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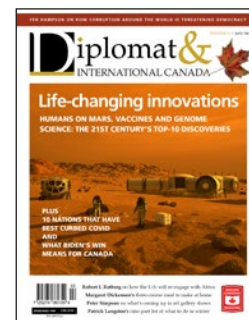


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Volume 32, Number 1

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Starting 2021 with optimism

As the staff at *Diplomat* looked toward 2021, we were keen to find some bright spots on the horizon. So why not look back at some of this century's best innovations so far?

At the top of the list is genetic editing and the charming story that goes with it. Many will remember Jennifer Doudna's story of getting the call from Oslo, to tell her she won the Nobel Prize for her work on technology that can help scientists change the genetic code. It opens up possibilities in medicine, agriculture and life sciences, with researchers hoping to do everything from curing Alzheimer's to improving the yield of agricultural crops.

Needless to say, vaccines find themselves on this list. Messenger RNA, the medical technology behind the first two COVID-19 vaccines to hit the market, has been touted by experts as the key to other effective vaccines and something that will also change the very model of future vaccine development, writer Wolfgang Depner reports.

The energy section highlights SPARC, an up-and-coming nuclear fusion reactor, while the quantum computing section reports on Google's new quantum computer that led the company to claim "quantum supremacy." There are several more on our list, but I'll leave the preview there so you can read them for yourself.

Also in our efforts to be a little bit upbeat as much of Canada faces early 2021 COVID-related lockdowns and a new more contagious strain ravages the country, we look at the Top-10 COVID crushers — the countries that have fared the best in their quest to eradicate the tena-

cious virus. Africa has three countries on the list and Asia has five. Which continent has the last two? You'll have to read on to find out.

Also in *Dispatches*, Robert Rotberg writes about what the presidency of Joe Biden will mean for Africa and posits that it will likely mean more fruitful and less hostile relations than have been experienced over the past four years.

Rotberg also contributes a piece on his desire for an international anti-corruption court, something for which many prominent Canadians are also advocating. Some of those Canadians include Allan Rock, former attorney-general and ambassador to the United Nations; Lloyd Axworthy, former foreign minister; and Peter MacKay, former attorney-general, justice minister and foreign minister. All three have written about why they think the court should be established, and why it should be located in Canada.

Up front, columnist Fen Hampson examines what the election of Biden will mean for Canada — as with every new administration south of the border, there's good and bad news on that front.

We also have my interview with Joel Spicer, president and CEO of Nutrition International, who talks about how COVID has affected his organization's efforts to eradicate malnutrition globally. It's no small task, but he offers several small but effective solutions to help in the fight against wasting and stunting, the former the result of hunger, the latter the result of malnutrition.

In our *Delights* section, Margaret Dickenson offers three recipes to get you through the long, dark winter and books columnist Christina Spencer takes a well-deserved break. Peter Simpson shares his thoughts on art exhibits in Ottawa — be sure to double-check that the venues are open, however, before you head out to take them in, given the lockdowns.

Finally, Patrick Langston found some COVID-friendly things to do in and around Ottawa in his local travel piece.

Here's to 2021.

Jennifer Campbell is editor of *Diplomat*.

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Allan Rock is president emeritus and professor of law at the University of Ottawa. He is a former attorney-general of Canada and ambassador to the United Nations. He is a senior adviser to the World Refugee and Migration Council. Lloyd Axworthy is chairman of the World Refugee and Migration Council. He served 27 years as a member of the Manitoba Legislature and as an MP, holding several cabinet posts, notably Foreign Affairs. He's known for his work in advancing the treaty on anti-personnel landmines, the International Criminal Court and the Protocol on Child Soldiers. From 2004 to 2014, he was the president and vice-chancellor of the University of Winnipeg.

Peter MacKay



Peter MacKay was federal minister of justice and attorney-general (2013–2015), minister of national defence (2007–2013), and minister of foreign affairs. He was leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada in 2002 and worked with Stephen Harper's Canadian Alliance to re-unify the Conservative movement. After retiring from politics in 2015, he joined Baker McKenzie in its Toronto office as a partner in the firm's growing government enforcement and compliance practice. He also advises companies involved in international business and trade. He recently ran for the leadership of the Conservative Party of Canada.

UP FRONT

Our cover image is a NASA-generated artist's concept that depicts astronauts and human habitats on Mars. The idea of humans on Mars is part of our cover story, which features the Top-10 most promising innovations from the first two decades of the 2000s. The good-news package begins on page 32.



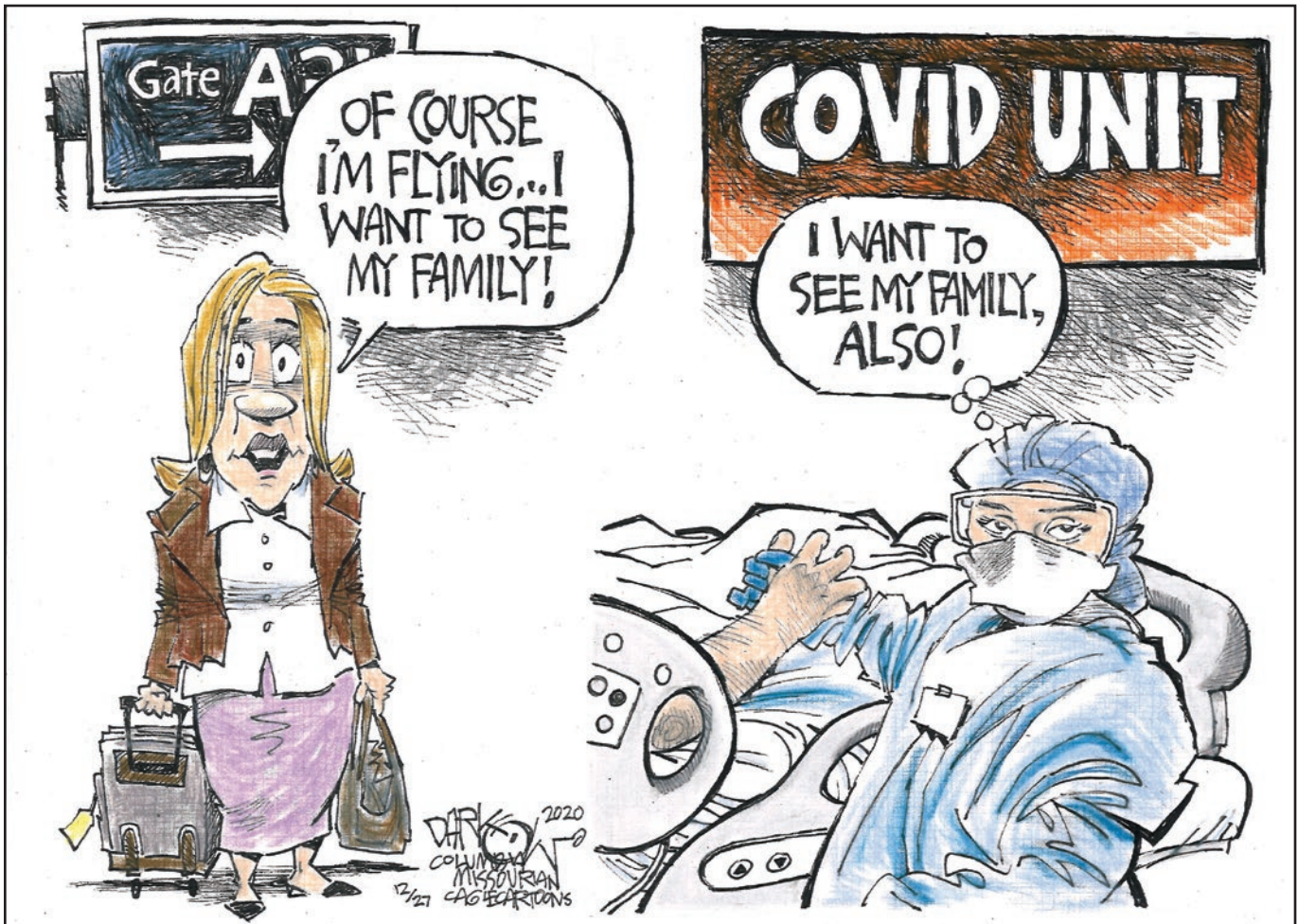
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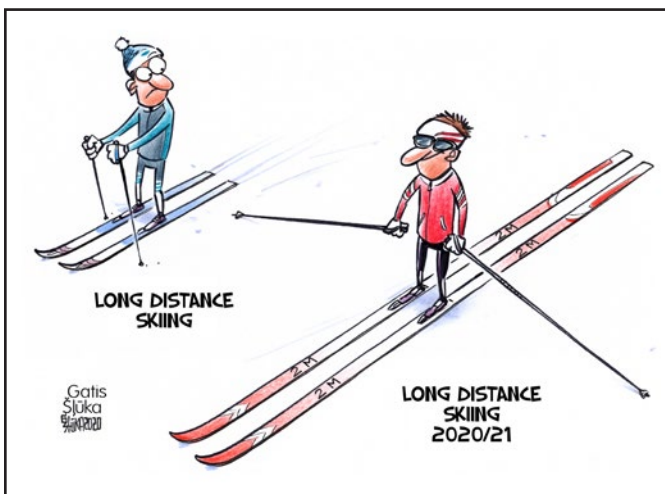


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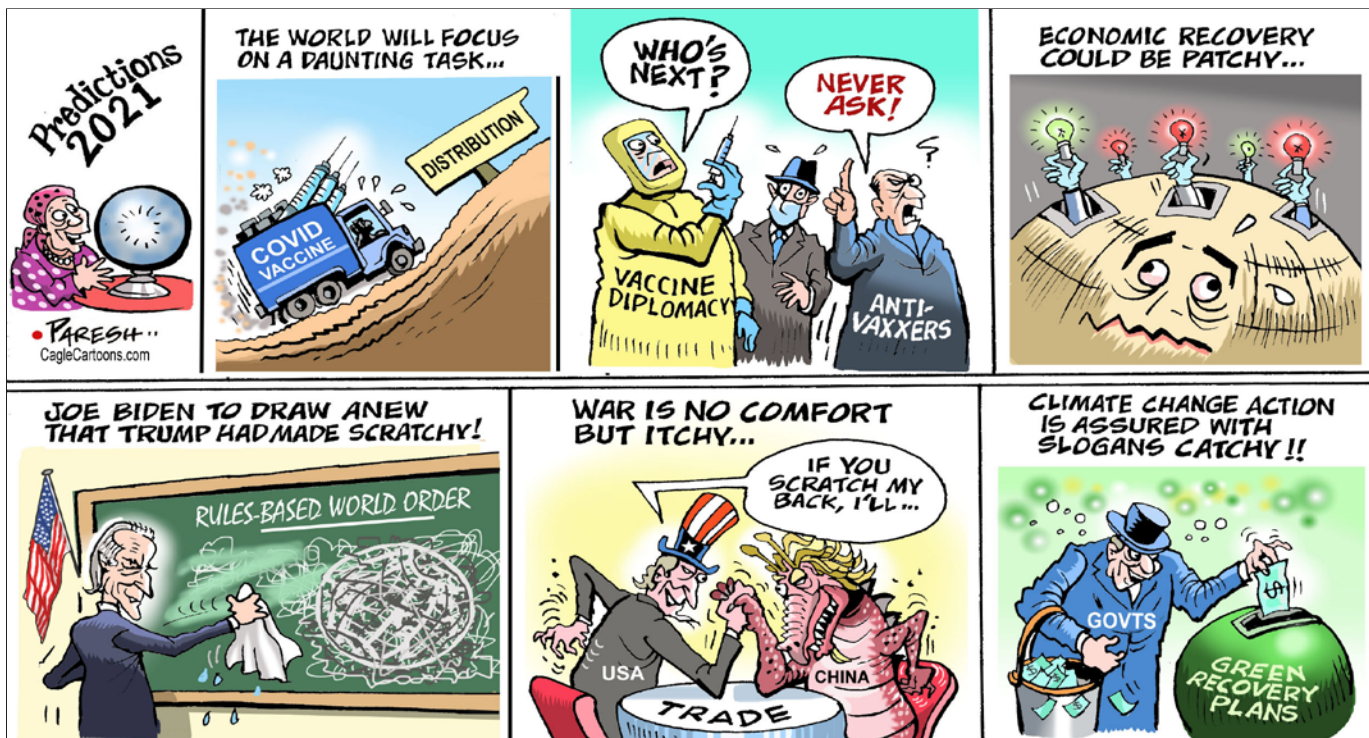
Travel in time of COVID by John Darkow, Columbia Missourian, U.S.



Long distance skiing by Gatis Sluka, Latvijas Avize, Latvia



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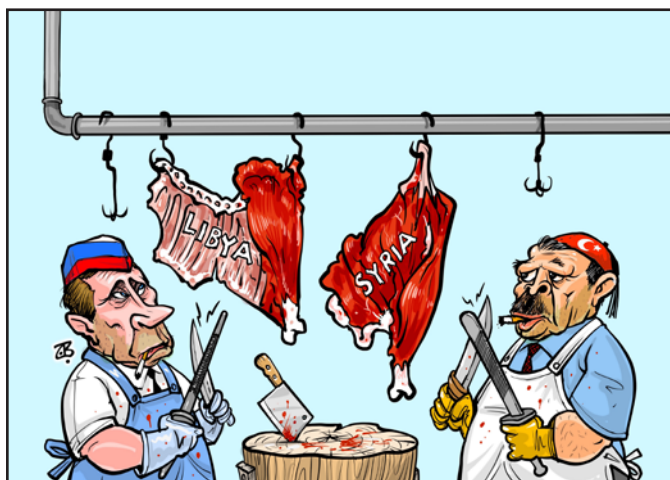
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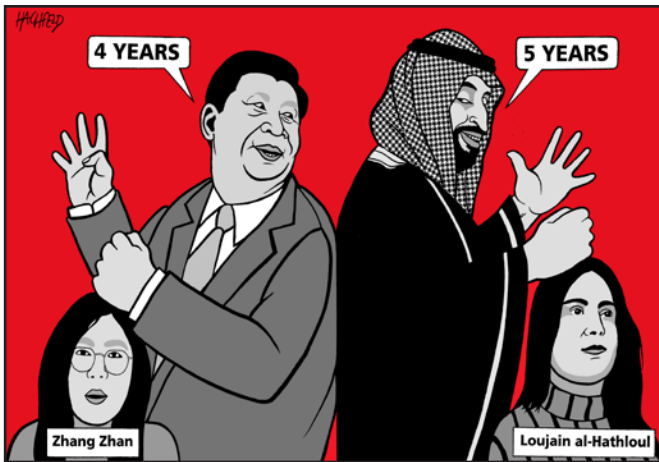
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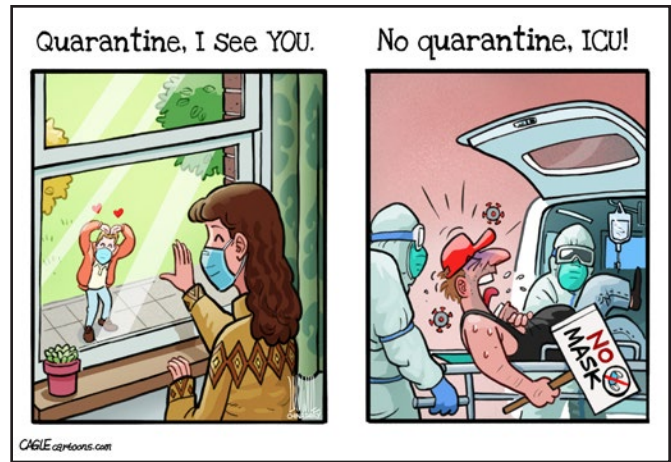
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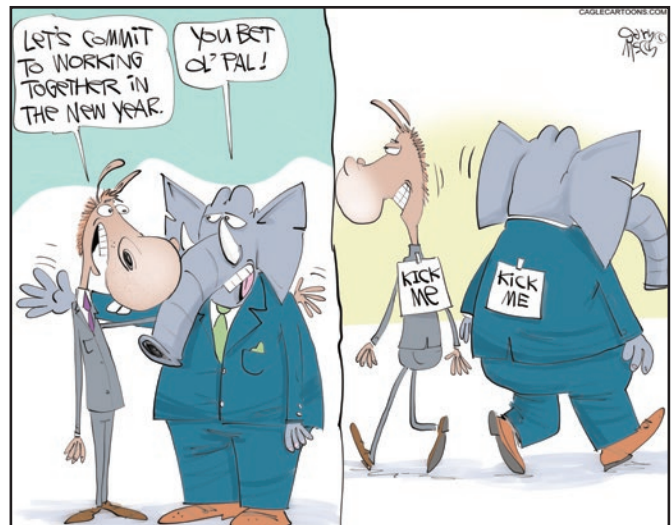
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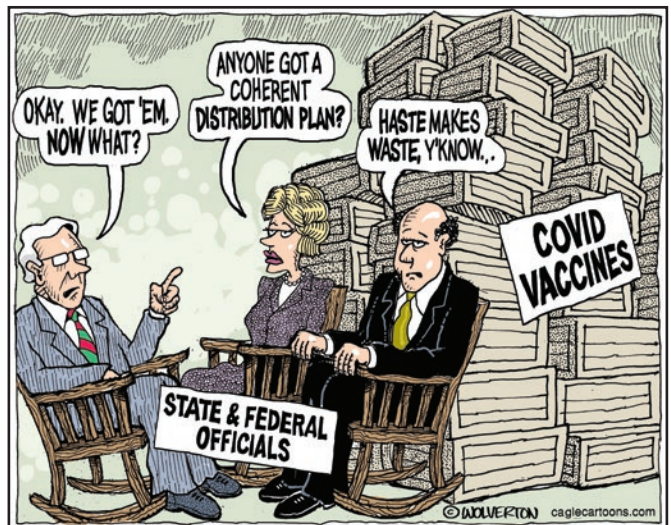
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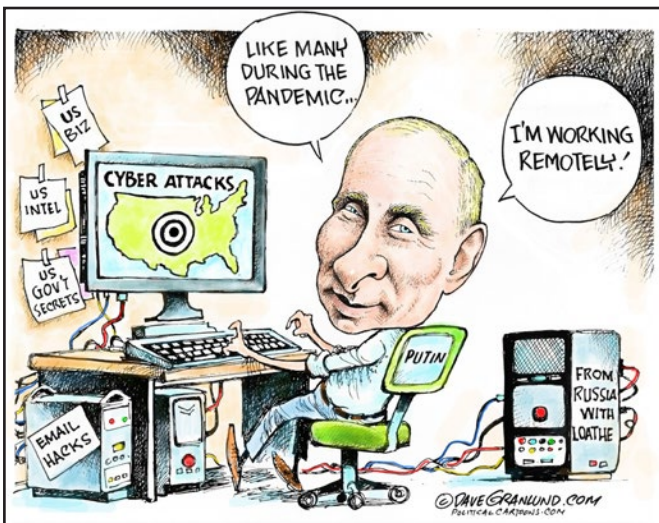
America's Enemies by Pat Bagley, *The Salt Lake Tribune*, Utah, U.S.



Transition at the White House by Patrick Chappatte, *Le Temps*, Switzerland



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Snookie is best known for her role in the Ottawa 2017 celebrations where she was the producer and developer of the Ottawa Welcomes the World series of events that brought together 88 countries in a series of 45 events during the course of Canada's 150th anniversary year that saw over 240,000 attendees at her events.

She has run her own consulting firm doing business development and large-scale events for over 18 years working specifically with the diplomatic, international and local business community. Prior to that she has lived and worked abroad on diplomatic posting with her husband. She has had careers in the clothing business as a fashion buyer, retailer sector as owner of a \$3M sales agency and worked for Global Affairs Canada developing programs and activities to build exports amongst SME's as well as coordinating large scale business marketing events.

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Canada's gains and losses in a Biden presidency



While discourse will be more civil between Canada and the U.S. under Joe Biden as president, protectionist impulses run deep in his Democratic Party.



Fen
Hampson

Many hope that Joe Biden's presidency will reap big dividends for American allies and for Canada after four tumultuous years of Donald Trump. There will be less bashing of friends and fewer insults with the new president. He will also pay greater attention to nurturing alliances and multilateral institutions. But there is no going back to the future. The American polity

remains deeply fractured, more so after the riotous storming of the U.S. Capitol by Trump supporters just as his presidency was ending. America's moral authority as leader of the democratic world has taken a serious drubbing. Its credentials as a beacon of hope for the rest of the world are more than a little sullied.

Biden will abandon Trump's harsh rhetoric about "America First" and bring a softer, friendlier tone to the White House. But make no mistake. Putting friendly rhetoric, warm hugs and high fives aside, Biden is not going to go out of his way to do Canada any special favours on the issues that really matter to Canada, even if he and Vice-President Kamala Harris get the royal treatment when they visit our nation's capital.

It certainly helps that our prime min-

ister has warm personal relations with Biden and that Harris attended high school in Montreal and has a better understanding of Canada than most of her fellow Americans. When the rest of the world is standing in line to get a hearing at the White House, you want to be in the front of the line, as former prime minister Brian Mulroney often liked to remind Canadians.

Biden faces a Herculean task to restore the U.S.'s economic fortunes, which have tanked with the COVID pandemic as millions of Americans have become infected and more than a quarter million have died. Restoring the health of Americans and the U.S. economy will be his first and foremost priority. Whether he has the mojo to provide inspired political leadership and unify Americans in a post-Trump

nation remains to be seen.

And there is still a lot of uncertainty out there about how quickly the U.S. economy, which is Canada's most important trading partner, will rebound from its COVID-inflicted wounds and the nosedive trade took in 2020.

The U.S. Conference Board predicts that "real economic growth will rise by 2.2 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2020 while the U.S. economy continues to wrestle with the COVID-19 pandemic." It points out that this "deceleration in the recovery follows a contraction of 5 per cent in the first quarter of the year, a contraction of 31.4 per cent in the second quarter and a rebound of 33.1 per cent in the third."

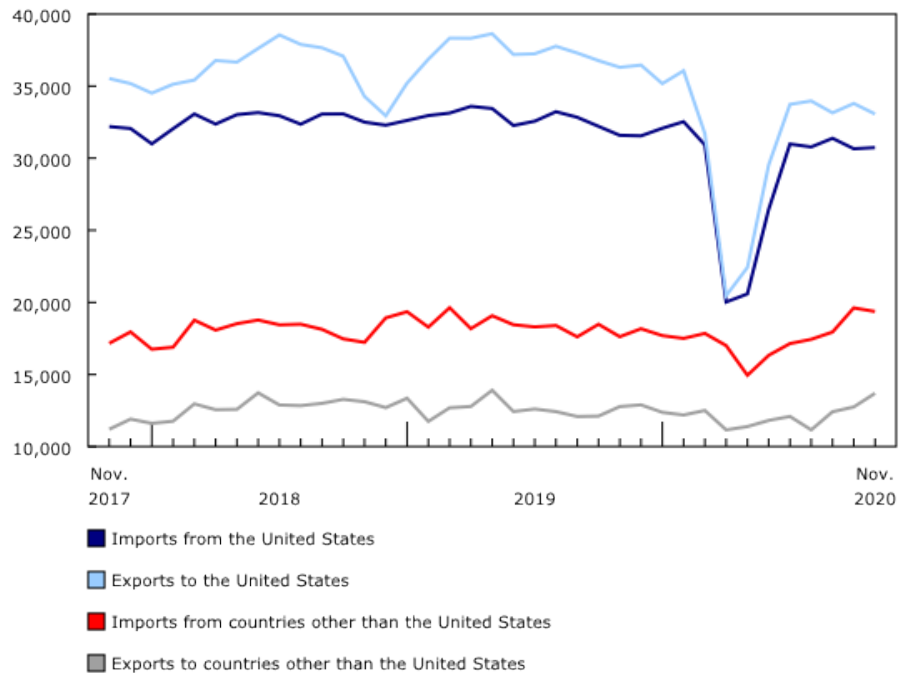
But all bets are off for 2021. Future recovery, says the Conference Board, is going to depend on a number of wild cards, including "a) the scale of the ongoing COVID-19 resurgence and any resulting lockdowns, b) the status of labour markets and household consumption, c) the size and timing of additional fiscal stimulus, d) the availability of a COVID-19 vaccine, and e) the degree to which volatility in the U.S. political transition affects consumer and business confidence." If COVID is contained, lockdowns are short-lived and a vaccine(s) becomes readily available for the general population, in the best-case scenario the U.S. economy will grow at an annualized rate of 3.8 per cent. That will be good for Canada and intensify U.S. demand for Canadian goods and services.

However, if the virus continues to exact its deadly toll and there are more lockdowns and layoffs, the contraction of the U.S. economy will extend well into the first quarter of 2021 or perhaps even beyond. In the worst-case scenario, the U.S. economy won't rebound to its pre-pandemic levels until 2022.

A key factor in any recovery scenario will be the size and scope of a stimulus package that a new administration and Congress can agree on. Trump and a bitterly divided U.S. Congress were at loggerheads about how much to spend. Whether a Biden administration fares any better will depend on the president's negotiating skills. Although the Democrats now control both the lower and upper houses in Congress after they won two run-off elections for the Senate in the State of Georgia in early January, Biden and his party will have to work closely with Republicans in the Senate because of Senate Rule XXII (the cloture rule), which requires a supermajority of 60 per cent to end debate on key bills. This power is now somewhat circumscribed — it does

Canada's exports and imports from the United States and other countries

millions of current dollars



Source: Statistics Canada. Available at: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/201006/cg-a006-eng.htm>

Canada's imports and exports from the U.S. and non-U.S. countries (in millions)

| | Imports from the U.S. | Exports to the U.S. | Imports from non-U.S. countries | Exports to non-U.S. countries |
|----------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| January 2018 | 31,056 | 34,229 | 16,652 | 11,741 |
| February 2018 | 32,042 | 35,068 | 16,765 | 11,697 |
| January 2019 | 32,681 | 34,982 | 19,337 | 13,289 |
| February 2019 | 32,960 | 36,341 | 18,434 | 11,701 |
| January 2020 | 31,989 | 35,063 | 17,730 | 12,408 |
| February 2020 | 32,596 | 36,147 | 17,351 | 12,183 |
| April 2020 | 20,062 | 20,542 | 16,862 | 11,518 |
| June 2020 | 26,400 | 29,288 | 16,209 | 11,790 |
| July 2020 | 30,898 | 33,412 | 17,035 | 11,987 |
| August 2020 | 30,778 | 33,965 | 17,442 | 11,165 |
| September 2020 | 31,378 | 33,144 | 17,945 | 12,420 |
| October 2020 | 30,652 | 33,791 | 19,620 | 12,753 |
| November 2020 | 30,735 | 33,063 | 19,368 | 13,700 |



The American polity remains deeply fractured, more so after the riotous storming of the U.S. Capitol by Trump supporters, shown here, just as his presidency was ending.

not apply, for example, to votes on judicial appointments, including Supreme Court nominations, “fast track” procedures for approving trade agreements or budget reconciliation for major legislation. It nonetheless still applies to appropriation bills and major legislation in areas such as taxation, the military, health care, the environment and civil rights, giving Republicans a handy tool to thwart progressive Democratic intentions.

The crown jewel of Biden’s recovery plan is the proposed US \$2-trillion “green energy” infrastructure plan. If it comes to fruition, however, Canadian companies could find themselves shut out of the action if American energy, transportation and construction companies are shielded from their foreign competitors. However, it is more likely to be whittled down for the reasons mentioned above, though this would not necessarily open doors to Canadian companies seeking business south of the border.

Biden’s first speech on U.S. economic recovery as president-elect, which he delivered shortly after the election, may be an ominous portent of his protectionist impulses. Ironically, the words could have easily come out of the mouth of the man he had just defeated at the polls. “Our plan,” Biden said, “will create millions of good-paying union jobs in manufac-

turing, building the vehicles, products, technologies that we’re going to need for the future to compete with the rest of the world. From autos to our stockpiles, we’re going to buy American. No government contract will be given to companies that don’t make their products here in America. To secure our position as a global leader in research and development, we’re going to invest \$300 billion in the most critical, competitive new industries in technologies creating three million good-paying jobs. And the corporate American technology firms [such as] Microsoft... they all agreed. We can make sure a future is made here in America. And that’s good for business and it’s good for American workers.”

