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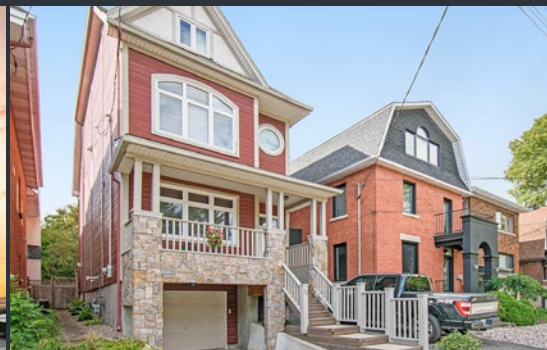
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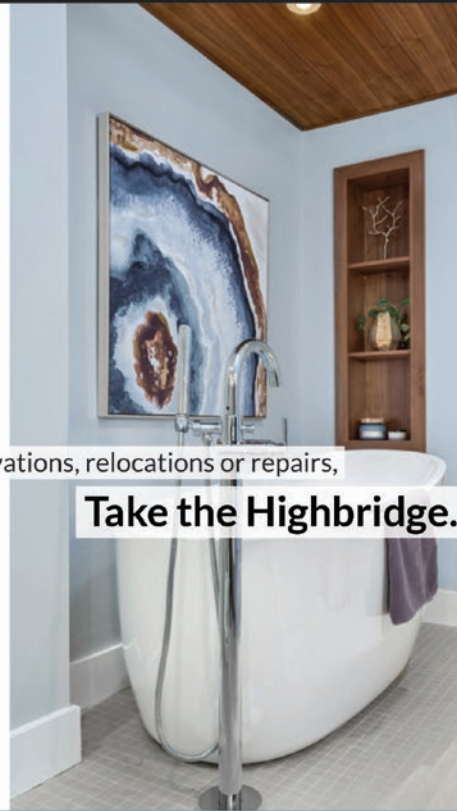
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## When faith comes at a cost

The Pew Research Centre has shown that the suppression of religious minorities is on the increase. It's a subject that is reported on sporadically, when major incidents happen. But what about the systemic, constant persecution of citizens simply for what they believe. *Diplomat* looked into it and, drawing on the Pew research, and that of several other governmental and non-governmental groups, came up with a Top 10 list of some of the worst-offending countries.

Writer Wolfgang Depner discovered a few consistencies among the countries in question. Religious persecution occurs under authoritarian rule, whether that be secular or theocratic. He also discovered that Asia is becoming increasingly hostile for religious minorities, Christians and others. Finally, he found that Christians are being driven out of the Middle East.

Also in *Dispatches*, J. Paul de B. Taillon tackles the subject of Afghanistan. The retired colonel has plenty of experience in war zones and discusses what the future holds for the beleaguered country after 20 years of war and the hurried withdrawal of foreign troops in August.

Taillon refers to it as a war "marred by unclear strategic goals after the initially successful United States invasion of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in response to the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001."

He acknowledges that the exact date for a Taliban takeover would have been difficult to ascertain, but that it was clear the Taliban would eventually fill the tactical vacuum left by the Afghan/U.S. military.

Also in *Dispatches*, Africa columnist

Robert I. Rotberg writes about Hakainde Hichilema's Zambian election win and how it represents "a rare triumph of popular democracy in an Africa increasingly fraught with vicious ethnic disputes and intranational rivalries." He also writes about other African countries, such as Ethiopia, which is in danger of separating into ethnic sections, the Central African Republic and Nigeria. Still in *Dispatches*, Clair Bolton of CODE tells how hunger to learn is propelling older girls in Liberia to attend school with primary students to gain the education that war and discrimination against females have denied them.

Up front, columnist Fen Hampson discusses the issues that will arise at fall summits and Canada's election, which was supposed to indicate how the Liberals steered Canada through COVID but was overtaken by the way Canada would deal with refugees who worked with Canadian forces when they were in Afghanistan as that country fell to the Taliban.

Also in *Diplomatica*, I (virtually) sat down with World Health Organization senior adviser Bruce Aylward, who runs the ACT-Accelerator program. COVAX, the global vaccine equity program, falls within his purview and Aylward spoke frankly about the importance of vaccine equity and how national leaders must make it a priority and encourage others to do so, too. With many high-income countries reporting 40 per cent of their populations fully vaccinated and Africa reporting only 2 per cent, Aylward points out that vaccinating the world is morally and economically the right thing to do.

In *Delights*, Christina Spencer shares background on books about diplomacy, sovereignty and pandemics, while food writer Margaret Dickenson offers up three elegant recipes for entertaining or just treating those in your family bubble. Arts columnist Peter Simpson surveys the latest from the Ottawa art scene and Patrick Langston continues his ongoing series of imaginative suggestions for getting out and seeing things in spite of the pandemic.

Jennifer Campbell is editor of *Diplomat*.

## CONTRIBUTORS

### Col. J. Paul B. de Taillon



J. Paul de B. Taillon served in the Canadian intelligence community for 30 years and also served as an army reserve colonel. From 2006-2014, he was the strategic and counterinsurgency adviser to the commander of the Canadian Army. He has operational experience with American, Canadian and British Special Operations Forces, and has served in Great Britain, the United States, Oman, Bosnia, Kosovo, Ukraine and Afghanistan. Taillon holds a PhD from the London School of Economics and Political Science and a master's in strategic studies (U.S. Army War College). He has taught at the Royal Military College of Canada, is an adjunct fellow at Joint Special Operations University in Tampa and has taught at the U.S. Naval Post Graduate School in Monterey and the NATO Special Operations School in Chievers, Belgium.

### Claire Bolton



Claire Wanjiru Bolton joined CODE in 2012 and is currently a program manager. Working with local partner organizations in Liberia and Ghana, Bolton is on a mission to help teachers effectively engage classrooms of young readers and learners. Born and raised in Kenya, she moved to Canada a decade ago to earn her master's in globalization and international development from the University of Ottawa. She is a proud mom of two toddler boys and wife to Fidele.

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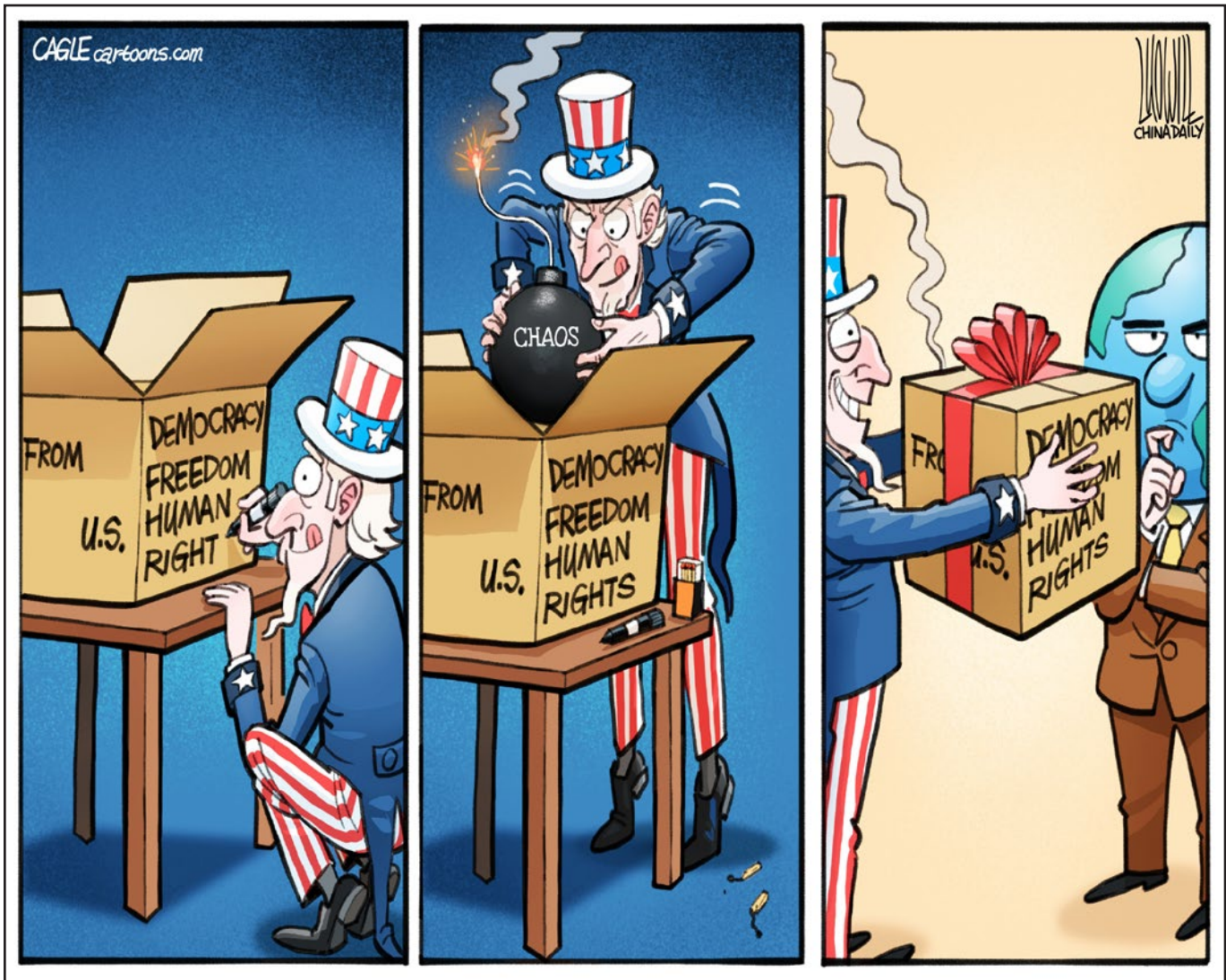
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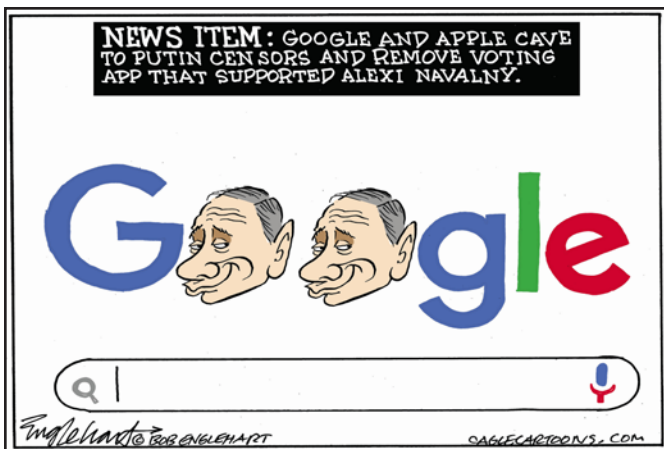
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# Political commentary from around the world



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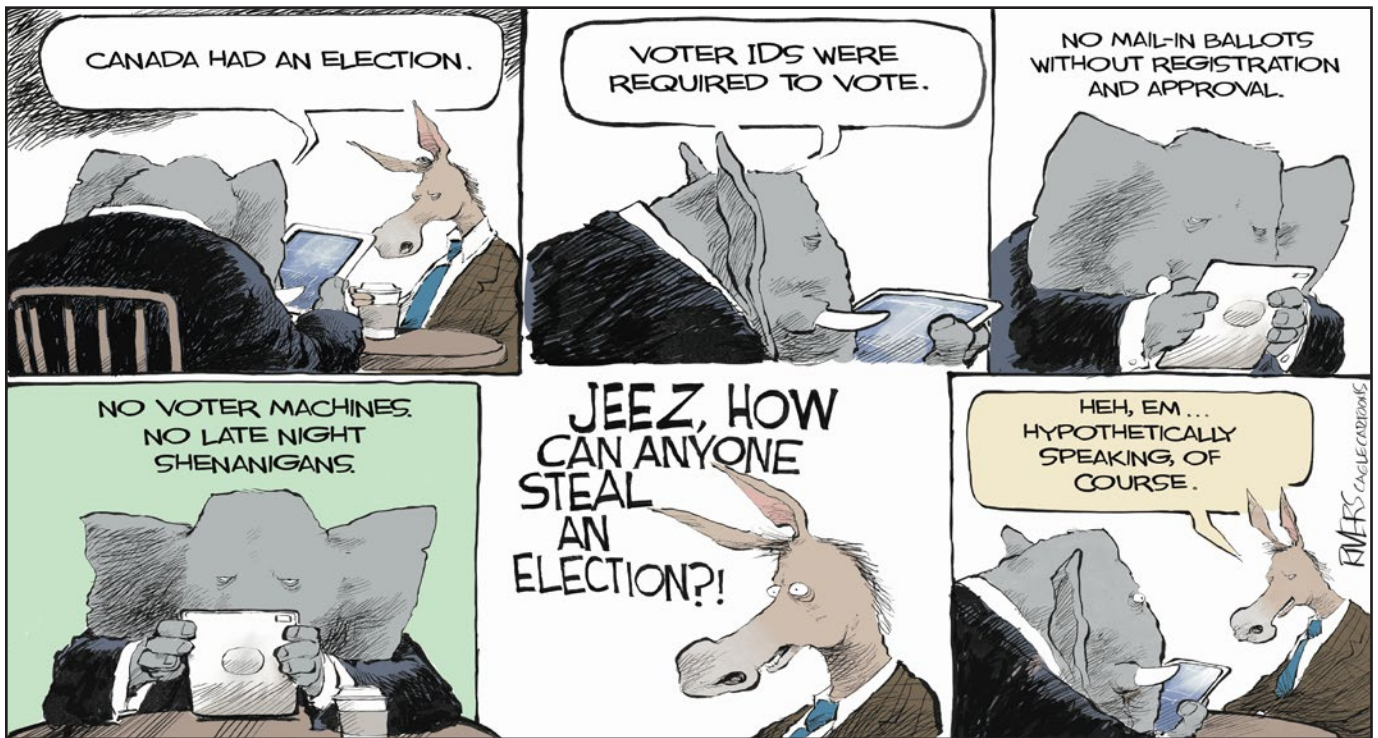


Google Caves in Russia by Bob Englehart, *PoliticalCartoons.com*



Human Rights in the Arab World by Emad Hajjaj, *Alaraby Aljadeed* newspaper, London





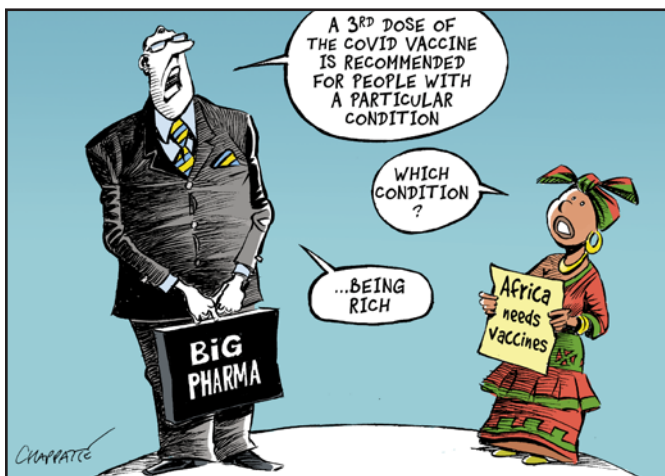
Canadian example by Rivers, CagleCartoons.com



Taliban & Women by Bart van Leeuwen, PoliticalCartoons.com



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More vaccines by Patrick Chappatte, NZZ am Sonntag, Switzerland

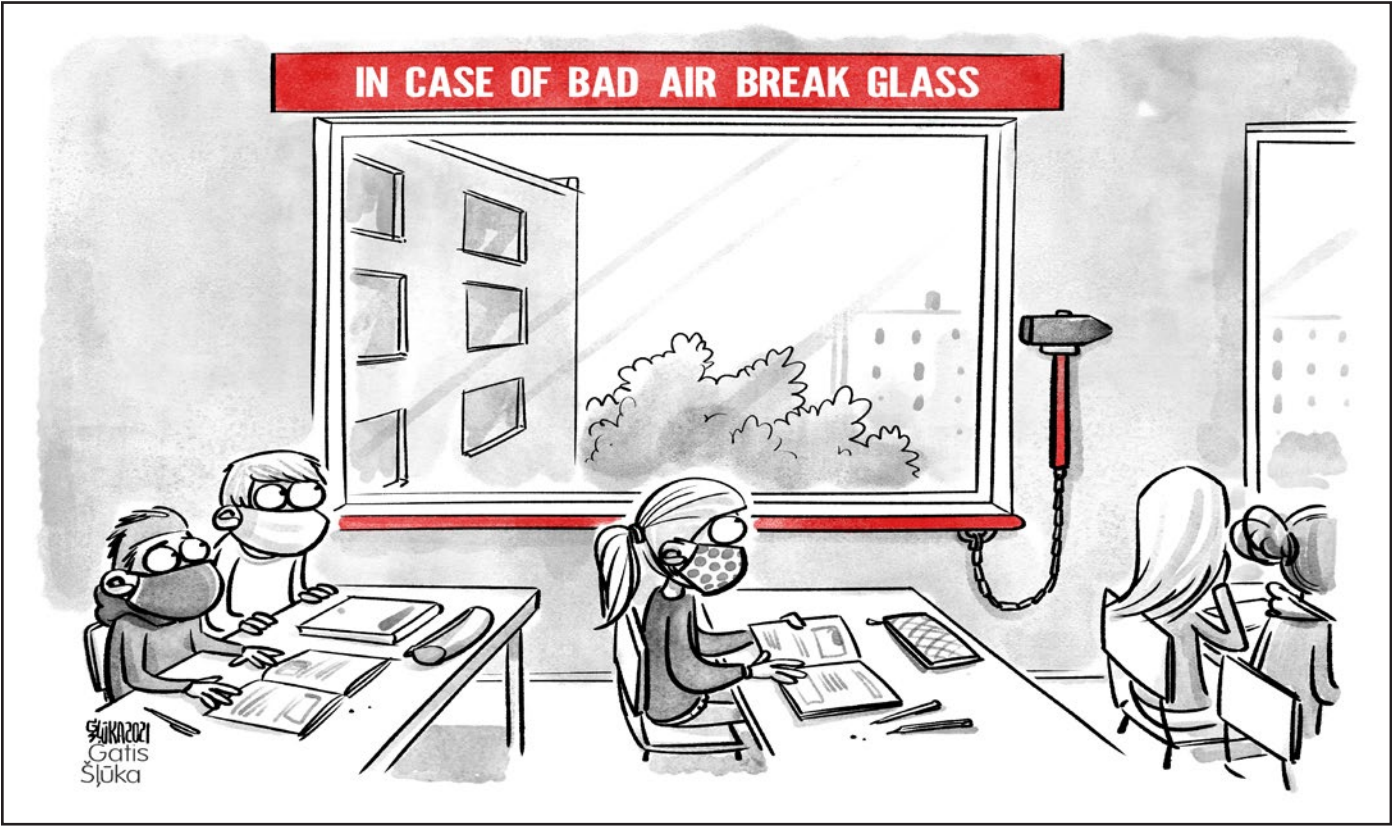


Diplomatic lust by Manny Francisco, The Manila Times, Philippines





Canada election 2021 by Paresh Nath, *U.T. Independent*, India



Bad air by Gatis Sluka, *Latvijas Avize*, Latvia





Chinese crackdown by Paresh Nath, *U.T. Independent*, India

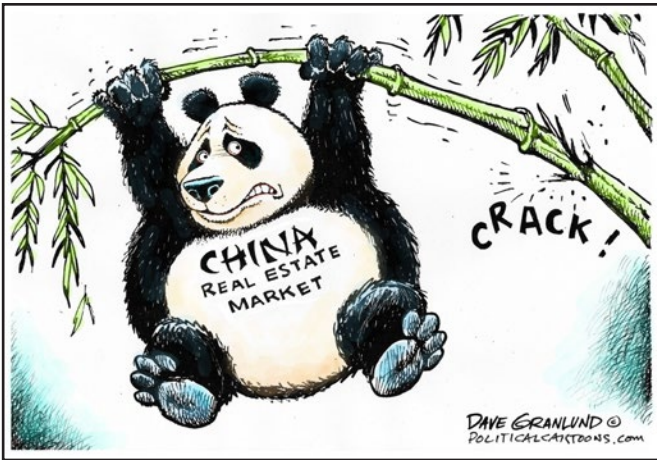


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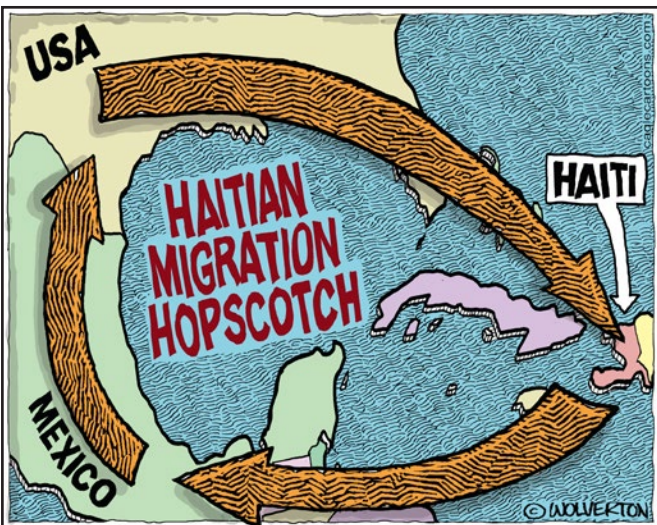




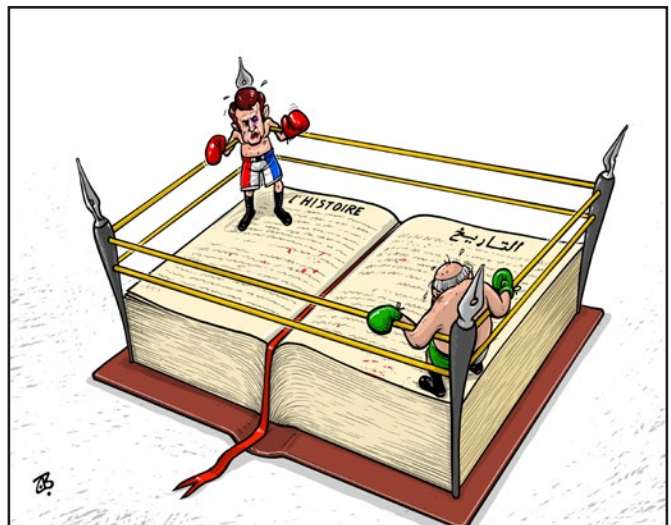
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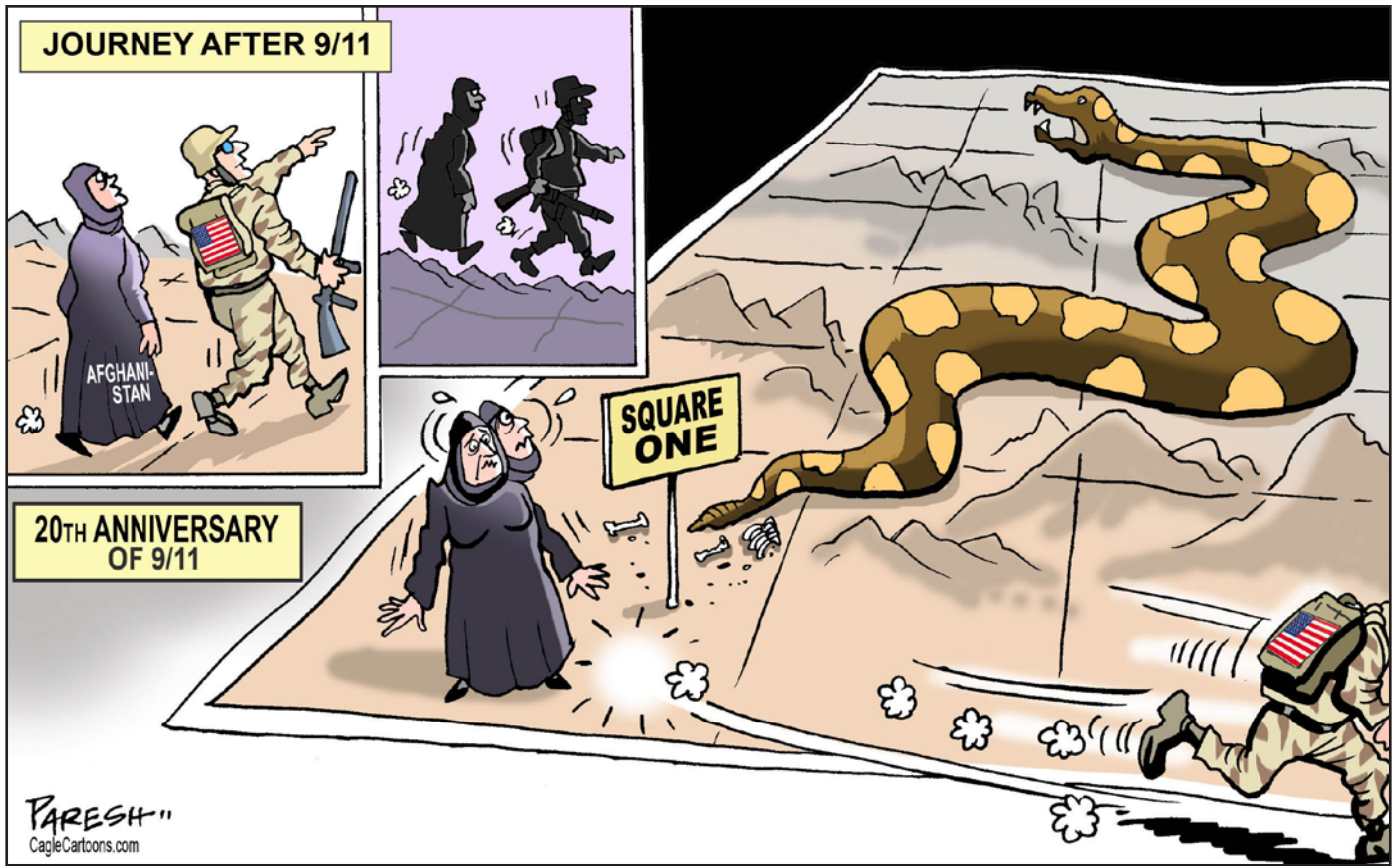


Alexander Lukatanko by Bart van Leeuwen, *PoliticalCartoons.com*



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Twentieth year of 9/11 by Paresh Nath, *U.T. Independent*, India



AUKUS submarines by Bart van Leeuwen, *PoliticalCartoons.com*



# Fall summits will shape Canada's global goals



At his virtual Leaders' Summit on Climate Change, U.S. President Joe Biden said his administration would halve U.S. greenhouse gas emissions from 2005 levels by 2030, with a goal of making the U.S. economy carbon-neutral by 2050. It's summit season again and two major events will test Canadian leaders' ability to define key foreign priorities.



Fen  
Hampson

**T**he fall of the Western-backed Afghan government to the Taliban just as the Canadian election writ was drawn showed, yet again, that the best-laid plans, to riff on Robert Burns, "go oft awry."

The Sept. 20 election was supposed to be a referendum on the Liberal government's handling of the COVID pandemic

and stewardship of the economy. Instead, it was quickly overshadowed by the unfolding tragedy in Afghanistan and questions about the government's competence and failure to properly plan for the evacuation of its citizens and those Afghans who had worked alongside Canadian forces. As former British prime minister Harold MacMillan once said when asked what could throw a government off course, "Events, dear boy, events." That adage also clearly applies to elections. Although the Liberal government's handling of the Afghanistan file was itself not a ballot issue, it reinforced the question in the minds of many voters about why the election was being held when the country and the world were in crisis.

Afghanistan will not disappear from

the headlines, especially if, as is certain, the humanitarian and refugee crisis worsens under Taliban rule. Canada's new government will be under pressure to secure the safe passage of Canadians and others who were left behind after the Aug. 31 deadline for U.S. withdrawal expired and international airlift operations were suspended.

The foreign policy challenge doesn't stop there. Two major summits of global leaders in the fall will test the new government's ability to define clearly some of its key foreign and economic policy priorities.

## G20

The first international junket is to the G20 leaders' meeting on Oct. 30-31 in Rome. The summit will focus on the global



economy and post-pandemic economic recovery. In addition, poverty and inequality, which have been exacerbated by the pandemic, and climate change, in a year where many parts of the world have experienced serious drought, destructive and uncontrollable wildfires and/or flooding, will be on the agenda. Canada's new government will be expected to showcase its own plans for economic recovery and how they dovetail with those of other G20 countries.

Unprecedented levels of government spending and the “easy” monetary policies of many central banks have contributed to rising inflation in many countries, including Canada. Monetary policy will almost certainly be a major topic of discussion. A prime minister who doesn't “think about monetary policy” — as Justin Trudeau boasted during the campaign — will have to show that he does. With inflation now approaching 4 per cent in Canada (well outside the Bank of Canada's 3 per cent control range) and 5 and 3 per cent in the United States and Europe respectively, the impact on consumers and their savings is becoming something of a hot political potato. Central banks everywhere are coming under mounting pressure to wind back their monetary stimulus policies.

If the U.S. starts to raise interest rates to curb inflation, there will almost certainly be “significant capital outflows from emerging and developing countries” as the International Monetary Fund has warned. This will hurt economic recovery in poorer countries. Most don't have access to COVID vaccines and are experiencing chronic food shortages, job losses, rising poverty and homelessness because of COVID. Canada has an important role in providing aid to these countries while supporting the delivery of vaccines, health tools and concessional financing. Canadians will be looking to their government to step up to the plate.

Almost immediately after the G20 meeting, world leaders will head to Glasgow, Scotland, where the COP 26 UN Climate Change Conference, hosted by Britain in partnership with Italy, takes place. The conference was originally scheduled to be held in 2020, but meeting plans were derailed by COVID. The two-week conference is supposed to be more than the usual gabfest, but will also give countries a chance to showcase their individual concrete plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. COP countries (110 in all) had to submit their national plans to address climate change by July 31 this



In a year where many parts of the world have experienced serious drought and destructive and uncontrollable wildfires, climate change will also be on this year's G20 agenda. Shown here are wildfires raging in British Columbia last summer.

year so that a “synthesis report” can be issued at the conference. The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has urged countries to do more, arguing that by the end of the third decade of this century, countries will have to reduce their emissions by at least 45 per cent compared to 2010 levels if there is to be any hope of forestalling climate catastrophe.

While forest fires ravaged much of British Columbia and Northwestern Ontario, and droughts took their toll on Western farmers, the Liberals pledged during the election that they would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 45 per cent, going well beyond the government's earlier pledge at the 2015 Paris climate conference. Under their plan, carbon would have to be priced at \$170 a ton by 2030, meaning that carbon taxes would rise at \$15 per annum. The Conservatives' plan proposed to return carbon levies, which would be at a lower 30 per cent rate, to consumers to be used for the purchase of “green” products such as bicycles, electric cars and solar panels, instead of the redeemable tax credit proposed by the Liberals. Whatever Canada eventually does, the reality is that it can't solve climate change on its own. Canada's GHG

emissions only account for 1.5 per cent of the global total. (The comparatively high figure on a per capita basis is explained by Canada's role as a producer of oil and gas. Road transportation is another key source of emissions because of the country's geography.)

It will be important for Canadian officials at Glasgow, in concert with others, to hold the world's major carbon emitters — China, India and the United States — to account by demanding precise commitments and concrete plans of action. In 2019, China accounted for almost 30 per cent of global GHG emissions. The United States and India accounted for 11 per cent and 6.6 per cent respectively.

Although China touts the fact that it is making major investments in renewable energy sources such as solar and hydroelectric power, it is also boosting its reliance on coal by continuing to construct hundreds of coal-fired electricity plants while also funding infrastructure projects in more than 70 countries that will soon account for more than half of all new carbon emissions, according to the World Economic Forum.

At his “Leaders' Summit on Climate” earlier this year, U.S. President Joe Biden





Italy and the European Union co-hosted the G20 Global Health Summit in the leadup to the G20 in Rome in October. Shown here are Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi and EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. This year's G20 will focus on post-pandemic economic recovery.



Although China touts the fact that it is making major investments in renewable energy, it is also boosting its reliance on coal by continuing to construct hundreds of coal-fired electricity plants. Shown here is a coal shipment headed to China.

said his administration would halve U.S. greenhouse gas emissions from 2005 levels by 2030, with the long-term goal of making the U.S. economy carbon neutral by 2050. However, it is not clear how he is going to do this because he was forced, by stiff opposition within his own party, to abandon his pre-election commitment to levy a carbon tax. Democrats feared a carbon tax would penalize poor and lower-income Americans. The Biden administration will now focus instead on promoting government investment in green technologies and infrastructure, along with regulatory changes. Mainstream climate economists consider this approach to be much less effective than a straight carbon tax.

As it moves forward on climate change policies, one of the government's central challenges will be to ensure that Canada doesn't get out of sync with its major trading partner, the United States. Otherwise, new regulations will undercut a basic element of Canada's economic competitiveness. As Alberta economist Jack Mintz cautions, "It would make sense for Canada to have a carbon policy consistent with its major trading partners, most obviously the United States...If Canada decides to go alone in stopping oil and gas developments...resources provinces will get badly hurt and so will Canada as a whole."

#### APEC

There will be no need for the prime minister and his senior officials to make the exhausting flight across the Pacific to attend the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in New Zealand the week of Nov. 8. The summit's host decided to make the gathering a virtual one a long time ago because of fears that the arrival of thousands of officials, journalists and other APEC strap-hangers would spike a major outbreak of COVID.

Despite being a virtual summit, it will nonetheless put a spotlight on Canada's policies towards the region. Under the previous Liberal government, Global Affairs Canada struggled for months, if not years, to craft a cabinet document outlining a new strategy towards the Indo-Pacific. The document was blessed by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's cabinet earlier this year, though its contents were not made public.

Canada's China policy has been in the deep freeze for several years as a direct result of the imprisonment of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor — the "Two Michaels" as they are known — in retaliation



for Canada's arrest of senior Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou at the request of U.S. authorities who wanted to put her on trial in the United States. Although the United States and China are in a new Cold War, it is quite different from the Cold War of the last century.

China's imperial ambitions appear to be limited — at least for now — to gaining control over Hong Kong, Taiwan and the South China Sea. Political ideology (Marxism-Leninism-Maoism) has taken a back seat in China's ambitious Belt and Road initiative, which is driven more by its desire to expand its economic linkages and project strategic influence than promoting its own authoritarian system of governance. In fact, China's popularity with developing nations is based on the fact that its aid and investments come with few strings attached, unlike Western democracies whose aid is tied to the promotion of liberal values and democracy.

