

## OTTAWA, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13, 2013 ISSUE 443 • \$4.00

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Carl Meyer

The Harper government wants to speed up and simplify the process that surrenders individuals in Canada to another country or organization to face trial, triggering worries from two legal observers that extraditions could become rubber-stamped affairs.

Justice Minister Rob Nicholson believes the current extradition regime “causes sig-

**Continued on Page 5**

■ Strategy may be integrated into a wider defence paper, says one expert.

Ally Foster

The Royal Canadian Navy might very well have a strong vision for where it sees itself on the world's oceans in the years to come, but the document that reportedly lays out this vision has been kept from public view, say several defence analysts.

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**Lean in close, folks:** Former Australian prime minister John Howard talked foreign investment, China, and the Anglosphere in a speech and question-and-answer session March 9. He was speaking to hundreds of conservatives attending the Manning Centre Networking Conference in Ottawa. Among some of his notable lines: “We still live in a world of nation states; we haven’t surrendered our national identity to multilateralism.”

■ But concerns persist over global aid budget cuts, rising food costs.

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Ally Foster

Several international development analysts and non-governmental groups are relieved to see Canada pledge a minimum annual commitment of \$250 million to the newest version of an international food assistance treaty. But they also caution that the year ahead could be fraught

with rising food needs, rocketing food prices, and continuing cuts to global aid dollars.

"We were pleased with the minimum level of commitment that Canada made," said Jim Cornelius, executive director of Canadian Foodgrains Bank, who called the pledge substantial and said it was higher than expected.

The new version of the Food Assistance Convention, which came into force on Jan. 1, manages the way international donors give food aid to people in need.

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■ Sensitive to president-elect's ICC charges, it 'encourages Kenya to continue to respect its international obligations.'

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Kristen Shane

With Kenya's electoral commission on March 9 declaring Uhuru Kenyatta the winner of the country's presidential election, the congratulatory messages began pouring in.

Mr. Kenyatta's official Facebook page shows photos of him meeting with representatives from the Indian, Chinese, Saudi Arabian, Ethiopian, Egyptian, Rwandan, Burundian, and South Sudanese governments.

But his election has many Western governments, including Canada, in a diplomatic bind. They are responding carefully.

Kenya has been an important player in ensuring regional security, and is East Africa's biggest economy.

But Mr. Kenyatta's alleged participation in violence that erupted after Kenya's 2007 presidential election, which saw about 1,200 people killed, has led the International Criminal Court to accuse him of crimes against humanity. His trial is set to open in July. He is alleged to have helped to mobilize a criminal group to attack his opponents.

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# Diplomacy This Week



Bosnia-Herzegovina Ambassador Biljana Gutic-Bjelica with artist Marina Gavanski-Zissis in front of her work, Cosmic Fire Dancer, at Ottawa City Hall on March 7.

## The art of women



SNEH DUGGAL  
*Chatter House*

She's sensual, intellectual, and emotional. She is a woman. Those are the ways artist **Marina Gavanski-Zissis** describes the subjects of many of her paintings. Sitting inside Ottawa City Hall on March 7, the Montreal-based artist points to one of her paintings, called Cosmic Fire Dancer. It shows a young woman spinning fire as a gymnast would twirl a long ribbon. The woman is also at the centre of the universe. "It shows the woman's power, beauty, grace," Ms. Gavanski-Zissis said. "I find that as a woman, I paint a woman from a different aspect."

On a table across the room is a portrait she painted of **Biljana Gutic-Bjelica**, the ambassador of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Ms. Gutic-Bjelica hosted the reception that evening in honour of International Women's Day, which people across the globe marked on March 8.

The event featured Ms. Gavanski-Zissis' Colours of a Woman exhibit.

The artist described the show as a journey through life.

Another painting showed a man and woman looking at each other. Ms. Gavanski-Zissis said they were looking at their future and their dreams.

She pointed to another of a bride. "She's escaping the past and going towards the future and happiness," she said.

Her latest painting was called Peace Dreamer, and showed a young girl lying down naked, surrounded by whiteness.

The word "peace" is written in Korean at the bottom.

Ms. Gavanski-Zissis, who was born in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina, related the painting to her country, which faced a civil war in the 1990s.

"As a woman she paints from a specific feminine, feminist and maternal perspective," wrote **Milomir Niketic**, a correspondent with BETA news agency, a wire service based in Belgrade, in an essay.

"She is a painter with all the human experience of a woman."

Speaking to the crowd of more than 50 people on March 7, **Nikola Miscevic**, a Canadian originally from the former Yugoslavia who currently lives in

Montenegro, read two poems he wrote. The first was devoted to his seven-year-old daughter **Sara**, and the second was to **Queen Nefertiti**.

"All this trying to confirm how important the beauty of a woman is and how meaningless we are without this beauty, physically and spiritually," Mr. Miscevic said.

Ms. Gutic-Bjelica said the day was very important in her country, and throughout Europe.

"They buy presents, they buy flowers, kids make small presents for their mothers and their teachers...it is really hugely celebrated," Ms. Gutic-Bjelica said.

She noted the importance of promoting gender equality and women's rights, because there are still places where women are not considered equal to men.

She said there are around 20 female ambassadors in Ottawa, by far the minority.

The elegantly dressed ambassador shared with *Chatter House* her message to her eight-year-old daughter Una: never to accept "no" as an answer and "you can't because you're a woman."

Also joining the festivities that evening were Palestinian delegation head **Said Hamad**, Cameroonian High Commissioner **Anu'a-Gheyle Solomon Azoh-Mbi**, Jamaican High Commissioner **Sheila Sealy-Monteith**, Rwandan Ambassador **Edda Mukabagwiza**, **Manfred Auster**, head of the political and public affairs section of the European Union delegation, and Ottawa Mayor **Jim Watson**.

### Celebrating Arab women

The women's day festivities spread to the Arab world as well.

**Kawther Aabed**, wife of the Saudi Arabian chargé d'affaires **Yousuf Rashad A. Abuaish**, hosted an event on March 8 to honour Saudi Arabian women's achievements.

The event rang true to being a women's day celebration—as women were the only ones present.

Close to 15 women were asked to speak about something they had achieved.

Having the event on International Women's Day seemed like a good fit, said **Raghad Al-Awwad**, a graduate student studying computer science at Carleton University.

Ms. Al-Awwad, 31, was one of the people who spoke that evening.

She jointly talked about yoga with **Sameera Abuaish**, a graduate student at the University of Ottawa. The two women enrolled in a yoga teaching training program last year.

Ms. Al-Awwad started doing yoga about seven years ago during her undergraduate years as a way to cope with anxiety, especially during public speaking.

She volunteered with the Muslim Association of Canada and taught some yoga after her training course.

They gave those in attendance a sample of yoga through a breathing exercise.

Others played music, talked about experiences as a doctor, displayed artwork, and spoke about food and dining etiquette.

"The evening is really to show that you're proud as a Saudi woman [and] what did you achieve, what did you do?" Ms. Al-Awwad said.

She said women are trying to improve their status everywhere around the globe and that Saudi Arabia is improving when it comes to women's rights.

But some are still fairly critical of women's rights in the country.

**Manal Al-Sharif** is a Saudi Arabian activist who was put in prison for nine days after driving her car in the country.

She wrote in a statement on the website of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights that, "A Saudi woman can't make any decision in her life—study, work, marry, obtain a passport, and travel—without written permission from her legal male guardian, effectively treating her as a minor all her life."

Ms. Al-Awwad doesn't deny there are problems, but thinks there is hope.

"We are catching up to the world, it's slow and sometimes it is frustrating that it is that slow, but I'm not completely pessimistic about it," Ms. Al-Awwad said.

She said improvements don't get as much attention in the media.

**King Abdullah** issued a decree earlier this year granting women seats on the Shura Council, an advisory body to the king, for the first time. In 2011 he also said women would be able to vote and run in the 2015 municipal elections.

Ms. Al-Awwad said with some of the issues in Saudi Arabia, it's not just the government. Society also plays a role in deciding whether things will change or not.

Overall, she said the evening was one that gave them a chance to celebrate and discuss things they liked.

The evening was also a chance for the women to be open and let down their hair. Literally.

*Chatter House* was told that a male photographer could not attend the event.

Because only women were present, Ms. Al-Awwad said she had the choice of taking off her hijab.

"It's an opportunity for me to actually get dressed and fix my hair," she said lightly.

### Keystone XL lineup

It isn't exactly a cavalcade or a procession of horses and carriages.

But the steady stream of Canadians going down south to talk about pipelines could come mighty close to a modern defini-

tion of one, minus the horses of course.

The Canadian government and industry officials have been rallying up their troops and lobbying intensely in the United States, trying to garner support for the Keystone XL pipeline.

The pipeline project faces a consultation period with the public and then with other government departments to determine whether the project would be in the national interest.

Trade Minister **Ed Fast**, Public Safety Minister **Vic Toews**, and Treasury Board President **Tony Clement** are set to travel to Washington this week.

"They are highlighting the importance of our shared priorities of enhancing environmental protection and energy security to support jobs, economic growth and our long-term prosperity," said a notice from Natural Resources Minister **Joe Oliver**'s office.

Mr. Oliver too was south of the border for a two-day trip last week trying to ramp up support for the pipeline.

Canada was "the most and perhaps only responsible choice" for the United States when it came to the need for oil, *The Globe and Mail* reported Mr. Oliver as saying on March 6.

Foreign Minister **John Baird** discussed the pipeline when he met with his American counterpart **John Kerry** on Feb. 8.

But NDP Leader **Thomas Mulcair** said he would take more of a middle ground approach during his trip to the US capital this week.

"My position is that the Americans are going to sort themselves out based on their own rules," Mr. Mulcair told *The Globe and Mail* on March 10.

A delegation from the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers was also in Washington at the end of February.

This included president **Dave Collyer**, vice presidents **Greg Stringham** and **Bob Bleaney**, and government and policy advisor **Kay She**.

The names were listed in the Feb. 28 edition of a popular Canada-US newsletter put out by former US ambassador **David Wilkins**.

"With a presidential decision looming on the Keystone XL pipeline, CAPP advocated for Canadian oil and reminded lawmakers that the US has no better ally and responsible energy partner than our neighbors to the north," the newsletter read.

Also with the delegation were industry officials like Imperial Oil president **Bruce March**.

CAPP met with members of the House and the Congress such as Senators **Joe Manchin** and **Lindsey Graham**, and representatives such as House speaker **John Boehner** and US Representative **Jeff Duncan**.

They also had meetings with **Gary Doer**, Canada's ambassador in Washington, and Obama aides.

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## Talking Points

### Groups say feds backtracking

Refugee groups in Canada are saying the Conservatives are not fulfilling their pledge to increase the number of refugees resettling in the country, the Canadian Press reported. The number of resettled refugees in Canada in 2012 was down 26 per cent from 2011. The government also **didn't make its target to resettle between 7,500 and 8,000 refugees** this year, instead only taking 5,412. Immigration Minister Jason Kenney says the government isn't giving up on its commitment, and that the department is working with the UN to do its best to meet this year's target.

### Drafting error in refugee law

The federal government has admitted to making a "drafting error" in its refugee legislation that passed last June, Postmedia News reported. A note on the Citizenship and Immigration's website suggests the **new provision came into force four months too early**. The legislative error means about

1,650 claimants who filed their application between Aug. 15 and Dec. 15 of last year will now have access to the Refugee Appeal Division if initially turned down. Lawyers claim the only way to fix it may be by introducing and passing a new law. RAD was only supposed to come into effect Dec. 15.

### New citizenship judge for GTA

Angelo Persichilli, who served briefly as Prime Minister Stephen Harper's director of communications, will take on the role of citizenship judge for the Greater Toronto Area, the Canadian Press reported. Mr. Persichilli is a **former newspaper columnist for The Hill Times, The Toronto Sun, and Embassy**. The NDP are calling this appointment another example of conservative patronage.

#### CORRECTION

A photo in the March 6 edition of Party Time labelled "Malaysia" mistakenly stated the photographer was Sam Garcia. In fact, it was Ulle Baum. *Embassy* regrets the error.



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# Aid reps applaud Canadian contribution to food assistance treaty

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Canada's \$250-million commitment sits quite high in comparison with other pledges made to date. Austria committed 1.495 million euros, Finland pledged 6 million euros, and France (which has yet to ratify the convention) pledged a minimum of 35 million euros. They are all members of the 27-state European Union, which pledged 200 million euros, or a little over \$267 million Cdn.

"There are some concerns, globally, about what level of commitment countries will actually make," added Mr. Cornelius.

Previous versions of the convention—which expired in 2002 and has been existing on year-long extensions until now—had minimum commitments written into the text, but the new convention allows donor countries to choose a minimum contribution.

The new version also allows food aid to be delivered in a number of ways, including: cash and vouchers, seeds and tools, as well as actual tonnages of food—which, for many years, was the mandated method of commitment.

### Concerns over food costs

Many analysts have applauded the new convention's flexibility for donors to respond to a variety of situations in the most efficient and effective way. But Jennifer Clapp, a food aid expert with the University of Waterloo, cautioned in an email to *Embassy* that, "if donors make their commitments in a cash amount (as Canada has done), it means that if food prices

spike later this year, then the fixed amount of cash that is pledged now would buy less food."

