this immersive digital production by Montreal's Normal Studios, and presented by RBC and Ottawa Bluesfest. "Us-

ing the artist's own dreams, thoughts and words to drive the experience as a narrative," the notes say "guests move along projection-swathed walls wrapped in light and colour that swirls, dances, and refocuses into flowers, cafés and landscapes." It opens Aug. 5 at Aberdeen Pavilion at Lansdowne Park. See vangoghottawa.com for tickets.

*Owls Rendezvous*: This outdoor exhibition, created with Little Ray's Nature Centre, will see four species of "these charismatic birds" in newly built habitats on the museum plaza along Argyle Street (regular museum entry required). There'll be barn owls, great-horned owls, snowy owls and the Eurasian eagle owl, and they'll have many hoots to give. Dates TBD, Canadian Museum of Nature, 240 McLeod St. See nature.ca for more.



Victoria Laube's *Encumbrance* is among the graduate work to be exhibited at the School of Photographic Arts Ottawa.

*Queens of Egypt*: The female leaders of ancient Egypt have waited a couple of thousand years to be featured at the Museum of History, so the protracted delay — the show was originally set for 2020 — seems bearable. Spectacular artifacts and stories recall the reigns and influence of the empire's most powerful women. It's showing until Aug. 22 at the Canadian Museum of History, 100 Laurier St., Gatineau. See historymuseum.ca for more.

*Exhibition No. 16*: See new work from the graduating class at Ottawa's only school dedicated solely to art photography. Runs until Aug. 20, SPAO, 77 Pamilla St. See spao.ca for more.

*Barry Ace*: The Ottawa-based Anishinaabe artist Barry Ace returns with new work. The indoor exhibition will open when

public-health conditions permit, but Ace's outdoor installations should be up for viewing by the time you read this. See centralartgarage.com for more, Central Art Garage, 66B Lebreton St. N.

*Jerry Grey*: Showing in August at Jean-Claude Bergeron Gallery, 150 St. Patrick St., Ottawa, this is a retrospective of the work of the highly regarded veteran Ottawa painter Jerry Grey. See galeriejean-claudebergeron.ca for more.

*At Home: Hammershøi*: Ottawa photographer Leslie Hossack was enraptured with the painting *Sunshine in the Drawing Room*, by Vilhelm Hammershøi at the National Gallery. "The Hammershøi project is about confronting and invading our own foreign territory, crossing into that last unknown frontier within ourselves. He uses psychological seduction to entice us to explore our own interiority," Hossack told the *National Gallery of Canada Magazine* last year. This runs from Sept. 3 to Oct. 10, Studio Sixty Six, 858 Bank St. See studiosixtysix.ca for more.

*Triennale en métiers d'art*: The review of crafts includes recent work by 12 artists, including locals Béla Simó, Éric Tardif, Paula Murray and Thoma Ewen. See more at gatineau.ca, Sept. 11 to Oct. 17, Espace Pierre-Debain, 120 rue Principale, Gatineau.

*Mathew Nuqingaq*: An exhibition of small sculptures and fold-formed jewelry by the Inuit artist Nuqingaq shows at L.A. Pai Gallery at 13 Murray St., lapaigallery.com, Aug. 7 to 27.

*Portraits and Pesticides*: Artist Benoit Genest-Rouillier has an exhibition of his work showing at Galerie St-Laurent + Hill, 293 Dalhousie St., galeriestlaurentplushill.com, Aug. 19 to Sept. 14,

*Sue Adams*: A solo exhibition of new works on paper and sculpture by Adams runs from Aug. 4 to Sept. 17 at Sivarulrasa Gallery, 34 Mill St., Almonte. See sivarulrasa.com for more.

*True North*: Various artists offer paintings of the Canadian landscape in a show that runs until Aug. 31 at Electric Street Gallery, 299 Crichton St. See electric-street-gallery.myshopify.com for more.

Contact Peter Simpson at [pete@petersimpson.ca](mailto:pete@petersimpson.ca) with details of your upcoming art exhibitions.



## A trio of summertime eats



Extra Light Waffles with Summer Fruits are a perfect way to make a breakfast guest feel special.



Margaret  
Dickenson

**R**egardless of all that is happening around us, summer is the time to celebrate the outdoors — barbecuing, al fresco dining and savouring the

flavours of the season. If you are in search of some easy inspiration, consider my Extraordinary Roast Beef Bites, where mini popover shells prove to be the perfect base upon which to build scrumptious hors d'oeuvres. Although the popovers may be prepared well in advance, they actually can be made in a matter of minutes and are at their best when presented within a couple of hours of baking. To add a touch of pizzazz to my Tantalizing Crispy Chicken Wings, I frequently serve them for a casual evening dinner either al fresco on the patio or in the dining room,

but always enhanced by the soft glow of candles. The Extra Light Waffles — a popular choice for a special breakfast — also deserve recognition as a dessert with unquestionable appeal, particularly when enticingly topped with fresh summer fruit, decadent crème fraîche and maple syrup. Bon Appetit!

**Extra Light Waffles with Summer Fruits**  
*Makes 4 servings*

How to make a summer brunch memorable? After a savoury main dish, complete



Extraordinary Roast Beef Cocktail Bites are a bite-sized version of a roast beef dinner.

the occasion with a serving of these exquisitely light waffles, temptingly garnished with crème fraîche and fresh summer fruits.