Although Biden is unlikely to play the kind of game that Trump did by slapping tariffs on Canadian (and Mexican) steel and aluminum pursuant to Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, he is also unlikely to revoke the agreement that Canada and the United States struck in 2019, which provides for aggressive monitoring and a mechanism to prevent surges in imports of steel and aluminum. If imports of steel and aluminum “surge” as the U.S. economy rebounds, a Biden administration would almost certainly come under pressure from U.S. producers to take retaliatory action against Canada

and Mexico.

The same thing applies to critical minerals. Under the Canada–U.S. Joint Action Plan on Critical Minerals Collaboration, Canada and the U.S. agreed in 2020 to collaborate to secure supply chains for the critical minerals needed for key manufacturing sectors, including communication technology, aerospace and defence and clean technology.

Canada is the largest supplier of potash, indium, aluminum and tellurium to the U.S. and the second-largest supplier of niobium, tungsten and magnesium. It is also a major supplier of vanadium, which is used in the production of metal alloys for the aerospace, defence, energy and infrastructure sectors. Major discoveries of the mineral at Lac Doré in Quebec suggest that those reserves may be among the world’s largest. In the summer of 2020, then-U.S. commerce secretary Wilbur Ross initiated an investigation into whether vanadium imports into the U.S. threatened to impair national security. Pressure to do so came from vanadium producers in Ohio and Arkansas.

The outgoing U.S. administration also threatened trade action against Canada on dairy on the grounds that Canada has failed to abide by its Canada–United States Mexico Agreement commitments to allow more U.S. dairy imports into its highly



Vice-President Kamala Harris attended high school in Montreal and has a better understanding of Canada than most of her fellow Americans.

protected market. Biden may come under pressure from U.S. dairy producers to do the same.

All of which is to say that protectionist pressures from U.S. producers seeking government redress aren't going to disappear under a Biden administration.

The biggest bugbear is, of course, that constant cyclical trade barrier, Buy American, which former president Barack Obama deployed to dig the U.S. out of the 2008-2009 recession caused by the financial crisis, and which Biden will be tempted to use again as he tries to extract the American economy out of its COVID-induced recession.

There are no special provisions in the new free trade deal to exempt Canada from U.S. Buy American legislation, although federal governments in the two countries are governed by the World Trade Organization (WTO) agreement on federal contracts, which also applies to some — though not all — state governments. There is obviously a silver lining in Biden's commitment to adhere to the WTO and not pull out, as Trump threatened to do. But Canada will also have to take a closer look at itself in the mirror when it complains about discriminatory U.S. policies. Our two biggest provinces have refused to open some of their big agencies — Hydro-Québec and Infrastructure Ontario — to free-trade procurement, and American officials will almost surely

take notice.

Under Trump, the U.S. and Canada moved in opposite directions on climate change. The federal government's carbon tax undercut a basic element of Canada's competitiveness vis-à-vis the United States, especially after Trump withdrew the U.S. from the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate-change mitigation. Biden's promise to rejoin the accords and his Clean Energy Revolution plan, if it comes to fruition, will put both countries in greater alignment on energy and climate change, although Biden's proposed "carbon adjustment tax," which is intended to force countries exporting goods to the United States to meet their climate and environmental obligations, could penalize Canada's energy and resource-exporting sectors. Canada should press Washington for a North American as opposed to U.S.-centred approach if it decides to move in this direction.

Canada will also have to be vigilant about the actions of state authorities where there is more mischief afoot. Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer has threatened to revoke, on environmental grounds, the 1953 easement, which allows oil from Western Canada to be carried via pipeline through her own state to refineries in Ontario and Quebec. The effects would be disastrous and would see a 40- to 50- per-cent reduction in output of gasoline and other fuels by Canadian re-

fineries and a spike in prices for Canadian consumers at the pump.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, his senior officials, and our new ambassador to Washington, Kirsten Hillman, may have heaved a collective sigh of relief when the moving vans brought a switchover at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. But a kinder, gentler occupant in the Oval Office who doesn't berate our prime minister on Twitter or accuse Canadians of "ripping off" American producers is no guarantee that Canada-U.S. relations will be any smoother or an easy ride.

In a world where authoritarian China is overtly challenging American power and strategic interests, Russia is resurgent and Iran spins its nuclear centrifuges to acquire enough weapons-grade material to build a bomb, Biden has his foreign-policy work cut out for him. White House officials may see Canada as more of a nuisance than a friendly neighbour to which to lend a helping hand. When our officials plead that Biden reverse himself on his election promise to kill the Keystone XL Pipeline or to carve out a corner for Canadian business on his Build Back Better Plan to put Americans back to work, they have their work cut out for them.

Fen Osler Hampson is Chancellor's Professor at Carleton University and a board member of the Parliamentary Centre.

Joel Spicer, president and CEO of Nutrition International 'Nutrition is something that's intimately connected to the stability of our world.'

Joel Spicer is a global health leader who has led initiatives and partnerships in nutrition, maternal and child health, TB, HIV, innovative finance and resource mobilization. Over his career, he has worked for the Canadian International Development Agency, UNICEF, the WHO, Stop TB Partnership and the World Bank. He attended the Harvard School of Public Health on a Fulbright scholarship, where he obtained a master's in international health policy and management, and also the London School of Economics and Political Science, where he earned a master's of science in development studies.

Diplomat magazine: What effect has COVID had on the state of nutrition worldwide?

Joel Spicer: It's been fairly catastrophic, actually. To begin with, just in terms of setting the framework, before COVID, you had a situation where one of three people on the planet suffered from some form of malnutrition, where one of every four children suffered from stunting, where there were almost 50 million cases of children being wasted. Then you throw a bomb like COVID on top of that, on top of a lot of people that were experiencing vulnerability and pre-existing conditions, and you've got the perfect storm of a malnutrition crisis.

Just to get into the hard numbers, recent modelling came out from the Standing Together for Nutrition Consortium. They're forecasting that over the next two years, there will be an additional 2.6 million cases of stunted [from malnutrition] children, an additional 2.1 million cases of maternal anemia, which is particularly dangerous because anemia is one of the major contributors to maternal deaths, due to hemorrhage [and] an additional 9 million cases of wasting [where one becomes emaciated from hunger.] When you look at all of these numbers on top of a scenario where of the five million children under five who die from preventable

causes every year — what people haven't clicked into is that 45 per cent of those deaths have malnutrition as the underlying cause. And that's before COVID.

There are all these mismatches in terms of how we allocate funding in order to create good. We're going to see more than a decade of progress wiped out in a very short period of time. COVID is a health crisis, but it's set up as an economic crisis, which is a perfect storm for a malnutrition crisis. Why? Two reasons: The first is that people who already didn't have very much now have even less, so their ability to care for themselves and their families, their ability to purchase nutritious diets, has tanked. At the same time, the fiscal space of governments and donors has shrunk because of the need to shift everything to COVID treatment. The damage from trade impacts is going to shrink the amount of money they have to spend on the social sector, which was already not enough. [And] you see people who are afraid to access health-care services, so there's a reduction in health-seeking behaviour. We're seeing that in Canada, too. People are waiting until they're almost dead before going to the hospital. All of these things together are setting up a very bad situation that threatens to cause a lost generation.

DM: You used the words 'malnutrition crisis' — are we there?

JS: Yeah, I think for people who have been [working] in this area for a long time, they'll be banging their heads against the wall because they've been flagging a silent emergency and the world hasn't stepped up. It's one of the issues where our capacity to do good is so high and yet our lack of will to do anything about it is equally high.

There are some reasons for hope as you look at the map — it's not all doom and gloom — but it was bad before and it's significantly [worse now.] All those areas where we've made progress are at risk of going down. It's absolutely a crisis and it is on fire now. And it's not going to get better because the rate of vaccine

rollout doesn't look like all will be celebrating their freedom from COVID at the same time so these conditions are going to persist and the more they persist, the more they compound.

You've got people living in poverty and many of them are day labourers. Their ability to make money and to eat that day depends on their ability to go out and work. You lock people down, then they start selling their assets. I've got three small kids and when they have diarrhea or a fever, I worry about them, but I don't worry about them dying. From a parent perspective, when you think about other parents not far away, the choices they're having to make are unconscionable. They're making choices like 'which kid do I feed?' 'What can I sell to look after my kid who has a fever?' From an empathy point of view, that should really hit us as Canadians, when we think about the work we can do over there. I'm not talking about charity. I'm talking about actual development.

Their rate of recovery is directly connected to ours. There isn't a world where we get to vaccinate ourselves and go back to our merry business.

The thing that's really galling, there have been many cases where there are failed states and countries are in crisis — Yemen, Somalia, Syria — there's a need for emergency food aid because if you don't do it, people will die right away. But that's different than the slow-motion crises of malnutrition in countries where significant portions of the population are falling through the cracks because they're malnourished, they get pregnant, their children are born malnourished, their immune systems and their brain development is compromised from the beginning. If they're lucky enough to go to school, they can't learn as much, they get sick more often.

DM: Are United Nations estimates that 10,000 more children a month will die of hunger in the first year of the pandemic proving to be accurate?

JS: I think they're accurate, but if anything, I worry that they're underestimates. The reason for that is no one can actually know how long this situation will persist. Every month that it persists, people are getting weaker. They're accurate, but we need to assess damage in terms of short, medium, long-term.

DM: What is the difference between food security and nutrition, and why does Nutrition International focus on the latter?

JS: This is a really important question because a lot of our challenge with addressing malnutrition in the world is that at the head-of-state level, people still don't understand the difference between food and nutrition. If you want to end hunger, you fill bellies. If you want to end malnutrition — you have to get the right vitamins and minerals and nutrients. All human beings, in the absence of nutrition, are vulnerable.

In many countries around the world,

high impact. If all the women breast-fed in the world, you'd save 800,000 deaths per year and generate \$300 billion of additional economic impact. That's pretty cheap intervention and there should be more support there.

DM: What kind of support for breast-feeding is lacking?

JS: I think investment is required to increase awareness in the population about it to counter some taboos. In many



A mother and her child in Sirajganj District, Bangladesh. Even before COVID, one of every four children on the planet was suffering from stunting.

it's easy to be reductionist and say it's a matter of food, hunger and starvation, but that is a little retro. In some cases, that's the reality. People are running out of food for structural reasons or trade supply lines or war or the control of the supply to certain populations. I'm not saying it's not real, it's real. But food doesn't solve malnutrition. Getting nutritious food to everyone does. There's a big distinction between those two points. People like to point out that food systems need to be strengthened to provide more nutritious food for people. That's entirely true, but it's also very complicated. It'll be, in some countries, decades. In the meantime, there's catastrophic damage being done with things that are really easy to fix. That's why we focus on the lowest cost, evidence-based, highest-impact interventions such as salt iodization, Vitamin A supplementation, folic acid for adolescent girls, multiple micro-nutrient supplements and breast-feeding. Anything you can think of that is really low cost and really

countries, multinational food companies that sell breast milk substitute are spending more on marketing so that people come up with the belief that breast milk substitute and powder is better for their babies than breast milk, which is actually malpractice and completely unethical. You need to remove that problem from the equation as well. Breast feeding has a long list of advantages [but global rates are only about 40 per cent.]

DM: The UN World Food Program expects acute hunger to double by the end of 2020. How does nutrition fit into this?

JS: You've got to look at the overlaps. It's very important in terms of food security to make sure the population is able to grow, produce and have access to nutritious food. I contrast that with dropping food out of planes. That is really a last resort and it's among the most expensive. There's a difference between a prevention approach and a treatment approach.

One of the easiest and most impactful

ways [to help] is fortifying food. One of the interesting phenomena we're seeing with COVID, which I think has great potential for doing good after COVID, is that social safety net programs have been expanding globally. They now cover more than 1.8 billion people and by nature, their intent is to target the most vulnerable. But they've never been optimized for nutrition. They tend to get the lowest quality staple foods jammed through the channel. So, if you're living in poverty at the end of that chain, you'll get 30 kilos of white rice. It's better than nothing, but it's not going to help you. Because all of that production and distribution is centralized, it's very easy to fortify — to put the vitamins and nutrients that are required into it. One of the things we're looking at is social safety net programs as part of addressing not only food insecurity, but the malnutrition side. You could also put pulses into the mix. Because Canada is the leading exporter of lentils in the world, we're looking at how to add iron and other micronutrients to them. They're such a good source of protein, and cheap.

One of the things we're reflecting on now in terms of the missed opportunities lens, if you have billions of people accessing these public distribution networks, can you also go a step farther and screen their kids for wasting? Could you also combine COVID vaccine, ultimately?

There's a lot of siloed thinking in development right now. And, therefore a lot of good can be created by thinking about things differently. Malnutrition is a cross-cutter — investing in nutrition is an education investment, so it shouldn't be outside the realm of consideration of people if they're interested in education outcomes. This kind of holistic thinking is overdue.

DM: Can you explain what stunting is?

JS: [It's] When you don't get enough nutrition in the first 1,000 days, from conception to age two. If you look at the rate at which a child's brain grows, it's astronomical. If you miss that window, a lot of damage is not reversible. I've seen kids in India that I thought were six or so, but when you ask, that kid is 10 or 11. You'll see a girl who looks like she's 12, but she's 17 and she's just been married. When children are stunted, their future potential is cut off for life. They are never going to perform well. If they're so far gone that they're cognitively damaged, it's really just manual labour for the future. In countries where we work, such as DR Congo, you have one in two children

who are behind. And that's a recipe for discontent and instability.

Nutrition is something that's intimately connected to the stability of our world.

DM: We read that 550,000 per month will suffer from wasting, malnutrition that causes spindly limbs and distended bellies. That's up 6.7 million from last year's total of 47 million, which is a significant proportion. What are the causes and implications of wasting and why is it important to address them?

JS: The causes of wasting are manifold, but typically, [it happens] in terms of sudden shocks, where people's access to food collapses, and that's typically found in emergency situations where there's a natural disaster or war. And the chance of dying in kids that are wasted is extraor-



This mother and child in the Philippines benefit from Nutrition International's programs.

dinarily high. On the flip side, if you get to them in time, you can save their lives, so the interventions are totally worth it. But the cost is also astronomical. That brings to light the idea of treatment versus prevention. You need both. There's a close association between kids who are wasted and stunted, but the costs to treat a wasted child, because they're so fragile, are high. So, you've got to prevent that. The question becomes how do you bring about peace as quickly as possible because while they're still fighting, there's no way you can bring this under control. There's a lot that can be done at the community level to strengthen systems that monitor children before they become wasted. It's much cheaper and it is effective. If you keep waiting to find kids who are so close to death that they need super-expensive emergency treatment, and then they're released into an environment that doesn't care for them, it's going

to happen again. That's the definition of madness. Investing more in prevention is going to remove more of the wasting problem in many — not all — situations.

The whole issue about treatment and prevention in nutrition is worth unpacking a little bit. There's no country that doesn't have malnutrition. It goes in both directions — you can be obese, too. What's happening now is that health systems are being bankrupted by the consequences of malnutrition because it's pushing health systems into treatment. If we could reverse that and put a lot more into the prevention side — access to healthy nutrition — we would start to see savings on the health-system side.

DM: What countries or regions would you name as the most at-risk and what numbers can you share about each?

JS: If you break down the projected damage in the next two years, it looks like 6.2 million children will be wasted in South Asia and about 1.9 million will be wasted in Sub-Saharan Africa — that's additional cases of wasting. In terms of stunting, it's an additional 1.2 million in Africa and 790,000 in South Asia. In a way, you'd expect South Asia to carry the highest burden because it has the biggest population, but what the data mask is that the damage potential is much higher in many ways in Africa. In Africa, when I think about the punch that it has taken economically and the damage we have yet to see, for a continent that in a few decades will have the highest number of workers on the planet, the damage done to children now will be seen when the children enter the workforce.

West Africa has particular challenges where damage is very high on women, adolescent girls and children. Many countries are small, with the exception of Nigeria, in terms of their population, but the rates are astronomical. We're talking 40 to 50 per cent anemia in women and adolescent girls. It's very hard to move forward with that size of anchor around the development aspiration in your country. In East and Southern Africa, the population is a bit higher and malnutrition has always been a problem. There's some progress, but they're going to fall back a lot, too. They're trying to spin up social protection aspects, but that's a stopgap measure. If you think of the Democratic Republic of Congo and other countries that have experienced insecurity, it becomes quite serious. The strength of the health system, the strength of governance institutions, they determine the country's ability to lean in.

Our attitude is not to go in and try to fix the problem. It is 'How can we [help] as expert allies alongside government so they can have capacity and support to tackle the problems themselves?' In many cases, where there's additional fiscal space, we'll say 'We'll put money on the table if you're willing to also put money on the table.' In other countries that are deeply struggling and don't have the fiscal space, we don't do that.

DM: What do you do with the countries that are run by thugs?

JS: Tough question, there are lots of countries around the world that are run by thugs, not just in Africa. I think your right to rule depends on a contract you have with the people. No ruler or person in power has the moral authority to do what they're doing if they can turn a blind eye to malnutrition in their fellow citizens. That's a marker of a governance failure. So, there are some countries where you'd [work] with local partners and civil society more. In others, you partner with government. In still others, you'd distinguish between national and subnational governments.

DM: Are there countries outside of Africa you would name as being seriously at risk? Yemen, for example?

JS: I'm trying to think of a country that's not worthy of being named. India, because of its population size, still has the highest number of stunted children. If you really wanted to take a bite out of malnutrition globally, you'd go to India. There are other countries where obesity is their major problem.

DM: Are there signs of hope of addressing global malnutrition?

JS: One of the things I'm hopeful about is Canada. At lot of countries are spending so much money on their own domestic problems that there's concern many will cut donor budgets for supporting people overseas. The U.K. removed 4 billion pounds from their ODA [official development assistance] budget. They removed more money than Canada spends on development in a year because they're so big. They were also a nutrition leader. They were one of the countries that was instrumental in making nutrition a global priority at the Nutrition for Growth Summit in 2013. Right now, they're discussing internally what their contribution will be. This is a make or break year for nutrition. The action-forcing moment in December 2021 will be the Nutrition for Growth



A child receives a dose of Vitamin A supplementation in Kenya. Giving malnourished children two capsules per year, up to the age of five, reduces their mortality by 24 per cent.

Summit in Tokyo and Canada will be the starting pistol. [At a recent 'springboard' event for this summit,] the issue [Canadians] planted the flag on was 'What if the world invested more on women, adolescent girls and children and on things that are evidenced-based that are low-cost and high impact. Who's with us?'

DM: How did the other players respond?

JS: I think the world took notice. Did they solve the problem? No, but this notion of having events that will solve the problems one at a time, they really don't make sense to me. But saying 'This is what's important, who's with us?' that makes more sense to me. From that point of view, I'm hopeful.

So I'm optimistic. With COVID, that which was urgent is more urgent. Canada [coming] forward, it makes me proud.

DM: What kinds of initiatives are working and what do we need more of?

JS: One of the things that [International Development] Minister Karina Gould announced [at the springboard event] was \$29.5 million for Nutrition International to lead a catch-up campaign on Vitamin A. For those who aren't aware of this little red capsule, it's a quintessential Canadian story. [Researchers] figured out a long time ago that if you could get two capsules per year into a child between the age of six months and five years, you can cut their mortality by 24 per cent [in countries where children are deficient.]

Canadians figured out how to make a heat-stable capsule and it's been scaled up around the world. It costs two cents to make one capsule. Since we've started, we've saved more than 5 million children's lives with this simple innovation. It cuts deaths by diarrhea by 15 per cent.

The second thing we're working on is social safety net programs. We're really excited about being able to optimize them for nutrition outcomes. We're starting work with the Gates Foundation in India, specifically to get double fortified salt and cooking oil, fortified with vitamins A and D. It'll have a huge impact when it's up and running. Most salt has iodine in it, which is really important for brain development. It's been a major source of preventable mental impairment around the world. At the University of Toronto, we worked with them to put iron in it. Salt is widely used so if you can optimize it, it'll have a big effect.

Finally, anemia is one thing that's really important. I would love to see the world rally around the issue of anemia. It's a major issue for women around the world. There are more than a billion women, adolescent girls and children who suffer from anemia. It contributes to 20 per cent of maternal deaths. People get it here, too, but in other countries, it's a killer. For the world to focus on maternal and adolescent nutrition would be incredible. That was the main thrust of Melinda Gates' remarks at the Springboard event [in mid-December] so that's something we're [working] on as



Dropping food out of planes is really a last resort in the fight against hunger and malnutrition, Joel Spicer says. Nutrition International, meanwhile, is working on new methods to fortify pulses as well as wheat flour, maize, rice, salt and edible oils.

well. It's also the target that affects women most that is the farthest off-track. That's something we can change.

DM: Where are we on the nutrition-related SDGs and how far has COVID set those back?

JS: About 12 of 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) have indicators that are highly relevant to nutrition and they won't be achieved unless we meet the nutrition goal. I'd reference the World Health Assembly (WHA) targets for nutrition. The SDGs are due in 2030. The WHA targets are due in 2025 so they're the canary in the coal mine and we focus on those a little bit more. When the targets were set in 2012, 30 per cent of women had anemia. And those numbers are through the roof with pregnant women — about 42 per cent of all pregnant women have anemia. That's terrible news because their babies are much more likely to be low birthweight babies, which predisposes them to stunting, which predisposes them to becoming overweight and obese later in life and to having more non-communicable diseases. So, all of this cycle really argues for doubling down on the mother and upstreaming on adolescent girls. In order to achieve that target, we have to get that number down to 15 per cent, but it's increased — it's actually over 30 per cent right now and

there's no country that's on track. And that's just a lack of attention.

DM: When it comes to nutrition, what would you say are the top three problems that must be addressed?

JS: One, we need to focus. Two, we need to figure out where to get the money and, three, we need to get our priorities straight.

We really need to focus on global time-bound targets. There's a reason that private sector companies move in certain directions. It's because they have targets. We need targets and [we need] to pay attention to them. Tracking our progress relentlessly against them to see if we're on track — we could do a bit of that in development. Because of the financial damage caused by COVID, there's less money, so focusing on which people, which places and which things we're talking about [becomes more important.] In terms of people, we need to target women, adolescents and children. In terms of places, we need to target countries where the greatest areas of vulnerability are.

A lot of the spin in the media has been about starvation and crisis and food and hunger. When you combine that with the fact that many heads of state don't know the difference between food and nutrition, I'm not sure that it's the right way to frame the problem.

Regarding where to get the money, the modelling ballparks the additional funds required to prevent damage at \$1.2 billion. If you combine that with the World Bank's [estimate] on what it would cost to scale up nutrition, they had \$7 billion a year. But that was before COVID. It sounds like a lot of money, but World Bank estimates say if you did invest that additional money, you could save three million lives, take out 265 million cases of anemia and prevent millions of stunting cases. It might seem crazy, but it's only crazy if you think about how we spend \$5.2 trillion on fossil fuel subsidies. We spend billions on agricultural subsidies so we can keep producing food that isn't nutritious, some of which we throw away. That's the definition of insanity as well. And I'm not even getting to weapons spending.

In terms of getting our priorities straight, I would be wrong to not discuss the food system for a moment. The way we produce food on this planet is broken. Our food system produces 25 per cent of the greenhouse gases every year. We make cheap calories that actually hurt people and the environment and it's created a scenario where we're fuelling massive cases of obesity and hunger's increasing as well. When you look at the growing [gap] between rich and poor people, which has only been made worse by COVID, I think that means that the way we live is on a collision course with reality because it's based on an infinity growth level, but the planet's resources are finite. We have put profit and politics over people and planet.

There are more challenges, like the need for champions and then political will.

DM: What can you tell me about Plumpy'nut's role in the fight against malnutrition?

JS: Plumpy'nut is one of the tools to prevent wasting. It's a ready-to-use therapeutic food with a high concentration of calories and nutrients in a peanut buttery paste and it works. But it comes back to some of the points I made before. It's nice to throw commodities at people and it's important sometimes. But the hard work and the important work is to look at the systems and the government and the authorities to strengthen their capability to tackle this. The most important part of the system are the community health volunteers going door to door in helping and educating people and that's grossly underinvested in. If you want to save the most lives, invest in community health workers

amount. Plumpy'nut is good. Preventing the need for Plumpy'nut is better.

DM: You've already offered a few, but what other practical, doable, non-bureaucratic solutions do you have for the mal-nutritional crisis we're now in?

JS: [A professor of mine once said] 'Until you make it more comfortable to do the right thing, pointing your finger isn't really going to change the situation.' Practical, non-bureaucratic solutions [would include] the global initiative on anemia. Then I'd say level the playing field for governments in terms of regulation, taxation and legislation in regards to the food environment — stop food polluters. There's no regulatory or tax environment that factors in the full cost of these products. Think about soda pop. I can buy some sugar water that's bad for me and put it in a plastic bottle and throw it into the environment? What a negative double-word score that is.

On the flip side of that, though, we're starting to see the spread of sugar taxes, where governments are saying 'Above a certain concentration of sugar, you're going to pay this much more.' That space is expanding. I think we're late to the table, but I'd love to see more. I don't mean creating a nanny state, I mean creating a situation where governments identify a revenue stream from something that is bad for you and they put that additional money into something that is good for you. It's not going into general revenue, it's going into prevention. That would be a nice circle to create. It's easy to say and really hard to do.

DM: Are there any places where money is being wasted in the fight to curb world hunger and malnutrition?

JS: We've already talked about one element and that is treatment versus prevention. I'm not saying treatment is a waste of money — it's essential and lifesaving. But looking at how the volume of cases to treat is generated and trying to go upstream and looking at smart investments that are cheaper — I think that would be a good use of money. I approach this question as more 'We could get a lot more bang for our buck.' We need more money for nutrition, but, to be fair, we need to get more nutrition for the money.

There's a lack of co-ordination. There's greater efficiency we could bring to it. You can't have five different people with five different issues tangentially related to nutrition advising the same person in government about how to spend their

limited budget. We need to be on the same page about using the money we have in the highest-impact places. There's some siloization in development around the world. It's a common problem.

When we confuse food and nutrition, we risk lowering the investment. Both are important, but we have to be clear about that. And again, that last piece is focus. Focus on women, adolescent girls and children. Focus like a laser there.

DM: So you would say there is waste?

JS: Well, it depends. Do you call it waste to save a child's life and then see them back in a month? I wouldn't. I think the waste is the opportunity we lose every day by not investing in something obvious. The good nutrition creates is manifold beyond nutrition and health. There will also be a need to optimize targeting.

DM: How can people (especially Canadians) help, beyond the desperate need for donated money?

JS: By leaning in, in full support of pregnant women, young people and teens. We should also be humble enough to look at our own country, as well. How the SDGs are different from the Millennium Development Goals is the principle

of universality. And we have malnutrition in our country, too. We've got to look at First Nations and Inuit people. No way a Coke should be cheaper than milk.

There are some related issues — we've got to look closely at homelessness and the normalization of food banks.

It's within our power to end malnutrition. The people who suffer the most are somehow out of our view. They aren't seen as essential for our future. That's a big mistake. We need to help decision-makers be equipped with the right knowledge and information and if they don't take the right action, we need to support them with resources. It's a strange world where the ruler of a country has several private planes while people are starving.

What can Canadians do? Canadians can understand about the work their country has been doing in nutrition globally. There's been a constancy in Canada's leadership on nutrition that goes back 30 years, across multiple governments.

I'd love for there to be a world in which Canadians care as much about those developments as they do about the landmine treaty. It is well within our capability to have a positive influence on the world around us. ■

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Saving the orangutans of Borneo

By Janie Dubman

A red-headed youngster takes a bite of a banana and slowly chews it while gazing off into the distance, her brown eyes thoughtful. Then, in the manner of kids everywhere, she seems to surge with energy and makes a sudden lunge for the woman sitting nearby, cartwheeling and running right into her lap. After a quick cuddle, the young adventurer takes off again, and, within seconds, is five metres above ground, swinging and swaying on a slender tree-branch. The woman is not concerned because this morning, she is caring for little ones that are very similar to, but much more agile than, human children. She's at the Orangutan Care Centre and Quarantine (OCCQ) in Central Kalimantan, an Indonesian province in the south of Borneo, and the playful youngster is Meli Two, a six-year-old orangutan female who is part of Orangutan Foundation International's orangutan rehabilitation program. Her caregiver is Ibu Epi, an indigenous Dayak woman whose job is to provide the care, attention and guidance that Meli Two lost when she was orphaned. The natural 'jungle gym' where they spend their mornings is a parcel of land belonging to a hereditary community elder, and today it is dappled with golden sunshine slanting through enormous leaves, and humming with the sounds of countless birds and insects. It is a piece of Borneo preserved from time immemorial, a lush green relic of the world's oldest jungle.

