

bout de papier

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CANADA'S MAGAZINE OF DIPLOMACY AND FOREIGN SERVICE
LE MAGAZINE CANADIEN DE LA DIPLOMATIE ET DU SERVICE EXTÉRIEUR

SEPTEMBER / SEPTEMBRE 2022

JOE CLARK WANTS SOUP

Ken Neufeld

**QUEL SERVICE EXTÉRIEUR POUR ASSURER
LE RENOUVELLEMENT DE NOTRE POLITIQUE
ÉTRANGÈRE?** Jean-Yves Dionne

ESCAPING INERTIA
Launching a new Canadian
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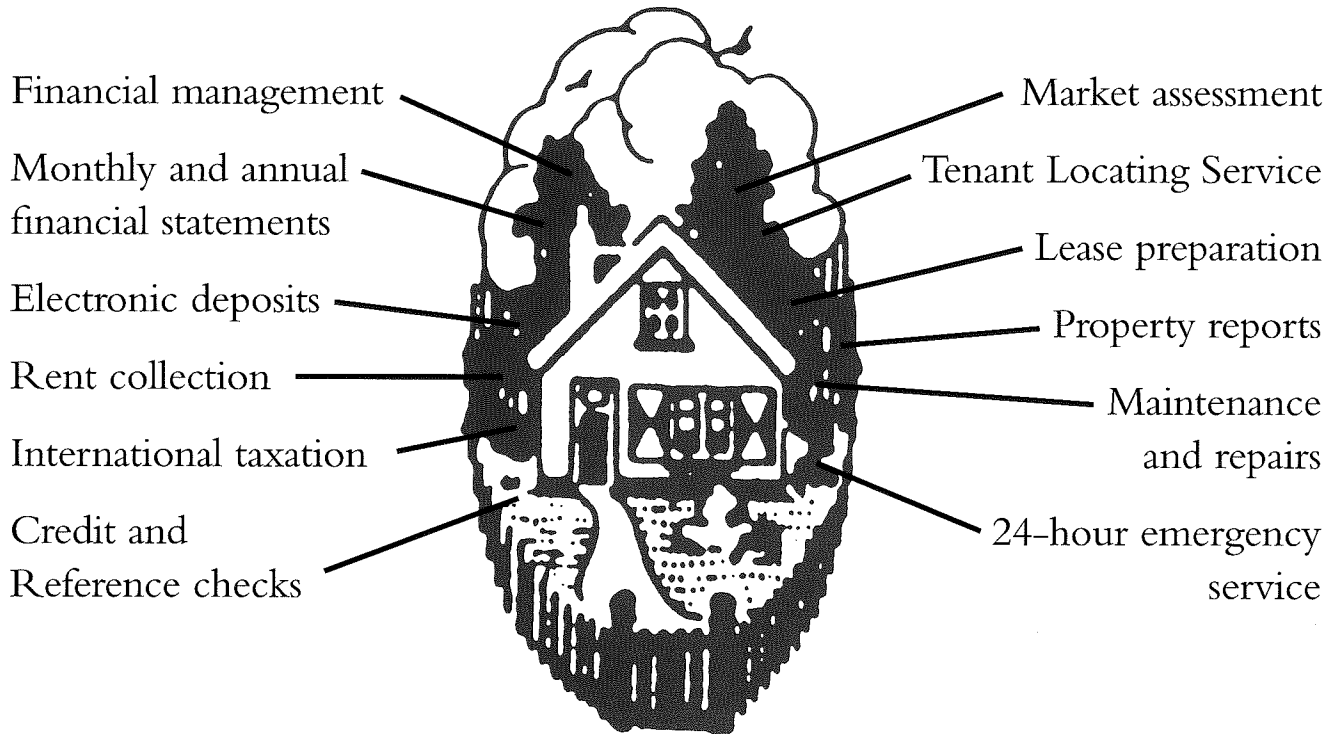
**ARE CRISIS
OPERATIONS THE
NEW NORMAL?**
Zal Karkaria



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412-47 rue Clarence St., Ottawa ON K1N 9K1
613 241-1391
boutdepapier@pafso-apase.com

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A Foreign Service for the 21st Century

Lillian Thomsen

Editor-in-Chief // Rédactrice en chef



FIRST OF ALL, my deepest appreciation and warm thanks for the many kind and encouraging words sent my way after the publication of the last issue of **bout de papier**. They gave me a sense of what readers would like to see in future issues and some even volunteered to write for **bout**, which was particularly welcome.

In this issue I have tried to strike a balance between features of historic – and sporting – interest and pieces about the modern foreign service. The latter is particularly timely given the study being undertaken by the Standing Committee of the Senate on Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the internal review announced by Minister Joly and Deputy Minister Morgan in June. I am sure that not everyone will agree with everything in the articles in this issue but they are thoughtful and well written pieces by colleagues, current and former, who care, not only about the Canadian Foreign Service but about the work it carries out, both at home and abroad. And given the complex – and quite frankly often depressing – world in which we are living with crises ranging from the war in Ukraine, the political uncertainty to the south of us, economic instability and fragility, as well as the increasingly obvious impacts of climate change, a discussion engaging the considered views of those with real-life experience and extensive knowledge acquired over years of study and practice is of importance in and of itself. It may also contribute to the work being undertaken elsewhere, including the two aforementioned reviews.

So more articles will be welcome as there is a third issue to come in the fall. Comments and suggestions sent to myself at lillianthomsenottawa@gmail.com are also most welcome. The print edition of the magazine is now being delivered to PAFSO members across Canada and around the world and also to the Privy Council Office, the offices of the deputy and assistant deputy ministers with international responsibilities and the National Press Gallery. So we are trying to grow the readership and that will continue to be a priority.


Another consideration is to ensure that the magazine reflects the full scope of the Foreign Service. I am writing this piece from Nova Scotia, a province I had visited for work purposes but never for pleasure. My partner and I spent several hours visiting the Canadian Immigration Museum at Pier 21 in Halifax. Although my own parents were

immigrants and like most of us I have friends, colleagues, and acquaintances of a vast range of backgrounds the Museum really pulls it all together into a coherent narrative, including those parts of our history of which we cannot be proud. And it covers Canada's history with respect to the treatment of refugees, a theme of Zal Karkaria's contribution to this issue.

Ken Neufeld's feature on his adventures delivering international assistance in Tanzania is a wonderful example of our approach to the delivery of development projects and programmes in an earlier pre-Internet pre-cell-phone age.

The excerpt from Gary Smith's book, *Ice War Diplomat*, a product of several years of research and his own experience as a junior officer in the Canadian Embassy in Moscow in the early 1970s, is sure to bring back memories for those of you who were around at the time and watched the famous final game and Paul Henderson's goal. Gary's book is being made into a 100-minute documentary film which will be premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival this September just before the 50th anniversary of the most famous goal in a hockey game ever. While fun to read – and the film will undoubtedly be fun to watch – the excerpt published in this issue of **bout de papier** is also a timely reminder that many countries have, over the years, used cultural and/or sports diplomacy to further the achievement of their international objectives. Our own performance in this respect has been inconsistent as I know from my own experience but again, an informed discussion of the merits or lack thereof could factor into the work of the Senate Committee and the department's internal study.

Finally, I am very pleased to be able to announce that the Board of the Canadian Ambassadors Alumni Association (AmbCanada) has agreed to reinstate its annual prize of \$500 for the best article in **bout de papier**, which was traditionally announced at the PAFSO annual awards dinner. More information will be forthcoming in the next issue.

In the meantime, happy reading! 



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE // MOT DE LA PRÉSIDENTE

The Foreign Service in a VUCA World

Pam Isfeld

President, PAFSO // Présidente de l'APASE

THE ACRONYM VUCA – volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous – was coined by the US military to describe the world after the end of the Cold War. Three decades and two pandemic years later, the concept resonates with professionals in most fields. In April this year, I had the honour of being the first witness before the Standing Committee of the Senate on Foreign Affairs and International Trade as it launched a study to determine whether Canada's Foreign Service is up to the challenge. In June, Minister Joly and Deputy Minister Morgan announced their own internal operational review at Global Affairs Canada (GAC).


Foreign Service professionals are certainly facing volatility in the pace, amount, and magnitude of the changes to our operating environment and working conditions. Aside from the obvious impact of the pandemic, we're all affected by rising inflation, supply chain issues, the effects of climate change, geopolitical power shifts, war, and insecurity. Historical information and experience seem less and less helpful in predicting the future in increasingly dynamic, interdependent situations. This complexity is amplified by the speed of information, especially when working outside everyone's comfort zone, with few established best practices for what we are experiencing.

Whether we like it or not, we face serious questions. How do we forge a path that allows Canada to meet these challenges and effectively pursue both our international and national interests? In the discussions before the Senate committee and in response to GAC's transformation exercise, key needs have emerged, including reform of human resources management to get the most out of an exceptionally talented, diverse, and knowledgeable workforce and supplement that workforce with outside expertise where needed; development of a new model for risk management and assessment that encourages innovation and empowers employees to take calculated risks; more research, strategy, and big-picture thinking; and less of a transactional and administrative focus; and encouragement of a culture which discourages complacency and explicitly rewards innovation, expertise, action, and flexibility.

Most importantly, though, we face fundamental questions about our mission. It's difficult to assess whether or not an organization is "fit for purpose" without a strong and shared

understanding of exactly what that purpose is. It's been over two decades since we took a serious look at our national interests to determine what Canada, and by extension GAC and the Foreign Service, wants to achieve internationally and why. We need to demonstrate how our work will improve life for Canadians and others in our global community and then work with allies in business, academia, the NGO world, international organizations, and other governments to align our actions with our intentions. It's not enough to say that we support lofty principles – we must show up on the ground in meaningful ways. As one witness before the Senate Committee put it, "hope and hashtags" are no substitute for an effective foreign policy.

Unfortunately, we're in a bit of a vicious circle. For a lead foreign policy department hobbled by a risk-averse culture that rewards going along to get along, mired in transactional and administrative work, this kind of fundamental review could be – and indeed should be – difficult and painful. Thankfully, GAC's Minister and Deputy Minister seem to be meeting the external challenge of the Senate review rather than avoiding it or trying to water it down. Hopefully, these operational discussions will lead to consideration of the deeper questions we must answer if we are to navigate effectively through what comes next.

I am struck by the generosity of experienced Foreign Service professionals who have come forward to share their wisdom and expertise on the challenges facing us all in this issue of **bout de papier**. However, we will be entering this next phase without the wise counsel of three of our most-loved colleagues and former PAFSO members, Jacques Bilodeau, Ken Sunquist, and Deborah Chatsis. Jacques had numerous ambassadorial posts during his long career, including as Ambassador to Belgium and the Prime Minister's personal representative for the Francophonie. Ken had served at numerous missions abroad including as Ambassador in Indonesia, and as Chief Trade Commissioner and Assistant Deputy Minister for Africa and Asia at headquarters. Deborah was a 1998 PAFSO Award recipient and Canada's first female ambassador from a First Nations community. We remember these colleagues for their dedication to Canada and their generous mentorship of young Foreign Service Officers. They will be sadly missed. 



FEATURE // REPORTAGE

Are Crisis Operations the New Normal?

by Zal Karkaria

ZAL KARKARIA has been a Foreign Service Officer with IRCC for 17 years. He has been posted to Nairobi, New Delhi, and London and has undertaken various assignments at IRCC headquarters. He is currently involved in a fast-moving project to develop the next generation of visa processing IT tools for the department.

DURING THE LAST TWO YEARS ALONE, destabilizing events have come at us fast and furious: a global pandemic, the triumphant re-emergence of the Taliban in Afghanistan, and the brutal invasion of Ukraine by Russia. Each, on their own, could be described as “era-defining” yet they have cascaded one upon the other, upending geopolitics, and the global economy. Government departments have had to adapt far more quickly than they are used to, and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) is no exception, as each of these three events have impacted migration flows into Canada.

IRCC has been forced to respond in unprecedented ways, improvising, taking risks and re-organizing its operations. But has it been enough? If we are entering an age where “era-defining” events are a semi-annual occurrence, it is worth asking: Is Canada’s Immigration department prepared? An analysis of its structure and staffing indicates that the answer is not entirely clear.