- 4 individual one portion-sized waffles (recipe follows)
- 2/3 cup (170 ml) crème fraîche or sour cream, divided
- 1/3 cup (80 ml) maple syrup, divided
- 1½ cups (375 ml) sliced fresh strawberries
- 1½ cups (375 ml) sliced fresh peaches

Garnish (optional)  
Edible flowers and/or sprigs of fresh herbs

1. Place each of the 4 waffles on 4 separate dinner plates.
2. Top each waffle with a dollop (1 tbsp

or 15 ml) of crème fraîche and drizzle with 1 tsp (5 ml) of maple syrup. Then, add about 1/3 cup (80 ml) of both sliced fresh strawberries and peaches before topping with another dollop (1 tbsp or 15 ml) of crème fraîche.

3. Artistically, drizzle each waffle and plate with maple syrup (about 2 tsp or 10 ml.)
4. If desired, garnish each serving with edible flowers and/or sprigs of fresh herbs.

#### Extra Light Waffles

Makes 1 cup or 250 mL of batter or 1¼ large “4-segment” Waffles

Who doesn't like waffles? This quick and easy recipe makes light waffles that also freeze well. The recipe can be successfully multiplied as required.

- ½ cup (125 ml) cake flour
- 2 tsp (10 ml) granulated sugar
- 1 tsp (5 ml) baking powder
- ¼ tsp (1 ml) salt
- Pinch of baking soda
- ½ cup (125 ml) water
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) egg yolk
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) melted butter
- 1½ tsp (8 ml) vegetable oil
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) egg white, beaten until foamy

1. In a large bowl, sift together flour, sugar, baking powder, salt and baking soda.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together milk and egg yolk. Add to flour mixture and whisk thoroughly.
3. Whisk butter and oil into the batter, and then the egg white.
4. Pour batter as required into a preheated waffle iron; close lid and cook until done.

#### Extraordinary Roast Beef Cocktail Bites

Makes 16 hors d'oeuvres

Family and guests rave about this hors d'oeuvre. It's a creative cocktail twist on a traditional roast beef dinner. Roast beef teams up with goat's cheese, red pepper jelly, a few arugula leaves and a final touch of horseradish, all layered on mini popover shells.

- 2 oz (60 g) cooked roast beef/steak (preferably rare), sliced thinly (i.e., 1/6 inch or 0.4 cm)
- 2 oz (60 g) goat's cheese (wheel type)
- To taste, salt and crushed black peppercorns
- 16 prepared mini popover shells\* (recipe attached)
- 32 small fresh arugula leaves
- 1 1/3 tbsp (20 ml) slightly spicy red pepper jelly, divided
- 1 tsp (5 ml) bottled prepared horseradish

1. Divide roast beef into 16 portions; season with salt and crushed black peppercorns. Slice goat's cheese into ¼ inch (0.6 cm) slices and divide into 16 portions.
2. To each popover shell, add 1/8 of a teaspoon (0.5 ml) of red pepper jelly, then one dollop of goat's cheese. Top with 2 arugula leaves (folded if necessary) and add a second touch of red pepper jelly. (Apply the jelly in such a way as to glue the leaves together.) Then add a portion of roast beef/steak (folded as required) and finally, just a touch of horseradish.
4. If not serving promptly, cover loosely with plastic wrap and serve within an hour.





Tantalizing crispy chicken wings come with a caveat: They are addictive.

### Mini Popover Shells

*Makes 48 pieces (or 1 cup/250 ml of batter)*

Add another tasty dimension to your hors d'oeuvre repertoire by topping these herb-infused mini popover shells with creative fillings of choice.

2 to 3 tbsp (30 to 45 ml) soft butter (for buttering pans)  
 ½ cup (125 ml) sifted all-purpose flour  
 ¼ tsp (1 ml) salt  
 ½ cup (125 ml) milk  
 1½ large eggs  
 1½ tsp (8 ml) melted butter  
 1½ tbsp (23 ml) finely chopped fresh dill weed  
 1/3 tsp (2 ml) crushed dried tarragon leaves

1. Heavily butter 4 mini muffin pans with 12 mini cups each.
2. In a medium-sized bowl, sift flour and salt together.
3. In a second medium-sized bowl, beat together milk, eggs and melted butter. Gradually add flour mixture and beat until smooth. Stir in dill weed and tarragon.
4. Let mixture rest refrigerated overnight

(or for at least 30 minutes at room temperature). (Makes about 1 cup or 250 ml of batter.)

4. Drop 1 tsp (5 ml) of popover batter into each buttered cup of the muffin pans.
5. Bake popovers in the centre of a preheated 400 F (200 C) oven until deep, golden brown in colour (about 8 to 10 minutes).
6. Remove pans from oven, loosen popovers with the tip of a small sharp knife and transfer to cooling racks. (Note: The centres will collapse to create mini popover shells.)

Make ahead tip: Mini popovers may be made in advance. Wrap them in plastic wrap, place in an airtight container and store refrigerated for up to 2 days or frozen for weeks. Note: Allow popovers to return to room temperature before using. To restore original quality, wrap popovers in aluminum foil and heat in a preheated 300 F (150 C) oven for just a few minutes.

### Tantalizing Crispy Chicken Wings

*Makes 4 servings*

Warning: The crispiness, caramelization

and the rewarding combination of spices may make these wings addictive, even if you aren't a chicken wing fan. The baking powder draws the moisture out of the skin, giving the final product its crispiness while locking in the flavourful juices. Applying dots of tomato paste before grilling will enhance caramelization and browning.