However, just past the edge of this 80-hectare sanctuary, a louder and harsher reality prevails. The ubiquitous mopeds of Indonesia roar up and down large, paved roads and tiny rutted side streets alike, and just a few kilometres in almost every direction, Borneo's jungle is shrinking. The main culprit is palm oil plantations. Cheap because of its fast growth and the low costs of land and labour in the tropics, palm oil can be found in everything from Halloween chocolate to soy milk to body wash and 90 per cent of it is grown in Indonesia and neighbouring Malaysia — the two countries where almost all of the world's orangutans live. The total area of land in Indonesia dedicated to palm oil has doubled since 2008, now covering more than 13 million hectares, most of which was once forest. In addition, the



The job of caring for today's needy orangutans is enormous and complex.

forests where orangutans live are increasingly devastated by wildfires, which used to be very rare in these humid jungles. Logging, both legal and within protected areas, continues to damage and degrade wildlife habitat.

When 26-year old Biruté Mary Galdikas — a Lithuanian-Canadian primatologist — arrived in Indonesia in 1971, her goal was to study wild orangutans. But within a month of setting up camp in a remote part of what would become Tanjung Puting National Park (the camp she named Camp Leakey in honour of the famous anthropologist who was her early mentor), a young female orangutan named Akmad was brought to her cabin, likely orphaned by illegal loggers in the park. After Akmad came many more, eventually leading Galdikas to establish the Orangutan Care Centre and Quarantine in the village of Pasir Panjang, where her Indonesian husband dedicated the forest around it for the jungle school described above. Today, the OCCQ is home to 311 orangutans. Most of them are in the process of rehabilitation from physical and psychological wounds received at the hands of humans, and once they reach eight to 10 years of age, they will be released back into their native forest home. Orangutan Foundation International Canada supports this work by providing funds to purchase fruit for



Orangutan Foundation International's founder, Biruté Mary Galdikas.

daily feedings, paying salaries of local caregiving staff and helping to maintain the sleeping quarters and jungle gyms of the young orangutans.

Besides care and rehabilitation, orphan orangutans need safe habitat to return to. That is why we sponsor the purchase of remaining forested lands in our area, and then ensure that they continue providing habitat to orangutans and wildlife by taking active stewardship of that land. Firefighting and patrols that OFICanada sponsors help protect these forests from constant encroaching threats, while a large-scale native tree reforestation program helps heal forests damaged by wildfire and human land use.

The mission of caring for today's needy orangutans, while simultaneously working to provide them with a secure and viable future in their own ancestral jungle, is enormous and complex. Much of the time, it feels like pushing a boulder up a hill with no visible summit. However, the countless hands, hearts and minds who have generously contributed to this mission for the past half century provide the oasis for the soul that we all need to keep going. Visit www.orangutanacanada.ca/donate/ to donate.

Janie Dubman is an OFICanada board member.

Annual EU concert: 'A strong Christmas tradition'

For the previous 12 years, the European Union had held an annual Christmas concert at Ottawa's Notre Dame Cathedral. It was always a seasonal celebration and a treasured gift to the city, so it would be sad to have COVID cancel it. The same was true of the EU Film Festival, which took place every autumn.

So, the EU Delegation got creative.

"It was our 13th annual EU Christmas concert and we have very strong Christmas tradition with all our member states," says Christian Klaus Burgsmuller, EU chargé d'affaires. "All our member states are proud they have a Christmas song. It's something where we like to share our culture."

Given that, they decided to hold the concert at an empty sanctuary at Notre Dame, have Rogers TV film and air it and package it up so they could offer it for



More than 1,000 singers and musicians have performed at the EU Christmas concerts over the past 13 years. Here, Ottawa soprano Nadia Petrella sings an Estonian Christmas song.

streaming on YouTube.

"Certainly, we had to be very creative this year and we also had to be creative with the EU Film Festival," Burgsmuller says. "Due to COVID, it's not possible to have a mass event this year, but we had many people asking us about both events and we decided we had the songs, the films and the demand, so let's be creative and go virtual."

The concert and film festival have become beloved traditions for Ottawans,



Sabina Koziakova, centre left, and Terezia Koziakova, centre right, daughters of Slovakian Ambassador Vit Koziak, far left, performed *Jasna hviezdicka*, a Slovakian Christmas carol. The girls are wearing handmade folk costumes and their mother, Janka, is at right.

who enjoy seeing the films and love listening to the continent's carols, some of which they will have heard, and some of which will be new. And it gives the EU Delegation a chance to engage the community because it asks local school choirs to sing the carols.

Usually the delegation holds the film festival in three different cities, and it reaches thousands, but this year, 25,000 households connected. And Burgsmuller thinks the Christmas concert reached more than the usual 1,500 Ottawans it traditionally reaches, often with standing room only at the back of the church.

"It was important to keep this tradition alive, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, even if it was done in a different way," said long-time organizer Ülle Baum. "Keeping our annual celebrations preserves a sense of normalcy."

Traditionally, the concert features several local choirs and soloists from Ottawa, but this year's pared-back program had just five soloists. In accordance with social distancing regulations, the soloists performed with 30-minute breaks in between their sets, in an empty church. Then the organizing team combined these pieces with some performances by choirs from the 2014 EU Christmas concert.

Featured performers included Canadian soprano Natalya Gennadi, members of the University of Ottawa's Calixa Lavallée Choir, conducted by Laurence Ewashko, and members of the Chorale de La Salle, conducted by Robert Filion. The concert ended with the 2014 performance of *Silent Night* by the Ottawa Children's Choir, the Calixa Lavallée Choir and Chorale de La Salle. The members of the audience stood up and sang with them. ▀

Hungary: Pharma, food, IT and vehicles trade



By *Mária Vass-Salazar*

Hungary is one of the fastest-growing economies in the European Union. The central European country's GDP grew by five per cent in 2019. It has one of the highest trade-to-GDP ratios in the world, at approximately 83 per cent, according to the World Bank. This indicates a robust dependence on world trade.

Hungary is a hub of talent and innovation. Just to highlight an example, medical technology and the pharmaceutical industry employ more than 48,000 people in Hungary and make up a 4.9-per-cent share of total exports. The med-tech industry makes up 1.5 per cent of GDP. Indeed, the medical technology sector has seen almost 100 years of widely acknowledged innovation, highly specialized technical development and notable exports to the global market. Several Hungarian companies have achieved international recognition with cutting-edge products and technologies. A growing number of innovative domestic SMEs as well as several international producers take advantage of Hungary's highly favourable economic environment and productive workforce. Multinational medical device companies located in Hungary include General Electric, Hoya Lens Manufacturing, B.Braun Medical, Becton, Dickinson and Company and Coloplast. In pharma manufacturing alone, we have Teva Hungary, Glaxo SmithKline, Sanofi-Aventis and Richter.

Bilateral trade between Hungary and Canada passed the threshold of \$1 billion in 2019, for the first time. On both sides, machinery-related products took the lead with \$369 million in Hungarian exports and \$33 million worth of exports from Canada to Hungary. Hungarian export volumes are also significant in



Richter Gedeon is a Hungarian pharmaceutical and biotechnology company with a strong focus on research and development.

transportation-related products at \$240 million in exports of cars and car parts for the vehicle industry, while pharma-related chemical products boosted Hungarian exports by more than \$107 million. Prepared food and agricultural products also play a significant role in SMEs' exports. Hungary traditionally is a quality supplier of poultry, especially ducks and geese. In addition, Canada exports agri-food products, such as pulses, and wood pulp for the paper industry.

Canadian companies such as Linamar, Magna, Bombardier, CAE and Eclipse Automation are all investors in Hungary. Talent and knowledge are the keys to success for both countries. The famous 3D puzzle Rubik's Cube has been an example of our creativity for more than 40 years. Canadian toy giant Spin Master has just closed the acquisition process of the London-based company that owns the brand.

Hungary's primary objective is to encourage SMEs in Hungary and in Canada to accelerate Hungarian-Canadian trade because, at the moment, multinational or large-scale companies generate most of the trade. We encourage Canadians to take advantage of CETA, the Canada-EU free-

trade agreement, most of which came into effect in September 2017. This agreement opens the Canadian public procurement market to EU companies, but Hungary's procurement process is also open to Canadians. The procurement aspect of the agreement also helps exporters of value-added products and services.

Hungary is a land of opportunity for doing business in the EU. Our highly skilled talent base and STEM-oriented education system in the heart of the continent offers great value for Canadian companies dealing with high added-value products and services. There has been a qualitative shift from "made in Hungary" towards "invented in Hungary."

Hungary has tailored its labour legislation to allow ample room for creating innovative workplaces based on R&D. In this context, it is important to note that Hungary offers the most competitive tax scheme in the EU. Company tax is a flat 9 per cent and personal income tax is a flat 15 per cent. The government reduced the social contribution to be paid by the employer to 18.5 per cent. These elements, combined with highly developed modern infrastructure, a competitive, quality labour force and political stability, create an attractive investment environment. Budapest is one of the largest and most developed cities in Central and Eastern Europe and offers a high-end environment and real estate solutions for businesses. Before the pandemic, the city was served by a direct flight from Toronto that operated seven days a week in peak season.

Trade commissioners at the Hungarian Embassy in Ottawa, the consulate general in Toronto, the vice-consulate in Vancouver and the Hungarian Export Promotion Agency's regional office in Canada are ready to help, advise and assist Canadian businesses. Our offices offer free consultancy services for Canadian investors and importers and we help companies with technology co-operation and transfers such as medical technologies, ICT and greentech. Hungary is also interested in encouraging trade in quality food products, bearing in mind that Hungary champions biological and GMO-free production.

Mária Vass-Salazar is the ambassador of Hungary. Call (613) 230-9614 or email ambassador.ott@mfa.gov.hu to reach her.

Slovenia seeks FDI in renewable energy and ICT



By Melita Gabric

As Slovenia and Canada look to build back after COVID-19, both countries put a premium on the environment, sustainability and digital innovation. These are all areas where we can find new opportunities. COVID taught us how important it is to have business partners who are reliable, who share a compatible business culture and who subscribe to the same set of rules.

The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) that has been in effect for three years removed 98 per cent of trade tariffs between Canada and all EU countries, including Slovenia. This agreement, along with our shared norms, form an important level playing field, which is an excellent vantage point for Slovenian-Canadian economic co-operation.

Like Canada, Slovenia is an open and export-oriented country that wishes to diversify its global trade. Also, like Canada, Slovenia is a trading nation: 82 per cent of our GDP is from exports of goods and services and 80 per cent of that is done with our closest trading partners — Germany, Italy, Austria, Croatia and France. We wish to extend our partnerships and develop closer ties with Canada, especially in high-tech, and are looking for partners in green tourism, the automotive industry, the banking sector and digitalization.

The past decade has seen a positive trend in Slovenian-Canadian business co-operation. The total value of exports from Slovenia to Canada in 2019 amounted to \$145.5 million and has almost doubled over the past five years. Our top exports include pharmaceuticals, electrical machinery, nuclear reactors, optical and medical instruments and skis.

On the other side, the total value of Slovenian imports from Canada in 2019



Ljubljana is Slovenia's capital and largest city.

amounted to \$173.4 million, which is a nearly 100-per-cent increase compared to 2018. The top Slovenian import products are airplanes, oil and nickel, but also pharmaceuticals and electrical machines.

These numbers indicate that we have a lot of space to increase our trade and economic co-operation, something that CETA makes more viable than ever.

Slovenia appreciates the high-quality products from Canada and we have a clear picture of the main sectors where we would like to enhance our co-operation. Clean-tech is certainly high on the list, as well as artificial intelligence, biotechnology, ICT, nanotechnology, automobiles, energy, food, timber and chemicals. Slovenia and Canada have already established strong co-operation through the Global Partnership on AI (GPAI). The newly established UNESCO-backed International Research Centre on AI (IRCAI), seated in Slovenia's capital Ljubljana, is another opportunity to enhance our ties.

Like Canada, Slovenia has well-preserved natural beauty and a culture that, barring pandemics, attracts ever more tourists, many from Canada. We wish to see more Canadians travelling to Slovenia, and encourage more Slovenians to travel to Canada. We also hope to increase the number of Canadians visiting Slovenia under the Youth Mobility Program.

We have a system in place through which we encourage Slovenian enterprises, especially SMEs, to explore new, more geographically distant overseas

markets. By providing technical expertise, facilitation and financial incentives, the Slovenian Enterprise Fund and business development agency, called SPIRIT Slovenia, are valuable partners in the promotion of entrepreneurship and internationalization of Slovenian businesses abroad.

Slovenia provides a strong business-friendly environment where foreign enterprises are treated on an equal footing with domestic companies and protected by laws that are harmonized with EU legislation. Slovenia's attractiveness lies in its strategic geographical position at the heart of Europe that offers easy access to the vibrant single European market with 450 million consumers. The main assets of the Slovenian business environment are its talented and well-educated people with high foreign language competence and the skills to perform complex and abstract tasks. We also pride ourselves on clean nature and excellent living conditions.

"Green. Creative. Smart." is Slovenia's motto and a nationwide approach toward encouraging and boosting foreign direct investment. Slovenia is looking for new investments in logistics, tourism, renewable energy resources and the high-tech sector.

Slovenian investments in Canada saw a 34-per-cent increase in 2019 and we have more than 20 companies in Slovenia with Canadian shareholders.

Starting a business in Slovenia is easy and cost-effective. The government introduced a program called SPOT, which is a comprehensive single-point-of-contact system of free services to support domestic and foreign investors wishing to set up shop in Slovenia. Slovenia's financial incentives and tax relief for investments in the R&D sector might also be of interest.

A Canada-Slovenia virtual high-tech business forum that was organized in November 2020 attracted 50 Slovenian and Canadian high-tech companies specializing in everything from AI and advanced manufacturing to ICT, to mention a few. We are planning a follow-up visit by a business delegation from Slovenia once conditions allow for safe travel, hopefully in the first half of 2021.

Melita Gabric is Slovenia's ambassador to Canada. Email sloembassy.ottawa@gov.si or call (613) 565-5781 to reach her.

An emergency on top of an emergency

By Rema Jamous Imseis



FIRST NAME: Rema

LAST NAME: Jamous Imseis

CITIZENSHIP: Canadian

NAMED AS UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE:
Jan. 27, 2020

PREVIOUS POSITIONS: Deputy
director for the Middle East and
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I returned to Canada less than a year ago, after many years working for the United Nations abroad. At the time, I joked with my new colleagues that wherever I go, disaster seems to follow. Little did we know that a few months later, the world would be facing an unprecedented global health emergency.

COVID-19 will forever mark 2020 as a year like no other. For me and my colleagues, it was also a particularly important year for other reasons. UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, marked its 70th anniversary. On Dec. 14, 1950, the agency was given its mandate to protect people displaced from their homes by war, conflict and persecution.

Seven decades later, forced displacement continues to grow, despite calls for a global ceasefire that resonated across the world in March as the world began battling COVID-19. In fact, our most recent report shows that more than 80 million people are now displaced, a number that has doubled since 2010. Resurging violence in Syria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Yemen all drove new displacements, along with complex and evolving situations in Venezuela, Central America and, most recently, Ethiopia.

It's been a tough year for everyone. For refugees, however, COVID-19 is an emergency on top of an emergency. Millions already faced strenuous living conditions and limited access to essential health services and sanitation systems. COVID-19 has exacerbated these vulnerabilities, exposing them to even greater hardships and a heightened risk of poverty, homelessness and exploitation. Though the pandemic knows no borders, it is key to

recognize the disproportionate impacts COVID-19 has had on the world's most at-risk individuals.

Staying "home" isn't an option

First, is health. We have been told time and again, including in Canada, that the best

way to curb transmission and save lives is by staying at home. Unfortunately, sheltering in place is not an option for people forced to flee their homes.

In a gang-ravaged neighbourhood in El Salvador, for example, staying home was not an option for Óscar. In March, the 44-year-old happened to witness a crime, and the armed gang responsible for it went after him, threatening his family. He knew that, despite the pandemic, he had no choice but to flee for his life. He told UNHCR: "I thought about going to the police, but they [the gang members] told us that if I did, they would kill my family," said Óscar, who has an adult son who is still in El Salvador.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, UNHCR has been working with governments and other partners to help minimize transmission rates among refugees. In Lebanon, for example, UNHCR funded expansions and additional ICU beds in several hospitals and provided ventilators and other advanced equipment, as well as medicine stocks. In Akkar, northern Lebanon, UNHCR supported a fully-equipped isolation centre to receive individuals from all nationalities who need to self-isolate and do not have the capacity to do so at home.

Yet, inclusion remains a big issue. Refugees are often excluded from national health systems, facing challenges such as a lack of inclusive policies, language barriers or prohibitive costs. This is particularly the case in low- and middle-income countries — where more than 85 per cent of the world's refugees live, and where the majority of new internal displacement due to conflict is taking place. Often these countries are already struggling to meet the health needs of their own populations.

Loss of livelihoods is another area of major concern.

With many refugees relying on the informal economy, they were also among the first to suffer the economic impacts of lockdowns with little or no access to any support. In fact, UNHCR monitoring shows us that 74 per cent of refugees can only meet half or less of their basic needs.

Mariney, a Congolese refugee in Uganda, lost all of her income because of COVID-19 lockdowns. With no safety net, the 44-year-old single mother of three was surviving on food handouts from a community church when she told UNHCR that "the biggest worry for refugees is hunger. If we go out, we risk contracting coronavirus. If we stay home, hunger will kill us. This is worse than a war."

With the World Bank predicting the worst recession since the Second World War, our fear is that things will get far worse before they get better.

Confinement and lockdowns mixed with increasing poverty have also unleashed a wave of violence against refugee and displaced women and girls.

A network of UN agencies and NGOs providing protection to people affected by humanitarian crises reported increases in gender-based violence in at least 27 countries. For example, in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, 42 per cent of Rohingya male and female refugees surveyed in a humanitarian assessment said it had become more unsafe for women and girls "inside the house" since the onset of the COVID-19 crisis. Respondents described an increase, in particular, of intimate partner violence resulting from tensions over containment measures, movement restrictions and financial difficulties.

Gender-based violence affecting Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Colombia has also increased by 40 per cent over the first three quarters of the year, compared to the same period last year.

And of course, young refugees have not been spared.

The virus has reversed gains

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on refugee education and even reversed important gains that had been made. Refugee children are now facing yet another obstacle to an education already torn apart by conflict and displacement, and 3.7 million are currently out of school.

The Malala Fund estimates that half of refugee girls in secondary education risk never returning, even when classrooms reopen. This, in turn, increases their risk of child marriage, early pregnancy and other forms of exploitation or abuse.

This has been a worry for some time in the four primary schools in Jewi Camp, Ethiopia, where fewer girls go to school because of early marriage in the camp and sometimes a family situation that forces girls to stay at home to prepare food to sell in the market or run tea stalls. The schools are now deploying parent-teacher association teams into the community to persuade parents, especially mothers, to send their children to school.

I could go on, but I want to conclude with a little hope on the horizon. Despite these and other grave challenges caused or exacerbated by COVID-19, the pandemic has also shown us that solidarity and generosity continue to beat in hearts across the world.

Countless examples of refugees and displaced persons working on the frontlines of the COVID-19 response have emerged. For example, 24-year-old Iraqi refugee nurse Moheyman Alkhatavi is applying his skills to help fight the virus in Iran, or Saidul Karim, who spends

his days moving from shelter to shelter along the muddy paths in Kutupalong Refugee Settlement in Bangladesh to refer suspected COVID-19 patients for testing and care. In Canada, we have numerous



Doctors administer COVID tests on refugee women at a shelter in Ecuador, one of Latin America's most COVID-affected countries.

examples of refugees stepping up to assist in long-term care homes, leading the government to create a new pathway to permanent residency in recognition of their work.

Across the world, we have seen inspir-

ing stories of neighbours helping each other and supporting refugee families despite their own hardships. In northern Lebanon, 35-year-old shopkeeper Kawkab Mustafa continues to extend credit to her customers, despite facing an increasingly dire financial situation and health issues herself. In South Africa, a community of Somali refugees has stood together with its neighbours to assist those struggling the most during the COVID-19 pandemic, seeing it as a way to repay the generosity they themselves were shown.

Canadians have continued to welcome refugees into their communities despite the difficulties of COVID-19, and Canada continues to lead the way in refugee resettlement globally.

UNHCR was supposed to exist for three years in the aftermath of the Second World War, to help the millions of Europeans who fled or lost their homes.

Our continued existence is not a cause for celebration, but our work is more pressing and complex than ever. Much has changed since 1950, but even in the midst of an emergency on top of an emergency, our mission has not.

Rema Jamous Imseis is the representative of UNHCR in Canada.

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This is an artist's rendition of the Sycamore processor. Google says the Sycamore was able to do a mathematical calculation in three minutes and 20 seconds. The company claims it would have taken existing supercomputers 10,000 years to complete the same calculation.

This millennium's major innovations

Looking past 2020's annus horribilis, **Wolfgang Depner** presents the 21st Century's Top-10 major innovations and technologies.

When 2020 dawned, various media organizations whetted the appetites of their readers with lists of things to come, ranging from major sporting events and the release of new movies and musicals to pending breakthroughs in medicine and transportation. As we all know, COVID-19 has, and continues to, upend our lives in ways no one could have imagined in late 2019. But if last year forced the world and its institutions to see everything through the narrow tunnel of the pandemic, the first year of the third decade of the 21st Century may also be a moment to look back at the broader trendlines of the past two decades. This list attempts to showcase some of the major innovations and technologies whose antecedents lie in the recent past, but which will continue to shape our lives in the coming decades. The list does not claim to be comprehensive and appears admittedly heavy on scientific and technological advances, but deliberately light on gadgets.

Rather, it looks for broad developments that may not always immediately impact our day-to-day lives, but may nonetheless represent inflection points in humanity's course and its relationship with itself and the world it inhabits, both on small and large scales.

1. Genome editing

Jennifer Doudna was asleep when the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences initially called to tell her she and her colleague, Emmanuelle Charpentier, had won the 2020 Nobel Prize for Chemistry. Several missed calls later, she heard of her award through a reporter from *Nature*. "She wanted to know if I could comment on the Nobel and I said, 'Well, who won it?' And she was shocked that she was the person to tell me," Doudna told *Science* magazine.

The news equally befuddled Charpentier. She told *Science*: "I was told a number of times that when it happens, you are very surprised and feel that it's not real."

Any level of astonishment appears more than appropriate when considering the scientific, commercial and philosophical significance of their 2012 discovery that an obscure immunological mechanism used by bacteria to defend themselves against viruses can be used like "scissors" to "cut and paste" human and non-human genetic material with extreme levels of precision.

Thanks to CRISPR/Cas9, scientists can now change the very code of life with economy and efficiency, opening unprecedented opportunities in medicine, agriculture and life sciences. Researchers are speaking of curing such diseases as Alzheimer's while improving the yield and resiliency of food crops in the face of population growth and climate change.

True, experts have lauded the promises of genetic engineering for decades. Yes, the use of CRISPR/Cas9 remains in its infancy and its use by now-imprisoned Chinese scientists to edit the genes of three babies has only confirmed the often-heard complaint that human morality lags behind technology. But if these concerns are well-founded, they do not inherently diminish the duo's discovery. It is not only historic in the sense that Doudna and Charpentier are the first two women to jointly win a Nobel science prize on their own. It is also historic in the sense that it democratizes a technique. It is perhaps its mass availability and applicability that makes it such a turning point.

"We can improve the world around



Jennifer Doudna, pictured here, and Emmanuelle Charpentier won the 2020 Nobel Prize for chemistry for their work in genome editing.

us in extraordinary ways," said Fyodor Urnov, one of Doudna's fellow CRISPR researchers, in *Science*.

"The 21st Century will be the age of CRISPR — thanks to [Doudna and Charpentier.]"

2. Vaccines

It was a moment fit for a king. Minutes before swinging his hips and snarling his lips for a national television audience during *The Ed Sullivan Show* on Oct. 28, 1956, Elvis Presley rolled up his sleeve to receive a shot of the polio vaccine, which had entered widespread use in North America in April 1955, following its development by Jonas Salk in 1953.

The point of this messaging campaign was more than skin-deep. While millions of young children had already received the vaccine, many teenagers (along with adults) were acting like rebels without a clue in failing to seek immunization. Presley's publicity on behalf of public health produced its desired effect. People followed his lead and, coupled with other measures, this reduced the annual incidence of polio in the United States by nearly 90 per cent between 1950 and 1960.

While cases of the paralyzing viral disease continued to flare up occasionally — Canada, for example, experienced 2,000 cases in 1959 alone — polio's long-crippling grip on humanity was loosened. As of August 2020, five of the six regions of the World Health Organization, representing more than 90 per cent of the global



Two COVID-19 vaccines hit the market in December 2020, ending the year on a note of optimism.

population, are now free of the polio virus.

Similar public relations measures will help spread the use of the various COVID-19 vaccines once they've entered the market.

But if the offerings of celebrities to promote COVID-19 vaccine usage echo the history of humanity's fight against polio, the creation of more than one COVID-19 vaccine appears nothing short of astonishing, even revolutionary.

Scientists are working across international and institutional borders in real-time with the help of super-computers and modern communication technologies previously unimaginable during the development of earlier vaccines. They also have harnessed the combined power of the public purse and private investment to produce what appear to be effective and safe vaccines, ready for use with all the necessary regulatory reviews and blessings.

As a number of experts have noted, the individual pieces that produced the vaccines already existed before COVID-19 and the previous two decades have seen the emergence of major vaccines against horrific diseases such as Ebola. The existentialist threat of COVID-19 merely served as a catalyst to combine all the gains of the previous two decades. Nobody knows what the new normal will look like, after the widespread introduction of at least two promising vaccines. But experts have already predicted that the medical technology behind the first two vaccines — Messenger RNA — will not only lead to other highly effective vaccines, but change the very model of vaccine development.

That, as Elvis would say, is something about which to be “all shook up.”

3. Energy

Cynics could conclude that nuclear fusion is the energy of the future and always will be. Ever since scientists started their research into nuclear fusion (as opposed to nuclear fission) shortly after the Second World War, the world's first working fusion reactor has always appeared beyond the horizon. So we should treat any claims of a major breakthrough with caution, including recent ones in *The New York Times*, which described work on a compact nuclear fusion reactor called SPARC, developed by researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. If everything goes according to plan, a spinoff company could construct a working reactor by 2025, with actual electricity cre-

ated by 2030. Projects are also under way in Australia, Germany and France, where an international consortium is working on the world's largest nuclear fusion project.

But whether these projects actually reach the “long-elusive goal” of mimicking the way in which the sun produces energy by fusing rather than splitting lightweight atoms (usually hydrogen) within their stated project time frames, might actually be of secondary importance. Rather, they draw attention to the ambition driving developments in the field of nuclear fusion specifically, and energy generally.