Though the events described above are in many ways unprecedented, they hardly represent the first crises to impact IRCC. During the past 20 years alone, it has responded to multiple emergencies, including the Indian Ocean tsunami (2004), the war in Lebanon (2006), the earthquake in Haiti (2010), and the resettlement of 25,000 Syrian refugees in three months (2015–16).

Yet, surprisingly, IRCC lacks a permanent home for Emergency Operations. While this has not crippled IRCC’s ability to respond to emergencies, it has slowed it down. There is organizational chaos at the beginning of a crisis while precious time is spent figuring

out who is in charge – something that often takes weeks to work out – when the department needs to be focused on setting up operations on the ground.

For example, for Afghanistan IRCC has created an entirely new sector focused on that country and Canada’s commitment to resettle 40,000 Afghans in the coming years. Essentially, the department has decided to implement a re-org in the middle of a critical operation. However, an unfolding crisis is hardly the best time to set up a sector with a new Assistant Deputy Minister, new Directors and new analysts pulled from all corners of the public service, some of whom may lack in-depth knowledge of Afghanistan, Canada’s immigration programs, or, indeed, emergency operations. Inevitably, the result is organizational confusion as the sector struggles to define its precise role despite the best intentions of all involved.

Emergencies are chaotic enough in their own right without the bureaucratic nightmare of a reorganization thrown into the mix. While a “pop-up” sector may appear to be the best way to respond to the specific complexities of Afghanistan, IRCC cannot keep creating sectors and senior manager positions for each new crisis. This is neither a strategic nor sustainable approach for a world where each emergency is different.

Instead, the department should consider creating an Emergency Operations branch or directorate. This would include staff with specific skill sets including crisis response training, overseas processing experience, and the ability to manage data flows and produce reports; communications and IT equipment ready to use that work in Canada, overseas, and across various departmental networks; and a database of staff who can be accessed immediately for Temporary Duty, minimizing the need for last-minute “call-outs” for staff to support the new critical event. An early warning system fed by the best classified and open source intelligence should be developed as well.

This is not to minimize the scale of IRCC’s response to recent events which has brought out the best in staff both in Canada and across its global network. Employees have worked long hours implementing unfamiliar and ever-changing program guidance, taken on dangerous assignments (including in Kabul), adapted to challenging work environments and interacted with countless clients by phone, Whatsapp, email, and in person, many of them desperate and distraught. Throughout these emergencies, IRCC worked to resettle thousands of Afghans, met historically high permanent resident admission targets for 2021, and made agonizingly difficult decisions while assessing the applications from clients seeking COVID-related travel ban exemptions. These required smart, flexible immigration and visa policies and arguably, Canada has the best in the world.

But it also required nimble and effective operations: at its essence, IRCC is in the business of managing the movement of people from across the globe into Canada. It is in the business of logistics.

However, recent events have exposed the department’s operational weaknesses even beyond the lack of an emergency response team. Many of these were already known: outdated IT systems, cumbersome application processes oblivious to user-centric design that disregard lived realities on the ground, a heavy reliance on temporary duty officers (including a large number of retirees), and ineffective client communication, amongst others.

To improve, IRCC needs to embrace its logistical essence and establish excellence in operations at the heart of the department’s mandate. Until fairly recently, the department had multiple career Foreign Service Officers peppered throughout the ranks of senior management, right up to the ADM level. These executives combined years of on-the-ground experience in everything from spousal sponsorship

Recent events have exposed the department’s operational weaknesses even beyond the lack of an emergency response team.

interviews to emergency hiring practices to biometrics collection, with prized access to the Deputy Minister and Minister's Office. This powerful combination gave FS executives the ability to caution against ideas that may have appeared brilliant when cooked up in the theoretical climate of a Laurier Street boardroom but would crumble once confronted by the complex operational realities inherent in running a global people-moving network that stretches from Bogotá to Beirut.

But though the department has nearly doubled in size since 2015, FS representation at the executive table appears to have shrunk. At the ADM level, for example, even in the Operations Sector itself, it appears, somewhat perplexingly, that operational experience is barely required for the job. Whether by neglect or design, this sends a signal that IRCC is devaluing operational experience just at the time when the delivery of its programs and policies has become more complex – and logistical – than ever. The ongoing logistical challenges of the Afghanistan operation alone – which involves the resettlement of thousands of Afghans stuck in a country without any Government of Canada presence run by a designated terrorist organization Canada does not even recognize as the legitimate governing authority – would severely test even the most hardship-seasoned Migration Officer.

The bureaucracy must structure itself in a way that maximizes the quality and breadth of real-world advice it can provide to the Minister. To that end, IRCC hiring competitions and staffing strategies need to be adjusted to reflect the fact that nitty-gritty, roll-up-your-sleeves operational know-how is adequately reflected in the upper echelons of IRCC.

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Simultaneously, Foreign Service Officers (FS) at IRCC need to self-reflect on why their stature appears to have diminished in recent years. A specific strategy for identifying and developing future EX's may be in order. FS often spend most of their careers abroad. When they eventually return to HQ they find themselves lost, feeling less at home in the bureaucratic culture of the country they represent than they did at post. Drifting, demoralized, and suffering from reverse culture shock, they stare longingly at their expired diplomatic passports overflowing with the exotic visas that symbolize the globe-trotting career they're used to; within months they begin thinking about the next overseas assignment and after just two, maybe three years, they're gone again.

More can be done to help FS with adjusting to HQ: there needs to be recognition that it represents a specific work "culture" to which FS have to adapt in order to be effective and have their unique operational skill sets recognized. Mentoring and "buddying up" with colleagues familiar with HQ can help ease the transition. De-briefings

with management – where recently-returning officers are asked to provide insights on their experiences abroad – can make officers feel valued while providing Ottawa with a fresh perspective.

Training is another area where IRCC can look to for solutions. Newly recruited IRCC Migration Officers benefit from the lengthy and rigorous Foreign Service Development Program that includes classroom training, headquarters and overseas assignments, and written and on-the-job assessments. There's pressure to perform and not everyone successfully completes the approximately three-year development program. It's long and expensive, but those that make it through will be equipped with an impressive skill-set: the ability to make decisions on almost all categories of permanent and temporary resident visa applications; a strong grasp of the Global Case Management System (GCMS) IT platform; experience supervising staff, including intercultural management skills; the ability to manage the workflow of thousands of paper and digital applications running through an office; and the ability to interview clients, write reports, and represent their country when meeting with external stakeholders. So why not have a rigorous, months-long development program for non-FS?

Instead, IRCC has attempted to hire its way out of the challenge it faces with cascading emergencies and historic admission targets for permanent residents. The department has ballooned in size since 2016, with a large ecosystem created to manage the endless flow of briefing notes, decks, briefing books, one-pagers, meeting agendas, meeting read-outs, placemats, and other assorted items the bureaucracy specializes in and senior management adores. This is not to minimize the complexity of this work: managing a temperamental ministerial staffer or intractable Central Agency analyst can require formidable skill and fortitude. It makes sense to have a strong corporate secretariat in an Ottawa of endless spin where the centre has a voracious appetite for the minutiae of how departments function. But if it comes at the expense of an effective operations sector, that's where things can go off the rails, especially when a crisis hits: as much as it may try, government cannot spin its way out of crises on the scale of COVID, Afghanistan, and Ukraine. A stylish PowerPoint presentation or video advertorial won't cut it. It must perform. It must deliver.

IRCC must invest in the training and development of a larger proportion of its own staff with the specific aim of improving the delivery of its programs as opposed to the quality of its briefing products. It must sharpen the pointy end of its stick. It is unfair to both staff and clients to expect newly onboarded staff to "hit the ground running" in an era where – overnight – the ground can shift dramatically.

IRCC needs more decision-making officers, more operationally savvy data "air traffic controllers" to manage workflow and pull stats, and more logistics specialists. It should also look at the language skills of its staff: it is shocking that a department that deals with the most

diverse clientele imaginable places so little emphasis on foreign language ability in its hiring, training, and HR management practices.

In parallel, it desperately needs to improve client service; as a start, the department should reverse the long-standing trend of discouraging direct interaction with clients, including interviews. IRCC will not be able to improve operations if it does not understand its clients' needs, and it will not be able to understand its clients' needs if hardly any of its staff meet with them, even those involved in front-line operations. I have been in meetings where officers are actively discouraged from meeting with clients, including refugees, as these interactions are considered an inefficient use of officer time.

IRCC can't look to others to address its challenges. The bill for outsourcing has ballooned since 2016 and the added value of this spending on service delivery is unclear. Instead of boosting the profits of the Big Four consultancies, why not invest these millions in the public service, demonstrating a commitment to employee excellence instead of an admission of inadequacy? Instead of loudly repeating sexy but empty buzzwords ("Modernization!" "Digital Transformation!") why not quietly devote resources towards a revitalized training program that emphasizes operational excellence and actually delivers?

A meeting convened in August soon after Canada had pulled out of Afghanistan illustrates the chasm between IRCC HQ and the clients it serves: during the meeting, staff expressed frustration after the Minister's Office rejected the convoluted wording in a letter meant for Afghan refugees still stuck in Afghanistan.

"Well, I understood the letter," one staff member complained to nodding heads, all failing to grasp the fact that the letter was not meant for public servants with inside knowledge of departmental programs, but desperate clients abroad. This one statement crystalized how out of touch the department had become.


The department's website includes a page titled "Canada: A History of Refuge". It lists various waves of immigration to Canada, emphasizing the persecution and hardship these migrants were leaving behind in their country of origin, though failing to describe the prejudice and discrimination they often met with in Canada. Despite this critical oversight, the page crystalizes how important Canada was to the lives of millions, right up to today's refugees fleeing persecution from a list of dangerous and violent countries that remains depressingly long.

Canada is important to many others as well: international students from dusty towns and villages who have made Canada the first country they have visited outside their own; the parents who then visit them a few years later to proudly witness their child's graduation from a Canadian college; young men and women from Cochín or Warsaw or Port au Prince, aching to be reunited with the Canadian who captured their heart; the ambitious fruit-picker from Latin America, determined

to maximize the few months they are permitted to perform backbreaking work under the West Coast sun in order to save enough to build a new home for their wife and newborn child.

They, in turn, are important to Canada as well: replenishing our aging population, enriching our culture, and expanding our knowledge of the world, staffing our hospitals, farms, greenhouses, warehouses, elder care homes, hotels, restaurants, and countless other businesses we depend on.

Evidently, IRCC's mandate is simply too important to Canada to be managed by a department that is not fully cognizant of the strengths it can build on and the weaknesses it must repair. It must recognize that the effective management of migration operations – both emergency and day-to-day – is a specialty that must be planned for. It must recognize that it is unfair to both staff and clients for it to be treated as something that can be learned on the fly.

The bigger picture is no less stark. The pandemic has demonstrated how important government service delivery can be in a crisis. But it has also exposed operational weaknesses that have undermined not just confidence in government but also trust. Traditional sources of information are shunned, leaving the playing field open to purveyors of misinformation, disinformation, and fraud. A critical part of the response to these new, often sinister sources of messaging, must be to demonstrate that government departments – including IRCC – can act in response to citizens' needs. Government must re-focus and prioritize; it must regain the public's trust with a simple message that cannot be conveyed via tweet, promotional video, or annual report, but by actions on the ground: that when needed it can get things done. 

IRCC must invest in the training and development of a larger proportion of its staff with the aim of improving the delivery of its programs as opposed to the quality of its briefing products.