- 1 tsp (5 ml) cumin seeds
- 1 tsp (5 ml) ground cumin
- 2/3 tsp (3.5 ml) ground coriander
- ½ tsp (3 ml) ground nutmeg
- 1/3 tsp (2 ml) salt (first addition)
- Pinch of chili powder
- 2½ tsp (13 ml) baking powder
- 1/3 tsp (2 ml) salt (second addition)
- Pinch of crushed black peppercorns
- 2 lb (900 g) chicken wings, drumettes and winglets
- 1 ½ tsp (8 ml) finely minced fresh garlic
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) tomato paste
- 1 2/3 tbsp (23 ml) olive oil

1. In a small bowl, mix together cumin seeds, cumin, coriander, nutmeg, salt (first addition) and chili powder. Set aside.
2. In another small bowl, mix together baking powder, salt (second addition) and crushed black peppercorns.
3. Arrange wings in a large baking dish (or on a platter). Sprinkle with the baking powder mixture and toss to coat wings evenly.
4. Place a wire rack over a baking sheet lined with wax paper. Arrange wings on the rack and refrigerate for two or three hours, uncovered.
5. Before baking, allow the wings to come closer to room temperature; then transfer the wings to a large baking dish or platter, sprinkle with the spice mixture; toss to evenly coat. Then sprinkle with minced garlic and toss to distribute evenly. Finally, dot with tomato paste and lightly rub over surface of chicken wings.
6. Brush wings gently, but thoroughly, with garlic infused olive oil and arrange on a well-oiled preheated barbecue grill (400 F or 200 C). Close lid and grill until first side of wing pieces appears rather crispy and brown (about 2 to 3 minutes).
7. Promptly turn off one burner and while turning the wing pieces over, arrange all of them over the unlit burner. Close lid and cook until juices run clear (only a matter of minutes). NOTE: Total cooking time is about 12 minutes.

Margaret Dickenson is a cookbook author, menu/recipe developer and a protocol, business and etiquette instructor.

## New arrivals

**Alfred Kenneth Russell**  
High Commissioner for Bahamas



After a long career at the Bahamas Oil Refinery, High Commissioner Russell became a justice of the peace and a member of the housing commission for the island of Grand Bahama. He was then responsible for public works as a council representative and then chairman of the town planning committee for New Providence and The Bahamas.

In 1997, he was elected as a member of parliament and became minister of public works in 2001, after which he served as minister of housing and national insurance.

When he left politics in 2012, he became owner and operator of two companies — ALS Construction and Best Home Designs.

In 2019, he received the British Empire Medal for meritorious service. He was appointed high commissioner to Canada in November 2020.

**Bafetigue Ouattara**  
Ambassador of Côte d'Ivoire



Ambassador Ouattara began his career as a legal adviser after completing a master's in international relations. He then studied diplomacy and joined the foreign ministry as a senior research analyst in 2004. He was promoted to deputy director in 2006 and his first posting came in 2008 when he was sent to the permanent mission of the United Nations as counsellor.

He became ambassador and deputy permanent representative at the United Nations in 2013 and held the post until he was assigned to Canada.

**Andrea Ferrari**  
Ambassador of Italy



Ambassador Ferrari joined the foreign service in 1990, starting in the treaty law division, and then the press and information service. His first posting was to Malaysia in 1992, where he ran the embassy's trade office. In 1996, he was posted to Hungary. He returned to the office of the foreign minister in 2000, until 2004, when he was posted to Beijing as first counsellor commerce. In 2008, he became ambassador to Qatar.

He returned to the ministry in 2012, in the directorate general for the promotion of the Sistema Paese and later to the office of the minister, where he served as deputy chief of staff. In 2014, he became deputy director-general of political affairs and security, and central director for the United Nations and human rights. In 2016, he was named ambassador to Cuba.

Ambassador Ferrari is married to Maria Grazia Mattarella. They have one daughter.

**Immaculate Nduku Musili Wambua**  
High Commissioner for Kenya



High Commissioner Wambua began her career in the public service in 1988 as children's officer at the ministry of home affairs and national heritage. She held that position for eight years before becoming assistant secretary in the office of the president in the department of provincial administration and internal security.

In 2003, she joined the foreign ministry and held various positions within the multilateral, Asia Australasia directorates. In 2006, she was sent to Brussels as first counsellor and then returned to headquarters as deputy director of the economic and external trade directorate. She was sent to Ireland in 2013 as chargé d'affaires, and later, deputy head of mission. Back at the ministry in 2018, she became deputy director of the protocol directorate for a year before becoming director of the Americas and Caribbean directorate.

**Oleg V. Stepanov**  
Ambassador of Russia



Ambassador Stepanov graduated from Moscow State University in 1994 with a master's degree in international journalism and public relations. He then joined the foreign ministry North American desk. He has served as vice-consul in San Francisco and counsellor at the embassy in Georgia.

In 2010, he became minister-counsellor for political and political-military affairs at the embassy in the U.S. and a year later, he was promoted as minister and deputy chief of mission. From 2016 to 2021, he served as director of the foreign policy planning department at the foreign ministry.

The ambassador is a member of two academic non-governmental organizations — the Council on Foreign and Defence Policy and the Russian Foreign Affairs Council. He is married to Yulia Stepanova and they have two children, a son and a daughter.

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First secretary

**China**  
Jiangang Li  
Minister-counsellor

**Congo**  
Jolie Karungi Sebise  
Attaché

**Germany**  
Thomas Ludwig Thiede  
Assistant attaché

**India**  
First secretary  
Chellappan Gurusubramanian

**Israel**  
Anan Raad  
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**Mexico**  
Arturo Caracas Uribe  
Naval attaché

Francisco Alejandro Maldonado Aguilar  
Deputy naval attaché

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# The flavour-packed skin of grapes and why it matters



Tristan  
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Murdock

**M**ost wine grapes' characteristics and colour come from the skins. Grape pulp houses sugars, water and acids, but it's the thin protective layer that gives the grape its true character. Tannins, volatile aromatic compounds and bitterness all come from the skin. And upon it? Blooms of yeast, the inoculant for fermentation, can be found on the skin itself.