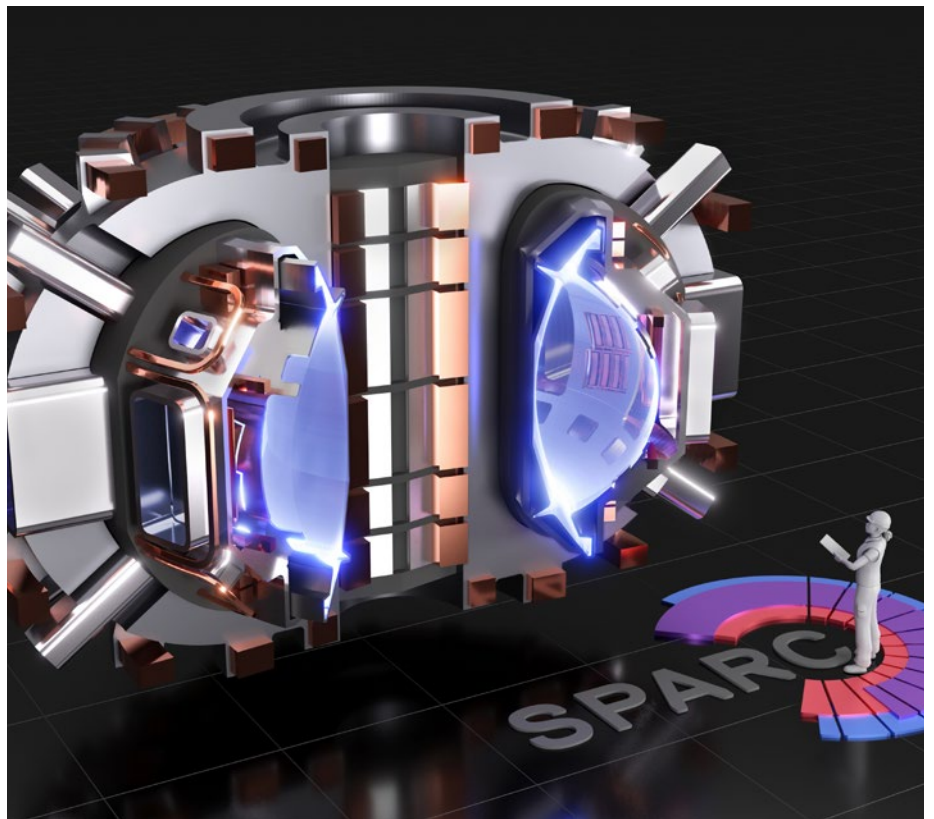
As climate change creates an existentialist imperative for greenhouse-gas-neutral energy sources, and the financial world senses a commercial opportunity, recent years have revealed continuous improvements in battery technology for elec-

that electric vehicles will end up costing less than the fossil-fuelled variety currently dominating streetscapes.

Hydrogen, meanwhile, is emerging as the leading alternative for fossil-fuel-powered ships, trains and planes, a development made possible by the declining cost of wind and solar energy.

The creation of hydrogen through electrolysis itself requires energy and the growing availability of solar and wind energy can further reduce the carbon-footprint of hydrogen.

It is this very promise of “green hydrogen” that underpins plans by the European Union to revive old plans to create a hydrogen superhighway between Europe and Africa. Under this plan, Europe would use the abundant sunshine of the Sahara to supplement its own green hydrogen supplies. Saudi Arabia, the very



SPARC, a compact, high-field, DT-burning tokamak shown in this rendering, is currently under design by a team from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Commonwealth Fusion Systems. Its mission is to create and confine a plasma that produces net fusion energy.

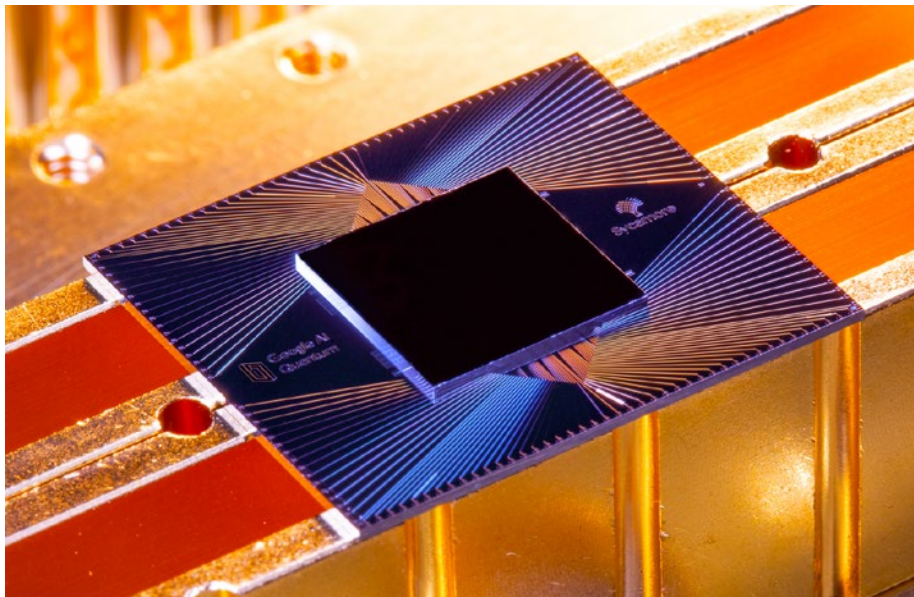
tric vehicles with American, Chinese and, increasingly, European companies vying for global leadership in the field.

Improvements in battery technology have, in turn, sparked a surge in the sales of electric cars, their sticker prices now approaching those of gas guzzlers.

Ultimately, industry experts predict

epitome of an oil-producing, oil-dependent economy, is also investing in green hydrogen.

The clock on bringing these technologies into application is ticking and not everything that glitters green now will pay off in the future. But the post fossil-fuel age is perhaps closer than it appears.



Google's Sycamore chip is composed of 54 qubits, technology that has led the internet giant to claim "quantum supremacy."

4. Quantum computing

Three minutes, 20 seconds. According to Google, that was the amount of time its embryonic quantum computer, called Sycamore, needed to complete a mathematical calculation traditional supercomputers could not complete in fewer than 10,000 years.

This led the internet giant to claim it had achieved what it called "quantum supremacy," the state when a computer runs on the laws of quantum physics as opposed to classical computers running on classical (Newtonian) physics.

As *Science* explains it, traditional computers work by manipulating long, strong strings of bits that can be set to 0 or 1. "In contrast, a quantum computer employs quantum bits, or qubits, that can be 0 and 1 at the same time, the equivalent of you sitting at both ends of your couch at once."

If this all sounds simple, it isn't. Even experts struggle to explain the properties of quantum physics in ways that ordinary folks can understand.

"If we're honest, everything we currently know about quantum mechanics can't fully describe how a quantum computer works," Alan Baratz, executive vice-president of research and development at D-Wave Systems, told *The New York Times* in December 2019, when the paper asked experts to describe the concept in 280 characters.

What perhaps matters more is the power of quantum processors to perform certain tasks "exponentially faster" than classical processors, as stated by the company in a paper published in *Nature* in

October 2019.

Compared to the first airplane flight by the Wright Brothers, the event might lead to machines that significantly speed up the development of artificial intelligence, new drugs and policies designed to fight climate change by improving atmospheric modelling.

Quantum computing requires considerable engineering, as the fragile and volatile qubits require colder-than-outerspace refrigerators. In other words, do not expect to carry a quantum computer in your pocket any time soon. Practical uses may still be decades away and not every expert considers Google's achievement as ground-breaking as advertised. But the potential is enormous.

5. Exploration of the solar system

The discovery of possible signs of organic life on Venus. The discovery of liquid water lakes beneath the surface of Mars, thereby expanding previous discoveries of water on that planet, which remains the object of scientific curiosity as the space agencies of the United States, China and United Arab Emirates used Mars' relative proximity to Earth in the summer of 2020 to launch unmanned scientific missions. Ongoing refinements include the retrieval of samples from asteroids and, most recently, the Moon.

These were just some of the headline-making developments in the exploration of Earth's solar system in 2020, with more events on the horizon.

Those include, among others, plans to collect and return Martian rock samples to Earth for analysis with the help of unmanned spacecraft. The discovery of a "weird" previously unknown molecule in the atmosphere of Saturn's largest moon, Titan, in October 2020 will likely only pique the curiosity of scientists in the run-up to NASA's 2027 unmanned mission to that planet. Multiple unmanned missions are also planned for Europa, Jupiter's moon, (2022 by the European Space Agency, 2024 by NASA) and scientists are actively lobbying for a mission to Enceladus, another Saturn moon, as the search for life in our own solar system "with," says NASA, "its stunning diversity of worlds" continues.

And yes, the United States wants to send humans back to the moon by 2024, with China pursuing the same goal, albeit with a less definitive timetable. Finally, entrepreneur Elon Musk appears eager to beat everyone to Mars, saying recently that he is "highly confident" about plans by his company, SpaceX, to land humans on Mars by 2026, maybe even by 2024.

Some of these projects pursue genuine scientific goals. Others come in packages that might say "science" on the outside,



Elon Musk is confident SpaceX will be able to land humans on Mars by 2026, maybe even 2024. Shown here is the launch of Falcon 9 in July 2014.

but pursue political goals in showing off the superiority of one political system over the other. The latter is likely the case in the lunar ambitions of the United States and China, its main terrestrial rival.

Whatever the reasons, however, these

projects promise to spark significant advancements in the fields of engineering, but also in humanity's understanding of its own place by confirming or revising prevailing theories about the emergence of the solar system and life on this planet.

6. Exoplanets

It is highly unlikely humans will ever set foot, never mind settle, on K2-315b, an Earth-sized exoplanet orbiting a dwarf star 186 light-years away. For one, its measured surface temperature of 350 C is just a touch too toasty for human habitation. That said, future earthly visitors to

two decades ago, have not only revolutionized scientific understanding in turning prevailing theories of planetary mechanics upside-down. They have also raised profound questions about humanity's own origin, future and possibilities, as astronomer-cum-philosopher Benjamin Pope from New York University recently put it. "We ultimately want to understand our place in the cosmos: [Are] we alone or is there life elsewhere?"

The search for, and continuous discovery of, exoplanets has undeniably aided the search for an answer to this question. It has not only confirmed the existence of planets outside of our own solar system,

Centauri, which just happens to be part of the Alpha Centauri system, the closest star system to our own, just 4.22 light-years away.

Human knowledge of Proxima Centauri b is evolving and its location relative to its parent star does not inevitably mean it is a suitable "escape hatch" for humanity. But its very existence (and that of other exoplanets) expands humanity's possible frontiers. Few would have imagined it as few as two decades ago.

7. Gravitational waves

Massive events a long time ago sometimes leave behind small signals in the present that change everything in the future.

This equation perhaps describes the sequence of events that led to the historic discovery of gravitational waves, ripples in space time, on Sept. 14, 2015. About 1.3 billion years ago, two massive black holes, one the size of 29 suns, the other 36 times larger than the sun, finally merged after wobbling toward each other at speeds of 200,000 kilometres per second. The moment of merger lasted mere fractions of a second, but created a black hole 62 times larger than the sun, but three suns smaller than the sum of the two black holes. The missing mass shuddered across the universe in the form of gravitational waves that did not wash up on our planetary shores until that fateful day in September 2015 when the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO), a pair of instruments in Hanford, Washington, and Livingston, Louisiana, picked up displacements in the distance between our Sun and Earth — displacements no larger than the width of a hydrogen atom.

This minuscule discrepancy, however, was enough to confirm the existence of gravitational waves, which every object can create, true to the often-quoted aphorism that you can shake the universe by shaking your fist, with the proviso that existing instruments would never detect it. Only large catastrophic events leave behind measurable gravitational waves by virtue of the fact that gravity is the weakest of the four fundamental forces in the universe, the other three being electromagnetism, the strong (nuclear) force and the weak (nuclear) force. If it had not been for constant refinements by countless scientists and engineers working across decades and continents, the waves created by the aforementioned collision of black holes would have simply remained theory.

The confirmation of gravitational waves has since catapulted humanity's



Planet Proxima Centauri b, shown here in an artist's rendering, orbits the red dwarf star Proxima Centauri, the closest star to Earth's solar system.

K2-315b would nonetheless have the opportunity to celebrate a new year every 3.14 Earth days. Scientists first discovered this "Pi" planet in 2017 with data from NASA's Kepler Space Telescope, which during its almost 10-year-long mission in space that ended in 2018, confirmed the existence of 2,662 exoplanets with several thousand more awaiting confirmation.

As such, K2-315b, with its eccentric nature, represents just a small sliver of the expanding universe of exoplanets. As of Nov. 19, 2020, scientists had confirmed 4,306 exoplanets, with thousands more awaiting confirmation.

These discoveries, starting more than

but also fired up collective imaginations, while raising intriguing possibilities about humans living on distant worlds.

For example, the February 2017 landmark discovery of seven Earth-size planets orbiting the dwarf star called TRAPPIST-1, 40 light-years away, inspired artists to create an array of tourism-themed posters that conjured up some distant future, but also felt familiar, even comforting.

Yet none of these discoveries has been as significant as the one of Proxima Centauri b, the closest Earth-like exoplanet. Discovered in 2016, the mass of this planet is 1.27 times of Earth's and it lies within the habitable zone of its star, Proxima



The northern arm of the LIGO interferometer on Hanford Reservation in Washington confirmed gravitational waves, pushing our understanding of the universe into a new sphere.

understanding of the universe into a different sphere. While invisible to the naked eye, astrophysicists can now use them to “see” phenomena (such as black holes) previously hidden from scientific sight, and several recent discoveries have relied on the detection of gravitational waves.

The confirmation of gravitational waves also underscores the genius of Albert Einstein. He first predicted in 1916 that massive objects whirling in certain ways could create gravitational waves. As such, he built on his general theory of relativity that explains gravity as the warping of spacetime by mass or energy.

Twenty years later, Einstein recanted his own conclusion, only to stick with it at the last minute, after peer-review had poked holes in his math. In other words, he had it right the first time.

8. Discovery of Higgs-Boson particle

British physicist Peter Higgs, a self-described atheist, never cared for the popular term with which the media have described the particle bearing his name and said to explain the universe: the so-called “God” particle.

“Well, that was the bad joke of the author of a book who wanted to call his book, ‘That Goddamn Particle’ because it was going to be difficult to find,” he said in a 2013 television interview, one year after the discovery in April 2012.

Said author was fellow physicist Leon

Lederman, who had pitched the initial title because it underscored the elusiveness of the particle. But pressure from publishers eventually led Lederman to accept the title of *God Particle*, a concession to commercial realities that has caused much consternation in the scientific community, because it actually confuses the public, while likely offending religious individuals.

Simply put, Higgs-Boson is a subatomic particle that helps to explain why matter has mass. It is, in the words of the *New Scientist*, the “fundamental unit, or quantum of the Higgs field, an all-pervading entity” through which all particles must pass. As *Scientific American* describes it, particles get their mass by interacting with the so-called Higgs field said to pervade space, just as swimmers get wet by moving through a pool.

More research remains and the Higgs-Boson may actually only be the first of a family of such particles that humans have discovered.

The discovery of the particle was, in many ways, a team effort. In 1964, Belgians François Englert and the late Robert Brout published a paper on the subject. Higgs followed a few weeks later with a comparable, but independent piece of work, which experts say went further than the Belgians’ paper.

A second trio of scientists, working at



The discovery by British physicist Peter Higgs of the Higgs-Boson particle caused celebrations in the scientific community.

the same time as the other three — Carl Hagen, Gerald Guralnik and Tom Kibble — can also claim pioneer status in the field. But the work of Higgs and his colleagues remained theoretical until the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) operated by the Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire (CERN) in Geneva proved its existence.

This fundamental discovery caused

celebrations in the scientific community. Even the unassuming Higgs allowed himself a moment of elation when he called it “an incredible thing that happened in my lifetime.”

The discovery made Higgs the instant favourite for the Nobel Prize in Physics, which he and Englert duly received in 2013. But Higgs (whom *The New York Times* described as the J.D. Salinger of physics) did not care much for the publicity surrounding his person and always made it a point to recognize Brout, whose death one year before confirmation of the particle made him ineligible for the Nobel Prize.

In fact, were it not for the rule that no more than three individuals can share a Nobel Prize, Hagen, Guralnik and Kibble could have also received the 2013 prize.

9. Women in politics

First the bad news. At the current pace, it will take 94.5 years to close the political empowerment gap between women and men, as defined by the World Economic Forum in its 2020 *Global Gender Gap Report* (released in 2019.) While the overall average shows a gap of 31.4 per cent, the largest average disparity exists in the field of political empowerment, where the gap stands at 75.3 per cent and it is dismaying to report that the current rate of female participation in politics represents a “significant” increase from the last assessment in the report’s 2018 edition. According to the report, women held only 25 per cent of 35,127 legislative seats and held only 21 per cent of 3,343 ministerial portfolios. In some countries, women are not represented at all and 85 out of 153 countries covered in the report are still waiting for their first female head of state 50 years on.

While many experts have expressed concerns about the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on women, 2020 may also go down as a watershed year for female leadership, starting with the election of Kamala Harris as the first female vice-president of the United States, an historic development by any measure.

Equally influential figures during 2020 were Svyatlana Tsikhanouskaya, Maryya Kalesnikava and Veranika Tsapkala. Their role in the ongoing uprising against the autocratic rule of Belarussian President Aleksandr Lukashenko has led to claims that Belarus might be the site of the world’s first feminist revolution.

Iranian Nasrin Sotoudeh, meanwhile, has become a global figure in the fight for human rights, having already co-won the

prestigious Sakharov Prize for freedom of thought in 2012 and the alternative Nobel Prize in 2020. Sentenced to 38 years in prison and 148 lashes in March 2019 for having defended women who defied the Iranian regime by refusing to wear their headscarves in public, Sotoudeh has not flinched in the face of injustice in serving as an inspiring beacon for others to withstand intimidation and oppression.

The response to the COVID-19 pandemic has also drawn attention to dif-

ferences in female and male leadership styles. Women in Poland and Hungary, meanwhile, led the opposition to efforts by their governments to curtail rights, with COVID-19 serving as convenient pretext for those totalitarian temptations.

As such, these figures showed that women were on the front lines of response to the various effects of COVID-19. They may also well inspire others to step into the political arena so that women do not have to wait another century for true equality.



The response to the COVID-19 pandemic has drawn attention to differences in female and male leadership styles. Countries run by women, such as Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen, have fared better.

ferences in female and male leadership styles. While it would be a mistake to make general statements, few have missed that countries led by blustering, rash male politicians (Boris Johnson, Donald Trump) have not fared so well. By contrast, countries led by women, such as New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen, Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin and, to a lesser degree, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, have had demonstrably more success in dealing with the crisis, even when accounting for other factors.

Europe's response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 has also had a distinct female face, with EU president Ursula von der Leyen and Merkel on the political side and Christine Lagarde as president of the European Central Bank on the institutional side.

10. Artificial intelligence

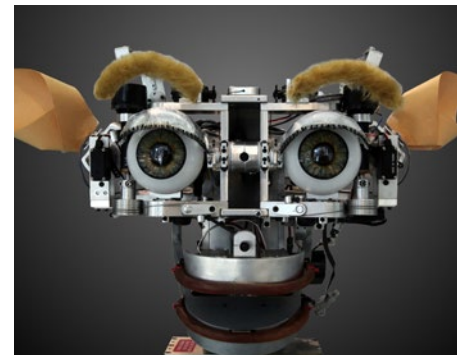
Let us first acknowledge the critics of artificial intelligence (AI) and their genuine concerns, starting with Israeli historian Yuval Noah Harari, who argues that artificial intelligence will help totalitarian leaders achieve levels of control that would have made the tyrants of the 20th Century envious. One does not need to look further than Communist China's social credit system to see how non-democratic regimes can use AI to help monitor the moves, even the motives, of millions.

The eminent thinker, along with others, also warns of significant economic (and therefore political) upheaval as AI renders reams of jobs, even entire sectors, unnecessary. But this view must be balanced with the immense possible benefits of AI. They include the development of drugs with speeds previously unimaginable,

enhanced medical diagnosis, safer streets and faster scientific research in every imaginable field.

Experts at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) have also countered predictions that AI-powered robots will leave an army of unemployed workers. Technological changes have always produced employment changes and the real challenge is not technological, but political, in reforming existing employment and educational systems to maximize the advantages of AI.

In fact, AI can help humans to create a "new, equitable social contract" in sparking nothing less than a 21st-Century version of the Renaissance that propelled Europe into modernity, as Kai-Fu Lee, one



Experts at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology have argued that AI-powered robots, such as Kismet, pictured here, will not leave an army of unemployed workers.

of the world's leading authorities on AI and author of *AI Superpowers: China, Silicon Valley and the New World Order* recently argued in *The New York Times*. "With machines taking over many duties and tasks in the new economy, AI will inject flexibility into traditional working patterns, allowing us to rethink what work-life balance should look like and transforming both the weekday routine and retirement thresholds," he writes. "With more freedom and time in such a new social contract, people will be liberated to follow their passions, creativity and talents, and to let that personal exploration inform their careers as never before."

Such a future may sound overly optimistic, but why not try for it?

Wolfgang Depner lives and writes in Greater Victoria, where he teaches at Royal Roads University. He has previously taught political theory, international relations and Canadian politics at the University of British Columbia, Okanagan Campus.

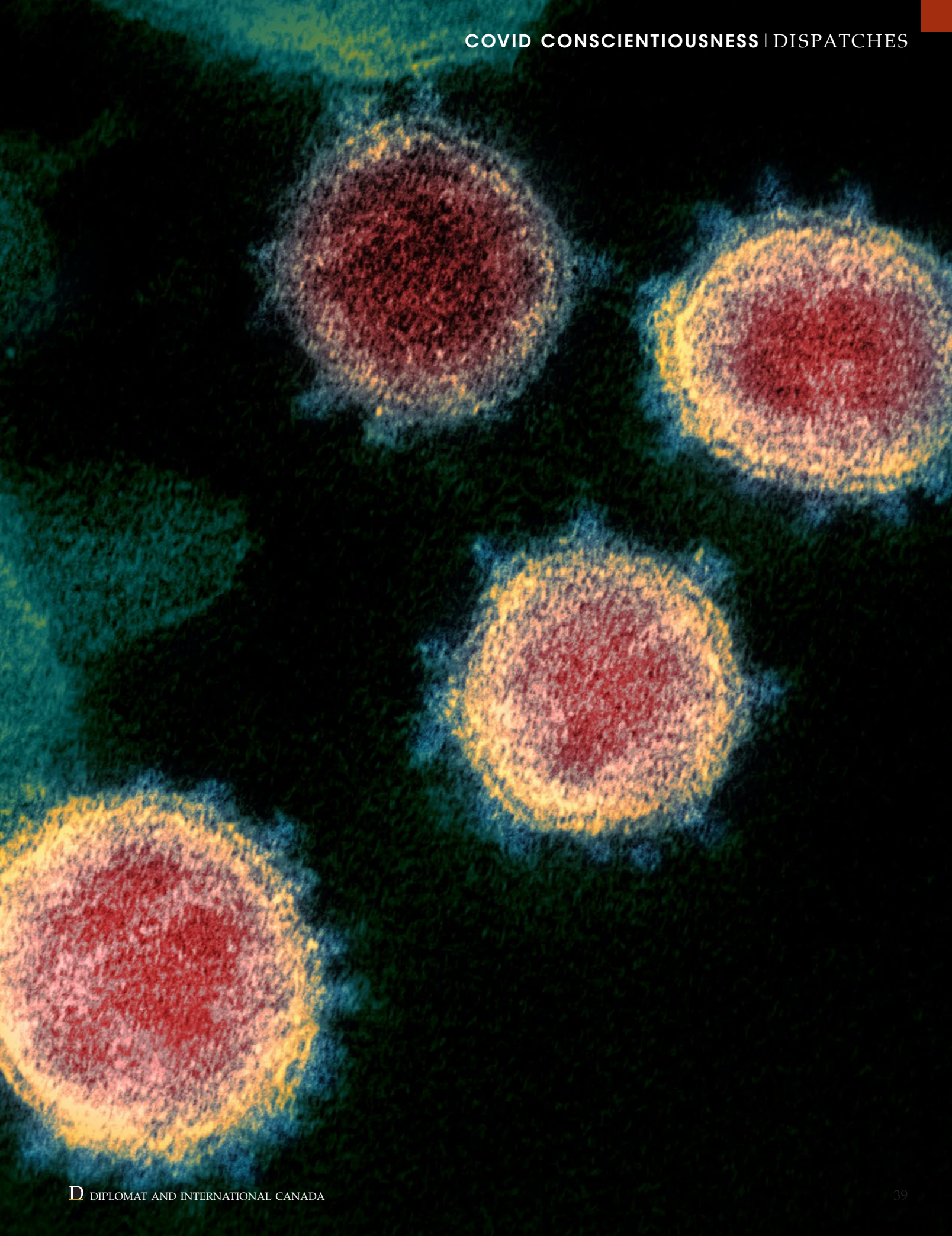
The COVID crushers

These 10 countries responded well to the pandemic — and have the numbers to prove it.

By Laura Neilson Bonikowsky

The novel coronavirus SARS-CoV2, COVID-19, has taken lives, disrupted our days, ruined businesses, spread fear and birthed a plethora of conspiracy theories. In that, it is very much like earlier pandemics.

A disease becomes a pandemic when it becomes prevalent over a whole country or the world. Pandemics have included smallpox, leprosy, influenza, cholera and the plague, the deadliest pandemic in history overall.



The plague is spread mainly by vermin, but the deadliest form, which affects the lungs, can spread human-to-human. It recurred over centuries, killing 200 million between 1347 and 1351 alone. In its last big outbreak, the Great Plague of London in 1665, it killed 100,000 Londoners in just seven months. Plague doctors wore cone masks filled with aromatic herbs and

Responses to pandemics have changed little throughout history. The first effort was always to close borders. When that didn't keep disease out, officials imposed distancing rules that some ignored. While nobody was safe, those who gathered in groups became ill in greater numbers. Victims were quarantined, the dead often buried in mass graves. Conspiracy theo-

of COVID, is it a COVID death? In some regions, it is; in others, it's not.

Cases were declining globally until the autumn surge was brought on by COVID-weariness and people ignoring recommendations. There is no consensus for comparing national performance. Case counts and deaths per capita can be collected, but the story they tell is incomplete — how sick were people, how old, how many fatalities had co-morbidities? Testing finds the virus, but as a performance metric it is ambiguous; the number of tests performed does not signify the actual number of people tested because some are tested more than once.

All countries have responded with handwashing, masks, testing, contact tracing and quarantine, but their success has varied. Besides these methods, the most successful countries have in common a plan and a high level of compliance, whether from nationalism, confidence in their government or fear of punishment.

This survey considers population size and compares reported cumulative cases versus deaths per capita as an indication of how well countries have contained the virus and isolated COVID cases. Areas with small populations and no cases or only sporadic outbreaks are not included. Data are from national centres for disease control, the Foreign Policy COVID-19 Global Response Index (to Oct. 1), World Health Organization (WHO) Coronavirus Dashboard, CovidStatistics.org, Johns Hopkins University COVID-19 Dashboard and the *Central Intelligence Agency World Factbook*. Statistics and rankings may change after our deadline.

Vietnam

Population: 98,721,275

Confirmed cases: 1,346 (14 per million)

Deaths: 35 (0.3 per million)

Tests: 1,339,465 (13,710 per million)

Vietnam's population is among the highest in the world. From the beginning, the government acted on its own, rather than wait for direction from the WHO.

Within days of the first cases being identified on Jan. 23, the government established the National Steering Committee on Epidemic Prevention and declared a national epidemic. As the virus spread in other countries, Deputy Prime Minister Vu Doc Dam observed that, if anti-outbreak measures were not undertaken properly, the country would be "beaten from both inside and outside."

Officials immediately initiated their



Instant noodles were a big item on the panic-buying list of Vietnamese residents. The country has fared extremely well during the COVID-19 pandemic, with only 0.3 deaths per million people.

dried flowers to ward off the miasma of disease.

The Spanish flu pandemic (1918–1919) infected 500 million and killed 50 million. It closed businesses and schools and caused food shortages. People isolated and wore masks and bags of camphor, but the virus spread in a deadly wave, carried by celebrations welcoming soldiers home from the First World War.

ries proliferated and many blamed the disease on outsiders and minorities.

The response to COVID-19 is familiar, though effective vaccines will be a game-changer. COVID-19 has been as confusing as any other pandemic. Information from health officials and governments is conflicting. Reporting is politicized and uncertain. Record-keeping is inconsistent — if a person dies with COVID, but not



Members of the Taiwanese military disinfect public spaces in the fight against COVID-19.

emergency plan, restricting movement where needed, locking down villages and communes as advised by the health ministry, monitoring and ultimately closing the border with China. They directed relevant agencies, doctors and clinics to prepare. They also implemented a vast contact-tracing operation and health checks at borders. Schools closed at the end of January for the Lunar New Year holiday and remained closed until mid-May.

