THE WORLD WON'T WAIT

Why Canada Needs to Rethink Its International Policies

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conclusion

Imagining a More Ambitious Canada

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The contributors to this book were each assigned three tasks: first, to evaluate major global trends in their respective areas of focus; second, to describe the implications of these changes for Canada; and third, to propose strategies that would position Canada to succeed not in the world that *was*, but in the world that is in the process of *emerging*. In this chapter, we summarize common elements in their analyses and draw out nine general conclusions for the future direction of Canada's international strategy – and we then add a tenth of our own (see text box).

Ten Lessons and Prescriptions

1. Don't underestimate the scale and speed of global transformation.
2. Recognize that Canadian policy isn't adapting quickly enough.
3. Creatively reframe policy issues and break down old "silos."
4. Mobilize coalitions around Canadian goals.
5. Strengthen international rules and norms.
6. Use knowledge as a comparative advantage.
7. Focus on practical solutions to concrete problems.
8. Identify long-term strategic objectives – and stick with them.
9. Don't succumb to a "small Canada" syndrome.
10. Update liberal internationalism for a new era.

1. Don't underestimate the scale and speed of global transformation

The central premise of this book is that the world is changing so rapidly that a fundamental rethinking of Canadian international policy is required. In the introduction we identified several "global shifts," or broad transformations cutting across individual policy domains, including the rapid diffusion of power to rising states and non-state actors, the waning of US leadership, the expansion of the global middle class, the changing pattern of global energy sources and flows, mounting pressure on the natural environment, greater volatility and turbulence in global politics, and an increasingly strained system of global governance.

Many of these trends are also visible in the individual chapters of this volume, which describe profound changes under way in their respective areas. Patterns of trade and investment are undergoing dramatic change. In energy and extractive industries the global markets are more competitive than ever. New technologies, emerging powers, and non-state actors are gaining importance in the international security environment, giving rise to new conventional and unconventional threats. Global governance is not keeping pace with these changes; many of our international institutions and regimes were built for an earlier era. Questions of Internet management and cybersecurity are increasingly difficult for traditional state-based actors to manage. Old assumptions about international development, including the very distinction "developed" and "developing" states, are rapidly falling out of date. Climate change proceeds apace, human rights norms are facing intensified pressure, and there are mounting demands for more effective humanitarian action.

The upshot is clear: any consideration of Canadian foreign policy that does not begin by recognizing the scale and speed of global transformation is likely to be based on old – and increasingly false – premises.

2. Recognize that Canadian policy isn't adapting quickly enough

All the chapters argue unambiguously that Canada is failing to keep up with these global changes. This perspective is striking and consistent. Danielle Goldfarb, for example, observes that other countries are well ahead of Canada in thinking strategically about their trade and investment policies. Andrew Leach and Andrew Mandel-Campbell both point to inadequate innovation and efficiency in Canada's natural resource industries, which face intense international competition. Although his recommendations focus more on the environmental effects of these industries, Stewart Elgie also contends that Canada could be a leader, rather than a laggard, in promoting solutions to global climate change.

According to Yves Tiberghien, Canada is well positioned to bridge the growing divide between established and emerging powers, particularly in Asia, but is not yet doing so. John McArthur writes that Canada "is stuck in a straggler approach to global sustainable development." Jennifer Keesmaat argues that Canada should be doing much more to address urbanization problems at home and abroad, noting that "the world's poorest, most vulnerable, and least resilient cities are also the fastest growing."

Jonathan Paquin contends that Ottawa's recent penchant for "tough-talk diplomacy" has been regarded as largely empty rhetoric by the rest of the world, and that Canada should be play a more active and constructive role in addressing international security challenges from cybersecurity to robotic weapons. Similarly, David Petrasek notes that Canada has offered a heavy dose of moralizing, but has failed to pursue a sustained international human rights policy.

This is a long list of shortcomings. While the authors recognized that Canada has recently been active on certain issues, including child and maternal health, most suggest that Canada is becoming increasingly marginal in world affairs – and, worse, that it has been marginalizing *itself* by failing to adapt to global shifts. This

poses a problem. Canada's core interests, including its prosperity, are at stake.

Indeed, there is a sense of urgency in all the chapters. Canada cannot afford to stand still. The world in which we once engaged as a "middle power" no longer exists. Simply stating our desire to be relevant is not enough. In many areas in which we once engaged, the international policy conversation has moved on. Re-engagement will require assertive, strategic, ambitious, and sustained involvement in an increasingly crowded and complex global field.