Red and white grapes may spend some time macerating with their skins after being crushed. The varietal, alongside the winemaker's choices, will determine how long the skins are in contact with the juice. Early on, at colder temperatures and prior to any alcohol formation, the extraction process will be slower, gradually speeding up as the vigours of fermentation heat up the mixture. The creation of alcohol will exacerbate this extraction. Deciding when to remove the juice from skins depends on the winemaker's goal.

Notably, almost all reds will see skin contact: this is where, for the most part, they derive colour. In a few rare cases, the pulp is also red and, as such, the juice when initially pressed will also be red. These varietals are known as teinturier grapes. Alicante Bouschet, Marechal Foch and Saperavi are the most common, though they are still rarely seen. On the flip side, Blanc de Noirs Champagne is a white wine made out of Pinot noir and Pinot Meunier, two red grapes that see zero time on their skins, making a white wine from red grapes.

Rosés are typically a lightly pressed red, and not often a blend of red and white wines. Rosé Champagne is an outlier, as some red will be blended in post-fermentation to add colour. In table wines and sparklings outside of Champagne, a short maceration time will give colour and complexity, ideally without introducing too many tannins, as the aim is to create a



Stanners Vineyard is an artisanal, family-owned and operated winery located near the village of Hillier in Prince Edward County. Try its Pinot Gris Cuivré for a good skin-contact wine.

lighter, more delicate style that may be lost behind too much tannic grip. Light reds often ride the line between rosés and reds: don't expect to see a Pinot Noir on skins for too long. It's about finding that delicate balance between the textural grip and the volatile oils and compounds in the skin.

There is often a misconception that white wines don't see any skin contact and this is true for some bottlings. Italian-styled Pinot Grigios tend to have no time on skins, but they're also picked early to retain a high acidity and low alcohol. In essence, their very being aims to create a neutral, approachable "house white" style. A little skin contact can go a long way in providing more body, texture and truer iteration of the grape and winemaker's intentions.

If the white winemaker decides to extend skin contact to more than a few days, the wine will take on even more of those colour compounds, tannins and skin characteristics. Depending on the varietal, these wines might turn orange. Some, such as Stanners Pinot Gris Cuivré turn a veritable copper, as the Pinot Gris grape is more pink-hued than the green most white grapes tend to be.

Extended maceration into the realm of orange is typically reserved for highly aromatic grapes with thicker skins and higher acid. Flavours of Orange Pekoe tea, dried white flowers, nuts and tropical fruits tend to abound, though texturally the wine will be closer to robust red than most whites. The acidity is important as it'll help keep the tannic grip in check, while the higher aromatics provide more depth to the finished wine. Grapes such as Gewurztraminer, Pinot Gris and Sauvignon Blanc are typical.

Recommendations: Groupe Soleil wine agency carries a plethora of Blanc de Noir Champagnes from artisanal growers throughout the region. Stanners Pinot Gris Cuivré is available from the winery in Hillier, Prince Edward County, or is available on its website at [www.stanners-vineyard.ca](http://www.stanners-vineyard.ca).

Classic orange wine producers worth seeking out are Pheasant's Tears (from wine agent All the Right Grapes) and from Gravner (The Living Vine).

Tristan Bragaglia-Murdock likes pouring wine at Fauna almost as much as he likes writing about it, drinking and making it.





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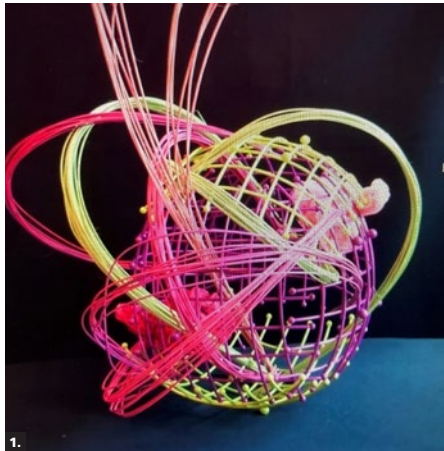
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1. The Embassy of Japan, in collaboration with the Sogetsu School of Ikebana Ottawa Branch, hosted two online guided tours of the virtual Sogetsu Ikebana Exhibition. This arrangement, titled *Swirl*, was made by Quebec artist Christiane Ryan. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 2. This Ikebana arrangement by artist Michael Charron from Gatineau, Qué., is titled *Fire Works*. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 3. To commemorate the 80th anniversary of the June deportations from the Baltic countries in 1941, the ambassadors of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania stand at the Garden of the Provinces and Territories, where a memorial to the victims of communism is being built. From left: Estonian Ambassador Toomas Lukk, Latvian Ambassador Karlis Eihenbaums and Lithuanian Ambassador Darius Skusevicius. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 4. Peruvian Ambassador Roberto Rodriguez Arnillas spoke at a full-day virtual summit of the Peruvian Canadian Institute hosted by Huntington University. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 5. Carleton University's Centre for European Studies hosted a webinar on the EU and COVID-19. Scott L. Greer, professor of health management and politics at the University of Michigan, presented. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 6. The embassy of Kazakhstan hosted an online conference about Kazakhstan's role in regional and international security. The event was presented in collaboration with Carleton University's EURUS Centre and the University of Toronto's Centre for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies. Yerzhan Saltybayev, director of the Institute of World Economics and Politics, spoke. (Photo: Ülke Baum)