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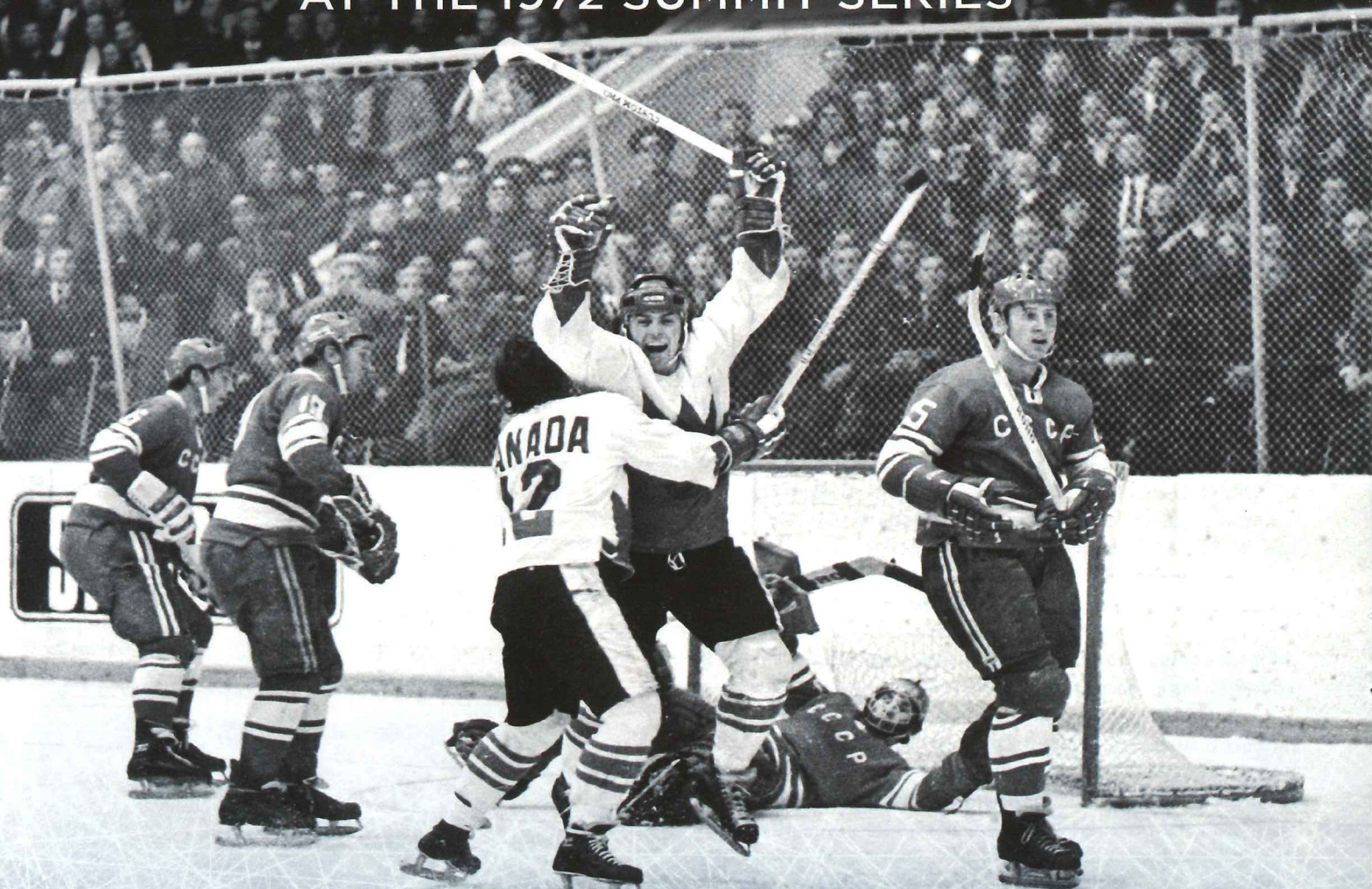
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ICE WAR DIPLOMAT

HOCKEY MEETS COLD WAR POLITICS
AT THE 1972 SUMMIT SERIES



FORMER AMBASSADOR

GARY J. SMITH

GARY J. SMITH was a diplomat at the Canadian embassy in Moscow in 1972. He was instrumental in making the 1972 Canadian-Soviet Hockey Series happen – and keeping it from falling apart. Smith lives in Perth, Ontario.

FEATURE // REPORTAGE

The Referee Ultimatum

Excerpted from the first chapter of *Ice War Diplomat: Hockey Meets Cold War Politics at the 1972 Summit Series* (Douglas & McIntyre, 2022) by Gary J. Smith. Reprinted with permission from the publisher.

THE TWO SENIOR KGB OFFICERS masquerading as Soviet hockey officials flinched as shattered glass and ice hit the walls and floor of the cramped, colourless ante-room of Moscow's otherwise stately Palace of Sports. It was late morning of Thursday, September 28, 1972. The decisive Game Eight of the Canada-USSR Summit Series was due to be played later that evening. Team Canada's assistant coach, John Ferguson, had sent the side table and its pitcher of water flying as he leapt to his feet from his hard wooden chair, launching a verbal broadside against the two Russians: "You sons of bitches – you suckered us."

Fergie was not a person you wanted to anger. He had been a very productive NHL scorer during his eight seasons with the Montreal Canadiens before retiring the previous year, in 1971. He was better known however as Jean Beliveau's left wing protector and someone who let his fists do the talking.

The small room fell silent. The tension thickened.

There was no need for me to translate what Ferguson had said. There was no mistaking the force and intent behind his words, and anyway the two Russians spoke perfect English. I knew them both.

Alexander Gresko had appeared unexpectedly on the Moscow scene as deputy head of the International Department of the Soviet Ministry of Physical Culture and Sports in April of 1972, when I first encountered him. A basic background check had shown that he had been kicked out of the United Kingdom in October of 1971 as part of an extensive expulsion of one hundred and five Soviet diplomats and other officials for "activities incompatible with their diplomatic status." In plain talk: "spying." Gresko was said to have been engaged in attempting to recruit well-placed British citizens to betray their country by working for the Soviet Union. The dark-haired and youngish-looking Gresko had a surface affability that covered a combative nature, and his clothing displayed a smattering of London tailoring.

The second KGB officer, older and greyer, with a long face, aristocratic nose and a perpetually sly grin, had a semi-sophisticated air, aided by a more fashionable suit. Kiril Romesky, who always seemed to have a different title as part of his duties at the Physical Culture and Sports Ministry, was senior to Gresko but normally let his junior countryman do the talking. When he did pipe up, almost always in Russian, you paid attention.

Romesky had been a late addition to the small Soviet delegation travelling with the USSR team to Canada for the first four games in early September 1972 for what had initially been billed as an eight-game home-and-home "Friendship Series." As second secretary at the Canadian embassy, I had been involved from the beginning in negotiations for the series, and due to my Russian-language capability and position as a defenceman on the "Moscow Maple Leafs" beer-league hockey team, I had been tasked to be the Canadian government's "Liaison Officer and Interpreter." Thus, I had flown from the Soviet capital to Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver with Romesky, other officials and the Soviet team. His principal job was to ensure the Soviet players remained disciplined off the ice and to deter any potential embarrassing situations for the USSR, such as a possible defection.

Another person shoehorned into the ante-room was Team Canada's head coach and general manager, Harry Sinden. He and Ferguson had just finished running the morning on-ice practice with Team Canada at the Sports Palace, and this was a convenient location for the continuation of

The Trudeaus greeted by the author and his wife on the first visit of a Prime Minister to the Canadian Embassy in Moscow.





Negotiators pose after finalizing arrangements for the Summit Series in Moscow, July 1972.

(Author appears fourth from left)

Photo credit: Victor Akhlov, *Izvestia*

the extremely heated argument over who would be the two referees for the final game. The series was now deadlocked at three victories apiece, with one tie, after consecutive and stunning one-goal victories by Canada in Games Six and Seven, both winning goals scored by Paul Henderson. Everything was now on the line.

Sinden often appeared harried, preferring to keep the top button of his shirt undone and his tie askew, even when wearing his official blue Team Canada blazer and chequered grey pants. He was a contrast to the more dapper Ferguson and to Team Canada leader Robert Alan Eagleson. The “Eagle,” or “Big Bird” as he was nicknamed in some quarters, was also present in the ante-room. Eagleson was a dynamic force of his own – the founding executive director of the National Hockey League Players Association was a hard-driving Toronto lawyer and consummate networker with political ambitions.

Like Eagleson, Sinden ran hot, as if he had jet fuel in his veins. In describing his own actions, he was fond of using the converse expression “losing my cool” – which he did often. But then Harry had the weight of the entire nation of Canada on his shoulders. Team Canada, with its roster of all-star NHL professionals, was expected to sweep the ice clean against the so-called “amateurs” of the Soviet Union. Sinden had won a Stanley Cup with the Boston Bruins in 1970 and, perhaps of more significance in his current context, had played and beaten the USSR team at the 1958 World Championships in Oslo, Norway, as part of the Allen Cup champion Whitby Dunlops. Harry Sinden was fully expected to deliver victory for Canada and Canadians in this monumental series as well.

When Team Canada stumbled badly out of the gate in the first game in Montreal on September 2 and went on to

lose the Canadian portion of the series with two losses, one win and a tie, the blame game began in earnest, and the wrath of the country and the media fell on the players – but particularly on Sinden. His reputation took an awful beating. Now he had much to prove in the communist capital, with wall-to-wall media coverage, including over one hundred Canadian journalists desperately seeking photos and juicy copy, and under the close attention of nearly three thousand frenetic Canadian fans who had come to Russia to watch the games. No pressure, eh?

From the moment Sinden had been named head coach, in mid-June of 1972, he had expressed his dissatisfaction with the arrangements for referees and the use of the international rules that had been negotiated and signed in April in Prague as part of the overall series agreement between the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association (CAHA) and the Soviet Ice Hockey Federation. Sinden believed the deal favoured the Soviets, as they were familiar with this system, and that two referees with no linesmen would miss a lot of infractions, or they would compete with each other to see who could call the most penalties. During follow-up negotiations in Moscow in July he attempted to change these arrangements, but the Soviet side would not budge from the agreed position that these were international, and not NHL, matches.

For the first four games, in Canada, the April agreement called for a pool of four American referees with international experience: Gord Lee, Len Gagnon, Frank Larsen and Steve Dowling. They would split the first two games. Both sides would then agree on which two refs to choose for Games Three and Four based on their initial performance. If there was no agreement, then Canada would pick the referees for Game Three and the USSR for Game Four. Lee and Gagnon started out fairly well, largely staying out of the spotlight.

Team Canada's opening game 7-3 loss was not laid at their doorstep. On the other hand, Larsen and Dowling were said to have been subjected to a strong scolding in their dressing room by the general secretary of the Soviet Ice Hockey Federation, Andrei Starovoitov, following the USSR's 4-1 defeat in Game Two in Toronto. A wastebasket and chair or two had apparently been kicked over and the word "barbarians" used to describe Team Canada's "excessive and illegal physical play." Starovoitov would call Sinden late that night arguing that Lee and Gagnon be used exclusively for the final two games in Canada. Sinden obliged him, but later would say he noticed the refs had tightened up in Games Three and Four, to the detriment of Team Canada. It convinced him more than ever that, from the beginning, NHL rules should have been in place – enforced by NHL referees. However, he did readily admit that Team Canada had displayed poor play and a lack of stamina in these two games, which was beyond the scope of the referees.


The fat hit the fire in Stockholm during the two exhibition games there, on September 16 and 17, against Team Sweden, which were intended as a warm-up for Team Canada on the wider Olympic-sized ice, as would be used in Moscow. These games turned into a nasty bloodbath, with spearing, cross-checking and slashing galore. Team Canada's Wayne Cashman, for one, endured fifty stitches to sew up his tongue, which was split severely by a Swedish butt-end. Sinden blamed the referees for letting the games get out of hand, in particular the two West Germans, Franz Baader and Josef Kompalla (whom he later would call "Badder" and "Wurst"). Both were part of the four-person European pool to be employed in Moscow (Sweden's Ove Dahlberg and Czechoslovakia's Rudolf (Rudy) Bata being the other two). Sinden said the two West Germans were "absolutely terrible; they couldn't even skate," adding that "they were miles behind the play all night and don't know the damn rules." He blamed their "incompetence" for making the game very bitter by not calling penalties on the Swedes for "backstabbing" and other dirty stickwork.