What is also different about this new Cold War is that although the United States and China are military rivals and economic competitors, they are also each other's most important, though uneven, trading partners. As Bloomberg News reported, "China and the U.S. are shipping goods to each at the briskest pace in years, making the world's largest bilateral trade relationship look as if the protracted tariff war and pandemic never happened." The U.S. trade deficit, despite former President Donald Trump's tariffs and his table thumping over Hong Kong, Taiwan, Chinese cyber-attacks and human rights, hasn't put a dent in the trillions worth of goods that the U.S. buys from China. In 2020, U.S. exports to China were US \$125.5 billion whereas imports from China were US \$434.7 billion.

At the APEC Summit, Canada has a major opportunity to showcase its plans to boost trade, investment and people-to-people ties with Southeast Asia's fastest growing economies, which include Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore. Free-trade talks with India (which have proven difficult because India is a limited market economy and is still encumbered by rigid labour laws, excessive bureaucracy and protectionism) must continue. But if there is to be any prospect of reaching a deal, there will have to be top-level political engagement on the file. The government also needs a proper China strategy. Canada can't ignore the Chinese market, which, within a decade, will surpass the United States' in size alone. China's strong growth prospects and its rapidly budding middle class will



Shown here is the informal leaders' retreat, hosted by New Zealand in July. The APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting will take place virtually, the week of Nov. 8.



Canada's China policy has been in the deep freeze as a direct result of the imprisonment of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor — the "Two Michaels" as they are known — in retaliation for Canada's arrest of senior Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou, shown here, at the request of U.S. authorities who wanted to put her on trial in the U.S. All three were recently released.

stimulate its demand for commodities that are Canadian strengths — canola oil, pork, wheat, potash, etc., and energy resources such as liquefied natural gas, oil and uranium. Sitting as it does at the centre of many of the world's key supply chains, China, as Bloomberg reports, will "drive global economic growth as the world recovers from a pandemic that's killed [4.5] million people... and contribute more than one-fifth of the total increase in the world's gross domestic product in the [next] five years."

China is Canada's second biggest export market and there is ample room for further growth. However, the government will have to move deftly to repair relations now that it has secured the release of the Two Michaels. A proper strategic rethink of Canada's bilateral relationship with China should be based on accommodating mutual economic interests without compromising fundamental differences on values or genuine security concerns.

This is a tall order for any government at the best of times. But in the COVID-racked world we are living in now, the government cannot afford to drag its feet or stick with the status quo.

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



## Bruce Aylward, head of the WHO's ACT Accelerator program 'These are always hard times. This is a Churchillian moment we're looking for here'

Epidemiologist Bruce Aylward is the senior adviser on organizational change to the WHO's director general. He's also a Canadian from Newfoundland, and has spent his career in public health, much of it at the WHO, where he's held various positions, including special representative of the director general for the Ebola response. He also led the WHO's global response to Zika virus. In February 2020, WHO director general Tedros Adhanom asked him to lead the WHO-China Joint Mission on Coronavirus Disease. In the midst of the fourth wave, he spoke with *Diplomat* editor Jennifer Campbell.

**Diplomat magazine:** Canada was the only G7 country slated to draw from COVAX's vaccine supply in the program's first allotment. Were you disappointed in Canada when it accessed COVAX vaccines?

**Bruce Aylward:** Every leader is going to do what they deem most important to protect the populations of their countries. They are elected by the people of their countries, they put mechanisms in place to take care of their health first and then broader populations subsequently. It's [not] my position to judge why and what leaders will do in that position, especially knowing the Canadian government, with its incredibly deep and sincere commitment to multilateral action and to helping the vulnerable. They've been fantastic champions of that. If there's a situation in which they do something not to run directly in line with that, at a certain point, you have to say the leaders are doing what they deem they were elected to do for their people.

We also have to look forward. Our goal is to get 40 per cent of the world vaccinated by the end of this year and then 70 per cent by the end of next year. We're going to need everyone working together to get to those [goals] and Canada has been a fantastic partner in getting us this far — getting COVAX set up and vaccines [in

arms.] We're looking forward to continuing to work with Canada to get everyone else vaccinated. That same sort of ambition they have for the people of Canada, we need that everywhere else, too, to get people vaccinated.

Today, we're just over 30 per cent of the world's population vaccinated. Over 40 per cent of the world's population has one dose. It's just extraordinary less than a year after the vaccine was invented. In Africa, those numbers are 2 per cent and 4 per cent and that's what we need to change and we need Canada's help massively on that.

COVAX works. I keep telling people we have a fantastic vehicle. We can get vaccines anywhere as rapidly as possible. We have no-fault compensation for 92 countries, on-the-ground assistance in 150 countries, a footprint for UNICEF and the WHO. The machinery all works and it's unprecedented — there's never been anything like it before. But, not everybody wants to play ball and countries like Canada and the G7 have to, first and foremost, make sure manufacturers prioritize COVAX. That's the bottom line.

**DM:** What was the COVAX policy that allowed Canada to tap those vaccines that were supposed to be for poorer countries?

**BA:** COVAX is a pretty unique construct and remember, this is the first time in history where you've tried to do something where you've brought together high-income, low-income, middle-income countries into a single mechanism to pool procurement. When we set up COVAX, there was no vaccine.

At that point, we were trying to reduce risk for everyone, pool procurement, optimize prices and supply and that requires high-, upper- and low-income countries to all be part of it. When we started COVAX, we had the participation of the AMC countries [92 low- and middle-income countries] that will get donated doses, but we also needed the participation of the other countries, which have to buy doses. With their downpayments and optioning





of doses, that provides a [framework] that you can use to help set the deals with manufacturers that will help benefit the entire facility.

What we do is work with high-income and middle-income countries as self-financing participants, so, under the legal terms and conditions and because they're spending taxpayer money, they had to have a guarantee that they would be eligible for vaccines just like all other countries. Otherwise, you could end up in a situation where they all come in, but then decide that they want to serve these countries, or those countries.

Way back in the beginning, there had to be protections for all countries to be able to access vaccines and that's why. The whole world was vulnerable because nobody had seen this virus before. The threat was in every single country. The threat was rapidly becoming omnipresent. Everyone was at risk, so what we worked on was how to roll things out, which meant proportional distribution to everyone who was part of [COVAX.] What we didn't expect when we set up COVAX — there were some countries that had bilateral deals going into it and we kind of grandfathered those in — was the proliferation of bilateral deals subsequently. It's not just high-income countries, because manufacturers have chosen not to prioritize COVAX and they've continued to do bilateral deals with everyone else at a higher price and all sorts of other conditions, and frankly have not been [acting] in the best interests of the global population. I get really frank about this these days. It'll probably be the last job I ever have.

That's the great thing about working for someone like Tedros [Adhanom, director general of the WHO.] He is all about equity. He's the moral compass on that piece of the response. This man just never loses sight of the fact that a person anywhere has to have the same degree, same rules of the game across the board. That's why he's looking at [whether] we need a treaty or an international treaty and [whether] we need to make it binding, because this doesn't work. We put the best possible mechanism in place, everyone agrees it's the right thing, but no one wants to play ball. As a result, there are hundreds of billions of dollars in profit.

**DM:** How does a country balance the health of its citizens and faltering jobs/economy with the needs of countries already disadvantaged financially and with COVID overwhelming their poor health-care systems?

**BA:** It's a great question. Of course, we all say our older populations and health-care workers should be prioritized, which is really a moral argument to a certain degree. But we also have leading economists [speaking.] [British economist] Lord Jim O'Neill, whom I've worked with a lot on the economics of this, spoke at a meeting of G20 finance ministers and said 'Folks, this is the economic no-brainer of our time' — just the return on investment to finance this thing and to equitably distribute the vaccines. We're in an interconnected economy. Our sup-

the Delta virus, which is roaring through populations and we are going to continue to see a march of this virus becoming more transmissible. When I trained, half of my epidemiology course didn't know what an R-naught [which measures the transmissibility of a disease] was. Now half the world does.

The R-naught of the Delta is five, which means this thing is moving twice as fast, at least. You look at what is the right thing to do, what economically makes sense, because your economies are crushed in this whole thing, and then from a security



Bruce Aylward (centre), visits Sierra Leone when he was assistant director general of the World Health Organization (WHO) in charge of the operational response on Ebola. He's shown with Ismail Ould Cheikh, special representative to the UN secretary general.

ply chains, our markets — everything is interconnected and there's been some really good economic research that's come out. Look at the IMF's recent report that says there will be \$9 trillion in forgone economic growth if we don't vaccinate equitably around the world and that [the] \$9 trillion forgone is in high-income and upper-middle-income countries across the board, so you have the economic argument.

We didn't listen to the moral argument, we didn't listen to the economic argument so then the virus started to tell us: 'Look, if you don't get this under control everywhere, I am going to evolve, I am going to mutate and everything you're doing is going to be for naught.' So here we are with

perspective, what makes sense. And this ticks every single box. This means leaders standing up and explaining it to their populations and explaining it to other leaders. These are always hard times. This is a Churchillian moment we're looking for here. When we had the banks fail and then we had the giant financial stimuli that got us out of that crisis, it was because [then-British prime minister] Gordon Brown stood up and said 'This is what we have to do.' It was unpopular and incredibly expensive, but it got us out of the worst financial crisis we'd faced since the Depression.

This is how you control this pandemic. It comes back to 'What have we learned?' You need a set of rules for the game to





The Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator is a partnership of governments, health organizations, scientists, businesses, civil society and philanthropists, established in April 2020 to speed up an end to the COVID-19 pandemic by accelerating the development, equitable allocation and scaled-up delivery of vaccines, tests and treatments to reduce mortality and severe disease.



To date, the ACT-Accelerator has received commitments of US \$18.1 billion. Of that figure, US \$12.5 billion has flowed to the COVAX pillar. Canada has committed US \$552 million to COVAX and also pledged to share 40,700,000 vaccine doses with COVAX.

make it easier for people to be the people they want to be. Everyone wants to help the vulnerable. Everyone wants to get out

of this. Everyone finds it difficult to make the hard decisions. But guess what? That's why you have international treaties and

laws that tell us even which side of the road to drive on. It's to help us be a better person.

**DM:** Do you have suggestions for how the WHO could have done a better job in the early months of the pandemic?

**BA:** That's an easy question for me. These are the things you go back and look at when the fire is out and ask what you need to do differently. I have one advantage in that I wasn't running this crisis. I had moved from 30 years in infectious disease hazards and humanitarian emergencies to helping our director general run the transformation of the WHO. When I was asked to go out to China in early February 2020 and I was trying to understand what was going on and get myself up to speed, I read some of the early WHO outbreak newsletters. They were fantastic. They were out warning the world about this thing. I remember reading the early material and the referencing of precautions for severe respiratory infection. Even though they didn't know yet if it was human-to-human transmission, they were taking a no-regrets approach to advising the world. The big question was 'Would the world listen?'

On our side, I think it's [a case of] how do we amplify our early concerns, because we're telling the world stuff it doesn't want to hear. Nobody wants to hear that this is a risky pathogen, this is something you've got to take seriously.

When I came out of China in February 2020, we had just four big recommendations and they were really straightforward. And were they followed? No. I think the real question is going to be how do you really amplify these early alarms and get them taken seriously?

But I think you're still talking to us in the heat of the battle, so you're never going to get the thoughtful looking back that we will have with the benefit of time. People forget that every time we run a crisis, we have an after-action review that goes back and looks at what we could have done differently every step of the way. And they're really hard-hitting about what we could have done better. But you don't do it in the heat of battle.

**DM:** What most impressed you about the co-operation you saw during the pandemic?

**BA:** From the individual level to the community level where I live, to the inner-state and the international level, I saw greatness and goodness across the board at every single level. Think about



the small things. I live in a part of the world where people were clapping in the evening for health-care workers. These were beautiful gestures. When I came out of China, I was working with various different countries, so keen to understand what each other were learning. At the WHO, one of our greatest assets is our ability to convene. One of the things closest to me was the ACT Accelerator, which I run. This is an extraordinary type of co-operation and collaboration.

We've taken 10 leading agencies — such as WHO, UNICEF, the World Bank, GAVI, UNIFUND, Gates Foundation — and we said we're going to need a massive war effort. We've had these 10 agencies repurpose to try to advance these agendas and create new institutions like COVAX out of thin air. Those things have been inspiring. There are little things I see: With these agencies, they're running big multilateral operations, but every Thursday evening, 6:30 and 8 p.m., they're on a Zoom call with me, looking at what are the crucial issues we need to be cracking on for next week. This is a year and a half of this.

What's impressed me? The degree of collaboration, openness, co-operation and [the willingness] to share ideas and work toward really novel solutions.

**DM:** What most disappointed you?

**BA:** I don't know if disappoint is the right word because I don't really [get] disappointed. What's impressed me in a different way is how hard it is to solve equity. It comes in when you have scarcity of resources. Every political leader wants to do right on all fronts. Manufacturers want their vaccines used all over the world. They all say this, but it's really hard to achieve. I'm super impressed — call it disappointed — with how hard it is to solve the problem, despite the fact that it morally, economically and from a health security perspective made sense. If that's all so hard, you need new rules of the game to make it easier for people. It's like wanting to be a good citizen. We have a bunch of laws that make it easier: you can't murder people, you have to pay your taxes, drive on the right side of the road... we're going to need that for a pandemic. That's why [Adhanom] keeps coming back to this idea of a treaty. I've been most impressed in the wrong way by how hard people have found it to share.

These are life-saving interventions nine months after they first went into a human. Nine months later, we've used six billion

doses. In the Americas, 40 per cent are vaccinated with two doses; in the western Pacific, it's 40 per cent; in Europe, 40 per cent. In Africa, it's 2 per cent. How is that possible without a certain amount of intent, if you've got COVAX that solves that problem?

You've got all these people who say they want to be successful — manufacturers, high-income countries, producing countries. How can Africa have 2 per cent? Clearly the words aren't being matched by the action. We've got to come forward with rules as we go forward. People have

donations are great, but we really need countries to step out of the queue and take a place at the back. It's as simple as that. Today, manufacturers are shipping doses to high-income countries and they're saying they can't ship to [COVAX] because they have to service those high-income countries first. Then the high-income country says they have too many doses so they'll donate to COVAX. In the meantime, imagine the transaction costs and the time. So we get them late, they have expiry dates, we send them to the Congo. They can't use them. And the world com-



COVAX is one of the ACT Accelerator's four pillars. The other three are tests, treatments and health systems.

said money was part of the problem and that we were late getting contracts in place with manufacturers. But you can't sign a contract until you have the money. And guess who signed contracts before we got the money we had to raise from those same countries? But that's not the whole issue because the reality is that a lot of those 6 billion doses were bought and sold long after we had contracts in place for COVAX. So the question has to go back to the manufacturers: Why is it so hard for you to serve COVAX? What is it that scares you so much about a multilateral mechanism that makes sure everybody gets what they need.

That's why governments are so important, why Canada is so important. The

plains because Congo can't use the doses [in the three-week period before they expire.]

**DM:** *The New York Times* recently reported that 'COVAX stands half a billion doses short of its goal and that poor countries are dangerously unprotected as the Delta variant runs rampant, which is just the scenario that COVAX was created to prevent.' Can you comment on that?

**BA:** Last week, on Monday, Airfinity came out with a report that said it estimates that high-income countries — G7-plus — will have 1.3 billion doses more than they need to vaccinate their populations this year, including booster shots. So, they said 400 million they'd donate





Prime Minister Justin Trudeau earned some criticism early on when he announced Canada would be taking vaccines from the COVAX program to vaccinate its own people. But Canada has since made up for that transgression and is now among the top donors to COVAX.



Tedros Adhanom, director-general of the World Health Organization, always has vaccine equity at the top of his agenda, says his colleague, Bruce Aylward.

to COVAX — what about the rest? On Tuesday, the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers & Associations came out with an article that said this was a great triumph of science with all these vaccines and ‘We have great coverage in all these countries. Now we need to look at equity.’ Sorry — you don’t look at equity after you’ve vaccinated the rich people. What they said was that there’s enough to vaccinate the world. On Wednesday, COVAX comes

out and says because the manufacturers can’t meet their commitments, we have to downgrade what we can ship by 500 million doses, or 25 per cent of our portfolio. That’s the world we’re living in right now.

Who can solve this? Political leaders. They run the countries that buy the vaccines that the manufacturers depend on, so it’s got to be a collaborative effort.

**DM:** And that brings us to the Biden virus

summit. What are your hopes for outcomes from that?

**BA:** The summit’s fantastic. You’ve got one of the most powerful countries in the world standing up and saying we are getting behind the WHO’s target that 70 per cent of the population should be vaccinated by the middle of next year to get us out of this crisis. [Except] we don’t want to wait until the middle of next year. It’s great that such an important country that’s been so successful in the development of vaccines and really scaling [up] their manufacturing is now going to say ‘We’re buying into that goal, plus getting testing rates up where they need to be and getting oxygen up and we want the world to get behind those goals and agree as we go forward to work with us on those commitments.’ This is the kind of leadership we so welcome.

We have the ACT Accelerator and WHO’s big targets for the world — what we want to see in terms of vaccination and testing and oxygen is to get to a fair and equitable world where everybody’s got a shot. You can’t be penalized because you were born in a country that can’t access the vaccines because of its financial, political or other reality. That’s what we’re trying to solve for. That’s what the WHO is all about. It’s not just because it’s the right thing to do, it’s also how you solve a public health problem. The U.S. will amplify those calls and get countries to make those commitments.

Regarding the manufacturers, we’re going to have to work with them. We’ll have to say ‘to get the additional nearly two billion doses we need for low-income countries, we’re going to need this much from each one of you guys.’ They’re going to come back and say, ‘We can’t give that to you because of this contract here, or here or here.’ Then we’ll need countries to say ‘We’re willing to give up or swap our position in the queue so we can help the world catch up.’

The world is making 1.5 billion doses of vaccine a month now so [we need] all the places with a lot of vaccinations [to] step out of line for five weeks and let the rest of the world catch up. The summit is just the start. It will lay the groundwork.

This is why Canada is so important. It’s part of the G7, G20, the World Health Assembly. These big forums have to be used to bring together the political leadership to say ‘How are we doing?’ We can bring them together, but that accountability is something we’ll need from these guys. Biden has such an incredibly powerful podium.



**DM:** Anything you want to add?

**BA:** This is just such a giant issue. I've been in this for 30-plus years, in disease eradication — polio, Zika, or the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. I've been through a lot of these and I have to say I'm still stunned by what a triumph on the one hand that we have vaccines and the international effort on that, but the challenge of sharing scarce life-saving vaccines [stuns me, too.] If we could get just 10 per cent of the population in Africa covered, you would be covering everyone over the age of 60 because of the demographic. [In May] when [Tedros Adhanom] sent out his target of 10 per cent coverage by the end of September, everyone said 'That's not ambitious enough.' I said, 'Tedros, that's going to be a massive lift.' And today we're at 2 per cent in Africa. This is why the summit is so important and why we need world leaders out there.

**DM:** One more question, tell me about leading the WHO-China joint mission on coronavirus disease.

**BA:** It was fantastic, absolutely incredible. Always, when you go into a situation like this, you're trying to understand an outbreak. With China, the opportunity to

work with so many different parts of [the country] and an international team, in the middle of this massive crisis they were trying to manage and working with the China CDC, the Chinese physicians who were dealing with this first-hand — I got great insights into this country. Last time I'd been there was 20 years before and China has changed.

It was such an honour to lead a team of 26 and 27 people, which was half from Chinese institutions and half from international institutions. The insights, the brains and experience — it was fantastic. We said, 'We need to go to this area, to see a rural area, we need to see a densely populated area and we need to go to Wuhan to see what it's like at the epicentre of this.' And China — at that time and I'm not saying it in the current context — worked really hard with us to understand for China and then help the world understand what this virus was, what they were doing in response, was it making any difference, what do we have to do next? We had three or four big questions we had to answer. It was incredibly hard, because you're trying to solve hard problems with something very new, with very few anchor points, and then to distil all of what we saw to help the world as

it went forward. It was an extraordinary opportunity. [We saw] what China was doing. This [may have been] a respiratory pathogen and they were using contact tracing, [which usually doesn't work,] but they were making it work. The most amazing thing that struck me was the perspective of individuals. [The Chinese] like to engage as much as they can and the incredible personal sense of responsibility in Asia and China was just stunning. It was very difficult, but at the end of the day, the mission was a success. We understood as much as anyone could about what was working; we also understood what was not understood as well. You spend your lifetime in this business preparing for those missions.

[Final comment]: Canada has been a very important contributor to the ACT Accelerator and COVAX. It was a great champion right from the very beginning, but also Canada put its money where its mouth is. Canada is one of the highest per cent fair-share donors. It's one of four or five countries — up there with Germany, Norway and Saudi Arabia — in going that extra mile. We talked about why Canada didn't do this or that, but we wouldn't be where we are without Canada. ■

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# Rural Zanzibar's climate change lessons for the world

By Monica Allaby

**E**arlier this month, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its latest report on climate change and UN Secretary General António Guterres called it a “code red for humanity.”

What gives our team at Community Forests International hope is that we all know the causes of this crisis — and we also know the solutions. Too often, complex global challenges lack this same level of clarity. More important though, the small island communities we have the privilege of working alongside are adapting and responding to this crisis despite challenges that most of us in Canada can't even really imagine. We have witnessed these efforts first-hand through our work in Zanzibar, Tanzania, over the past decade.

In 2006, Mbarouk Mussa Omar — a community leader and climate activist on Pemba Island, Zanzibar — befriended Jeff Schnurr, a young Canadian tree-planter who was travelling in the region. Mussa Omar had a vision to bring back Pemba Island's lost forests, and Schnurr was inspired to help him any way he could. Local community groups quickly stepped up to get involved and establish tree nurseries, and when the next tree-planting season arrived in Canada, a growing team of young Canadians helped to raise money to support their efforts in tree planting camps across the country. Community Forests International and our local partner organization, Community Forests Pemba, emerged from these simple acts of solidarity.

Our work was built on mutual respect, trust and friendship, which remain the foundation of the partnership to this day. Our two organizations work closely together on community-led projects that range from agroforestry and tree-planting, to ethical trade and women's economic empowerment. While Community Forests Pemba oversees programs and a team of expert field staff, Community Forests International helps secure the resources that allow their work to grow. To date, we have directly helped upwards of 58,000 people in more than 50 communities.

The success of our work in Zanzibar inspired Community Forests International to establish an office and introduce



Mbarouk Mussa Omar, executive director of Community Forests Pemba, visits a community-owned and-operated tree nursery.

programming in Eastern Canada in 2010. While the regions we work in are home to unique ecosystems, cultures and challenges, we have learned that the most successful solutions to the climate crisis benefit ecosystems and the people directly connected to them. Applying lessons from Zanzibar back here at home has enabled Community Forests International to build one of Canada's first forest carbon projects, and to create new ways of working with forests to generate community and climate benefits.

Today, the Community Forest network is growing. We recently expanded to Mozambique and continue to scale up our climate action activities across Zanzibar, with a second local office and doubling of our team size there. Working alongside colleagues at Community Forests Pemba, our efforts have now directly benefited 7 per cent of the island's population and increased income for more than 80 per cent of the people we support.

In early 2020, as the profound challenges of a global pandemic and accelerating climate change combined in challenging ways, with political turmoil in Tanzania and Zanzibar, we were reminded that building food and income security for greater climate resilience also helps build community strength and resilience against any crisis that may arise. Inspired by the

results of our most successful climate-adaptation efforts, the European Union awarded our organization a new four-year contract to deliver our greatest programs to more people and communities in the region.

This initiative is now allowing Community Forests Pemba to team up with new partners, such as the Tanzania Media Women's Association and the People's Development Forum to expand our climate-smart agriculture and forestry projects, while empowering women and youth to earn a living as they strengthen the health of their environment.

The innovations that our work has generated are increasingly needed around the world today. Our partners in Zanzibar have taught us that sustainable change is community-led change, and that fostering strong relationships between people and forests is critical to ensuring a climate-secure future. The IPCC made it clear that we need to act fast. Communities in Zanzibar have proven it's possible to work with nature — even on small islands, in one of the most climate-vulnerable regions of the world.

Monica Allaby is the communications adviser for Community Forests International, which is headquartered in Sackville, N.B.



# Filling an acute need for arriving Afghan refugees

**W**hen Sarah Harvey heard that Afghan refugees, fleeing the now Taliban-run state, were coming to Canada, her mind immediately turned to her friend Arian Ahmadi. Harvey is the head of the Heads of Mission Spouses Association (HOMSA) and Ahmadi is a member of its steering committee and wife of Afghan Ambassador Hassan Soroosh.

"We've all been very conscious of what life is like for her now," Harvey says of Ahmadi, who was born in Canada to Afghan parents. "She's been in contact with the local Afghan community and discovered they need all kinds of supplies because the refugees are arriving."

Harvey knew that in addition to collecting used clothing for refugees arriving just as Canadian winter nears, the volunteers would need a place to store the goods.

"We have a very large basement and I offered it to them," Harvey says. "They said 'yes, please.' My basement looks like a department store and I have the real pleasure of working with 12 local Afghan Canadians, some of whom were refugees themselves. They come to my house to sort and then to distribute to the families in the hotels."

Harvey figured it was a simple way she could help out. As she puts it: "It's not everyone who lives in a large residence." Asked if she had to go through any official New Zealand channels to get the okay to offer the space, she said "the official channel is my husband — he said yes."

As a founding member of the Afghan Canadian Support Network, Ahmadi was pleased to be able to link the Ottawa Afghan community with the city's diplomatic corps — especially when people such as Harvey stepped up to help.

Harvey doesn't usually work in the basement alongside the volunteers because they tend to speak an Afghan language among themselves and she doesn't want to slow them down by requiring them to speak English. Instead she supports them in other ways. For example, one night in early October, knowing they were coming to her home straight from their day jobs, she asked them to let her feed them dinner.

"I offered to prepare a meal so they can be more efficient," she says. "I'm just a support. It's a privilege to get to eat with



The Afghan-Canadian Support Network is working towards a better future for our newcomers through resettlement programs. From left to right (front row): Zahira Sarwar, Allaha Balouch, Tamana Shekib and Malala Mehraban. Back row from left, Bassel Kaddoura, Mina Nazir, Barin Habibi and Naheed Housany.




Sarah Harvey, centre, and her friend, Sue Carlton, right, prepared a meal for the members of the Afghan-Canadian Support Network, who are working in the basement of the residence she shares with her husband, New Zealand High Commissioner Martin Harvey, left.

them and hear their stories."

One woman, for example, arrived in Sherbrooke, Que., as a refugee and now has the distinction of speaking Farsi, English and French. "She's now a social worker and is very adept at co-ordinating this group," Harvey says.

The Afghan Canadian Support Network needs warm winter clothing and,

most acutely, winter coats to fit men and teenage boys. It is also looking for space such as rental properties and a warehouse to store donated goods until they can be handed out.

Donors with questions can send an email to [acsn.ottawa@gmail.com](mailto:acsn.ottawa@gmail.com) or Afghan Canadian Support Network on Instagram. 



# Brazil and Canada: diverse and lasting partnership



*By Pedro Henrique Lopes Borio*

**S**ince 1866, with the opening of the first Canadian trade office in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and Canada have worked together to improve bilateral trade and investments based on a set of shared values. This year, both countries celebrate the 80th anniversary of the establishment of formal diplomatic relations. The traditional and significant bilateral exchanges were critical during the pandemic as trade and investment flows showed resilience amid turbulence and maintained a solid upward trend.

Brazil is the largest economy in Latin America and 12th in the world, with a GDP of about US \$1.45 trillion in 2020. The country is home to a diverse economy, ranging from commodities to aerospace. Brazil is the third largest exporter of agricultural products, therefore, like Canada, a key actor in feeding the world, with a highly mechanized and technological yield that brings together productivity and sustainability.

The Brazilian government is committed to continuing to improve the country's business environment and facilitating foreign investment and international trade. Extensive tax reform is under discussion to simplify and modernize the rules. Numerous new partnerships with the private sector are also on the way, notably in infrastructure projects, such as roads, railroads, ports, airports, sanitation and water treatment, frequently with Canadian participation.

Canada has been a close partner in all these efforts. The Canadian public and private investment funds have been successfully present in Brazil for more than a century and remain key sources for financing companies in a vast array of sectors, now including renewable energy, such as



Brazil is the largest economy in Latin America and 12th in the world, with a GDP of about US \$1.45 trillion in 2020.

solar panels and windmills.

Brazil and its partners of Mercosur (Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay) are also negotiating a number of free trade agreements with many other countries, with Canada on top of that group. Such a deal with Canada will expand the trade of goods and services and enhance the environment for investments.

The pandemic effects on the world economy are widely known, and tourism was one of the most affected sectors. In 2019, Brazil introduced the electronic visa for Canadians, with facilitated process and reduced costs. Original estimates of an increase in the flow of tourists could not be achieved so far due to travel restrictions, but Brazil expects that more Canadians will soon benefit from the expedient visa process and visit our country.

The flow of students from Brazil to Canada has also been severely affected. Canada is one of the main destinations for Brazilian students abroad: In 2017, more than 23,000 Brazilian students enrolled in Canadian universities, colleges and language courses. In addition to the enriching academic experience, such exchanges promote closer human connections and understanding and they will continue. Recently, Canada has included Brazil in the "Student Direct Stream" program, expediting the flow of Brazilian students to Canada.

As mentioned, bilateral trade and investments have shown impressive resilience during the pandemic. In 2020, Brazil-Canada trade accounted for US

\$6.03 billion, an increase of 6.9 per cent from 2019. Brazil's exports to Canada include mainly gold, inputs for aluminum, sugar from sugarcane, semi-manufactured goods of iron and steel and coffee beans. Canada's exports to Brazil include mainly potassium for fertilizers, aircraft, coal, ethylene, medicine and wheat. An example of the investments in the last year was the acquisition of CEDAE, a Rio de Janeiro water treatment company, by a consortium of a Brazilian company and a Canadian investment fund. Likewise, another Canadian fund invested in expanding the wind farms "Complexo dos Ventos do Piauí e do Araripe," in the Brazilian Northeast, the largest in the country, with a capacity of one million watts.

The traditional and close economic ties between Brazil and Canada stem from continuous and persistent efforts from both sides. There is vast untapped potential for further co-operation and more trade, investment and personal exchanges. The expected free trade agreement between Mercosur and Canada will trigger new opportunities, advancing a well-established economic relationship. Other initiatives geared towards reactivating the flows of tourists, professionals and academics will certainly boost the Brazil-Canada partnership and continue to help overcome the challenges of the pandemic.

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# Estonia: A strong digital economy



By *Toomas Lukk*

**T**hirty years after its re-establishment of independence, Estonia has become one of the fastest growing economies in Central and Eastern Europe, and a place where quick and successful reforms, economic westernization, innovation and openness to foreign capital have attracted numerous international companies.

Estonia has attracted FDI and enjoys some of the highest international credit ratings. Entrepreneurship indicators place Estonia in the same category as the Scandinavian countries. Its 2021 economic freedom score makes Estonia's economy the 8th most free in the world.

Canada was Estonia's 25th top foreign trade partner and the 9th biggest outside the European Union (EU) in 2020. Estonia's foreign trade balance with Canada was positive. However, COVID-19 has had an instant and strong impact on bilateral trade as exports from Estonia to Canada have decreased by 25.5 per cent compared to the previous year.

Estonia's main exports to Canada were refined petroleum products, followed by yeasts and other micro-organisms, and communication equipment. Estonia's main imports were precious and semi-precious stones and jewelry, various food products and electrical equipment and machinery, such as wood processing machines and computers.

Today, the world is concentrated on economic recovery while being mindful of weaknesses in global trade flows and threats from disrupted supply and value chains. The pandemic challenges the role of globalization in international trade and may have already reshaped it. A growing services economy along with digital and green transformations also affect the



Since it re-established independence 30 years ago, Estonia has become one of the fastest growing economies in Central Europe.

world's economic production and trading patterns. Post-pandemic co-operation models require a global vision.

International trade agreements provide a good framework to enhance such co-operation. The EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) is "the most ambitious trade agreement the EU has ever concluded." It has driven trade between EU member states and Canada since its provisional application in 2017, in spite of slowdowns in COVID.

Approximately 100 Estonian companies export to Canada, and 80 per cent of them are small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs.) CETA helps them reach markets and eliminate duties, provides a level playing field and sets clear and unambiguous procurement rules.

CETA also covers sustainable development and the environment, helping to achieve green transformation goals. Yet, it is about more than just trade. It could be a template for dealing with complex trade issues in a post-pandemic world.

The digitalization of society and the incorporation of new technologies and business models using the potential of information technology may become a key factor in accelerating economic growth.

Innovation and IT play a central role in the Estonian economy. Combining elements of the old and new economies helps upgrade value chains in sectors such as forestry and oil shale. This is why the European Innovation Scoreboard 2021 classifies Estonia as a strong innovator.

The digital ambitions of Canada and Estonia have much in common. Canada's digital strategy aims to provide better digital services and improve cyber security. Estonia is already a recognized leader in digital identification, cyber security and Blockchain technology, having produced numerous innovations at government, enterprise and consumer levels. As the world stands on the doorstep of the fourth industrial revolution, it's clear the future of the manufacturing industry depends on digital solutions, too. Estonia and Canada can work together in realizing this strategic goal of building a secure, reliable and seamless digital society and industry.

Estonia's vibrant and welcoming startup community consists of more than 1,000 startups, including 7 unicorns. The startup community has an excellent record of successful innovations and investments, which have delivered outstanding returns to its founders and investors. That takes smart people with outstanding IT skills, and excellent entrepreneurial and competitive performance. A business-friendly environment and modern digital infrastructure create an ideal environment for innovation and testing. A compact domestic market makes the sector open to global ideas, growth and investment.

Canadian capital is welcome to be part of this ambitious ecosystem. Foreign citizens may join Estonia's e-Residency program, which provides a government-issued digital identity and access to Estonia's transparent business environment. E-resident entrepreneurs from all over the world can start their EU-based company and run it online without leaving their home. The Digital Nomad Visa allows remote workers to live in Estonia and work for their employer or their own company registered abroad. E-residency also serves people beyond Estonia's borders and the Digital Nomad Visa allows people around the world to choose how they work.

At Expo 2020 in Dubai, open from Oct. 1 to March 31, 2022, Estonia will take a step forward and present a nation of tomorrow reflecting three important keywords — digital, smart and sustainable.

**Toomas Lukk is Estonia's ambassador to Canada. Reach him at (613) 789-4222 or [embassy.ottawa@mfa.ee](mailto:embassy.ottawa@mfa.ee).**



# Mongolia aims to widen exports and draw investors



By *Ariunbold Yadmaa*

In 2016, Mongolia and Canada signed the Canada-Mongolia Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement, which provides a more transparent and predictable regulatory environment for Canadian investors in Mongolia. The agreement's strong protections help Canadian and Mongolian companies deepen commercial ties.