She added: "Food price spikes are not always easy to predict, so it is not easy to tell at the start of a commitment period if donors are pledging enough to cover what will be needed in the coming year."

Observers should monitor the aid delivery very closely to ensure that the changes to the system don't lead to unpredictability for recipients, she wrote.

Mr. Cornelius said that a need for transparency has been built into the new convention, and he hopes that it will make reporting about how assistance is being delivered on the ground more easily and quickly communicated to non-governmental organizations and donor countries.

Food security is one of Canada's three priority themes guiding the Canadian International Development Agency's work.

Given that focus, Robert Fox, executive director of Oxfam Canada, applauded Canada's contribution and added that he wasn't surprised at the strong minimum commitment. "[Canada] has been one of the most generous countries in supporting the convention and has played a really critical leadership role on issues of food assistance," he said.

But, he added, "we are very concerned about aid levels around the world."

"There are a number of European countries that are reducing their level of aid, and there are other countries—including Canada—which are not increasing their aid."

Mr. Fox said he expects countries such as



A local trader prepares jerry cans at the voucher distribution centre at an internally displaced persons camp in North Darfur, Sudan, in October 2012.

Spain and Italy to make reduced pledges to the convention this year.

Demand for food aid is rising due to climate change and resulting environmental disasters, as well as conflicts and rising food prices, he said.

"Part of our concern is that [CIDA's] budget is diminishing. So we absolutely welcome and applaud this commitment, but we can't lose sight of the need for long-term development and long-term investment in production in the Global South."

Mr. Fox is confident that the flexibility in delivery methods is a good change.

"We work in many places around the world where the most efficient, most effective, and most rapid response is to give people cash," he said. Shipping food around the world creates, "huge costs, huge losses, and huge delays. So the flexibility in terms of mechanisms, we certainly welcome."

Giving cash vouchers for local stores and producers also funnels money back into the economy, he added.

### Leading by example

Meanwhile, the United Nation's World Food Programme is hopeful that other member countries to the Food Assistance Convention will follow Canada's lead.

"We were always optimistic that Canada would lead by example and pleased they responded so well," wrote Chris Kaye, director of the WFP's performance management and monitoring division, in an email to *Embassy*.

Mr. Kaye added: "We are aware that with the continuing global economic crisis, many of our traditional donors may find it difficult to explain to their hard-pressed taxpayers that support for people beyond their own borders remains the right thing to do."

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## Q&A Immigration

# Kenney 'bluffing' on refugee health changes: Doctors group leader

'He has bluffed from the very beginning. I think he's been caught out, which is why it seems that what we're saying, which is the truth, is getting under his skin.'

Kristen Shane

Changes to the way the federal government pays for health care for refugee claimants are so confusing, and their implementation so mismanaged, that walk-in clinics are refusing patients and people are not getting treated for treatable conditions, says a doctor leading the charge against the changes.

More than eight months into the implementation of Interim Federal Health Program changes, "the administration of the system has been absolutely chaotic and incredibly mismanaged," said Dr. Philip Berger, chief of family medicine with St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto, and a leader of Canadian Doctors for Refugee Care.

Immigration Minister Jason Kenney has said the changes largely affect people deemed not to be refugees and called out people like Dr. Berger as "ideologues." Dr. Berger called that statement "febrile, frothy bluster."

The changes grouped refugees and refugee claimants into coverage categories based on their immigration status. Claimants from a new class of so-called safe countries would only be covered for an initial medical exam, and medical treatment for diseases that threaten public health or safety. The government said successful refugee claimants would get coverage similar to what Canadians get through provincial health insurance plans.

The doctors said they joined Feb. 25 with the Canadian Association of Refugee

Lawyers and three rejected refugee claimants to mount a Federal Court challenge of the cuts.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada spokesperson Philippe Couvrette wrote in an email March 1 that the department was reviewing its legal options. He wouldn't comment on the issue specifically because it's before the courts, but responded generally to allegations of confusion.

He wrote that the department took "significant measures to ensure that all stakeholders...were informed of the planned changes." It communicated to them through a news release, a new website and email address, mailed notices to existing beneficiaries, and technical briefings with groups including health-care provider associations.

Medavie Blue Cross, which administers the program's claims, also helped communicate the changes to health-care providers by posting website updates, mailing out information bulletins and other documents, and boosting capacity in its call centre to answer questions, said Mr. Couvrette.

"CIC continues to work with Medavie to find ways to simplify the new administrative requirements and develop tools for providers," he wrote.

A Medavie Blue Cross spokesperson referred comment to CIC.

Mr. Berger said his group would hit the streets this summer, as it did last year, to take Cabinet ministers to task at press conferences and other public events.

*Embassy* spoke to Mr. Berger by phone Feb. 26 to get his on-the-ground perspective of how the changes are being rolled out. This interview has been condensed and edited.

Dr. Berger: "I'm the head of a family practice department, and we have about 350 patients on [Interim Federal Health] in our department. And seeking approval for coverage is nightmarish.

"[I had a] patient who was not covered for one visit, who was covered for the next visit—no explanation from Blue Cross.

"The administration of the system has been absolutely chaotic and incredibly mismanaged. We know we've had documented cases, I've seen the correspondence, of people who actually should have been on the full IFH coverage, but who were told they only have public safety and public security coverage. In other words, no coverage for any health conditions that affected them."

**Walk me through how this works, when you have a patient come in and they have Interim Federal Health coverage.**

"First of all, the doctor has to be registered with Blue Cross. Most doctors are not.

"After they register with Blue Cross, they can either phone or try to figure out through their website, after supplying the unique immigration number that each refugee claimant is given, try and determine coverage by going through this incredibly

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Public Safety Minister Vic Toews and Justice Minister Rob Nicholson at a press conference on Feb. 14, 2012.

The Hill Times Photo: Lake Wright

# Move to speed up extradition regime worries legal analysts

Continued from Page 1

nificant strain on Canadian courts and can be extremely lengthy," wrote Sean Phelan, a spokesperson for the minister, in a March 11 emailed response to *Embassy*.

Mr. Nicholson is now taking that message on the road, speaking about his intent to make the extradition regime "more effective and efficient" in Edmonton and Vancouver on March 11 and 12.

But critics say extradition depends on a judicial process that is crucial to protect individuals from being removed from Canada without a fair hearing of their case. The courts have sometimes focused on the risk of wrongful conviction, they add.

John Edward Deukmedjian, associate professor of criminology at the University of Windsor, accused the government of trying to sidestep the legal system.

"It's up to the courts to decide whether someone's extradited or not. They want to circumvent that," he said.

"You avoid the whole process of rights... you avoid the costs associated with trial, and the uncertainty associated with the outcome."

Canada's extradition regime includes the 1999 Extradition Act, as well as 51 bilateral treaties with countries like the United States. There are other countries and entities, like the International Criminal Court, designated as extradition partners.

Before someone can be extradited, there is a multi-step process involving ministerial approval and an extradition hearing, among other aspects. There are also legal standards that have been developed as a result of cases, and how the courts have interpreted them.

Gary Botting, a lawyer who focuses on extradition law in British Columbia, said the Extradition Act "theoretically provides some sort of protection for an individual."

"I think if they modify it, it'll take those protections away, and that's of concern," said Mr. Botting, who has written several books on extradition in Canada.

He pointed to recent Canadian court decisions, in which he was a legal representative, that ruled no to extradition.

"I wouldn't be surprised if the Department of Justice is trying to plug [those] holes, so that indeed it is a rubber-stamped process," he said.

The government, however, considers it to be keeping with Canada's international obligations to extradite people "in a timely fashion," wrote Mr. Phelan.

He suggested it takes on average two and a half years, and up to over a decade, to extradite individuals facing criminal trials.

Extradition is also a topic heating up in Parliament, as the NDP member of Parliament François Lapointe said Bill S-9, the Nuclear Terrorism Act, would create "added pressures on Canada's extradition regime."

The act, however, is supported by his party, he said, and has sped through Parliament, reaching on March 7 the last legislative stage before becoming law.

Extradition has also been in the news, after legal analysts lashed out at the government for "disguised" extraditions to China, according to a Feb. 13 Global News report.

The news agency reported on a letter showing a meeting between China's Economic Crime Investigation Department and the Canada Border Services Agency that discussed "managing Chinese fugitives."

## Cross-border policing suspected

Mr. Deukmedjian said he believed Canada was changing its extradition regime to comply with an American request under the Canada-US perimeter plan.

Canada and the US are working to establish a system to allow law enforcement agents to pursue suspects across their land border, officially called the Next Generation of Integrated Cross-Border Law Enforcement.

It builds on a maritime cross-border policing program that was entrenched into law in 2012. The new program would amount to specially designated American agents, such as from the US Federal Bureau of Investigation or the US Drug Enforcement Administration, pursuing people onto Canadian soil, the RCMP has said.

But a pilot project under the plan has been held up for months because of legal problems. As of Feb. 1 the pilot was still on hold, according to a Public Safety spokesperson. The government has indicated several times that "legal" issues remain.

Mr. Deukmedjian said the two sides might have realized that Canada's extradition regime would have to be changed before such a program could proceed.

"I think they want to make it easy for the US authorities to have a very expedited process, and be able to arrest people they're looking for and bring them back to the US," said Mr. Deukmedjian.

Mr. Phelan wrote that the extradition regime changes would "provide Canadian law enforcement and prosecution officials with the tools they need to address serious, multi-jurisdictional crime." A March 11 Department of Justice press release also referred to the "complexity of multi-jurisdictional investigations and prosecutions."

But Mr. Phelan did not answer direct questions related to the perimeter plan or cross-border policing. He wrote that "more details will be provided in due course."

Diane Sovereign, cultural attaché at the US Embassy, said the mission had no comment on the matter. NDP justice critic Françoise Boivin did not respond to requests for comment by deadline.

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# Editorial Page

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## KEEP UP GAY RIGHTS SUPPORT

Canada has been quietly funding several gay rights programs in East Africa, and is getting involved specifically to fight a private member's bill currently before the Ugandan legislature that would further criminalize homosexuality.

The bill proposes life sentences for people convicted of having same-sex intercourse, and three-year sentences for people convicted of not reporting a homosexual crime.

*The National Post* reported March 6 that, since November, Canada has spent \$200,000 to boost several gay rights programs in places like Kenya and Uganda. The article cited an unnamed senior Foreign Affairs source.

There's reason for Canada to stay quiet. Foreign Minister John Baird has criticized countries that criminalize homosexuality and cited the bludgeoning death of Ugandan gay rights advocate David Kato in a speech he gave at an Inter-Parliamentary Union meeting last fall in Quebec City. Ugandan Parliament Speaker Rebecca Kadaga protested "in the strongest terms the arrogance exhibited by the foreign minister of Canada."

She accused Canada of taking a "colonial attitude" toward African countries and interfering in Uganda's affairs.

Funnelling money toward sources "specifically focused on fighting the Ugandan bill," as *The National Post* reported, will fuel Ms. Kadaga's argument.

But gay rights are human rights. On this issue Canada has a moral obligation to provide positive reinforcement to help protect the minorities threatened by this bill. Those worried about sovereignty or colonialism may take comfort that, in the end, it will still only be up to Ugandan legislators to decide; Canada can only do so much.

That being said, Canada's actions are important. This is what Canadian gay rights advocates have been seeking since the government began more loudly voicing its concern about the criminalization of homosexuality in the past few years. International development practitioners that make up the McLeod Group recommended in a policy paper released March 11 that Canada pursue not just words, but also deeds, in its fight for gay rights globally.

Among their various suggestions, the paper's authors proposed that Canada guide its missions abroad to support local groups that work to advance human rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered persons. The authors also suggested that the Canadian International Development Agency not give grants or contracts to groups that don't respect LGBT rights.

International Co-operation Minister Julian Fantino recently stated that he had asked officials to review funding, before more payments were made, to a Canadian group that does development work abroad and on its web-site described homosexuality as a "perversion" and a "sin."

The McLeod Group authors noted that with two strong ministers (Mr. Baird and Immigration Minister Jason Kenney, who has been working to grant asylum to persecuted gays from countries like Iran) behind the cause, LGBT rights "could actually serve as a focal point for co-operation between the government and all opposition parties."

Other countries (Britain, the United States, and Sweden, for instance) have put their money where their mouths are. It appears that Canada is starting to do that as well. It should continue, sensitively and sensibly, along this line.



## Quote of the Week

### THE LAST WORD

"insensitive and impertinent sentiments"  
—How Venezuela's vice-minister for North America, Claudia Salerno, described Prime Minister Stephen Harper's reaction to the death of Hugo Chávez.

## The Najibullah syndrome



GWYNNE DYER

"Yesterday's bombings (in Afghanistan) in the name of the Taliban were aimed at serving the foreigners and supporting the presence of the foreigners in Afghanistan and keeping them in Afghanistan by intimidating us," said Afghan President Hamid Karzai on March 10. What on Earth could he have meant by that?