According to Sinden, at the end of the second period of the second game, a donnybrook broke out in the joint corridor that led from the ice when he continued to berate the German officials while players from both sides shouted insults at each other. A shoving match ensued, which drew a crowd of Swedish photojournalists and eventually Swedish police, apparently with dogs. Sinden later described the scene as "ugly." Canada's ambassador to Sweden, Margaret Meagher, controversially called Team Canada's actions a "disgrace" and issued an apology. It is a matter of debate if she did the right thing in calling out her fellow countrymen publicly, but it was certainly not Canada's finest hour in this Scandinavian country. Sinden had left Sweden with three conclusions: one, refereeing would be the biggest problem in Moscow; two, if the team did not start playing better it would lose; three, no matter how bad the Swedish experience had been it might help bring the players closer together as a team.

Game Six (on September 24, the second of the four games in Moscow) reinforced Harry's first concern. Baader and Kompalla were back on the ice. Team Canada won a 3-2 squeaker to get back into the series, but Sinden was apoplectic about the refereeing, saying the two Germans were the most incompetent officials he had ever seen. They had called eight penalties on Team Canada for a total of thirty-one minutes, including a questionable infraction in the last two minutes, against only four minutes (two minors) for the USSR team. Mind you, twelve of those minutes involved Canada's Bobby Clarke, for his ankle slash of the leading Soviet scorer, Valeri Kharlamov, but still the distribution of penalties was disproportionate. Sinden said the Germans had done everything they could to help the Russians and was insistent that this was the last game for the two officials.



Sinden however had gone far beyond just yelling and shouting at the referees from behind the boards. He and Ferguson threw towels and a fold-up chair onto the ice in an effort to create a scene for the crowd and television audience and draw attention to their disdain for the officiating. They hoped the Germans would be shamed into altering their behaviour. Ferguson was given a bench penalty for his actions. At the end of the second period, as had happened in Stockholm, Sinden, at close quarters, chased the two referees up a common corridor while screaming at them. He was accompanied by Bobby Orr, who was in the vicinity and in street clothes, still recovering from off-season knee surgery that had prevented him from playing. This time it was Soviet officials and the Soviet police who intervened. By the time the game came to an end, the militia were lined up shoulder to shoulder in the runway to the dressing rooms.

The pressure continued to build. 

Shoulder to shoulder Soviet militia monitor the crowd as Dennis Hull sits on the penalty bench during Game Eight, Moscow, September 28, 1972.

Photo credit: Frank Lennon collection, Library and Archives Canada



FEATURE // REPORTAGE

Quel service extérieur pour assurer le renouvellement de notre politique étrangère?

par Jean-Yves Dionne

JEAN-YVES DIONNE est un ancien consul général du Canada à Rio de Janeiro (2005–2008), diplomate de carrière et membre de l'AmbCanada. Il est l'un des coordonnateurs/Instigateurs du groupe de discussion diplomatique de Montréal (GDDM) à l'Institut des études internationales de Montréal (IEIM/UQAM). Il est également vice-président de l'Association des auteurs des Laurentides (AAL) et diplômé de l'Université de Montréal (Msc Relations industrielles).

Introduction

Cet article a pour but de contribuer à la compréhension des malaises qui affectent le service extérieur canadien et à son renouvellement dans le cadre des nouveaux défis qui l'attendent au XXI^e siècle. Notre service extérieur représente la diversité sociale et économique du pays. Il a pour mission de mettre en œuvre les grands objectifs d'une politique étrangère faite pour tous les Canadiens.

Notre politique étrangère actuelle ou son absence suggère sa révision et sa refondation. Avons-nous une politique étrangère? Ou procédons-nous à la pièce selon la force du lobbying exercé par les groupes d'intérêts au bureau du premier ministre? Le dernier Énoncé de la politique internationale canadienne intitulé « Fierté et Influence : notre rôle dans le monde » date de 2005 – 17 ans déjà! Le monde a changé dramatiquement depuis. De nombreux défis attendent notre pays dans cet avenir incertain. Par le passé, le Canada apportait une contribution unique dans le système des relations internationales. On reconnaissait de partout sa valeur ajoutée. Mais, aujourd'hui, il semble qu'on ait de mal à définir cette valeur ajoutée et à investir dans le caractère unique de son service extérieur.

Un des aspects les plus marquants des dernières décennies est le sombre détricotage et les négligences répétées subies d'un service, qui au demeurant, a fait la réputation et l'influence de ce que fut le Canada sur la scène internationale pendant ses meilleures années.

Ce groupe de fonctionnaires, estimé à environ 1500 agents depuis l'inclusion des agents de l'Aide au développement international du groupe PM à celui de FS, forme le pivot de nos agents d'influence en première ligne à l'étranger. Ce sont nos fonctionnaires diplomates de carrière qui portent le système au quotidien par leur travail et leur résilience. Ce sont eux qui maîtrisent les dossiers et assurent la gestion des objectifs prioritaires de l'État canadien dans nos ambassades, consulats et représentations. Malheureusement, les

efforts de ce groupe de fonctionnaires ont été ralentis depuis une quinzaine d'années par divers défis, dont un sous-financement chronique et divers accroc à son fonctionnement.

Un peu d'histoire

En 1925, dans sa vision fondatrice nationaliste du pays, le premier ministre, William Lyon Mackenzie King, et son ami, Oscar Skelton (universitaire), ont mené ensemble l'édification d'un service diplomatique professionnel pur jus canadien. Il a été bâti à l'image de nos valeurs. Ce sera donc un service constitué d'un « bassin d'agents polyvalents » éduqués et composés de futurs fonctionnaires sélectionnés par un concours national annuel et distinct, lancé dans toutes les universités du pays. Et, point important, son but était manifestement de soustraire la conduite des affaires étrangères par des représentants de divers groupes d'intérêts du pays.

Dans sa version moderne, avec le rôle que le Canada a été appelé à jouer aux Nations-Unies, dans les clubs restreints du G7 et du G20, du Commonwealth et de la Francophonie, ce petit groupe d'employés est devenu un vrai métier avec une discipline, des processus et ses propres méthodologies de travail. Il a bien servi le ministère jusque dans les années 2000. Mais, à partir du gouvernement Harper, il semble que le ministère ait été négligé et qu'il y ait eu un manque de reconnaissance en sa valeur particulière pendant que le métier devait affronter de nouveaux défis, en lien par exemple, avec les attentes des conjoints et les conditions de travail à l'étranger qui se détérioraient.

En plus de 70 années, notre grand réseau international d'ambassades, de consulats et de missions est toujours l'un des outils le plus envié et reconnu pour son efficacité à l'étranger et donne l'exemple à plusieurs nations du monde.

Changements de paradigmes au début des années 1990

Les coupes budgétaires en rafales et les exercices de rationalisation occupent une grande partie de la décennie. Le service extérieur se met alors au diapason du jour et se modernise en répondant par un système de communications satellitaire performant et de nouvelles approches de travail. Le but est de diminuer les coûts récurrents et accroître l'impact des services avec toujours moins de budgets de fonctionnement. Mais, le ver est dans la pomme depuis longtemps et l'affaiblissement du service extérieur va profiter à d'autres ministères fédéraux et agences qui achètent des postes de travail à grands frais à l'étranger et caressent chacun de construire leur propre mini service extérieur. Une spécialisation accrue de leur mission ministérielle à l'étranger devient le mot d'ordre en lien avec un programme de cohabitation de services dans les murs de nos ambassades et consulats.

Une mise à jour profonde de notre politique étrangère devra donc aborder ces questions de doubles représentations et donner le ton nécessaire à une révision en profondeur de la carrière au sein du service extérieur et du bien-être des familles qui se sont beaucoup transformés depuis 2000.

Certaines des variables endogènes et exogènes de ce métier de praticiens des relations internationales sont donc à prendre en compte dans cette réflexion. Ces variables affectent directement le travail des agents et la santé et le bien-être de leurs familles.

Variables endogènes affectant le métier de la diplomatie canadienne

Le manque de réaction adéquate et rapide de l'employeur dans le cadre du « syndrome de la Havane » a mené à une poursuite des membres du personnel de notre mission à Cuba, à la cour fédérale. Selon la poursuite, le ministère a préféré se cantonner dans le mutisme et l'attentisme, alors qu'à l'inverse, le personnel de l'ambassade des États-Unis était rapidement pris en charge. L'État a failli à sa responsabilité fiduciaire et à l'obligation légale de s'occuper de ses employés et de leurs familles à l'étranger dans une situation de stress intense. Pourtant, la sécurité de nos employés devrait être un principe sacré.

Les connaissances du métier doivent être mieux reconnues lors de l'embauche des nouveaux agents. Au cours des dernières années, le ministère a délaissé le concours national annuel des agents bien établi depuis des dizaines d'années pour adopter le test de connaissance générale de la Fonction publique. Ce test général ne tient pas compte des connaissances ni des compétences recherchées chez nos futurs agents diplomatiques. En lieu et place, depuis 2015, on a recruté de manière aléatoire de parlants mandarins pour combler un manque en sinologues dans nos rangs diplomatiques, et des diplômés des universités du Canada central pour y rechercher entre autres des candidats déjà bilingues. Bref, un exercice qui est bien loin de la vision « from coast to coast » de King et de Skelton, soit recruter de

jeunes Canadiens de tous les horizons et des régions, puis en faire de dignes représentants du pays par de la formation et des affectations sur le terrain où se vit le travail et la carrière diplomatique. Un recrutement national était de retour en 2021 après des années de tergiversations. Et, sans l'examen spécifique dédié du service extérieur.

Nos futurs diplomates de carrière devront affronter la crème de la crème des agents diplomatiques du G7, du G20 et de l'Union européenne sans compter la meute des « loups guerriers » de la nouvelle Chine. Les compétences des agents s'affinent en mission à l'étranger et la conduite des dossiers sensibles fabrique le type de diplomates que deviendra cette personne au bout de 10 ou 15 années. Habituellement, un diplomate de carrière maîtrise l'étude de tous les argumentaires d'un dossier et ses moindres faiblesses. Sous couvert de l'humilité, il mijote l'audace et l'aisance en société cosmopolite. Sa communication interpersonnelle est retenue, empathique, voire bienveillante. Notre diplomate de carrière est un « brooker honnête » et un concepteur naturel de partenariats et du travail en équipe. C'est à l'usure de l'expérience sur le terrain, du mentorat de ses pairs plus seniors et au contact de divers réseaux que notre diplomate réussit à accomplir sa mission. Alors, pourquoi ne pas sélectionner les aspirants les plus doués et les mieux formés à même de s'adapter rapidement dans un cadre où les futurs pairs internationaux du métier en connaissent déjà tous les tenants et aboutissants. Cela vaut mieux qu'un simple exercice d'algorithmes. Il faudra que le ministère s'adapte au nouveau type de jeunes professionnels de notre société et offre plus d'avantages compétitifs avec le secteur privé pour garder ses professionnels sur le long terme. Ce n'est pas seulement l'argent. C'est aussi le type de milieu où il fait bon vivre et travailler en équipe sans oublier la reconnaissance dans le métier. Les sondages annuels des employés soulignent un très grand manque de reconnaissance du ministère envers ses agents FS. Que ferons-nous pour corriger cette situation?

Nos agents ont pratiqué depuis toujours l'art de la communication et l'usage des outils des nouvelles technologies de l'information. Ces dernières ont accru l'efficacité de nos missions sur le terrain. En dépit de certaines politiques calamiteuses du ministère, nos ambassades, nos consulats et nos diplomates se sont adaptés plus rapidement que le ministère à la révolution de l'information et ont intégré ces changements technologiques à leur coffre d'outils, afin de jouer pleinement leur rôle d'agent d'influence avec une efficacité redoutable.