Transparent and public information has been a powerful tool, invoking the population's sense of responsibility and framing the virus as a common foreign enemy, invoking the nation's history of threat by invaders. The approach is targeted, low-cost and effective.

Taiwan

Population: 23,508,428
Confirmed cases: 675 (28 per million)
Deaths: 7 (0.2 per million)
Tests: 110,332 (4,629 per million)

Taiwan's first COVID case appeared in January. It was ready with a plan derived from lessons learned from the 2003 SARS epidemic when Taiwan had the third-highest infection rate among affected countries. It had a stockpile of masks available and created apps to provide real-time updates of mask availability. Its approach also involved strong leadership.

When the WHO declared the pandemic on March 11, Taiwan wasted no time closing its borders and banning arrivals by foreign nationals. It has maintained tight control over its borders and traces 20 to 30 contacts per case.

Every public building requires temperature checks and masks for entrance. Those breaking quarantine or not wearing masks in designated areas are subject to large fines. Social pressure plays a role; naming and shaming rule breakers has become part of Taiwan's culture. People feel a strong sense of community, certain that acting together in the community's best interest will ensure they prevail.

The national health system includes a digital health-care record being used to alert doctors about patients at higher risk due to travel. The Taiwan Centers for Disease Control provide regular online updates of testing results with patient information (age, gender), how and where the virus was contracted and the severity of symptoms.

Thailand

Population: 68,977,400
Confirmed cases: 3,998 (58 per million)
Deaths: 60 (0.8 per million)
Tests: 977,854 (13,995 per million)

In October, officials from the WHO and Thailand's ministry of public health reviewed Thailand's COVID-19 plan. They identified successes in the first six months of the pandemic and determined how vulnerabilities could be corrected and strengths reinforced. Their findings are useful for other Southeast Asian countries.

The study credited Thailand's success to strong leadership informed by science; an effective and well-resourced public health system; lessons learned from the SARS, Avian Influenza and H1N1 outbreaks; early screening; cultural norms such as non-contact greeting and mask-wearing; and a "whole of society" approach that includes collaboration with the academic and private sectors. Recommendations include a national digital data system to support decision-making, an enhanced surveillance system to identify



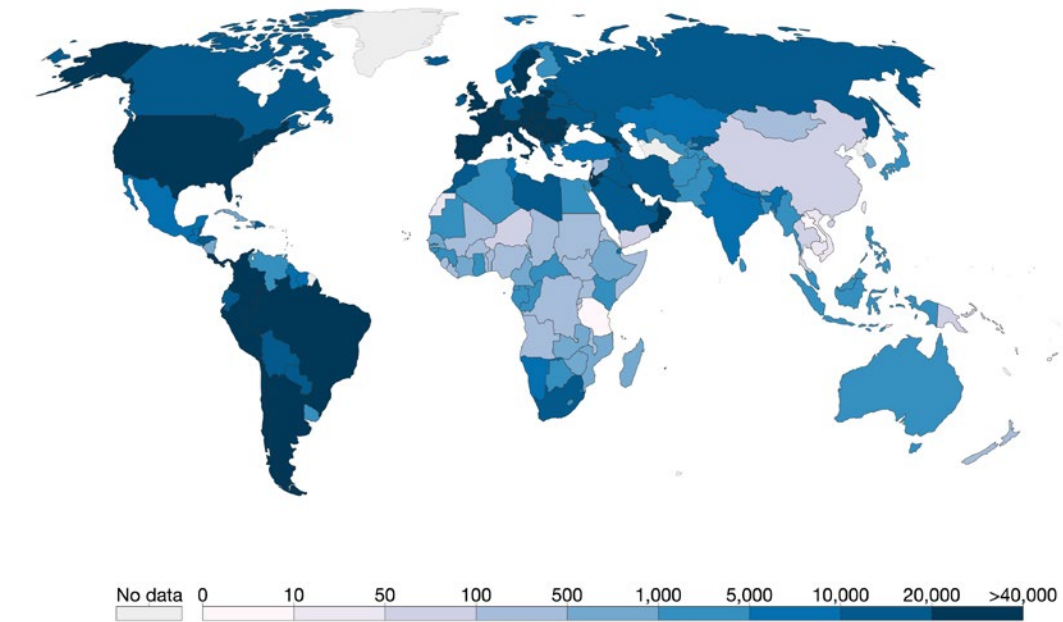
This supermarket in Bangkok requires visitors to scan a QR code before entering. Staff are doubly protected with face masks and shields.

cases and a national quarantine authority.

Thailand implemented "Thai Chana" (Thailand wins), a tracking app that requires users to scan the QR code of each place they enter and leave. It advises

Cumulative confirmed COVID-19 cases per million people, Dec 4, 2020

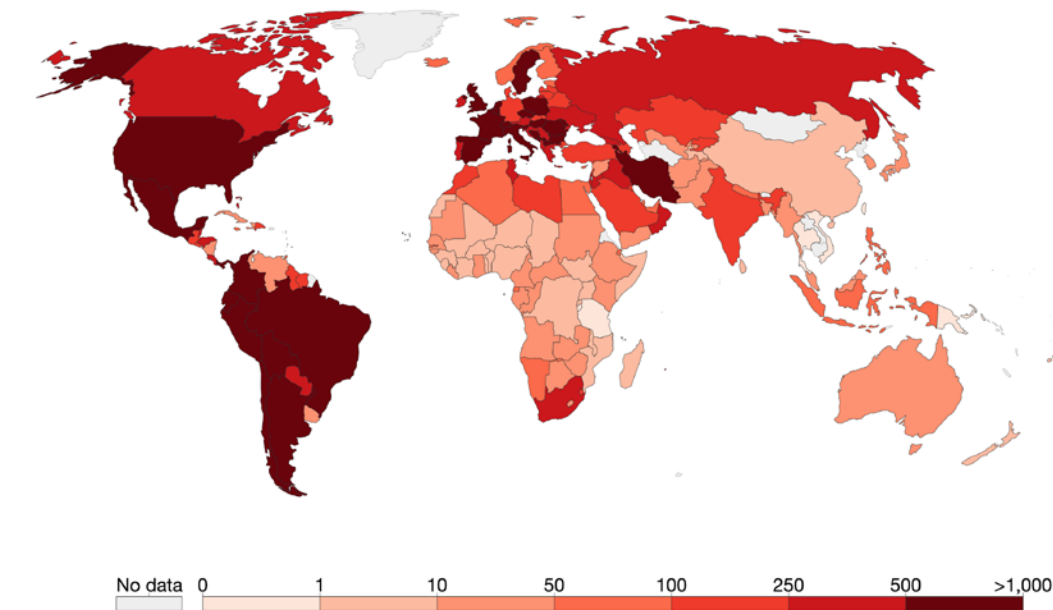
The number of confirmed cases is lower than the number of actual cases; the main reason for that is limited testing.



Source: Johns Hopkins University CSSE COVID-19 Data – Last updated 5 December, 06:06 (London time) CC BY

Cumulative confirmed COVID-19 deaths per million people, Dec 4, 2020

Limited testing and challenges in the attribution of the cause of death means that the number of confirmed deaths may not be an accurate count of the true number of deaths from COVID-19.

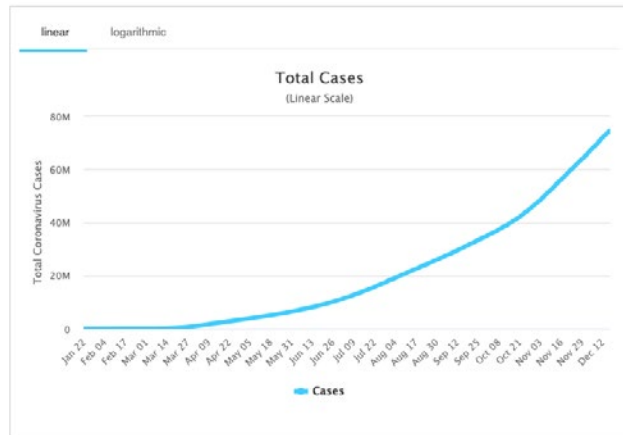


Source: Johns Hopkins University CSSE COVID-19 Data – Last updated 5 December, 06:06 (London time) CC BY

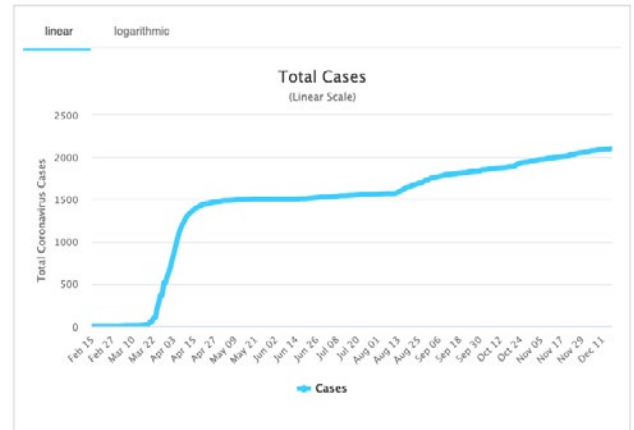
Total Cases (worldwide)

See also: [Data Table by Country](#)

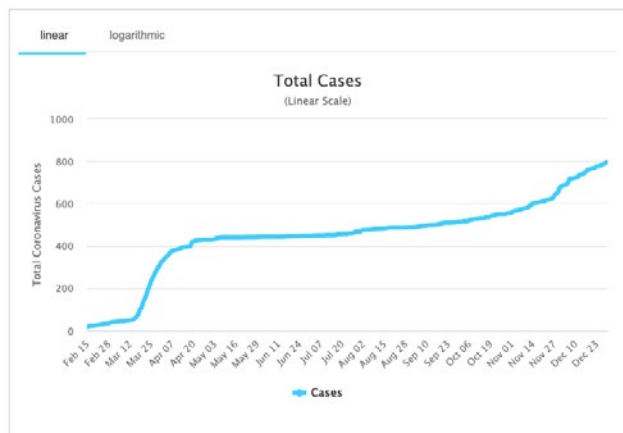
"Total Cases" = total cumulative count (75,204,596). This figure therefore includes deaths and recovered or discharged patients (cases with an outcome).



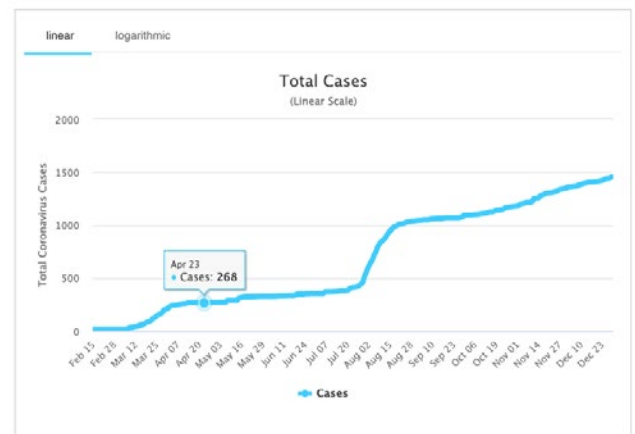
Total Coronavirus Cases in New Zealand



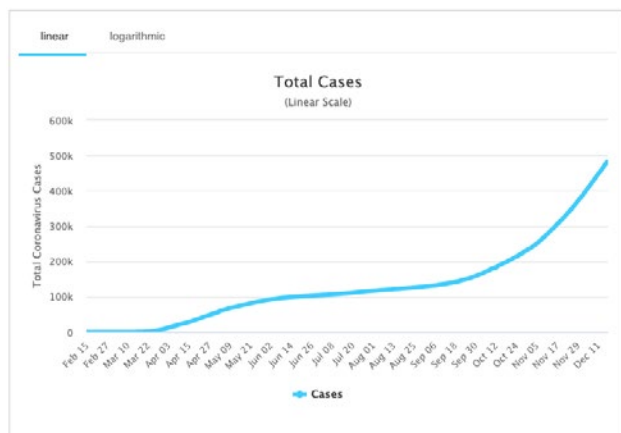
Total Coronavirus Cases in Taiwan



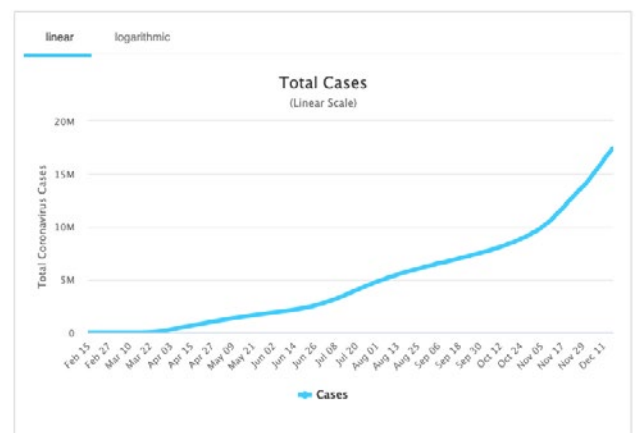
Total Coronavirus Cases in Vietnam



Total Coronavirus Cases in Canada



Total Coronavirus Cases in the United States



customers about crowded premises, if there is a threat nearby (non-compliant business or infected person) and sends an SMS notice for a free COVID test. It can also be used to report non-compliant businesses. While the government says tracked information is available only to the Department of Disease Control, some worry about privacy.

New Zealand

Population: 4,510,327

Confirmed cases: 2,056 (411 per million)

Deaths: 25 (5 per million)

Tests: 1,275,525 (254,998 per million)

On Jan. 30, when the WHO declared an emergency, New Zealand implemented preventive measures, following the science to act quickly to find, isolate and track contacts to curb the virus. It recorded its first case on Feb. 28.

New Zealand has the advantage of a rich economy, advanced health system and public confidence in the government.



New Zealand was an early adopter of Plexiglas in grocery stores.

It used tiered alert levels to introduce restrictions. Level 1 imposed flight bans to certain countries and a 14-day quarantine for returning travellers; level 2 enforced social distancing and precautions for high-risk groups and gatherings; level 3 confined people to social bubbles and encouraged working from home; and level 4 put the entire country into quarantine at home, except essential workers, from March 26 to April 10.

The country began to de-escalate on April 28 and in June, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern announced, “we are confident we have eliminated transmission of the virus...for now.” The country experienced a setback later in June by allowing a quarantine exception for two women



Japanese officials and experts, shown here at their first pandemic meeting in February 2020, have helped keep COVID-19 at bay, thanks to a cluster-based approach to tracking infections.

arriving from the U.K. to visit a dying relative, despite feeling ill and not having been tested. Both subsequently tested positive, ending 24 COVID-free days and beginning a resurgence of cases. Continuing its measured approach has kept New Zealand’s COVID numbers low.

Japan

Population: 126,451,398

Confirmed cases: 146,760 (1,162 per million)

Deaths: 2,119 (17 per million)

Tests: 3,502,536 (27,729 per million)

Japan’s success with COVID has been a mystery to researchers. It is a highly populated country, with the highest density of senior citizens in the world and close proximity to China. Its low numbers at the beginning of the pandemic caused speculation that Japan was not reporting honestly, reminiscent of the Fukushima nuclear disaster when Japan initially denied the meltdowns. The Summer Olympics were also at stake.

The government’s handling of the

pandemic was initially haphazard — it declared an emergency and implemented restrictions later than other nations — yet managed a low fatality rate. Japan’s first COVID diagnosis came in mid-January and case numbers have remained lower than many of its peer countries, although the fall surge has increased cases.

Japan has taken a cluster-based approach, which proposes that a cluster is formed because infected individuals quickly infect others. Each cluster is tracked to the original infection and those who are infectious are isolated to prevent spread and create chains of clusters. Health officials conduct pinpoint testing, so broad testing is not required.

Additionally, some measures are ingrained in Japanese culture. Many wear masks and greeting etiquette is bowing.

Australia

Population: 23,232,413

Confirmed cases: 27,785 (1,085 per million)

Deaths: 907 (35 per million)

Tests: 9,554,441 (373,032 per million)



Australia experienced a setback on March 19, 2020, when the *Ruby Princess* cruise ship, shown here, disembarked 2,700 passengers in Sydney Harbour. They weren't screened, nor were they told to self-isolate. When cases surged in July, Melbourne residents experienced the world's strictest lockdown.

Australia recorded its first cases on Jan. 25. In early March, most states controversially closed their borders and implemented the usual measures, along with enforcement of strict rules.

Australia experienced a setback on March 19 by allowing the cruise ship *Ruby Princess* to disembark 2,700 passengers in Sydney Harbour to catch trains, planes and buses home. They were not screened, told to self-isolate or informed of cases onboard. Within days, 21 of 48 people who had tested positive were found in other states. By March 24, a total of 133 cases were linked to the ship. Ultimately, at least 662 people connected to the cruise were diagnosed with coronavirus.

In Melbourne in July, a surge of 700-plus cases daily prompted what has been called the world's strictest lockdown; it lasted 112 days. Residents could go no further than five kilometres from home or leave with more than one family member. Police checked identification randomly and fined rule-breakers. Anti-lockdown protesters were arrested. In nine public housing towers, 3,000 people (mostly immigrants) were locked in their units 24/7

for two weeks.

On Nov. 1, Health Minister Greg Hunter announced the first day since June 9 with "zero community transmission." On Nov. 13, the health ministry announced its COVID-19 vaccination policy. Vaccinations are free and encouraged, but won't be mandatory. The national or state governments may require proof of vaccination for entry or re-entry.

Ghana

Population: 27,499,924

Confirmed cases: 51,667 (1,649 per million)

Deaths: 323 (10 per million)

Tests: 592,285 (18,900 per million)

Ghana has done well in the pandemic because of its proactive public health policy, strong leadership and reliance on facts despite poor population health and a weak health-care system. The country's low case incidence is particularly noteworthy given that the government is also dealing with insurgency and focusing on counter-terrorism against Jama'at Nasr al-Islam

wal Muslimin (JNIM), al-Qaeda's affiliate in West Africa, and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), both of which are



Ghanaians are shown here making PPE for front-line workers. The country's proactive health policy has helped curb its case numbers.

spreading westward.

Ghana uses pooled testing to enhance testing capacity and drones to collect



A clinic at the Nairobi Hospital in Kenya — the UN has partnered with the hospital to build, equip and operate a COVID-19 treatment facility for 20,000 UN staff and families based in Kenya and beyond.

samples from 1,000 health facilities. Labs combine samples from several people and test them together for coronavirus genetic material. If a batch tests negative for COVID-19, the patients are cleared. If it tests positive, the samples are retested individually or in smaller groups. COVID-positive people are isolated and quarantined. Ghana began testing contacts before other countries.

A unique feature of Ghana's response is ubiquitous wash stations with Veronica Buckets, a device developed in Ghana comprising a barrel of water with a tap at the bottom and basin below to catch waste water.

Senegal

Population: 16,898,799

Confirmed cases: 16,089 (951 per million)

Deaths: 333 (20 per million)

Tests: 230,861 (13,642 per million)

Senegal began developing its response on Jan. 30. On March 2, it became the fourth African country to confirm COVID-19, in a traveller returning from France. President

Macky Sall imposed a curfew, closed schools and mosques and restricted domestic travel.

The country's early prospects did not inspire confidence. It has a fragile health-care system with a low budget, scarcity of beds and only seven doctors per 100,000 people. The country learned from the 2014 Ebola outbreak that quick action and contact tracing are effective. Senegal's response has been scientific and innovative. The country has developed a \$1 coronavirus test kit and a \$60-ventilator made with 3D-printed parts.

Mobile labs return test results within 24 hours. Red Cross volunteers distribute food to people quarantined in hotels. Communication from the government has been transparent and science-based, with no prevarication about the seriousness of COVID. Experts disagree on the reason for Senegal's success, whether it's due to the government's response or herd immunity.

In late November, the Virtual University of Senegal began testing a mathematical algorithm using the Atos company's BullSequana X800 supercomputer, which models the spread of COVID-19 to evaluate containment measures.

Kenya

Population: 47,615,739

Confirmed cases: 83,618 (1,541 per million)

Deaths: 1,469 (27 per million)

Tests: 888,971 (16,385 per million)

The United Nations has praised the Kenyan government's initiatives to control the spread of COVID-19.

Kenya imposed constraints early in April, including restrictions on public transportation, passenger rail service, e-hailing and air travel. Proximity restrictions include only one rider on a bicycle and 50 per cent of licensed capacity per private vehicle. There are penalties for breaking the rules, such as vehicle impounding. Travel through infected areas is monitored by GIS (geographic information system); the government can impose restrictions or deliver services as needed.

Nairobi, site of the only UN headquarters in Africa, provides services to UN operations in more than 150 countries. Antonio Guterres, UN secretary-general, has said the UN considers Kenya's world-class



UNHCR employees distribute health kits in Senegal on World Refugee Day 2020. Senegal's response has been scientific and innovative. The country has developed a \$1 coronavirus test kit and a \$60-ventilator made with 3D-printed parts.

hospitals the best place to provide emergency medical treatment of humanitarian, development and peacekeeping personnel and their families. The UN partnered with the Nairobi Hospital to build, equip and operate a COVID-19 treatment facility for 20,000 UN staff and families based in Kenya and beyond, as well as Kenyans, reducing congestion at other facilities.

The facility opened on Nov. 13, with 20 ICU beds, a 45-bed high dependency unit, 85 general beds and infectious diseases triage.

South Korea

Population: 51,709,108

Confirmed cases: 34,201 (667 per million)

Deaths: 526 (10 per million)

Tests: 3,046,971 (59,410 per million)

South Korea reported its first COVID-19 case on Jan. 20. By early March, cases had surged to 3,000 and South Korea had the highest number of cases outside of China. But in a short time, the country slowed the spread without devastating its national health systems or its economy.

South Korea has an adaptive health-care system, open communication and an infectious disease emergency-management system, which includes prevention



South Korea slowed its spread of COVID-19 quickly without devastating its national health systems or its economy.

and preparedness plans that are updated every five years based on lessons learned from disease outbreaks. The government addressed COVID regionally, imposing restrictions and strengthening preventive measures where required.

The country's comprehensive approach included the first drive-thru screening centres, walk-thru screening stations, a self-diagnosis app and community treatment centres. South Korea adopted several policy strategies — swift action; widespread testing; contact tracing using AI for data analytics; treatment; and public-private co-operation.

COVID-positive patients are classified according to the severity of symptoms and treated accordingly. Specialized hospitals have been set up and medical staff provided where they are needed.

Communication measures include social media to correct inaccurate information and reminders to wash hands, wear masks, practise physical distancing and advise where masks are available.

Laura Neilson Bonikowsky is an Alberta writer who can't wait to travel again.

What Biden should do in Africa



Under U.S. President Joe Biden, shown here, and Secretary of State Tony Blinken, Africans can expect to be respected, befriended and no longer consigned to the rude discourse and name-calling they have been for the past few years.



Robert I.
Rotberg

U.S. President Joe Biden and Secretary of State Tony Blinken have not yet decided who will be in charge of Africa policy-making, but we already know that the nations of Africa will be respected, befriended and hardly consigned to the lavatory and schoolboy lavatory talk. Biden has travelled to Africa multiple times. Blinken, on Biden's behalf,

will need to oversee and restore trust in other key geographical arenas, but he has visited the continent and will doubtless want and need to deepen engagement across Africa, not only in order to compete effectively with China and Russia. Moreover, Africa's serious security issues are already vexing Washington, with no easy answers in sight.

Simply by listening to African concerns sympathetically, the new U.S. foreign policy establishment will begin to recover the enormous losses in American prestige, comity and influence that occurred as a result of President Donald Trump's hostility and disdain. Despite the Trump-inspired assault on the Capitol Building, the electoral preferences of the American people prevailed and a transfer of power took place. Notwithstanding the tumult, that

should reassure civil society and democrats throughout the African continent that despots need not rule and that there is hope for major improvements of governance in their own home countries.

Changing the atmosphere, and the better and more collegial manner in which the United States interacts with each African nation, will constitute positive development and be widely cheered in the disparate and very differently situated countries of the continent. But Africans will lean on Washington to engage far more even than the Obama administration chose to do.

Under Biden, the U.S. can strengthen its diplomatic and bureaucratic posture in and towards Africa, both grievously weakened by Trump's neglect and antagonism. Washington needs to send

well-prepared professionals (not wealthy Republican contributors) to restore embassies to their former significance as both listening posts and proponents of American soft power. Already, China has embassies in more countries, and more diplomatic and military personnel overall, than the U.S. in Africa, especially in sub-Saharan Africa.

The U.S., at one time, spoke out strongly for democracy and good governance, and provided foreign assistance to African countries that sought capacity-building in public administration and leadership techniques. Those initiatives need to be resumed, as should steady support for civil society, enhanced accountability and transparency, statistical services, environmental scientific learning, non-violent methods of protest and every variety of educational opportunity enhancement.

Africa's authoritarians should be checked by U.S. attention to and careful critiquing of human rights violators, corrupt kleptocrats and those tolerant of internal discrimination and abuse. The U.S.'s new African policy establishment hence will need to craft effective responses, for example, to Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni's curbing of free expression, Equatorial Guinean President Obiang Nguema's theft of his country's oil revenues, Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa's continued corruption and Ethiopian President Abiy Ahmed's ethnic cleansing attacks in his country.

There is much to do with and in Africa. Merely confirming the African Growth and Opportunity Preferential Trade Act that permits a number of African countries to send manufactured goods and some agricultural products to the U.S. without paying high duties will be salutary. However, imports from Africa into the U.S. have fallen drastically since about 2011, thanks to growing petroleum self-sufficiency in the United States. (Nigerian oil had previously comprised the most valuable of imports to the United States from sub-Saharan Africa.) U.S. exports to sub-Saharan Africa peaked in 2014 at US\$25.49 billion. The numbers for American imports are regularly much higher, reaching US\$86 billion in 2008. In 2019, the U.S. only exported US\$16 billion worth of goods to sub-Saharan Africa, the sales of Boeing aircraft (among other products) having slowed considerably. In the same year, the U.S. imported just US\$20 billion worth of textiles, shellfish and grains from sub-Saharan Africa, down from US\$74 billion in 2011 and US\$39 billion in 2013.

Through regulatory amendments, the Biden administration could expand the list of products eligible for preferential tariff treatment and thus help African producers and growers.

The Biden administration can act symbolically, too: Speaking from the White House and the State Department against dictators and in support of democrats from both bully pulpits will help Africans shift more of their politics in the democratic direction. Making it evident, early, that Biden will invite no despots to the White House and will also assist Africa's struggling, middle-class-driven efforts towards reform should help. Biden has already signalled that he will not be glad-handing autocrats. "No more blank cheques for Trump's favourite dictator," Biden tweeted in July, referring to Egyptian President Abdel Fatah el-Sisi. A presidential visit to the African continent would also be welcome, and widely embraced by Africans.