The foreigners he is talking about are the troops from the United States and various NATO countries in Europe that have been in Afghanistan for the past dozen years. They will almost all be gone by the end of next year.

Can Karzai seriously think that the Taliban bombs in Kabul and Khost on March 9, which killed 19 people, were meant to get the Americans, British, Germans et. al. to keep their soldiers in Afghanistan longer?

If he were the leader of al-Qaeda, you can imagine him saying that. It was always al-Qaeda's goal to get Western military forces entangled in military occupations in the Muslim world, in the belief that that would nurture popular hostility both to the West and to the local leaders who collaborated with it.

But Karzai IS a collaborator, parachuted into Afghanistan after the American invasion in 2001. He may have won the first presidential election in 2005 legitimately, but by the second election in 2009 he was so unpopular that he was only re-elected thanks to massive vote rigging, tacitly condoned by the US. And when the Americans leave, he had better leave with them.

So what is all this nonsense about the Taliban bombs being an attempt to persuade the foreigners that they have to stay, and to intimidate Karzai and his cronies into letting them stay? It can best be explained as a manifestation of the Najibullah syndrome.

Najibullah was the Communist leader who ruled Afghanistan during the latter stages of the Soviet occupation and immediately after the Russians left. When the Taliban finally took Kabul in 1996, he was tortured, castrated, dragged through the streets behind a truck, and then hanged from a traffic light.

It can be safely assumed that Karzai and his cronies, when they contemplate the forthcoming American departure, are acutely aware of this precedent.

This leads to various flailing attempts by members of the regime to distance themselves from the American occupation forces who originally boosted them into power. Karzai has been increasingly vocal in criticizing the NATO forces in Afghanistan, as if he had nothing to do with their presence in the country, and didn't owe his presidency to them.

Let's deconstruct that remarkable statement of Karzai's. The message is that he is an Afghan patriot who is trying to make the "foreigners" go home, whereas the Taliban are trying to keep the Americans and their NATO allies in the country to further their own nefarious purposes. It makes no sense whatsoever, but what else can he say? That the Taliban are winning, the Americans are getting out, and he is doomed?

He's not really doomed. Since the constitution does not allow him to run for the presidency again, he can easily leave the country for health reasons or whatever before the foreign troops depart. He must have salted away enough money abroad to live quite well in exile, as have almost all the other members of the regime. So why does he act as though he might have a future in post-occupation Afghanistan?

The Najibullah precedent is instructive here, too. The former collaborator with the Soviet occupiers stubbornly believed that the Taliban would understand that his motives had been pure, and after all he was a Pashtun like them. He refused to leave Kabul before the Taliban took over, even though numerous friends implored him to do so. Karzai apparently suffers from the same delusions, and may eventually suffer the same fate.

This is not to say that the Taliban will overrun all of Afghanistan after the NATO forces leave. They will undoubtedly gain control of the Pashtun-majority south and east, and they will probably take Kabul. They didn't gain control of the Tajik, Hazara, and Uzbek minority regions in the north of the country last time, and they may not do so after this bunch of foreigners leave either.

The likeliest post-occupation outcome in Afghanistan, therefore, is a reversion to the situation that prevailed there before 2001. Karzai will either leave or be tortured and killed, as will most of his senior collaborators. Pakistan will be the dominant influence in Taliban-controlled parts of the country, and the minorities will have to fend for themselves.

If this is the final outcome, what have the foreigners been doing in the country for the past 12 years? Several thousand of their soldiers have been killed, hundreds of billions of dollars have been spent, and things will be about the same after they leave as they were before they arrived—apart from the al-Qaeda terrorist training camps, which were dealt with before the end of 2001.

For the NATO alliance, which has been searching for a new role ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Afghan operation at least helped to justify its enormous budget. For the US, it never made sense from any point of view. And for Afghanistan, it was merely the continuation of a disaster now more than thirty years old.

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# Opinion Defence & Diplomacy

## Backhanded jab at Chávez was undiplomatic

Venezuela is short on goods and professional expertise that Canada could provide.



**SCOTT TAYLOR**

*Inside Defence*

When Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez succumbed to cancer last Tuesday, Prime Minister Stephen Harper offered an official statement of condolence to the people of Venezuela.

He also said he was looking forward to “working with [Chávez’s] successor and other leaders in the region to build a hemisphere that is more prosperous, secure, and democratic.”

Unfortunately for future Canada-Venezuela relations, Harper did not have a good sense to stop at that. Instead, he went on to deliver a backhanded admonishment of the fallen Venezuelan leader.

“At this key juncture, I hope the people of Venezuela can now build for themselves a better, brighter future based on the principles of freedom, democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights,” read Harper’s official statement.

In other words: *I’m sorry you Venezuelans feel sad, but you will soon realize you are better off without him.*

Obviously, our prime minister needs to brush up on his grievance counseling skills and diplomatic etiquette. Venezuelan officials immediately rebuked Harper for his callous comments.

While it is true that the charismatic Chávez was a divisive figure in Venezuela and one who deliberately invoked the enmity of the United States with his socialist reforms, the massive crowds of mourners in Caracas are evidence that he was also a wildly popular leader.

Within hours of his death, the sheer volume of crowds gathering to pay their respects led interim president Nicolás Maduro to proclaim that Chávez’s body would lie in state for eight days before being placed on permanent display at the Museum of the Revolution.

While detractors decry the elaborate funeral proceedings as simply a grotesque extension of the megalomaniacal lifestyle of the flamboyant Chávez, the fact is that his followers genuinely loved him.

Keeping in line with the US administration, Harper denounced Chávez for his socialist policies and privately confided to reporters that he considered the Venezuelan to be his “political polar opposite.” There is, of course, some merit to that observation.

To wit: as a young man, Chávez was a promising baseball player with the potential of a career in the major leagues until he was sidelined by an injury. Harper, on the other hand, has been a dedicated fan of Canada’s national pastime and has just authored a history of professional hockey.

After joining the Venezuelan military, Chávez quickly rose through the ranks to



Nicolás Maduro, the interim Venezuelan president, speaks after a meeting with Brazilian Foreign Minister Antonio Patriota in 2011.

become a lieutenant colonel in the elite airborne regiment. Harper has no military experience whatsoever, but he was keen to embrace the dangerous combat mission in Kandahar after he was first elected in 2006 with the bold words, “Canada doesn’t cut and run.”

In 1992 Chávez boldly attempted to seize power with a failed military coup. Harper became leader of the new Conservative Party through duplicitous subterfuge when Peter MacKay reneged on his promise not to merge this Progressive Conservative Party with Harper’s Reform Party.

When Chávez did try his luck at the polls, he was first-time lucky and elected as president in 1998. Following his party’s overwhelming victory in the constitutional assembly in 1999, Chávez also won a referendum, which included the abolishment of the Venezuelan senate.

Chávez was subsequently re-elected to no less than three consecutive, six-year presidential terms with an enviable percentage of the popular vote (56, 63, and 55 per cent, respectively).

For his part, Harper first led the new Conservative Party to defeat against Paul Martin’s Liberals in 2004, won minorities in 2006 and 2008, before finally cementing a majority win in 2011 with just 39 per cent of the popular vote.

Despite Harper’s years of professed desire to reform the Senate dating back to his days as a Reform Party member of Parliament, as prime minister he has instead continued to use the upper chamber as a patronage plum for the party faithful.

No one will deny the fact that during his tenure Chávez used the power of his office to curb the basic tenets of democracy. However, on this score, even the most ardent Harper supporters would have difficulty distancing their master from allegations of employing the same philosophy.

So, even if the pot wants to call the proverbial kettle black, common sense says you don’t do it at the kettle’s state funeral. Oil-rich Venezuela is short on all sorts of goods and professional expertise that Canada could provide. Jeopardizing potentially lucrative future trade deals to stick in one last jab at a dead opponent is not just dumb, it’s petty.

Steven Harper—Canada’s highest profile hockey fan—has written a book on the sport he loves, but when it comes to garnering the love of his people, Hugo Chávez can still offer a few pointers from beyond the grave.

*Scott Taylor is editor and publisher of Esprit de Corps magazine.*

## Canada needs an atrocities prevention board

It would work proactively and preventively, align with other countries’ actions, and be less costly than intervention.



**ROMEO DALLAIRE & JUSTIN MOHAMMED**

On Feb. 28 in Ottawa, the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity hosted Stephen Rapp, the United States ambassador-at-large for war crimes.

Although his office focuses on ensuring that perpetrators of serious international crimes are brought to justice, he also sits on the newly created Atrocities Prevention Board, the first institutional mechanism specifically mandated with mainstreaming atrocities prevention as a “core national security interest and a core moral responsibility of the United States.” On a monthly basis, the board brings together senior American policymakers, from defence and intelligence to foreign policy and development, around a single table to share information and discuss situations of concern.

As one might expect, these meetings include talk of the “usual suspects” like Syria or Sudan, but the board also routinely discusses countries that are not (yet) hitting the headlines. With this new institution,



United States President Barack Obama tours the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington with Sara Bloomfield, museum director, and Elie Wiesel, Nobel Peace Prize laureate and Holocaust survivor, April 23, 2012. Mr. Obama launched the US Atrocities Prevention Board that day.

the US now possesses a powerful mechanism to assess, mitigate, and—ideally—interrupt threats through non-military means long before guns are fired, bombs are dropped, or lives are lost. Canada ought to consider how we might draw from the example set by our neighbours to the south.

### Why?

There are at least three reasons why Canada would benefit from an atrocities prevention board. The first is to regularize the discussion about conflict prevention among senior decision-makers. The sharing of information across these actors is a necessary precondition for taking early measures to prevent conflict.

Furthermore, as we begin to understand that mass atrocities flow from one another, the need to keep a pulse on post-intervention developments becomes clearly linked to the prevention of future conflicts.

Libya is illustrative: Canada took a principled stand by participating in NATO’s mis-

sion to protect Libyan civilians, but after the operation ended in October 2011 our attention shifted elsewhere. Meanwhile, Libyan fighters picked up their weapons and moved to Mali, where they quickly destabilized that country and necessitated yet another intervention.

History is rife with similar examples. If and when Canada is compelled to intervene in a given crisis, an atrocities prevention board would help keep our decision-makers’ eyes trained on post-conflict developments and thereby reduce the possibility of future atrocities.

The second reason relates to our place in the Western hemisphere and the global community. The American board is no longer the only mechanism of its kind.

Argentina has already created a National Mechanism for the Prevention of Genocide. It is similar to the American mechanism but has been modified to fit Argentina’s priorities. For example, it will have a unique component focused on genocide prevention education in the private and public education system, as well as the training of civil servants.

The Auschwitz Institute for Peace and Reconciliation, an American civil-society organization that conducts training and is a close partner of the American atrocities prevention board, is actively engaging with other Latin American countries that have expressed interest in creating their own atrocities prevention mechanisms. The institute has furthermore signed a memorandum of understanding with the African Union Commission for the creation of a regional genocide pre-

vention program. All of these initiatives have unfolded within the past two years, and thus Canada must take care not to be left behind the curve on these important developments.

The third reason relates to the economic incentives for prevention. Academic experts and practitioners of conflict resolution have long understood that prevention remains the most cost-effective way to deal with state fragility and instability. Contrary to what conventional wisdom suggests, ignoring these crises is actually the most expensive alternative.

We pay for our failure to address instability every time a terrorist attack threatens us or our allies, every time one of our diplomats or aid workers is captured, and every time a refugee is forced to leave his or her homeland in search of protection at our shores.

On the other hand, military interventions are costly—in both blood and treasure. When the options of ignorance and intervention are contrasted with the creation of an atrocities prevention board, the fiscally prudent choice is clear: it is better for our decision-makers to invest in effective prevention with an hour of their time every month rather than gamble on the untold human and financial costs that come at the price of inaction.

The old adage tells us that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of remedy—it is high time that Canada heed this lesson.

*Lieutenant-General (Ret’d) Roméo Dallaire is a Liberal senator and chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity. Justin Mohammed is the co-ordinating intern of the group.*

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## Opinion Diplomacy

# Hugo Chávez: The promise and the tragedy

Venezuela will have to find a path to the future. I don't think that cause is hopeless.

JIM CRESKEY



*Ed. Note: Embassy's senior editor Jim Creskey has a personal relationship with Venezuela that dates back 45 years. Here is his take on the Chávez legacy:*

Hugo Chávez liked to think of himself as a successor to South American revolutionary leader Simón Bolívar, dubbing his own attempt to shake Venezuela free of its twentieth-century past “the Bolivarian Revolution”.

But in truth he had a lot more in common with Argentina's Juan Perón.

Both men spoke for the poor but accomplished far less than their rhetoric promised, and both became symbols of often-violent social and political division.

Chávez, like Perón, can be expected to leave an indelible mark on his nation. Chavismo may not be as much a part of Venezuela's future as the country's ubiquitous corn flour muffin, the *arropa*, or the equally ubiquitous bottle of Scotch. But like Peronism, it will leave behind a nation changed.

On the other hand, Venezuela is a very different place from Argentina.

My first taste of Venezuela came in 1968 when I had a job in Caracas working on a traveling exhibition for the New York Museum of Modern Art, at the same time trying to free-lance to anyone who would publish me.