Investment-related laws and regulations of Mongolia render equal rights and opportunities to both foreign and domestic investors to run a business in Mongolia. There are no restrictions on trading foreign currencies and returning profits to their home country. The tax environment is internationally competitive and certain taxes can be stabilized through the issuance of a stabilization certificate as well as investment agreements.

Mongolia is a mineral-rich landlocked country encountering its biggest challenge of diversifying the economy with non-mining export products and accessing new market destinations. In 2020, Mongolia's GDP amounted to \$14.4 billion and growth averaged -5.3 per cent over the previous year, due to COVID-19. It is forecasted to recover in 2021, accelerate in 2022 as post-pandemic global recovery strengthens and reach 6 per cent by 2023.

Canada is the top-tier investor in the mining sector of Mongolia. One of the world's largest copper-gold deposits was discovered by a junior Canadian exploration company in Mongolia and it is now being developed into a multi-billion-dollar world-class mine, known as Turquoise Hill (Oyu Tolgoi). During the underground mine construction for this project, bilateral trade between the countries reached \$260 million, which



Oyu Tolgoi has one of the world's largest copper-gold deposits, which is being developed into a multibillion-dollar world-class mine.

was boosted by the import of machinery and equipment from Canada.

Several other TSX-listed Canadian companies are developing their projects in Mongolia. Mongolia-Canada ties in the mining sector are also bolstered by a cross-listing of TSX-listed companies' shares on the Mongolian Stock Exchange.

However, the volume of bilateral trade in other goods and services is far behind the above-mentioned mining-related co-operation. Canadian imports totalled \$27.7 million in 2020, which is 50 per cent lower than the previous year. The total value of goods sent from Mongolia to Canada was \$850,000. Mongolia exported cashmere products and prefabricated yurts and imported vehicle, machinery and their parts from Canada.

Mongolian yurts, the traditional dwellings of Central Asian nomads, are very popular in Canada. More than a tent, the yurt is the result of ancient know-how and has been developed over hundreds of years. Made to resist extreme climates, this circular domed abode is warm in the winter and cool in the summer.

Mongolian cashmere is known as one of the softest fibres in the world. Despite supplying 45 per cent of the unprocessed cashmere in the global market, only 10 per cent of final cashmere products with a "Made in Mongolia" label enter the global market. Recently, the Mongolian wool and cashmere association introduced a "Mongolian noble fibre" mark, which certifies that the product is made with 100-per-cent high quality wool and cashmere sustainably sourced from Mongolia.

The cashmere sector employed 10,000 in 2020, of which 90 per cent were women. Indeed, 52 per cent of total registered entities are women-led enterprises. It reflects a policy in which the government pays particular attention to giving women more equitable access to business.

Due to similar weather conditions, Canadian and Mongolian entrepreneurs in the construction and agriculture sectors could learn from each other and work well together. Given the importance of bilateral trade involving Canadian wooden structure building materials and technology, we are working closely with the Standards Council of Canada and other standards-developing organizations to adopt more Canadian standards.

Mongolia's farmers are interested in importing seeds of crop varieties, such as wheat, barley and buckwheat, that are suitable in Mongolian climate conditions. They also want to learn best practices for establishing feedlots, developing quality beef production, refining supply chains and exporting. Advanced agricultural technologies help Mongolia to diversify its exports.

In accordance with the recent amendments to banking laws, commercial banks in Mongolia will be publicly traded companies by 2023, with shares of each owner not exceeding 20 per cent. Canadian institutional investors are welcome to the banking sector of Mongolia. Transport, logistic services, aviation, online trading, information technologies, health, education, agriculture, forestry, wooden construction and tourism are also potential areas of prosperous business and sustainable investment.

In addition to the domestic laws and regulations, the friendly political and economic relations formed with our main market countries such as Russia, China, Japan and South Korea, as well as the agreements signed with these countries can be advantageous for investors operating in Mongolia. Mongolia, with its easy access to much of Asia, remains committed to welcoming Canadian investors.

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# 10 years on, the Pacific Alliance is still going strong

By Jorge Alberto Julian Londono de la Cuesta,  
Raul Eduardo Fernandez Daza,  
Juan Jose Ignacio Gomez Camacho  
and Roberto Rafael Max Rodriguez Arnilla

**C**olombia, Chile, Mexico and Peru — sister nations united by history, a common language and the vast Pacific Ocean — signed the “Declaration of Lima” on April 28, 2011, establishing a new integration scheme to achieve the free transit of goods, services, capital and people; promote greater growth, development and competitiveness of their economies; and become connected to the rest of the world, especially the Asia Pacific.

Today, 10 years after its creation, the Pacific Alliance is the regional integration mechanism that has accomplished the most achievements in the shortest amount of time, establishing a flexible and pragmatic integration space with a view towards deep integration, representing the eighth largest world economy, 41 per cent of Latin America’s GDP and 40 per cent of foreign direct investment in the region.

When the agreement came into force, 92 per cent of the goods imported and exported between the four countries had duty-free tariffs, which has contributed to productive supply chains in the region, allowing each member of the alliance to access supplies from the other three countries. Similarly, export, investment and tourism promotion activities have generated nearly US \$1 billion in business opportunities. This would not have been possible without initiatives aimed at facilitating trade, such as the interoperability of the foreign trade single windows, which save costs, time and facilitate business development among entrepreneurs by allowing them to process their certificates digitally.

For SMEs, the Pacific Alliance has established an ecosystem of entrepreneurship and innovation made up of networks of innovation agencies, investors, business accelerators and technology transfer offices, which has made it possible to unite the business community and develop innovation in member countries.

For SMEs, initiatives such as the entrepreneurial capital fund stand out. It has given startups financial support to grow and go global while establishing an



In April 2011, Colombia, Chile, Mexico and Peru signed the Declaration of Lima, establishing a new integration scheme to achieve the free transit of goods, services, capital and people and promote the greater growth, development and competitiveness of their economies.

ecosystem of entrepreneurship and innovation with accelerator agency networks, investors, innovation and technology, which has made it possible to unite the business community and develop innovation in member countries. Likewise, the Pacific Alliance Cooperation Fund has been established, with US \$1 million available to finance projects in various areas.

For the four member countries of the alliance, it is clear that deepening integra-

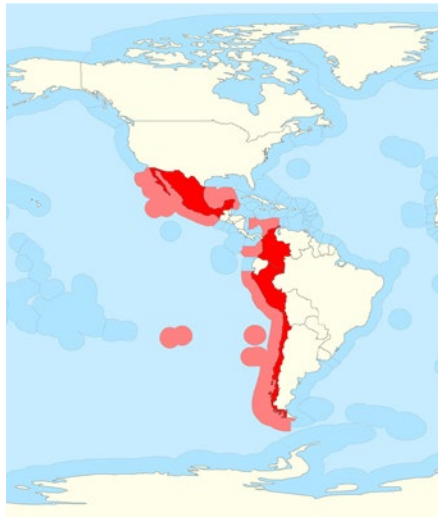
tion requires generating incentives for the creation of new ventures, especially in activities that are intensive in human capital. In this sense, the Pacific Alliance seeks to be a portal for the knowledge economy and a landing strip for future technological ventures in Latin America. For this reason, and with a view to what the economy and trade of the future will be like, during the last summit in Santiago de Chile, the countries’ presidents signed a declaration



on the development of the regional digital market (MDR) and the drive towards digital transformation. These initiatives seek to enable the free flow of digital products, goods and services that are marketed through the internet.

Characterized by its high degree of flexibility and pragmatism, the Pacific Alliance's achievements are reflected in student and academic scholarships, which have mobilized more than 3,000 students and teachers since 2013; the electronic exchange of certificates of origin and phytosanitary certificates through the foreign trade single window system; the free movement of permanent resident foreigners in the member countries; and active international relations through the network of 59 observer states and other regional initiatives, such as ASEAN, APEC, Mercosur, the Eurasian Economic Commission and the European Union.

Similarly, the Pacific Alliance has made important progress on the social and sustainable development agenda. In 2019, its four member states signed the Declaration on the Sustainable Management of Plastics, which reflects the importance of developing and implementing new policies to promote the integral management of this waste and reduce its presence in ecosystems.



As shown on the map, the Pacific Alliance stretches down the West Coast of North and South America. Its total area is 13,729,753 square kilometres.

In addition, in the coming weeks, the Social Observatory of the Pacific Alliance will identify the needs of the most vulnerable populations in the four countries and thereafter develop joint policies. Likewise, the promotion of gender equality and the permanent integration of women in the economy is fundamental for the Pacific Alliance. For this reason, on the occasion

of the Santiago Summit, the four states signed a statement and implemented a roadmap specifically aimed at promoting the autonomy and economic empowerment of women. Being inclusive of gender has been incorporated as a cross-cutting element in all the Pacific Alliance's work. Likewise, training programs have been developed for businesswomen and entrepreneurs in the region to strengthen their business skills, create contact networks and expand their export capacity.

The expansion of the Pacific Alliance is promising. Today, we are working with the 59 observer countries on various matters of co-operation. Also, we are signing joint statements with the EU, ASEAN and the EEC. Meanwhile, progress is being made to begin negotiations with associated states such as Singapore, and meetings are being held with Canada, New Zealand and Australia to establish a mutually beneficial association agreement with these countries. Meetings have started with Ecuador and it is expected that in the near future it will become the fifth member of the Alliance.

The Pacific Alliance shares common values and principles with Canada, as well as a similar vision of the global challenges our countries face during this health and economic crisis. Through Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan), important co-operation channels have been consolidated with the alliance, especially the Education for Employment Program of the Pacific Alliance (EPE-AP), a joint project that facilitates a three-party dialogue between the public sector, private sector and civil society to address the issue of environmental sustainability.

Despite these achievements, there is still a long way to go. Before the pandemic, intra-regional trade in Latin America and the Caribbean was barely 30 per cent, compared to other regions with higher rates, such as Europe (70 per cent) and Asia (60 per cent). In 10 years, the Alliance has achieved much for our countries, counting on the active participation of the private sector through the Business Council of the Pacific Alliance. However, there are new challenges today, in particular due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We can only overcome these challenges together. We must continue working together towards the construction of an alliance that is more integrated, more connected and more global every day to enhance our competitiveness and help us overcome inequalities, to benefit the 229 million citizens who reside in our four countries. ■



Pacific Alliance leaders haven't met lately because of the pandemic. This meeting took place in 2013. From left, then-Mexican president Enrique Peña Nieto, then-Colombian president Juan Manuel Santos, Chilean President Sebastián Piñera and then-Peruvian president Ollanta Humala.

# UAE: Home to the world's most sustainable city



**FIRST NAME:** Fahad Saeed M. A.

**LAST NAME:** Al Raqbani

**CITIZENSHIP:** Emirati

**NAMED AS AMBASSADOR::**  
Jan. 29, 2018

**PREVIOUS JOBS:** Senior adviser at Mubadala Investment Company, director-general of the Abu Dhabi Council for Economic Development.

The United Arab Emirates marks its Golden Jubilee this year, and while we are proud of our many accomplishments over the last 50 years, we have always had our eye on the future.

Our country is already home to the world's most sustainable city, where people move around in self-driving pod cars. We're also building an authentic Mars city in our desert — while developing an actual one on the red planet within 100 years — and already our firefighters are using jetpacks and robot surgeons are performing operations. In short, we are always looking forward.

The roots of our current innovative culture are found within our environment and history. With our harsh desert climate that includes almost no rainfall, a limited supply of fresh water and sparse arable land, we have always had to innovate to survive.

From the earliest of times, we sought innovative solutions to gain access to food and water. In fact, more than 3,000 years ago, we developed the world's earliest underground irrigation system, called "falaj," and trained falcons to hunt for our food.

Today, the UAE enjoys economic and political stability, a strong currency, high, world-class logistics infrastructure and progressive food and water policies. It is also a food-secure country that serves as a global food logistics hub.

However, with our growing population — currently at approximately 10 million — our rising consumption needs, which are growing at a 4 per cent annual rate, and the fact that approximately 90 per cent of our food is imported, the UAE established a portfolio of a minister of

state for food and water security.

Leading this ministry, Mariam bint Mohammed Al Mheiri has developed a comprehensive food security strategy to achieve year-round food self-sufficiency, increase our food nutritional level,

reduce our food waste and contribute to global food security.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been an invaluable time to take stock of our current food security policies and direction. Even during the height of the pandemic, we did not experience food shortages, we controlled food prices, and our food distribution systems ran extremely smoothly as a result of our government's insightful policies.

While food supply chains may have been challenged around the world during the pandemic, we actually witnessed flourishing trade relations between the UAE and Canada. Overall bilateral trade between our two countries increased by

17 per cent in 2020 over 2019 to more than \$2 billion, with the UAE continuing to stand as Canada's No. 1 trading partner in the Middle East & North Africa (MENA) region, with an additional \$30 billion of UAE investment in Canada.

UAE agricultural imports from Canada alone saw a dramatic increase of 42 per cent in 2020 from the year prior, with the UAE importing almost \$1 billion from Canada in this sector. Said in another way, this means agriculture made up almost half of the total bilateral trade between our two countries.

According to the Canola Council of Canada, canola seed exports alone from Canada to the UAE reached a record of \$607.9 million (in 2020) making the UAE one of the top five global buyers of Canada's canola seeds.

Likewise, Saskatchewan-UAE total bilateral trade increased by 65 per cent in 2020 from 2019, also making the UAE Saskatchewan's largest trading market in the MENA region, largely due to this robust trade in agriculture. To expand on these already strong relations, the government of Saskatchewan has announced it will open a trade office in the UAE in the fall of this year, with another Canadian province also expected to soon follow suit.

Turning to the transport systems that



Pure Harvest is a recognized leader in sustainable agriculture, growing year-round, pesticide-free fresh fruits and vegetables in the Middle East.



support this dynamic trade, it is interesting to note that even the logistics network to export Canadian products, such as Saskatchewan's canola, is operated by DP World, a UAE company that manages four container handling facilities in B.C. alone (Vancouver, Prince Rupert, Nanaimo and Fraser Surrey Docks, the latter having been acquired in February of last year.) DP World also manages other ports across Canada.

DP World is one of the largest marine terminal operators in the world, with more than 75 terminals located in more than 40 countries. The company has won countless awards for being the world's best and most efficient operator, including the 2020 prestigious Port Operator Award from Lloyd's List, a company that records shipping traffic at the world's major ports.

Yet another dynamic connection between DP World and Canada is the US \$8.2-billion investment partnership between DP World and Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec (CDPQ), in ports and terminals worldwide. This joint investment was expanded by US \$4.5 billion just last year from the original US \$3.7-billion agreement in 2016. This partnership has since grown to include a high-quality portfolio of 10 ports and terminals across the globe, including locations in Canada, Chile, the Dominican Republic and Australia.

Above and beyond our strong ports infrastructure and management, the UAE is also a world leader in the aviation sector, serving as home to seven of the world's top-ranked airports, and two internationally award-winning airlines — Etihad Airways and Emirates Airlines, both of which offer direct flights between Toronto and the UAE.

Our strong infrastructure also allows for the efficient flow of goods, including more than 45 free trading zones in the UAE. They play a significant role in promoting an attractive business environment for entrepreneurs that offers economic freedom to investors such as a tax-free package and world-renowned facilities.

Outside of the free trading zones, the UAE also recently approved legislation that allows for full foreign company ownership within certain categories, including the agricultural sector, which will reduce costs for companies and further attract foreign entrepreneurs.

Canadian companies registered in the UAE are also eligible to apply for the Mohammed Bin Rashid Innovation Fund, a federal government fund worth US \$545 million to finance innovation. This fund

supports resident individuals and companies of all sizes registered in the UAE, provided they offer unique and innovative ideas.

Canadian firms setting up operations in our Emirate of Abu Dhabi can also receive support from the Abu Dhabi Investment Office (ADIO), which enables opportuni-

where we welcome Canadian researchers, entrepreneurs, startups and industry experts to lead us into the future of the food industry, with my government now taking expressions of interest from around the world.

This new smart city will host four main clusters: agricultural technology and en-



Food Tech Valley will be an integrated modern city that will serve as a hub for future clean tech-based food and agricultural products in Dubai.

ties for domestic and foreign investors aligned with Abu Dhabi's economic priorities, including food security. Just in the last year, ADIO invested a total of US \$142.95 million in seven AgTech companies.

Another economic advantage for Canadian companies located in the UAE comes from our geographic positioning. With one third of the world living within a four-hour flight of the UAE, and this connectivity reaching more than 3.2 billion consumers in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East, the world is at your fingertips when you have a presence in the UAE.

Drawing upon the UAE as an international gateway to the world, and always striving for excellence, we are now pushing the boundaries of discovery and building a new futuristic city where clean high-tech meets global food demands.

Food Tech Valley will be an integrated modern city that develops alternative proteins, creates drought-resistant crops and uses 3D technology and robots to help sustain food production, create superfoods and provide answers to global food challenges. It will help us achieve our National Food Security Strategy 2051 objectives, and it will support a diversified knowledge-based economy.

It will serve as a global destination,

engineering, a food innovation centre, R&D facilities and an advanced smart food logistics hub, with 60 per cent of the project's space dedicated to vertical farming.

Bioengineering in aquaculture and hydroponics will be used to produce more than 300 varieties of crops. This will triple the UAE's food production while improving our nutrition and reducing food waste in a world where approximately one third of all food is wasted.

Another exciting and historic opportunity for international collaboration within the agricultural and agritech sector is through EXPO Dubai, where global markets come together.

From Oct. 1 to March 31, 2022, the UAE will host EXPO Dubai, where Canada will join more than 190 other participating countries to showcase Canadian business and investment, research, academic and cultural sectors, among others. Those include opportunities for the agrifood and agritech sectors, such as Gulfood in February.

We look forward to working in collaboration with knowledgeable Canadian partners in the agricultural sector to further enhance our national food security strategy, not only for the UAE, but in support of a sustainable, healthy, equitable and prosperous future for the next generation of our global community. ■





The ruins of Sinjar massacre marked the beginning of the genocide of Yazidis by the Islamic State.





# When church and state clash

Many governments oppress and even commit genocide against religious minorities — **Wolfgang Depner** lists some of the worst offenders.

**T**he sword and the word: These terms respectively describe the power of the state to make and enforce laws and the power of religion to shape millions of believers. What separates the West from the rest of the world is the (theoretically) strict separation between state and religion. It's a spirit that also infuses other Western institutions and ideas, including the diffusion of political power across separate but equal sources of authority with the rule of law governing them all, and the supremacy of empiricism over dogmatism.

As Heinrich August Winkler, author of the monumental four-volumed *A History of the West*, and others have argued, these characteristics have their roots — many ironically — in Christianity, itself combining the monotheism of Judaism with “pagan ideas” from antiquity.

Early Christians embraced an enduring universalism in opening their faith to all groups regardless of social status and previous religious beliefs and sharply distinguished between a worldly and heavenly sphere, to “render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s,” to quote the Gospel of Mark, a perspective that earned them violent persecution by the Roman Empire.

Christianity, of course, eventually became the religion of the empire and its successors. And yet the tension between the sword and the word never ceased. Certainly it continued in Western Europe, the geographic centre of Christianity after the spread of Islam through Asia and North Africa between the middle of the 7th and the middle of the 15th centuries, but before the European colonization of the Americas and beyond.

This tension (exacerbated by sectarianism within Christianity) sparked the religious wars that roiled Europe following the Protestant Reformation, climaxing in the continental catastrophe of the Thirty Years’ War (1618-48), which depopulated parts of continental Europe through war, famine and disease. But, as cynical as it might sound, this conflict also had positive consequences. It not only sparked the emergence of the modern nation-state, but also set the fuse on the slow but inevitable divorce of the political from the religious.

Prussia’s King Frederick the Great summarized this sentiment in the 18th Century when he told his subjects that they could prepare themselves for the afterlife in any way they pleased.

True, the European Enlightenment (with its anti-clerical spirit) also led to the anti-religious excess of the French Revolution, the Napoleonic period and ultimately the forced secularization of Eastern Europe during its Soviet period.

On the other hand, the 19th Century witnessed the ongoing perversion of Christianity in Western Europe in the form of colonialism abroad and stifling social policies at home, including the state-sanctioned oppression of religious minorities such as Europe’s Jewish population. Mixed with Social Darwinism, it set the stage for the Holocaust.

Seven decades later, most Europeans can and do save themselves as they please, with many increasingly refusing the very premise of their supposed salvation. This said, a small but loud (and growing) share of European Muslims place their word above the sword of the state and it is hard to ignore current tensions between the increasingly secular societies of Europe and

their respective Muslim minorities. But European affairs are increasingly devoid of relevance and the real tensions between the sword and the word exist in Asia and its sub-regions.

As the Washington, D.C.-based Pew Research Centre has shown, the suppression of religious minorities — or more broadly, religious belief — has been escalating (<https://www.pewforum.org/2021/09/30/harassment-of-religious-groups-reaches-new-peak-in-2019/>).

Drawing on the work of the Pew Research Centre, various governmental and non-governmental groups and international agencies, this list draws attention to states that openly oppress and even commit genocide against religious minorities. It is not a quantitative ranking, but rather a qualitative representation of the worst offenders against religious minorities specifically and the right to worship generally. As such, it aims for a measure of balance, in so far as it does not want to downplay the sufferings of some while exaggerating those of others. This said, three things stand out. First, religious persecution is part and parcel of authoritarian rule, whether it be secular, as in the case of China, or theocratic in the case of Shia Iran and its Sunni rival Saudi Arabia. Second, Asia is becoming increasingly hostile for religious minorities, Christian and otherwise. (As such, the region continues a historic tradition. While the Ottomans’ genocide of Armenian Christians during and after the First World War had causes, religion was one of them). Third, the number of Christians clinging to their homes in the Middle East continues to shrink as they are effectively driven out, and it is uncertain whether they will have a future in the region from where their

religion spread into every corner of the world. Fourth, the sword and the word remain firmly wed in the Islamic world, as recently demonstrated by the behaviour of the Sunni-sect Taliban following their return to power in Afghanistan. Amnesty International has already received accounts of Taliban fighters massacring members of Afghanistan’s Shia minority for being out of line with the Taliban’s interpretation of Islam. Reports of a woman killed for not wearing a burqa (on the very day Taliban leaders pledged to protect the rights of women within the norms of Islamic law) won’t likely dispel the perception that much of the Islamic world remains a realm of religious intolerance.

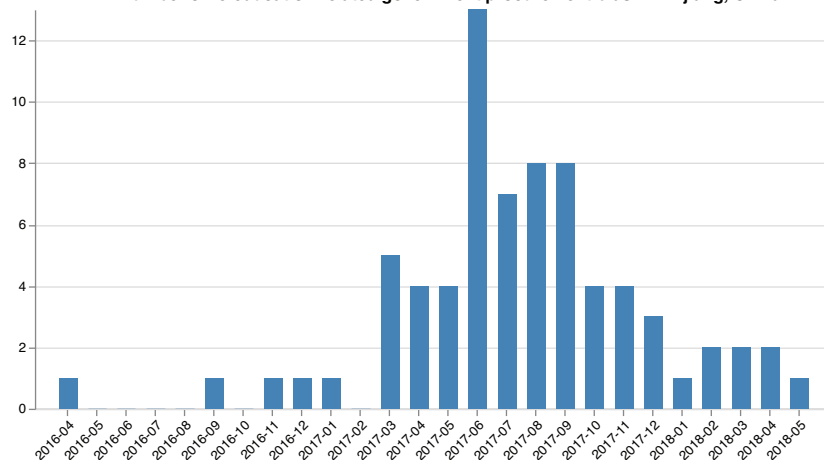
## China

The message sent by the British House of Commons in April 2021 was symbolic, but sharp. China, so read the non-binding motion passed by parliamentarians, is committing genocide against the Uyghur people, the historic Muslim minority of Xinjiang province.

Subject to forced labour, torture and sterilization in internment camps euphemistically named “re-education” camps, one million people are currently suffering the personal consequences of living under the rule of a Communist Party that subscribes to official atheism and suspects believers of challenging its authority.

But the status of the Uyghur has not just soured already strained relations between several Western countries and China in drawing attention to the difference between religious toleration and persecution; it has also raised the provocative but legitimate question (as posed by *Forbes*) of whether Christians would

Number of re-education-related government procurement bids in Xinjiang, China







This child was at a rally in Ottawa calling for an end to the Uyghur genocide and organized by the Uyghur Rights Advocacy Project.

undergo comparable treatment in the future as a growing number of Chinese turn toward, rather than away, from religion.

The Chinese state officially recognizes five religions (Buddhism, Catholicism, Daoism, Islam and Protestantism) and citizens “enjoy freedom of religion” under the Chinese constitution. But Human Rights Watch has questioned the reliability of this promise.

State officials routinely supervise registered and unregistered religious groups with the stated purpose of preventing public disorder, an agenda authorities interpret broadly and with growing animosity toward Christians, according to Christian and non-Christian groups.

While Christianity has ebbed and flowed with China’s changing political tides — Washington’s Freedom House, which conducts research on democracy, political freedom and human rights, speaks of “periodic cycles of growth and suppression” — the religion has been find-

ing new followers across all segments of the society since the early 1980s, when the Communist Party relaxed religious rules.

Current estimates peg the total number of Protestants and Catholics at anywhere between 103 million and 127 million, with Protestants outnumbering Catholics by a large margin. Other organizations say the number is higher and that the number of Christians could reach as many as 160 million by 2025 and 247 million by 2030, according to projections from the Pew Research Centre cited by the New York-headquartered Council on Foreign Relations.

This development has not gone unnoticed among Communist authorities, who have long considered Christianity a Trojan Horse through which the West introduces unwanted ideas.

None other than President Xi Jinping is a strong subscriber to this theory. His government has declared that it will not tolerate any other source of “moral and social

authority” and the campaign to “Sinicize” religion has been under way since 2015 continues.

This forced alignment of Christian faith with communist ideology has led to the closing of churches existing outside those sanctioned by the state, the arrest of preachers and parishioners who preached and prayed in them and the rewriting of Christian scriptures with pictures of Xi and Mao replacing Christian icons. An historic, albeit provisional agreement, signed in 2018 between China and the Holy See (the Vatican state and the religious entity that is the Catholic Church) governing the appointment of bishops continues into 2022. But Beijing shows indifference, even contempt toward the letter — never mind the spirit — of the agreement.

This does not bode well for relations between the world’s most populous country and the church that speaks for its largest denomination.

Ultimately, Freedom House points to a



More than one million Rohingya have fled Myanmar since the early 1990s. Members of the small Muslim minority in a largely Buddhist country are persecuted and have been stripped of their citizenship.

linkage between international events and state-sanctioned repression of Christianity. It spiked in the aftermath of the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests and ahead of the 2008 Beijing Olympics. As tensions between China and its Western rivals rise, Christians may prepare for another round of repressions if they are not already experiencing them.

### **Myanmar (Burma)**

As this country of 57 million and multiple ethnic groups continues its descent into

civil war following yet another military coup in early 2021, attention has faded from the fate of the Rohingya, the increasingly smaller Muslim minority in the largely Buddhist country. Since August 2017, more than 742,000 have officially fled Myanmar for neighbouring Bangladesh, according to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). There, they live in unbearable conditions, uncertain about their future, as authorities do not recognize them as a “national race,” having stripped them of citizenship in 1982.

More than one million Rohingya have fled the country since the early 1990s. Another 130,000 of 600,000 remaining Rohingya live in government-run detention camps.

“The squalid and oppressive conditions imposed on the Rohingya amount to the crimes against humanity of persecution, apartheid and severe deprivation of liberty,” Human Rights Watch concludes.

Yet Myanmar is neither close to a restoration of civilian rule nor the legal punishment of those responsible for the actions in 2017 that amounted to a genocide, as



defined by the United Nations, even as a case before the International Court of Justice unfolds.

The plight of the Rohingya briefly grabbed the world's attention again in March 2021, when a deadly fire killing at least 15 people and displacing tens of thousands swept through Cox's Bazar Refugee Camp, which is sheltering the world's largest number — 600,000 in total — of refugees, according to UNHCR.

But such temporary flickers of concern compete against decades of indifference for the Rohingya, whose faith and supposed foreignness have made them easy targets for persecution for decades.

As the CIA notes in its *World Fact Book* assessment, the Rohingya, “arguably the most persecuted population in the country,” form a “patchwork” of more than 130 religious and ethnic groups.

“The Burmese government and the Buddhist majority see the Rohingya as a threat to identity, competitors for jobs and resources, terrorists,” says the CIA, “and some still resent them for their alliance with Burma's British colonizers during the 19th Century.”

This points to one of the peculiarities of Myanmar. As *Foreign Policy* notes, Buddhist movements in Asia have often shown “few qualms” about the use of force against perceived enemies of the faith and about stoking nationalism.

Radical Buddhist monks helped to spark the recent wave of persecution in August 2017 and such prominent monks as Sitagu Sayadaw have collaborated with the generals during the recent uprising. This said, others have broken with the generals.

The fate of the Rohingya points to a larger problem in Myanmar: the lack of tolerance for non-Buddhist faiths and the willingness of authorities to do the bidding of religious zealots. Even Aung San Suu Kyi, the once-revered patron saint of democracy in Myanmar, now back under house arrest, could not risk alienating them, as evidenced by her refusal to denounce the violence against the Rohingya, never mind stop it.

Myanmar's Christians (6.2 per cent of the population) have also started to experience what the Rohingya people have felt for decades. As *The Wall Street Journal* and other sources have reported, the country's military has also systematically targeted Christians, who, by virtue of the religion's popularity among the Kachin, Karen and Shan ethnic minorities, find themselves greatly outnumbered by the ethnic Burmese who account for 68 per cent of the population.

## The Maldives

After Mohamed Rusthum Mujuthaba had received death threats for his social media posts, he did what any reasonable person might do: he asked for police protection. But instead of protecting Rusthum, police arrested him on charges of blasphemy against Islam, that country's state religion. Nearly two years after his arrest in September 2019, Rusthum remains in pre-trial detention, where he has suffered torture and solitary confinement, according to his family, as the International Humanist and Ethical Union reported in testimony during the 46th session of the UN Human Rights Council.

Rusthum's case is hardly unique, as he is among six Maldivians accused of blasphemy since the current government of Ibrahim Mohamed Solih assumed power in November 2018, according to the International Humanist and Ethical Union, founded in the Netherlands and

headquartered in London. Solih is representative of the larger threats facing those calling for more freedom of religion and speech in Maldivian society.

Prominent blogger Yameen Rasheed was found dead of stab wounds in the stairway of his apartment complex in the early morning hours of April 23, 2017. Like Rusthum, Rasheed had also asked for police protection, but authorities ignored his plea. They later arrested and tried six individuals linked to a radical mosque. But more than four years later, the trial has dragged on, with Rasheed's family and Amnesty International complaining of delays in the administration of justice.

Rasheed's death (with its eerie similarities to the murder of Russian activist Anna Politkovskaya, who was also found dead outside of her apartment after exposing corruption) made international headlines. It drew attention to a long list of other individuals — be they journal-



Maldives President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih has arrested those calling for more freedom of religion and speech in the Maldives.

ists such as Ahmed Rilwan or lawmakers such as Afrasheem Ali — who have died at the hands of Islamic radicals, who find themselves tolerated, if not encouraged, by a state-sanctioned climate of religious intimidation and intolerance.

The constitution of the Maldives declares Islam to be the state religion and denies citizenship to non-Muslims. All candidates for elected offices must be followers of Sunni Islam, explicitly excluding adherents of minority religions, according to Freedom House. The latter laments the growing influence of Islamists on the education system and other spheres of society, an influence that leaves no room for public expressions of non-Islamic faith. The constitution guarantees freedom of expression, but only if exercised in a manner that is “not contrary to any tenet of

Islam,” which Freedom House describes as a vague condition that encourages self-censorship in the media. The media stand accused by the International Humanist and Ethical Union of spotlighting individuals with allegations of apostasy, atheism, secularism, homosexuality or support for homosexuality.

International observers have praised the current government for launching the Commission on Investigation of Murders and Enforced Disappearances, which is designed to investigate cases such as Rasheed’s. But its slow progress contrasts with years of growing religious extremism, stoked in part by the previous administration, and confirms the unholy confluence of political corruption and religious fervour in a place best known for pristine beaches.

## Iran

Lost in the current climate of geopolitical tension and clandestine warfare between Iran and Israel is the historic role that Iran played in saving thousands of Polish Jews fleeing the German-orchestrated Holocaust during the Second World War. A total of 116,000 Polish refugees, including 5,000 to 6,000 Jews, many of them orphaned children, used Iran, itself struggling with famine and political impotency, as a temporary refuge, then a transit point between 1942 and 1945, mainly to British overseas colonies and protectorates.

This history, recently told in personal detail by Mikhal Dekel in *Tehran Children*, draws attention to the deep, biblical ties that connect Judaism to Iran and its historic predecessors, with Jews having lived



The part-Jewish cemetery at Yazd in Iran: Jews find themselves living in a constant state of anxiety, never sure how the mullah might limit their religion. Worse off are the Baha'is, who are persecuted, sent to jail and banned from access to higher education.



on the current territory of Iran for 2,700 years.

Even today, as leading Iranian officials continue to threaten Israel with another Holocaust while denying the first one, 8,300 Jews (as of 2019) continue to live in Iran, which holds the distinction of being home to the largest Jewish population in the Middle East outside Israel.

But their numbers are dwindling. At least 80,000 Jews lived in Iran before the Islamic Revolution in 1979. Tens of thousands have, since then, left Iran in the face of state-sponsored persecution. Those who remain have faced spurious charges of being spies for Israel as well as violent forms of harassment and intimidation, as catalogued by governmental and non-governmental observers. Within this context,

## THE CURRENT IRANIAN CONSTITUTION RECOGNIZES JEWS ALONG WITH ZOROASTRIANS AND CERTAIN CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES AS NON- MUSLIM RELIGIOUS MINORITIES.

the Iranian state frequently riles up the masses with anti-Semitic rhetoric.

The current Iranian constitution recognizes Jews along with Zoroastrians and certain Christian communities as non-Muslim religious minorities. These small groups are relatively free to worship, according to Freedom House, a perspective also heard from religious leaders in Iran itself. The Iranian parliament also reserves five seats for the recognized non-Muslim minority groups: Jews, Armenian Christians, Assyrian and Chaldean Christians and Zoroastrians.

But such forms of institutional recognition in a legislature denied any genuine authority should not distract from the fact that religious minorities such as Jews find themselves living in a constant state of anxiety, never sure how or when the mul-

lahs might limit religious freedom.

Sadly, Jews in Iran can count themselves among the more privileged religious minorities.

Consider the members of the Baha'i faith, whose followers are, in the words of Freedom House, systematically persecuted, sentenced to prison and banned from access to higher education.

The hostility of the mullahs toward religious minorities does not stop even at fellow Muslims, as Sunni Muslims also find themselves excluded from positions and denied opportunities to worship. In a way, this treatment of Sunni Muslims at home reflects the sectarian crack running through the Muslim world at large.