Les nominations de fonctionnaires « parachutés » d'autres ministères de la Fonction publique et d'agences fédérales à des postes de la haute direction d'Affaires Mondiales Canada (AMC) ont contribué ces dernières années à la « grogne » ambiante des bons agents du ministère dont la progression, à ce niveau, a été ralentie par cette politique de mobilité agressive des cadres de la Fonction publique. Ces fonctionnaires n'ont pas eu à gérer la compétition qui existe dans les rangs pour gagner sa place au « Saint des saints » dans la catégorie de la haute direction du ministère. Cette

politique du haut mandarinat fédéral est également dénoncée dans d'autres pays du G7 par les syndicats professionnels qui y voient une manière détournée de voir accéder à ces postes des amis politiques ou des incompetents (Philippe Ricard, au quai d'Orsay, la réforme du recrutement indignes les diplomates, *Le Monde*, 28 octobre 2021 et *Le Figaro*, Quai d'Orsay, levée de boucliers contre la réforme de la haute fonction publique, 22 novembre 2021). Comment voulez-vous obtenir des professionnels loyaux en les traitant de cette manière?

Cette initiative de mobilité doit faire l'objet d'une réflexion beaucoup plus profonde, alors qu'une très forte majorité d'agents a déjà exprimé à 83 pour cent son immense envie de reconnaissance dans les derniers sondages des employés dans la section des agents FS. Pour le soussigné étant entré dans le service extérieur par concours national et ayant progressé dans la carrière par diverses affectations et participations à des concours de promotion, cette initiative de la Fonction publique manifeste une méconnaissance totale de la culture professionnelle particulière du service extérieur : un véritable affront à la dignité du métier et à ses professionnels.

Si ceci explique cela, les nombreux postes dédiés à nos diplomates réquisitionnés pour du personnel temporaire « contractuels » à temps déterminé, qui finissent par être occupés de manière permanente, par l'effet des renouvellements successifs de leurs contrats d'emploi, sont une autre manière d'entrer dans ce métier par la porte d'à côté et de faire carrière dans une filière parallèle à ceux qui sont entrés par concours – deux poids deux mesures. Cela devient une nuisance à la création d'un esprit d'équipe et de collaboration.

Variables exogènes : un système des relations industrielles dysfonctionnel pour les agents du service extérieur

Les fondements mêmes de la participation de ce groupe au système des relations de travail de la Fonction publique fédérale sont viciés. Dès les débuts de l'implantation de ce système dans les années 1960, les agents du service extérieur croyaient que le système des unités syndicales fonctionnerait sur la base d'une représentation par ministère. Au contraire, ils se retrouvèrent seuls et le plus petit syndicat de la Fonction publique, dans un système où ce sont les plus gros syndicats qui font la loi. En raison de ce manque de puissance syndicale, les agents ont dû se rabattre, la plupart du temps, sur la formule des décisions arbitrales à la place du rapport de conciliation pouvant mener à la grève, à l'occasion de négociations collectives difficiles.

De plus, l'organisation du ministère est en grande partie fondée sur l'éclatement de son réseau de missions à l'étranger. Cela exacerbe et cadenasse en très grand nombre les exclusions d'agents pour motif de responsabilité de gestion. Cela affaiblit aussi le choix de faire la grève. Si l'Association des agents du service extérieur (APASE) a réussi, tant bien que mal, à conserver un niveau de salaire aligné sur les demandes des autres syndicats de

professionnels, c'est qu'au tournant des années 2000, l'entrée en vigueur d'une nouvelle grille salariale à quatre échelons (FS-1 à FS-4) a permis d'effectuer un certain rattrapage salarial et à offrir une carrière dans le groupe FS, corrigeant ainsi après des décennies de tergiversations une injustice systémique.

Il reste tout de même qu'il est très difficile, voire impossible, pour l'APASE de convaincre l'employeur (le Conseil du trésor), lors des négociations collectives, de l'importance d'accepter des clauses professionnelles spécifiques pour le groupe. Lors des dernières négociations, le syndicat des agents a ferrailé avec les négociateurs du Conseil du trésor sans réussir à faire reconnaître une carrière professionnelle fondée sur « la succession des affectations ». N'y a-t-il pas là une clause de professionnalisation plus légitime que celle-ci pour protéger ce métier? L'employeur refuse de concrétiser ce principe fondamental de la carrière des agents, laquelle existe de facto depuis la formation du service extérieur. Le Conseil du trésor se refuse à accepter un principe de carrière dans un métier qu'il ne peut octroyer à tous les syndicats du système. Le système ne veut pas reconnaître les particularismes des groupes d'emploi dans notre Fonction publique, quel que soit son niveau de professionnalisation. Et, en même temps, l'employeur (le ministère) s'évertue à tenter de transformer le groupe des agents commerciaux du ministère (CO) en une espèce de groupes d'agents hybrides (demi-permutants). Ce projet « fumeux » a finalement été rejeté par le syndicat de ce groupe. Choisir de passer 50 pour cent de sa vie active dans les pays étrangers, ce n'est pas pour tout le monde! Et plus nécessairement un avantage du métier.

Cela se voit également autour de la table de réunion du Conseil national mixte (CNM), une table paritaire, où siège l'employeur, les fédérations syndicales et les syndicats de la Fonction publique possédant des membres à AMC. Tous les trois ans, ces représentants se rencontrent pour évaluer et assigner des enveloppes financières aux divers postes du guide des directives du service extérieur. Ces directives gèrent l'attribution des primes du service extérieur et du personnel du gouvernement à l'étranger. Malgré le poids important des agents diplomatiques du ministère (16 pour cent de l'ensemble de ses ressources), l'APASE ne fait pas le poids équivalent à ce que représente le syndicat de l'Alliance de la Fonction publique du Canada (AFPC), ni même l'Institut professionnel de la Fonction publique du Canada (IPFPC), les deux grandes centrales syndicales des fonctionnaires fédéraux. C'est une réalité affligeante lorsque ces directives gèrent de 30 à 50 pour cent du bien-être des agents et leur famille en poste à l'étranger. Le grand défi de l'APASE est de convaincre le CNM de l'importance d'accorder plus de primes d'encouragement à l'étude des langues étrangères et à la carrière dans le service auprès de groupes aux intérêts et aux priorités différents.

Nos futurs diplomates de carrière devront affronter la crème de la crème des agents diplomatiques du G7, du G20 et de l'Union européenne sans compter la meute des « loups guerriers » de la nouvelle Chine.

Pour ajouter une finale à cette section qui découle des relations industrielles, jetons un coup d'œil sur la gestion calamiteuse des griefs au ministère. Le sondage annuel des employés nous informe que 42 pour cent des agents ne font pas confiance à leur syndicat pour les défendre, alors que seulement 31 pour cent utilisent le processus des griefs pour faire valoir leurs droits. Pire, 17 pour cent des agents ne font aucune confiance à leur syndicat pour les représenter lors d'un grief. Il y a ici une problématique syndicale fondamentale.

Pourquoi les membres d'une organisation syndicale, dont les membres du conseil d'administration sont élus par des pairs, ne peuvent-ils pas faire confiance à leurs représentants?

Autres variables à considérer : les dogmes

Outre les variables que nous venons d'expliquer, il en existe d'autres, plus globales et historiques qui, sous la forme de décisions bureaucratiques et institutionnelles, agissent en dogmes et ralentissent la capacité de ce ministère à intégrer et à répondre aux nouveaux paradigmes de son nouvel environnement international et domestique.

En 2013, le gouvernement a décidé de fusionner la mission de l'aide publique au développement à celle des affaires étrangères. Une telle décision a exigé une négociation entre l'ancienne Agence canadienne de développement international et son ministère d'accueil qui, dans la foulée, a élargi sa mission et son contrôle de manière directe. Une telle fusion a ses exigences. Le transfert des ressources humaines et de la culture de l'organisme qui avale ne se fait pas sans peine. Il exige du temps et de la souplesse de la part de l'institution qui reçoit en son sein la nouvelle mission. Selon les experts, il en coûte de 10 à 15 années d'efforts d'intégration et d'accommodements pour que la nouvelle entité soit complètement digérée par le nouveau ministère.

Est-ce que cela a eu un impact sur les nouveaux délais beaucoup plus longs imposés aux premières affectations des nouveaux agents du ministère? La lourdeur additionnelle générée dans un tel exercice a des conséquences sur tous les autres services du ministère.

Dans ce nouvel horizon du 21^e siècle, le ministère doit s'ouvrir à la créativité de nos agents en particulier, ces jeunes qui entrent avec le désir de faire bouger les choses. Nous avons besoin d'idéateurs intra muros qui défient le système, tels ceux qui sont partis autrefois à l'assaut du monde sous la forme d'initiatives à l'établissement de nouvelles règles internationales ou de nouveaux concepts : de l'intervention des Casques bleus à la mobilisation universelle autour du traité sur les mines antipersonnelles et de la résolution des problématiques des enfants soldats. Ce sont ces réalisations qui ont fait l'admiration du monde entier et donné le prestige et la place que le pays s'est méritée sur l'échiquier mondial. Cette impressionnante feuille de route a attiré des milliers de jeunes Canadiens au ministère et a donné l'envie de servir le pays. Sans encourager les idées nouvelles, le ministère sera constamment en péril. D'autres organismes s'imposeront à sa place et à terme, le pays perdra la place qui lui revient sur cet échiquier mondial.


Dans la même veine, le ministère entretient une « vision bureaucratique », par laquelle tout agent du service extérieur demeure, en dépit de ses conditions d'emploi et de son environnement à l'étranger, un fonctionnaire comme s'il était au siège à Ottawa. Cette restriction mentale, louable et égalitariste, a-t-elle vraiment du sens? La carrière à l'étranger est exigeante et mérite des compensations. Les problèmes liés à la santé et la pollution de l'air dans plus de 70 pour cent des missions ne sont pas compensés. La sécurité personnelle de nos diplomates et de leur famille est essentielle au maintien du service extérieur. Il y aura toujours des situations pratiques qui défieront les dogmes établis par la pratique de la diplomatie en action, des nouveaux défis et des dangers qui nous guettent. Sachons les anticiper.

Nos défis

- La perte des nombreux avantages de la vie à l'étranger et au bien-être des familles
- L'absence d'emplois pour les conjoints dans une grande proportion des missions (la grande majorité des familles sont à deux salaires)
- La baisse de la qualité des logements situés hors des zones sécuritaires dans les capitales et habituellement occupés par les diplomates
- La détérioration du climat et ses effets contagieux vont continuer à faire diminuer les attraits du service à l'étranger dans une carrière qui a besoin d'un souffle nouveau et d'un cadre bonifié de vie professionnelle à l'exercice de ce métier.

Que nous réserve l'avenir ?

La carrière au sein du service extérieur canadien n'est plus ce qu'elle devrait être. Les processus d'affectations à l'étranger sont trop longs (c'est dans la pratique que ce métier s'apprend le plus rapidement). Le long processus de sélection du ministère conduit nécessairement à des départs plus tôt dans la carrière ou à des réorientations dans le secteur privé plus prompt à répondre aux besoins des jeunes professionnels. Le ministère perdra ses meilleurs éléments et la formation unique qu'ils reçoivent après quelques années (une étude sur la rétention des agents et les causes des départs est un exercice essentiel et régulier dans la gestion d'une politique de ressources humaines).

La négociation collective depuis 2000 se démarque par un durcissement de ton et une action syndicale beaucoup plus militante. La seule grève des agents en 2013 a duré plus de 5 mois et elle a coûté à l'économie canadienne 380 millions de dollars canadiens (*Le Devoir*, le tourisme, victime de la grève des diplomates canadiens, 13 juillet 2013). Nous croyons que les recommandations ci-dessous peuvent apporter un meilleur fonctionnement de ce groupe d'employés investi d'une importante mission de notre pays. 