3. Creatively reframe policy issues and break down old "silos"

Many contributors also suggested that thinking strategically about today's cross-cutting global challenges will require breaking down boundaries between foreign and domestic policy, including the traditional silos of trade, the military, diplomacy, and development. Taking this suggestion seriously could have far-reaching implications for existing academic disciplines, practitioner communities, methods of engagement, and the "scale" of policy. For example, framing an international policy conversation around the challenges faced by cities and urbanization, as Keesmaat and Petrasek both recommend, would require analysis and action across local, regional, and national scales, addressing a mix of issues, from sustainability, security, and poverty to human rights and innovation. Leach offers a different example of this kind of reframing when he argues for breaking down the conceptual and regulatory barriers separating production, manufacturing, and extraction. This would allow us to think of Canada's resource sector as something to be "manufactured" and not just extracted or consumed.

The same is true for many of our pressing global challenges, including climate change, terrorism, growing inequality, and cybersecurity. Goldfarb argues that making Canada more competitive in the rapidly changing global economy will require a whole-of-Canada approach. "Domestic policy actions," she writes, "may not draw as much public attention as signing trade deals or sending trade missions, but they are no less critical, and perhaps even more so." From this perspective, domestic policy concerns such as regulatory differences between the provinces, education and skills programs, and infrastructure development projects, need to be seen through a foreign policy lens. When Jennifer Welsh and Emily Paddon recommend involving diaspora groups in Canada in humanitarian emergency-response initiatives, they are also calling for a breaking down of divisions between what are often considered separate domestic and international issues.

These arguments suggest that more strategic approaches to Canada's international policy require not only understanding that the world has changed and that complacency in the face of that change is disadvantageous, but also that traditional definitions of policy domains serve to inhibit strategic thinking.

4. Mobilize coalitions around Canadian goals

The proliferation of actors in international affairs, including rising states and non-governmental organizations, will make it harder for individual countries to pursue policy agendas by themselves. Increasingly, global effectiveness will require the ability to assemble and mobilize broad "action coalitions" of diverse actors who share an interest in specific policy objectives.[1] Several of the contributors to this volume suggest that Canada is well equipped to perform this role, but doing so will require a conscious strategy on the part of the Government of Canada and the collaboration of other levels of government and non-state groups: in short, a pan-Canadian effort. This has been done in a more limited way in the past, including, for example, in the campaign to ban anti-personnel landmines that resulted in the Ottawa Convention of 1998, or Ottawa's more recent leadership on the issue of child and maternal health. But these instances remain the exceptions, and the range of capabilities of global actors is now far more disparate.

Over the last hundred years, Canada has played an important role in the development of the current international architecture, be it the UN, international legal bodies, or the large network of international development organizations. But many of these institutions face crises of legitimacy and effectiveness. For some issue

areas, authors argued that we need to work within this system to promote and modernize ideas and practices that are still vital. Welsh and Paddon argue that we need to re-engage with the implementation of the Responsibility to Protect, focusing in particular on civilian protection. Tiberghien maintains that Canada has a stake in the post-war liberal economic order, and that we therefore need to work to enhance the global financial architecture in a way that fits our values and supports our economic interests. This involves, he suggests, further investing in the G20 and imagining it as a place to develop an institutional agenda that "deeply and proactively engages emerging powers."

Others go further, arguing that new policy challenges may require entirely new international architecture. Raymond points out that while there are a wide range of emerging international institutions to regulate the Internet, many are decisively state-centric and don't adequately incorporate the business and civil society communities that both have significant power and that also "tend to value non-hierarchical, consensus decision-making procedures." Petrasek argues that in the field of human rights we need to move beyond the UN to the much broader objective of human rights diplomacy, which empowers the wide range of non-state actors who ultimately shape how Canada "acts" in the world. Paquin would like to see Canada invest in new forms of collaborative conflict management that would prioritize ad hoc, informal, and improvised processes, while Keesmaat sees a largely informal network of cities serving as a platform for addressing big transnational problems such as poverty, migration, crime, climate change, and pluralist tolerance. In all these areas, the authors underline the importance of building networks, coalitions, and institutions in order to advance Canada's international goals.

5. Strengthen international rules and norms

Likewise, many authors pointed out that Canada has in the past proven effective at developing norms and laws in the international system. As a moderately-sized country that is open to the world, Canada has always had a direct interest in helping to maintain the rules-based international order that is now under strain. Norms and rules are not equivalent to organizations; rather, they are the "operating system" of global politics that regulate the behaviour of states and other international actors in myriad domains. Canada benefits when this operating system supports an open international economy and a peaceful world. In this vein, Petrasek, Welsh, and Paddon all argue that Canada needs to build on its role as a norm entrepreneur in relation to human rights, for example, and Paquin maintains that Canada should be a leader in norm setting and regulating in relation to cyberespionage and the use of lethal autonomous weapons systems.