### Syria

While some believe that Islamic State has been vanquished, many think it is still an entity that will regroup. Nevertheless, in the short-term, at least, defeat and destruction of the Islamic State may have freed the religious minorities of Syria from an existentialist threat, but their long-term future looks perilous, because the country — once a relative beacon of religious pluralism — has become more sectarian.

Ten years after the start of the civil war

in Syria, hundreds of thousands lie buried in its soil, killed by the weapons of their own government or those of foreign powers supporting the various factions.

Millions more have fled their homes. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the war has chased more than half of the overall population (about 13.5 million) from their homes, displacing them to other parts of Syria or abroad. At total of 6.7 million Syrian refugees have sought refuge in 128 countries, with Turkey hosting 3.6 million, which is more than half of Syria's refugees. As the years pass, it is less and less likely many will return, depriving the country of human potential and resources. Those who have remained live among the ruins of destroyed cities and devastated institutions of every kind. And yet this state of sorrow and suffering has served Syrian President Bashar al-Assad well.

When it became increasingly clear that none of the rebel groups opposing al-Assad could push him from power, thanks to support from Russia and Iran, he started to spell out his vision for a "healthier and more homogenous society in the true sense," code for a country less diverse and presumably easier to control, a vision increasingly appearing before the



Before the war in Syria, pictured here, Christians represented 10 per cent of the Syrian population. They now account for 5 per cent, many having fled the country to avoid service in al-Assad's military.

eyes of the world.

As in the rest of the Middle East (minus Iran and Iraq) and the Islamic world at large, Muslims of the Sunni sect have historically dominated the religious demography of Syria, with 74 per cent. But their numbers are smaller relative to other parts of the region, having to co-exist with smaller groups like the Druze, Yazidis, Christians and Alawites, a Shia Muslim sect.

This last group, from which the al-Assad family hails, has historically sought to maintain its ruling status in Syrian society by stressing secular pan-Arabic nationalism and stifling, sometimes by brutal force, any signs of sectarianism by the Sunni majority. Yet it was al-Assad who stoked sectarian violence by reframing the political rebellion against him as a sectarian conflict.

Freedom House notes that this choice saw the regime discredit the rebellion during its early stages through the release of jihadists. This move, reported widely by Western media such as the *Atlantic*, gave the regime licence to suppress Sunnis, who bore the brunt of repression, according to Freedom House.

Even the temporary occupation of Syrian territory by Islamic State, borne out of weakness by al-Assad's regime, served his sectarian agenda because he could present himself to the Western world, including the United States, as the defender of religious minorities, including Christians, in the face of ISIS's undeniable barbarism against them and other religious minorities.

True, al-Assad's coalition included Christians with sympathies for him, but this alliance has always appeared fraught with ambivalences, if not illusionary.

Ultimately, Syrian Christians have done exactly what the smaller minority of Yazidis have done — fled, if possible, the chaos that al-Assad has unleashed.

Before the outbreak of the war, Christians accounted for 10 per cent (about one million) of the Syrian population. A decade later, they account for 5 per cent, many of them having fled the country to avoid service in al-Assad's military or to escape radical Sunni Islamists opposed to the regime.

Those who remain now find themselves in a double-bind. They remain objects of suspicion by a murderous regime, cynical and capable of committing atrocities against its own people. At the same time, they live in a ruined state that is poisoned by sectarianism with severe consequences for all.

## Iraq

When Pope Francis visited Mosul in March, he prayed for the war victims of the Middle East. During this historic trip as the first pope to ever visit Iraq, he was walking the Earth mere kilometres away from what many believe to be the Tomb of Jonah, the Bible's uneasy prophet, whom God had sent to the Assyrian city of Nineveh to prophesy its doom unless its residents repented their wickedness.

Nineveh's modern-day successor, Mosul, was — to use the words of Jonah himself — a place where “the wickedness of men rose up to heaven” after forces of

and forced conversion on pain of death.

For the first time in nearly two millennia, church bells fell silent for years in one of the oldest regions of Christendom, sparking the question of whether the world was witnessing the end of Christianity in the Middle East.

Christians, of course, did not share this fate alone, as Islamic State forces also persecuted Yazidis and other Muslims who did not conform to its radical interpretation of Islam.

Deeply moved by the physical and spiritual damage that Islamic State had caused during its three-year-long occupation of Mosul before Kurdish and Iraqi



This Humvee was overturned in a clash between Iraqi and IS forces. IS's seizure of Mosul led to an exodus of Christians. Those who didn't leave were forced to convert on pain of death.

the Islamic State had captured it in June 2014 as they spread across parts of Iraq and Syria.

Their seizure of Iraq's second-largest city sparked a modern-day exodus of Christians from Mosul and the nearby cities of the Nineveh Plain, such as Qaraqosh, the largest city of Iraq's Christian heartland.

What followed was the desecration and destruction of ancient Christian churches and religious symbols, theft and extortion

government forces expelled it, Pope Francis referenced this shared suffering.

“How cruel it is that this country, the cradle of civilization, should have been afflicted by so barbarous a blow, with ancient places of worship destroyed,” the Pope told *The New York Times*. Thousands of Muslims, Christians and Yazidis, he said, “were cruelly annihilated by terrorism, and others forcibly displaced or killed.”

With these words, the Pope drew



attention to the religious diversity in the region, a diversity that ultimately depends on the steadfastness of religious minorities such as Christians and a broader commitment to religious pluralism by a state with barely existing institutions and rife with sectarianism.

Accordingly, the Pope called on Christians to forgive their trespassers and rebuild, while praising their perseverance. But the Pope's appeal to persist is falling on fewer and fewer ears.

When he toured the historic ruin of Ur, believed to be the birthplace of Abraham, the personified root of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, he visited a region nearly emptied of Christians, with only one Christian family said to be left in the nearby provincial capital of Nasiriya, according to *The New York Times*.

While Christians had experienced decades of discrimination before the 2003 invasion of Iraq by U.S.-led forces, their fate worsened after it as the country descended into violence and civil war, eventually getting caught in the maelstrom of the Syrian civil war. Within this context, Sunni and Shia extremists treated local Christians (their roots in the region dating back to late Antiquity) as fifth columnists for Western forces with predictable results. They include the destruction of churches and the threat of death unless they convert, pay a tax or leave the area.

As in neighbouring Syria and Iran, all part of the Shia Crescent, the number of Christians in Iraq has declined precipitously. According to U.S. estimates, Iraq's overall Christian population has decreased at least 50 per cent and perhaps as much as 90 per cent since 2003, with many fleeing to Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and beyond.

Only time will tell whether the Pope's visit will reverse current trajectories. But his sermon in Mosul included a promising reminder when he noted that the inhabitants of Nineveh eventually heeded the words of Jonah.

## Malaysia

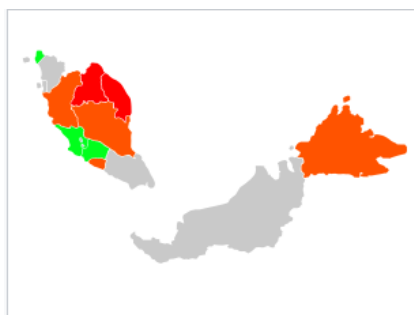
A self-described born-again Muslim, Mustafa Akyol sees Islam going through a crisis that threatens the very future of Islamic societies, even Islam itself, unless the religion undergoes an Enlightenment that divorces the sword from the word.

Islam, writes the author of *Reopening Muslim Minds: A Return to Reason, Freedom, and Tolerance*, must save itself from its contemporary marriage with coercive power.

Akyol, a Cato Institute fellow, experi-

enced this marriage firsthand when he visited Malaysia in late September 2017 to make his long-running case, through a series of lectures, for a reformed Islam, the second of which called on Muslims to uphold freedom of conscience in line with the Qur'anic dictum against compulsion in religion.

"I said that apostasy should not be punished by death, as it is in Saudi Arabia, or with 'rehabilitation,' as it is in Malaysia," he wrote. This appeal earned him a visit from authorities at the end of his lecture, an overnight stay in prison and an appearance before a Sharia court, where authorities interrogated him for hours before releasing him.



**State laws on apostasy in Malaysia. Criminal offences include 'apostasy', 'attempted apostasy' and being an 'accomplice to the apostasy' of someone else (i.e. converting another person).**

- Death penalty (suspended by federal law)
- Imprisonment or detention
- Apostasy not legally possible
- Apostasy legal after counselling

"This incident," he wrote in *The New York Times*, "showed me once again that there is a major problem in Islam today: a passion to impose religion, rather than merely proposing it, a mindset that most Christians left behind at the time of the Inquisition."

Unfortunately, this attitude appears to be flourishing in Malaysia (along with neighbouring Indonesia).

As the Council on Foreign Relations notes, the two countries have "witnessed an upswing in harder-line Islamist sentiment," which further enforces an artificial form of religious apartheid that denies personal agency and obscures the country's religious diversity. By way of

background, Muslims account for 61.3 per cent of the population; Buddhists, 19.8 per cent; Christians, 9.2 per cent; Hindus, 6.3 per cent; while followers of Confucianism, Taoism and other traditional Chinese religions account for 1.3 per cent.

Of interest and influence, Freedom House notes, is the role of the powerful Malaysian Islamic Development Department (JAKIM) in shaping and enforcing the practice of Islam in Malaysia. Local state officials also have considerable influence.

While the constitution enshrines freedom of worship, it declares Islam as the country's official religion and automatically defines all ethnic Malays as Muslims. In other words, the government sees faith as a product of biology (rather than social conditioning), a logic designed to discourage conversion.

While conversion to a non-Muslim religion is possible, would-be converts face immense hurdles. Specifically, they have to make their case to a religious court and cases of conversion are incredibly rare. Those who signal their desire to convert face the possibility of being placed in rehabilitation centres, a prospect that forces many to live double lives, ripping apart families along the way. Other cases have seen parents secretly convert their children to Islam to gain the upper hand in custody battles.

As Freedom House says, Muslim children (along with civil servants) are required to receive religious education using government-approved curriculums and instructors.

Muslims are subject to Sharia (Islamic law) and the constitution stipulates that all matters related to Islam should be heard in Sharia courts. This means Muslims and non-Muslims receive different treatment in "moral" and family law cases, with non-Muslims subject to English common law.

Freedom House also notes that the state prohibits the practice of Islam other than the Sunni version. Shiites and other sects face discrimination. Further, it notes, non-Muslims are not able to build houses of worship as easily as Muslims, and the state retains the right to demolish unregistered religious statues and houses of worship.

These restrictions have economic consequences. Ethnic Chinese, who account for just under 21 per cent of the population, are increasingly leaving the country, taking with them their money and education.

Akyol's prediction is slowly, but steadily coming true.

## Algeria

Like so many places in the Middle East, Algeria breathes the spirit of ancient Christendom.

Within the borders of the modern-day Annaba, near the border with Tunisia, lie the ruins of Hippo, where St. Augustine served as bishop during the final phase of the Roman Empire. Having converted

sign of weakness, the Algerian government treats the few religious minorities (Jews, Christians, as well as Ahmadiyya and Shia Muslims) as threats that must not be allowed to “shake the faith of Muslims,” to use the language of the ban on proselytizing by non-Muslims.

Violators (as deemed by authorities) face a significant fine and a prison sentence of up to five years for printing, storing



The Algerian government treats the few religious minorities as threats that must not be allowed to “shake the faith of Muslims.” This photo depicts a Christian family from Kabylia.

from paganism, St. Augustine’s influence on Christendom has remained inexorable. His views on sin, grace, freedom and sexuality have shaped Catholicism specifically and Western culture generally, deep into the 19th Century and beyond, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* says, if only as a foil for contemporary liberals, feminists and secularists.

If St. Augustine’s philosophy has survived into the present, history has reduced his work and that of other early Christians living and praying in North Africa to little more than archeological attractions.

Like its neighbours, Africa’s largest country by area is an overwhelmingly Islamic country, as Muslims account for 98 to 99 per cent of the population.

And yet in what can only be read as a

or distributing materials intended to convert Muslims.

Authorities, for example, recently arrested Christians for violating said ban, as reported by Pew Research.

Such actions confirm Algeria’s history of repressing and persecuting religious minorities and contradict previous constitutional commitments to conscience and worship as found in the 2016 constitution.

Algerian authorities have since dropped such pretence by eliminating the language from the 2020 constitution that protects “freedom of conscience” following a constitutional reform of questionable legitimacy, based on low turnout and the absence of genuine consultation with all groups, including the 130,000 to 200,000 Christians in a country of 43 million.

Religious minorities are already fearful that authorities will use the constitution to further erode their numbers, even if, as Human Rights Watch suggests, the new constitution promises the right to “practise a religion,” a promise devoid of credibility.

Central to Algeria’s apparatus of religious control is the ministry of religious affairs, an Orwellian phrase if one ever existed. Groups must register with it before conducting any activities, and a commission under the ministry’s supervision approves worship locations. There is only one catch. The commission rarely approves locations — some sources claim it has never met — leaving non-Muslim worshippers in violation of the law. Claiming merely to enforce the law, authorities can close places of worship used by Christians or the non-Sunni Muslims such as the 2,000-member-strong Ahmadi community, a Muslim sect long the object of government persecution.

## Saudi Arabia

The diplomatic quarter of Riyadh or Neom is a futuristic mega-city 33 times the size of New York City that is currently under construction in the northwestern corner of Saudi Arabia bordering the Red Sea.

It is the potential, highly speculative location of what would be that country’s



Jamal Khashoggi was killed in Turkey for being an outspoken critic of Saudi Arabia’s current regime.

first church, should authorities ever permit such a place of Christian worship in the country that sees itself as the self-described defender of Muslims around the world. Some (like an unnamed royal adviser quoted in *The Economist*) say it is not a question of if, but when the country, home to the two holiest cities in Islam —



Mecca and Medina, the respective birth and burial place of the Prophet Muhammad — would sanction such a step.

This prediction has its premise in the past actions of Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman (MBS), the de-facto ruler of Saudi Arabia.

Since coming to power in 2017, MBS has met with Maronite Patriarch Bechara Boutros al-Rai, who represents Christians in Lebanon, Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby and Coptic Pope Tawadros II. MBS himself has spoken of religious tolerance, acknowledged the historic presence of Christians on the Arabian Peninsula and held several meetings with evangelical Christians from the United States who are eager to open the first church. King Salman has met French Catholic Cardinal Jean-Louis Pierre (since deceased) and Pope Francis himself visited the neighbouring United Arab Emirates (a Saudi ally) in early February 2019 as the first pontiff to travel to the Arabian Peninsula.

These Saudi overtures to the Christian world and its various emissaries have unfolded against the backdrop of larger reforms designed to make Saudi Arabia more attractive to foreign investors as the country designs a post-oil future.

But Western ears have heard such promises before, only to see them go unfulfilled.

True, MBS has cut the influence of Saudi Arabia's religious police — the Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice — and radical clerics at large.

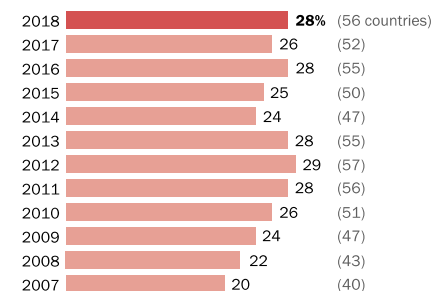
But their current weariness and suspicion about MBS could easily turn into something more threatening if he were to allow a church.

Christians living in Saudi Arabia, some 1.2 million in a country of 34 million, most of them working migrants from Asia and Africa, may no longer suffer the worst effects of the Saudi state, but their religion remains underground. Open displays of faith are to be avoided lest believers want to invite danger. Even Evangelical Christians from the United States, who enjoy the support of former U.S. president Donald Trump, an ally of MBS, had to heed this lesson. Ultimately, MBS has skilfully exploited low expectations of himself and any assessment of his regime boils down to the following: Is he pursuing genuine reform or is he guilty of window dressing? MBS's proven involvement in the brutal murder of regime critics, such as journalist Jamal Khashoggi, is one of a long litany of human rights abuses against critics at home.

### Number of countries with high or very high levels of government restrictions on religion reaches five-year high

% of countries with high or very high government restrictions on religion

(Scores of 4.5 and higher)



Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. See Methodology for details.

"In 2018, Government Restrictions on Religion Reach Highest Level Globally in More Than a Decade"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

### Russia

Harassment, video surveillance, arrest threats, torture and long prison terms: According to *The Guardian* and other observers such as Human Rights Watch, these are the realities facing the 175,000 Jehovah's Witnesses living in Russia.

Relative to the overall population of 142.3 million, this Christian sect makes up only a fraction, yet the state of Vladimir Putin places them in the same category as neo-Nazis and members of al-Qaeda.

Jehovah's Witnesses earned the unjustified wrath of the state after an April 2017 ruling by the Russian Supreme Court, which declared the church's head office an extremist organization and banned 395 branches across Russia.

As of mid-June 2021, Russian officials had investigated 418 members of the church, with 53 Witnesses in pre-trial detention or sentenced to prison, another 36 under house arrest and 224 not allowed to leave their hometown, according to JW.org.

UN observers have found these detentions to be arbitrary, lacking legal basis and in violation of the right to freedom of religion, while other groups such as Human Rights Watch have called on the Russian government to reverse course.

In typical manner, Putin first treated the accusations with feigned ignorance, even concern for the Jehovah's Witnesses before signalling his tacit approval of them in December 2018. Since then, persecution of this Christian minority has only intensified, likely to the satisfaction of the Russian Orthodox Church. It supports the

ban, saying it would combat the "spread of cultist ideas, which have nothing in common with Christian religion," as cited by Pew Research. This language echoes the words of Putin himself, who has described Jehovah's Witnesses as people who practise faiths that are not "traditional" in Russia.

This overlap points to a larger pattern: the alignment of the Russian state with the agenda of the Russian Orthodox Church, currently headed by Patriarch Kirill of Moscow, now in office for more than a decade.

As Russian historian Michael Khodarkovsky has noted in *The New York Times*, this relationship is as old as Russia itself, with the church playing the role of subservient proponent of a political theology that presents Moscow as the Second Jerusalem and the Third Rome (after Rome and Constantinople).

True, seven decades of state-enforced atheism during the Soviet period have shown their effects on Russia's religious sociology. Russian society is thoroughly secular as Russian Orthodox Christians — the largest sectarian group — account for somewhere between 15 and 20 per cent of the population, not far ahead of Muslims, who account for 10 to 15 per cent, followed by other Christians at 2 per cent.

Yet the Russian Orthodox Church enjoys a privileged position in Russia, "working closely with the government on foreign and domestic policy priorities," as Freedom House notes. Kirill himself said that even during the Russian Empire, "the church did not have an equal partner in the face of government."

More broadly, the vague, increasingly harsher extremist legislation sweeping up Jehovah's Witnesses has in the past also netted other believers and non-believers appearing as threats to the state-church alliance propping up Putin's regime, its most recent catch being Alexei Navalny's nationwide political organization.

It, like Jehovah's Witnesses, has since suspended operations to avoid a similar fate. That will likely not help.

(<https://www.pewforum.org/2021/09/30/harassment-of-religious-groups-reaches-new-peak-in-2019/>)

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## Harassment of religious groups reaches new peak in 2019

The number of countries and territories where religious groups experienced harassment by governments and social groups reached 190 (out of 198 analyzed) in 2019, a higher number than in any other year of the study. This figure is up from 185 in 2018. The harassment measured in the study includes a wide variety of actions — from derogatory statements by government officials to physical acts of force such as property damage, detentions, displacements from homes, assaults and killings — that target groups or individuals at least in part because of their religion. Harassment directed against those who are religiously unaffiliated, including atheists, agnostics and humanists, also is captured by this study.

### Christians, Muslims harassed in more countries in 2019, most of any religious groups

*Number of countries where religious groups were harassed, by year*

	2007	'10	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19
Christians	107	111	105	110	102	108	128	144	143	145	153
Muslims	96	90	101	109	99	100	125	142	140	139	147
Jews	51	68	69	71	77	81	74	87	87	88	89
Others*	33	52	42	39	38	43	50	57	50	56	68
Folk religions**	24	26	23	26	34	21	32	41	38	37	32
Hindus	21	16	12	16	9	14	18	23	23	19	21
Buddhists	10	15	9	13	12	10	7	17	19	24	25
Unaffiliated	CODING NOT DONE			3	5	4	14	14	23	18	22
<b>Any of above</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>190</b>

\* Includes Sikhs, members of ancient faiths such as Zoroastrianism, members of newer faiths such as Baha'i and other religious groups.

\*\* Includes, for example, followers of African traditional religions, Chinese folk religions, Native American religions and Australian aboriginal religions.

Note: This measure looks at the number of countries in which groups were harassed, either by the government or individuals/social groups. It does not assess the severity of the harassment. Numbers do not add to totals because multiple religious groups can be harassed in a country. The figure for other religious groups for the year ending in December 2012 and the any-of-the-above figure for the year ending in December 2011 have been updated to correct minor errors in previous reports.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. See Methodology for details.

"Globally, Social Hostilities Related to Religion Decline in 2019, While Government Restrictions Remain at Highest Levels"

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## Most religious groups experienced government harassment in more countries than social harassment in 2019

*Number of countries where religious groups were harassed, by year*

Government harassment in the year ...												Social harassment in the year ...											
	2007	'10	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19		'07	'10	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19
Christians	79	95	78	81	85	79	97	114	123	124	128	74	77	81	83	71	85	94	107	101	104	107	
Muslims	77	74	78	83	73	80	106	127	124	126	135	64	64	82	88	84	81	94	97	105	103	115	
Jews	11	21	28	28	39	31	43	56	63	59	69	46	64	63	66	72	80	67	66	75	77	73	
Others*	25	40	39	34	33	39	44	49	43	50	59	15	28	18	20	17	17	18	22	21	25	24	
Folk religions**	13	10	5	11	12	13	16	23	16	23	20	16	20	21	18	26	12	23	25	27	23	18	
Hindus	12	13	9	13	8	9	14	18	17	14	18	12	10	6	9	4	7	11	11	11	10	10	
Buddhists	7	11	5	9	7	8	5	15	15	22	23	4	7	5	7	7	3	3	6	9	10	8	
Unaffiliated	CODING NOT DONE			2	1	1	9	11	14	12	14	CODING NOT DONE			2	4	3	6	5	13	8	11	
Any of above	118	124	129	131	133	129	157	177	175	175	180	127	135	150	147	145	139	146	159	164	160	169	

\*Includes Sikhs, members of ancient faiths such as Zoroastrianism, members of newer faiths such as Baha'i and other religious groups.

\*\*Includes, for example, followers of African traditional religions, Chinese folk religions, Native American religions and Australian aboriginal religions.

Note: This measure does not assess the severity of the harassment. Numbers do not add to totals because multiple religious groups can be harassed in a country.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. See Methodology for details.

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# Worldwide religious harassment experiences

**C**hristians and Muslims, the world's largest and most widely dispersed religious groups, experienced harassment in more countries than other religious groups in 2019, continuing a consistent pattern since the beginning of the [PEW Research Center] study [first published first in 2007].

In addition, both Muslims and Christians saw increases in the number of countries where they were harassed in 2019.

And, as in prior years of the study, both groups faced harassment in countries where they are religious minorities as well as in countries where they are the majority. For instance, Muslims faced harassment in 38 European countries where Islam is not the majority religion, as well as in all 19 countries and territories with Muslim majorities (either Sunni or Shiite) in the Middle East.

In 2019, harassment of Christians was reported in 153 countries, up from 145 countries in 2018. In Pakistan, for example, a Christian suspect in a theft case was tortured while in police custody and died a few hours after being released. The victim's brother reported that one of the police officers who arrested the man said, "I know how to deal with these infidels." In Cuba, meanwhile, there were multiple reports of state officials threatening Christian house church leaders for conducting religious activities.

Muslims were harassed in 147 countries in 2019, up from 139 countries in 2018. In France, the interior ministry closed numerous Muslim-owned businesses, Islamic schools, Islamic cultural sites and mosques as the secretary of state to the minister of the interior linked them to "political Islam." And in South Africa, 80 Islamic graves were vandalized and rearranged to form the shape of a cross.

Jews faced harassment in more countries than any other religious groups besides Christians and Muslims, despite their relatively small population size. (Jewish people make up just 0.2 per cent of the world's population.) In 2019, Jews were harassed in 89 countries — a slight uptick from 88 countries in 2018. One such incident occurred in Argentina, where a prominent rabbi was seriously injured during a home invasion in which his attackers physically assaulted him, robbed him and said they knew he was a rabbi.

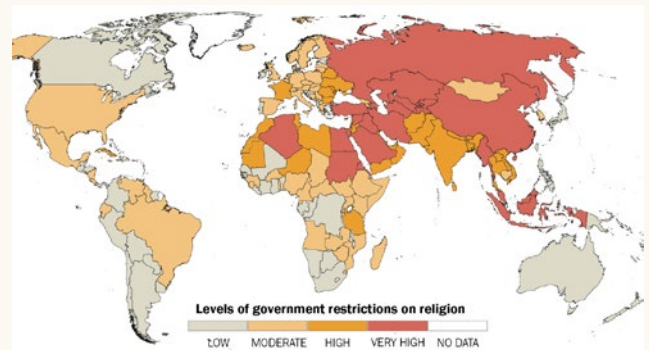
Hindus were harassed in 21 countries in 2019 — up from 19 countries the previous year. In Bangladesh, for instance, rioters ransacked a Hindu temple after two Muslims were arrested for allegedly hacking the Facebook account of a Hindu man and posting material disparaging Islam on his account.

Buddhists experienced a small increase in the number of countries where they faced harassment, from 24 in 2018 to 25 in 2019 — the highest total for this religious group since the study began in 2007. In Austria, for example, the construction site of a Buddhist shrine was vandalized with swastikas.

Religiously unaffiliated people (including atheists, agnostics and people who don't identify with any religion) were harassed in 22 countries in 2019, up from 18 the previous year. In Saudi Arabia, the presidency of state security released a video on Twitter referring to atheism as "extremist." A 2014 royal decree in the country punishes atheism with up to 20 years in prison, and in early 2019, the government criminalized "the promotion of atheistic ideologies in any form."

## Government restrictions on religion around the world

Level of government restrictions on religion in each country as of 2019



Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. See Methodology for details.  
 "Globally, Social Hostilities Related to Religion Decline in 2019, While Government Restrictions Remain at Highest Levels"

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## Government harasses more than society

Most of the religious groups analyzed individually — Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and the religiously unaffiliated — faced harassment in more countries from governments and public officials than from private actors, such as social groups or individuals.

Jews were the only religious group that faced social harassment in more countries (73) than government harassment (69) in 2019, although the gap between those two figures is at its narrowest since the study began, and the 69 countries where Jews experienced some form of government harassment is a record high since the beginning of the study in 2007.

Adherents of folk religions experienced government harassment in 20 countries and social harassment in 18 countries in 2019. In Canada, an Indigenous elder contended that airport security officials desecrated the contents of a pouch containing cedar, sage, sweet grass and tobacco, considered sacred by her tribe, by requiring her to open it for inspection in order to travel.

And in the United States, an Indigenous tribe called the Ramapough Mountain Indians had an ongoing lawsuit in 2019 against the township of Mahwah, New Jersey, after the township limited their religious gatherings and ordered them to remove several religious structures, including an altar and prayer circle. (The U.S. Department of Justice later supported the tribe's lawsuit against the town, and the parties eventually settled in June 2019.)

Other religious groups beyond those analyzed individually — including Baha'is, Scientologists, Sikhs, Rastafarians and Zoroastrians, among others — faced government harassment in more than twice as many countries (59) as they faced social hostilities (24). In Kenya, for example, a public secondary school asked a Rastafarian student to shave her dreadlocks. The school had expelled the student the previous year for wearing them in a turban and had been ordered by a court to let her return.

# Afghanistan's grim future

Chaos in the the Western world's closing act in Afghanistan portends ill for its people and regional and world security.

By J. Paul de B. Taillon



A U.S. Air Force C-17 Globemaster III transports 823 Afghans from Hamid Karzai International Airport on Aug. 15, 2021 after the U.S. military withdrew from the beleaguered country.

**"T**he first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgement that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish the kind of war on which they are embarking," wrote strategist Carl von Clausewitz in his book, *On War*.

For the soldiers and Marines who were assigned to the U.S. security force in Kabul during the August pullout from the country, their arrival hit many instantly and

full on. Fine fecal-laden dust covered their bodies and gear. The heat and the 25-kilogram weight of the personal protective equipment (PPE) and the ensuing body sweat, combined with the scent of gun oil, was ever present amongst them and their comrades.

Meanwhile, crowds of desperate Afghans sought sanctuary outside the airport security walls topped with barbed wire that separated them from the

hope of being included on the departure list for one of the flights that would take off before the withdrawal date of Aug. 31.

It was on this date that the United States would finally clear out of Afghanistan. For those soldiers and Marines undertaking their respective duties to secure this airport, many had not witnessed the events of 9/11. For those born after 9/11, they were now witnessing, indeed participating, in a historic moment — the



hasty and frantic departure from Afghanistan after two decades.

The ill-fated departure followed a 20-year war that was marred by unclear strategic goals after the initial successful United States invasion of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in response to the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001.

#### Intelligence failure?

There has been much speculation as to the intelligence assessments that would have been provided to the American political and military leadership in Washington and Kabul. This would include the various scenarios being considered, the options and potential courses of action and assessed cascading consequences. It is unlikely that the U.S. intelligence community would not have briefed those responsible about the implications of the Afghanistan withdrawal, likely by providing daily assessments of events.

Although the exact date for a Taliban takeover would have been difficult to ascertain, the monitoring of the U.S. withdrawal also saw the Afghan forces under attack. The Taliban would immediately fill the tactical vacuum left by the Afghan/U.S. military. Intelligence assessments would be updated daily, if not hourly, as the Taliban advanced towards the capital. It is difficult to believe that senior political leaders and the bureaucracy writ large would not have been aware of the Taliban momentum as Afghans surrendered or withdrew from the field.

Of note, in a cable dated July 13, two dozen American diplomats stationed in the U.S. Embassy in Kabul warned of the potential collapse of the Afghan government to the Taliban following the U.S. troop drawdown. Forwarded to the secretary of state, the strongly worded cable reportedly urged the U.S. State Department to start organizing an airlift operation to evacuate Americans and other qualified personnel. This assessment may have been supported by other U.S. and allied intelligence reporting.

The scapegoating of the intelligence community has impinged on the credibility and dedication of intelligence professionals who have committed their lives to addressing and analyzing the “wilderness of mirrors” to provide the necessary guidance to their respective political, military and bureaucratic leadership. This accusation, in itself, is revealing and reflects poorly upon the Biden administration as it tries to displace its responsibility, and to ascertain who is blameworthy.

NATO partners — Canada, Great Brit-

ain, France and Germany — were also monitoring events in Afghanistan, and may also be responsible for not anticipating an eventual Taliban takeover. More than 40,000 Canadian Armed Forces members served in the Afghanistan theatre of operations between 2001 and 2014.

The failure to be ready and act quickly to expedite the departure of Western citizens and Afghans seeking asylum demonstrates a true lack of strategic vision by political leaders and bureaucrats.

threat of terrorist activities, presumably targeted against those nations that participated in the fight over the last two decades. The success of the Taliban will provide al-Qaida, ISIS-K (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant - Khorasan Province) and other jihadist organizations with a tremendous psychological boost. This cannot be understated as Islamists have and will draw inspiration from the U.S. and the West's ignominious departure. A Taliban Afghanistan may again provide a territo-



Where it all began in 2001: The remains of the World Trade Centre smoulder as U.S. officials were no doubt making retaliation plans against Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida.

This is not hindsight, as those nations involved were aware, as were their intelligence organizations, of the inevitability of a Taliban takeover. Preparations should have been made, and plans and options for evacuation co-ordinated and put in place. Instead of a well-planned and orderly withdrawal, those political leaders responsible for this catastrophe were nowhere to be seen, including the Canadian ambassador, Reid Sirrs, who reportedly went on leave in July, as the Taliban were advancing. This does not bode well for the future of the U.S.'s global position or the credibility of the Western alliance.

#### The threat picture

Following the departure from Afghanistan, the West will likely face an increased

rial operating space to facilitate recruitment, training, support and planning for terrorist violence against the West.

The release of thousands of incarcerated members of the former al-Qaida, ISIS-K and Taliban from Kabul prisons poses potential problems. Al-Qaida and ISIS-K are dedicated to a regional and global jihadist campaign and the Afghan Taliban are focused on re-establishing their Afghan power base. It is unknown to what extent al-Qaida and ISIS-K have influenced the Afghan Taliban in their doctrinal outlook regarding a global jihad, or what the Taliban success will mean to jihadists globally, especially those who aspire to follow a more activist/violent path against the West and Western interests. Western police and security organizations



Canadians joined the U.S. war effort in Afghanistan in 2001. In all, 158 Canadian Armed Forces members lost their lives. Here, a Canadian honour guard carries the remains of Canadian army Pvt. Sebastien Courcy during a sundown ceremony at Kandahar Air Field.

may have to counter a potential resurgence by similarly inspired Islamist terrorist groups and individuals.

### The history

The stated aim of the invasion was to kill or capture Osama bin Laden, replace the Taliban-led Afghan government, which aided bin Laden, and ensure that Afghanistan was no longer a terrorist haven. Following the successful invasion, prominent Afghan citizens met in 2002 with the U.S. government, the United Nations and NATO representatives to form a new representative Afghan government to mirror the democratic West. While an Afghan constitution was based on Western democratic ideals, it lacked an appreciation or a comprehensive understanding of the psycho-social aspects of a complex multi-ethnic Afghanistan. These democratic goals were unsustainable in an Afghan context.

For the U.S. and its allies, the aim and objective soon became wobbly over how these were to be achieved and how coalition members were to contribute. For many leaders and participants, this was a

strategic issue, ignoring a critically important principle of war — establishing and maintaining the aim. The intention of the U.S. and its allies to build an Afghanistan that mirrored Western countries was in itself a magnitude of hubris — indeed arrogance — beyond any Western norm.

Lord Jonathan Evans, former head of Britain's security service, reflected that the coalition should have concentrated on the initial counterterrorism objectives as "it was very worthy and rather ambitious to think we could reshape the whole country, [when] the reason we went in originally was for counterterrorism reasons, and I think that might have been a more achievable task." He added that, "from the beginning there was a noble ambition that we would have been able to reshape the politics of that region and I think, in retrospect, it was overambitious."

The challenges were immense: Building a democratic system and functioning governmental infrastructure, creating an effective judiciary and developing a solid educational system, among other goals, in a country where only an estimated 5 to 8 per cent of the population could read.