AMÉLIORER L'ÉTAT DU SERVICE EXTÉRIEUR

Quoi	Commentaires
Instituer une Commission royale d'enquête sur le renouvellement du Service extérieur.	La dernière date de 1981 (40 ans). Il est temps d'avoir une telle enquête pour forcer un redressement des dérives du gouvernement, du ministère et de la FP.
Mettre à jour une vision moderne du service extérieur.	On connaît celle de King / Skelton – quelle est celle du diplomate canadien du XXI ^e siècle ?
Recadrer le métier dans une véritable relation professionnelle avec l'employeur – Pour cela, le législateur doit songer à une Loi sur le Service extérieur – pour corriger un système dysfonctionnel depuis des années.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Déclarer le groupe FS « employés stratégiques » de l'État – et l'exclure du système des relations de travail de la FP • Déclarer le groupe FS « employés stratégiques » de l'État – et l'exclure du système des relations de travail de la FP • C'est le seul groupe à bénéficier d'un bassin de postes de permutants • Remplacer la négociation collective actuelle par une table de négociations salariales et des clauses normatives sur la base de comparatifs de groupes similaires exerçant le même emploi dans les pays du G7 et les études internationales de Mercer (exemple : GRC, EX). L'APASE demeurera le porte-parole officiel des agents FS • Aménager des passerelles étroites avec la FP pour ceux qui quittent le service extérieur ou entrent par la porte d'à côté
Moderniser le Conseil national mixte (CNM) pour refléter davantage les conditions de travail des agents du groupe et leurs familles FS.	Les agents FS représentent 16 pour cent des ressources humaines permutantes du ministère et le plus grand nombre d'employés du gouvernement à l'étranger. Mais, leur voix est diluée dans celle des grands syndicats de la FP qui représentent des groupes permutants moins importants en nombre (exemple : communicateurs, commis, etc.).
Faciliter la création d'une communauté active du Service extérieur et de leur famille.	Encourager l'organisation d'une association des anciens employés du ministère, un forum permanent sur divers aspects du service extérieur, ses besoins et sa communauté.
Reconnaître les nouvelles réalités dans lesquelles les agents font leur travail à l'étranger et en reconnaître l'engagement par des primes et des crédits retraite appropriés pour leur travail.	Problèmes environnementaux, terrorisme et sécurité, pandémies et maladies ou syndromes du style de celui de La Havane.
Renforcer la notion de méritocratie, de confiance et de loyauté dans la sélection des agents, les nominations plus transparentes aux postes d'ambassadeurs et de consuls généraux.	<p>Le gouvernement devrait avoir une véritable politique de nomination de chef de missions de carrière et de méritocratie comme d'autres pays s'y emploient. Il doit être le premier à donner l'exemple.</p> <p>Renforcer la représentativité régionale, le bilinguisme et la diversité du pays.</p>
Reconnaître et intégrer les compétences distinctes nécessaires dans la carrière des agents dans le cadre d'un travail effectué dans un environnement étranger à la culture canadienne (exemple : résilience, gestion de la diversité, empathie psychologique, etc.).	Mettre en valeur ces compétences dans le cadre professionnel des agents et en tenir compte pour les exercices de promotion.
Évaluer le mode d'entrée officiel au service extérieur par un concours national. Les critères de sélection doivent représenter le travail de l'agent au Canada et à l'étranger.	Assurer une formation de base avant départ à une première affectation et offrir un programme de formation et de mentorat continu durant toute la carrière de nos agents.
Maintenir un nombre adéquat de niveaux dans la carrière FS afin d'y développer une carrière qui englobe toutes les compétences recherchées et exercées.	Répondre à la baisse d'opportunités créées par la politique de mobilité des cadres EX de la FP dans les structures du ministère. Éliminer cette pratique ou offrir plus de postes enrichis pour les meilleurs éléments du bassin d'agents.



FEATURE // REPORTAGE

Escaping Inertia

LAUNCHING A NEW CANADIAN DIPLOMACY
FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

by Andrew McLaughlin

In this critical historic moment, global challenges call for innovative solutions that Canada can and should provide, but our outdated bureaucracy and directionless foreign policy hamper the pursuit of our international interests.

HAVING SET OUT ON A CAREER IN DIPLOMACY, I had ambitious dreams of traipsing across the world doing my small part to help pursue our country's most pressing interests, while representing Canada – a nation I had long heard “punched above its weight” on the international stage since the Pearson era. As the years passed, and as the initial rush of flashing a red passport subsided, I was able to get a deeper look under the hood of our diplomatic machine. While I was frequently in awe of the exceptional talent of many of my colleagues, I was all too often underwhelmed by the vacuousness and directionless output of the machine itself; a machine made up of several thousand employees that burned through an annual budget in the several

billions of dollars. It often felt like we were just going through the motions without pursuing actual tangible objectives, and every three or four years, we'd all shuffle desks on a global scale. There was something fundamentally amiss about the machine – it ran on a glaringly outdated design, it was driven without a destination in mind, and had one overriding objective: not making waves.

Unable to shake these increasing doubts, I ultimately took the difficult decision to abandon my Foreign Service career to move to the private sector. Despite this decision, I still care very much about the Foreign Service and remain convinced that Canada needs to forge a path in the world through effective and innovative diplomacy, now more than

ANDREW McLAUGHLIN is the VP – Legal Affairs, General Counsel and ESG Lead at Major Drilling Group International Inc. He was named a Lexpert Rising Star for leading Canadian Lawyers under 40. He previously served as a diplomat at the Canadian embassies in Havana and Mexico City. Andrew is on the Board of New Brunswick's economic development agency, ONB (a Crown corporation) and the Editorial Board of Canadian Lawyer magazine. Connect with him on LinkedIn to get the conversation started.

ever. But if we just continue to tinker with the machine, we're bound to be left in the dust, and soon enough, left out of the race altogether. Having been on the outside now for some time helps me see it for what it could be, not for what it is – a vantage point largely inaccessible to those currently at the helm.

So, what might this look like?

Snapshot of a future afternoon at a reimagined GAC

A joint US–UK delegation has just arrived at 125 Sussex to learn more about the strong momentum behind the department's recently launched Cross-Sectoral Leaders Program – an initiative aimed at developing a cadre of leaders who seamlessly transition between the public, not-for-profit, and private sectors, potentially several times over the course of their careers, bringing new thought and skills back to GAC at regular intervals. In the Skelton Lobby, new Foreign Service Officers are hosting a department-wide innovation competition to select the top five initiatives that support the department's corporate purpose/vision with a \$20 million funding envelope. On the fifth floor, a top-performing Director is taking her last meeting before heading off for a three-year secondment as the chief sustainability officer at a Canadian-headquartered global cleantech firm, while a VP from that same company is picking up his diplomatic passport to serve as senior trade commissioner in Chile. Meanwhile a mid-level officer is having her semi-annual meeting with her career advancement officer to discuss the pathway to achieve her ambassadorial aspirations.

What is the best model for arriving at this imagined future?

It's certainly not a matter of propping up the antiquated bureaucratic systems of our current diplomatic establishment that's marked by risk-averse decision-making, limited meaningful empowerment of diplomats on the ground (from junior officers to handcuffed Ambassadors), ineffective human resource management (e.g. rigid job classifications, conflating seniority with capability, broken promotion competitions, an effectively non-existent talent management program), complacency among the upper ranks in which

too many of the executives have very limited experience abroad, and incessant reporting loops and echo chambers of career bureaucrats communicating with other career bureaucrats. It's these remnants of the past that have held GAC back from realizing its potential.

We're now in a new era marked by geopolitical power shifts, a war in Europe, a global pandemic, and a climate change crisis. We need to identify innovative solutions to face this new set of global challenges as we carve a path for Canada to meaningfully contribute on the international stage while effectively pursuing our national interests. To embark on a path that positions GAC to realize the type of brighter future envisioned above, the following key imperatives must be incorporated into GAC's DNA:

- **More empowerment throughout the ranks.** GAC is blessed with among the most talented workforces in the country. And yet, in recent years, it has largely squandered this most important of resources through a failed human resources system. GAC must undertake a complete overhaul of its human resources practices, with an aim to unleash this talent, empowering its employees at all levels, relinking performance to promotions and advancement, and providing the necessary career support and talent management – all with a view to creating the best Foreign Service in the world. Why send a multilingual senior Latin America expert to Bogotá, only to have her spend half her time taking notes for her ambassador and snapping photos for social media? Why continue to staff the human resources branch with rotational Foreign Service Officers rather than seasoned and permanent HR professionals? And perhaps it's time to rethink the well-worn assertion that it's of no concern to GAC if a Foreign Service Officer leaves the ranks as there are hundreds waiting in the wings to fill their spot. While there still may be some truth to this for now, that line of thinking is a damaging commodification of GAC's most valuable asset – its people.

If we just continue to tinker with the machine, we're bound to be left in the dust, and soon enough, left out of the race altogether.



Canadian Embassy outreach visit to the state of Durango, Mexico.
(Author, third from right.)

Without a coherent strategy guiding our national efforts, we're hanging our future on hope alone.

- **Taking smart risks.** The prevalence of risk-aversion, particularly among the senior ranks, is a recipe for bureaucratic inertia, feeding a bias towards inaction and channeling energy into low value work. GAC's workforce needs to be encouraged to take intelligent and calculated risks, with the default toggled to exercising the appropriate level of caution, rather than an abundance of caution. GAC management must recognize that the risk of doing nothing also has high stakes, i.e., the "don't rock the boat" mentality leads to missing the boat entirely. As a backstop to support this more ambitious approach, GAC could seek inspiration from the US

State Department's "Dissent Channel" by embedding a formal process for ensuring that constructive criticism of potential policies reaches decision-makers.

- **Embracing cross-sectoral diversity.** GAC needs to evolve into embracing a more heterogeneous diplomatic ecosystem that prioritizes a broader diversity of perspectives and experience, beyond just career civil servants. This model could include the development of a cadre of leaders with a proven track record of effectively navigating across disciplines and sectors. These professionals would seamlessly transition between the public, not-for-profit, and private sectors, potentially several times over the course of their careers, helping to break down parochial silos along the way. Given their breadth of experience, these seasoned operators would be better positioned to focus on developing big-picture strategic thinking – a critical piece that is all too often neglected compared to the monumental amount of time spent on transactional bureaucracy (e.g., briefing notes, coordinating committees). Whereas the US Foreign Service is known for embracing the "up or out" principle, GAC's principle could be that you need to "get out to go up". Ultimately, empowering a broader talent pool under this model would create opportunities we don't even know we're missing.


- **A cultural rewiring.** Too many among GAC's senior management and employees don't feel responsible for the degradation of the department – which has become a shadow of its former self. Nor do they recognize how their actions are reinforcing a culture of complacency; indeed, their complacency is consistently rewarded with promotions and senior appointments. All undertakings should be imbued with a broader sense of ownership and purpose, and with a bias towards nimbleness and agility in all processes. Why are senior managers rewarded for taking on positions in the human resources branch, when we all agree human resources management is the problem? Since joining the Foreign Service in 2006, every single director of the assignments division had gone on to a Head of Mission position, and yet none accomplished their stated goals and the culture of nepotism and opaque decision-making is worse than ever.

- **Clarity of purpose.** Most importantly of all, GAC needs to have a clear purpose and vision. There is a critical unanswered refrain heard from many insiders: "What is our foreign policy?". GAC needs to clearly articulate what it wants to achieve, how it intends to get there, how this will improve the lives of Canadians, and the mark it wants to leave on the world. Any such purpose needs to be clearly linked with Canada's national competitiveness and industrial strategies (among others), and must leverage alignment with efforts in the private and not-for-profit sectors as well as academia. Sustainable resource development is one such area where there is broad alignment across all of these sectors – but we have failed to fully harness this convergence to pursue common goals. By deepening the integration between these sectors to achieve Canada's foreign policy goals, we can achieve a much bigger impact on the world stage. In a re-imagined future, Canada could position itself as the leader in sustainable development at the forefront of the Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) movement, and forge non-traditional alliances with countries pursuing similar goals. Through the practices of Canadian companies, NGOs and others operating internationally, we could execute on this vision, lending significant credibility to our messaging. Unfortunately, under our current model, our words and perceptions about our reputation are often noticeably misaligned with our actions and the perceptions out in the real world. We talk about these issues, but are all too often absent on the ground.

Only once this clarity of purpose is adopted and engrained across the organization can GAC begin to reassert its relevance in the modern era as the central vehicle for leading Canadian diplomacy. Without a coherent strategy guiding our national efforts, we're hanging our future on hope alone.

Hope and hashtags are not strategy, they are the hallmarks of a listless foreign ministry, grasping for purpose.