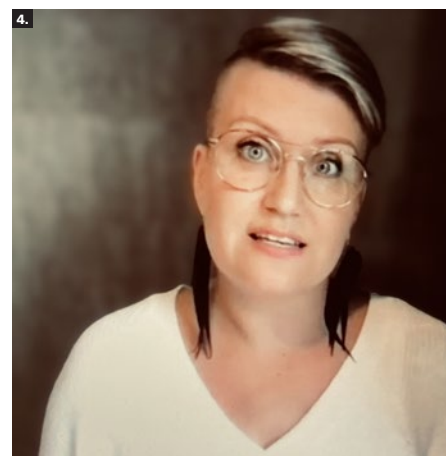
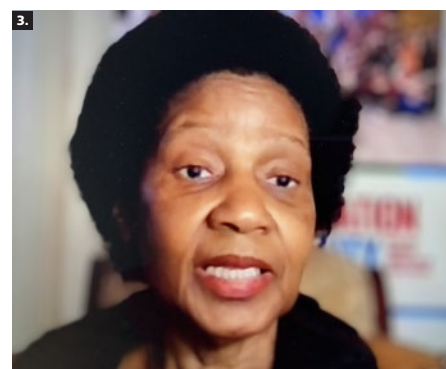
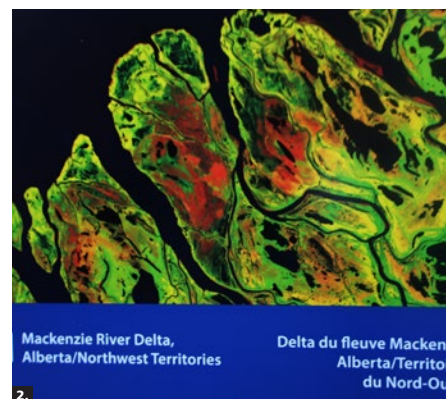
1. To mark Georgia's national day, Niagara Falls was lit up in the country's national colours. (Photo: Embassy of Georgia) 2. Georgian Ambassador Konstantine Kavtaradze marked his national day by delivering packages of Georgian specialties, including a bottle of Georgian wine and a jar of honey, to those who would have been invited to an in-person event. (Photo: Embassy of Georgia) 3. The Ethiopian Embassy hosted a webinar titled The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam: an opportunity for co-operation or a cause for confrontation? Lemlem Fiseha, a lawyer and member of the negotiating team at Ethiopia's foreign ministry, was one of the panellists. (Photo: Ülle Baum) 4. Latvian Ambassador Karlis Eihenbaums received an Order of Merit from the Estonian Central Council in Canada for outstanding contribution to building Latvian relations and advancing Baltic interests in Canada. (Photo: Ülle Baum) 5. To celebrate National Flag Day, Estonian Ambassador Toomas Lukk hosted a reception and raised his country's flag at the new Estonian embassy on Daly Avenue. He stands with his wife, Piret. (Photo: Ülle Baum) 6. Also at the Estonian flag-raising, from left, Anne-Ly Ader, consul at the embassy, EU Ambassador Melita Gabric, Ambassador Lukk and his wife, Piret, Latvian Ambassador Karlis Eihenbaums, Maryse Guilbeault, deputy chief of protocol for Canada, Lithuanian Ambassador Darius Skusevicius and Vanessa Gold, assistant to the ambassador. (Photo: Ülle Baum)





1. To mark the 175th birthday of Kazakh folk musician Zhambyl Zhabaiuly, the Embassy of Kazakhstan organized an online musical event. The musician pictured was a participant. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 2. To mark Paraguay's independence day, outgoing Ambassador Ines Martínez Vallinotti held a flag-raising ceremony at Ottawa City Hall. From left: Erika Álvarez, minister-counsellor at the Embassy of Dominican Republic and Ambassador Martínez Vallinotti. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 3. Canada and Paraguay celebrate 60 years of diplomatic relations in 2021. Martínez Vallinotti stands in front of Ottawa City Hall. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 4. The Philippines Consulate General in Toronto, in co-operation with the Embassy of the Philippines and Consulate Generals of Vancouver and Calgary, presented a virtual cultural event. Myrna Segismundo, one of the Philippines' top chefs gave a lecture and cooking demonstration on Filipino cuisine. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 5. To mark the independence day of the Philippines, Ambassador Rodolfo Robles hosted a flag-raising ceremony at Ottawa City Hall. He's shown with his wife, Nora. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 6. Hungarian Ambassador Maria Eva Vass-Salazar hosted an online screening of Hungarian films related to football to mark Budapest as one of the hosts of the 60th European Football Championship. (Photo: Ülke Baum)





1. To mark the 45th year of the EU delegation to Canada, the mission presented a photo exhibition featuring 24 satellite images captured by Copernicus Sentinels. It was presented both as a virtual and in situ experience in several Canadian cities, including Ottawa, Toronto, Edmonton, Montreal, Halifax and Vancouver throughout the year. From left: Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson, EU Ambassador Melita Gabric and Kevin McHale, executive director of the Sparks Street Business Improvement Area at the opening of the exhibition on Sparks Street. The exhibition stays open until September. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 2. One of the EU exhibit's 24 satellite images is of the Mackenzie River Delta in Alberta and the Northwest Territories. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 3. The Embassy of Finland organized a webinar about advancing women's and girls' rights through technology. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, executive director of UN Women, was one of the speakers. The event was organized in collaboration with Global Affairs Canada and the University of Ottawa. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 4. From the same event: Milja Köpsi, award-winning co-ordinator of the Finnish Mimmit koodaa -program, joined an online panel discussion. The project encourages women to join the IT sector. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 5. To celebrate Europe Day in Canada, the European Union flag was raised at Ottawa City Hall and at many cities across Canada. (Photo: Ülke Baum)