The chimerical aim was to create a centralized Afghan government responsible for securing and governing a traditionally disparate country, from Kabul. This project appeared idealistic, overly optimistic and unattainable given the complexity of Afghanistan.

The U.S. and its allies proceeded undeterred, with little appreciation of the ethnic complexities, cultures and local and regional politics. Layered onto this was an Afghan population riddled with historic suspicion, animosity, criminality, corruption and inter- and intra-tribal frictions in both the urban and rural centres. Notwithstanding, the U.S. and its allies innocently, but arrogantly, sought to remake Afghanistan in their image.

In 2020, the U.S. Trump administration negotiated a deal with the Taliban that committed to withdraw U.S. forces by May 2021. U.S. President Joe Biden adhered to this agreement, albeit amending the departure date to Sept. 11, 2021. The subsequent rapid seizure of the Afghan government by the Taliban changed the date to Aug. 31, 2021. Under the terms of the Doha Agreement, a withdrawal





The U.S. invasion of Afghanistan involved the deployment of special forces, CIA operatives and air assets with the assistance of anti-Taliban resistance forces on the ground.

from Afghanistan was inevitable and was anticipated to be well-planned and orchestrated.

During its 20 years in Afghanistan, the U.S. and its coalition allies found some staunch Afghan allies in the brave men and women who dedicated themselves to the education of young boys and girls, and who hoped to transform Afghanistan under a democratic and effective government. This includes many Afghan women who made great progress in societal terms in public and private sectors, forging a path in Afghan society by starting businesses and becoming teachers, professors, doctors and lawyers as well as elected representatives.

Many of these Afghans were educated in the West and witnessed the opportunities provided by democratic societies and their institutions in the form of human rights, social equality and freedom of speech. They appreciated the advantages of modernity in terms of technology, social attitude, education and opportunity. The U.S. and the coalition shared an optimistic vision for Afghanistan's future and sought to help Afghans forge a new path for

themselves and their country.

When Kabul fell in August 2021, these hard-won achievements were thought to have been for naught as Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid surprisingly announced on Aug. 17 that the Taliban would honour women's rights within Sharia law and urged them to return to work and continue their education. This was viewed with some circumspection, particularly by Afghan feminists. The next day, the Taliban reportedly shot a woman in the street for not wearing a burqa. This incident and reports from the provinces of women hiding, in fear of Taliban assault and potential retribution predicated upon their education, occupation or political/feminist activism, demonstrated the level of concern for the future of women and girls in Afghanistan.

#### Why were we there?

Twenty years on, the question still needs to be posed as to why the West was in Afghanistan. Even in 2006, then-secretary of state Condoleezza Rice asked if someone could tell her why the U.S. was still in Afghanistan. The original 2001 aim

was to take down the Taliban government, deny al-Qaida a haven and kill or capture Osama bin Laden, ensuring that no further terrorist operations could be launched. Within the strategic aim, Western leadership at the time did not fully appreciate the risks and complexities of an ill-defined mission that was not fully understood amongst the coalition. This, in part, resulted in a multifaceted and protracted conflict, which some would now deem futile, that resulted in considerable national and financial costs. It should be noted that these aims were accomplished in 2002, except the killing of bin Laden, which did not occur until 2011.

The invasion involved the deployment of special forces, CIA operatives and air assets, with the assistance of anti-Taliban resistance forces on the ground, in what was described as a light footprint, as demanded by then-secretary of defence Donald Rumsfeld. Although this invasion was dramatically successful, the follow-through was lacking in resources, resulting in a failure of the ultimate outcome.

In December 2001, American political and military leadership refocused on the weapons of mass destruction threat from Iraq, moving American military efforts and resources from the secured Afghan theatre to the invasion and occupation of Iraq. While the U.S. and its allies evolved provincial reconstruction teams to rebuild Afghanistan through education, local development projects, infrastructure, economic and agricultural initiatives, there was an uneven success in the implementation. Afghanistan then became a secondary theatre of operations and was treated as an operational backwater — ignored and under-resourced.

Pakistan was an intimate player, indulged by American political masters in Washington. The Afghan-Pakistan border was historically permeable and the Taliban employed this advantage, recruiting young men from Pakistani madrassas (religious schools) to fight. They used the city of Quetta to secure their leadership and used Pakistan for training, a logistical base and a secure communications route for their Afghan operations.

As the years passed, the Taliban waited patiently while inspiring fear, conducting psychological warfare by threats, targeted assassinations and IEDs and occasionally attacking American and allied ground forces. The Taliban persistently studied how Western forces planned and operated, working out the methodologies at strategic, operational and tactical levels, garnering substantial insights on how





Airmen guide qualified evacuees aboard an Air Force C-17 Globemaster III while supporting the noncombatant evacuation operation in Afghanistan on Aug. 24, 2021.



Paratroopers facilitate the safe evacuation of U.S. citizens, special immigrant visa applicants and other at-risk Afghans out of Kabul on Aug. 22, 2021.

.American and Western militaries functioned, and how they could successfully be challenged. As the departure date had been announced, the Taliban had time to plan their next steps.

#### **Afghan security forces**

Throughout these years, the U.S. and its allies expanded the Afghan military and security forces. Despite building and equipping a 300,000-member Afghan security force, in the summer of 2021, the Afghans evaporated under attacks by the Taliban while U.S. forces withdrew. Only 30,000 Afghan commandos bravely attempted to stymie the Taliban's advance. Unfortunately, the Afghan military infrastructure could not sustain the combat requirements in terms of medevac, food, ammunition, fuel, reinforcement and air and fire support. The hasty U.S. withdrawal left the Afghan army without the necessary sustainability or supporting fire assets. Once the Afghan army realized U.S. ground forces were withdrawing out of Bagram airbase and elsewhere, they understood their support requirements to defeat the Taliban could not be sustained and that, in operational terms, the end was inevitable.

By 2021, the Afghan army was in part a mirror image of the U.S. army — it was a modern ground force that required substantial investment in intelligence assets, fire support, logistics and airpower to provide air-to-ground support as well as logistics and medevac.

It was inevitable that as U.S. ground units withdrew from their key bases, their ability to assist and sustain Afghan forces in the field diminished. The hurried departure had a direct impact upon the morale of the Afghan National Army, which was now the target of sustained Taliban assaults, resulting in Afghan soldiers realizing the futility of pursuing the fight against the advancing Taliban, thus prompting widespread surrender. The American departure and the cessation of their innate support helped to create the tactical, operational and strategic vacuum of which the Taliban forces expeditiously and understandably took immediate advantage.

#### **Friction with ISIS-K**

When the Taliban opened the prison in Kabul, one of the occupants was reportedly Abu Omar Khorasani, the leader of ISIS-K. Reports indicate that Taliban fighters executed him on the spot. According to ISIS-K, the Taliban is a nationalist apostate group; moreover, the ISIS-K view for pro-



paganda purposes is that the Taliban is an organization of American-led “crusader-puppets.” ISIS-K gained a foothold in Afghanistan in 2015 and is an integral part of the IS global terror franchise, which is dedicated to establishing a formal caliphate in both south and central Asia. Operating in Afghanistan and Pakistan, it has conducted a reported 250 attacks targeting Pakistani, Afghan and American personnel over the past four years.

These operations provoked U.S./Afghan forces to conduct operations in 2019 with the aim of driving ISIS-K forces from their refuge in eastern Afghanistan. With the Taliban in charge, ISIS-K will likely bide its time to expand its reach in Afghanistan. This will further challenge and complicate matters for the Taliban government in its attempts to secure the country. In the latter stages of the Kabul evacuation, intelligence raised the spectre that ISIS-K would attempt a suicide attack, car bomb or mortar attack that would usurp an orderly evacuation and withdrawal. The attacks on the Kabul airport on Aug. 26 reportedly were orchestrated by ISIS-K, killing 13 U.S. service personnel. On Sept. 8, an ISIS-K suicide bomber attacked a Shiite mosque in Kunduz, killing 46 attendees.

#### Were the aims achieved?

What may remain amongst the Afghan population and its youth is an aspiration to move their country into a peaceful, successful, sustainable 21st Century — and hope for the future. During my deployments, I remember driving through the crowded streets of Kabul and encountering a group of young girls going to school. I turned to my security detail and advised them that “there is a future for Afghanistan if we can ensure their education — the future will be bright.” That hope is now at risk of being diminished.

To evaluate the success of the U.S. and NATO’s work in Afghanistan, the initial strategic aim and objectives must be assessed. If they were achieved and sustained, the U.S. and its allies were successful. If they were not, the coalition has failed.

The scorecard is not balanced. The Afghan poverty rate increased to 47 per cent in 2020, up from 36 per cent in 2007, according to World Bank records. Schools, hospitals and dams that were planned and built by Americans and allies reportedly were largely ineffective. The U.S.-trained Afghan military, as was witnessed in August, dissipated in a matter of weeks. The good news is that life expectancy over

the past two decades moved to 64 years from 56 years and the literacy rate saw a significant increase to 43 per cent from 8 per cent.

#### Mujahideen resistance to the Taliban

Afghanistan is still far from a cessation of hostilities, with the possibility of a civil war amongst the Afghan people. Situated in the Panjshir Valley, a number of sources confirmed that a nascent resistance movement has begun to evolve, operating under the banner of the National Resistance Front of Afghanistan (NRFA.) This anti-Taliban resistance group was led by the deposed Afghan vice-president and well-respected former head of the National Directorate of Security, Amrullah Saleh, who is now considered by many as the de facto president of free Afghanistan. He was joined by Ahmad Massoud, son of the famed Northern Alliance leader, Ahmad Shah Massoud, who conducted a determined and ferociously skilful resistance against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s and continued to fight the



Amrullah Saleh is now considered by many as the de facto president of free Afghanistan.

first Taliban regime that took power a decade later. Massoud posed a direct threat to al-Qaida and was assassinated at the direction of Osama bin Laden just before the 9/11 attacks. Ahmad Massoud was educated at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, and then studied at King’s College, London, earning a master’s in international politics. By 2019, he was named his father’s successor and returned to the valley to garner anti-Taliban support in Kabul and the Panjshir.

Anticipating a contradiction between what the Taliban publicly declared and



#### ARMING THE FUTURE GLOBAL JIHADI

Most concerning to security services is the Taliban’s windfall capture of a quantity and variety of weapons and ammunition from departing U.S. forces. Social media is replete with photos showing Taliban fighters brandishing late model M4 and M-16 rifles and videos including M2 .50 heavy machine-guns and M24 sniper rifles.

According to the July 2021 Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction study, the U.S. provided Afghan forces with more than 7,000 machine-guns and 20,000 grenades, 4,700 Humvees and uncounted communications equipment, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) equipment and explosive ordnance disposal equipment. A 2017 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report identified that the U.S. military donated approximately 75,898 vehicles, 599,690 weapons and 208 aircraft to the Afghans between 2003 and 2016.

Of possible greater security concern is that the Taliban has reportedly seized American military biometrics devices that would help identify Afghans who assisted the coalition forces, which would compromise the safety and security of many Afghans.

The \$1 trillion expended on the Afghan security forces means that the U.S. government has essentially provided modern and expensive arms and equipment to the Taliban forces it was meant to fight. This windfall has made the Taliban the world’s best equipped and armed terrorist state, at the expense of American taxpayers.



Commanding General U.S. Central Command Kenneth F. McKenzie tours an evacuation control centre at Hamid Karzai International Airport on Aug. 17.

what it would do, Massoud brought together various Afghan leaders and their supporters. The resistance began acquiring weapons and equipment, and was populated by soldiers and commandos well versed in military skills, having garnered extensive combat experience over the past 20 years. Both Massoud and Saleh are Dari-speaking Tajiks, the second largest ethnic group in Afghanistan.

This challenge to Taliban rule forced the deployment of forces to the Panjshir Valley, as elements of the NRFA were reported to have seized three districts. Ahmad Massoud wrote in *The Washington Post* on Aug. 18 to request that the West provide weapons, ammunition and supplies to support a war against the Taliban as, he stated, “Afghanistan will without doubt become Ground Zero of radical Islamist terrorism; plots against democracies will be hatched here once again.” However, any perceived American support for NRFA jeopardizes the precarious and fragile arrangements with the Taliban leaders in Kabul who are enabling American passage from the Kabul airport.

However, on Sept. 7, 2021, the Taliban

reportedly overtook Panjshir Valley; while the status of the NRFA is unknown at this time, Massoud is believed to have escaped and Saleh sought refuge in Uzbekistan. Notwithstanding, an interview on Oct. 5, 2021, with the head of foreign relations of the NRFA Ali Maisam Nazary advised that Massoud remains in Afghanistan and resistance inside the country will continue.

#### Concerns for the future

Ignoring the acrimonious discourse that pervades the issues of intelligence warning — who, what, when, where and why — what are the takeaways? Following the Taliban takeover, Lord Evans “cautioned that the West will now have to ‘tool up’ to counter a potential resurgence from the group founded by Osama bin Laden.” Islamists globally have heralded the Taliban takeover as a victory, which will likely inspire similar groups and create a resurgence of calls for a global caliphate. There are early reports of increased attacks citing ISIS as an inspiration.

This long-running conflict will have impacts on the American intellectual landscape, as some might want to obliterate

the memories of the neo-conservative (neo-cons) movement that permeated the Bush administration for two terms. The neo-cons embraced a belief in American ideals and the innate military/economic power and global purpose of American exceptionalism, which clashed with the Afghan culture and multifaceted societal realities.

This misguided idealism was further complicated by the counter-insurgency environment that pervaded the conflict. The hopes of undertaking an Afghan-wide program of defence, diplomacy and development that would be transferred to the Afghan government to subsequently lead and manage, failed. There was no effective government in Kabul that could assume the 3D responsibilities to provide and manage the spectrum of basic social services, security and governance. Historical experiences that acknowledge the importance of having either governmental control (Malaya, Northern Ireland) or substantial government influence (Oman, Philippines) to address a counter-insurgency challenge abound.

In geopolitical terms, the seemingly



unilateral withdrawal by the U.S. caused allied nations to reassess the U.S.'s global role and their respective relationships. The U.S., under the Obama, Trump and Biden administrations, gradually withdrew itself as a trustworthy leader and effective global partner. All three U.S. administrations began to exhibit varying degrees of insularity pertaining to U.S. foreign policy, perhaps given a U.S. perception that NATO allies were not delivering on their NATO military and financial commitments. This was highlighted in Afghanistan where, for 20 years, the U.S. government was the supplier of 90 per cent of the money, equipment and personnel. The U.S.'s allies have been reliant on its support within NATO for out-of-area operations and to be the world's policeman. With the U.S. decision to leave Afghanistan, the ensuing uncharacteristic lack of co-ordination from NATO impacted allied nations that had hoped to have more time to extricate their citizens and those Afghans who assisted their respective governments.

For many Americans, this departure may herald the beginning of the end of the "forever wars." The departure of the U.S. and its coalition from Afghanistan may mean accepting unconditional surrender. Afghanistan had ceased to be a "war" a number of years ago, as the small numerical presence of American and coalition forces had transitioned to a counterterrorism operation from a counter-insurgency operation. Importantly, this small representational force continued to successfully exclude the Taliban from seizing power and reinstituting a theocratic regime. The rapid departure of American forces created a vacuum of which the Taliban took full advantage, thereby finding itself in control in Kabul.

In the end, the U.S. and its coalition partners departed Kabul. This demonstrated to the Taliban that they succeeded militarily and politically to defeat the West, diminishing the West's power, influence and unity.

In the aftermath of the U.S.'s departure, the question amongst many observers is: What happens after the departure of the United States and the West from Afghanistan? The establishment of Taliban leadership in Kabul has brought with it anger, frustration, finger-pointing and the search for scapegoats. This will occupy historians and commentators for months and years to come. The hard reality is that no withdrawal from Afghanistan would be easy and Biden had to make a difficult decision.

The fact is that the Taliban was much better organized and stronger than in 2001. Meanwhile, the Afghan military and security forces were targets of widespread corruption with intermittent pay, little logistical support and under pressure from an aggressively advancing Taliban. The situation was exacerbated further by the U.S.'s seemingly secretive withdrawal from their bases that helped to spark widespread Afghan desertions. A

#### POST-WAR FINANCIAL COSTS

Since the 2001 invasion, approximately 47,000 Afghan civilians and more than 2,500 American troops have died in the conflict. According to Brown University and its Costs of War Project, the war cost approximately \$2.5 trillion and will rise to \$6 trillion. The direct war fighting costs were assessed at \$815.7 billion and infrastructure projects, training of Afghan military forces and nation-building added another \$143 billion. The cost of the campaign has been estimated at \$300 million per day for 20 years. To pay for the war, military actions were supported through government general revenue, which borrowed heavily, resulting in more than \$530 billion paid in interest and total debt payments, which are estimated to balloon to \$6.5 trillion, according to the Costs of War Project.

Linda J. Bilmes, an expert on budgetary and public financial issues at the Harvard Kennedy School, reported that "the costs outlined here are really just the tip of the iceberg. For example, the U.S. will need to continue to provide care for veterans wounded in the Afghan and Iraq wars for decades to come."

That expense, which will total more than \$2 trillion, is not expected to peak until after 2048, according to Bilmes.

decision to support the Afghan government would have meant the re-introduction of U.S. forces that would have effectively renewed open conflict with a numerically strong Taliban. Moreover, should Biden not have ordered the departure of U.S. forces and personnel, the Taliban would likely have launched attacks against American interests in the country.

The notion of sustaining the Afghan government was not in the cards. The United States and the West must now contemplate, plan and prepare for a steeper problem in confronting the extremist threat, not only potentially from Afghanistan, but from Islamist extremists operating globally who have taken inspiration and succour from this Islamist victory over the West. This situation will require global counterterrorist security and police authorities to, once again, 'up tool' to address the impending terror challenges. The departure of U.S. intelligence assets from Afghanistan will also make the monitoring of counterterrorism activities in the region far more difficult. This expensive venture in Western political idealism underlined some little-appreciated Afghan realities.

Overextending an occupation in any country, particularly Afghanistan, was a serious geopolitical error of epic proportions. The invasion's initial objective was to take down the Taliban government and rout al-Qaida and its leadership. This subsequently morphed into what has been described as a neo-con fantasy of taking a poor and disparate tribal state that was deeply religious and governed essentially by warlords and transforming it into a modern Western democracy. This dramatic transition was to be orchestrated through the West's combined investment and efforts in defence, diplomacy and development.

As recent events have proved, our combined efforts were, for the most part, for naught. We have ended the lives of thousands of American, allied and Afghan military personnel and civilians. Among them were 165 Canadians — 158 soldiers and 7 civilians. More than 2,000 were wounded during the war. And thousands more endure lifelong debilitating physical and mental injury — and we spent trillions to what end?

Will we see the same when the Americans depart Iraq by the end of 2021? Perhaps this time they will be better prepared.

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# Hope and hopelessness in Africa



Robert I.  
Rotberg

**H**akainde Hichilema's resounding victory in Zambia's August presidential poll proves that Africans can abandon identity preferences, resist intimidation by an incumbent regime and oust a sitting autocrat accustomed to rigging elections. Voters in that one southern African country removed president Edgar Lungu, a despot who had increasingly brutalized opponents, curtailed free speech and assembly and wrecked the nation's economy while lining his own pockets and the pockets of cronies.

Hichilema's success represents a rare triumph of popular democracy in an Africa increasingly fraught with vicious ethnic disputes and intranational rivalries. Ethiopia, the continent's second most populous country, with 110 million inhabitants, is a poster child for such internal antagonisms; as a result, Ethiopia is in danger of dissolving into its separate ethnic sections thanks to misguided policies pursued since 2020 by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, the nation's arrogant leader.

The two leaders and their policies represent the disparate poles of contemporary sub-Saharan Africa discourse: Will the post-colonial nations of that continent hold together and eventually become full nations, or will they continue to remain pre-institutional states dominated by particularly populous or influential ethnicities intent on marginalizing minorities?

Zambia has never elected someone from its neglected south to high office. But, because Lungu, backed by the country's Bemba majority, ruled high-handedly, mismanaged the country's economy, borrowed lavishly from China and Europe to finance extravagant infrastructure projects, and threatened to extend his term of office beyond constitutionally permitted limits, voters tossed him out and thus ended northern (Bemba) hegemony in Zambia. Hichilema, a CiTonga-speaker, promises to unify Zambia, end corrup-



Hakainde Hichilema's election as president of Zambia represents a triumph of popular democracy in an Africa that is increasingly politically fraught.

tion and restore prosperity in a land long dependent on the export of copper and cadmium.

Zambia defaulted on its bond payments to Europe in 2020, Africa's first victim of profligacy. Whether Hichilema can persuade the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to give Zambia the massive loan it needs to pay off its remaining debts to Europe and China and stabilize an economy, now running wild deficits remains to be seen. Under Lungu, Zambia's public debt as a share of GDP doubled from 66 per cent to 113 per cent, the value of the local kwacha currency fell precipitously, food prices soared and copper production slumped. The austerity that the IMF will demand promises to make Hichilema's early governing efforts unpopular.

Nevertheless, Hichilema has already accomplished the bringing together of a state long organized along ethnic lines. He could be the unifier and nation-builder that Abiy is not, and his election and efforts in office could advance the cause of democratic modernization in a continent otherwise still focused largely on ethnically acquired spoils.

Ever since winning a Nobel Peace Prize, Abiy, a member of the Oromo, Ethiopia's largest ethnic group of 38 mil-

lion people, has led his country in exactly the opposite direction. The successor as prime minister to the Tigrayan junta that had organized and fought a guerrilla war to take Ethiopia back from an oppressive Marxist regime that had assassinated Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974 and ruled all of Ethiopia despotically until 1991, Abiy tried and is still trying to conquer Tigray (one of his country's 10 regional governments) and extirpate Tigrayans (6 per cent of Ethiopia's population) in 2020 and 2021. By attempting to gain control over Tigray and thus end a theoretical threat to his personalist rule, Abiy has revived contentions among all of the country's other large ethnic entities, and engaged in wholesale ethnic cleansing (a precursor to genocide) in Tigray. As many as half of Tigray's 8 million inhabitants are now hungry and starving.

Abiy has prevented humanitarian aid from reaching Tigray and his actions have driven 150,000 Tigrayans across the border into impecunious Sudan. Meanwhile, a Tigrayan militia regained control of the region, thus further nullifying Abiy's efforts to become a new paramount ruler of a now-divided Ethiopia, but deepening internal schisms. Abiy's forces bombed and invaded Tigray again, in October.



Whereas Hichilema can conceivably build upon his unexpected electoral triumph to unify and modernize Zambia, a Texas-sized country of 18 million inhabitants, Abiy's actions have accentuated fissiparous tendencies in Ethiopia, a mixed Christian and Muslim entity 1.6 times the size of that same American state. Many other African polities are still struggling — 60 years after independence — to build real nations. Most default into their ethnic components, and fight elections on the basis of identities, not policies.

Nigeria harbours an extreme version of this ethnic favouritism. Africa's most populous place, with more than 200 million people, and by 2050 about 400 million, Nigeria is home to an Igbo irredentist movement in its southeast quadrant that seeks to revive the fortunes of Biafra, a secessionist state that fought and lost a bitter war against the rest of Nigeria from 1967 to 1970. To the southwest of the area that was once Biafra, in and around the Niger River delta, is the homeland of the increasingly restive Ijaw people. West of this area and west of the Igbo homeland is Yoruba country, already exhibiting another ethnic upsurge. These three peoples, and others such as the Ibibio and Ogoni (near the Ijaw) and the Tiv (in mid-Nigeria), collectively resent the predations and pretensions of northern Muslims (about half of the country's total population), and especially of Fulani herders who are increasingly moving south into what was once considered the fertile lands of Christian and animist agriculturalists.

Nigeria's northeast corner, spilling over into Niger and Cameroon, also suffers from a long-running insurgency that has pitted Boko Haram (now split into two fundamentalist groups) irredentists against the massive (but ineffectual) Nigerian army for control of Borno state and the littoral of Lake Chad. Boko Haram and gangsters farther west in Muslim Kaduna, Katsina and Zamfara states (Nigeria has 36) have kidnapped schoolchildren repeatedly, disrupted farmers and even raided towns and cities such as Maiduguri.

Nigeria, a classically failed state, will doubtless continue to stagger onward despite its many separatist-inclined peoples and ambitious ethnically driven politicians. President Muhammadu Buhari's leadership is lacking, so a ramshackle country that should advance Africa's interests globally and continentally falters endlessly without finally falling apart.

Nearby Cameroon also suffers from separatist endeavours on the part of its long-discriminated-against English-

speaking minority. Currently, 20 per cent of Cameroon's people speak English rather than French, the residue of different colonial experiences. Since 2017, the English speakers have been fighting to create Ambazonia, a new state to be carved out of Cameroon's southwest corner. But so far, even with a ruler of 39 years (President Paul Biya) who lives most of the year in Switzerland, French-speaking security forces have managed to prevent Ambazonia from splitting away from Cameroon.

The Central African Republic, just east of Cameroon, has been mired for at least a decade in a pitched battle between Muslims (the Séléka) from the north and Christians (the anti-Balaka movement) from the south. Likewise, Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, north of Nigeria, endure almost weekly attacks by criminal Islamists loyal to the Islamic State in the Sahara/Maghreb. The insurgents have been growing stronger in recent months, especially as France, Britain and the United States have focused their military attentions else-



Patriotic Front (PF) leader Edgar C. Lungu casts his ballot in the Zambian election. His opponent, Hakainde Hichilema prevailed.

where and the local armies have proven incapable of recovering the lands of the Sahel (and the Sahara) from militants with access to Libyan arms. This whole area could soon fall, Afghanistan-like, to armed gangs based mostly beyond Timbuktu.

In many more African states, governments discriminate on the basis of ethnicity. Uganda favours southwesterners loyal to its autocratic president, and systematically persecutes those from its one-time dominant kingdoms of Buganda and Bunyoro. Kikuyu rule Kenya, often with little consideration for the wishes of those of, say, Luo, Kamba, Samburu, Maasai or Kipsigis origin.

Possibly in southern Africa, given Hichilema's ascent, Zambia can join Botswana in becoming a fully unified nation, rather

than an embryonic state. South Africa, long a full nation, would seem exempt from all of these concerns. But president Jacob Zuma's calamitous rule from 2009 to 2018 exacerbated residual ethnic preferences. As a Zulu, a member of the most populous peopling of South Africa, Zuma shifted governmental employment preference and access to illicit profits to fellow Zulu, thus opening up the Pandora's box of ethnicity almost for the first time. His efforts, and the "selling" of the state to a cabal of Indian capitalists and Zulu entrepreneurs, divided the ruling African National Congress (ANC) and the entire nation in ways that president Nelson Mandela himself warned against before his death.

Zuma, now on trial for peculation and influence-peddling from as long ago as the 1990s as well in the 2010s, is still trying to protect himself and his mercantile interests by raising the Zulu ethnic flag and, with his supporters, by opposing the valiant, but so far still inconclusive efforts of President Cyril Ramaphosa to unite the nation and rebuild it economically despite the massive damage of COVID-19, the Delta variant and inexcusable vaccine shortages. Ramaphosa is a Venda, a smallish and much-derided ethnicity in northern South Africa.

Woe be to South Africa and Africa if Ramaphosa is unable to contain the Zulu and ANC separatists. Like Nigeria, South Africa is the tribune of Africa and, under a democratic, well-intentioned leader such as Ramaphosa, it theoretically should be able to hold together and prosper on behalf of its 60 million inhabitants and for the rest of Africa.

Africa's future depends on triumphs such as those of Hichilema, and the stalwart endeavours of Ramaphosa. But there are power hungry leaders, such as Abiy and Biya, and inept ones such as Buhari, whose maladroitness efforts may drive Africans more and more apart.

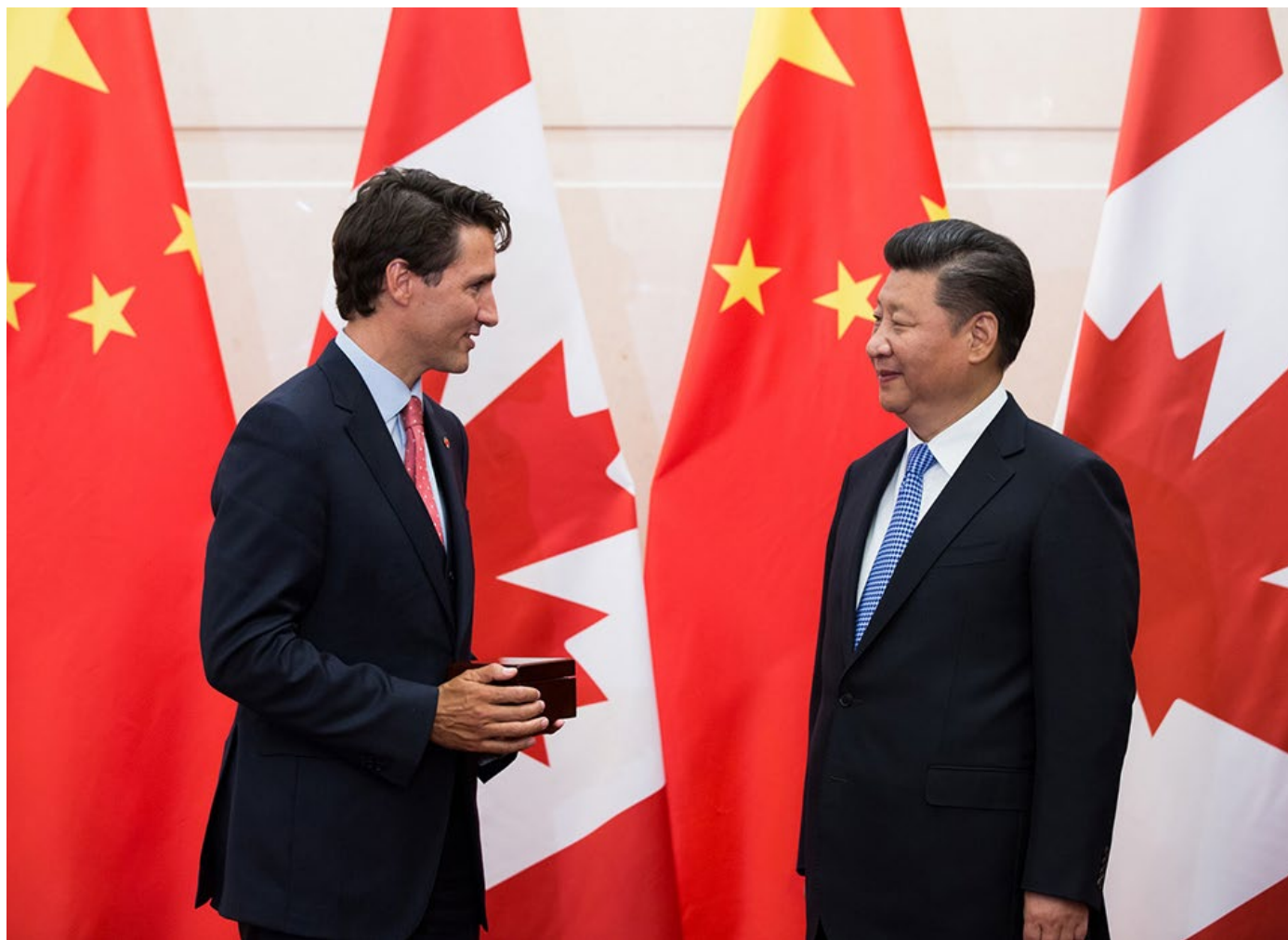
Things have, at least, come together in Zambia at last, a hopeful harbinger for much of the rest of Africa.

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# Wanted: A major reset

Our writer, a former Canadian ambassador to China, says its time to re-examine and restart Canada's relationship with its second-largest trading partner

*Guy Saint-Jacques*



*Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, shown here with Chinese President Xi Jinping, has alluded to a revised engagement strategy with China.*

**B**oth Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Foreign Affairs Minister Marc Garneau have alluded to an upcoming revised engagement strategy with China. This is good news as Canada takes stock of the aggressive path President Xi Jinping has taken in China. Trust has been broken with the heavy penalties imposed on Canada after the arrest of Meng Wanzhou in December 2018 at the request of U.S. authorities, including taking Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig as hostages.

## The China of Xi Jinping

It is important to understand where China is going. When Xi Jinping became general secretary of the Communist Party of China in November 2012, he was concerned about instability, inequalities in Chinese society and the bad reputation of the party. He has put measures in place to clean up the party, launched a major anti-corruption campaign and more recently revived the notion of common prosperity. Domestically, there has been a major crackdown on freedom of expression, more lawyers and labour activists ar-

rested, no tolerance for dissent, controls on foreign NGOs and the introduction of the social credit system that penalizes those who dare to criticize the Chinese regime.

Traditionally, China's foreign policy has been based on its security and territorial integrity (it has 14 neighbours), but also on principles such as non-interference, equality and mutual respect. These principles seem to have been jettisoned when you look at the Wolf Warriors type of diplomacy pursued by Chinese diplomats, including recent Chinese ambassadors to Canada. Since 2012, we have seen a China



that is more assertive, arrogant and aggressive, especially in the neighbourhood.

Recall the Senkaku/Diaoyutai crisis in the fall of 2012, the militarization of the South China Sea despite the July 2016 decision under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea that its claims are overwhelmingly without merit and, more recently, border incidents with India.

When he came to power, Xi declared that the time had come for China to take its rightful place on the international scene. His goal was to achieve a comprehensive national renaissance and be the main global superpower by the time of the 100th anniversary of the creation of the People's Republic of China in 2049.

Consequently, China has put its people in international organizations (and supported the election of foreigners whose country is indebted to China.) It has created its own institutions, such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, it has become one of the largest contributors to UN peacekeeping operations and launched the Belt and Road Initiative to increase its sphere of influence, and its markets. At the 19th Party Congress in October 2017, Xi went further by presenting China as a model for the world, underlining the economic success it had achieved without adopting Western values. Based on its recent assertive and aggressive behaviour, it seems that Xi no longer cares about China's reputation, as he has probably concluded that Western countries depend so much on China that they will not dare to react forcefully to its transgressions.

#### Canada's engagement with China

The government of Pierre Trudeau established diplomatic relations with China in October 1970 and the Chinese government was grateful for the sale of wheat by the Diefenbaker government in the '60s after the disastrous Great Leap Forward of Mao Zedong. Other factors that explain why Canada was still well perceived in China until recently are the contribution of Norman Bethune during the anti-Japanese Occupation War or that of generations of Canadian missionaries, for instance in helping build its health system. As well, successful programs were put in place by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Over 30 years, Canada spent more than \$1 billion in China, which helped create the Chinese dairy industry and the ministry of environmental protection. It also helped finance the feasibility study of the Three Gorges Dam hydro-electric project, readied China for its admission into the World Trade Organiza-

tion and trained engineers, lawyers and judges.