All of these shifts in posture will help counter China's growing economic involvement with Africa and its influence in many of its countries. China's Belt and Road Initiative has reached northeastern Africa; China has constructed a new port in Djibouti and also established a military outpost in that Red Sea nation, near American and French bases. Elsewhere, China has built roads and railways, pipelines, dams and power stations, football

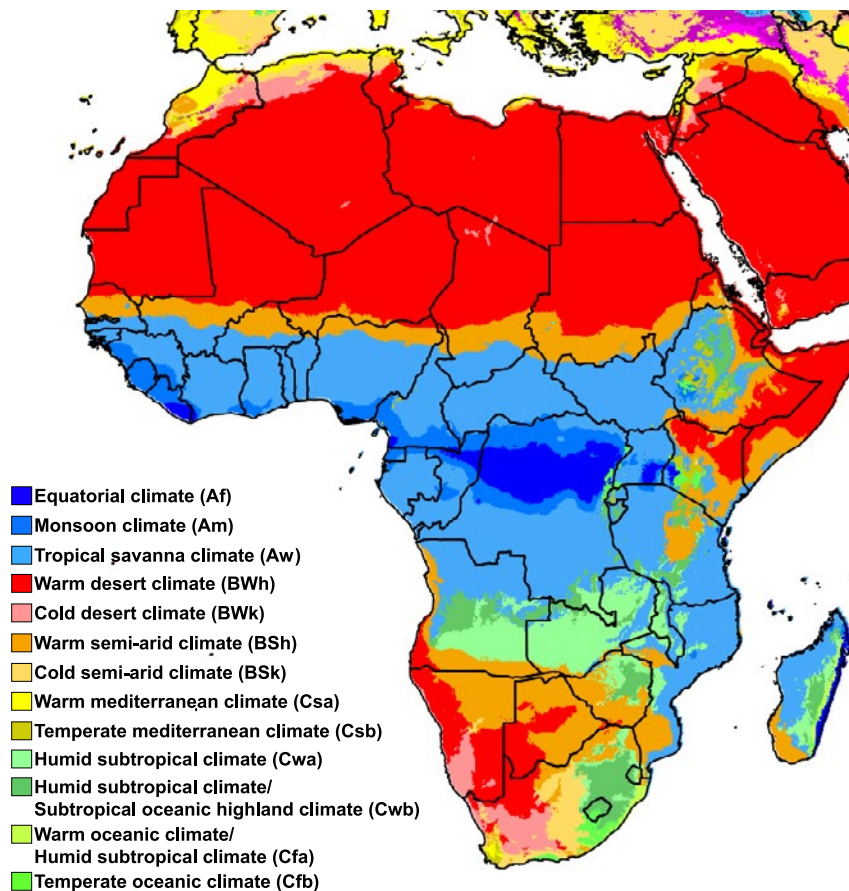
stadiums and political party headquarters, water-pumping facilities and much more. China supplies news items to Kenyan television and teaches Mandarin to thousands of African schoolchildren.

None of those Chinese incursions into Africa threatens American interests directly. China, the U.S., Europe and Japan each purchase the primary mineral resources of Africa that they require without being hindered because of nationality. But with economic influence comes political engagement, votes in the United Nations and in a host of other international organizations, the training of future generations and a retreat from Western democratic ideals. Under Biden, support for ethical universalism, anti-corruption and democratic political values can be resumed.

Africa poses a severe threat to world order. So, despite the Trump administration's attempt to retreat from arenas for which it had no affinity, the incoming Biden team needs to do exactly the opposite if Africans are going to be spared even more mayhem than they currently endure, and if the health and well-being of Africans are going to become a priority. Wars in Africa spread elsewhere. Hungry Africans migrate, especially to Europe. Insecurity there even affects security at home. A more peaceful Africa allows better governments to exist and grow. If it can assist Africa in curtailing a legion of insur-



Climate change is causing rivers in Africa, such as this one, to dry up. It can also foster civil conflict as seen in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic, not to mention the insurgency-inflicted areas, writes Robert I. Rotberg.



This map of Africa details its many climates in 2016, according to the Köppen-Geiger climate classification.

gent jihadists, the U.S. will only help itself.

The first test is Somalia. The Biden team and Lloyd Austin, Biden's chosen secretary of defence, will need to send special forces, foolishly withdrawn by his predecessor, Chris Miller, back to counter a newly emboldened al-Shabaab jihadist insurgency group. An al-Qaeda affiliate, it is poised to continue harassing Somali citizens; attacking parliament, hotels and offices even in Mogadishu, the country's capital; exacting tolls over rural commerce; profiting from transporting Pakistani heroin destined for Europe; and generally causing destruction wherever and whenever it can — even across the border into Kenya. The U.S. deploys drones against al-Qaeda to some modest effect from Kenya and Djibouti. But to counter al-Shabaab, al-Qaeda and a related Islamic State detachment in the same region, U.S. military personnel need to be there, alongside Somali troops. As the Somali colonel in charge of an elite commando force trained and assisted by the removed U.S. special forces said: "You can launch and stage operations from countries like Djibouti and Kenya, but it's not the same as being in the country. You

can't train a force remotely." Moreover, al-Shabaab has threatened to attack the U.S. directly; U.S. forces are required on the ground to help the Somali army and an African Union army defeat al-Shabaab.

Another worrying insurgency, spun off from Somalia, exists farther down the East African coast, straddling the Tanzanian-Mozambican border. There, an Islamist insurgency is only a few years old, but it has already wreaked havoc on the forces of Mozambique and deterred oil and gas drilling by American and other concerns offshore. It also smuggles heroin from Pakistan and Somalia into South Africa and beyond, to Europe. The new Biden administration needs to concern itself militarily and diplomatically with this rebellion, and to seek a way of stanching its profitable trade in narcotics.

Of much longer standing are the wars in northeastern Nigeria and across the nearby Sahel, including Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. These wars are perpetrated by Islamists affiliated separately to al-Qaeda and to the Islamic State, but Boko Haram is in conflict with the Nigerian state. And al-Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM) attacks and plunders across three

Sahelian countries from bases in Algeria, Libya and northern Mali. An outpost of the Islamic State also operates in the same territories. Originally ideologically inspired movements, each now is focused more on the control of narcotics shipping routes across the Sahara and on pillaging locally.

For its own safety and to rescue the people of several fragile nations, as well as in order to slow the movement of migrants toward Libyan ports and Europe, the U.S. will surely seek to continue to assist local armies and French and British soldiers in containing jihadist militancy in these areas south of the Sahara. It recently constructed a big base for surveillance and attack drones in northwestern Niger, and has employed them mostly to gather intelligence. The Trump administration threatened to close down the base and leave the battle against Islamists to France and weakened local forces. Instead, the Biden administration needs to work more and more closely with its French and British allies, and to bolster local armies, especially in Nigeria. To leave these parts of West Africa to unravel before plundering Islamists would be the height of folly.

Another war in that region pits English-speaking Cameroonians against French speakers, the majority in that country. Autocratic President Paul Biya, 87, has lived mostly in Switzerland for 37 years, but still attempts to use soldiers to oppress those of his countrymen who speak English and who have tired of being systematically discriminated against. Biden's Africa team should put pressure on Biya to find a negotiated solution to a civil conflict that threatens to cause thousands of deaths and much starvation.

The U.S. will want to rein in Ethiopian punishment of Tigray and Tigrayans. Blinken needs to intervene as soon as he can to restore peace and the promise of fair treatment to Tigrayans.

A bigger, even more cataclysmic battle for Africa (and the rest of the world) concerns global warming and climate change. Already cyclones have spun out of the Indian Ocean to the shores of Mozambique with unusual force, rivers across the continent have flooded and low-lying West African coastal regions have been submerged. At the same time, large swathes of Africa have remained profoundly dry. The intertropical convergence, which brings rain to the centre of the continent from the Atlantic Ocean, has weakened along with monsoons from the east, the rainfall on which 500 million African farmers and consumers depend to nourish

their cash and subsistence crops. The monsoons are no longer reliable. People starve; the United Nations' World Food Program has been feeding about one-third of Zimbabwe's people, for example, for several years. In addition to curbing its own CO2 emissions, the U.S. needs to work with Africans to slow their own CO2 and to mitigate the effects of Chinese, Indian, and recently, American neglect.

Severe climate change fosters civil conflict, as in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic, not to mention the insurgency-inflicted areas. It also has pitted pastoral herders against settled farmers, in competition for forage, as in northern Nigeria. For those reasons as well as global ones, the U.S. needs to show Africa that it is redoubling its announced effort to diminish its carbon dioxide and methane emissions, and to join others — even China — in doing less harm to Africa.

In the meantime, the Biden government should increase humanitarian assistance to Africa's poorer and hungrier countries such as Liberia, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Aid should go, too, to leadership training as well as to valuable infrastructure projects. One arena in which former president



Above is a confrontation between al-Shabaab and African Union troops.

Barack Obama promised to be innovative was in helping selected African countries invest in new forms of electricity-generation, especially solar and wind. Africa lags far behind the rest of the world in this regard despite an abundance of sun and wind almost everywhere, albeit with far too few long-distance transmission lines. The U.S., with fairly minimal expenditures, could also help debilitated coun-

tries such as Zimbabwe to purify their municipal water supplies and, even in an advanced nation such as South Africa, to assist in rehabilitating its power-generation capacity. Africa needs trees, of which it is surprisingly bereft. A simple program to plant thousands of trees would be welcomed everywhere, and would mitigate global warming.

There will be innumerable urgent global crises to resolve on Biden's coming watch. What he does for the world, and what he and climate czar John Kerry do to help reduce planetary greenhouse temperatures, will be good for Africa. If he can turn Africa around economically and morally, too, Africa will benefit, as will all parts of the fragile world that we in the northern hemisphere inhabit.

Robert I. Rotberg is the founding director of Harvard Kennedy School's Program on Intrastate Conflict and was Fulbright Distinguished Professor at Carleton and Waterloo universities. He wrote *The Corruption Cure* (Princeton University Press, 2017) and published *Anticorruption* (MIT Press) and *Things Come Together: Africans Achieving Greatness in the Twenty-first Century* (Oxford University Press) in August. rivotberg@gmail.com



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Canada could host global tribunal

The push is on for an international anti-corruption court and Canada, as a key friend of the court, makes a befitting home for the new institution.

By Robert I. Rotberg



Corruption remains a serious problem across the globe to the point where many are calling for an international court, one that could be located in Canada. Shown here are Indonesian protesters calling for an end to corruption in their country.

When global human rights activists and international affairs strategists campaigned for a new international tribunal to help to prevent future Rwandan genocides and other outrages, Canada was in the vanguard of those writing and creating the Rome Statute that established the International Criminal Court (ICC). Likewise, when a similar cohort of important parties gathered together to write and advocate for the Ottawa Treaty banning the further use of landmines, Canada took the lead. Now is the time for bipartisan Canadians to lead the world's attack on wanton kleptocracy and free-wheeling kleptocrats by helping to establish an International Anti-Corruption Court. Appropriately, such a new court could find a good home in Canada, especially if Canada's government embraced the idea and offered its support to other concerned nations.

Former Canadian foreign minister Lloyd Axworthy, former foreign minister,

minister of justice and attorney-general Peter MacKay and former justice minister Allan Rock (who also represented Canada at the United Nations) are now among those prominent Canadian and world leaders who see virtue in a new tribunal to bring the world's most corrupt, and hitherto impugned, leaders to justice through such an instrument. They argue for it, and for locating the Court in Canada, in the two following articles in this issue of *Diplomat*.

Kleptocracy and the need for a new court

Whereas corruption is the taking advantage of public office for private gain, kleptocracy, as a form of grand corruption, is the widespread illicit shifting of a state's patrimony into private hands. Usually kleptocrats are heads of state, heads of government, or other high-ranking elected or appointed officials who are able to control who gets lucrative contracts (to construct an airport, say) or concessions

(to dig for gold or drill for oil), and who receive the resulting kickbacks. Dictators, even more elected despots, get rich in this manner. So do ordinary politicians, as they did in Brazil during the multibillion-dollar Lava Jato Car Wash escapade involving a huge petroleum company and the largest contracting firm in South America. The proceeds of Lava Jato turned mere parliamentarians into kleptocrats.

Unfortunately, where there is corruption in a country, there are often kleptocrats. And where there are kleptocrats, too often there is impunity. It is impossible for domestic courts to cope with their own national kleptocratic crooks because courts are hardly independent, being paid by and controlled by the local politicians whose avarice and actions are (or should be) under investigation. Hence the desperate need for an International Anti-Corruption Court (IACC), in concept analogous to, but in function and instrumentality distinctly different from the ICC.

Judges in all jurisdictions, even the least corrupt, are sometimes swayed by political reality. Whether they adhere in minds and hearts to the impartial principles of the law, they may be moved to favour those who pay their salaries or control their preferment and promotions. Where the national executive or legislature hold the budgetary reins, where the executive interferes forcibly concerning outcomes of individual cases, and where autocrats decry the rule of law, it is exceedingly difficult, even for the bravest of judges, to exercise impartiality and obey the dictates of their judicial consciences.

The loss of judicial freedom

When and where regime corruption undermines judicial independence, forfeits obedience to an even-handed rule of law, impedes peaceful dispute resolution, undermines the credibility of contracts, takes property willy-nilly and discards due process — all on account of entrenched corruption — foreign investors and potential aid donors become wary, economic growth prospects suffer and homegrown remedies are absent or unusually difficult to implement. Furthermore, absent an affirmative judicial climate, curtailing corruption — even minimally — becomes highly unlikely.

If kleptocracy prevails and the courts are thus compromised — for whatever set of reasons and no matter to what degree — prosecuting authorities are in cahoots with the dominant domestic actors and there are no internal remedies available in any pragmatic sense, some manner of outside intervention or mediation may be required. That external oversight could come most directly in the form of a new institution, such as the proposed International Anti-Corruption Court (IACC).

Curtailing grand corruption

Any IACC-type institution would sensibly focus its energies on the curtailing of grand corruption, leaving petty corruption to be limited by domestic police systems and legal-enforcement efforts. But grand corruption of the venal kind most responsible for contract fraud, money laundering, large-scale theft from the public purse, and deleterious educational, public health and infrastructural disasters, can only be pursued and prevented by investigators and prosecutors who are loyal to an impartial institution and independent of the domestic and thoroughly implicated ruling clique. That could be an IACC authorized and legitimized by the UN General Assembly or a special convention

or treaty analogous to the Rome Statute that established the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Not the ICC

The IACC, wherever it might be based, would be mandated to investigate and prosecute heads of state and other suspected senior-level kleptocrats and rulers who preside over compulsively corrupt regimes and are beyond the reach of any (beholden) domestic judicial systems. The convention or other mechanism that established and empowered such a court would stipulate whether or not an IACC would have the ability to refer kleptocrats to itself when it determined that local procedures were inadequate and whole populations were suffering. The convention might also declare that only the UN Security Council or the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights could authorize interventions absent local requests. The empowering formula might restrict the IACC's jurisdiction only to those instances where the offending country or its offending ruler voluntarily requested the oversight and involvement of the IACC.

Complementarity, which is what this arrangement is called in international law, may prove as fundamental to the operations of an IACC as it has, unfortunately, been to the running of the ICC. (Under this formula, the nations that never ratified the Rome Statute that established the ICC are free from its attention unless and until the ICC is authorized by the UN Security Council to proceed. In the case of ex-president Omar al-Bashir in the Sudan, a non-signatory, the ICC could not investigate his alleged crimes against humanity until the Security Council gave its OK. In 2018, the ICC attempted to work around this constraint when it began to investigate the actions of Myanmar, another non-signatory, in the pursuit of alleged genocidal attacks on its Rohingya population. The ICC took the position that because Bangladesh was a signatory, and because nearly all Rohingya fled from Myanmar to Bangladesh, it could investigate.)

Alternatively, an authorizing method more effective than that created for the ICC might be found to make the operations of an IACC comprehensive and inclusive. Because frail and failing nation-states across the globe often find it difficult forensically to investigate and thoroughly follow the tortuous and devious trails that would-be kleptocrats and other venal politicians make across their own national as well as international terrains, the IACC

would preferably be staffed by the kinds of trained personnel and experts that most developing countries lack. That level of capability would hence be able to assist authoritative bodies in corrupt polities that sought help in following their own local cases. Or they could employ it to recommend cases for further investigation and possible prosecution. Established IACC staff would also be able to pursue flows of ill-gotten funds across national borders, and to “follow the money” more generally. Even if its annual load of cases was few, because of jurisdictional issues, its ability to name and shame could be powerful.

The judges

The IACC's judges could, ideally, come from any approving and ratifying country. Like the judges of the World Court, they would be chosen for their legal experience and proven quality, and because they were deemed capable of providing wise oversight to the judges of the many domestic jurisdictions wholly or partially influenced by corrupt heads of state or those court systems located within countries controlled by criminal, criminalized or kleptocratic regimes.

If the IACC had existed, for example, in important cases, it would have been able to weaken the hegemonic influence of local prosecutorial and judicial systems. An IACC investigation, authorized by the Security Council, would have had the authority to bring a despotic regime's various kleptocrats (including someone like President Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe) before the court for trial. In the absence of the IACC, such corrupt officials are able to avoid punishment entirely.

Exactly how the issues that would have bedeviled any attempt to follow the money in the Zimbabwe case, or in the similar cases of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Myanmar, Nigeria, or even South Africa, are resolved — when and if the IACC is constituted — will determine its success and its utility in the remaining decades of the 21st Century. There is no doubt, however, that an institution such as the IACC is much needed, and that its existence and its judicial ability to help corral and punish corrupt political leaders everywhere, plus the major searchlight on such activity that the IACC would represent, could help to chill corrupt behaviour by heads of state and their ilk everywhere.

Robert I. Rotberg is the founding director of Harvard Kennedy School's Program on Intrastate Conflict.

It's time for an IACC

By Lloyd Axworthy and Allan Rock

The World Bank estimates that each year between US \$20 billion and US \$40 billion in development assistance is stolen by corrupt officials. Such grand corruption undermines support in the West for foreign aid, while at the same time defeating its very purpose. Those who steal the money cheat the intended beneficiaries out of the better life it could have provided. And all the while, corrupt leaders, focused on their own enrichment, neglect or ignore their people's needs.

In our work with the World Refugee and Migration Council (WRMC), we have seen for ourselves the terrible consequences of grand corruption in places where money intended for humanitarian relief is siphoned off before it can be spent to provide the dispossessed with food, shelter and health care.

Addressing grand corruption is more urgent today than ever, as developed countries prepare significant aid packages to help lower-income states manage the devastating economic consequences of the global pandemic.

There is no shortage of laws to prohibit grand corruption. What is lacking is enforcement. Integrity Initiatives International (an American NGO led by U.S. senior Boston federal judge Mark Wolf) proposes the creation of an International Anti-Corruption Court (IACC) to hold offenders to account. The IACC would operate on the principle of complementarity, only exercising its authority if a country is unwilling or unable to prosecute corrupt officials itself.

Some argue that the IACC would be hamstrung if corrupt states refuse to join it. But kleptocrats do not keep their stolen money at home. As long as the IACC member states include financial hubs such as the U.K., Switzerland and Singapore, and places like Canada, where the corrupt like to store their cash, the IACC would have full jurisdiction to investigate and prosecute when sums are deposited in those jurisdictions.

Creating a new international body won't be easy in today's geopolitical climate. But there's precedent for overcoming resistance from those stubbornly opposed to progressive change. It's found



To secure the Ottawa Treaty, which banned landmines, Canada worked outside of the United Nations, whose general assembly is pictured here. Now, it's time for an International Anti-Corruption Court.

in Canada's experience with the Ottawa Treaty, which banned landmines. When the process bogged down within the United Nations' system, Canada worked outside the UN, pulling together a coalition of NGOs and like-minded states. Then, once our advocacy and political action in capitals achieved a critical mass of support, we convened the Ottawa meeting at which 121 countries signed the treaty. Only then, with the accord a "done deal," did we move the process back under UN auspices for ratification. Today, 164 states are party to the Ottawa Treaty, which has saved countless lives and limbs.

There is no reason the same strategy can't work with the International Anti-Corruption Court, and no reason why Canada can't, once again, lead the way.

And let's propose that once created, the IACC should be headquartered here in Canada. Our deep commitment to the rule of law, our faithful support for the international order, and the global reputation that our courts enjoy for excellence and impartiality, make Canada an ideal home for the new court.

The WRMC, recognizing the connection among corrupt leaders, bad governance and forced displacement, supports the creation of the IACC. The WRMC has a related proposal, now adopted by the government of Canada, that will allow the government to go beyond merely freezing the assets that corrupt officials deposit in Canada, and to confiscate those assets. The proceeds can then be redirected to assist, for example, those forcibly displaced as a result of bad governance by the corrupt regime.

With so much at stake, and with vast sums for post-pandemic recovery about to flow to vulnerable governments, the time has come to create the IACC, to end impunity for grand corruption, and to address the harm it does to so many of the voiceless worldwide.

Lloyd Axworthy, a former foreign minister of Canada, is chairman of the World Refugee and Migration Council. Allan Rock, a former attorney general of Canada, is a senior adviser to the World Refugee and Migration Council.

Canada and the corruption court

By Peter MacKay

2020 was like no other in living memory. No one envisioned starting the decade with a pandemic.

Well before the virus washed over us like a poison tsunami, sweeping unpredictability and uncertainty already existed in many aspects of our lives. In addition to responding to COVID-19, I suggest we use this moment to shape our futures to meet the ever important challenges in the area of anti-corruption as well. People deserve leadership and attention to justice in addition to the obvious focus on human health and the critical response to the pandemic.

Global bad actors representing hyper-aggressive nations and their leadership in countries such as China, Russia, Iran and Venezuela, who menace their neighbours and democratic countries, or the mega-crooks and syndicates who perpetrate violence, theft and deal in contraband, have expanded their reach partly due to the explosion of the internet and its reach into homes of citizens around the world. How do law-abiding victims achieve justice?

The time for an International Anti-Corruption Court has come. The world needs an institution tasked to hold corrupt officials to account, uphold the rule of law and enforce order against the rise of those who abuse public office. Many have called for more accountability and tracking of illegal activities that flow across jurisdictions and flout national and international laws. An anti-corruption court would accomplish that.

There are numerous unchecked criminal acts by those in office — from money laundering, human trafficking, extortion to interference with the administration of justice. The flagrant acts have become more sophisticated and enabled by the internet and cyber-criminality that knows no bounds and respects no jurisdiction.

Efforts to bring international criminals to justice are not new. We have Interpol, the International Criminal Court and numerous binational treaties on extradition and prosecution. Yet there is a pressing need for a higher standard of co-operation to address the expansion of corruption, which impacts national economies in the range of hundreds of billions of dollars, takes a toll on human life and leads to suf-

fering and impoverishment.

An International Anti-Corruption Court with a mandate to take a comprehensive approach to sharing evidence, setting standards for enhancing enforcement, establishing restitution efforts, seizing assets, exercising warrants and accelerated extraditions and a rules-based approach to justice, would help create a global standard for addressing this scourge.

Canada can and should play a unique and historic role in this effort. As Canadians, we have always tried to utilize multi-lateralism as a means to elevate solutions

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and home in on sore spots with innovative initiatives. Canada has been a founding nation and participant in numerous international bodies — from NATO and the United Nations to the International Criminal Court (ICC). From peacekeeping to sponsorship of initiatives such as the Ottawa Treaty on landmines and helping to urge the end of apartheid in South Africa, and raising issues such as child soldiers, Canada has been at the forefront of combatting threats to peace and justice globally. In our understated way, Canadians have helped develop concrete solutions to some of the most complex and protracted challenges in the last century.

Severe breaches of law have directly impacted Canadians' lives. There was the shooting down of a plane after takeoff, on orders of the Islamic Regime. It was carrying many Canadians and all lives were

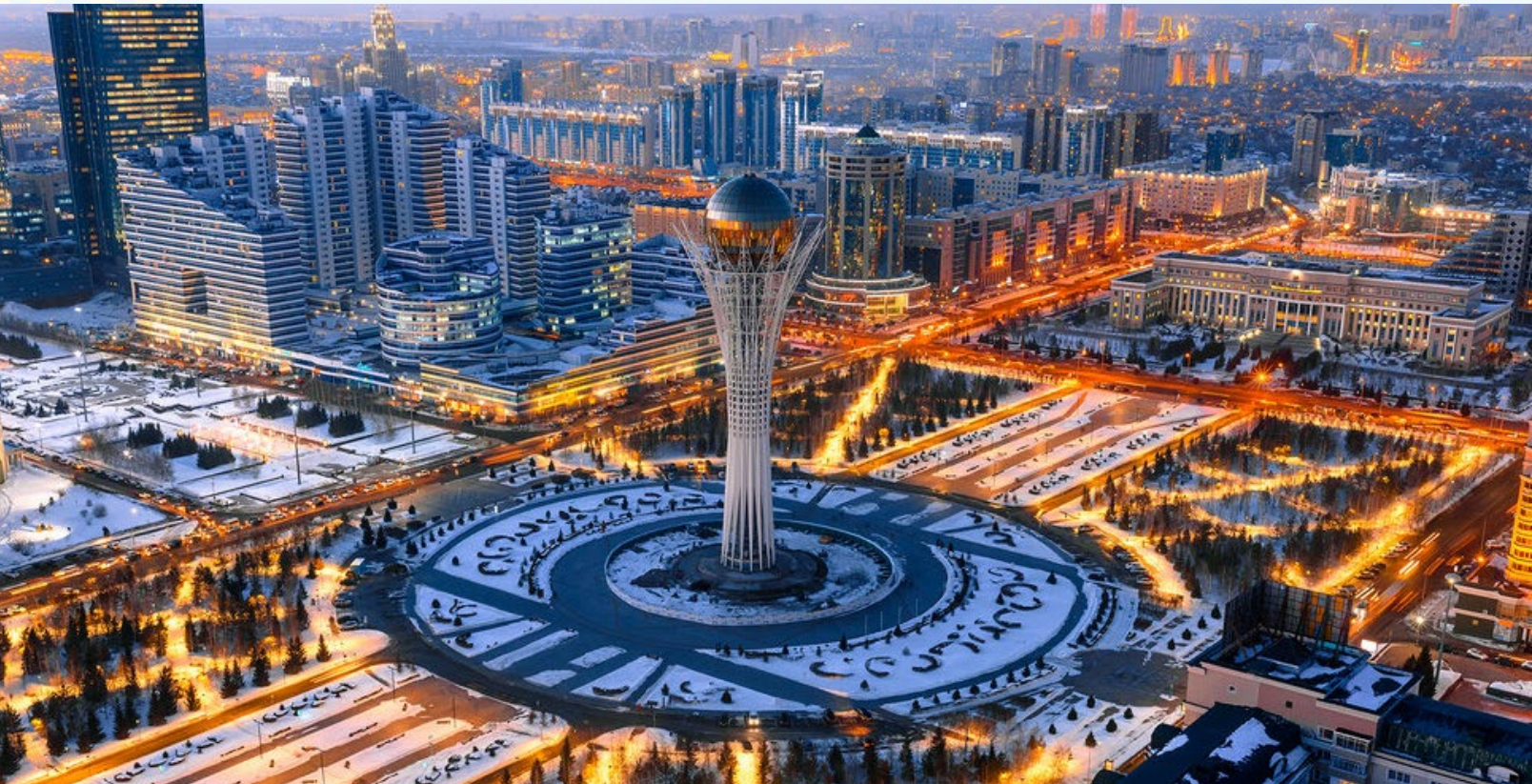
lost. We also continue to hope for the safe return of Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig from their unlawful incarceration in China. Canada is not without its own failings, including corruption convictions of Canadian companies and allegations of political interference and misuse of our new deferred prosecution agreement regime. Still, Canada has the potential to be a host country for a court that could take on the task with transparency and the goal of setting the highest ethical bar.

The growth of the ICC demonstrates the necessity of a specialized anti-corruption court. The ICC holds international criminals to account and was conceived in the aftermath of the Second World War, the Nuremberg trials of Nazi atrocities and the Holocaust. While not perfect and outrageous assaults on humanity followed, it has made strides at enforcement and holding to account dictators, kleptocrats, oligarchs and organized crime syndicates, not to mention human rights abusers. Capacity and delay are challenges, but the cause is worthy.

The movement has strength and could gain momentum with the right backing, leadership and resources. At a 2016 anti-corruption summit, more than 180 countries pledged greater anti-corruption enforcement co-operation, which offers hope for action. In addition to the evolving fallout from the global pandemic, dark and complex issues demand our attention as well — displaced people, homelessness, poverty, all forms of addiction, the need for affordable childcare and the health and social needs in our Indigenous communities. It is justice that remains a cornerstone matter. 2020 ended with a glimmer of hope for all, with arrivals in many countries of vaccines, so we can only hope we see steps toward addressing another global threat — corruption. A court tasked to address this issue head-on is the antidote we need. We have the ability to take on all forms of corruption. Now we need the will and the wisdom to act.

Peter MacKay is a former federal cabinet minister. Besides his run for Conservative Party leader, he practises law and advises international businesses on trade.

Kazakhstan is 29 years old. It's only the beginning of a story.



The changing dynamic in current economic trends indicates major shifts in the level of understanding of what is known as conventionally development frameworks. Contemporary world emerging markets are getting greater dominance in shaping global economic growth. From gaining its independence in 1991, Kazakhstan has demonstrated its strong competitiveness and attractiveness on the regional and global stage.