However, as new kinds of actors from ISIS to Anonymous gain prominence, and as states with different ideas about justice and sovereignty also come to the fore, we will need to devise new methods of rule building. In the realm of cybersecurity and Internet governance, for example, Raymond argues for what he calls "soft law," which "encompasses an array of quasi-legal and diplomatic instruments that stop short of formal international treaties." This is important because, he points out, the Internet functions as "a series of nested clubs, where rule-making remains decentralized and will continue to occur across levels of analysis, geographic jurisdictions, and institutional contexts."

6. Use knowledge as a comparative advantage

Another thread running through most of this volume is the importance of Canadian expertise, knowledge, and technical know-how in any forward-looking international policy strategy. For Goldfarb, Mandel-Campbell, and Leach, innovation is a key to our competitiveness. McArthur recommends establishing a chief scientist and research department within DFATD, emulating a model used in France, the UK, and the US to ensure rigorous analysis and research innovation in development policy. Tiberghien sees Canada's multicultural networks and human capital as a source of creativity for developing new forms of international institutional collaboration.

Technical expertise is similarly central to Elgie's vision of Canada as a global leader in the environmentally responsible production of natural resources.

For Keesmaat, too, sharing Canadian experiences and knowledge of urbanism with developing countries should be part of a multilayered cities agenda. Raymond also emphasizes know-how, arguing that the challenges of Internet governance are so complex and changing so rapidly that the most sensible approach for Ottawa would be to "prioritize learning and flexibility" in this area. Canada, he maintains, should bring together practitioners and researchers to understand the social and policy implications of new communications technologies, and aim to be a world leader by building Canadian-based expertise in the requirements and possible methods of governing the Internet. In short, most of our contributors regard expertise as a critical comparative advantage for Canada. Building and leveraging knowledge should be an integral part of any forward-looking international strategy.

7. Focus on practical solutions to concrete problems

While theories of world politics and foreign policy can shed light on patterns of international relations, the contributors to this volume focus relentlessly on the need for practical solutions to specific problems, recognizing that a shifting international environment is changing both the type and scope of the challenges facing Canada, and the utility of various policy tools and strategies for addressing these problems. We could take this a step further: Canada's greatest contributions to global order – our contribution to Allied efforts during the world wars, the creative and committed diplomacy of Canadians after the Second World War, and their assistance in creating the United Nations, NATO, and a system of rules to govern international trade, as well as the innovation of peace operations, Canada's contribution to the campaign against South African apartheid, our advocacy for and welcoming of refugees, our leading role in efforts to establish the International Criminal Court and to ban anti-personnel landmines, and most recently our leadership on the issue of maternal, newborn, and child health in the world – have all been driven by a spirit of public-mindedness, yet they have all been relentlessly pragmatic and problem-focused.

Yet, while this has always been a part of Canada's international policy tradition, it has not always been fully appreciated. Debates about whether Canada is a "middle" or "principal" power, for example, sometimes seem to obscure more than they reveal. Perhaps the pragmatic bent of this volume reflects a generational change in the ranks of Canadian foreign-policy thinkers, with the newer generation having less interest in paradigmatic debates. None of the authors seems interested in debating the value of "soft" versus "hard" power, for example. Rather, they appear to recognize that both types of power – indeed, *all* the instruments at Canada's disposal – should be mobilized to advance Canadian interests and to contribute to global public goods. Their emphasis on problem solving also suggests that the success of Canada's international policy should be judged on the basis of demonstrated results. We welcome this approach.

8. Identify long-term strategic objectives – and stick with them

Given the pace of global change and the fact that new governments come to power with different views and priorities, long-term international policy planning can be difficult. But many of our authors stressed the importance of moving away from short-term policy making. Too often, they lamented, foreign policy seems to be driven by election-cycle political calculations and the desire of governments to place their own stamp on foreign policy.

Many of the recommendations in this volume require long-term commitments, including the building of coalitions and networks on global topics of importance to Canada, and the cultivation of expertise within Canada on key issues. Expanding Canadian economic involvement in the rapidly growing markets of the

Asia-Pacific region demands a sustained effort to deepen commercial and diplomatic relationships. Working on the problems of cities at home and abroad is a long-term endeavour. So is boosting the productivity, innovativeness, and environmental soundness of Canada's extractive sectors. The same is true of improving human rights. As Petrasek points out, the Harper government's initiative on child and forced marriage will take decades to achieve; such projects should not simply flutter in the political winds.