There was a little outdoor café attached to the Museo de Bellas Artes in the city's centre. I would go there when the café opened in the morning to have a cup of good Venezuelan coffee. And nearly every day as I drank my coffee at a tree shaded table I could see a man across the street in a vacant lot.

He would climb out of a cardboard and tin box where he had been sleeping. Emerging from the box he would stretch, hang out his



Words from Simón Bolívar displayed in Caracas street art: “Morality and enlightenment are our first needs.”

bedding, and brush his teeth. Some mornings he would leave briefly and come back with a jug of water, wash some clothing in a bucket, and hang it out to dry on sticks.

The museum director, Miguel D'Arroyo, told me that the man had been living there for a long time and that people who worked around the museum would sometimes bring him food.

That was Caracas of 1968. A museum filled with priceless art next to a lot where a man lived in a cardboard box. Not that there weren't thousands of homeless in New York or Montreal, but in Caracas, homelessness was accepted as structural.

Another thing about Venezuela: it has had a love/hate relationship with the United States for a very long time.

Inside the museum there were 54 works of art that were on loan from MOMA. Some of the paintings actually belonged to former New York governor and US vice-president Nelson Rockefeller. And each of the Rockefeller paintings, which were about to be unveiled in a show of modern European art, had a little brass plaque announcing that they belonged to Mr. Rockefeller.

“I'm going to remove those little signs,” the director told me.

“Because someone may see the Rockefeller name and throw paint or even slash these beautiful paintings in anger.”

Rockefeller was far from an avaricious cap-

italist. In fact he thought of himself as a philanthropist dedicated to helping Venezuela's poor. But the Rockefeller name was synonymous with its family business, Standard Oil of New Jersey, later known as Exxon, which had a long, checkered record in Venezuela politics.

Caracas was at the time probably the most Americanized of South American cities. You could buy Kellogg's Corn Flakes in a corner store, something you couldn't do in Argentina or Chile.

D'Arroyo, a respected curator and art historian, was politically moderate and no anti-American, but he feared the Rockefeller name would inflame nationalists, putting the paintings at risk. The plaques came off.

In the evenings when I left the museum, I would usually walk for about 45 minutes through the city to my rented apartment, where I worked on a story about the show at the museum for the Caracas English daily newspaper, *The Daily Journal*.

Walking through the vibrant city, ringed by tall green mountains, was a source of pleasure. Sometimes I would stop and sit on a park bench and just take in the beauty. Once or twice I took a nap on a park bench. As for safety, Caracas of 45 years ago felt much safer than Manhattan or many other American cities of the time.

But that was then. This is now in Caracas. I don't think I would walk alone through the Caracas city streets today, no less relax on a park bench in the evening in the same neighbourhoods.

When I returned to Venezuela nearly 40 years later I discovered a Caracas that became infamous as the world's most violent city. It is more violent than Baghdad and claims more lives than any Mexican city in the midst of that country's drug wars.

More than 90 per cent of murders go unsolved, and the murder rate averages around 200 killings a years per 100,000. By comparison, the recent murder rate in Bogotá, Colombia is about 23 per 100,000. Canada had a murder rate of 1.73 per 100,000 with about 75 per cent of all murders solved by the police within a year, according to Statistics Canada.

To be fair to Venezuela, the extreme urban violence of Caracas doesn't reach rural Venezuela or its smaller cities to the same extent. But the nation's capital is consumed by a modern plague of killing that has only worsened under Chávista rule.

On the other hand, it wouldn't be necessary to remove the Rockefeller nameplate from a

Picasso in the national museum. The country's great oil wealth is no longer in the hands of the Rockefeller family's Standard Oil of New Jersey. It belongs to the state—although the US is still the prime market for Venezuelan crude.

The poor of Venezuela and especially Caracas are still there, living in shantytowns, the ranchos that surround the city, in scrap wood and sheet metal boxes in the hills and in squatter homes with few if any services. But they have won something that they never had before.

For the first time they have become active in politics and started to learn the power of the vote.

This was precisely the point that Prime Minister Stephen Harper failed to understand when he once accused the Venezuelan president of wanting “to turn back the clock on the democratic progress that's been made in the hemisphere.”

Things are not always as they seem.

Venezuelan democracy under Chávez might have been messy and manipulative but it brought the poor to the ballot box. For millions of poor Venezuelans a door to political power has been opened and I don't think it will be shut again. This could be the heart of the Chávez legacy.

In more concrete terms, there will be less to remember. Bold and charismatic, Chávez came forward, speaking a powerful but divisive rhetoric to champion the cause of the poor. The rhetoric soared, but the substance too often disappointed.

He brought Venezuelans skilled Cuban doctors, many in rural areas that sorely lacked quality health care. It may have been his most significant practical achievement. But his systematic mismanagement of the Venezuela state oil company, whose product paid for the doctors, jeopardized the entire social welfare program.

He gave the people subsidized supermarkets but they often ran out of food. He maintained the subsidy on gas, the cheapest gasoline at the pump in the world, while inflation ran rampant on everything else.

But the worst thing he did was to allow his rhetoric to make poor Venezuelans angry, angrier than they had ever been toward the rich and the middle classes.

Chávez's rhetoric bordered on class warfare. He also encouraged Venezuelans to fear and detest Americans more than they ever had before. For every step Chávez took to help Venezuelans out of poverty he risked leading them back into a climate of fear and loathing.

At the same time he allowed a mountain of patronage to rise up under his one-man caudillo rule. Corruption was starting to rule the day and fattening the Chávista functionaries even as the country was losing its grasp on prudent management of its oil wealth, its infrastructure, and its public safety.

Now that he is gone, Venezuela will have to find a path to the future. I don't think that cause is hopeless. Venezuelans are a hard-working, passionate people, whose pride and capacity for self-sacrifice is as evident in the slums as it is in the middle class barrios.

If successors emerge who can continue a commitment to the poor but reach out to the country's middle class—many of them having fled or living less than public lives—the nation still has a chance to grow with the rest of Latin America.

The country is beautiful and rich in resources far beyond its crude oil and gas. The day-to-day violence will have to be defeated and the endemic corruption will have to be overcome. South America rises and, in time, I think Venezuela will rise too. Once it finds a way to hold on to some of the soaring Chávez's promise and jettison his tragic failures.

If Chávez leaves behind one lasting gift to his people it is that his Chávista successors and (especially) the opposition can no longer neglect the inclusion of the poor in the political process—and that in it itself is an exceptional political achievement.

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# Canada can no longer afford to ignore Mexico

Before long it will have a bigger economy than Canada and a younger and increasingly educated workforce to go with it.

DAVID CRANE



Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird recently completed yet another trip by a Canadian cabinet minister to Mexico. But getting Canadians to think of Mexico as an emerging economic powerhouse rather than a dangerous land of drug lords or a sunny destination for snowbirds, is still a big challenge.

The reality, though, is that Canada can no longer afford to ignore Mexico. Before long it will have a bigger economy than Canada and a younger and increasingly educated workforce to go with it. Canada is destined to become the smallest of the three economies in NAFTA, with the oldest population.

Projections by the consultancy PWC show that, in market exchange rates, Canada ranked 11<sup>th</sup> in the world in 2011 with a GDP of \$1.7 trillion US, and Mexico 14<sup>th</sup> with a \$1.2 trillion US GDP. But, it projected, by 2030 Mexico will climb to 10<sup>th</sup> spot in global rankings, with a \$2.8 trillion US economy, compared to Canada, with a \$2.4 trillion US economy, in 13<sup>th</sup> spot. And by 2050, Mexico would have climbed to 7<sup>th</sup> spot, with a \$6.7 trillion US economy, while Canada would be in 15<sup>th</sup> spot, with a \$3.5 trillion US economy.

Moreover, since 1994, when NAFTA came into effect, Mexico's share of United States imports has grown from about seven per cent to almost 15 per cent last year, while Canada's share has fallen from about 16 per cent to 10 per cent.

## Opportunity and challenge

Yet Mexico's success is also Canada's opportunity. With a growing middle class, and an urgent need to address the huge infrastruc-

ture needs of a growing and more affluent population, Mexico will have to make big investments in clean water and sanitation, electric power, roads and highways, railways, seaports and airports, and housing.

And some Canadian companies see opportunities. Scotiabank is a major banking presence. TransCanada Corp. has built a pipeline. Four Seasons Hotels has a major hotel in downtown Mexico City.

Rising wages in China, Mexican productivity gains, and growing transport costs due to higher oil prices are allowing Mexico to challenge China's earlier cost advantages. The BlackBerry is manufactured in Mexico.

At the same time, there's no doubt that Mexico is becoming a bigger competitor to Canada for North American investment, which is another reason why Canada has to improve its own competitiveness.

The auto industry is a prime example of Mexico's advance. It now produces more vehicles than Canada and outsells Canada in auto parts to the US.

Mexico has attracted big investment from Volkswagen, Nissan, Audi, Mazda, and Daimler, companies that Canada has failed to attract—as well as from the Detroit Three and Honda and Toyota. Canadian auto parts companies, such as Magna International, Linamar Corp., and Martinrea International, have invested hundreds of millions of dollars in Mexico and employ thousands of workers to link up with Mexico's assembly industry.

While autos are Mexico's biggest export to Canada, our top to Mexico is canola. In 2011 Canada had a \$19.1 billion trade deficit with Mexico, with exports of \$5.5 billion and imports of \$24.6 billion.

Mexico is also targeting another industry that Canada values—the aerospace industry, where it has big ambitions. Bombardier Aerospace has a major facility there, with more than 1,800 employees. A leading Canadian aerospace supplier, Heroux-Devtek, has followed Bombardier to Mexico.



**Not so fast, guys.** Then-Ontario premier Dalton McGuinty and Prime Minister Stephen Harper at a Toyota manufacturing plant in Cambridge, Ont., in January. Mexico now produces more vehicles than Canada.

In addition, Bombardier Transportation manufactures diesel locomotives and rail cars in Mexico, shipping locomotives to the US.

## Thirst for growth

Yet Mexico has many problems, which could be Canadian opportunities. For example, Mexico faces severe water problems, which will become even worse with climate change.

A recent OECD report, Making Water Reform Happen in Mexico, notes that since 1950, the country has seen water availability go down by 75 per cent due to population growth. The uneven distribution of water around the country is also a problem. Since food production, energy, mining, and industry all require water, this is a major challenge. Climate change will make matters worse.

Over the next 20 years, the OECD report says, Mexico will need to provide an additional 36 million people with clean drinking water and 40 million with water sanitation services.

This is an opportunity for Canada since we have a growing water industry. A 2008 survey of 64 water companies found that 12 of them were exporting to Mexico. More could.

Similarly, as the new Mexican government opens up access to oil and gas development, Canadian companies, including service companies as well as oil and gas producers, will have new opportunities. Some are already there. An example is the geophysical aerial survey that NXT Energy Solutions conducted for Pemex, the state oil company. Earlier, in 2007, Nexen Inc. signed an agreement with Pemex to co-operate in research, training, and oil and gas exploration and development, including offshore deep-water drilling.

For the longest time, Mexico was far off Canada's radar. Mexico until recently was

a largely closed society while Canada was focused on the North Atlantic triangle with the US and Britain.

Circumstances have changed with globalization and the opening of Mexico. "What surprises is that Canada and Mexico have accomplished so little together," Canadian Chamber of Commerce president Perrin Beatty and Andrés Rozental, former deputy foreign minister of Mexico, wrote in a recent report, Forging a New Strategic Partnership between Canada and Mexico.

Indeed, they said, Canada and Mexico can celebrate few significant achievements. "Relations have been cordial and harmonious, but they cannot be said to have been productive. The potential for more has always been there, but until recently that potential never seemed capable of being translated into concrete results."

Canada cannot afford to downplay Mexico's role any longer, as a growing competitor for North American investment and as a growing opportunity.

We will continue to see transfers of jobs, such as the decision by the maker of Ski-Doo to eliminate 425 jobs here and increase production to Mexico.

So we have to develop a strategy to target the opportunities in a growing Mexico while improving the competitiveness of our auto and other industries. For the past decade we have been captivated by China's rise. Now we are witnessing Mexico's rise. They both represent the new global economy and we have to build a new Canada in response.

*David Crane is a Toronto-based writer on economic, political, and environmental issues. He can be reached at crane@interlog.com. editor@embassynews.ca*



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## Opinion Disarmament

# Oslo, Ottawa, and the need for a nuke-free world

The Canadian government should move past its step-by-step approach by leading the call for a global legal ban on nuclear weapons.



**CESAR JARAMILLO**

**T**he endgame to nuclear disarmament is remarkably straightforward: a global legal ban on the development, possession, testing, and use of nuclear weapons by any actor. Call it a multilateral treaty or a Nuclear Weapons Convention—there is no clearer path to rid the world of the most destructive weapons ever made.

Regrettably, more than four decades after the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, or NPT, came into force, nuclear-weapons states still call a ban ‘premature.’

But demands for a ban are mounting. Calls come from a growing number of scientists, legal scholars, mayors, and parliamentarians, as well as active and retired diplomats and statesmen—from both nuclear and non-nuclear weapons states.