It was, maybe, for all these reasons that former Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji said in November 1998 that "Canada is China's best friend." There was then a heavy flow of visitors in both directions and a genuine desire in China to move forward with rule of law and gradual democracy. Its

Square uprising of June 4, 1989. More recently, relations improved after the election of the Trudeau government in October 2015 with the creation of many official annual dialogues, completing the work started by prime minister Stephen Harper. Despite repeated warnings about the tightening of controls on Chinese society imposed by Xi Jinping and events



When she was foreign minister, Chrystia Freeland expressed support at a rally, shown here, for the right to peaceful protest in Hong Kong.

upcoming entry into the WTO was going to result in more business opportunities and more contacts with the outside world, which would help move it in the right direction. But, that plan didn't work exactly as anticipated.

It is fair to say that despite this goodwill and support, Canada gradually lost its influence and there is no longer any special relationship with China. Since 1970, there have been a number of ups and downs in the relationship. There was a major cooling off after the Tiananmen

such as the August 2014 arbitrary arrest of Canadian Christian aid workers Kevin and Julia Garratt, some in the political class in Ottawa had remained ambivalent on China — until the arrest of the two Michaels.

The arrest of Huawei CFO's Meng Wanzhou in December 2018 changed the ambivalence by showing the challenges of dealing with a superpower that ignores international rules when they are not to its liking. China does not hesitate to severely punish countries that refuse to obey





Canada's embassy in Beijing: Despite the political tensions, bilateral trade is now doing well. Canadian exports increased by eight per cent in 2020.

its diktats. Apart from having Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor detained as hostages and four Canadians on death row for drug trafficking, including Robert Schellenberg, Canada paid a heavy price in 2019 as its exports to China went down by 16 per cent or \$4.5 billion, with canola and pork producers being hard hit, although the African swine flu eventually forced China to resume its imports of our pork.

Despite the political tensions, bilateral trade is now doing well: Canadian exports increased by 8 per cent in 2020 (\$25.2 billion). Exports saw a further increase of 23.2 per cent over the first six months of this year as Canada benefited from China's trade war with Australia. Barley went up 238 per cent; metallurgical coal, 185 per cent; copper, 121 per cent and canola seeds, 52 per cent. In fact, food exports expanded by 51 per cent, year over year, to \$4.6 billion and, as a result, food accounted for 31 per cent of all Canadian exports to the mainland compared to 8 per cent for the world as a whole. On the other hand, Canada's reliance on China as a source of goods is steadily rising. Indeed, the mainland accounted for 10.8 per cent of Canada's world imports in 2011 (\$48.2 billion) and 14.1 per cent in 2020 (\$76.5 billion).

#### Looking forward

As Colin Robertson pointed out in *The*

*Globe & Mail* on July 30, 2019: "We need a realistic, not a romantic, China policy. It should start with the recognition that China is an authoritarian state, a strategic competitor and systemic rival. It will



When he came to power, Xi Jinping declared it was time for China to take its rightful place on the international scene.

never follow Western democratic norms because that would destabilize the Communist Party — the root and base of the People's Republic of China."

So, how should Canada deal with

China? It is high time for the Canadian government to adopt a much firmer attitude with China. After all, firm language is only type it respects. The message should be forthright: Canada is ready for a constructive engagement, as long as China respects international laws and treaties and stops acting like a bully when a country does not follow its edicts. Also, there should be zero tolerance for interference or spying activities in Canada. A good starting point would be to look at the four foreign interference laws adopted by Australia.

China will always need Canada's agri-food products, as well as iron and copper, which gives Canada leeway to take stronger measures. Its revised engagement strategy should be based on the defence and protection of Canadian values and national interests, as well as reciprocity and transparency. As trust has been broken, future Canadian engagement with China will have to be a lot more selective for areas that serve Canada's interest, and be implemented in a consistent manner. Canada needs to recover its voice: Ottawa must call China into question when it transgresses obligations undertaken through international treaties. This includes problems such as the trampling of human rights in Xinjiang, Tibet and Hong Kong; the militarization of the South China Sea; the undue pressure on Taiwan and Beijing's refusal to collaborate





With China's recent provocations against Taiwan, some have questioned whether Taiwan's Navy, together with its allies, including the U.S. Navy, whose forward-deployed aircraft carrier *USS Ronald Reagan* transits the South China Sea here, are well enough equipped to go to war against China.

with the World Health Organization to investigate the origin of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Canada should also ban Huawei from its 5G development to ensure that the company's equipment cannot be used for espionage and to align Canada with the United States.

As this country may be asked again, in the future, to arrest a prominent Chinese citizen at the request of a foreign country with which it has an extradition treaty, it needs mechanisms to prevent future hostage-taking. Canada should take the Declaration Against Arbitrary Detention in State-to-State Relations one step further by developing criteria that would trigger common responses, including sanctions, on the part of signatory countries. The way the two Michaels were released just confirmed that it was pure hostage diplomacy and that it can happen to citizens of other Western countries, as well.

Canada should continue to work with like-minded countries to reinforce the multilateral system. The Australian Strategic Policy Institute noted recently that China used coercive tactics 152 times between 2010 and 2020, against 27 countries and the EU. To prevent such bullying tactics, Canada should impress on Washington that it needs to make the World Trade Organization functional again by allowing arbiters to be appointed to panels. Countries could then launch action against

China when it imposes punitive sanctions (this would apply to other countries that enact these measures as well). Canada could suggest an alliance to Australia and the U.S. (to start) whereby they would not increase their exports to China beyond their historical share of a given product if one of their citizens is victim of such sanctions. To counter China's influence in the developing world through its Belt & Road Initiative, Western countries also need to offer an alternative with more financing and assistance, and to demonstrate that a democratic system presents more long-term benefits than the Chinese authoritarian regime.

The Canadian government should also look at ways to diversify its trade by relocating resources from China to other markets in Asia. In this regard, ASEAN should be a top priority for a new free trade agreement (FTA) because of the growth potential of the region. Negotiations could proceed rapidly using as the model concluded with Australia and New Zealand. Similarly, the CPTPP offers a good platform to expand Canadian exports; and it would not be surprising to see the Biden administration take another look at it.

There are, of course, areas where it is in Canada's interest to pursue co-operation with China. On the environment, Canada has already a good record of providing assistance. This could facilitate business opportunities for Canada to provide China

with clean technologies, liquefied natural gas and green/blue hydrogen to help reduce its coal addiction. On public health and pandemics, Canada should continue to collaborate with China — especially to ensure it doesn't cut corners.

It is important to distinguish between Chinese leaders and Chinese citizens: Chinese immigrants have made a great contribution to Canada's development and the government should declare that Canada remains open to Chinese visitors, including students, and will provide support to all Chinese nationals seeking asylum from state persecution, including those from Hong Kong. The Canadian government also has its own homework to do by increasing Canadian literacy on China by devoting more resources to Mandarin training and centres specializing on the country's politics, economics and culture.

To be successful, this new engagement strategy with China will have to be implemented in close collaboration with like-minded countries. An impending test to do so will be at Beijing's 2022 Winter Olympics. Let's propose that delegations to the opening ceremony be limited, and that foreign leaders not attend. The more the West speaks with one voice, the more China will be forced to stop its bullying tactics.

Guy Saint-Jacques was Canada's ambassador to China from 2012 until 2016.

# The residential schools tragedy

By Laura Neilson Bonikowsky



Shown here is study period at Roman Catholic Indian Residential School, Fort Resolution, Northwest Territories. The latest residential school scandal made headlines across the globe, and China weaponized it in its dealings with Canada.

In May, Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc leaders announced that the loss of children from B.C.'s Kamloops Indian Residential School had been confirmed by ground-penetrating radar. In the press release, Chief Rosanne Casimir said the presence of the graves was known, but the deaths appear to be undocumented and they "sought out a way to confirm that [knowing knowledge] out of deepest respect and love for those lost children and their families."

As other school sites revealed their findings, the media reported in sensationalist detail, sometimes with some historical context.

Comments on social media revealed that many Canadians, surprisingly, knew nothing of the residential schools. The subject has been in provincial curricula for decades. Canada formally apologized

for the residential school system in 1998 and 2008. The 1998 Statement of Reconciliation included \$1.9 billion to pay 80,000 survivors.

A more profound apology in 2008 paid \$3.23 billion to 26,700 claimants in a class-action settlement. A cornerstone of the agreement was the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (established in 2007). Its widely publicized final report in 2015 noted missions near reserves had conducted burials of local and non-local children and adults. The report also identified known and suspected burial sites across Canada.

It has never been a secret that residential schools had cemeteries. Sol Mamakwa, an Indigenous member of Ontario's legislature, said, "It is a great open secret that our children lie on the properties of the former schools." There is no reason Cana-

dians should not have known about the residential schools. We're shocked because we've refused to look at the dark side of our history; it's time we did, especially if the world is looking at us.

## History of residential schools

Roman Catholic missionaries established the first Indigenous residential schools in 17th-Century New France, which was ceded to Great Britain in 1763. With Confederation in 1867, the federal government assumed responsibility for Indigenous people with the mistaken belief that they needed to be managed. The Indian Act of 1876 incorporated colonial laws to assimilate Indigenous people into Euro-Canadian society.

In the 1950s and 60s, the government began integrating Indigenous children into provincial school systems. Closing



them took decades; the last closed in 1996. (Grollier Hall closed in 1997, but was not a state-run residential school in that year.)

It was a horrific social experiment based on ideas of colonial superiority and that assimilating Indigenous people into Euro-Canadian society would solve the “Indian problem.” The schools separated children aged seven to 15 from their families, communities and traditions, ostensibly to educate them. Education was not restricted to religion and the three Rs; children also learned skills to allow them theoretically to earn a living — sewing, laundry, carpentry and construction. With schools underfunded, students were put to work to maintain them.

There was often too little food. Dormitories were crowded; tuberculosis flourished. Many teachers were unqualified and teaching materials reflected an alien culture. Many children could not speak English or French, the languages of instruction. Corporal punishment was applied excessively. And while not every teacher was a child abuser and not every child was abused, the environment was hostile.

### The graves

In July, the Tk’emlúps te Secwépemc announced the Kamloops Indian Residential School Le Estcwéy (The Missing) Report. They had hired Sarah Beaulieu, a University of the Fraser Valley instructor and a ground-penetrating radar (GPR) specialist experienced at surveying Indigenous and municipal cemeteries. She explained that GPR is not an X-ray; it reveals soil disturbances, not necessarily organic matter such as human remains or coffins. While disturbed soil is not exclusive to burials, it “can give indications of burials if they are in an area where burials are suspected to exist.”

The results are used in conjunction with oral histories, a known cemetery or other evidence to determine if further searches are warranted. By Beaulieu’s estimate, the Kamloops location revealed 200 suspected graves in a two-acre (.8-hectare) portion of a 60-acre (24-hectare) site where excavations and assessments had been done two decades ago.

GPR surveys at other sites revealed more suspected graves, including 182 at the Kootenay Residential School in B.C., which former chief Sophie Pierre said they had always known about.

Cowessess First Nation in Saskatchewan located 751 graves. Chief Cadmus Delorme emphasized unmarked graves, not a mass grave, and suggested the Cath-

olic Church had removed grave markers in the 1960s. Jon Z. Lerat, a Cowessess band councillor, said the site was used by the municipality and not all of the graves contain children’s remains. In Shubenacadie, N.S., Sipekne’katik First Nation announced evidence of unmarked graves that predate the residential school by 100 years, connected to former landowners.

### Global repercussions

Canadian media reported mass graves and bodies found. The story took on a life of its own; it wasn’t about Indigenous efforts to seek “out a way to confirm that knowing.” Reaction was immediate; shrines of little shoes and teddy bears appeared at legislatures. Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau apologized. Churches were burned down. Some politicians made wary public statements about the national tragedy while some, along with other notables, cheered the arsonists. NDP leader Jagmeet Singh fanned the flames, declaring “215 Indigenous kids were found in an unmarked mass grave.”

Global reaction has largely been restricted to the media. The *BBC*, *The New*

#### EXCERPT FROM 2008 APOLOGY BY PRIME MINISTER STEPHEN HARPER:

Today, we recognize that this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm and has no place in our country. The government of Canada sincerely apologizes and asks the forgiveness of the Aboriginal peoples of this country for failing them so profoundly. We are sorry.

Source: CBC Archives

*York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *Al Jazeera* hung the story under headlines crafted to get eyeballs on pages, such as “Horrible History: Mass Grave of Indigenous Children Reported in Canada” (*NYT*, May 28.) Reader comments suggested many read only the headlines. *The Washington Post* noted “one of the darkest chapters of Canada’s history”; *France 24* focused on national shock; UK dailies criticized the Catholic church’s role. German media avoided referring to mass graves or genocide.

There were few official statements; countries with dark histories shouldn’t point fingers. France and Britain share the residential school history. In the U.S., Native Americans leveraged the situation

to demand an investigation. Prompted by Deb Haaland, the first Native American Cabinet secretary, the Biden administration announced it will review America’s residential schools.

China weaponized the graves. At the same time Canada helped launch an effort to have the UN demand China allow free access to Xinjiang to investigate human rights violations, China and its allies demanded the UN investigate Canada’s crimes, citing its deep concern for Indigenous people, “especially the children.”

China’s supporters — Belarus, North Korea, Iran, Russia, Sri Lanka, Syria and Venezuela — do not have rights-respecting governments. According to Aaron Ettinger, an assistant professor specializing in international relations at Carleton University, “They regard international human rights instruments as tools of Western dominance and would be happy to undercut the global effectiveness of human rights.”

### Will there be fallout?

On Sept. 12, in Saskatchewan, the Pasqua First Nation donated orange markers to identify graves at the cemetery of the Regina Indian Residential School. The story fell out of the news cycle by mid-September, but was referred to ahead of the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

According to Ettinger, “For the most part, most other countries will regard the discovery of Indigenous graves as a matter of domestic Canadian affairs.”

Perhaps Canadians are now aware of the residential schools and are uncomfortable. Roger Epp, professor of political science at the University of Alberta, says it should “set limits around the classic Canadian temptation to imagine that, in foreign policy, we are rightly positioned on the side of the angels, that we stand for the kind of higher principles on which a better world will get built.”

What others think they know about Canada is less important than what we understand about ourselves. As Epp notes, there aren’t countries with settler-colonial histories that have shown a better way to address their history or re-building their relations with Indigenous peoples. As to whether international reaction could create barriers to healing and reconciliation, Epp says “some days, the [barriers] we’ve built for ourselves seem imposing enough.”

Laura Neilson Bonikowsky is an Alberta writer who learned about Canada’s residential schools in middle school.

# A second chance at school

Over-age girls who've had a later start in school get a chance to accelerate their studies, strongly supported by Ottawa-based CODE and Liberia's WE-CARE Foundation.

By Claire Wanjiru Bolton



Reading *Liberia* books developed by CODE in partnership with local authors and illustrators feature prominently in the Girls' Accelerated Learning Initiative, which aims to help over-age girls master literacy and numeracy skills. Without this program, girls such as Annie and Sarah, above from left, who are too old for their grade, are at high risk of never completing primary school as they contend with many social and economic barriers.

**G**race hunches over her desk to write. Watching her, it seems she's trying to hide her size and blend into the sea of much younger and smaller children around her. She's 16 and sitting in a Grade 1 classroom in rural Liberia. If you were to flip through her notebook, you would be impressed by her penmanship. She has mastered the art of copying notes from the chipped chalkboard. Grace shows up every day, conquering her shame and determined to learn.

So, what's holding her back? She can't read.

In sub-Saharan Africa alone, 88 per cent, or 202 million children, are not meeting minimum proficiency levels in

literacy. Amongst over-age students — those whose learning is truncated by late entry into the school system and early departure during adolescence — the rate is often higher. This example of Learning Poverty, as defined by the World Bank and UNESCO, is the inability to read and understand a simple text by age 10. Learning Poverty has catastrophic downstream impacts on children like Grace.

The ability to read is a foundational stepping-stone, a gateway skill that allows students to progress successfully through school and to realize their potential as literate, empowered and self-reliant citizens. Conversely, if children can't read by age 10, or at least by the end of primary

school, they are likely to never learn to read in later years.

Over-age girls such as Grace have the odds stacked against them. They suffer under the weight of compounding pressures and multiple barriers to success. A late start in school finds them in over-crowded and desperately under-resourced classrooms where teachers often lack the skill to cater to their unique pedagogical needs. A lack of parental support, feelings of low self-worth, low family literacy and mounting social pressures push girls into unwanted sexual activity, teen pregnancy, early marriages and into the labour market to support their families. Unless something changes, girls such as Grace



quickly drop out and are relegated to a life of poverty.

As in other post-conflict countries, in Liberia, over-age enrolment remains a civil war legacy. But there are other persistent economic and social challenges that contribute to the high prevalence of children getting a later start in school. For girls, in particular, this includes a disproportionate burden of care for younger siblings and household chores, as well as safety concerns when girls need to travel a long distance to school.

Over-age enrolment in Liberia is the highest in sub-Saharan Africa, with 74 per cent of students (both girls and boys) too old for their grade. And although the incidence of over-age enrolment is nearly the same for boys and girls, girls face a greater risk of dropping out sooner for the many reasons noted above.

Over-age girls need to advance quickly if they are to have a fighting chance at completing primary school and successfully transitioning into higher levels of education. And that is precisely what the Girls' Accelerated Learning Initiative (GALI) aims to do.

The program, established by CODE (an Ottawa-based international development organization) and its local partner, the WE-CARE Foundation in Monrovia, aims to give girls like Grace an academic lifeline.

The program presently provides 383 over-age girls at 25 primary schools in Bomi, Margibi and Montserrado counties in Liberia with daily after-school small-group tutoring to accelerate their learning and equip them with valuable life skills. Through the program and the girls' hard work, girls are quickly and confidently advanced to more age-appropriate grades.

Each of 75 specially trained teachers receives a modest stipend to work closely with a group of five over-age girls over the course of the academic year. They focus on mastery of foundational literacy and numeracy skills and provide remedial support for learning in other subject areas as well. Given that participating girls tend to be 12 to 16 years old and in Grades 1 to 3 when they enter the program, inclusion of gender-specific topics such as menstrual hygiene management and gender equality are also a critical element of the program.

GALI was first piloted in five schools in 2017 at the behest of the WE-CARE Foundation. The high demand and exceptional potential were quickly recognized, and the following year, GALI was expanded to an additional 20 schools with support from the Montreal-based 60 million girls foundation.

Over the past four years, the program has been refined and adapted with feedback from teachers, students and other local stakeholders. Attendance challenges have been minimized through enhanced parental engagement and the introduction of snacks and sanitary pads. Professional development for GALI teachers, introduction of more girl-centric learning materials and mobile learning labs have created environments where girls are thriving.

In CODE's most recent GALI cohort, 77 per cent of girls were promoted two grade levels in a single year and 22 per cent were

tending school.

While primary education in public schools is free in Liberia, the costs of uniforms, school supplies and transportation can be prohibitive and force families to make difficult choices.

Perhaps traditional cultural norms would have dictated that one of Mary's brothers be given the opportunity, but seeing Mary's rapid promotion from Grade 2 (where she remained age 14) to Grade 4 over the course of one academic year has Mary's mother convinced that her education is worth supporting.



Every day after school, Ms. Kemokai works with a group of five over-age girls at Dominic Hena Primary School in Liberia to help them succeed academically and develop important life skills.

promoted one grade. The latter may not seem surprising, however many would have dropped out or been held back without the additional support. While statistics show a good measure of success, it's the stories and voices of participating girls that show the far-reaching impacts of this modest program. So, we are delighted to introduce you to three current GALI girls.

#### Mary, 15

##### Shifting the norm

"If you don't go to school, you will not eat...." threatens Mary's mother in a stern voice when Mary drags her heels in the morning.

This kind of parental "encouragement" for girls to attend school is often still the exception rather than the rule. As in much of the Global South, in Liberia, pervasive cultural norms diminish the perceived value of educating girls. Amongst her siblings, Mary is the only one currently at-

GALI demands significant awareness-raising among parents and community members, culminating in formal permission being granted for their daughters to participate in the after-school programs.

Without parental support and permission, attendance in after-school programs would be erratic or start off strong and then taper off as the year goes on. Girls are in high demand after school to help with chores and income generation, and allowing them to stay at school longer is no small commitment for these families.

An interesting and notable driver of parental interest in GALI has been the introduction of mobile learning labs into the program at select schools, which give the girls access to a carefully curated assortment of high-quality books, videos and games through a solar-powered RACHEL-Plus wireless server and tablets. The digital divide is significant in Liberia, and yet there is recognition amongst many parents

that familiarity with technology provides a significant advantage to their girls.

For Mary's part, she required no convincing to take part in GALI. She describes herself as "happy" for having been selected, and says that the program has helped her "feel good about herself."

The friendships she has made with the other four girls in her GALI pod are the sorts that are bound to last a lifetime. The girls open up during their lifeskills lessons about difficult subjects such as puberty and sexual health, and turn to each other for academic support.



For Mary, learning to read with the support of the GALI has been a critical stepping stone in her academic journey. Now that she has learned to read, she can read to learn.

It's this camaraderie and the safe space that GALI creates that help the girls not only thrive in their studies, but also gain a sense of empowerment that helps them challenge norms and assert their rights now and well into the future.

#### **Sarah, 14**

##### **Defying the odds**

Sarah confidently strode out of the classroom where she had just concluded sitting for the Liberia Primary School Certificate Examination, which tests knowledge of science, language arts, social studies and mathematics.

The sun was shining brightly, reflecting her buoyant spirits. "I know I passed," she declared to Yvonne Weah, program director with the WE-CARE Foundation.

If Sarah's prediction is true, she will

begin the new academic year in November as a 7th-grader in junior high school. Sarah has come a very long way academically and, just as important, in her feelings of confidence and self-worth.

When Sarah first joined GALI in 2017, she was a 10-year-old sitting in a Grade 1 classroom. Having already repeated Grade 1 twice before, she was struggling to learn and to advance. With her parents not seeing the "return" on their decision to enrol Sarah in school, her days in the classroom were most likely numbered.

Through GALI's small-group tutoring,

Sarah's learning accelerated and double promotions over a two-year period got her comfortably into Grade 5. And although she exited the academic portion of the program at that time, making way for other over-age girls awaiting the opportunity, she continued to participate in Friday sessions focused on sexual health and lifeskills development.

Underlying Sarah's success was her mastery of foundational literacy skills, a gateway to learning in all other subject areas. Sarah explains in her own words: "I was very excited [to join GALI] because I knew that it was going to benefit me in the future. Knowing how to read and write... can further my understanding of lessons."

Literacy is about mastering the basics — ABCs, letter sounds, decoding and word recognition — but it goes well beyond

that to include fluency, comprehension and critical thinking. The teachers CODE trains to facilitate GALI focus on developing the entire spectrum of literacy skills, thereby helping to nurture girls to become problem-solvers and eager learners.

With only 32 per cent of girls transitioning to junior high school in Liberia (and only 11 per cent from the poorest households), Sarah is already defying the odds. While GALI has helped to nurture her academic success, it's Sarah's intrinsic motivation, conscientious work ethic and light-hearted sense of humour that will get her further than she may ever have dared to hope.

#### **Blessing, age 14**

##### **Determined to learn**

Blessing grew up living with her mother "in the interior" — a rural area where she wasn't given the chance to go to school. At age 12, her father brought her to the city and enrolled her in school for the first time. Despite her late start, Blessing is determined to follow in the footsteps of her older sisters, both of whom are currently in high school.

Blessing was selected to participate in GALI one year ago, and has since advanced two grade levels. It hasn't been an easy road as schools in Liberia remained closed due to the pandemic between September and December 2020, and, upon reopening, introduced a condensed school year, including weekend classes.

It's well documented that girls are disproportionately impacted by large-scale disruptions to schooling, whether civil unrest or health-related emergencies. After the Ebola crisis in 2015, for instance, the percentage of out-of-school girls in Liberia rose from 8 per cent to 21 per cent. To help prevent learning loss, but also to maximize their chances of returning to school, CODE adapted the GALI program to encourage girls to keep on learning at home.

Between September and December 2020, CODE and WE-CARE Foundation distributed monthly at-home learning kits to GALI participants containing reading books, academic workbooks with grade-specific content for language arts, math, science and social studies, as well as stationery and hygiene supplies, including hand sanitizer and face masks.

Along with the kits, GALI teachers established contact, where possible, with the five girls in their respective GALI pods, and regularly checked in to provide help with self-study. Despite the additional supports, 19 per cent of GALI participants did not return when school reopened,



demonstrating just how significant the challenge is.

Although Blessing's parents are illiterate, she received support from her siblings in completing her at-home study activities, and returned to school without delay in January 2021. With the resumption of GALI, her grades improved dramatically — from failing in all subjects to meeting the 80 per cent minimum requirement for accelerated promotion. Midway through the year, she was promoted to Grade 3 and then to Grade 4 at year end.

In November, with the start of the new academic year, Blessing will find herself sitting proudly in a Grade 4 classroom. While she credits her GALI teacher Ms. Watson's careful explanations for much of her success in mastering fundamental literacy and numeracy skills over the past year, she notes it's the math games available on the mobile learning lab tablets that have injected a dose of fun and excitement into her learning.

Blessing will have an opportunity to continue diving into the wealth of interactive content available on the tablets, as well as benefit from Ms. Watson's tutelage over the coming year. We hope, for her sake and that of all students, that the

school year ahead will be far less tumultuous than last year's.

#### Hope for the future

In 1992, Lawrence Summers, then-chief economist at the World Bank, said, "Investment in girls' education may well be the highest return investment available in the developing world." Although much time has passed, this statement rings as true today as it did when it was first made.

Great strides have been taken globally in advancing girls' education, and the momentum continues to build. Earlier this year at the G7 in Cornwall, England, world leaders defined two new global goals for girls' education, one of which is "20 million more girls reading by age 10 or by the end of primary school by 2026." Significant funding commitments followed from both donor and national governments through the Global Partnership for Education's Global Education Summit.

Meanwhile, within the framework for the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, and with careful consideration of national education priorities, organizations such as CODE and the WE-CARE Foundation continue to do their part.

Over the past three years, GALI has demonstrated that remedial lessons and lifeskills development opportunities for over-aged girls need not be difficult or expensive to make a positive impact.

For girls like Blessing, Sarah and Mary, GALI has been an educational lifeline that has set them on a solid track toward primary school completion and transition into higher grades. But beyond the immediate benefits, we know that investment in girls' education creates a virtuous circle over time: The children of literate mothers are more than twice as likely to go to school themselves. By supporting this generation of girls, we are also supporting the next, through compounding benefits in education, health and economic prosperity.

Claire Wanjiru Bolton joined CODE in 2012 and is presently a program manager. CODE (formerly the Canadian Organization for Development through Education) has been championing children's literacy as a foundational building block of quality education for more than 60 years. Our partnership with the Liberian WE-CARE Foundation spans more than a decade. [www.code.ngo](http://www.code.ngo)



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# On diplomacy, sovereignty and peacemaking



Christina  
Spencer

*They Call It Diplomacy: Forty Years of Representing Britain Abroad*

By Peter Westmacott

Head of Zeus, Apollo Books, 2021

368 pages

Kindle: \$9.99

Soon after Peter Westmacott arrived in Turkey as British ambassador, a bomb razed Pera House, the British consulate general in Istanbul. Twelve consulate employees died in the 2003 attack, and three people in the vicinity. Had the timing been a few days earlier, when Westmacott and his wife were visiting the building, they would have been among the casualties.

It's a reminder that the life of diplomats — though often perceived to be focused on pomp, protocol and pleasantries — can also be dangerous. It is not just superpower representatives (specifically Americans) who are the targets of protest and sometimes violence abroad.

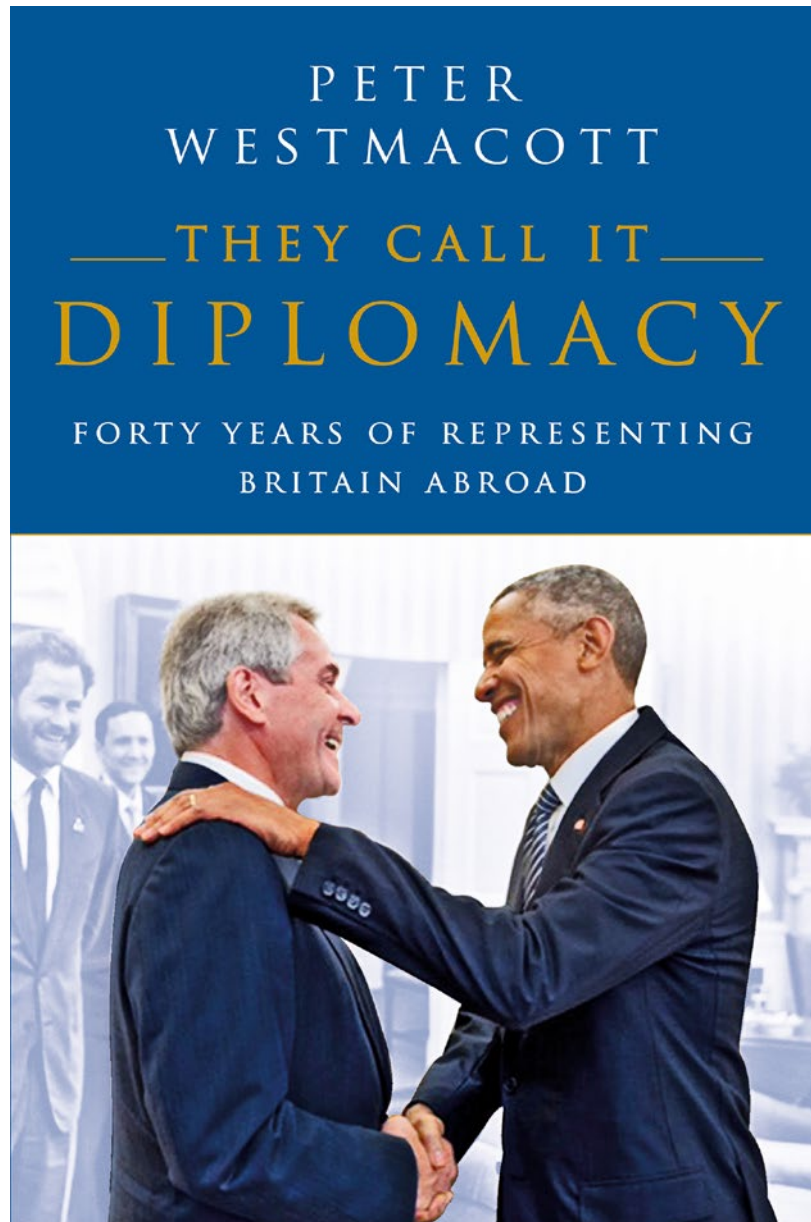
Nor is it just the superpowers that have global interests and priorities, as Westmacott's biography of a British envoy shows. Much of the focus of this book is on London's herculean attempts over many years to resolve the festering tension in divided Cyprus and assist Turkey in joining the European Union — an effort that has so far failed (and is now more than a little ironic, given that Britons themselves have left the European fold).

Westmacott joined what was then the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 1972, and served as British ambassador to Turkey, France and ultimately, the United States, with various other postings (including with royalty, as deputy secretary for the Prince of Wales). Along the way, he increasingly strongly believes in the role of professional diplomats, even as they are less and less appreciated by their governments in the modern age. Build-

ing relationships with the senior ranks of other nations is crucial, he believes, and his close ties to ministers and leaders seem to bear that out. Turkey's President Recep Erdogan, for example, never accepted hospitality from foreign diplomats, but was happy to come for a meal at the rebuilt consulate.

Later, posted to the United States, West-

macott enjoyed time with his next-door neighbour, then-vice-president Joe Biden. "He was a people person. Genuinely interested in other human beings, and warm to the point of being more tactile than some people found comfortable, but which we found endearing, he understood that the secret to getting another person to do what you want is to gain their trust and



Peter Westmacott's new book provides insights from a British envoy abroad. He served as British ambassador to France, Turkey and the U.S.



understand their needs as well as your own," writes Westmacott, surely alluding to what he thinks is unique about successful diplomats, too.

Westmacott's insights include short, telling anecdotes. For instance, he was friendly with British prime minister Tony Blair, who came to Paris regularly even after he had left No. 10 Downing Street. In 2008, Blair, then out of office, was asked to give a speech to Nicolas Sarkozy's political party in Paris. "He arrived on an overnight flight from the Middle East, suf-



Peter Westmacott joined Britain's foreign service in 1972 when it was called the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

fering from an unpleasant throat infection. After putting the speech he had written on the plane into French with the help of his translator, he put on his suit, went to wash his hands in an elegant but vintage bathroom ... and was promptly soaked by the overhead shower. Hairdryer to the rescue, we did our best to tidy him up and sent the former prime minister on his way with a throat so sore he was barely able to speak. None of the several thousand UMP [Union pour un Mouvement Populaire] supporters who heard him speak, powerfully and in excellent French, were any the wiser."

Then there was Margaret Thatcher, whom Westmacott saw in action when he was a junior foreign officer. Travelling abroad, she liked to talk through the issues with her team the night before formal meetings, over a glass of whisky. On one occasion, she asked a technical question and no one could answer — except Westmacott, a lowly first secretary sitting on the floor. After he offered up the information she wanted, "the prime minister went round the room, wagging her finger and

counting the number of cabinet ministers and permanent secretaries she had brought with her who had been so unable to answer her questions that she had had to get the answers from the first secretary kneeling at her feet." It was a technique Thatcher, a woman operating in a man's world, sometimes used to keep her people in their place.

In mid-career, Westmacott took a job as deputy private secretary to The Prince of Wales. Rumours swirled about the tattered relationship between Prince Charles and Princess Diana, yet his respect for both is clear. "On trips abroad, ambassadors wanted the prince to be given the keys of the city, attend receptions and shake lots of hands, while he — and the princess — wanted to make a difference, engage with businesspeople and cultural leaders, promote environmental projects and conservation, or set up local versions of volunteering. My role was to try to get others to understand what [his] agenda was, and to make my principals feel that their time was being well spent."

He adds: "... on a series of global issues like inequality, social cohesion, [corporate social responsibility,] the survival of endangered species and the future of our planet, the Prince of Wales was already years ahead of his time."

Not included in this book, no doubt because it wasn't directly part of Westmacott's brief, is discussion of Britain's role in the Commonwealth. Indeed, only one Canadian prime minister is even mentioned — Stephen Harper — during a brief segment describing a particularly busy day at the British Embassy in Paris. (This may speak to the relative importance accorded Canada by world powers).