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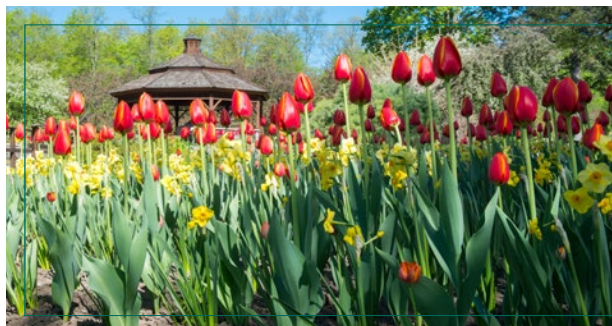
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# Theatre, murals and summer fun: 9 things to do

By Patrick Langston



The Oeno Gallery Sculpture Garden, pictured here, is located on the Huff Estates Winery's property in Bloomfield. It's a changing display of 60 steel, granite and bronze sculptures, all of which are for sale.

**N**o question: It's high time to rediscover the pleasures of local travel. Many public safety restrictions remain in place, but at the time of writing, opportunities for day and overnight trips were opening up in Ontario and Quebec. Our nine suggestions emphasize the outdoors (it is summer, after all) and even include a bit of time travel. Before setting out, remember to check on interprovincial travel regulations, masking requirements and whether the destination is open for business.

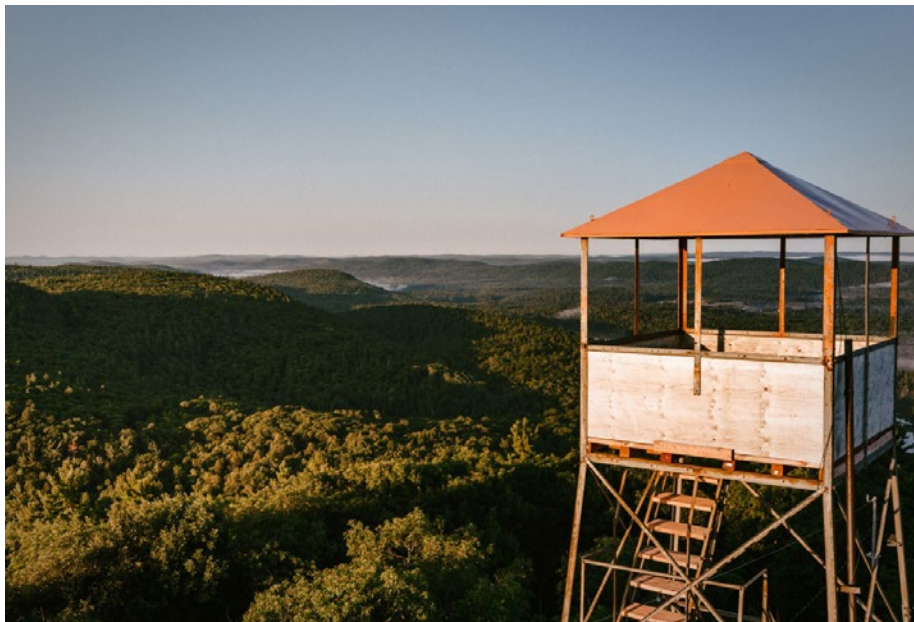
**Sexy Laundry and the Queen:** COVID-19 means live theatre is still mostly a no-go in the Ottawa area. Thousand Islands Playhouse, in leafy Gananoque about an hour and a half south of Ottawa, is an exception. It has scheduled four indoor, socially distanced shows by Canadian playwrights. They include, in August, Michele Riml's *Sexy Laundry*, a light but funny show about a long-married couple trying

to reignite their marriage. More substantial is *Serving Elizabeth* by Marcia Johnson (a different production of the same play is part of the Stratford Festival this summer). Opening in early October, the show shifts between 1952 Kenya and 2015 London as it delves into colonialism, monarchy and inclusion. 1000islandsplayhouse.com

**Where sculptures grow:** The Oeno Gallery Sculpture Garden at Huff Estates Winery in Bloomfield, Prince Edward County, is the outdoor home for a changing display of 60 steel, granite and bronze sculptures in a 1.6-hectare setting of walking paths, maple and poplar groves, gardens and more. Some of the sculptures are monumental and they are all for sale. About 90 minutes west of Oeno and near Peterborough is ZimArt, where dozens of stone sculptures by Zimbabwean artists sit in a park-like setting overlooking Rice Lake and the Northumberland Hills. Like Oeno, admission is free and the sculptures

are for sale. Visitors to ZimArt can picnic on the grounds, and evening outdoor concerts are planned for this summer. zimart.ca. Bonus: Prince Edward County is home to wineries, art studios and beaches. oeno-gallery.com.

**Easy hiking in the west end:** Salamanders, wildflowers, a red-tailed hawk (if you're lucky) and gorgeous views of the Ottawa River and the Quebec shoreline beyond — Sheila McKee Park is an under-appreciated gem in Dunrobin, just north of Kanata. The two kilometres of trails are an easy hike, even for youngsters, and the woods are a balm for the addled mind. And here's an insider's tip: The park is close to Pinhey's Point Historic Site, a green space that rolls down to the Ottawa River and features a nearly 200-year-old manor house (now a museum) and surrounding ruins. The site is a fine spot to picnic and relax for free. The manor house has admission by donation. ottawa.ca



The 18-metre observation tower, with its view of a dozen lakes and surrounding forests, is a highlight of Mont Morissette Regional Park.