An urgent overhaul

There is an urgent need to fundamentally rethink the nature and function of Canadian diplomacy. This is the challenge of our time for Canada's foreign policy. Those at the helm of the diplomatic establishment, whose careers have been defined by rising up through an antiquated system, may not be willing or able to provide the leadership required in this time of deep and profound change. The COVID-19 crisis has given us an opportunity to reshape our foreign policy and improve our diplomatic corps to better serve Canada's national interests. Are we doing this? Are we capable of real change? The temptation will be to use the crisis to save money. If our ambition is global leadership, our goal ought to be to lead the world in areas where we know we can pack a punch and make a difference. 



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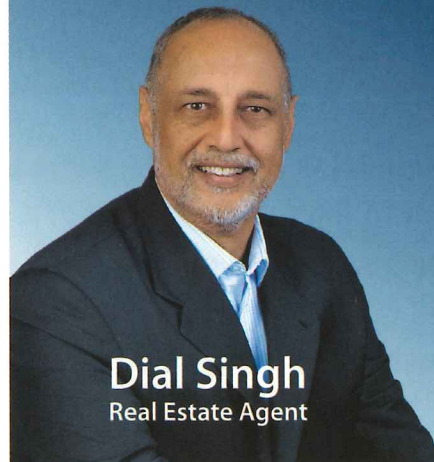
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FEATURE // REPORTAGE

Joe Clark Wants Soup

by Ken Neufeld



A Wheat Complex
Toyota Landcruiser drives
past Mount Hanang

Prime Minister Joe Clark lost his luggage on an official visit to the Middle East, and it may have cost him his job. The incident seemed to paint the Prime Minister as hapless, and Clark was turfed out of office by a hapless-intolerant electorate after only 10 months at the helm.



KEN NEUFELD is now retired but still making soup. His career meandered through a CUSO placement at a Girls' Secondary School in Iringa, Tanzania, the Wheat Project, CIDA, DFAIT, and GAC postings in Haiti, Peru (twice), Bolivia, Tanzania (again), Mozambique, and Afghanistan with periodic stints in Gatineau and Ottawa for re-education. He is also blissfully married to Cheryl Frankiewicz.

THE NEXT TIME JOE CLARK lost his luggage neither he nor the media noticed. It was 1987 and Joe Clark had been downgraded to Foreign Minister in the Brian Mulroney government.

The other protagonist in this story is me, in Arusha town, the administrative guy for a great big Canadian government-funded effort to help Tanzania grow wheat.

Arusha in those days was a sleepy town on the shoulder of Mount Meru, not far from Mount Kilimanjaro, eking by on the remnants of its glory days of safari fame, coffee plantations, and as the capital of the East African Community. Arusha had even starred in a movie called *Hatari*, improbably featuring John Wayne lassoing a rhinoceros. But by 1987 the East African Community (Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania) had self-destructed after Idi Amin seized the Ugandan state in a violent coup d'état. Relations between Tanzania and Kenya got so bad over the disposition of EAC's assets that they closed their mutual border for years. The socialist policies of the Tanzanian government had severe negative impacts on the agricultural and tourism sectors and neither tourists nor coffee beans were easy to find any more. Alongside the few remaining safari operators and coffee growers you would also have found an unlikely community of Canadian scientists, farmers, and mechanics.

By the end of the 1960s Tanzania had come around to the idea that its best path out of poverty was self-sufficiency. One means to achieve this, believed President Julius Nyerere, was "import substitution". Seems to make sense at first glance – don't spend scarce foreign currency on buying stuff from abroad when you can grow or make it at home, employing your own citizens who would thereby learn all kinds of new skills and before you know it, a virtuous cycle. The idea was particularly attractive for agricultural products as farming is what most Tanzanians did, and the country appeared to have plenty of unused land. In fact, 230 kilometres southwest of Arusha there is a high plateau with fertile soil and a climate suitable for dryland wheat production – the kind you might



The author posing in a wheat field.

find in southern Saskatchewan. President Nyerere told his friend Prime Minister Trudeau (the Elder) about the land around Mount Hanang and his wheat dream; maybe Canada could provide some advice. The eagle-eyed reader perched in 2022 will have spotted a couple of flaws in this import substitution idea. Things grown or made locally by inexperienced and under-capitalized companies and farmers tend to be of poor quality while also being more expensive. In Tanzania, these problems were compounded by the government's policy of nationalizing a significant percentage of the means of production. Nevertheless, the wheat dream launched itself on the path to government-owned and operated farms.

By 1970 there were scientists from Agriculture Canada looking at the wheat question from every

angle, bouncing about the bush with shovels, soil sample bags, and rain gauges. They confirmed that the soil on the plateau was exceptionally rich and could certainly grow wheat. The climate is dry, but rainfall averages and its annual distribution were not dissimilar to the dryland farming regions of Saskatchewan. Not that the place looked like Saskatchewan what with an extinct volcano looming above thorny acacia trees shading impala and ostrich. The high plateau looked unused to the untrained eye as it was not farmed in the way we might have understood agriculture at that time. In fact, the land was home to the Barabaig people who migrated from the Nile Valley 1,000 years ago. They certainly had not been pining for wheat fields in their yard; but nobody asked them.

Fast-forward to 1987 and a visit to the Hanang Plateau is a mind-blowing experience. Seven farms each cultivating 10,000 acres are producing tens of thousands of metric tonnes of wheat a year. Every farm was like a village run by a Tanzanian manager supported by two Canadian farmer-advisors (not scientists but farmers contracted off their farms in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta). The seven farms in turn were supported by a larger village with a huge service centre and agriculture experts. In total something like 5,000 people lived and worked at the Hanang Wheat complex. Huge tractors and combines roamed the enormous fields scaring up ostrich and the occasional leopard on their circuits.

Back in Arusha, a large research station developed wheat varieties adapted to the local conditions, studied wheat pests, and logged climatic



A Wheat Complex farmer proudly displays his versatile tractor and cultivator.

data. The research station and the farms were in turn supported by an administrative office in the centre of Arusha. In all, between the farm advisors, mechanic advisors, road builders, scientists and their families, there were well over 100 Canadians living at Hanang and in Arusha. From my office in what used to be the East African Community Headquarters I ran the administrative office for the Canadian side of this massive program and that is the fate which put me on a collision course with Joe Clark's luggage.

Arusha is nearly 700 kilometres from Dar es Salaam where, unbeknownst to us, the Canadian High Commission was busy organizing Joe Clark's participation in a conference of the coalition of African countries surrounding South Africa (the Southern African Development Community – SADC). These countries, opponents of the racist apartheid

members were on their own. Suddenly us wheat project folks were in the Government of Canada spotlight for our office space, housing, and vehicles right in Arusha town. Before we knew what hit us, Joe Clark's visit became a sort of high school field trip with his entourage billeted in Canadian houses all around town.

Joe Clark wanted to have lunch with the Canadian Community to press flesh and say thank you. Being an Alberta boy, he was intrigued by the farms and was a bit taken aback by how many Canucks were in the woodwork. All our plans for a big Prairie-style barbeque lunch were squelched however when minion Vaughan Johnson told us in no uncertain terms that Clark wanted soup. Just soup, maybe a slice of bread. So soup it was, made by farmers' wives and even one by me.

Vaughan Johnson was a legendary Department of Foreign Affairs protocol officer assigned to make sure the Foreign Minister's world tour went smoothly and that he got soup for lunch. He arrived in Arusha a few days before Clark landed at the Kilimanjaro International Airport in a Government of Canada Challenger jet and from that time on, he and I were tied at the hip. He was kind of like Mr. Wolf in the film *Pulp Fiction*; able to handle any situation without breaking a sweat and priding himself at never getting alarmed. The kind of guy who would not lose his boss' luggage. I was about to put his sang-froid to the test.

Joe Clark was visiting quite a few countries on this trip and meeting a lot of presidents and prime ministers. So, when he landed the first things out of the hold of the Challenger jet were two big aluminum cases stuffed with gifts symbolic of Canada such as Inuit art, maple syrup, high tech communications devices, and maybe some extra

From Dar es Salaam to the wheat farms was 1,000 km and took a week on horrendous roads.



The head manager of the Wheat Complex discusses the crops with a Canadian advisor.

regime of South Africa, collaborated on a wide range of issues trying to promote their own economic growth and integration while attempting to exert pressure on South Africa to reform. Canada and many other wealthy countries supported SADC's objectives in principle and with financing which bought them an invitation to these meetings. Joe Clark was to represent Canada and deliver some platitudes.

The problem, which quickly became evident, was that there would be many platitude-deliverers at the conference, all of them supported by an army of minions. Arusha was barely a city back then with limited capacity to host even a modest conference, and this was a big one with presidential delegations from many African countries and big shots from donor countries and the United Nations. The Tanzanian government would provide a hotel room for Joe Clark and one advisor, but the other 30 Canadian delegation





Joe Clark
ordering soup.

suits, who knows. Mr. Johnson agreed to my proposal that the most appropriate place to keep these items was my house.

A 70,000 acre farming operation needs a lot of machinery and Tanzania did not manufacture any of it. In those days development assistance (or foreign aid as it was also called) tended to be tied to the donor. While this seemed to make sense to politicians and to taxpayers, it led to huge inefficiencies and bizarre situations. Most of the machinery on the farms was paid for by Canada and that meant it had to be purchased in Canada and shipped half-way around the world to a country which did not have dealers who could service this machinery. We had Massey Ferguson combine harvesters, Versatile swathers and tractors, Champion graders, grain wagons from Regina, International trucks, and just about anything else you could think of. We also had to supply all the spare parts, filters, tires, special lubricants, and a thousand other things needed to keep these machines going. In hindsight it seems insane.

Months or even years later ships full of stuff would arrive in Dar es Salaam and be sent to Arusha by train and then transferred to trucks for delivery to the farms a couple of hundred kilometres west of Arusha. The most urgent stuff would sometimes get left at my place and then anyone driving out to the farms could take it so it wouldn't have to wait for the next big convoy.

My assistant Ali took over the handling of the shipping and forwarding while I was distracted by the Clark visit. Ali dropped by my place to see if there was anything for the farms. "Well," said my cook Rafael, "maybe those big aluminum cases sitting in the corner of the living room?"

A couple of hours later Vaughan and I arrived at the house on our way to the airport to prepare for Clark's departure. With a sense of foreboding, I asked Rafael in Kiswahili where he had moved the aluminum cases. He told me Ali had picked them up a while ago and was on his way to the farms 12 hours drive away. Vaughan did not speak Kiswahili but he may have picked up a jump in my stress level. True to his reputation, he did not have a meltdown when I told him what had happened. There was not really a telephone system in Arusha, but we did have two-way radios. By some miracle I was able to locate the truck still at the research station taking on additional cargo. We recovered the cases and off we went on the 55 kilometres to the airport with just enough time in hand to get everything ready for take-off – if nothing else went wrong.