For all the world events in which the author had a front-row seat — the Falklands invasion, the Gulf wars, the Arab Spring, the Obama years, for instance — Westmacott is also determined to describe the "soft" side of diplomacy. He is interested in and often describes the architecture of British embassies abroad. He plays tourist, and passes on his observations: "We skied at 4,000 metres in the Alburz Mountains just north of Tehran." "It would have been a terrible waste to spend four years in France and not develop some appreciation of its wonderful wines" and so forth. Such travelogue paints a life of privilege, but it is also part of what diplomats do — aside from helping nationals in distress, pushing business and commercial interests, gathering and sharing intelligence with allies and trying, so genteelly, to influence policy in their host countries.

Freed in his retirement of the bonds of self-restraint, Westmacott has a few choice words about his country's most significant global action in recent years: its decision to leave the European Union. To Westmacott, Brexit was a clear mistake that has diminished the U.K.'s standing in the world. If only the British government listened more closely to its diplomats.

### *Sovereignty: The Biography of a Claim*

By Peter H. Russell

UTP Insights, University of Toronto Press, 2021

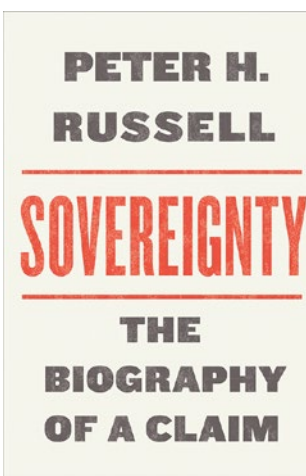
192 pages

Kindle: \$16.63

Hardcover: \$29.65

Almost 50 years ago, professor Peter H. Russell was approached by members of the Dene Nation for help in dealing with the threat that a pipeline would be built in Canada's North. Although he had been teaching political science since the late 1950s, Russell writes that he had never heard of the Dene. When its representatives asked him two specific questions — "What is sovereignty?" and "How did the Queen get it over us?" — he was at a loss to provide helpful answers.

Addressing these questions in the



context of Canada's relationship with its Indigenous population spurred his decades-long research into the nature of sovereignty — its history, evolution, advantages and pitfalls — and how it applies globally and to groups, such as Indigenous peoples, not subsumed by the Westphalian notion of sovereign states. He soon concluded that the Crown had acquired sovereignty over the Dene through "trickery" and "fraud."

They're powerful words from an academic. And while you'd think a book



Author Peter H. Russell moves his exposition on sovereignty along smoothly, exploring European history from Charlemagne through the Thirty Years' War and the French Revolution, whose storming of the Bastille is pictured here.

about sovereignty (and its relatives such as federalism and constitutionalism) might be dry reading, Russell moves this exposition along smartly, touring European history from Charlemagne to the Thirty Years' War, through the French Revolution and into the age of imperial expansion, with nods along the way to Jean Bodin, Thomas Hobbes, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Voltaire, Denis Diderot, Edmund Burke, Francisco de Vitoria and other thinkers.

Sovereignty, writes Russell, is a claim to be the highest source of legitimate power, but as a claim, "it can be resisted; a claim is only as good as its acceptance by others." The European notion of sovereignty at first rested with the Christian God, then was channelled to the monarch, eventually passing during the revolutionary age between 1760 and 1800 to "the people." Ideas about sovereign states had been strengthened over the centuries by Gutenberg's invention of the printing press, which homogenized languages and

helped spread nationalistic pride.

While the strengthening of sovereignty among nations lent coherence and identity, it also made it easier for European countries to start what Russell calls "the global scramble for wealth and power" — also known as expansionism and colonialism. Nations claimed new territories to prevent other sovereign states from reaping any of the benefits associated with them, and if those new lands happened to be populated prior to their "discovery," well, European thinking held that "only civilized people were entitled to self-government." A land could be claimed on any of three principles: "terra nullius" (the assertion that there was no one else there); conquest; or cession. Russell notes with dismay that these principles were applied to both North America and New Zealand in what he terms "fake history." The lands weren't devoid of people; no one was ever "conquered"; and Indigenous peoples certainly did not cede their land by any accepted definition of the term.

When Britain in the 1830s handed over to the Canadian colonial government responsibility for Indigenous peoples, their plight worsened, through "dishonest use of treaties," the Indian Act and the introduction of residential schools. "No other settler country tried so systematically to force Indigenous peoples to assimilate with the dominant settler culture, or invested as many resources in that undertaking."

How, in the modern world of nation states, might one respect the sovereignty of Canada's first people? Here, Russell touts the virtues of federalism, in which entities within a country — provinces and territories, for example — are treated as equal political partners under a federal umbrella. "Treaty federalism," he feels, can give the descendants of this country's original peoples a large measure of self-rule.

Sovereignty, being a "claim," is never an absolute, he reminds us. Globally, there are precedents for one state or a cluster



of states to challenge the actions of others: the Genocide Convention, the World Bank and the WTO all were created with this need in mind. The European Union crowds into aspects of individual state sovereignty (at least in the eyes of the United Kingdom, which voted to leave it.) The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change presses its signatories to achieve greenhouse gas emissions reductions, and so forth.

There are also limits to sovereignty: Individual states cannot prevent nuclear war, solve the world's growing migration and refugee crisis or perhaps even properly manage global pandemics. For this, nations must act in concert. Thus Russell ends his "biography of a claim" on a bit of a jarring note — a quick argument in favour of some sort of world government to counter "the incapacity of sovereign states." This powerful world government would be "organized on a federal

government with its own independent authority to address grave issues of concern to all humankind.

"So I end my book by expressing the hope that the next step in the biography of the sovereignty claim is the consummation of a global marriage between sovereignty and federalism," he writes.

High hopes. What would the Dene think?

***The Frontlines of Peace: An Insider's Guide to Changing the World***

By Séverine Autesserre

Oxford University Press, 2021

240 pages

Kindle: \$15.12

Hardcover: \$27.95

In the last five years, armed conflicts have flared in more than 50 regions around the world, affecting two billion people, costing at least US \$10 trillion a year and



Two Life & Peace Institute representatives conduct inter-community dialogue in Democratic Republic of Congo. Author Séverine Autesserre lauds the organization's work in that country.

basis, one in which sovereign nation states maintain their self-rule over most matters of importance to their citizens, but at the same time join together to create a global

sparkling the worst global refugee crisis since the Second World War. The United Nations has 100,000 peacekeepers deployed and urgent peace or truce nego-

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tiations regularly take place between the top belligerents. Humanitarian and non-governmental organizations rush to war zones to provide aid to victims.

With so much at stake, you'd think the experts would by now have developed more effective ways to quell the violence that devastates lives decade after decade. Instead, asserts researcher Séverine Autesserre, these high-level elites often end up fooling themselves: an agreement is signed; foreign workers and aid money pour in — all looks good on paper. Yet the misery continues. Why? Can it be fixed?

In some of the least likely places on the planet, local people are answering in the affirmative, showing that there is a better path forward than relying solely on "Peace Inc.," which is Autesserre's term for the conventional methods, culture and approach of the UN-NGO-diplomatic community. A 20-year veteran of on-the-ground peacebuilding projects in war zones, she has the examples to prove it.

The sprawling Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is one of these unlikely

pared to neighbouring provinces. Its own citizens have long fostered this culture. And they have done it without the assistance of national governments or big humanitarian programs.

"When there is a conflict that individuals or families cannot resolve by themselves, instead of calling the police or the army or resorting to violence, people reach out to religious networks, traditional institutions, youth groups, elders' groups, women's groups, and so on," she writes. "Village elders, along with the village chiefs, have historically helped to assuage local tensions ... In recent years, everyday citizens have also formed dozens of small clubs and community organizations, and they have done so without any funding."

Local superstitions and beliefs help, too: In the case of Idjwi, there is a strong tradition of blood pacts between families, and there is a widely held belief that the guardians of ancestral power live there. Both do wonders for discouraging bloodshed.

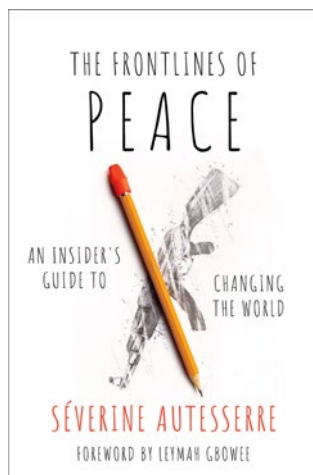
Outsiders generally don't learn how these kinds of characteristics can buttress peace in a given community unless they take time — often years — to listen and learn, slowly earning local trust. In another example Autesserre cites, residents of a rural part of South Kivu province were facing a sharp increase in kidnappings, murders, rape and torture. About 100,000 people in more than 50 villages were affected. The local farmers' association approached Life & Peace Institute (a rare NGO that was doing things right) for support, then spent huge periods of time talking to kidnapping and other victims about the perpetrators, who were apparently rebels from neighbouring Rwanda. They were consistently told there were 10,000 or perhaps 100,000 insurgents.

To the local people researching this, the number sounded odd. So they kept patiently asking questions, and eventually discovered that these figures were used because the perpetrators had told people to use them. "In fact," a farmers' association leader told the author, "they are no more than 15 people, and they are not from the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, they are a dissident group called Rasta." This was the sort of information, he noted, that "foreigners could never get."

But using it, Congolese troops were able to kill a handful of the Rasta gang and scare the others away. The villages slowly re-established ties to each other, and rebuilt their once-terrorized communities.

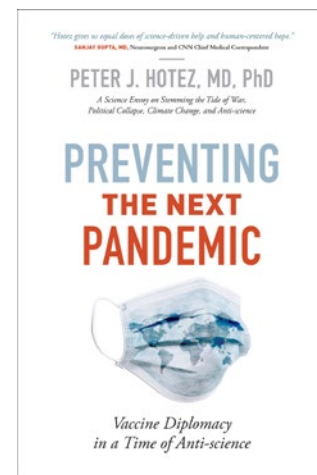
Autesserre offers lots of other examples

of localized peace initiatives that have worked — from Liberia to Somaliland, to Timor-Leste to local Israel/Palestinian pacts (yes, even there) — but she is careful not to present them as utopian fixes or, in many cases, permanent solutions. Nor does she shut out conventional notions of peace-building. What she is emphasizing is that leaders negotiating at high levels often have no accurate sense of what is happening on the ground; and on-the-ground conflicts, while sometimes tied to or exacerbated by national geo-politics, are often focused on specific local tensions



places. Since independence from Belgium in 1960, Congo has been pummelled at various times by ethnic and social clashes, corrupt and dictatorial government, civil war, rebel infiltrations and brutal regional conflicts involving its nine neighbouring nations. It is the 11th least-developed country on Earth. Drawn-out, high-level peace talks have been hit-and-miss in terms of making people's lives safer.

Yet during her years there, Autesserre discovered grassroots peace projects that worked extraordinarily well in specific regions. One was on the island of Idjwi on Lake Kivu, which borders Rwanda. While Idjwi has its share of crime — domestic assaults, public brawls, prejudice between tribes, etc. — it is a "haven of peace" com-



that can be resolved regardless of who's sitting down for dinner with whom at the UN.

The work can also often be done cheaply, but the key is taking the lead from the people who are themselves most affected by the violence, those whose voices are often least likely to be heard. They have the most at stake for resolving conflict, and quite probably the most realistic notions of how it can be done.

And they are willing to work at it over the long-term; unlike the "Peacelanders" in foreign NGOs or political and diplomatic circles, they can't board a plane and leave.

*Preventing the Next Pandemic: Vaccine Diplomacy in a Time of Anti-science*  
By Peter J. Hotez

Johns Hopkins University Press, 2021

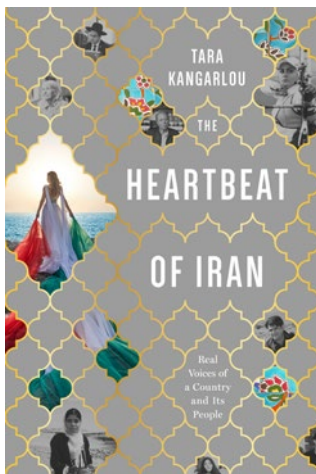
208 pages

Hardcover: \$35.30

Kindle: \$27.49

"Infectious and tropical diseases are now abruptly arising in multiple hot spot areas across the globe," writes Peter J. Hotez. And it's mostly because of 21st-Century forces: war, poverty, climate change,



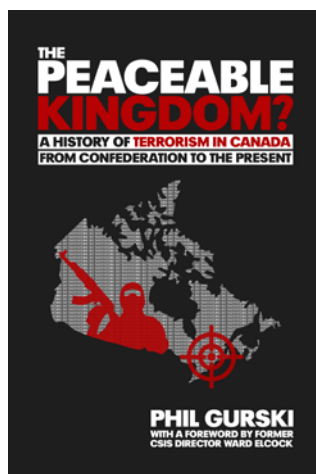


urbanization and anti-science views. COVID-19 is but one example. Hotez argues that a concerted focus on “vaccine diplomacy” might be part of the solution.

As a one-time U.S. science envoy for the Middle East and North Africa, Hotez describes the concept as “simultaneous scientific and diplomatic opportunities between nations, with an overriding objective to jointly develop and test vaccines as a means to promote health, security, and peace.” The author then cites examples of how this has worked and can in future. Well and good, but Canada’s recent experience attempting to develop a COVID vaccine in concert with China might give one pause.

*The Heartbeat of Iran: Real Voices of a Country and Its People*

By Tara Kangarlou  
Ig Publishing, New York, 2021  
288 pages  
Kindle: \$14.07  
Paperback: \$28.56



An American-Iranian dual national who spent her childhood in Tehran, then her high school and college years in the United States, journalist Tara Kangarlou quickly realized the one-dimensional views Westerners, and Americans in particular, have of Iran. As a journalist and a “daughter of Persia,” she aims to change this, with a series of detailed, absorbing portraits of everyday Iranians.

While her book also provides a useful lay person’s history of Iran, it is not, she stresses, a political book. Indeed, through the people she interviews and portrays, she wants readers to conclude “there is so much more that connects us as human beings than what divides us on the global stage.”

*The Peaceable Kingdom?*

*A History of Terrorism in Canada from Confederation to the Present*

Phil Gurski

Borealis Threat and Risk Consulting Ltd., 2021

242 pages

Paperback: \$25

This year is the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, and it is hard to remember

that before them, terrorism was seen in the West mostly as a “niche phenomenon, something that happened ‘over there,’” Phil Gurski writes. It didn’t seem like part of our own lives. Public perception has changed vastly since then; these days, it is rare for news media not to mention incidents or threats of some sort. Still, in the West, terrorism is not an existential threat as it is in many countries (the Taliban having just illustrated this in Afghanistan.)

But it is still important — often front and centre in our psyche — and this book from Gurski, who spent more than 30 years working in Canada’s security intelligence community, is a useful introduction to how our government thinks and approaches those episodes when this is not a “peaceable kingdom.”

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

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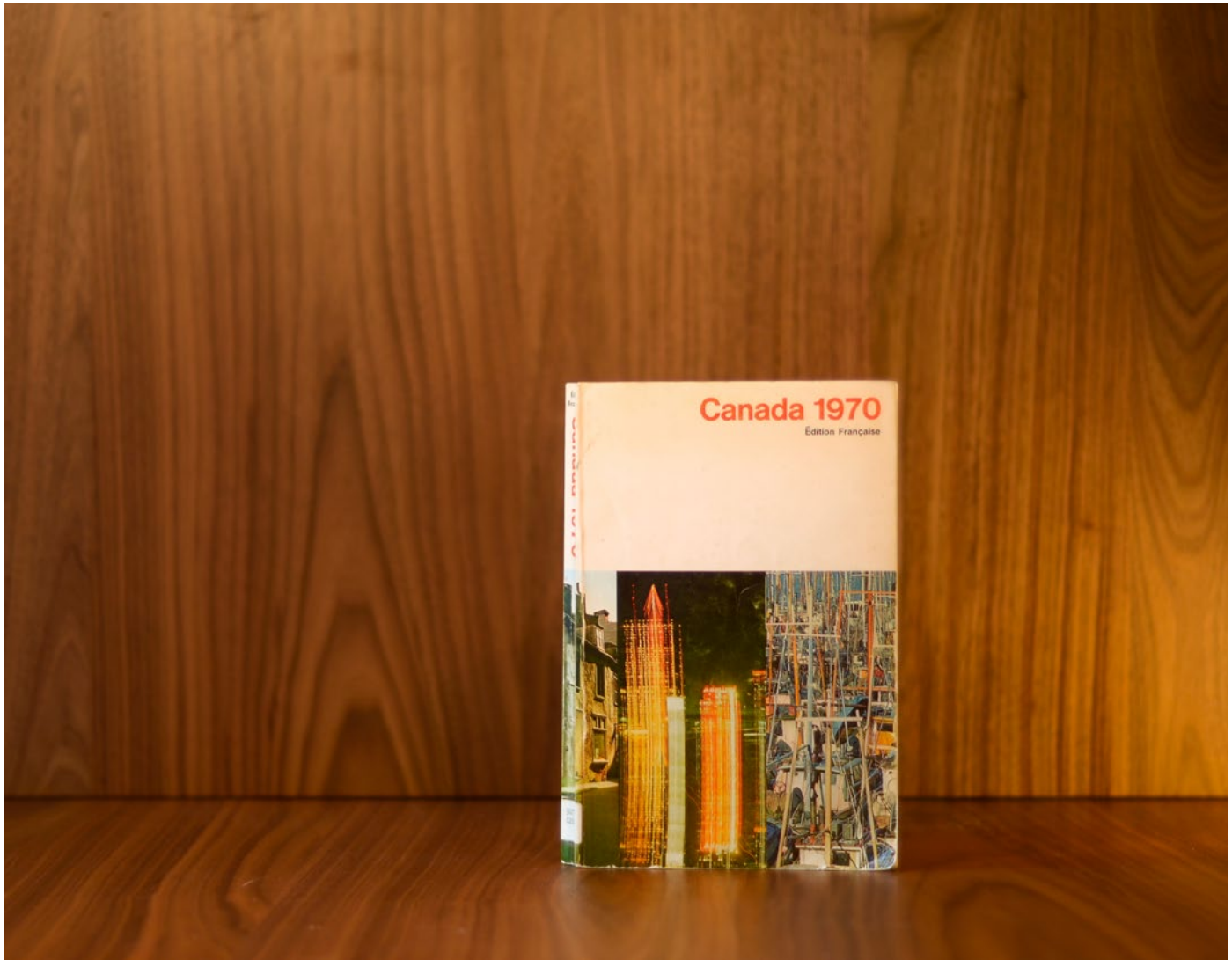
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# Long knives and a silent symphony



A dry, federal compendium is the launching point for Laure Bourgault's "canadas" at AXENÉO7 in Gatineau.



Peter Simpson

*Editor's note: All dates and times are tentative, as pandemic public health rules evolve. Please contact galleries before visiting to learn of any changes.*

Concurrent exhibitions at AXENÉO7 may challenge a viewer's sense of how Canada looks, and how it is governed.

The exhibitions, which run Nov. 3 to Dec. 11 at the artist-run centre in Gatineau, include Laure Bourgault's *canadas*, and Simon Belleau's *Pour Quelques Arpents de Neige* (*For a Few Acres of Snow*).

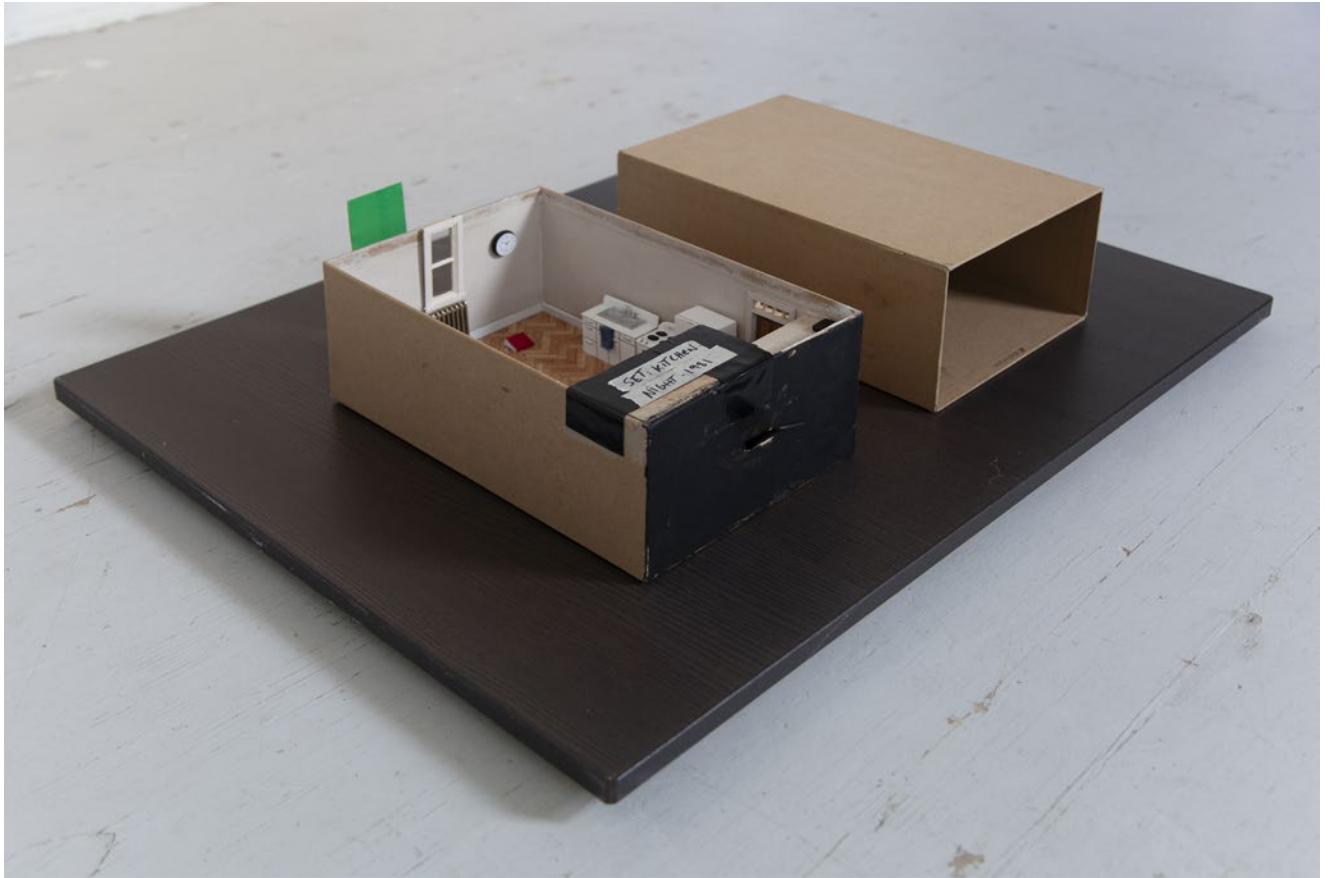
Belleau's exhibition revisits, 40 years later, a notorious moment in Canada's political history, when prime minister Pierre Trudeau, behind Quebec's back, turned the provincial premiers toward support for the new and bitterly contested Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Almost all premiers had been opposed to the Charter as an incursion on provincial jurisdictions, and none more than Quebec's René Lévesque.

Overnight on Nov. 4, 1981, after Lévesque and his delegation had returned to Gatineau, Trudeau's team doggedly won support for the Charter from the other premiers. The next morning Lévesque, outraged at what he saw as backstabbing by other premiers, decried it as "the night of the long knives" — a provocative label, given its origin in a night of extreme violence by the Nazi party in Germany in 1934.

Outside of Quebec, the event and its





Simon Belleau's *For A Few Acres of Snow* reconsiders an infamous night in Canadian political history.

players are better known as “the Kitchen cabinet” or “Kitchen Accord,” which describe the politicians who pushed Trudeau’s deals through overnight. “Kitchen cabinet” has its own distasteful historic connotations from the ignominious administration of American president Andrew Jackson.

“I am interested in the irony of the distinction between these two terms, which nevertheless refer to the same event,” Belleau writes. “Two very distinct terms, which nevertheless name the same event,” and are a starting point to consider “the framing of political and historical events within a larger public consciousness, the tension between individual and collective narratives, and the relationship between historical and physical time.”

Belleau takes the title for his exhibition from Voltaire, who disdained France’s determination to colonize Canada — “a few acres of snow.” To mark the 40th anniversary of the notorious night, Belleau “takes on the role of director,” the exhibition notes say, “creating a multidisciplinary installation that retraces this almost Shakespearean episode in Canadian history.”

In the exhibition *canadas*, Laure Bour-

gault considers “the type of images and texts used to put forward a certain vision of Canadianness — a large space with pristine nature, harmonious and open to the world. Bourgault’s launching pad is the book *Canada 1970*, a sort of state-of-the-union compendium published in the early 1970s by the federal Dominion Bureau of Statistics (precursor to Statistics Canada).”

“Through paintings, poetic texts and sculptural elements inspired by Brutalist architecture,” the notes say, “the exhibition reworks the official Canadian rhetoric in order to propose a critical re-reading.”

AXENÉO7 is at 80 rue Hanson in Gatineau. [axeneo7.qc.ca](http://axeneo7.qc.ca)

#### Interns showing the way

Not far from AXENÉO7 at the Canadian Museum of History, a team of Indigenous interns “invite you to witness the sparks currently reigniting the flames of our cultures.” Their display is titled *Rekindled — Tradition, Modernity and Transformation in Indigenous Cultures*.

“Following centuries of disruption, our nations have struggled to assert their cultures,” the group’s notes say. “Our re-

ligions were banned. Our land occupied. Our languages silenced. Yet we remain. It is through family knowledge, the persistence of our art, renewed relationships with the land and the reclaiming of spiritual traditions that our children will come to know the ways of our ancestors.”

The display continues to August 2022 at the museum, 100 rue Laurier in Gatineau. [historymuseum.ca](http://historymuseum.ca)

#### An out-of-gallery installation

The National Gallery of Canada is making superlative use of its unintended places — meaning, places that are not built as exhibition galleries, per se. The rotunda that’s outside the doors to the cafeteria, for example, is once again home to an ambitious and beautiful installation.

*Symphony*, by the Brooklyn-based Canadian-Jamaican artist Tau Lewis, is a new addition to the gallery’s Contemporary Projects series. It’s part of Lewis’s ongoing work known as T.A.U.B.I.S., or the Triumphant Alliance of the Ubiquitous Blossoms of Incarnate Souls. *Symphony* is the sovereign of T.A.U.B.I.S., and she is built of many flowers, each one containing a soul that has been inducted into the alliance,



RBC Indigenous Internship Program co-ordinator Gaëlle Mollen, left, at the Canadian Museum of History, with interns Sarah Monnier, Kaitlyn Stephens, Shaun Canute and Skylar-James Wall. Their display, titled *Rekindled — Tradition, Modernity and Transformation in Indigenous Cultures*, invites you to “witness the sparks currently reigniting the flames of our cultures.”



A detail of Tau Lewis's *Symphony* at the National Gallery of Canada.

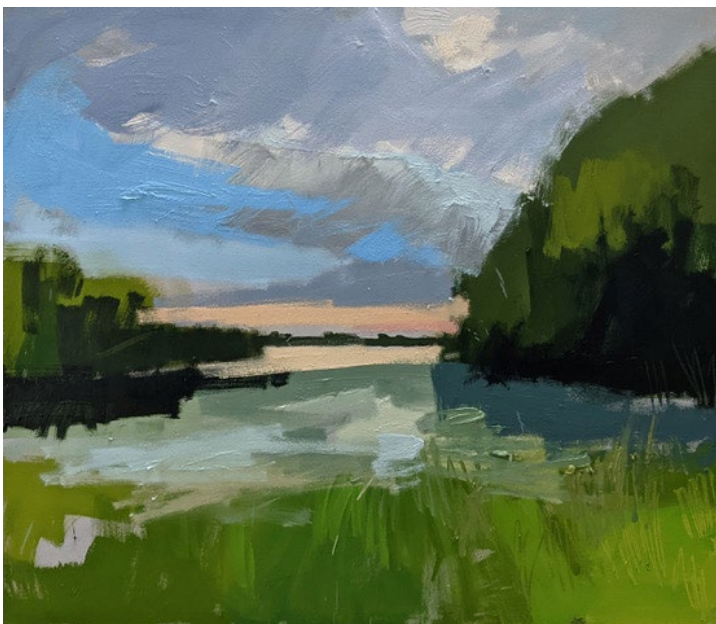


An image from *Playing Dead*, an intensely intimate exhibition by Project X Award winner Joyce Crago, at the Ottawa Art Gallery.





Andrew Morrow's *Here's A Place To Start* is scheduled to open in November at Studio 66 in the Glebe.



Drew Klassen's work shows at Galerie St-Laurent + Hill in the ByWard Market.



*Onwards (But Not Forgotten)*, by Ava Margueritte at the School of Photographic Arts: Ottawa (SPA.O).



“an institution similar to sainthood. They regulate the moral compass of the Universe,” she writes.

Responding to the legacy of the Black diaspora, Lewis’s textile works “are exuberant and lively sculptures, stitched together from discarded materials that have been revived by Lewis’s hand,” writes Jack Levinson, of the Night Gallery in Los Angeles, in the National Gallery’s magazine, *Muse*. “Immersed in falling blossoms, Lewis’s stunning sculptures create a new world from scraps of our shared history, bridging the terrestrial and the celestial, the intimate and the communal, the archival and the imagined.”

*Symphony* continues to at least January, with an exact closing date TBA. 380 Sussex Dr., gallery.ca

#### The enigma of detritus

One person’s trash is another’s treasure, the saying goes, and Ottawa photographer Joyce Crago’s work has been rich proof of that maxim.

Crago’s previous work has seen her mining trash as far afield as Washington, D.C., where she searched trash cans for a “back story” of those who participated in the inauguration of U.S. president Donald Trump, or in the massive Women’s March on the capital. Her photographs of the trash are sometimes eloquent, sometimes enigmatic.

In the exhibition *Playing Dead*, at the Ottawa Art Gallery, Crago gets much more personal — intensely so. She uses the detritus from her sister Hazel’s funeral, and some of her late sister’s clothing, to reflect on mortality, to question “our impulse to hold onto each other and reconstitute ourselves through remnant traces,” she writes.

*Playing Dead* marks Crago’s selection as this year’s winner of the Project X Photography Award, which “celebrates the merits of a publicly presented photographic project by an Ottawa-based artist.” The show runs Oct. 29 to Nov. 28. Enter the gallery on Daly Avenue. oaggao.ca

#### Also showing . . .

**Canadian Museum of Nature:** *Shadowland*, Dec. 10 to April, 240 McLeod St. Montreal artist Lorraine Simms’s drawings are built of ghostly layers. Simms’s graphite-on-paper works show “transcribed shadows” cast by taxidermied animals and skulls and bones. “In these works, the cast shadows become the actual subject.” nature.ca

**SPAO:** *Stay Silent Run Deep*, Nov. 5 to Dec. 19, 77 Pamilla St. Artists Ava Margueritte, Margo McDiarmid, Shaelynn Tredenick and Steven West completed residencies at



Anna Williams’s *Untold Stories I Once Wished Lost* will show at the Ottawa City Hall Art Gallery from Oct. 14 to Dec. 5.

the photography school during the pandemic, and the work they produced addresses questions such as, “Is there peace in solitude?” “Can my mental health be mapped?” “Where are the spaces for self-discovery?” “How deep does this grace go?” spao.ca

**Jean-Claude Bergeron Gallery:** *Michel Savage*, Nov. 4 to Dec. 6, 150 St. Patrick St. Montreal artist Michel Savage’s work “follows a path that privileges a symbolist poetry of the image” as he “seeks the shortest route between the emotion and the sign.” galeriejeanclaudebergeron.ca.

**Studio Sixty Six:** *Here’s a Place to Start*, works by Andrew Morrow, Nov. 26 to January, 858 Bank St. Ottawa artist and University of Ottawa professor Andrew Morrow’s paintings “engage broad, historical themes such as war, eroticism, beauty, the apocalypse and death, complicating these through a resistance to narrative closure and spatial coherence,” the gallery says. His new works, created in studio sessions often held via internet video, explore “notions of friendship and (are) rooted in mutual recognition, opacity, stewardship, transparency and appearance.” studiosixtysix.ca

**Galerie St-Laurent + Hill:** *Drew Klasen*, Nov. 11 to 30, 293 Dalhousie St. New works, including impressionistic landscapes. galeriestlaurentplushill.com

**Sivarulrasa Gallery:** *Constructs* — Eric Walker and Louis Thériault, to Oct. 29, 34 Mill St., Almonte. Walker and Thériault offer distinctive perspectives on transpor-

tation landscapes, their work bound by an inchoate sense of unease. sivarulrasa.com.

**Wall Space Gallery:** *Claire Desjardins*, Nov. 18 to Dec. 24, 358 Richmond St. Claire Desjardins’ abstract patterns are “vibrant and dynamic compositions” that have been collected worldwide, and even reproduced on clothing and other consumer goods. wallspacegallery.ca

**Carleton University Art Gallery:** *Nuvisi — Threading our Beads at Qatiktalik*, to Dec. 12 at St. Patrick Building. Using “photographs, cultural belongings, texts, artworks and stories,” Krista Ulujuk Zawadski focuses on Qatiktalik on Hudson Bay, and explores how Inuit, including her own family, engage with the community and its cultural material. cuag.ca

**Ottawa City Hall Art Gallery:** *Anna Williams — Untold Stories I Once Wished Lost*, Oct. 14 to Dec. 5, 110 Laurier Ave. W. Ottawa artist Anna Williams says she seeks “to provoke audiences to reflect on what we have lost in our passage from nature to culture — our skewed experience of the natural world and female identity, and how this dissociation has impacted the stability of the human mind.” She does so with a fantastic world of ecology and mythology. ottawa.ca (search for “city hall gallery.”)

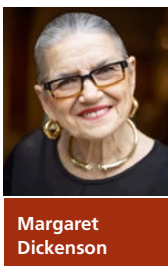
Contact Peter Simpson at [pete@petersimpson.ca](mailto:pete@petersimpson.ca) with details of your upcoming art exhibitions.



## Originality as a culinary booster



Burrata Persimmon Stacks with Caviar are a heavenly starter for any meal.



Margaret  
Dickenson

**T**his issue features three recipes that illustrate my determination to continue introducing originality into my culinary repertoire. Over the past

decade, burrata cheese — a cloud-like ball made of cream and mozzarella — has become a darling of serious chefs, usually paired with luscious tomatoes. Instead, I surprise guests with a unique burrata persimmon stack with caviar, delivering exquisite and complex colours, textures and flavours. Keep in mind that only ripe Hachiya persimmons should be used in this recipe. They appear on grocery shelves in October and are gone by mid-February. Next, my inviting escargots and orzo with portobello are always a winner. And, when preparing for the holiday

season (or any time of the year), thrill your family and guests with my crunchy, addictive and scrumptious peanut butter chocolates. They are certain to become everyone's new favourite. Bon Appetit!