**Time travel:** If you're on a road trip this summer, why not take along Tom Russell? The American singer/songwriter's 1999 album, *The Man From God Knows Where*, makes a dandy travelling companion with its musical portraits of 19th- and 20th-Century immigrants and working class families in places such as Missouri, Iowa and California. One of the U.S.'s best songwriters, Russell, along with a bevy of guest artists, blends the universal and the particular in vivid stories of farm wives, an Irish kid arriving at Ellis Island, a father with big dreams, and others. Buy the album at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) if you can't find it in local record shops.

**Taking the long view:** The 18-metre observation tower, with its view of a dozen lakes and surrounding forests, is a highlight of Mont Morissette Regional Park in the Quebec municipality of Blue Sea, 115 kilometres north of Ottawa. What else can you do there? How about hiking (12 kilometres of marked trails), access to the small beach at Lac Blue Sea, a tour of the art gallery in a former Blue Sea manse and an overnight stay at the enticingly named Camping Insolite CarpeDiem on Lake Edja? [tourismeoutaouais.com](http://tourismeoutaouais.com)

**Gardens galore:** Public and community gardens in the National Capital Region are about more than just tulips. The manicured grounds of Rideau Hall — home to the governor general of Canada, a role currently unfilled — feature traditional British rose gardens and rockeries as well

as an Inuit garden, while the rooftop garden on the Canadian War Museum is one of the largest in North America. The expansive Central Experimental Farm includes ornamental plantings and the Fletcher Wildlife Garden. In Westboro, the national historic site of Maplelawn boasts a 19th-Century walled garden. A drive to Gatineau Park's 231-hectare Mackenzie King Estate, the one-time summer home of Canada's longest-serving prime minister, rewards you with luxuriant gardens and walking trails. See [gardenpromenade.ca](http://gardenpromenade.ca) for more on this year's riot of colours, textures and fragrances.

**Beach time:** With forecasters calling for a steamy summer in Ottawa, Petrie Island in Orléans will be popular. The extensive conservation and recreation area on the Ottawa River includes sandy beaches with swimming, along with canoeing, kayaking and hiking. A mix of wetlands, forests and open areas, it's also a favourite spot of naturalists and anyone who enjoys birding or watching turtles laze away the hours sunbathing on logs. Also, the village of Cumberland is a 10-minute drive east of Petrie Island along Highway 174. Highlights include the Black Walnut Bakery at the corner of Highway 174 and Cameron Street and the Cumberland Heritage Village Museum at 2940 Old Montreal Rd. The 100-acre museum showcases rural and village life in the 1920s and 30s with dozens of heritage and reproduction buildings, including a fine old church, a

fire hall and homes. The pandemic may limit access to building interiors. [ottawa.ca](http://ottawa.ca)

**Mural mania:** Ottawa buildings and other paintable surfaces are home to an array of murals and graffiti that celebrate neighbourhood histories and offer artists broad canvasses for their imaginations. Westboro — always a great place for a stroll — is especially rich in murals, many of them painted by former Ottawa artist Shaun McInnis. Westboro murals include McInnis's panoramic tribute to his nephew and the joys of boyhood on the Scotiabank building at 388 Richmond Rd. and a multi-artist celebration of youth at the Granite



This mural by Shaun McInnis is on the side of the Scotiabank in Westboro.

Curling Club, 206 Scott St. Buildings get knocked down and weather takes its toll on outdoor art, but the map of local murals and graffiti at [houseofpaint.ca](http://houseofpaint.ca) is still an excellent guide to what's viewable.

**Eco-tourism in the Outaouais:** Over the past 24 years, Michel Leclair has fashioned Eco-Odyssée, a 70-acre water maze and canal system in marsh land just outside Wakefield, a 30-minute drive north from Ottawa. He wanted to give visiting paddle-boaters, paddle-boarders and canoers a beaver's eye-view of nature, which Leclair grew to respect during his career as an animal conservation officer in Gatineau Park. The family-friendly water labyrinth may include beaver sightings and there are night sojourns, including observation from a boat of the Perseid meteor shower in August. Paddle boats, boards and canoes are available. Open until the end of August. [eco-odysee.ca](http://eco-odysee.ca)

Patrick Langston is an Ottawa writer who's had both of his COVID vaccinations and has gassed up his aging vehicle for another summer of adventuring.



# Photography: The new art of diplomacy

By Randy VanDerStarren



Take Your Seat's solo exhibition at the Prince Takamado Gallery at the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo was extended for four months to cover the G20 in Japan in June 2019.

If a picture is worth a thousand words, what power does that give an ambassador with an entire gallery to draw upon? Add the fact that the cumulative effect of those thousands of inspirational "words" can be understood in every language, and you'll begin to appreciate the enthusiastic support Take Your Seat's photography is garnering in diplomatic circles.

The Take Your Seat team aims to show people that we're more alike than different and it does that by taking photographs of different countries and then setting them up alongside similar scenes from Canada. The common thread throughout the images is the Take Your Seat director's chair, which serves as an invitation to become part of the shot and as a conversation starter.

"Audiences ask why a red and white chair is in each location and in doing so, they experience the human connection of

the Take Your Seat project, which includes exhibitions, talks and publications," says Spencer VanDerStarren, Take Your Seat's photographer and digital director.

Canadian and foreign embassies have embraced the photographic project, commissioning Take Your Seat exhibitions of their own. The Royal Canadian Geographical Society and Trans Canada Trail have become partners to ensure the very best of Canada is showcased on a global stage.

Thirteen countries and 35,000 photographs later — not to mention international exhibitions, journalism awards, books, airport installations and keynote addresses — this director's chair is doing its artistic part to connect Canada with the world and the world with Canada. And that need for human connection is ever growing. After all, despite our unprecedented digital connectedness, the world is increasingly becoming detached. Literal and figurative walls are erected every day.