Kazakhstan began its journey as an independent state on December 16, 1991 when the country's independence was officially declared and the Republic of Kazakhstan was established. Over the past 29 years of independence, our state has undergone significant large-scale political transformations and carried out substantial reforms in

economic and social spheres.

Since its independence, Kazakhstan has become an incredible economic success story. With nation's GDP increasing 16-fold since 1991 our country has become the largest economy in Central Asia. For almost three decades, our state has attracted more than \$430 billion (CAD) of foreign direct investment, which is about 70% of the total amount of FDI attracted to the region of Central Asia. According to the World Economic Forum, Kazakhstan entered the club of the 50 most competitive countries in the world. The World Bank's Human Development Index (HDI) Report ranks our country 50th of 187 countries. Its HDI value for 2019 is 0.817, which increased between 1990 and 2019 from 0.690 to 0.817, a significant growth of 18.5%.

The strategic geographic location and economic successes of Kazakhstan

set a solid foundation of extensive integration with global markets. Today, the country plays a strategic role in re-creating a historic trade corridor connecting East and West through intercontinental road and railway networks that span the country.

While Kazakhstan is blessed with abundant natural resources and its energy and mining sectors are main drivers of the national economy, the government is aware that diversification and modernization are vital to creating sustainable economic growth. A nation's most important resource is its people and human capital. Understanding this, our government is investing heavily to improve citizen's lives and opportunities for growth.

Following his election in 2019 President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev outlined the key government priorities within the overall strategy,

aimed at improving the social well-being of both individual segments of the population and society as a whole. From his presidency's first days President Tokayev set the Kazakhstan Government a task to develop measures to stimulate economic growth, improve fiscal and monetary policies, stimulate entrepreneurship and support domestic producers. With these tasks in mind, the current government's agenda is focused on socio-economic development, on increase of state budget revenues and on reduction of the national economy's dependence on raw commodities and crude oil exports.

An important priority in President Tokayev's policy is to increase confidence in the state and public administration's effectiveness. To address these issues, he established the concept of a "state that listens", which has become the main philosophy of his administration with a task to ensure the transparency of all procedures based on digitalization. Following this goal, a national parliament is adopting necessary legislation to ensure sustainable growth of our economy. Political reforms will be continued to enhance the role of civil society. At the same time great attention is paid to solving housing issues of citizens, improving the quality of medical services and developing education and sports.

The strategic priorities of Kazakhstan foreign policy are nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). It was the decision of the First President of Kazakhstan, Elbasy Nursultan Ábishuly Nazarbayev, to close the world's second largest test site and abandon the fourth largest nuclear arsenal, which gave impetus to the global nuclear test ban and the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). Today, our country is one of the most active members of the Non-Proliferation Treaty of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). World leaders and international experts in the field of nuclear disarmament wholeheartedly endorse Kazakhstan's leadership and contribution to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and express commitment to work together to achieve our collective aspiration for Global Zero by the United Nations' Centennial in 2045.

Like Canada, known for uniting people of different beliefs and cultures, Kazakhstan has been profoundly contributing to inter-religious tolerance and coexistence. On this foundation

of a multi-ethnicity, a resilient and resolute nation emerged. Our country has become a secure and prosperous nation whose citizens enjoy the benefits of religious freedom.

Kazakhstan has acted as a voice for moderation and peace and by the initiative of Elbasy-President Nazarbayev, the world's religious leaders participate in a Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions at the specially built Palace of Peace and Reconciliation in the capital city Nur-Sultan. It is also represented by the creation of the Peoples of Kazakhstan's Assembly, created in 1995, which unites all ethnic groups, plays an important role in country's political life and facilitates a friendly atmosphere.

With a population of 18.8 million people in this Central Asian nation, Kazakhstan is proud of its reputation as a tolerant society where people of all ethnicities and religions are treated equally. More than 120 ethnic groups live together in Kazakhstan in peace and harmony, 818 ethnic-cultural associations and 180 schools across the country provide opportunities to study the traditions, cultures and languages of 26 ethnic groups.

Just as in Canada, where the promotion of women in business is one of the important issues, in Kazakhstan considerable attention is paid to supporting women in entrepreneurship and in other sectors. Traditionally, women have enjoyed freedoms in our country. They are well-educated, qualified employees and many of them hold high-ranking positions in civil service and business spheres. According the World Bank's Human Development Report 2018, the Human Development Index (HDI) value for females in Kazakhstan is 0.814, in comparison with 0.815 for males.

Environmental protection, "the green economy," development of national parks — these are also issues that have equal priority in Kazakhstan and Canada. Kazakhstan has 10 nature reserves and 10 national parks, which are large protected areas, mainly designated as closed reserves that can only be entered with permission and are under constant scientific observation.

Many important events and anniversaries were celebrated in 2020 in Kazakhstan, including the 1150th anniversary of the great philosopher Aby Nasr Al-Farabi and the 175th anniversary of Kazakh poet Abai Kunanbayuly. The country's biggest

university, The Kazakh National University, bears the name of Al-Farabi (870-950) who was called the second Aristotle because of his universal knowledge. With his creative use of the works of Plato, Aristotle, Pythagoras and Ptolemy, he built up a world of ideas aimed at the reconciliation of science, philosophy and the philosophical concept of faith.

Kazakh literature is rich of folklore, with sagas about Kazakh knights (batyrs), combat, heroic epics and fairy tales. In the second half of 19th century, a scholar named Abai Kunanbayuly started writing down folk stories and legends. His literary and philosophical



Kazakhstan's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev had a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau in Munich in February 2020.

masterpiece is evident in Book of Words, which provided a powerful impulse to develop Kazakh writing and has been translated into many world languages. In November 2020, the world's oldest publishing house, Cambridge University Press in the UK, launched a complete collection of Abai's works in English.

In historic terms, the 29 years since independence is not considered a long period of time. But during this period, our country has proven to the world that Kazakhstan has passed the test of time and is on the path of rational and strategic development. We are a relatively young state, but we have a rich history and culture, and Kazakhstan has passed through a new stage of formation and is on the trajectory of long-term stable growth.

Next year we will celebrate a milestone — the 30th Anniversary of our Independence and Kazakhstan is open to the globe and is looking forward to mutually beneficial and fruitful cooperation with all partner countries.

Warm meals for winter nights



Margaret Dickenson's deluxe eggs make a comforting brunch dish or could even serve as a starter for a multi-course meal.



Margaret
Dickenson

Cold weather has set in, awaking our desire for comfort food and that starts with breakfast. My oven-poached eggs are a perfect choice. In addition to the delicate nature of eggs poached in this manner, the combination and strategic positioning of ingredients will delight palates. But be aware that the eggs will continue to cook when removed from the oven and the hot water bath.

Turning to the main course, mussels simmered in a stick-to-the-shells sauce will have diners experiencing the pleasure of tasty flavour dimensions that go far beyond the mussels themselves.

Thinking of dessert, consider my signa-

ture Lemon Phyllo Napoleons. The lemon curd and phyllo squares may be prepared days in advance, ready to be quickly assembled into crispy, creamy stacks.

Deluxe Oven-Poached Eggs with Herbs

Makes 4 servings

This is a quick and easy recipe that is certain to make any breakfast or brunch a special occasion. The delicate texture of cream poached eggs becomes even more delectable with the hints of fresh herbs, cheese and ham. The recipe is delicious regardless of the final (sometimes unanticipated) degree of doneness or serving temperature. (Extra portions taken directly out of the refrigerator a day or two later, rank high as a special breakfast treat for me.)

2 tsp (10 mL) butter
3 tbsp (45 mL) cooked ham, diced
1/3 cup (80 mL) medium cheddar cheese, coarsely grated
1 1/3 tbsp (23 mL) fresh dill, minced

4 eggs (room temperature)
1/4 cup (60 mL) heavy cream (35 per cent)
1 1/3 tbsp (23 mL) chopped fresh chives

Garnish (optional)

Rosemary sprigs adorned with grape tomatoes or fresh herbs of choice

1. Butter 4 ramekin dishes (diameter: 3 inches or 7.5 cm).
2. Sprinkle bottom of ramekin dishes with ham, then cheese and finally fresh dill.
3. Make an indentation in a central area of the ingredients, pushing them to the edge and up the inside of the ramekin dishes.* Carefully crack (i.e., avoid breaking yolk) one egg into each ramekin dish. Add cream and sprinkle with chopped chives.
4. Place filled ramekins in an oven-proof baking dish. Pour boiling water into the dish to reach two thirds up the outside of the ramekins.
5. Carefully place baking dish (uncovered) into middle of a 375 F (190 C) preheated oven. Bake for 18 minutes.** (Caution: The egg whites should be barely set, the yolks



This mussel recipe is simple. Its thick sauce offers flavours far beyond the tasty mussels themselves.

soft and running and the eggs still quivering slightly when the ramekin dishes are jiggled. Avoid overcooking, understanding that the eggs will continue to cook to some degree after they are taken out of the oven.)

6. If desired, garnish with fresh herbs. Serve with an artisanal bread or toasted English muffins. (Note: toasted triangles of thin pita bread work very well, but be careful not to burn them.)

* This will help keep the yolk in the middle of the dish and enhance the overall flavour.

** The timing will vary, depending on the temperature of the ingredients, the type of ramekins used and even the individual oven. (The timing indicated here is for 3/4 cup or 180 mL oven-proof porcelain ramekins.)

Fragrantly Simmered Mussels

Makes 2 main-course or 4 appetizer servings

Fantastic and oh so easy. It is the thick flavourful sauce that makes this mussel recipe memorable. (Feel free to adjust the seasoning to suit your own taste.)

2 lbs (900 g) mussels

1 can diced plum tomatoes* (can size: 14 fl. oz or 398 mL)

2/3 cup (170 mL) dry white wine

1/2 cup (125 mL) tomato sauce of choice

2 tbsp (30 mL) tomato paste

1 1/2 to 2 tsp (8 to 10 mL) finely-chopped fresh garlic

1 tsp (5 mL) fines herbes

1 tsp (5 mL) dried tarragon leaves

1/2 to 2/3 tsp (3 to 4 mL) Chinese five spice

1/2 tsp to 3/4 tsp (3 to 4 mL) peeled and grated fresh gingerroot

1/4 to 1/3 tsp (1 to 2 mL) (Indonesian) hot chili paste**

1/3 cup (80 mL) heavy cream (35 per cent fat)

3 tbsp (45 mL) chopped fresh parsley

2 tbsp (30 mL) chopped fresh dill weed

1/2 tsp (3 mL) granulated sugar

2/3 cup (170 mL) coconut milk

To taste, salt and crushed black pepper

Garnish (optional or as desired)

sprigs of fresh herbs

1. Before cooking, scrub mussels (if necessary) and pull off any beards; rinse and drain well. Place any mussels that are not closed in a bowl of cool water and stir them. Discard all that do not close after a minute.

2. Put tomatoes, but only about 2/3 of the juice,* into a large pot. Add wine, tomato sauce, tomato paste, garlic, fines herbes, tarragon, five spice, ginger and chili paste. Place over medium heat and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and allow to simmer gently uncovered for about 8 minutes.

3. Shortly before serving, bring contents of

pot to a boil over medium-high heat. Add mussels and bring back to a boil, turning mussels frequently into the sauce. Cover, reduce heat to low and cook for 5 minutes.

4. Add cream, parsley and dill; turn mussels into sauce. Finally, add sugar and coconut milk; season with salt and crushed black peppercorns according to taste. Turn mussels thoroughly into sauce to evenly blend flavors. Discard any mussels that do not open.

5. Serve mussels with their sauce in large flat bowls. Garnish with sprigs of fresh herbs as desired. Place an empty bowl on table for discarded shells.

* Avoid using all of the juice as it will make the sauce thinner.

** Option: Sriracha to taste (be cautious with the quantity.)

Tip: I like to serve individual portions of rice in small covered dim sum baskets which have been lined with lettuce leaves. This is always a big hit.

Lemon Phyllo Napoleon

Makes 4 servings

Always popular concisely describes this signature dessert recipe of mine. It features a slightly tart lemon curd cream layered between crisp buttery squares of phyllo pastry. It is light with phenomenal flavour, textural and visual appeal. For a quick touch of pizzazz, top the Napoleons with a delicate dusting of icing sugar before drizzling with melted bittersweet chocolate. (The phyllo squares may be prepared days in advance.)

2 sheets phyllo pastry*

2 tbsp (30 mL) unsalted butter, melted

2 tbsp (30 mL) granulated sugar

Lemon Curd Cream Filling**

1 cup (250 mL) heavy cream (35 per cent fat), chilled

2 1/2 tbsp (38 mL) icing sugar (first addition)

1 cup (250 mL) lemon curd (recipe attached or commercial***), chilled

Garnish (optional)

2 tbsp (30 mL) icing sugar (second addition)

1 1/2 oz (45 g) bittersweet chocolate, melted

1. Place one sheet of phyllo pastry on a clean work surface with long side in horizontal position; brush with melted butter. Lay another sheet on top of first



Lemon Napoleons are one of Dickenson's signature recipes that have remained popular over the years, thanks to the tart curd layered between phyllo.

and brush with butter. Cut phyllo horizontally into 3 equal strips and then vertically into 4 equal portions to produce 12 squares. (Note: Each square is made up of a double thickness of phyllo pastry and is almost square in shape.) Sprinkle top of phyllo squares evenly with granulated sugar.

2. Transfer phyllo squares (sugar side up) to parchment paper-lined baking sheets. Bake in a preheated 400 F (200 C) oven until golden and crisp (about 2 1/2 to 4 minutes). Remove from oven; carefully transfer phyllo squares to wire cooling racks.

3. Beat cream in a medium-sized chilled bowl with chilled beaters until cream begins to thicken. Add icing sugar; continue beating until firm peaks form.

4. Place lemon curd in a second medium-sized bowl. With a rubber spatula, carefully fold whipped cream into lemon curd and combine thoroughly to produce a Lemon Curd Cream Filling. (Makes about 3 cups or 750 mL.) If not using immediately, refrigerate.**

5. In advance of serving, dust 4 of the phyllo squares with icing sugar (shaken through a fine sieve) and then decorate with piped lines of melted chocolate.

6. Just before serving, dust 4 individual oversized plates with icing sugar. Drop 1 tsp (5 mL) of Lemon Curd Cream Filling

into the centre of each plate to hold the Napoleon in position. Add one of the undecorated phyllo squares (sugar side up), and then top with 1/4 cup (60 mL) of Lemon Curd Cream Filling and spread evenly to about 1/3 inch (0.8 cm) from edges of square. Repeat the process, adding a second undecorated phyllo square and 1/4 cup (60 mL) of Lemon Curd Cream Filling. Finally, crown each portion with a chocolate-decorated phyllo square. (For smaller appetites, use only a total of 2 phyllo squares (i.e., omitting the second undecorated phyllo square) and adding 1/3 cup or 80 mL of filling per serving.)

7. For best results, serve as soon as possible so the phyllo pastry remains crisp.

* Size: About 16 1/2 x 12 1/4 inches (41 x 30.5 cm)

** The Lemon Curd Cream Filling is firmest the first day, once it has been chilled; however, leftover quantities usually retain their quality for several days. (If the filling softens, re-beat it in a chilled bowl with chilled beaters until firm. This may take several minutes.)

*** Commercial lemon curd tends to be stiff and gummy. Therefore, if using a commercial product, press it through a very fine-meshed sieve so that it is smoother.

Velvety Lemon Curd

Makes about 1 1/4 cups or 300 mL

My Velvety Lemon Curd takes minutes to prepare, can be refrigerated for a week or longer and may even be frozen. Lemon curd, however, can be tricky to make and may be too aggressive in flavour. I have developed a technique that is easy and fail-proof,* and by using equal portions of lemon and orange juice along with a touch of grated lemon zest, the resulting lemon curd excites and doesn't assault the palate.

2 eggs**

2 egg yolks**

1/2 cup (125 mL) granulated sugar

1/4 cup (60 mL) fresh lemon juice, strained

1/4 cup (60 mL) orange juice, strained

1 tsp (5 mL) grated lemon zest

1 tbsp (15 mL) butter (unsalted), soft

1. In a medium-sized bowl, whisk together eggs and egg yolks until smooth.

2. In a small saucepan over medium-high heat, combine lemon and orange juices, sugar and lemon zest. Stir until sugar is dissolved and mixture comes to a boil.

3. Gradually, and in a steady stream, whisk hot juice mixture into beaten egg mixture. Pour this mixture into saucepan.

4. Place saucepan over medium-low heat, add butter and whisk constantly until mixture is thick and bubbling (about 4 to 5 minutes).**

5. Remove lemon curd from heat and immediately transfer to a bowl (to avoid overcooking).

6. If not using until later, place cooled lemon curd in an airtight plastic container and store refrigerated for up to a week.***

* Cooking tip: During the final minutes of cooking, I prefer to stir the mixture with a heat-proof rubber spatula, moving it more effectively away from the sides and bottom of the saucepan. As well, I can more accurately judge the thickness of the mixture and avoid overcooking.

** Note: If a slightly thicker lemon curd is desired, use 3 eggs and 1 yolk; but note that the final product will be less velvety.

*** Tip: I often freeze leftovers. (Previously frozen lemon curd may not be as firm; so, if necessary, reheat it over medium-low heat, stirring until it thickens. Transfer to a bowl to avoid overcooking.)

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

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Tristan
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A grape's life often ends in the production of wine, but that's becoming less the norm. Producers are looking to tradition and sustainability by using wine byproducts, expanding into new and old territory alike, while crafting beautiful beverages.

"Great wine comes from good beer," is a truism I've heard countless times at wineries around the world. Having recently worked the grape harvest, I can speak to that sentiment: After a 12-plus-hour day of cleaning, sorting and crushing grapes, then cleaning some more, nothing quite refreshes like a crispy pint.

Matron Fine Beer, located in Prince Edward County's Bloomfield, has taken the idea a step further — a low alcohol, easy-drinking ale fermented with grape skins from nearby friends at Stanners and The Grange wineries. "We're using second-use skins that have been pressed and fermented already," says head brewer and co-owner Justin da Silva. "Being in the county and being exposed to smaller producers has opened our eyes to the good stuff that's happening out here."

Second-use skins still retain much of the flavour, colour and tannic compounds of the grape, so rather than sending them off to fertilize a field, brewers such as da Silva are imbuing life into them. The result is Nonesuch — it's a rosé in colour and character, though at a much lower 4 per cent alcohol. Vibrant and refreshing, the staff have trouble keeping it in stock. Thankfully, being surrounded by great wineries means there are always skins to be repurposed.

In Niagara, Tawse Winery has started distilling its own grape pomace, turning a waste product into grappa. Traditionally, grappa was made by soaking the already-fermenting skins in water before distilling, in efforts to embrace all that the fruit has to give. Focusing on single-varietal distil-



Marrow Vermouth is making vermouth and amaro while Tawse winery is distilling its own grape pomace to produce three kinds of grappa.

lations, the team is able to pull out the essence of each grape.

Under the La Pressatura label, the three single-varietal spirits are certified organic. The Pinot Noir's earthy, sour cherry gives a bright lift to the minty chocolate chip notes typical of grappa distillation. The Riesling iteration offers up tropical fruit and cantaloupe while the Gewurtztraminer's florality and unctuousness is amplified.

While Tawse focuses on capturing the essence of each grape individually, Shawn Dalton, owner of Marrow Vermouth in the Okanagan, aims to capture the essence of a time and place. Fortified wine aromatized with herbs, vermouth had its start as a manner to ingest herbal medicines in a more palatable manner. In the early 1900s, the ability to ship worldwide and the efficiency of the spice trade made Italian styles essential to cocktail culture the world over and its impact is still felt in classics such as the Negroni, the Manhattan and the Martini.

With the rise of natural wines, so too is there a rebirth in the world of vermouth. Starting by seeking out interesting flowers, roots and herbs found in his surroundings, Dalton builds out a flavour profile that excites him. "I treat the wine



like any of the other botanicals I decide to use," explains Dalton. "The wine also has its own characteristics to lend to the final product. I try not to ignore or mask that, and just let those characteristics contribute to the final result."

He credits local wineries for crafting wines made in a low-intervention style using natural fermentations, no chemicals or sugars added. He knows these wines will translate into a good base. "If I'm going to explore 'place' through my vermouths, then it's important that the wines I'm using do that, too."

Matron Fine Beer is readily available online at www.matronfinebeer.ca and Nonesuch is being brewed as often as possible to keep up with demand.

Tawse's La Pressatura is available online through www.tawsewinery.ca.

Marrow Vermouth is represented in Ontario by Don't Worry Wines, a subsidiary of Happy Coffee and Wine. Though not always available, Marrow is worth seeking out when released.

Tristan Bragaglia-Murdock is co-founder of Jabberwocky in Ottawa, a former cellar hand at Revel Cider and iBi wines and is constantly exploring fruit fermentation in his spare time.

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Pandemic art can be a salve in troubled times

By Peter Simpson



The Outsiders (mixed media, 2009) by Ron Noganosh, from *Shelter in Place* at the Ottawa Art Gallery.

What strange things the pandemic makes us do. Even the simple act of looking ahead to exhibitions in local galleries becomes tricky, as, at time of writing, it's not even certain that galleries will be open to the public when the intended opening dates arrive. In other cases, the precise dates were still to be set.

So, with the unpredictability of recent months in mind, please be sure to check with galleries before visiting — but do visit, as there's much to see.

First up, *Shelter in Place*, at the Ottawa Art Gallery. By this point it may seem art about the pandemic is the last thing one would care to see, but perhaps it's a tonic.

Early last spring, when we all first started to self-isolate, I read Emily St. John Mandel's novel, *Station Eleven*, about a deadly flu that quickly wipes out most of the human population (no spoilers here, that all happens in the first few pages). Yet even in that terrible story there was goodness to be found, much basic human decency and reading about it was somehow calming, perhaps even cathartic. Such is the power of art done well. It shows us that others, caught in the same trap, are coping with the enormous stress and strain, from fears of infection to the slow grind of quarantines.

Shelter in Place is a group exhibition with the subtitle "Portraits of self, family

and community," which are three things to which a lot of us have gotten a lot closer in the past year.

"At this time of social-distancing and isolation, we look inward at ourselves and outward towards our immediate community or family bubbles," say the exhibition notes. "From installation to film, this group exhibition focuses on self-portraits and works by artists who create portraits of their close community."

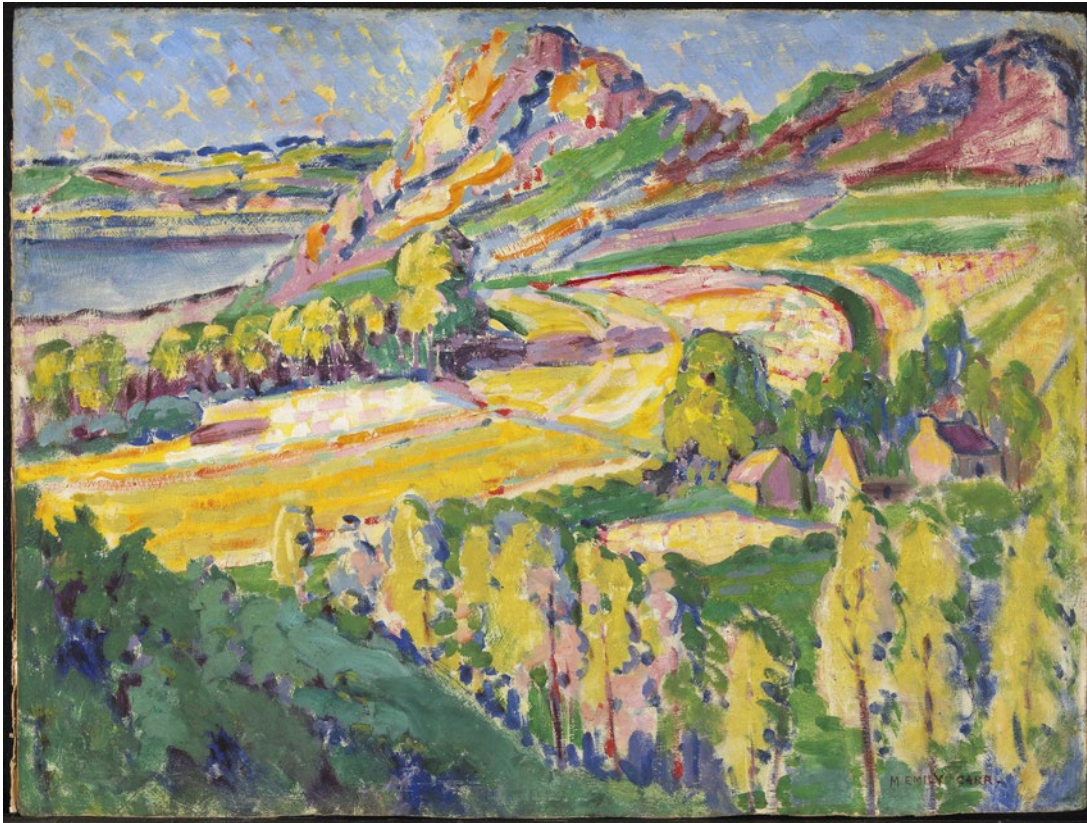
Artists include Chantal Dahan, Max Dean, Christopher Lea Dunning, Robert Hyndman, Martha Kyak, Patrice James, Faiza Omer, Jessie Oonark, Kosisochukwu Nnebe, Ron Noganosh and Annie Pootook.



From *Containment: Knit Your ...art* (mixed media, 2020) by Greta Grip, at the Diefenbunker in Carp.



Everyday Life (coloured pencil and ink on paper, 2003) by Annie Pootoogook, at the Ottawa Art Gallery.



Autumn in France, by Emily Carr (oil on paperboard, 1911) from *Canada and Impressionism: New Horizons, 1880-1930* at the National Gallery.



Old Houses, Baie-Saint-Paul, by Clarence Gagnon (oil on canvas, c. 1912) at the National Gallery.

Pootoogook's work seems ideally suited to the theme of sheltering in the places we call home. The late Inuk artist's pencil-and-ink drawings of interiors are studies of family interaction, of the for-better-or-worse balance between family peace and family turmoil.

The exhibition is scheduled to be open Jan. 30 to Aug. 15. oaggao.ca.

Knitting art in the Diefenbunker

Nothing says "shelter in place" quite like a nuclear bomb shelter. The Diefenbunker — named for the Canadian prime minister who ordered it built in Carp outside Ottawa in 1958 — has temporarily been made softer. At least, in parts.

Ottawa artist Greta Grip has been knitting art for years, so it's no surprise that her turn as the Diefenbunker's artist in residence for 2020 would arrive with knitting needles in hand.

Knitting may seem incongruous in a decommissioned Cold War bunker, but Grip says the craft is "something individuals do to contribute to wartime efforts and social causes, or to build community in difficult times. Both the bunker and the knitted items provide protection and comfort." Further, she says, knitting and the bunker "use code to create, embed, decipher, and communicate covert messages. Like the dots and dashes of Morse code and the 0s and 1s that symbolize binary code used in digital computers, knitting relies on two basic states: knit stitch and purl stitch."

Her exhibition, titled *Containment: Knit Your .- .art* ("knit your own part") has been open since October and is only up until Jan. 31. 3929 Carp Rd., diefenbunker.ca

Impressionism at the National Gallery

There's a much different perspective to be considered at the National Gallery of Canada, where introspective interiors (such as Florence Carlyle's *The Studio*) share space with expansive exteriors (such as Maurice Cullen's *The Ice Harvest*). The exhibition is *Canada and Impressionism: New Horizons, 1880-1930*.

The show, which has already completed a tour of Germany, Switzerland and France, includes work by Canadian artists from the 19th and 20th Centuries. Curated by Katerina Atanassova, it "explores how two generations of artists contributed to the worldwide phenomenon of impressionism and to the advent of modernity in their homeland," say the exhibition notes.

After so much time spent cooped



Great Bear Rainforest (photograph) by Michelle Valberg at Wall Space Gallery.



Emergency Broadcast (photograph, 2017), by Pixie Cram at Ottawa City Hall art galleries.



Homenatge a Prats (original lithograph, 1971) by Joan Miró, at Jean-Claude Bergeron Gallery.