From March 1 to 5, Oslo was the epicenter of the latest international push for a world free of nuclear weapons. Back-to-back

conferences—the first organized by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons and the second by the Norwegian Foreign Ministry—shone the spotlight on the use of nuclear weapons and prospects for adequate emergency response.

Despite the disappointing boycott of the governmental conference by the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council—also the sole possessors of nuclear weapons among states parties to the NPT—representatives of more than 130 states, various United Nations agencies, the Red Cross, Hiroshima survivors, and about 500 civil society activists examined in detail the effects of a nuclear attack.

Grim first-hand testimonies alternated with disturbing scientific findings. The message was clear: effects of the use of nuclear weapons on the environment, the global economy, and life on the planet would be catastrophic; effective emergency relief, impossible.

Underlying the visceral reaction to the presentations was frustration with the anomalies, contradictions, and fundamental injustices underpinning the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime that delay progress to disarmament. Among them:

- the mistaken notion that the primary risk of nuclear weapons is their potential proliferation—not their existence;
- the imbalance between disarmament and non-proliferation obligations, with the



Lanterns float in Hiroshima on Aug. 6, 2011, the 66th anniversary of the US atomic bombing of the Japanese city during the Second World War.

former framed as a mere aspiration and the latter a hard obligation;

- the rationale by which nuclear-weapons states claim nuclear arsenals as vital for their national security, but express outrage when others pursue nuclear weapons;
- a discriminatory approach that imposes sanctions against some states suspected of pursuing a nuclear weapons capability, while ignoring the undisputed, illegal possession of nuclear arsenals by others.

### Canadian leadership needed

Especially problematic is the determination of several nuclear-weapons states to retain a nuclear arsenal as long as such weapons exist. This strategic, political, and logical straitjacket all but ensures that a world without nuclear weapons will never be achieved. The alternative necessarily has to be a concerted effort to negotiate a global legal ban on nuclear weapons.

Achieving such a ban would require determined leadership, and Canada is uniquely positioned to assume this role. Besides enjoying credibility as a responsible international actor, Canada is a member of NATO (a nuclear alliance), an active player in the global nuclear energy industry, a state party to the NPT, and a member of the G8 and G20.

The current Canadian government has not made nuclear disarmament a top foreign policy priority. But it should. And such a stand would have wide public support.

In 2010 a unanimous motion by the House and Senate urged the Canadian government “to engage in negotiations for a

nuclear weapons convention as proposed by the United Nations Secretary-General” and “to deploy a major worldwide Canadian diplomatic initiative in support of preventing nuclear proliferation and increasing the rate of nuclear disarmament.”

Civil society organizations, former diplomats and government officials, and more than 600 recipients of the Order of Canada are urging the Canadian government to support UN resolutions calling for formal negotiations toward a nuclear weapons convention. Polls indicate that more than 88 per cent of Canadians support a legal agreement to eliminate

nuclear weapons.

Canada’s current position—and that of most NWS—focuses on a step-by-step process. From this perspective, the international community cannot negotiate—or even plan for—a global legal ban on nuclear weapons until, for example, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty enters into force or a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty is negotiated. But if the end goal is clear, are intermediate steps necessary?

If street racing in a residential neighbourhood poses a grave danger and has already caused deaths, steps could be taken to limit the number of vehicles in each race. New drivers could be forbidden. But the obvious course of action would be to seek a ban on street racing.

The Canadian government should move past the step-by-step approach that its delegation in Oslo reiterated, and embrace the opportunity to make a significant contribution to international peace and security by leading the call for a global legal ban on nuclear weapons.

The double standards sustaining the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime will not and cannot hold indefinitely. Citizens aware of the dire consequences of nuclear weapons will pressure governments to move toward complete nuclear disarmament.

Mexico has already announced that it will host a follow-up to the Oslo conference. In an eventual process to negotiate a legal prohibition on nuclear weapons, Canada should be a key player and not merely a spectator.

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# A last push for an effective global arms trade treaty

Now is the time for active diplomacy by Canada and others.

**KENNETH EPPS  
MARK FRIED  
HILARY HOMES  
LINA HOLGUIN**

**N**ext week the world’s diplomats convene in New York to hammer out the final details on a global treaty to keep weapons and ammunition out of the hands of criminals, abusive regimes, and others who would misuse them.

It is painfully obvious why the Arms Trade Treaty is needed. The steady supply of weapons from Russia has created a horror show in Syria. In Mali, Canada is helping to pick up the pieces from the uncontrolled migration of weapons from Libya. And there is Mexico’s bloodbath of a drug war.

A comprehensive UN treaty will oblige all arms exporting nations to prevent irresponsible and illegal transfers of weapons to those who would use them for crime, acts of terror, human rights violations, and genocide.

The treaty began as a gleam in the eye of Nobel Peace laureates and civil society groups like ours more than a decade ago. Our organizations and others waged a worldwide public campaign starting in 2003 that succeeded in getting the UN to begin a treaty process three years later.

The most recent negotiations last July ended with a draft document but without agreement. This month’s meeting is expected to finish the deal.

To date Canada has worked to ensure that the treaty will not infringe on the rights of lawful gun owners, a principle that is clearly established in the draft treaty. Having won that battle, Canada can now turn to strengthening the text in other areas.

Here are priority aspects that need Canada’s attention:

- Ensure strong anti-corruption provisions to bring the treaty in line with recent government announcements that Canada will be doing more to prevent bribery in foreign trade. The arms trade is one of the most corrupt on the planet and the ATT

should help tackle this blight.

- Champion provisions to prevent the diversion of weapons from legal sources to illegitimate end users. The ATT must ensure that all states prohibit arms transfers if there is a substantial risk of diversion.

- Promote stringent provisions for regulating the shady world of arms brokers, who act as go-betweens in weapons deals.

- Ensure that ammunition and weapons components are fully covered since so many weapons are already in the wrong hands. (The current draft regulates these at a lower standard.)

- Finally, champion agreement on mandatory public reporting of weapons transfers. Only by naming and shaming can we begin to hold states to account for their actions.

The world is very close to concluding a legally-binding Arms Trade Treaty with teeth, one that could save thousands of lives and livelihoods. It’s no surprise that the ATT’s greatest champions are African and Latin American countries that have lived through the devastation wrought by the unregulated flow of weapons across borders.

The vast majority of the world’s countries are on side. Now is the time for active diplomacy by Canada and other proponents to bring this treaty to fruition.

*Kenneth Epps is senior program officer at Project Ploughshares. Mark Fried is policy coordinator at Oxfam Canada. Hilary Homes is campaigner for international justice, security, and human rights at Amnesty International Canada. Lina Holguin is policy director at Oxfam Quebec.*

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### Impact of the arms trade

- Between 794,000 and 1,115,000 people died as a direct result of armed conflicts between 1989 and 2010.

- An estimated average of at least 200,000 people die every year as an indirect result of armed conflict.

- An estimated 42 per cent of global murders are committed by individuals and criminal gangs using firearms.

- Only 35 countries publish reports on international transfers of conventional arms and only 25 provide data on actual deliveries.

- In 2010, the total value of global international conventional arms transfers worldwide, as recorded in national statistics, was approximately \$72 billion in US dollars.

—Sources: UN, TransArms, Uppsala Conflict Data Program, Geneva Declaration

# Teeter-tottering between contending perceptions of China

DAVID DYMENT

**T**his week the National People's Congress will confirm the change in Chinese leadership announced during November's National Congress of the Communist Party of China.

As we ponder this transition, we teeter-totter between the perceptions that China is either a challenge or an opportunity. It is both, and a more mature approach suggests we consider the elements of our relationship in their entirety.

While China's political modernization is not keeping pace with its economic development, and all that it entails, the darker vision of China in a war for treasure without the loss of blood is extreme.

It is too easy to see China as either a threat or an opportunity. It is a global force we must lean into, participating in its growth and contributing to its evolution.

China's emergence in the international system is driven by its rapid economic development, growing wealth, and massive population. Increasingly, the world's problems pass through Beijing.

Canadians are aware of a dizzyingly ascendant China. The tempo of our trade with China over the last eight years has grown 10 times faster than our trade with the rest of the world. China's purchase of Nexen, for more than \$15 billion, was the largest foreign acquisition in its history. This week, we learn BlackBerry is in the sights of Chinese electronics maker Lenovo.

The larger context of China's development is that in the last two decades more than 300 million Chinese have moved from a peasant existence of poverty to greater wealth and opportunity, so that recently China's population has become more urban than rural.

This is the trajectory taken earlier by the West. And it is one that requires massive amounts of building, especially for the most populous country on earth.

At the moment China is consuming 53 per cent of the world's cement, and 47 per cent of the world's iron ore and coal. It's doing this while growing rich. Today it has foreign currency reserves of more than \$3 trillion US, the largest in the world.

And if the future is about education, perhaps most remarkably of all, in the last 15 years it has moved from the 14<sup>th</sup> country



Prime Minister Stephen Harper shakes hands with outgoing Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao in the Great Hall of the People in February 2012.

to the second in the number of published scientific articles.

In a sense, China is imposing itself on us, challenging of us to respond.

## Beyond the teeter-tottering

A step in responding, will take place in Ottawa on March 22 when the Canadian International Council hosts the Canada-China Opportunities in Transition conference at the Chateau Laurier, with gavel-to-gavel coverage by CPAC.

With the goal of going beyond the teeter-tottering of our contending perceptions of China, the conference will examine our evolving relations with our second-largest trading partner. Panels will cover the potential of the two countries as strategic partners, the energy sector, security challenges, and managing our future relationship.

The gathering will look at the opportunities and challenges from a Canadian perspective, but also with significant Chinese participation. A panellist from China is on each of the four panels.

Our track-two Chinese partner in working to foster better understanding and relations, is the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs. Lu Shumin, the vice president of the institute, will lead the delegation from China to the conference. China's ambassador to Canada from 2005 to 2008, he will kick off the conference as the first keynote speaker.

This undertaking is part of a process that Paul Evans, a professor of Asian affairs at the University of British Columbia, describes as "providing a substructure to the relationship," which includes the joint Canada-China Economic Complementarities Study released by the two governments six months ago.

Perhaps the Canadian International Council in Ottawa is participating in a missionary drive, with deep roots in Canada, to change China by engaging it. With almost 40 Chinese for every Canadian, such an impulse is likely quixotic.

Yet at the end of the day, or at least at the end of March 22, perhaps the conference will have contributed to a Canadian calling of middle-power-bridge-builder, going beyond our contending perspectives.

It will participate in the project of engaging China so that it adopts as smoothly as possible the norms that Canada and others have worked so tirelessly to advance in the post-war era. The conference is part of a worldwide conversation with China, with the objectives of building understanding, overcoming challenges, and fostering opportunities.

*David Dymont is the chair of the Canada-China Opportunities in Transition conference being organized by the National Capital Branch of the Canadian International Council. He is a senior research associate at Carleton University. To learn more about the conference, visit [canadachina.eventbrite.ca](http://canadachina.eventbrite.ca).*

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## Opinion Development

# Asian Development Bank: Time for new leadership

Canada could play a role in pushing for electoral reform.

JOHN SINCLAIR

Japan recently decided it wanted a new governor for its central bank. So it recalled Haruhiko Kuroda, the Japanese president of the Asian Development Bank, to do the job.

Fair enough, if a little rushed, asking their man to resign in just three weeks after a decade away.

But there's no rule that says Japan should automatically provide the next president of the ADB, a key regional multilateral development bank. Even the new pope is having a proper election, albeit in private with smoke signals to indicate the voting is over.

Just last summer, after a bit of hesitation, the board of the World Bank, comprising representatives of most of the world's governments, decided it would be good practice to allow for some competition for their new president.

Competitive elections have indeed become the practice in all the other regional development banks. Those same governments form the ADB Board, so will the same practice apply there?

Perhaps surprisingly, many expect no change this time around. The region is seen as more conservative. Japan does not seem keen on a change. There is no reason to break the cozy tradition.

Then again, there is no reason not to either. Japan only contributes 12.8 per cent of the capital, so it doesn't necessarily deserve the permanent privilege. Another Asian country could easily provide a strong president for Asia's own multilateral financial institution.

Even if the ADB's board has been a bit slow to modernize its share allocation to catch up with new global power realities, there are obvious Asian countries with great leadership candidates waiting in the wings.

One is China, which in recent years passed Japan to become the second-largest trading nation; another is India, closing in fast economically on Japan and full of world-class expertise in the ADB's core business of development and poverty reduction. Other Asian countries such as South Korea, Singapore, Indonesia, and Thailand are also not lacking talented leaders.

What was good enough for the World Bank and the United States might be good enough here too. There was a little reluctance at first, but after a few days of hesitation the US felt it would be just too embarrassing to refuse an open election for the World Bank presidency.

In the end there were three candidates including two non-Americans. The American was finally the winner, but only after Obama ignored his own bureaucrats and their shortlist of safe, if uninspiring, candidates to choose a renowned development practitioner.