### **Burrata Persimmon Stacks with Caviar** *Makes 4 servings*

For many, persimmons remain a rather unfamiliar fruit. They tend to make their appearance on the market primarily from October until February. But what does one do with persimmons? Here, I share a

favourite persimmon creation, which specifically uses ripe Hachiya persimmons.

3 ripe Hachiya\* persimmons  
6 oz (175 g) burrata cheese  
2 cups (500 ml) arugula  
To taste, salt and crushed black peppercorns  
To taste, a mustard herb type of vinaigrette  
4 straight, firm stems of fresh rosemary  
3 tbsp (45 ml) black caviar\*\*  
2 fresh lemons

1. Slice off the tops and acorn-shaped bases of the persimmons, setting them aside for another purpose.
2. Cut the persimmons horizontally into 1/3-inch (0.8 cm) slices.
3. Cut the burrata ball(s) horizontally into four 1 1/3-oz (40 g) slices.
4. For 4 individual servings, arrange 1/2 cup (125 ml) of arugula in the centre of 4 dinner plates. According to taste, season with salt and crushed black peppercorns and drizzle with vinaigrette.
5. Place one persimmon slice in the centre of the arugula on each plate, top with a slice of burrata and crown with a second slice of persimmon.
6. Pierce a sprig of rosemary through the centre of the stack to hold it in position.
7. Add a total of 4 small dollops (each about 1/2 tsp or 3 ml) of caviar to each serving (e.g. 3 dollops to the surface and 1 placed at the base of the persimmon on the arugula).
8. Cut one lemon into 6 equal wedges, remove any seeds and garnish each plate with a single slice of lemon.
9. According to taste, squeeze the juice of the remaining 2 wedges and as required from the second lemon, over the persimmon stacks and caviar.

\* NOTE: Not any type of persimmon will do for this recipe. It is absolutely necessary to use only Hachiya persimmons (also called Japanese persimmons). Hachiya persimmons are round, can be up to 3-inches or 8 centimetres in diameter, and have a slightly elongated, pointed base (i.e., acorn-like in shape). Only eat them when they are ripe (i.e., soft and rather “squishy” when pressed gently); otherwise, they have a more astringent flavour, causing the mouth to pucker. When completely ripe, their smooth, edible skin is a bright red-orange in colour; they have a jelly-like texture and a tangy-sweet flavour.

\*\* Option: Black mullet and herring roes (or similar types of black roe).



Escargots and Orzo in a Portobello Dish is an unusual quartet of simple ingredients.

#### Escargots and Orzo in a Portobello Dish (with Instant Goat's Cheese Sauce)

*Makes 4 servings*

Here, I have introduced an unusual quartet of exotically simple ingredients (portobello mushrooms, orzo, escargots and goat's cheese) to design a dramatically original dish. Together, these elements offer an exciting myriad of flavours, textures and shapes while my “stack” presentation contributes to the artistry and appeal of the recipe. Try it as a main course for lunch or brunch or even as a light dinner. Basically, this is an “assembly” recipe where many of the components may be prepared a day in advance.

3 cans escargots (can size: 4 oz or 115 g, drained weight)  
3 tbsp (45 ml) butter  
1 1/2 tsp (8 ml) finely chopped fresh garlic  
1 1/2 tsp (8 ml) peeled and grated fresh gingerroot  
1 tbsp (15 ml) beef bouillon powder  
To taste, crushed black peppercorns  
1 cup (250 ml) orzo  
1/3 cup (80 ml) soft garlic butter, divided  
To taste, salt  
4 large portobello mushroom caps (diam-

eter: 4 1/2 inches or 11 cm), stems removed  
7 oz (200 g) fresh spinach leaves (stems removed)  
1 tsp (5 ml) garlic-infused olive oil

#### *Instant Goat's Cheese Sauce*

5 oz (150 g) soft unripened goat's cheese  
1/2 tsp (3 ml) chicken bouillon powder  
1/2 cup (60 ml) hot water

Garnish (optional)  
8 fresh chive stems

1. Drain and rinse the escargots; drain well again; check for and discard any pieces of shell.
2. Melt butter in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add garlic and ginger; stirring constantly, cook for 1 minute.
3. Add escargots; sauté for another minute; sprinkle with beef bouillon powder and crushed black peppercorns; cook for 2 or 3 more minutes stirring frequently. Cover, remove from heat and allow escargots to rest for about 10 minutes to absorb flavours.
4. Cook orzo in an abundant amount of salted boiling water over medium heat until al dente (about 7 to 8 minutes); drain well. (Makes about 2 1/2 cups or 625 ml.)





Scrumptious Peanut Butter Chocolates are good for the holidays or for any occasion.

Toss with just 2 tsp (10 ml) garlic butter and salt to taste; set aside.

5. Meanwhile, to make the Instant Goat's Cheese Sauce, break up goat's cheese in a small bowl. Dissolve chicken bouillon powder in hot water; gradually whisk only a sufficient amount (e.g., 6 tbsp or 90 ml) into the goat's cheese to form a smooth, creamy sauce. (Makes about 4/5 cup or 200 ml.)

6. Rub all surfaces of mushroom caps (as required) with remaining soft garlic butter.

7. In a couple of large nonstick skillets over medium heat, sauté the whole portobello mushroom caps on both sides, seasoning them with salt and crushed black peppercorns. Cook until barely 2/3 done; remove from heat. (Note: mushroom caps should be rather firm.) Transfer sautéed mushroom caps (underside up) to 4 individual dinner plates. Drizzle any mushroom drippings into inverted caps.

8. Heat spinach leaves in a microwave oven for a matter of seconds only to soften slightly. (Spinach should still look fresh.) Season with salt and crushed black peppercorns, drizzle with garlic-infused olive oil and toss.

9. Place an equal quantity of the spinach into the 4 mushroom caps; top with warm orzo (about 1/3 cup or 80 ml per cap); crown with heated escargots.

10. Drizzle escargots with sauce.

11. Garnish each serving with 2 fresh

chives arranged in an "X" formation across the top of the stack.

#### **Scrumptious Peanut Butter Chocolates**

*Makes 20 chocolates*

Peanut butter lovers will want to check out this unique recipe that combines white chocolate with the nutty spread.

6 tbsp (90 ml) smooth peanut butter  
 ¼ tsp (1 ml) maple extract  
 2 tbsp (30 ml) icing sugar  
 ½ cup (125 ml) lightly crushed Rice Krispies cereal  
 ½ cup (125 ml) very finely chopped walnuts  
 6 oz (175 g) white chocolate  
 2 oz (60g) dark chocolate (preferably bittersweet), optional

1. Place peanut butter in a bowl. Add maple extract and combine thoroughly before adding the icing sugar and blending it in well.

2. Gradually, add crushed Rice Krispies, incorporating them well into the peanut butter mixture after each addition.

3. Finally, incorporate the chopped walnuts.

4. Transfer the mixture to a rectangular or square airtight plastic container, pressing down firmly and smoothing the surface. Cover and place in the freezer for at least several hours.

5. Using a melon baller (capacity: 1 tsp or 5 ml), scoop and level off portions of the mixture, pressing down firmly to create small domes. Place the peanut butter domes on a parchment paper-lined tray and place in the freezer for at least a couple of hours.

6. Place white chocolate in a microwave-safe bowl and soften gradually in a microwave oven at medium heat, stirring well every 15 seconds until the chocolate is quite soft, but definitely not melted. Remove from microwave oven and stir until the chocolate is smooth and creamy. (Note: The chocolate should be thick to facilitate coating of the domes.)

7. Working with a few peanut butter domes at a time, remove them from the freezer, dip into the chocolate and coat completely. Transfer to a wax paper-lined tray and refrigerate.

8. When the white chocolate coating is set, if desired, decorate\* the chocolates with melted dark chocolate and refrigerate to set.

9. Store the peanut butter chocolates in a single layer in an airtight plastic container lined with wax paper and refrigerate until ready to serve.

\* e.g., Lattice-work, dots, stars, swirls, etc.

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

## New arrivals

**Gline Arley Clarke**  
High Commissioner for Barbados



High Commissioner Clarke began his career in politics as assistant to the leader of the opposition in Barbados between 1991 and 1994. In 1994, he was elected as a member of parliament for St. George North and became parliamentary secretary in the ministry of public works, transport and housing. By 1999, he was minister of housing and lands, a position he held until 2003, when he was named minister of public works and transport.

In 2008, he became the opposition spokesman and shadow minister of agriculture, housing and transport. In May 2018, he was named deputy speaker of the house of assembly. He has received several awards for his service in Barbados and has degrees in history, education and part of an MBA from York University in Toronto.

The high commissioner is married.

**Patrick Van Gheel**  
Ambassador of Belgium



Ambassador Van Gheel is a career diplomat who joined the foreign service in 1998.

In 2000, he became an attaché at the permanent representation to the European Union.

He returned to headquarters in 2003 as a diplomatic adviser to the minister of home affairs. In 2004, he became first secretary at the permanent representation to the OECD in Paris. And in 2008, he became a counsellor in the economic section of the permanent representation to the United Nations and World Trade Organization in Geneva.

He became a deputy full member of the EU trade policy committee in 2012, and in 2015, was posted as ambassador to Cuba, with dual accreditation in Dominican Republic and Haiti. He was then director for EU trade policy and the World Trade Organization at headquarters before being posted to Canada.

The ambassador has a master's of law.

**Anselm Ransford Sowah**  
High Commissioner for Ghana



High Commissioner Sowah is a lawyer by profession and he began his career in banking, having worked for the Bank of Montreal and Ghana Commercial Bank in London

and GCB Bank Ltd.

From 2005 to 2014, he was the business development and public affairs manager for the Ghana International Bank in London, after which he served as senior manager of compliance for the same organization. From 2017 to 2020, he served as managing director of GCB Bank Ltd., after which he became chairman of the Ghana Stock Exchange.

Over his career in banking, he presided over the acquisition of UT Bank and Capital Bank and the creation of GCB Capital as the investment banking arm of the bank.

The high commissioner was born in Accra and has degrees in English, philosophy and law from the University of Ghana. He has two teenage daughters.

**Ivan Jurkovic**  
Apostolic Nuncio, Holy See



Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič was born in Slovenia and ordained as a priest for the Archdiocese of Ljubljana in 1977 after graduating from the faculty of theology in Ljubljana.

His first posting was to Korea, followed by an appointment to Colombia as counsellor. He then went to Russia as counsellor. From 1996 to 2001, he served at the Holy See, but was soon posted to Belarus as Apostolic Nuncio in 2001. In 2004, he was sent to Ukraine and then back to Russia, with dual accreditation to Uzbekistan. In 2016, he was named permanent observer of the Holy See to the office of the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva, permanent observer to the WTO and representative to the International Organization for Migration.

He speaks Slovenian, Italian, Spanish, English, Russian, German, French, Serbian, Croatian and Ukrainian.

**Hlynur Guojonsson**  
Ambassador of Iceland



Ambassador Guojonsson began his career as general manager of the Young Conservatives in 1993 and he kicked off a career in advertising in 1998 when he became account manager at the Icelandic Ad Agency. He was account director of GSP Public Relations in 2001, and subsequently held the same position with Mekano Advertising, Public Relations and Web Agency, XYZ Advertising Agency and ABX Advertising Agency.

He was brand manager for Icelandic USA Inc. in 2004 and then general manager of the Icelandic Chamber of Commerce in New York between 2006 and 2021. Concurrently, he served as managing director of Iceland Naturally (2006 to 2017), consul and trade commissioner (2006 to 2014) and consul-general and trade commissioner (2014 to 2021.)

The ambassador has a master's degree in marketing. He is married to artist Lully Yee.

**Molise Paul Tseole**  
High Commissioner for Lesotho



High Commissioner Tseole began his career in 1992 as a high school teacher in Lesotho.

He taught at three different high schools before becoming assistant minister of agriculture and food security for Lesotho in 2002. He was named consul-general at the Lesotho consulate in Klerksdrop, South Africa, in 2007, an appointment that represented the start of his diplomatic career.

From 2013 to 2019, he served as founder and director of a non-profit organization in Lesotho while also volunteering for the Export of Labour Organization. In 2019, he became founder and managing director of a social enterprise involving organic landlin.

The high commissioner served as board director at the Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation. He founded the Akopane Machaba Youth Co-operative Society and formed the Kopanang Berea Savings and Credit Co-operative.

The high commissioner is married and has three children.



**Anizan Siti Hajjar**  
High Commissioner for Malaysia



High Commissioner Siti Hajjar joined the foreign ministry in 1994.

Throughout her 27 years in the foreign service, she has served as the deputy permanent representative of Malaysia to the United Nations in Geneva (2008 to 2012) and two terms at the permanent mission of Malaysia to the United Nations in New York, including as deputy permanent representative during Malaysia's rotation on the UN Security Council from 2015 to 2016. She also held several key positions at the ministry, such as undersecretary of the Southeast Asia Division, deputy director of the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations (IDFR) and undersecretary of the human rights and humanitarian division.

The high commissioner has an international relations degree from California State University and a master's from Schiller International University, Paris, France.

She is married with three children.

**Andrej Gregor Rode**  
Ambassador of Slovenia



Ambassador Rode completed his law degree at the University of Buenos Aires, after which he received a master's degree at the Centre d'Etudes Diplomatiques et Strate-

giques in Paris.

He joined the foreign ministry in 2000 and was sent to the embassy in Australia in 2002 and returned to headquarters as first secretary and acting head of the communication service. He was posted to Paris as counsellor in 2006 and then to Brussels as permanent representative to the European Union.

He returned to the ministry as deputy national co-ordinator for the OECD and adviser to the director-general on economic diplomacy. In 2015, he was consul general in Cleveland. After returning to the ministry, he became adviser to the secretary-general.

He is married to Monika Rode and has a daughter and two sons.

**Susannah Goshko**  
High Commissioner for the United Kingdom



High Commissioner Goshko was previously principal private secretary to the foreign secretary, a role that she held for the two years covering the CO-

VID pandemic and the merger of the foreign office and the Department for International Development. She has spent much of her career working on national security issues and has had a number of postings in the Americas (twice in Washington and once in Havana).

She has also worked at the Department for Exiting the EU, where she was responsible for setting up the team that negotiated the withdrawal agreement and she has been Britain's permanent representative to UNEP and UN Habitat.

The high commissioner is married to Matt Goshko, a U.S. State Department officer. They have two children.

## Non-heads of mission

**Austria**

Thomas Sindelar  
Assistant attaché

**Bangladesh**

Sharmin Sultana  
First secretary

**Bolivia**

Sorka Jannet Copa Romero  
Second secretary

**China**

Jianwei Li  
Second secretary

Hanzhao Pang  
Counsellor

**Ben Tian**

Second secretary

**Colombia**

Juan Jose Alvarez Lopez  
First secretary

Pablo Castagnino  
Counsellor

**Cuba**

Henry Torres Torres  
Attaché

**Germany**

Chrisin Furtwaengler  
First secretary

Manuel Furtwaengler  
First secretary

**France**

Frank Marchetti  
Minister-counsellor

**Honduras**

Sandra Isabel Mata Echeverri  
Minister

**Hungary**

Anna Erzsebet Miklos  
Second counsellor

Viktoria Kontra  
Attaché

**Japan**

Shigeki Kobayashi  
First secretary

Takeshi Nukui  
First secretary

Hiraku Uzawa  
Third secretary

**Kazakhstan**  
Amirbek Alibi  
Second Secretary

**Latvia**  
Edgars Kaktins  
Third secretary

**Mongolia**  
Uyanga Dorjsuren  
Counsellor

**Nepal**  
Rojina Tamrakar  
Counsellor/ deputy chief of mission

**Nigeria**  
Remigius Obioma Nzewuji  
Minister

Rhema Jummai Dungus  
Olayemi  
First secretary

**Qatar**

Nasser Hamad H.H Al-Khulaifi  
Second secretary

**Romania**

Marius Badea  
Attaché

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Albadi  
Chargé d'affaires

Hassan Alsaadi  
Attaché

Fouad Abdrabbo A. Alzahrani  
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# To cork or not to cork?



Tristan  
Bragaglia-  
Murdock

**D**espite being the first step in opening a bottle of wine, the closure is often the last thing that we put any thought into.

Traditionally, cork has been the closure of choice as it provides a near-airtight seal that allows minute oxygen interplay, a necessity for wines that require long cellaring times, aiding the evolution of the wine's fruit set anywhere from leathery to honeyed, softening tannins and rounding out acidities; think an aged Barolo or Mosel Riesling.

Natural cork is a cylindrically bored layer of the cork oak's bark. These are considered best for long-term ageing compared to agglomerated corks, which use the trimmings and dusts leftover from the cork-cutting process, reconstituted with food-safe materials.

The downside of cork is, of course, corked wine. Cork taint's chemical compound (trichloroanisole, or TCA) occurs when processing the wood with antimicrobial agents. At its best, cork taint will mute a wine's bouquet, while at its worst, it will leave it smelling of musty basement and wet cardboard. Improvements in the industry's production have lowered instances of TCA: depending on where you read it, 3 per cent to 8 per cent of all wines are corked — enough to allow guests at restaurants to taste the wine before they buy and occurring in high- and low-end wines indiscriminately.

Synthetic closure manufacturers push this narrative along, highlighting their ability to prevent TCA spoilage. While screw caps — Stelvins — offer a hermetic seal, their ability to store wines for any length of time is still hotly debated. Some winemakers bottle their still wines under crown cap, much like a beer or sparkling wine as they're meant for more immediate enjoyment. Synthetic corks, too, are best for short-term storage as they can allow



Frank Cornelissen makes his natural wine in these hills of Sicily.

too much oxygen in too quickly.

Frank Cornelissen, a natural winemaker in Sicily, known for his volcanic terroir-driven wines, employs a highly engineered hybrid closure. Cornelissen finds that this bullet-shaped capsule gives a consistent result throughout vintages while still allowing a minute amount of air interplay and preventing cork taint; a seemingly goldilocks solution.

Beyond the practical applications, capsule types have a financial and environmental impact as well. Cork can only be harvested from quarter-century-old trees every nine years. Synthetic corks were traditionally plastic-based while a growing number of environmentally friendly alternatives are becoming available. Not only does a natural cork cost the most, it also looks the nicest. From a marketing standpoint, Stelvin enclosures still face the inaccurate assertion that it means that the wine is cheap.

In the 1970s, due to high market demands for Birkenstocks, along with established wine countries demanding the best

cork, secondary wine regions were left with poor-quality corks, resulting in regularly corked and faulty wines. As such, it almost seems as though Australia passed a law that all closures on its wines should be Stelvins. Even today, more than 85 per cent of Australian wines are under Stelvin.

What was once a small economy based on supplying the local villages with barrels of wine has evolved throughout the years as globalization and wine has permeated cultures and national boundaries. Shipping supply routes have changed and lighter glass is used to offset carbon footprints. Liquor laws have been implemented that were previously unnecessary.

This past century has seen an explosion in advancements in chemical use and agricultural equipment, and yet the cork, a simple and effective closure, has yet to be topped.

*When Tristan Bragaglia-Murdock isn't talking wine and pulling corks at Fauna, chances are his nose is either in a glass or in a wine book.*



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1. Japan's Foreign Press Centre presented an online briefing about the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics, by Yuriko Koike, governor of Tokyo. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 2. The Embassy of Poland planted a tree in memory of Polish composer Krzysztof Penderecki at Confederation Park. The event was organized in co-operation with the National Capital Commission. Polish Ambassador Andrzej Kurnicki (left) and deputy mayor Laura Dudas spoke. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 3. A commemoration ceremony to mark the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks took place at the U.S. ambassador's residence. Arnold Chacon, U.S. chargé d'affaires, spoke. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 4. United Arab Emirates Ambassador Fahad Saeed Al Raqbani, shown here, hosted a virtual session on EXPO 2020 Dubai, featuring guest speaker Hayat Shamsuddin, senior vice-president of EXPO pavilions and exhibitions. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 5. On the occasion of the Constitution Day of Slovakia, Ambassador Vit Koziak and his wife, Janka Koziakova, took part in a virtual presentation. Slovak Foreign Minister Ivan Korcok, shown here, spoke. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 6. The Embassy of Paraguay hosted a national day celebration of Paraguayan folklore, food and drink at 1 Elgin St. First secretary and chargé d'affaires Victoria Mariel Franco Carvallo spoke. (Photo: Ülke Baum)





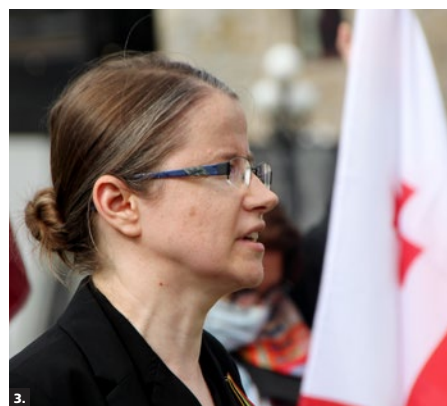
1.



2.



6.



3.



4.



5.

1. The embassies of Latvia and Lithuania hosted a Balts Unity Day celebration. From left: Latvian Ambassador Karlis Eihenbaums; Lithuanian Ambassador Darius Skusevicius; Polish Ambassador Andrzej Kurnicki; Ukrainian minister-counsellor Andrii Bukvyh; Antoine Pouliot, desk officer for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania at Global Affairs Canada; Paul Laanemets, member of the Estonian Central Council in Canada; and H       Cayer, Algonquin woman and member of the Friends of Library and Archives Canada. (Photo:        Baum) 2. From left, Darius Skusevicius and Karlis Eihenbaums at Balts Unity Day. (Photo:        Baum) 3. Black Ribbon Day was marked at Parliament Hill. Diplomats from Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia, Ukraine and Lithuania attended. Inga Miskinyte, second secretary at the Lithuanian Embassy, spoke. (Photo:        Baum) 4. To mark the 94th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, Ambassador Cong Peiwu spoke at a virtual reception. (Photo:        Baum) 5. To mark 50 years of scientific and technological co-operation between Germany and Canada, the Royal Canadian Geographical Society and the German Embassy presented a webinar. The event marked the launch of the German-Canadian Herzberg Network. Markus Rex, physicist and leader of the MOSAiC Expedition, spoke. (Photo:        Baum) 6. To mark the 205th anniversary of Argentine independence, Ambassador Maria Josefina Martinez Gramuglia hosted a wreath-laying ceremony before the statue of Gen. Jos   de San Mart     at Minto Park. (Photo:        Baum)





1. The Embassy of the Philippines organized a vernissage for *Perspectives and Experimentation in Visual Arts* featuring artworks by Alan Deniega, minister and consul-general; Jeffrey Salik, first secretary and consul; and Maria Teresa Narbuada. Here, Jeffrey Salik stands in front of his paintings. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 2. During the 2021 Korean Week in Canada, the Embassy of Korea and the Korean Culture Centre organized an outdoor concert at Lansdowne Casino Lac-Leamy Plaza featuring a string quartet and a traditional Korean musical performance. Here, Hyunyoung Roa Lee plays a gayageum, a Korean zither with 12 strings. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 3. The Belgian Embassy hosted an official unveiling of the mural *Peace Flowers* by Belgian artist Tom Cech, a gift from Belgium to the City of Ottawa. From left: Johan Verkammen, then-Belgian ambassador, his wife Kathleen Billen and Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 4. The Lithuanian Embassy hosted an event marking the restoration of Lithuanian-Canadian diplomatic relations at the Auditorium of the National Gallery of Canada. Mantas Adomenas, Lithuania's deputy minister of foreign affairs, spoke. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 5. To mark the national day and Korean Armed Forces Day, Ambassador Chang Keung Ryong and his wife, Suh Yong Suk, hosted a reception at the Westin Hotel's Venue Twenty Two. (Photo: Ülke Baum) 6. To mark the day of German unity and to look back on Angela Merkel's 16 years of leadership, the German Embassy, with the Munk School, presented a webinar. Ambassador Sabine Sparwasser delivered opening remarks. (Photo: Ülke Baum)





1. A flag-raising ceremony to commemorate the bicentennial celebration of the independence several Central American countries, including Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala. This year, Panama and Dominican Republic also joined in the event, which took place at Ottawa City Hall. From left: Ambassadors Mauricio Ortiz Ortiz (Costa Rica), Romy Vasquez (Panama), Maurizio Carlo Gelli (Nicaragua), Sofia Cerrato (Honduras), Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson, Ambassadors Ricardo Alfonso Cisneros Rodriguez (El Salvador), Guisela Atalida Godinez Sazo (Guatemala) and Michelle Cohen (Dominican Republic) attended. (Photo: Ülke Baum)

2. On the occasion of the 76th National Day of Vietnam, Ambassador Pham Cao Phong (right) and Madame Van Thi Le Hien hosted a large in-person reception and photography exhibition at the Westin Hotel. (Photo: Ülke Baum)

3. A full view of the Vietnam gathering, with social distancing. (Photo: Ülke Baum)

4. To mark the 76th Anniversary of Indonesia's independence, chargé d'affaires Yulastiarman Zakaria and his wife, Wiene Andriyana, hosted a reception and a musical performance at Wisma Indonesia in Rockcliffe Park. (Photo: Ülke Baum)

5. At the Indonesian event, third secretary I Made Diangga (left) and second secretary Sri Remaytin wear traditional costumes. (Photo: Ülke Baum)



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# Spending autumn hours with art

By Patrick Langston

**T**he fourth wave may be creating uncertainty, and winter is on its way, but there's no reason we can't get out and about in the coming months. Our travel recommendations this time keep us mostly closer to home and include multiple arts suggestions because the arts bolster the heart and mind in precarious times.

**Southbound:** A scant five kilometres south of Parliament Hill, Old Ottawa South is a blend of small-town Ontario, perogies and one darn big boulder. Bank Street, with its restaurants and small shops, and the surrounding neighbourhood, with its mature streetscapes and expansive parks, make for a fine stroll anytime. If you visit expansive riverside Windsor Park, check out the Bellwood Boulder on display at the Riverdale Avenue entrance. The boulder, which could be a billion years old, was discovered during recent infrastructure work on nearby Bellwood Avenue. Spending time with the ancient rock is a reminder of how fleeting our own woes really are. On a less philosophical note, House of TARG serves up handmade perogies and old-school pinball and arcade games, while Stella Luna Gelato Café offers scrumptious gelato, sorbet, panini and more. The Mayfair Theatre, on Bank Street just north of Sunnyside Avenue, is the city's oldest operating movie theatre and screens independent, classic and other films.

**Museum hopping in Montreal:** Ever wondered what more than 1,000 Barbie dolls look like when they're decked out in custom couture gowns by renowned designers such as Givenchy, Kate Spade and others? The Barbie Expo, a permanent exhibition at Les Cours Mont-Royal, will sate your curiosity. The exhibit starring the apparently ageless cultural icon is free. Still on the fashion runway, Montreal's McCord Museum features *Parachute: Subversive Fashion of the '80s*, an exhibit starting in mid-November. The venerable McCord is hosting other shows, including the permanent *Indigenous Voices of Today: Knowledge, Trauma, Resilience* and, over Christmas, *Enchanted Worlds*, a trip back to the wonderful seasonal window exhibits once mounted by Montreal's Ogilvy's de-



*Maharaja with Tiger after a Hunt* (a silver gelatin print with hand-colouring from India, dating to about 1890) is being shown at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto until Jan. 16, 2022. (The artist is unknown.)

partment store. The city boasts other museums, including Musée des Ondes Emile Berliner. It spotlights audio artifacts, from gramophones to televisions and satellites, illustrating the history of the recording, reproduction and broadcasting of sound and electromagnetic waves. The Canadian Centre for Architecture, a fine research institution, features current exhibits on carpet design and the use of design as a way to return colonized spaces to Indigenous peoples. Don't miss the outdoor sculpture garden, which is at once an urban garden and an outdoor museum.

**Live theatre — journeying into others' lives:** Bit by bit, Ottawa theatre companies

and venues have been announcing 2021-22 seasons. At the time of writing, the National Arts Centre had the fullest lineup, with in-person shows from its English, French and Indigenous departments that offer Canadian and international experiences from the comfort of a theatre seat.

Michael Frayn's award-winning *Copenhagen* (Nov. 4-7), which was to open just as the 2020 provincial lockdown descended, tackles the moral dilemma inherent in a 1941 meeting between a German and a Danish scientist about the atomic bomb. On Dec. 11 only, NAC Indigenous Theatre presents Tomson Highway: *Kisaaageetin (I love you/Je t'aime)*, a musical/literary celebration with the playwright/author/





NAC Indigenous Theatre presents Tomson Highway: *Kisaageetin* (I love you/*Je t'aime*), a musical/ literary celebration with the playwright/ author/librettist Highway on piano.

librettist Highway on piano, chanteuse Patricia Cano and others. On Oct. 26 and 28, NAC French Theatre offers a stage adaptation of the dark *Rêve et folie* by Austrian expressionist poet Georg Trakl, who died in 1914 at the age of 27 from a cocaine overdose. NAC Theatre, 1-844-985-2787

**Small town joys:** Why do small towns seem to revive the spirit of even the most die-hard urbanite or suburbanite? Maybe visiting them feels like a reconnection with some long-buried part of our past when community and a simpler life could be taken for granted. Fortunately, small towns abound within an hour's drive of Ottawa, and the fall is a lovely time to make the trek. Wakefield, Que., is home to a glorious red covered bridge, restaurants and shops, occasional intimate concerts at the Blacksheep Inn, and the unfussy MacLaren Cemetery, where former prime minister Lester B. Pearson is buried. The pretty towns of Almonte and Pakenham, part of the larger Town of Mississippi Mills, have the Mississippi Valley Textile Museum, Cartwright Springs Brewery, hiking at the Mill of Kintail, the High Lonesome Nature Reserve, and more. To the south are Manotick (check out the 19th-Century ghost-hosting Watson's Mill), Merrickville (a glass blower and fine stone buildings) and Perth (ultra-photogenic). Eastward, about 90 minutes from Ottawa, is Vankleek Hill, the self-styled Gingerbread (as in, architectural trim) Capital of the World, where you'll also find Beau's All-Natural Brewing Company and Gardenpath Homemade Soap. Arnprior, Chelsea, Casselman, Carleton Place... check your map to find even more spirit-bracing small towns.

**Breaking the Frame in Toronto:** If you're in Toronto before Jan. 16, 2022, leave time for a visit to the North American debut of *Breaking the Frame* at the Royal Ontario Museum. The photo exhibit showcases



*A Bride Dances* by Emilio Amero, a leading figure in the Mexican Modern art movement, who died in 1976. This vintage gelatin silver print is showing at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto until Jan. 16, 2022.

works from the Solander collection of mostly vintage prints of the last two centuries. The collection focuses on international traditions, underrepresented and forgotten artists, ethnic diversity and women. The exhibit includes one of the earliest photographs by a female artist, works from West African and Indian photo studios, and names such as Ansel Adams, Robert Frank and Dorothea Lange.

**Wildlife in the city:** You could commission Ottawa artist Christopher Griffin to create a work you'd treasure forever. Alternatively, and for free, you can just drive to spots like the underpass at Bronson and Riverside and revel in the natural world depicted in his art. Griffin, well-known for his painting and sculpture, has enlivened many of Ottawa's dull concrete structures with birds, fish, raccoons and other animals. At Bronson and Riverside, there are peregrine falcon etchings and sculptures. You'll spot a raccoon etching at the Glebe Community Centre and reptiles, birds and others at the four-level Glebe Garage parkade on Second Avenue. A fish mural emblazons a wall at 34 Brighton Ave. near the Rideau River. Lumbering sculptures of Blanding's turtles enliven the Beaverbrook branch of the Ottawa Public library in Kanata. And an unimaginative bit of graffiti at the Bayswater and Queensway underpass has been reworked by Griffin into an elegant horned animal that, if you look closely, still displays the original graffiti tags. Griffin has good reason for relying on animals in his transformation of uninteresting and even offensive public spaces through art. "They're fun for me and there's a spiritual quality to them and an innocence and broad appeal. They're a way to connect with nature," he says. You'll also find what he calls "semi-public" pieces scattered around the city, including a whale sculpture at Flora Hall Brewing and a painting at Planet Coffee.

Patrick Langston is an Ottawa writer who loves the arts, boulders and the romance of the open road.



Artist Christopher Griffin has works all over the city, including these Blanding's turtle sculptures at the Beaverbrook branch of the Ottawa Public Library in Kanata.

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## Celebration time

A listing of the national and independence days marked by countries

October		
1	China	National Day
1	Cyprus	Independence Day
1	Nigeria	National Day
1	Palau	Independence Day
1	Tuvalu	National Day
2	Guinea	National Day
3	Germany	Day of German Unity
3	Korea, Republic	National Foundation Day
4	Lesotho	National Day
9	Uganda	Independence Day
10	Fiji	National Day
12	Spain	National Day
12	Equatorial Guinea	National Day
23	Hungary	Commemoration of the 1956 Revolution and Day of Proclamation of the Republic of Hungary
24	Zambia	Independence Day
26	Austria	National Day
27	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Independence Day
27	Turkmenistan	Independence Day
28	Czech Republic	Proclamation of Czech States
29	Turkey	Proclamation of the Republic
November		
1	Algeria	National Day
1	Antigua and Barbuda	Independence Day
3	Dominica	Independence Day
3	Micronesia	Independence Day
3	Panama	Independence Day
9	Cambodia	National Day
11	Angola	Independence Day
18	Latvia	Independence Day
18	Oman	National Day
19	Monaco	National Day
22	Lebanon	Independence Day
25	Bosnia and Herzegovina	National Day
25	Suriname	Independence Day
28	Albania	National Day
28	Timor-Leste	Independence Day
28	Mauritania	Independence Day
30	Barbados	Independence Day
December		
1	Central African Republic	Proclamation of the Republic
1	Romania	National Day
2	Laos	National Day
2	United Arab Emirates	National Day
5	Thailand	National Day
6	Finland	Independence Day
11	Burkina Faso	National Day
12	Kenya	Independence Day
16	Bahrain	Independence Day
16	Kazakhstan	Independence Day
23	Japan	National Day





Photographer Mike Beedell: "The greater snow goose is a large, hardy migratory bird that travels from the Atlantic Seaboard and Gulf of Mexico to the Arctic islands of Canada and the west coast of Greenland every year. Snow geese raise their young on the tundra vegetation in the high Arctic before migrating back south in the fall. They nest within 820 kilometres of the North Pole and there are more than 800,000 in existence. The biggest colony in the world is on Bylot Island in Canada's Northwest Passage, where more than 200,000 geese nest annually. These rugged geese lay three to five eggs and, within hours, the goslings leave the nest and forage with parental supervision. One-day-old goslings can walk 30 kilometres in a day. Two of the finest observation sights for the fall migration spectacle are at Cap Tourmente and Baie du Febvre, Que.



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