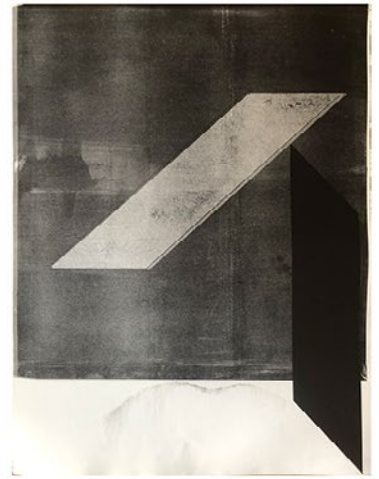
Halocine Parastic Jaeger 2 (mixed media, 2020) by Lisa Creskey at L.A. Pai Gallery.



Man Elm by Sara Angelucci, at the School of Photographic Arts Ottawa.



Bow Echo (photograph) by Ava Margueritte at Wall Space Gallery in Ottawa.



Studio Sixty Six the Glebe has an exhibit featuring works by painting and print-making artist Claudia Gutierrez and also shows work of Marisa Gallemit (centre) and Guillermo Trejo (right.)

up indoors, much of it will come as a figurative breath of fresh air. One can look at Helen McNicoll's 1913 oil-on-canvas *Sunny September* and almost feel the refreshing breeze that so impressionistically moves through the green and golden leaves and grass. Likewise in Emily Carr's 1911 painting *Autumn in France* — one of the exhibition's examples of Canadian artists working outside their home country.

[Editor's note: Unfortunately, at press time, the gallery announced New Horizons would be postponed until January 2022. See gallery.ca for details.]

Also showing. . .

Jean-Claude Bergeron Gallery: *Made in France VII* is a quintessential group show at the ByWard Market commercial gallery. It features works by some of the world's and Canada's best-known artists, including Pierre Alechinsky, Hiroshi Asada, Mario Avati, Julius Baltazar, Christian Bozon, Antoni Clavé, James Coignard, Corneille, Olivier Debré, Sonia Delaunay, Joan Miró, Jacques Muron, Pablo Picasso, John Paul Riopelle, Antoni Tapiès, Pierre-Yves Trémois, Bram van Velde, Mikio Watanabe and Zao Wou-Ki. Showing February and March at 150 St. Patrick St. Call the gallery at (613) 562-7836 to confirm dates. galleryjeanclaudebergeron.ca

Canadian War Museum: *Anne Frank — A History for Today* features personal photographs, stories and diary entries, brought

together to illuminate the tragic, heroic story of the Jewish girl and her family, who hid from Nazi persecution, but ultimately died in the Holocaust. Organized by the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam. Showing Feb. 25 to April at 1 Vimy Place. www.warmuseum.ca

City Hall Art Gallery: *Hindsight: 2020 Additions to the City of Ottawa Art Collection* is the second part of the annual new additions exhibition (the first part closed Jan. 10 in City Hall's Karsh-Masson Gallery). This part is sure to be widely satisfying. As the only common thread between the dozens of pieces is that they were recently acquired, it's always an eclectic show, with works of many styles, themes and materials. It shows until Feb. 7. Search for City Hall Art Gallery at ottawa.ca.

Studio Sixty Six: *Double Flame* by Claudia Gutierrez shows Feb. 19 to March 28 at 858 Bank St. Gutierrez is a Latin-Canadian artist whose study of painting and print-making now informs "her exploration of textile work." studiosixtysix.ca

Wall Space Gallery: With work from Joanna Baxter, Marianne Burlew and Ava Margueritte, this year's look at International Women's Day will also reflect on "the anniversary of a year with COVID-19 in our global lives." Baxter's photograph *Man Down*, with a prostrate figure shown face down in the foreground, before a magnificent valley, may sum up how a lot of people feel at this point. Check

with gallery for the March opening date. wallspacegallery.ca

School of Photographic Arts (SPA0) Gallery: *Sara Angelucci — Undergrowth* features Angelucci's photo-based work and asks "how an artist can respond to this critical time of ecological emergency." It takes place until March 5 at 77 Pamilla St. spao.ca

Sivarulrasa Gallery: *Sarah Anderson — New Works* takes place from March 31 to May 7 at Sivarulrasa Gallery, 34 Mill St., Almonte. sivarulrasa.com

L.A. Pai Gallery: Lisa Creskey's sculptural works look like they grew out of the northern landscape, and the materials they're made with often did just that. Check with the gallery for precise opening dates. lapagallery.com.

Galerie St-Laurent + Hill: Drew Klassen's *Flower Piece (in a Somewhat Dutch Mode)* takes place in March and April, at 293 Dalhousie St. Check with the gallery for dates. galeriestlaurentplushill.com

AXENEO7: This artist-run centre features works by Andréanne Godin, curated by Marie-Ève Charron in a show titled *Si Bleu Qu'est Notre Temps*. It takes place March 10 to April 24 at 80 Rue Hanson in Gatineau. See axeneo7.com for more.

Contact Email Peter Simpson at pete@petersimpson.ca with details of your upcoming art exhibitions.

New arrivals

Ricardo A. Cisneros
Ambassador of El Salvador

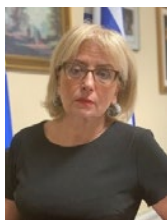


Ambassador Cisneros joined the foreign service in 1990 as an administrative assistant at the embassy in France and was posted to Brussels three years later. In 1996, he became first secretary at the embassy in Ottawa, where he stayed for five years before becoming consul-general in Milan. For a year, beginning in 2004, he was counsellor at the mission to the United Nations in Geneva and then became minister-counsellor in France.

In 2014, he became a professor at the Higher Institute for Communications and Advertising in Paris and he concurrently held several private sector positions, including as an international consultant for World Expos in Kazakhstan and Dubai.

The ambassador speaks Spanish, French and English and intermediate Italian. He is married and has two children.

Konstantina Athanassiadou
Ambassador of Greece



Ambassador Athanassiadou joined the foreign ministry of Greece as an attaché in 1986.

Having served in various positions in Athens early in her career, she was appointed secretary of the embassy in Moscow in 1988. She returned to Athens and was promoted to first secretary in 1994. She then had postings in London and, in late 2000, she was appointed head of the deputy foreign minister's diplomatic cabinet.

In August 2002, she was appointed consul-general in Egypt and, in September 2004, she transferred to the EU Embassy in Brussels. In 2008, she returned to the foreign ministry. In November 2010, she became deputy permanent representative to the United Nations in Geneva. In 2014, she was sent to Albania. In April 2018 in Athens, she was appointed as chief of protocol of the foreign ministry.

Ambassador Athanassiadou speaks English, French, Spanish and Russian. She has one son.

Weibert Arthus
Ambassador of Haiti



Weibert Arthus is a journalist, professor and diplomat. Most recently, he was worked for the foreign minister. From 2016 to 2020, he was minister counsellor in charge of political affairs and deputy head of mission in Washington. He was posted to Argentina from 2014 to 2016, where he served as cultural adviser at the embassy. From 1995 to 2013, he worked as a journalist in Haiti and France. He began his career as a journalist at Radio Caraïbes FM in 1995. He also worked as a journalist at Radio France Internationale (RFI) between 2002 and 2007. He was appointed director at Radio Télévision Caraïbes in 2011.

The ambassador has a doctorate in the history of international relations from Paris I-Panthéon Sorbonne University and he worked as an associate professor of history at the State University of Haiti, as well as at the Institute of Sciences, Technologies and advanced studies of Haiti.

Rodolfo D. Robles
Ambassador of Philippines



Ambassador Robles is a founder and senior partner of Robles, Brilantes, Ricafrente, Nachura & Aguirre Law Firm and also worked as a professor of law at San Beda College and was dean of Arellano Law School from 1977 to 1983.

During his legal career, he was chosen as a delegate to the 1971 constitutional convention and, more recently, he was appointed as a member of the consultative committee to review the 1987 constitution. He is also known as the principal author of the law creating the office of the ombudsman and principal author of the *Philippines' Miranda Doctrine*.

An honours graduate from San Beda College, he topped the bar exam in 1967 and proceeded to take his Master of Laws at Harvard University.

Ambassador Robles is married to Nora San Buenaventura.

Dejan Ralevic
Ambassador of Serbia



Prior to being posted to Ottawa, Ambassador Ralevic was assistant minister and acting ambassador for the EU. From 2011 to 2015, he was deputy head of mission in Switzerland and before that he worked at headquarters, again focusing on the European Union. Between 2003 and 2005, he was chargé d'affaires at the embassy in FYR Yugoslavia, Serbia and Montenegro, as well as Morocco.

During stints back at headquarters, his positions always focused on the EU, except for one, when he worked in bilateral economic relations. Between 1994 and 2002, he worked as a purchasing officer for Tyres Company. The ambassador studied at the University of Belgrade in the faculty of economics and international trade and did one year of military service in the Yugoslav army.

Hassan Dahir Dimbil
Ambassador of Somalia



Ambassador Dahir comes to diplomacy after a varied career. Prior to being posted to Canada, he was deputy minister of health and deputy minister of national planning and development. He supported the ministry of the interior in identifying areas for research and policy development to enhance the co-ordination of the community safety and security activities by local and international NGOs. He also worked as a political activist, entrepreneur and senior consultant for police reform for the United Nations Development Programme.

In 2012, he was a vice-presidential candidate for the Udub Party and prior to that, he was chairman of Amana Housing Association Ltd. in Birmingham, England. In the early 2000s, he was first secretary at the Somaliland Liaison office in Ethiopia and he served in the same position in Djibouti before that.

He is married to Yurub Ibrahim Saed.

Non-heads of mission

Algeria
Rabeaa Saadi
Attaché

Australia
Stuart Bett
Counsellor

Ayla June Black
Second secretary

Brazil
Danilo Silva Maia
Defence, military, naval and air
attaché

China
Heping Lan
Counsellor

Colombia
Rodrigo Alberto Villegas Rivillas
Counsellor

Congo
Hollandais David Stone Atipo
Counsellor

Sylvie Nelly Oloni Ossiala
Attaché

Guinea
Aminata Doumbouya
Attaché

Haiti
Paola Marie Carmel Arthur Jean
First secretary

Christela Mondesir
Counsellor

India
Prabhat Kumar Jain
First secretary

Iraq
Ali Rasool Hussein Al-Masoodi
Second secretary

Raheem Ahmed Meheedy
Third secretary

Mujahed Adil Shukur
Third secretary

Japan
Yusuke Kawachi
Military Attaché

Hiroyuki Sano
Naval attaché

Hiroyuki Sugai
Defence and air attaché

Masayasu Yoshida
First secretary

Kenya
Josephine Bittialy Saleri
Third secretary

Morocco
Hassan El Mkantar
Counsellor

Aziz Smires Bennani
Counsellor

Panama
Haydee Rita Villarreal Gomez
Attaché

Poland
Krzysztof Jacek Lewandowski
First counsellor and deputy head
of mission

Saudi Arabia
Mohammed Nashes B. Al Shlawi
Attaché

Senegal
Aissatou Diatta
Second secretary

Mamadou Moustapha Dieng
First secretary

Raki Kane
First secretary

Oumou Kalsoum Lo Epe Mbacke
Second secretary

Turkey
Mehmet Hakan Akgun
Counsellor

Bulent Cankaya
Defence, military, naval and air
attaché

Ukraine
Olena Penteleichuk
First secretary

United Kingdom
Sophie Thompson-Smith
Second secretary

United States of America
Nathan Alan Blore
Assistant Attaché

Jessica Pryce Burns
Attaché

Rachel Piedra Strein
Second secretary and consul

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1.



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6.



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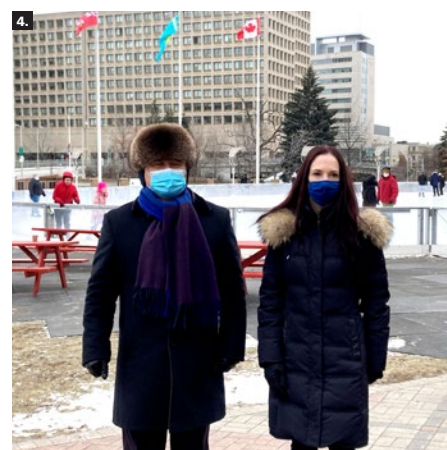


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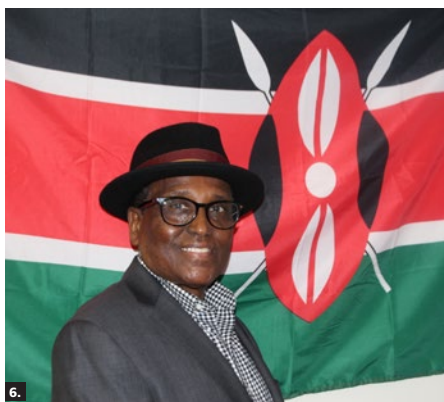
3.

1. To mark the 108th anniversary of the independence of Albania, Ambassador Ermal Muca and his wife, Alma, hosted a flag-raising ceremony at Ottawa City Hall. David Sproule, director-general for Eastern Europe and the Arctic at Global Affairs Canada, delivered opening remarks. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 2. Chief of Protocol Stewart Wheeler, Kosovar Ambassador Adriatik Kryeziu, Greek Ambassador Konstantina Athanassiadou and North Macedonian chargé d'affaires Dimitar Blazhevski attended the Albanian flag-raising ceremony at City Hall. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 3. The Mexican Embassy presented a Lights Up! Panorama Art experience at the Ottawa Art Gallery with visuals by AVA Animation and Visual Arts. The three-minute animation loop show was also on Facebook live. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 4. To mark Belgium's King's Day, Belgian Ambassador Johan Verkammen and his wife, Kathleen Billen, hosted two movie nights at Landmark Cinemas Kanata. The award-winning movie, *King of the Belgians*, was shown to 100 people during this two-day event. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 5. From left, Robert R. A. Fry, director-general of the Bureau of European Affairs at Global Affairs Canada, Hungarian Ambassador Maria Eva Vass-Salazar and chief of protocol Stewart Wheeler attended the Belgian celebration. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 6. Tunisian Ambassador Mohamed Imed Torjemane and his wife, Ihsane Boujendar Ep Torjemane, attended the Belgian event. (Photo: Ülke Baum)



1. Korean Ambassador Chang Keung Ryong hosted a *Turn Toward Busan* memorial ceremony at the cairn outside Ottawa City Hall. The event was organized by the Korean Embassy, the Korea Veterans Association – National Capital Unit 7, with the assistance of Veterans Affairs Canada and the Canadian Armed Forces. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 2. Lt.-Gen. Wayne Eyre, left, and Ryong, at the Korean event. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 3. Tong Zhang, shown here, wife of Chinese Ambassador Peiwu Cong, hosted an online cultural salon featuring "600 years of the Forbidden City" with special guest speaker Meixia Guo, director of publicity and education of the Palace Museum. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 4. On the occasion of the 29th anniversary of the independence of Kazakhstan, Kazakh Ambassador Akylbek Kamaldinov and his wife, Olga, hosted a flag-raising ceremony at City Hall along with an online national day presentation. From left: Kamaldinov and deputy mayor Laura Dudas. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 5. Gen. Jonathan Vance, chief of defence staff, spoke on Indigenous Veterans Day at the Canadian War Museum, when the donated *Normandy Warrior*, a painting by Ottawa artist Elaine Goble, was unveiled. It's a tribute to Pte. Philip Favel's service with the Royal Canadian Army Service Corps in the Second World War, and his post-war efforts as an advocate for Indigenous veterans. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 6. At the event, from left: Nadine Favel, granddaughter of Pte. Philip Favel, Second World War Veteran James Eagle and Goble. (Photo: Ülke Baum)





1. Victoria Carol Eriksson, wife of Finnish Ambassador Roy Eriksson, hosted a distanced get-together to welcome the spouses of European diplomats from Ireland, Norway and the EU, who recently arrived in Canada. From left: Eriksson; Piret Lukk, wife of Estonian Ambassador Toomas Lukk; Jenni Ahlin, wife of Swedish Ambassador Urban Ahlin and Marianne Fredriksen, wife of Norwegian Ambassador Jon Fredriksen. (Photo: Ülke Baum)

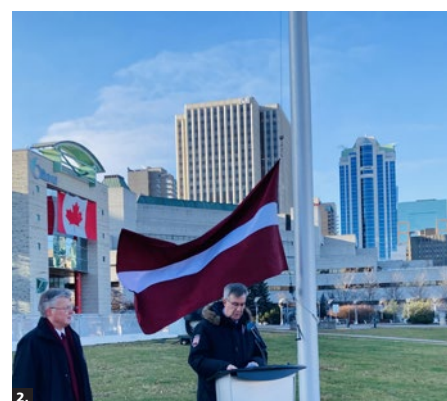
2. Members of the Head of Missions Spouses Association (HOMSA) participated in the "Sharing Hope Wishes 2021" project that raised money for Caldwell Family Centre. From left: Piret Lukk gives a candle as a present to Olga Kamaldinova, wife of Kazakh Ambassador Akybek Kamaldinov. Kamaldinova gave a donation for Caldwell Family Centre. (Photo: Ülke Baum)

3. Piret Lukk baked a strawberry cottage cheesecake and presented it as a contribution to iPolitics' holiday magazine for the "diplomats' favourite holiday recipes" section. (Photo: Ülke Baum)

4. Ernest L. Szelepcsenyi, a 1956 Hungarian Revolution veteran, attended a Hungarian flag-raising ceremony at City Hall and shared his memories at a virtual commemoration of the Hungarian Revolution and Freedom Fight in 1956, presented by the Hungarian Embassy. (Photo: Ülke Baum)

5. To mark the national day of Hungary and commemorate the Hungarian Revolution and Freedom Fight of 1956, Ambassador Maria Eva Vass-Salazar held a flag-raising ceremony at City Hall. She's shown with Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson. (Photo: Ülke Baum)

6. Kenyan High Commissioner John Lepi Lanyasunya celebrated Kenya's independence day virtually. Here the ambassador stands in front of the national flag. (Photo: Ülke Baum)



1. A flag-raising ceremony on the occasion of Latvia's 102nd anniversary took place at Ottawa City Hall. From left: Robert R. A. Fry, director-general of the Bureau of European Affairs at Global Affairs Canada, Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson, Latvian Ambassador Karlis Eihenbaums, Lithuanian Ambassador Darius Skusevicius, Col. Agris Ozolins, Latvia's defence, military, naval and air attaché, and Estonian Ambassador Toomas Lukk. (Photo: Ülle Baum) 2. Members of the diplomatic community and Latvian diaspora attended the Latvian flag-raising ceremony. Jim Watson, right, delivers remarks while the ambassador looks on. (Photo: Ülle Baum) 3. An inauguration of the first diplomatic Paraguayan Library in Canada took place at the embassy. Paraguayan Ambassador Martinez Valinotti, shown here, received book donations from Mayelinne De Lara, director of the International Public Diplomacy Council in The Hague. (Photo: Ülle Baum) 4. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, only 100 invited guests attended the Remembrance Day celebration in Ottawa and the wreaths left on behalf of the large diplomatic community in Ottawa were placed a day before at the National War Memorial. This wreath from the Embassy of Estonia was among them. (Photo: Ülle Baum) 5. Latvian Ambassador Karlis Eihenbaums and Col. Agris Ozolins, Latvia's defence, military, naval and air attaché, pay their respects at the National War Memorial. (Photo: Ülle Baum)

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Ski trails, virtual snooping and murals for staycations

By Patrick Langston



The Sir John A. Macdonald trail along the Ottawa River offers 16 kilometres of trails for cross-country skiers, snowshoers, hikers and snow bikers.

Avid travellers may be longing for the return of footloose times, but the pandemic hasn't nixed every opportunity to get out and about, even if some of our sojourns are now virtual. We've uncovered a clutch of COVID-safe travel ideas to keep you going until the spring. Some get you outside enjoying our Canadian winter, others prefer the appeal of a comfy chair with a favourite beverage at hand. Bon voyage!

Down by the water: Opened in 2016, the Sir John A. Macdonald Winter Trail runs west along the Ottawa River from

the Canadian War Museum to Westboro Beach. Two groomed, 16-kilometre trails give cross-country skiers, snowshoers, hikers and snow bikers access to spaces normally little used in the winter, offer sometimes-breathtaking river vistas and include a chance to visit John Ceprano's rock sculptures at Remic Rapids. Bring a snack and something to drink because there aren't any facilities along the way. The trail is free, but donations help keep the grooming equipment going. Bonus: Along with parking at Westboro Beach, Champlain Park and the Canadian War Museum, three transit stations — Pimisi,

Bayview/O-train and Dominion — border the trail. wintertrail.ca

Woodland gliding: You can head to the Rideau Canal or your local rink, but gliding through meadows, an orchard and a forest takes skating to a whole new level. RiverOak, a rural spot 30 minutes south of downtown Ottawa, has three kilometres of skating trails, designated hockey and ringette rinks as well as snowshoeing and hiking. You can use your hockey sticks on the trail, borrow from RiverOak's modest supply of sticks and pucks if you forget your own and rent skates and a helmet for



RiverOak, 30 minutes south of Ottawa, offers three kilometres of skating trails through the woods, as well as designated hockey rinks and trails for snowshoeing and hiking.

\$12, although the rental stock is limited. The family operation includes an historic log barn lodge with a wood-burning stove (pandemic protocols are in place), its skating trails are partially lit at night (skaters should bring a headlamp) and dogs are welcome (but they need to be polite). Admission starts at \$9, with youngsters under five getting in free. Open Wednesday-Sunday, depending on the weather. riveroak.ca

Virtual snooping: Financial pressures forced American humourist Mark Twain to abandon his 25-room dream home in Hartford, Conn., in 1891, but he always said it was where he had been happiest and most productive. With travel now in abeyance, we won't be visiting the home anytime soon, but it is open virtually at marktwainhouse.org. The same goes for various other intriguing spots in the U.S., including Rowan Oak, the modified Greek Revival home of Nobel-winning novelist William Faulkner in Oxford, Miss., (www.rowanoak.com) and the house-studio of



Shiny ice on the skating trails at RiverOak.

abstract expressionist painters Jackson Pollock and Lee Krasner near East Hampton, N.Y. (savingplaces.org).

More virtual touring: For something completely different, have a peek inside Handel & Hendrix in London, England, where — albeit not contemporaneously — the classical and classic rock musicians once lived in side-by-side homes with just a wall between the two residences. The virtual tour of the Jimi Hendrix side, where the American-born guitar star lived from 1968 to 1969, is really just a mini-museum visit, but the George Frideric Handel home, where the German-born composer lived and worked for 36 years, is rewarding. Bonus: These virtual visits are generally free, although a donation is sometimes suggested. handelhendrix.org

Cordelia and company: Live theatres everywhere have been pretty much shut down for close to a year. But stages live on digitally, including the Stratford Festival. Stratfest@home (stratfordfestival.ca) gives

you access to recorded versions of productions for \$15 a month. The library includes *The Tempest*, with Christopher Plummer in an acclaimed performance as Prospero; an uproarious rock 'n' roll take on *Twelfth Night*, with the late Brian Dennehy as Sir Toby Belch; and *King Lear*, with Colm Feore as the fond and foolish old king in a production that's at once tragic and tender, absurd and as richly rewarding as life itself.

Sweet stuff: Other than Margaret Atwood and federal-provincial bickering, it's hard to think of anything more Canadian — or at least central Canadian — than maple syrup. And there's no shortage of the sweet, sticky stuff right here in Eastern Ontario. By late February, sap is usually running and producers are welcoming one and all to their sugar bushes to experience an age-old tradition. You'll find sugar bushes (or "camps") everywhere — from Proulx Maple & Berry Farm in east-end Ottawa (proulxfarm.com) to the old-timey Log Farm (thelogfarm.com) in Nepean, where sap is still collected in pails. Sugar bushes are especially abundant across Lanark County in the west (lanarkcountytourism.com). Unfortunately, the urban gem that was the sugar shack at Vanier Museopark was destroyed by fire last year and likely won't reopen until 2022. Maple syrup is good for more than just pancakes, and, come springtime, you'll find everything from maple butter to maple bacon doughnuts popping up around the Ottawa Valley. If you make the short trek to east-end Proulx Maple & Berry Farm, swing by Orleans Brewery (orleansbrewing.com) on the way home; its Maple Ale is made with Ottawa-area maple syrup.

Southward bound with a ghost: At a time when cross-border travel is largely off-limits, Tony Horwitz's 2019 book *Spying on the South: An Odyssey Across the American Divide* is a dandy armchair equivalent. Horwitz, a Pulitzer-winning journalist with unbridled curiosity, journeyed through the southern U.S. before the 2016 presidential primaries, discovering an often-strange, economically hollowed-out place where fiction trumps fact, but humour and flickering hope live on. He modelled his journey on similar travels taken by Frederick Law Olmsted 160 years earlier. Olmsted, who eventually became a renowned landscape architect (New York City's Central Park, Montreal's Mount Royal Park), had taken a gig as an undercover correspondent in the Ante-



Maple syrup — and visiting the bushes where it's made — is a quintessential central Canadian experience and it's a COVID restriction-friendly outdoor activity.



This mural depicting Stompin' Tom Connors is one of more than two dozen murals in Carleton Place, a 35-minute drive southwest of Ottawa.

bellum South for the emerging *New York Times*, and, like Horwitz, found the place fascinating. What Olmsted, whose presence accompanies Horwitz like a literary ghost, would have made of the south's convulsed populace in the early 21st Century is anyone's guess.

Changed — forever: Will Kyle, Winnie Burwash, Michiko Ishii — not exactly household names, but their stories are now a bit more widely known thanks to *Forever Changed*, a new exhibit at the Canadian War Museum. Like so many others during the Second World War, the lives of the three were permanently altered, whether by being brutally incarcerated as a prisoner of war, by sacrificing self and family to support the Canadian war effort, or, as a Japanese-Canadian teenager, by being forced to move 600 miles from home. Developed by the museum to mark the 75th anniversary of the end of the war, the exhibit explores the personal wartime experiences of Canadians through stories and artifacts. *Forever Changed* runs until Sept. 6, with pandemic safety measures in place. warmuseum.ca 819-776-7000.

Marvellous murals: Stompin' Tom Connors and First World War flying ace Roy Brown, who's credited with shooting down the notorious Red Baron, may be dead, but they're not entirely gone from Carleton Place. The town, about 35 minutes southwest of downtown Ottawa, is home to better than two dozen lively public murals of folks and events connected to Carleton Place. The Maritimes' native son, Stompin' Tom, for instance, loved to play at the 19th-Century Mississippi Hotel, now The Grand Hotel, and was instrumental in saving it from demolition. Some of the murals are "ghost" images — painted advertisements from long ago — such as the one for Chewing Plug Tobacco at 136 Bridge St. Other, newer ones commemorate historic events such as the Ballygiblin Riots of 1824, when Protestant settlers and Irish Catholic immigrants battled it out. You'll find information on the murals, walking tours of the heritage downtown and more at carletonplace.ca. And don't forget to check out the tiny, perfect Carleton Place and Beckwith Heritage Museum (cpbheritagemuseum.com). While you're there, try dinner at Black Tartan Kitchen, but book ahead as it's a set menu during COVID.

Patrick Langston is an Ottawa writer who refuses to let COVID-19 limit his wandering ways.

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Photo by Bill Blackstone

Celebration time

A listing of the national and independence days marked by countries

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



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Photographer Mike Beedell: "I came upon this Weddell seal enjoying the austral summer sun at the southern end of the world on the Antarctic Peninsula. This large member of the phocid or seal family is named after the British sealing captain who plied these waters in the 1820s. Seals in Antarctica have little fear of humans on land because the beasts that eat them live in the ocean. Orcas in particular eat them for breakfast and I have seen many Weddells with horrific Orca-attack scars. Weddell seals are the most southerly living mammals in the world and can weigh up to 600 kilograms and reach a length of 3.5 metres. They are among the few seals that can have twin pups. They dive to 600 metres and stay under for more than 45 minutes. They dine on fish, krill, crustaceans, penguins and sometimes other seals. As I sat with this seal, who was ebbing and flowing out of a snooze, its high-pitched ooeees and whistles kept me entertained until I discovered Weddells have frightfully poor manners. When it assailed my nostrils with potent flatulence, I bid this seal adieu."



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