Tiberghien similarly urges that Canada pivot from its "tactical short-term positioning toward a long-term-oriented institutional entrepreneurship that addresses global public good requirements." And as John McArthur notes, both global sustainable development goals and carbon policy are by definition long-term initiatives that require us to develop policies that are firmly grounded in research, and then to stick with them across changes in government.

9. Don't succumb to a "small Canada" syndrome

Ultimately, we were struck by both the ambition and the optimism of our contributors. The dominant message to emerge from these chapters is that Canada can and must pursue a more comprehensive, constructive, and ambitious international strategy: more comprehensive in involving private actors and civil society groups in the conception and implementation of policy; more constructive in working with other countries, non-government organizations, and multilateral institutions towards common goals; and more ambitious in placing Canada at the forefront of efforts to make the world safer, more prosperous, and healthier.

None of the authors believed that Canada was achieving its potential or using all of the policy levers, international and domestic, at its disposal. On the contrary, the impression one gets from reading these chapters is that Canada has neglected its international policy for too long, and that the price for doing so will continue to rise over time.

Indeed, while each of the authors emphasized different objectives, they all reject what Daniel Livermore has called a "small Canada" approach to international policy, one based on resignation that Canada's international role is destined to fade, and that consequently treats foreign affairs as a matter of secondary importance.[2] This type of thinking is counterproductive and can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Neglecting international policy would reduce Canada's influence and capacity to shape international events. More importantly, it would fail to recognize that positioning Canada for success in a rapidly changing world will demand initiatives at both the domestic and international level – and approaches that transcend the conceptual and policy boundaries of traditionally defined "foreign policy."

10. Update liberal internationalism for a new era

We would take this observation further. Speaking only for ourselves and not necessarily for the other authors of this book, we believe that Canada has experienced a period of weak international policy leadership in recent years. Although some observers have objected to the Harper government's brash style and bald statements on a number of international issues, our objection is that our leaders have paid *too little* attention to foreign affairs. Nor should Canada turn its back on a tradition of diplomacy that has served this country well liberal internationalism.[3]

This approach is a blend of realist and liberal elements of foreign policy. Among other things, it emphasizes multilateral cooperation and international rule building, not solely because doing so reflects Canada's own domestic values and success as a multicultural, bilingual country, but perhaps even more importantly because energetic multilateral diplomacy provides Canada with opportunities for international influence that it would have otherwise lacked. This approach has never prevented Ottawa from taking strong stands on important issues, from nuclear arms control to South African apartheid. Nor has it precluded participation in close military alliances, including NATO and the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD). In short, it was not necessary to choose between hard and soft power because

they reinforced each other, just as effective multilateral diplomacy made it easier to pursue closer bilateral relationships with key partners, and vice versa. As Louis St Laurent once said, by contributing to multilateral efforts to improve the world, Canadians could be "useful to ourselves through being useful to others."[4]

This is not to suggest that liberal internationalism has always worked as intended, or that Canadian foreign policy has always been successful. There were moments of both great achievement and outright failure. Nevertheless, liberal internationalism provided a largely non-partisan basis for Canada's global policy for more than six decades, because it was believed to serve our interests and values. As we noted in the introduction, one of the most effective practitioners of liberal internationalism in recent years was Brian Mulroney.

After coming into office in 2006, the Harper government dismissed and disparaged many elements of liberal internationalism, portraying it as more Liberal than liberal, rather than as an approach that has historically made sense to all parties because it made sense for Canada as a whole. Instead of maintaining the virtuous circle of effective bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, Canada began marginalizing itself. The result – a very unfortunate one, in our view – was a shift towards a "small Canada" approach to foreign affairs.

Given the changes now under way in the world, Canada cannot afford to continue treating its international policy as an afterthought, or as an instrument of domestic electoral politics. We believe that an updated version of liberal internationalism would provide a sound basis for an ambitious policy that responds to these new conditions. Energetic and creative multilateralism and coalition building; promoting an open international economy, peace and stability, and a rules-based international order; investing in the tools of international policy, including robust diplomatic and military capabilities and a well-funded development program; and cultivating and maintaining a broad array of relationships with international actors, including established and emerging states and non-governmental organizations – these are all elements of the liberal internationalist approach, and they are more important now than ever.

To put it simply, Canada needs an updated version of liberal internationalism, based on clear-eyed analysis of how the world is changing and how these changes will affect Canada, and in recognition of the fact that the security, prosperity, and well-being of the current and future generations of Canadians will depend, in part, on how effectively we respond to these challenges. We hope that this book provides some useful ideas on how such a policy could be conceived and pursued.