"Take Your Seat sets out to bring those barriers down by demonstrating that we are much more alike than we are different," VanDerStarren says. "At our core, we all want to be respected. We all want to be part of something bigger than ourselves. Our work shares this universal human bond in sometimes unexpected ways."

Diplomats are well versed in the art of diplomacy, but art itself connects humans on a deeper emotional level.

"Our exhibitions and books share common ground in an uncommon way. Words that we've all heard before and take for granted such as, 'together', 'friendship', and 'unity' come alive with new meaning through the images and narratives that Take Your Seat shares with its global audiences," VanDerStarren says.

"Our photographs and stories connect on a visceral level. Our chair sparks a conversation about an individual's role in promoting respect, peace and admiration





"Our camera turns to the forest for inspiration. In moments, the rhythm of our footsteps is all that we hear. We shoot among the pines of Hakone [above] as we shot among the pines of Kamloops, aware that we are again fortunate to witness a natural spectacle shared by two nations that not enough of us get to see." Excerpt from *Take Your Seat, together: Canada and Japan*.





"Wonder pairs Trang's jungle peaks [above photo] with Alberta's Rocky Mountains. Serenity marries tropical water with a frozen lake. Nature unexpectedly shares a unified and lasting impression." Excerpt from *Take Your Seat, together: Canada and Thailand*, debuting this year with the Canadian Embassy and Thai foreign ministries in Bangkok and Ottawa.



Cows in Canada are joined by their sisters and cousins from Hong Kong and Turkey through a chair. Through culture, people and nature, Take Your Seat's mission of One People. One Planet. One Life showcases the common ground we all are privileged to share.

for each other and our planet. With that emotive backdrop, diplomats now have the ability to add inspired meaning and authenticity to their own art of diplomatic messaging."

Take Your Seat's first exhibition since COVID-19, and also its most comprehensive to date, opens virtually on July 1 and in person Sept. 1 at IconSiam in Bangkok, Thailand. The work celebrates 60 years of diplomatic relations between Canada and Thailand and will be opened by Sarah Taylor, Canada's ambassador to Thailand, Laos and Cambodia. The month-long exhibition will then tour throughout Thailand and is expected to have a reciprocal run in Canada with the Royal Thai Embassy. You can view the virtual gallery at [TakeYourSeatTogether.com](http://TakeYourSeatTogether.com).

Randy VanDerStarren is the lead photographer and founder of Take Your Seat, a global multimedia project by Randy and Spencer VanDerStarren.



Turkey's ambassador to Canada, Kerim Uras, poses in Take Your Seat's chair following its latest Turkish expedition.



Sarah Taylor, Canada's ambassador to Thailand, Cambodia and Laos, shares a moment and her *Take Your Seat* book with the deputy prime minister and minister of foreign affairs of Thailand, Don Pramudwinai.



Fahad Saeed Al Raqabani, the UAE's ambassador to Canada, takes his seat before Take Your Seat's National Day exhibition.



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## Celebration time

A listing of the national and independence days marked by countries

July		
1	Burundi	National Day
1	Canada	Canada Day
3	Belarus	Independence Day
4	Rwanda	Liberation Day
4	United States	Independence Day
5	Venezuela	Independence Day
7	Nepal	Birthday of His Majesty The King
10	Bahamas	Independence Day
11	Mongolia	National Day
14	France	National Day
14	Iraq	Republic Day
20	Colombia	National Day
21	Belgium	Accession of King Leopold I
23	Egypt	National Day
28	Peru	Independence Day
30	Morocco	Ascension of the Throne
August		
1	Benin	Independence Day
1	Switzerland	National Day
3	Niger	Proclamation of Independence
6	Bolivia	Independence Day
6	Jamaica	Independence Day
7	Côte d'Ivoire	Independence Day
8	Macedonia	Independence Day
10	Ecuador	Independence Day
11	Chad	National Day
15	Congo	National Day
15	India	Independence Day
17	Gabon	National Day
17	Indonesia	Independence Day
19	Afghanistan	National Day
24	Ukraine	Independence Day
25	Uruguay	National Day
31	Malaysia	National Day
31	Trinidad and Tobago	National Day
September		
1	Slovak Republic	Constitution Day
2	Vietnam	Independence Day
7	Brazil	Independence Day
15	Costa Rica	Independence Day
15	El Salvador	Independence Day
15	Guatemala	Independence Day
15	Honduras	National Day
16	Mexico	National Day
18	Chile	Independence Day
19	St. Kitts & Nevis	Independence Day
21	Armenia	Independence Day
22	Mali	Proclamation of the Republic
23	Saudi Arabia	National Day



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**Photographer Mike Beedell:** "The ocean provides a fascinating and challenging domain for a photographer. I met this Lion's Mane Jelly or Arctic Red Jellyfish in God's Pocket Marine Provincial Park on the northeast coast of Vancouver Island. It pulsed by me in a swiftly moving tide. When we swung into a shallow bay, there was time for a portrait session. Lion's Manes thrive in cold oceans — the North Pacific, North Atlantic and Arctic. The largest jellyfish in the world, they reach 2.5 metres in diameter and up to 33 metres in length, making them longer than the blue whale. They grow long stinging filaments called nematocysts, which can paralyze fish, crustaceans and other jellies for food. The free-floating nematocysts sting on contact and leave a welt on the skin, though the stings heal quickly. Totally covered in a dry suit, except for my mouth, I have been stung around my face many times when doing portraits of these enchanting creatures. Leatherback sea turtles are the main predator of these jellies, but seabirds and fish will also dine on them. They reproduce with the female carrying the fertilized eggs in her tentacles as they grow into larvae. Their lifespan is only a year.





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