Other shareholding countries such as Canada can now discreetly start to raise the same idea for leadership at the ADB. The Asian Bank's image will certainly be



Asian Development Bank president Haruhiko Kuroda, pictured here shaking hands with Vietnamese schoolchildren in Tu Son district, Vietnam, steps down on March 18 after being nominated to run the Bank of Japan.

enhanced if its board promotes a true election, rather than being dragged into one.

Moreover both Japan and its donor partners have recently signed up to an international agreement in Busan, South Korea, placing a special emphasis on engaging emerging economies as development partners. Many argue now is the time for these countries to share in global leadership beyond the economic sphere.

What sort of process might work? The ADB rule book formally provides for a competitive process, but other countries so far have been too polite to suggest anything but a nominal vote in a Japanese coronation.

Meanwhile Japan has already announced its candidate, Takehiko Nakao, a finance ministry official specializing in currency issues—not obviously the optimal skill set for the head of a development bank fighting for poverty reduction.

The more cynical say that in the past, regional governments feared that Japan would stop funding the Bank. But in today's world, with many countries anxious to improve their relations with Asia's new powerful economies, it is hard to believe that

Japan would be so impolite, so un-politic, as to actually walk away from a democratically-selected Asian candidate?

Of course, those same cynics will say Japan will just follow the US example and lobby very hard to ensure its candidate ultimately has enough votes, including those of fellow Western donors.

Fair enough, and Japan might fairly win. But there should be an open process for all in Asia to see, creating an irreversible principle of open competition.

Maybe in this case, donor country support may not be so solid, especially if the voting process is formally secret. After all those same Western donors, Canada included, would not wish to offend the emerging economies by favouring a possibly weaker Japanese candidate against one from the South, be they Indian, Chinese or Indonesian.

The South may be being strategically coy about yet seeking the leadership, but once engaged they will for sure lobby hard and deliver. Japan itself, preoccupied as it is with its own economic recovery, might even welcome passing this particular baton to a neighbour.

What is Canada's possible role? We lead an often-influential board constituency, shared with the Nordics. We could choose G8 clubiness or G20 global engagement. We could see electoral reform as part of building a re-energized institution for the new Asia, working with the nations we see as future trading and investment partners.

Or we could remain silent, picking up the Asian habit of avoiding confrontation.

The next two to three weeks will be crucial. Critically, somebody, probably the Americans, will need to quietly and persuasively present the idea to Japan.

The ADB board will have to set a new tone and formalize transparent rules for a competitive election. Developing Asia, if still hesitant, may even need to be prodded into participation. However, a do-nothing approach is not optimal.

*John Sinclair is a development practitioner with a global perspective, recently back from two years in Asia. He worked for several years at both the Canadian International Development Agency and the World Bank. He is a distinguished associate of the North-South Institute and a member of the McLeod Group.*  
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# Canada should lead on cracking down on conflict minerals: MP, analysts

NDP MP Dewar is reviving his 2010 private member's bill to be tabled at the end of March.

Ally Foster

Canada has the capability to be a world leader in the fight against the trade in conflict minerals, say several human rights observers who point to Canada's involvement in past efforts to halt the trade of conflict diamonds, as well as Canada's role as a major mining-industry player.

But NDP foreign affairs critic Paul Dewar, who will be tabling a bill dealing with the trade of conflict minerals in the House of Commons at the end of March, said Canada is lagging behind other countries.

Meanwhile, Partnership Africa Canada—referred to by one expert as the top Canadian organization on the issue—has recently seen its Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade funding end, as it continues to work in the Great Lakes region of Africa to establish a certification process for gold, tin, tantalum (an element of coltan), and tungsten.

Many everyday electronics such as smartphones, laptops, digital cameras, and gaming consoles rely on these minerals, which, according to Partnership Africa Canada, are plundered from the Democratic Republic of Congo by neighbouring countries and armed militias. The illicit resource grab has contributed to more than five million deaths, the displacement of millions of people, and human rights atrocities such as rape being used as a weapon of war, and child soldiers.

The central African country has been plagued by conflict for many years, but the situation worsened as a byproduct of the 1994 genocide in neighbouring Rwanda. Fighting has continued between rebels groups and government forces, even after the signing of a peace deal in 2003.

Kasongo Kalalo Kas, who was born in the eastern Congolese town of Kisangani, and who now researches and does non-profit work on Congolese conflict minerals, told *Embassy* in an email: "The war [is] still going on in the eastern Congo, where rebels and armed groups backed by Rwanda and Uganda are killing people and raping women. In such conditions, illicit trade of minerals from the conflict areas is going well."

Mr. Kasongo, who now lives in the capital, Kinshasa, said armed rebel groups use children to work in mines. They demand fees be paid to them before selling or shipping minerals. The revenue from this trade helps them buy guns and ammunition.

The war "has been entirely fuelled by the very rich minerals that lie in the eastern part of the Congo," said Alan Martin, research director for PAC.

The product, dug out of the illicit mines, is then sold to international technology giants, and fitted into electronics around the world.

With the support of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, PAC has been working to establish a certification mechanism, implemented by participating governments.

The program requires that the appropriate government certify that any of the four minerals being shipped out of the country was mined legally, said Mr. Martin.



'Canada has to up its game,' says NDP MP Paul Dewar.

He added that it isn't off the ground yet, but is expected to take flight by the end of this year.

## Carrying on, without Canada

Mr. Martin said PAC had been supported by DFAIT, but that funding ended earlier this year. "Unfortunately that funding has come to a close, so we now continue to do that work with other funders."

Ottawa gave \$1.7 million over two years to Partnership Africa Canada to help it put in place the new certification system, according to an October iPolitics article.

A Foreign Affairs official told a parliamentary committee in October 2011 that Canada has funnelled \$3 million into stopping conflict minerals in the region, the article states.

Rwanda has already printed certificates, and is waiting to use them, said Mr. Martin.

The certificate program is not easy to establish, and requires professional infrastructure, said Mr. Martin, including security measures on the certificates themselves as well as an inter-country database used to keep track of legal and illicit mining operations.

While DFAIT has ended PAC funding, there is a revival of discussion on the issue amongst parliamentarians.

Mr. Dewar is reincarnating his past private member's bill. He is mining support from Canadian consumers and politicians alike, and will table the bill at the end of March.

Bill C-571, known as the Trade in Conflict Minerals Act, was initially tabled in 2010, but died when Parliament was dissolved, without having reached second reading.

The bill required Canadian companies to exercise "due diligence" when purchasing minerals from the Great Lakes region, and also mandated an assessment of Canadian extractive companies operating in the region to ensure they were practising corporate social responsibility.

The new version will see some changes, said Mr. Dewar.

"The bill will get Canada to conform to

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## News Defence

# Navy strategy paper still missing in action: Analysts

Continued from Page 1

As the Harper government tries to get its multi-billion-dollar National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy off the ground and into the seas, some are wondering why the government still hasn't released the navy's long-term outlook strategy years after it was crafted.

The document, named Horizon 2050, was finished several years ago, but it has since found a resting place on a desk in the Prime Minister's Office, said Dan Middlemiss, a senior fellow at the Centre for Foreign Policy Studies at Dalhousie University.

There are several references to the document within the Canadian Forces website, including in an August 2011 military publication that describes it as a "strategic concept that outlines the way ahead for the Navy."

When asked about the existence and status of Horizon 2050, the Canadian Navy said it does not comment on "draft internal documents." A Canadian Armed Forces spokesperson wrote that the "focus remains on the implementation of the Canada First Defence Strategy."

Meanwhile, the PMO did not respond directly to questions about the presence of the document, but Julie Vaux, Press Secretary for the office, said that the navy is included in the CFDS, which is being implemented through the national shipbuilding program.

Mr. Middlemiss said it was his understanding that the federal government liked the strategy so much, it was integrating it into a wider defence strategy, causing the hold up.

"The navy has lost its chance—not due to any fault of its own—to explain its needs," said Mr. Middlemiss.

"Here we are launching the National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy without any clarification."

Ken Hansen, a research fellow at Dalhousie University who specializes in maritime security, also mentioned the vision document, and said as far as he knows, it is still being kept hush-hush in the PMO. He suggested that the government might find it out of step with its official defence policy.

Some thought the shrouding was deliberate. Rob Huebert, associate director of the Centre for Military and Strategic Studies at the University of Calgary, said the lack of a clear and public vision for the navy is mostly due to the Canadian government's priority of speaking about defence with a singular voice.

"The big problem that we face is, that given the increasing sensitivity that successive governments have had about putting down on paper what their policies represent, the navy has really been reduced officially, of just saying 'yes, we're following what's included in the Canada First program,' he said.

## Debating specifics

The government must make several decisions for its navy, such as what kind of fighting capabilities it wants for its combat vessels, whether Canada needs a significant naval presence in the Arctic, and whether Canada's navy will aim to project itself around the world or stay close to home.

As a result, the lack of a public navy outlook document has left experts to examine



The HMCS Regina docked in Mumbai, India, on Jan. 21 as part of a counter-terrorism operation in the Arabian Sea.

the NSPS, and to a lesser extent the Canada First Defence Strategy, for clues as to what the government considers to be its strategy.

For example, as the government rolled out its definition contract with Irving Shipbuilding Inc. on March 7 to procure the estimated six to eight Arctic/Offshore Patrol Ships, Associate Minister of National Defence Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay said the ships would patrol Canada's coastlines and protect its sovereignty.

Mr. Hansen argued the government shouldn't build all of the Arctic patrol ships at once. He said they should start with one or two ships, and test them out before building the rest.

The government's heavy investment in combat capability is misplaced, he added, and there has to be a boost in the navy's logistics capability, in case Canada ever finds itself

a long way from home, such as in the Pacific.

But another expert thought that creating a detailed strategy for the navy wasn't as important as the larger issue of trying to realistically reconcile strategy, readiness, and an appropriate budget.

Christian Leuprecht, associate professor of political science at the Royal Military College of Canada and Queen's University, argued the current international security environment is extremely hard to predict.

Mr. Leuprecht said that Canada can't prepare for unknown threats, but that it should continue to ensure that it has "a seat at the table with our allies, and we can bring enough sway and enough equipment to the table that we can actually have some influence on the decision-making process."

"We're an exporting and trading nation, so we have a key interest in international stability and open trade routes," he said.

"It's less about defining exactly where we're going to go, and in what exact capacity, than it is: 'Do we have sufficient all-around capacity, that whatever might come up, we can have something to contribute?'"

Mr. Leuprecht stressed that whatever Canada does on the world's seas in terms of military missions, it is always going to be done with partners and allies.

"So we don't need to be able to run [an] entire mission, we just need to be able to bring something to the table that's meaningful."

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# ‘Canada is well-equipped to lead on this’

Continued from Page 13

some of the standards being put in place elsewhere.”

The United States adopted the Dodd-Frank Act in 2010, which contains a section mandating that companies with products using tantalum, tin, gold, or tungsten determine if the minerals come from Congo or its neighbours. If so, they must report publicly to the Securities and Exchange Commission whether the minerals are from an illicit mine.

“Canada has to up its game,” said Mr. Dewar. “As the rest of the world is moving forward on this issue in particular, it is Canada right now that needs to at least come up to the same standards.”

One of the biggest challenges, he said, is that average Canadians are not aware of the scope of this issue. ‘Blood’ or conflict diamonds have become better known in recent years, said Mr. Dewar.

“What we need to do with conflict minerals is mirror the understanding and connection that was made with blood diamonds,”

said Mr. Dewar. “So that when people look at their BlackBerry, their iPhone, their computers, and their PlayStations, they’ll say, ‘Wait a minute. Am I contributing to conflict here?’”

While many see it as meaning well, critics have taken issue with the Dodd-Frank Act for being more complex than necessary in targeting electronics companies rather than manufacturers. They say companies need to spend billions of dollars to comply, and it amounts to over-regulation, which lowers competitiveness and hurts smaller companies with limited resources.

When the regulation was being debated in the United States in the fall of 2011, *The Globe and Mail* reported that “Multinational companies have stopped buying Congo minerals because they fear a boycott if they are accused of selling ‘blood cell phones.’”

Still other analysts have argued that the focus on illicit mining shouldn’t overshadow other causes of the Congolese conflict.

“The danger is that by making illegal mining the only story about the conflict in eastern Congo, other causes—requiring

more complex solutions—will be ignored,” wrote University of Ottawa professor Rita Abrahamsen in an October 2011 blog post on the university’s website.

## Canada’s role

In preparation for the new version of his conflict minerals bill, Mr. Dewar has launched an awareness campaign and has been holding roundtable discussions with experts and industry—including high-tech and extractive companies.

STAND Canada, a youth-led human rights advocacy group, has joined with partners in the US to raise awareness about the presence of conflict minerals in Canada, and has been lobbying members of Parliament.

Canada could be one of the best candidates to lead on fighting conflict minerals, said Ian Smillie, who was a founder of and participant in the Kimberley Process. It’s a 54-participant body, representing 80 countries, meant to ensure that governments certify the trade of rough diamonds and allow only legal and conflict-free diamonds

to enter the legitimate diamond industry.

Canada played a very constructive role in the Kimberley Process “and learned a lot in this area,” said Mr. Smillie, who is now chair of the board for the Diamond Development Initiative.

“We’re definitely in a place to be a leader,” he said. “You need a sophisticated, consistent, and flexible approach. And I think Canada is well-equipped to lead on this, simply because we have such a great interest in extractives, and people pay attention to us.”

Mr. Smillie said the Dodd-Frank approach is different from the Kimberley Process because it puts the onus and responsibility of identifying and limiting conflict minerals on the companies, instead of governments.

A similar method could work in Canada, he said.

Mr. Smillie said Partnership Africa Canada is likely the top Canadian group working on this file.

DFAIT did not respond by deadline to questions regarding the group’s funding loss or Canada’s role in the fight against conflict minerals.

## Q&A Immigration

# Kenney ‘bluffing’ on refugee health changes: Doctors group leader

Continued from Page 4

complex grid, or getting phone approval between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Otherwise you can’t phone in at all.

“And once that’s secured, the doctor can sometimes figure out whether the patient will be covered for laboratory investigations, etc.

“One of the problems is if they’re from a so-called safe country or a [designated country of origin], they virtually get no coverage, except if it’s a threat to public health or public safety.

“One of the conditions that may be a threat to public health is with tuberculosis. “But of course a doctor cannot determine if someone has tuberculosis until they’ve done the full investigations. And if it turns out not to be TB then in retrospect the person will not be covered. The laboratory doing the tests will not be covered, the x-ray facility doing the x-ray will not be covered. But you don’t know until you actually determine if they have TB or not.

“So there are people who are not going to be investigated for suspected TB because there’s no guarantee that the federal government will cover them. They will only cover them if they turn out to have TB.”

## What impact has this type of confusion had on doctors and patients?

“Our group did a survey last fall of 30 walk-in clinics in Toronto, where a lot of people go because they don’t have family doctors. Only five were accepting people on IFH.

“The other 25 would not consider seeing people, even if they did have IFH coverage, because there’s no confidence in the administration of the system. It’s been unbelievably mismanaged. To me it’s like ministerial mismanagement.”

“They have this very complicated grid that is impossible for most doctors to fig-

ure out. Mistakes have been made by Blue Cross. And people are not getting paid, the x-ray facility is not being compensated for taking x-rays, the labs for doing lab tests.

“And the word is out. It gets out very quickly.”

## Can you tell me about what you’ve seen from patients?

“There’s a case my colleague saw, a seven-year-old kid who was seen in the emergency department to rule out malaria because he had a high fever and he came from a sub-Saharan country, got a bill for \$700, and did not go back for follow-up because the person couldn’t afford it.”

## What does it all mean when you look at the person’s health?

“People are not getting treated for treatable conditions. They’re getting no preventive care. And people who are legally within our borders, following the rules, doing what they’re supposed to be doing, are not getting any health-care coverage or getting health care.”

**Mr. Kenney told reporters outside the House of Commons that “virtually all of the changes affect those folks who are basically overstaying in Canada. They’ve been deemed not to be refugees. So the people who say that these are refugee health cuts are ideologues who are spinning this.”**

“[It’s] febrile, frothy bluster. He’s bluffing. And he has bluffed from the very beginning. I think he’s been caught out, which is why it seems that what we’re saying, which is the truth, is getting under his skin.

“People from so-called designated countries of origin, or safe countries, or non-refugee producing countries according to the government, that are called DCOs officially,



The Hill Times Photo: Jake Wright

Dr. Philip Berger, chief of family medicine with St. Michael’s Hospital in Toronto, pictured at a Parliament Hill press conference in June 2012.

receive virtually no health coverage unless it’s a threat to public safety, or public health.

“And those are people who have not had their hearing yet. They are here legally. They are not failed refugee claimants.

“Further, there are refugees who have been unsuccessful in their determination but who cannot be sent back, because there’s a moratorium in sending back people from certain countries, like Afghanistan. That’s some of the co-litigants in this case. They are legally here, they cannot leave, the government will not send them back. They’re going to be left virtu-

ally with no coverage.

“These are not people who should be returning, as Kenney says.

“And even those who do have IFH coverage do not have coverage equivalent to people on provincial health care plans.

“So, for example, we had a patient from St. Michael’s who was discharged from hospital with congestive heart failure, who normally would have been sent home with robust home care to prevent re-admission—ineligible for home care. There are patients who have malignancies—ineligible for chemotherapy. These are people who have IFH coverage supposedly equivalent to what’s provided in provincial health care plans.”

## How do you feel?

“What Kenney has done is made doctors de facto agents of the state in compelling them to provide medical treatment based on a person’s country of origin and their immigration/

refugee status, not on their medical needs.

“And that’s one reason that there’s been such a sparking of resistance by physicians and medical students and residents in training right across Canada. Because they understand what it means to have to confront a patient and being forced by the government to make medical decisions based on a legal status or based on where they’re born.

“It’s anathematic to our ethical duties as doctors.”

kshane@embassynews.ca  
@kristenshane1

## News Diplomacy

## Canada's Kenya dilemma

Continued from Page 1

On the day the electoral commission announced Mr. Kenyatta's win, Canada's high commissioner to Kenya, David Angell, released a statement that congratulated Kenyans on "exercising their democratic right and on conducting peacefully the first elections under a new constitution."

But while it said "Canada will continue to partner with the Kenyan people to work toward a peaceful, stable and prosperous future for all," it did not congratulate Mr. Kenyatta—or even mention his name.

It called for any election-related disputes to be resolved through the Kenyan courts.

When asked whether Canada accepted that Mr. Kenyatta was the legitimate winner and if Canada congratulates him, Rick Roth, a spokesperson for Foreign Minister John Baird, barely deviated from the lines in the high commissioner's statement.

One addition, in response to whether Canada would change its relations with Kenya given Mr. Kenyatta's ICC charges, was his statement that: "Canada encourages Kenya to continue to respect its international obligations."

Mr. Kenyatta, in his victory speech, was reported as saying, "We recognize and accept our international obligations," but the international community should respect the "sovereignty and the democratic will of the people of Kenya."

He avoided a run-off by clearing the 50 per cent threshold by only 0.07 per cent, according to *The New York Times*. While most observers thought voting went well, the newspaper reported, the electronic tallying system broke down.

Raila Odinga, who came in second, is pledging he will challenge the results of the presidential election at the Supreme Court.

## Proceed with caution

United States Secretary of State John Kerry released a statement March 9 that also focused on the Kenyan people and did not mention Mr. Kenyatta by name, although it congratulated "all those elected to office." When asked whether the omission was deliberate, a State Department spokesperson told reporters not to read too much into the statement.

Prior to the election, *The Toronto Star* reported that the US's top diplomat for Africa, Johnnie Carson, told Kenyans that "choices have consequences."

Western countries likely don't know how to proceed, said Stephen Brown, a University of Ottawa associate professor of political science who has studied democracy and political violence in Kenya for 15 years.

Mr. Kenyatta's first-round victory in the hotly contested campaign was unexpected, he suggested.

"To be fair to [Canada], they're in a very hard position because it's quite the dilemma. Kenya is an important ally; they don't want to declare it a pariah state. At the same time,

they don't really want to embrace Kenyatta. So they're trying to find a middle ground. But it's unclear if that kind of middle ground will have much effect," said Mr. Brown, in a March 11 phone interview from Germany where he is currently based.

Uncertainty still surrounds whether Mr. Kenyatta was the legitimate winner and whether he will actually face trial in The Hague, said Mr. Brown.

The ICC prosecutor asked March 11 to withdraw charges against Mr. Kenyatta's co-accused because several people who may have provided evidence in the case had died, others were too afraid to testify, and a key witness had recanted a crucial part of his evidence and admitted to accepting bribes.

While the prosecutor said the decision only applies to that individual case, others have suggested that without key evidence, Mr. Kenyatta's case will also be affected.

Meanwhile, if Mr. Odinga's Supreme Court challenge goes ahead, it could invalidate the election results.

"[I]t was appropriate that Canada, and

all the other Western governments, as far as I have seen, were careful in their comments about the election outcome," wrote Lucie Edwards, a former Canadian high commissioner to Kenya now working with the Balsillie School of International Affairs, in an email to *Embassy*. She also cited Mr. Kenyatta's razor-thin majority, and his opponent's court challenge.

Rosalind Raddatz, a doctoral candidate and student of Mr. Brown currently based in Kenya, stated that the Canadian comments are not controversial or surprising.

"By encouraging Kenya to continue to respect its international obligations, the foreign ministry is subtly indicating that it (the Canadian government) will no doubt do the same," she wrote in an email.

"However, by reiterating a Canadian commitment to work with the Kenyan people in the future, as opposed to the Kenyan government, the minister is leaving open the possibility of government sanctions."

Mr. Brown suggested that Western countries support a forensic check of the results, but acknowledged that it will be hard to do that because they could be portrayed as meddling in Kenyan affairs. Mr. Kenyatta's team already accused the British high commissioner in Nairobi of a "shadowy, suspicious" role in the election.

Mr. Kenyatta, and his running mate—deputy president-elect William Ruto, who is also indicted by the ICC—"to a large extent succeeded in convincing many Kenyans that the ICC is a Western plot against their community, and not just against them individually," said Mr. Brown.

The ICC's active caseload has focused on African countries, which has led to accusations of bias.

Canada gave Kenya \$47.1 million in official development assistance in 2010-11.

Canada sent six teams to three different locations to observe the Kenyan elections, wrote Mr. Roth.

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@kristenshane1



Kenyan president-elect Uhuru Kenyatta, son of Kenya's first post-colonial president, at his initial appearance hearing at the ICC in April 2011.

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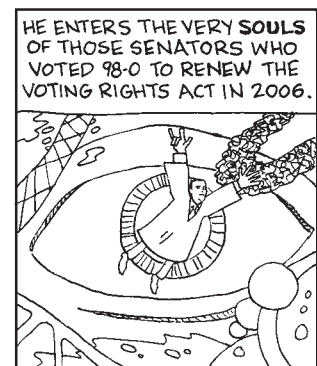
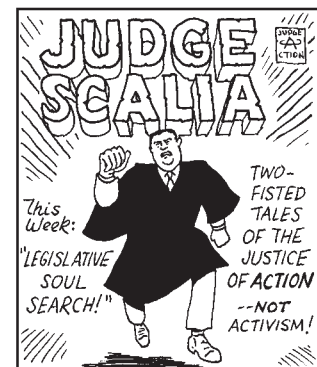
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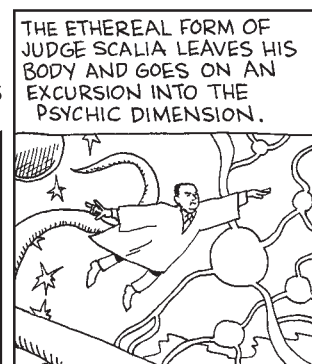
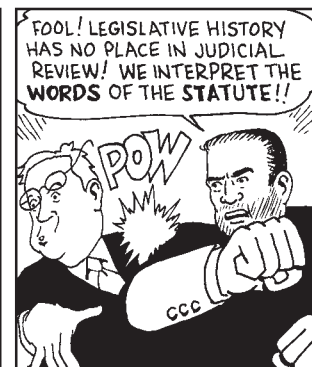
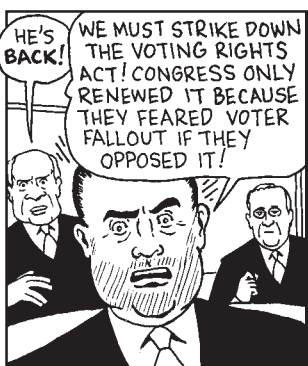
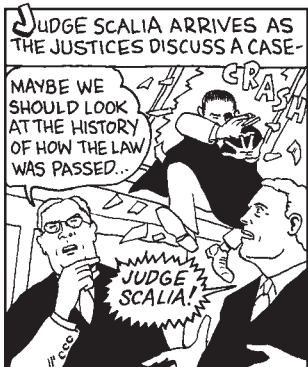


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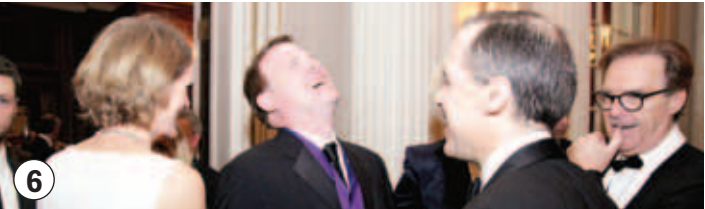
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# Party Time



Canada's political and literacy elite gathered at the Chateau Laurier on March 6 for the Politics and the Pen gala.

4. Journalist Marcello Di Cintio and his wife Moonira Rampuri. Mr. Di Cintio won the \$25,000 Shaughnessy Cohen Prize for Political Writing, awarded that evening for his book Walls: Travels Along the Barricades.
5. Former Canadian diplomat Colin Robertson, his wife and Politics and the Pen committee member Maureen Boyd, and Dutch Ambassador Wim Geerts.
6. The ceremony's co-host, Foreign Minister John Baird, emits a hearty laugh while chatting with his fellow co-host, Bank of Canada Governor Mark Carney.
7. Jeff Passmore, CEO of Passmore Group Inc.; with Julie Jacobson; and her husband, US Ambassador David Jacobson.
8. Mr. Geerts; Politics and the Pen committee member Jill Scheer; and her husband, House Speaker Andrew Scheer.
9. Claude Sauvé, general manager of the Chateau Laurier; his wife Deborah Sauvé; and Minister of State for Small Business and Tourism Maxime Bernier.
10. Embassy publisher Anne Marie Creskey.
11. The Manning Centre for Building Democracy's president and CEO Preston Manning, and Minister of State for Transport Steven Fletcher.



The Ottawa Diplomatic Association held a reception associated with its annual general meeting on Feb. 28 at the Indonesian Embassy.

12. Nadiyah Ahmad Rafie, second secretary and acting high commissioner with the high commission for Brunei; Chris Marion, diplomatic sales manager for Otto's BMW; Palestinian Representative Said Hamad; Indonesian Ambassador Dienne H. Moehario; Moroccan Ambassador Nouzha Chekrouni; and Azerbaijani Ambassador Farid Shafiyev.
13. Swiss Ambassador Ulrich Lehner, Mr. Hamad, and Haitian Ambassador Frantz Liautaud.
14. Mr. Hamad; Ghanaian High Commissioner Samuel Valis-Akyianu; Ms. Moehario; Zambian High Commissioner Bobby Samakai, the ODA's new president; Amadou Adrien Koné, ambassador of Burkina Faso; and Joseph Sokoline, minister plenipotentiary for the Tanzanian High Commission.



Swedish Ambassador Teppo Tauriainen hosted a Nordic-Baltic Ski Day at his residence on March 1. Staff and families of eight Nordic and Baltic embassies gathered for the third consecutive year to compete in a fun ski sprint relay.

15. Team Norway won the 2013 trophy. Team members included: Marie Harbo Dahle, trainee with the Norwegian Embassy; Inger Elisabeth Meyer, first secretary with the embassy; Åsmund Baklien, husband of the Norwegian ambassador; and Tobias F. Svenningsen, minister-counsellor with the Norwegian Embassy.
16. Norwegian Ambassador Mona Elisabeth Brøther; Mr. Svenningsen (obscured); Mr. Tauriainen; Mr. Baklien; and Danish Ambassador Erik Vilstrup Lorenzen cheer for their team members.
17. Silver Uustalu, husband of the Estonian Embassy secretary, participated in the relay.
18. Estonian Chargé d'Affaires Riho Kruuv, his wife Kristine, and their daughters Alessandra and Isabella. Mr. Kruuv participated in the relay.
19. Ms. Brøther and Mr. Baklien are all smiles.
20. Lithuanian Ambassador Vytautas Zalys and his wife Jurate Zaliene.

## Events &amp; Envoys

OTTAWA  
Listings

## WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13

**Ethics of Immigration and Emigration**—CIPS presents a one-day workshop on the “Ethics of Immigration and Emigration.” Guest speakers include Margaret Moore, Queens University, and Jay Drydek, Carleton University. 9 a.m.-5:45 p.m. Free. University Residential Complex, Lounge 140, University of Ottawa, 90 University Pk. cips.uottawa.ca

**Unmanned Aeroplanes in Gaza: Drones, Objects and Politics**—CIPS presents a talk with William Walters, Carleton University, on “Unmanned Aeroplanes in Gaza: Drones, Objects and Politics.” 12 p.m. Free. Room 4006, Social Sciences Bldg., University of Ottawa, 120 University Pk. cips.uottawa.ca

**Ambassadors Speakers Series**—The Ottawa Diplomatic Association and NPSIA at Carleton University present a talk on “The Year of Korea in Canada – a Path Towards a Strategic Partnership Between Canada and Korea” with Korean Ambassador Cho Hee-yong. 5:30-8 p.m. Free. Senate Board Room, 6th Floor, Robertson Hall, Carleton University, 1125 Colonel By Dr. Register at korea-ambassador.eventbrite.com.

**Book Launch: Unfree in Palestine**—Octopus Books presents a book launch of Nadia Abu-Zahra’s *Unfree in*

South Korean Ambassador Cho Hee-yong on Feb. 27 at the Korean Embassy.

Palestine. 7 p.m. Octopus Books Centretown, 251 Bank St., 2nd Floor. octopusbooks.ca

## THURSDAY, MARCH 14

**Screening: Camion**—Director, Rafäel Ouellet. Canada, 2012. In French with English subtitles. Part of the Diverciné Film Festival: World Cinema from La Francophonie, presented by the French Embassy and Canadian Heritage, in partnership with the CFI and Bytowne Cinema. In French with English subtitles. 6:55 p.m., \$7-\$10. Bytowne Cinema, 325 Rideau St. cfi-icf.ca

## FRIDAY, MARCH 15

**Jamaica Night** at Rideau Carleton Raceway, a fundraiser supporting the Jamaican Ottawa Community Association Inc. Event includes a Jamaican-inspired buffet, a race program, and more. 6 p.m., \$35 with part of the proceeds going to the Jamaica50 Ottawa Sickle Cell Legacy Project. Rideau Carleton Entertainment Centre, 4837 Albion Rd. 613-822-2211

**Screening: Rebelle (War Witch)**—Director, Kim Nguyen. Canada and DRC. 2012. In French and Lingala, no English subtitles. Part of the Diverciné Film Festival: World Cinema from La Francophonie, presented by the French Embassy and Canadian Heritage, in partnership with the CFI and Bytowne Cinema. 9:05 p.m., \$7-\$10. Bytowne Cinema, 325 Rideau St. cfi-icf.ca

## SATURDAY, MARCH 16

**Mushfiq Ensemble in Concert**—The Mushfiq Ensemble will perform the timeless poetry of Mawlana Rumi in its original language of Farsi. Presented by the Turkish Canadian Heritage Foundation. 7:30 p.m., \$15-\$20. Centrepointe Theatre Studio, 101 Centrepointe Dr. 613-862-8856 or mushfiq.ca

## SUNDAY, MARCH 17

**Ireland** celebrates St. Patrick’s Day. St. Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland. For information on any celebrations, please call the embassy at 613-233-6281.

Orchids for Beginners—The Ottawa Orchid Society presents Terry Kowalczyk from Flora Peculia. 1:30 p.m., \$5. Tom Brown Arena, 141 Bayview Rd. ottawaochidsociety.com

## TUESDAY, MARCH 19

**From Berlusconi to Monti**—The Centre for European Studies, the Italian Cultural Institute present a lecture “From Berlusconi to Monti: Anti-politics and the myth of civil society in Italy after 1989” with Giovanni Orsina, Guido Calì University in Rome. March 19, 1-2:30 p.m. Room 433, History Lounge, Paterson Hall, Carleton University, 1125 Colonel By Dr. esteri.it

## WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20

**Tunisia** celebrates its proclamation of independence. It declared independence from France in 1956. For information on any celebrations, please call the embassy at 613-237-0330.

**Taiwan and Cross-Strait Relations**—Chin Kung Liu, head of mission, Taipei Economic and Cultural Office, will discuss “Taiwan and Cross-Strait Relations.” Presented by CIPS at the University of Ottawa. 2:30 p.m. Free. Room 4004, Social Sciences Bldg, University of Ottawa, 120 University St. cips.uottawa.ca

Listings editor Alia Heward can be reached at listings@embassynews.ca, by phone at 613-232-5952 ext. 200, or by fax at 613-232-9055. Send in your event in a paragraph with all the relevant details by email, with the subject line “Embassy Listings,” by Friday at 5 p.m.

## A long road from union organizer to diplomat



SNEH DUGGAL

*Diplomatic Circles*

**M**embathisi Mdladlana still remembers the day 15 years ago when former South African president Nelson Mandela appointed him to his cabinet.

Mr. Mdladlana’s first swearing-in ceremony as South Africa’s labour minister was on July 18, 1998—Mr. Mandela’s birthday.

“It was quite an emotional moment,” the South African high commissioner to Canada told *Diplomatic Circles* on Feb. 6.

“All of us as members of Parliament, we aspire to be ministers even if we don’t say it,” Mr. Mdladlana said.

He thought of his parents that day and what they would say. After all, their “naughty boy” had become a minister, he said smiling.

The “cherry on top” was working with Mr. Mandela, the anti-apartheid leader who is commonly known among South Africans as Madiba.

“It was a lovely thing to work with that man, I was very proud of that moment,”

Mr. Mdladlana said, sitting in his spacious office inside the high commission located right across the street from Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s house.

“He taught us not to be angry,” Mr. Mdladlana said. “I was very lucky because it was his last year as president.”

After Mr. Mandela left office in 1999, the next three presidents reappointed Mr. Mdladlana as the country’s labour minister. He served as a minister until October 2010.

South African President Jacob Zuma decided to shuffle his cabinet at the time.

Mr. Mdladlana said he was informed that he would be posted to Burundi as an ambassador, so he resigned as a member of Parliament although he stayed on for a short period as a backbencher.

Being the labour minister was quite an experience for Mr. Mdladlana. He was a teacher by training, and had been a member of teachers unions including as president of the South African Democratic Teachers Union.

As a minister, he was on the other side, negotiating with the same people he used to previously work with.

“It was quite tough because they find it quite easy to say... You know what we want and we expect you to do what we’ve been saying.”

He introduced two laws, one on employment equity and the other on developing skills in the workplace.

There were also the tougher moments. “When you are a minister of labour, you get a lot of strikes, and some of the strikes were very adversarial,” he said. “It was hard, because you must actually get in there.”

He recounted his predecessor who once had to fly by helicopter to go negotiate in the streets with truck drivers who were on strike and had blocked off the roads.

Mr. Mdladlana began his career as a teacher in Cape Town in 1972. He also joined the Cape African Teachers Union.

A turning point for him was in 1976,



South African High Commissioner Membathisi Mdladlana on Feb. 6.

when students started protesting in the Soweto area against the introduction of Afrikaans, which stems from Dutch, as a teaching language in local schools.

“That was a difficult time to be a teacher,” he said.

Teachers had to take crash courses to learn the language.

“It was difficult for many of us; what’s worse is that it was forced,” he said.

He said teachers were torn between the students and the system.

It was then that some teachers left the unions they were with, because they wouldn’t meet with students, Mr. Mdladlana said.

He helped form SADTU and became its president in 1990. Those were tough years, he said, recounting stories of people he knew who were killed.

There was a day he said his house was surrounded by unmarked cars.

Someone happened to visit him at the same time, causing the cars to disperse.

“In fact I’m glad to be alive, because many of my colleagues died.”

## Taking in Canadian life

Mr. Mdladlana seems to be adjusting well to his new job as high commissioner. He’s been in Ottawa for about seven months.

“It’s more relaxed here than when I was a minister actually...and maybe I’ll gain my sanity also and be more relaxed,” he said with a laugh.

His energetic and candid personality is comparable to that of his predecessor Mohau Pheko, who was known in Ottawa for being a frank diplomat.

He said being a high commissioner in Canada reminds him of the days when Canadians helped South Africa during apartheid.

One of his priorities is to get a new high level visit between the two countries. Former South African president Thabo Mbeki visited Canada in 2003, and former Canadian governor general Michaëlle Jean visited South Africa in 2006.

Trade Minister Ed Fast led a trade mission to Nigeria and Ghana earlier this year. The government also recently signed a foreign investment treaty with Benin and finished talks on one with Tanzania. While South Africa hasn’t received such a visit, Mr. Mdladlana said he’s excited when he sees these things happening.

He said he wished Canada would also think about countries such as Botswana, Swaziland, or Zimbabwe. Many of those country’s citizens go to South Africa to find work, he added.

“We are the hub of those economies,” he said. “I don’t think we should be seeing ourselves as the big brother, hovering in the sky who gobbles everything.”

He added that if the economies surrounding South Africa were developed, it would give his country the chance to develop its own economy. This would mean more jobs for South Africans.

But Mr. Mdladlana said he is seeing a change in Canada-South Africa ties. He believes the two countries can nurture the relationship.

Mr. Mdladlana said he would like to deepen ties in the mining area, and between universities in the two countries.

The South African diplomat said he is impressed by what the provinces are doing on environmental issues and tackling climate change, and that this is one area where the governments and universities could share their knowledge with his country.

## Taking the wheel

Mr. Mdladlana had a driver as a minister and as president of SADTU. But don’t be surprised to find the high commissioner driving himself to events and even to other cities at times.

“I drive myself because...I’ve been having protectors, I’ve been having drivers, and now I’m enjoying my freedom,” he said.

“We must always remember that [drivers] are also human beings, they’ve got rights too, they need to be with their families.”

Despite having failed his driving test seven times before getting his license in 1977, Mr. Mdladlana explained that he was a very good driver and had no record of causing a single accident.

“I always say I’ve got a masters in driving because I failed seven times,” he said, his deep chuckle seeping through the room.

Mr. Mdladlana said he’s been made to feel right at home since his arrival, especially from his African colleagues. The day he arrived in Canada, there were about 20 to 30 people at the airport to greet him.

“It’s such a lovely environment,” he said. sduggal@embassynews.ca @snehduggal

# NEVER HAVE AN UNPRODUCTIVE MINUTE



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