My heart rate was nearly back to normal when the back right tire blew. By now it was dark, and we were in a rural area known for bandits. Fortunately, I had a lot of experience changing flat tires after years in Tanzania and figured I could impress with my mechanical prowess, get the new tire on, and still get to the airport before either the bandits or Clark's convoy showed up. Which was all well and good, but the jack was missing, and we were out of radio range of the cavalry. It seemed to me at this point that Joe Clark's luggage was determined to get lost, stolen, or missing by any other means and that my name was to live on in infamy. But then my friend Mama Kuku, the chicken farmer, happened by and saved the day, Joe Clark's luggage, and Vaughn Johnson's reputation, with her hi-lift jack. bdo



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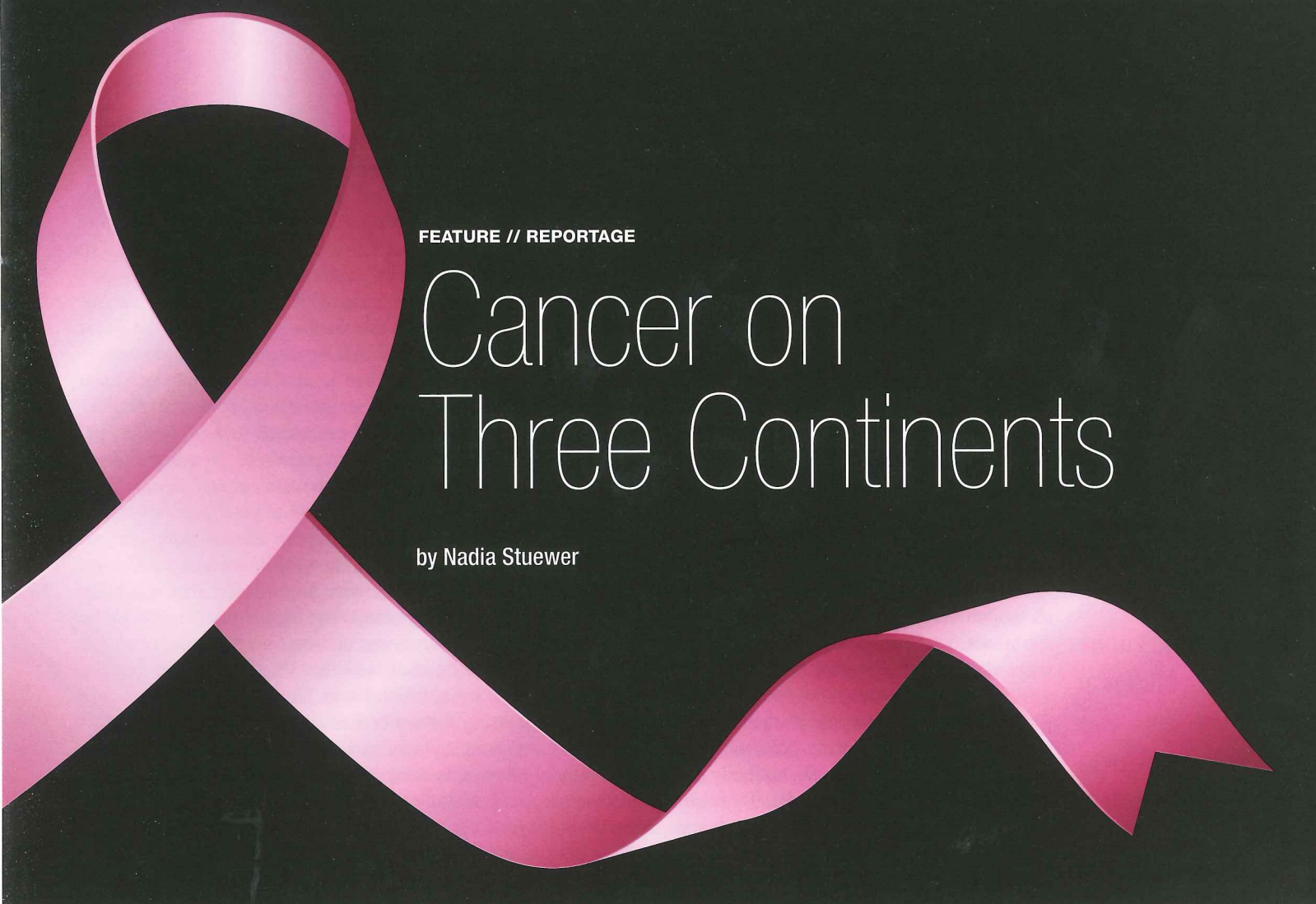
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FEATURE // REPORTAGE

Cancer on Three Continents

by Nadia Stuewer

NADIA STUEWER joined the Foreign Service in 2003. She was posted in Geneva and was a trailing spouse in Delhi and Dakar. She lives in Ottawa where she is a creator of beautiful things.

FSD 41. CAN YOU NAME IT without referring to the Foreign Service Directive (FSD) handbook? It's the one for health care travel where "the standards of medical care ... are inadequate in comparison with those in Canada." Like most of us, I didn't think much about getting seriously ill on post. If anything, I was more focused on accidents, since the simple act of crossing the street in many countries makes you realise how fragile our bodies are. In Delhi, where my spouse Jim Stone and I were posted from 2015 to 2018, there were so many immediate threats – car accidents; feral, possibly rabid, dogs; potholes in the sidewalks; and motorcycles on the sidewalks ...

However, in 2019, I learned about FSD 41 intimately. In 2018, Jim was cross-posted to Dakar, and in July 2019, I was diagnosed with stage 2 breast cancer. I'd noticed something odd one morning and was able to see my GP late that afternoon. The GP found a lump I hadn't noticed and sent me for a mammogram. The radiologist was concerned and suggested going abroad for a biopsy. While the mission sent me the text of FSD 41, which is very terse, a friend who had used FSD 41 to travel for a diagnostic

test a few months earlier walked me through the steps. I called the responsible medical officer at Health Canada ("don't call the general number, they don't give you the correct information"). After sending him barely legible scans of my x-ray and ultrasound, he recommended that the Head of Mission approve FSD 41 travel for the biopsy. I was given the choice of London or Paris. I was deep in denial that this could be anything serious and decided I'd prefer a quick weekend in London, one of my favourite cities. I was put in touch with Health Canada's fixer there, a well-connected GP who got me an appointment with the London Breast Institute (LBI) within days.

Less than two weeks after my initial GP visit in Dakar, I arrived in London after a sleepless flight. I did have a moment of panic as I was packing my two-day suitcase: "What if it's cancer?" Jim replied, "It will be fine." I was too early to check in to my hotel, so I dropped my bags and walked to the clinic. I arrived at the clinic unslept, unshowered, and unaccompanied. Private clinics in London have espresso makers and cookies in the waiting rooms, which helped

The first words out of his mouth were, “You have Stage 0 breast cancer and you need a mastectomy.” I was stunned.

me stay awake. After the biopsy and a new set of scans with higher-resolution machines, I met the surgeon. The first words out of his mouth were, “You have Stage 0 breast cancer (DCIS or ductal carcinoma in situ) and you need a mastectomy.” I was stunned. I was not expecting a diagnosis and treatment options yet – I came for the biopsy, not a diagnosis. But DCIS can be diagnosed from a mammogram alone. The surgeon softened the blow somewhat by telling me it was unlikely that there would be more cancer. I was in so much shock I was incapable of hailing a cab to get me back to the hotel, where I burst into tears while I checked in to my shoebox hotel room.

Two days later I returned to the LBI for the biopsy results. To my further dismay, the doctor announced I also had Stage 2 cancer, far more serious than the DCIS. Jim got on the next flight to London, arriving less than 24 hours later. The following week, the pathology results arrived which meant I could start the treatment: 12 weeks of IV chemotherapy followed by a mastectomy and a year of two IV antibody (immunotherapy) drugs every three weeks. Depending on how the cancer reacted to the initial chemo, more chemo or radiation might be necessary. The cancer was aggressive, which the doctor said meant that it would “eat up” the chemotherapy, so my prognosis was good.

As the plans for my cancer treatment came together, the doctor at Health Canada outlined my choices: treatment in London, Dakar, or Ottawa, or termination of the posting. While none of these were ideal, Dakar was far and above my first choice. It was home. I didn’t want to stay in London, although I had grown to trust my medical team, and I didn’t want to go to Ottawa. I wanted to be with my husband, my apartment, the life I’d created in Dakar. Ending the posting early was the worst possible option. The cross-posting the previous year from Delhi to Dakar had been intensely stressful. I had already started chemo. How would I manage to do the inventory and organize things for packing up with my rapidly diminishing energy? Our tenants were on a one-year lease, which we couldn’t break, so we’d have to live in temporary accommodation and move back into our home later.

Jim stayed with me in London for two weeks, and every day we would talk through these options and strategize how to continue the treatment at home. Health Canada was hesitant to let us return to Dakar but did not forbid it. I had long discussions about whether getting my treatment in Dakar was foolish

or wise. I was concerned about the availability of the drugs and things going wrong. Using my contacts, I eventually found a cancerologist in Dakar, who agreed to take me on while I continued under the primary care of my London oncologist. When Jim returned to Dakar, he interviewed the cancerologist and toured the clinic, which looked acceptable. We decided to take the chance. Nevertheless, the threat of being sent home hung over us the whole time.

Meanwhile, I had my first treatment in London a week after the surgical insertion of a portacath under my collarbone that connected to my jugular vein through which the drugs would be administered. An allergic reaction to both my chemotherapy drug and one of the two antibodies postponed my return to Dakar. Reactions to the chemo drug are not rare, and the following week I received a different, much more expensive formulation that my body tolerated. My oncologist figured my reaction to the antibody drug was similar to what some of us get with a flu shot, and that I’d probably be fine the next time, which I was. However, since I was only getting the antibodies every three weeks, I had to extend my stay in London to get the second dose there. The delay meant I spent more than five weeks in London, more than half of them alone. By the time I left I was losing copious amounts of hair and had become fairly lethargic. The overnight flight back to Dakar through Casablanca was among the most difficult I’ve taken.

I left London with almost \$15,000 worth of chemotherapy in my carry on – most precious cargo – because it was not available in Senegal. The two antibody drugs were approved in Senegal but had to be ordered by the pharmacy from France and Germany three weeks in advance. We soon got into a schedule of picking up the drugs the day before my treatment and ordering the next batch at the same time, paying the full \$10,000 cost up front. Allianz, our insurer, only reimbursed us for the drug costs at 80% (co-pay 20%) because they were provided outside of a clinic. Jim could only request reimbursement once the clinic provided proof that the drugs were administered. After we paid \$3000 out of pocket for the co-pay, the catastrophic drug coverage clause was triggered, and Allianz covered 100% of the cost.

Not only did I have to bring my own drugs to the clinic, but we had to bring supplies including the needle, saline, and tubing. The first time Jim went to three different pharmacies and still couldn’t find all the items on the list. We eventually got the hang of this too, buying six-packs of saline.

When I left London, the plan was to return after finishing the remaining eight weeks of chemotherapy for the mastectomy. However, once I finished the

chemo in early October, there was a confusing exchange of emails with Health Canada and Global Affairs Canada (GAC) about whether FSD 41 would cover the trip for the mastectomy. Was it considered follow up treatment that wouldn't be covered by FSD 41? Or part of the original treatment? It was suggested that I go back to London for some scans and then my case would be re-evaluated, although it was clear that the next step was surgery. In the end, my trip to London for the surgery was approved for FSD 41, but the confusion about whether and how that would happen caused agonizing stress that I could barely handle. By the time I finished the 12 weeks of chemo, I had counted about 25 side effects, but none were as bad as negotiating my future with GAC.

Everyone waits anxiously for the pathology report after cancer surgery. Although the pre-surgery scans indicated that the cancer had responded well to the chemo, only the pathology was able to give a clear answer on whether I would need further treatment. The possibility of more treatment – harsher chemo or radiotherapy, or both – scared me less than the question of where it would happen. I felt I had reached the end of GAC's patience and that if I needed further treatment, I would have to return to Canada for it. I packed my bags in Dakar with the possibility in the back of my head that I might not return again. So, my relief when we finally received the pathology reports, at 4 p.m. on a Friday afternoon before Jim's flight back to Dakar, was twofold when it indicated a complete pathological response to the chemotherapy. The best news possible! I would still have to continue the immunotherapy every three weeks until the following summer, but there was no further treatment.

I was not allowed to fly until two weeks after the surgery, due to the risk of blood clots. When I returned to Dakar, I promptly fell and broke my foot due to chemo clumsiness, while Jim was on a business trip to Mauritania. By this point I was used to managing my medical issues on my own. Jim came back in time to drive me to the appointment where a fibreglass cast was put on my foot, a cast I wore for three weeks. The only advice I received from the doctor when he cut the cast off was to walk barefoot in the sand and always wear "baskets" (running shoes). My physiotherapist-chiropractor, ironically at whose office I broke my foot, helped me rehabilitate my foot and walk again.

By February 2020, I was finally feeling stronger, recovering from the worst of the chemo side effects and walking longer distances without pain. We were planning a celebratory trip to Portugal but abandoned those plans when COVID hit Europe. On March 17, when we got our order to evacuate Senegal in less

than 36 hours, I felt my life fall apart for the second time in less than nine months. We left Dakar the day before my antibody treatment, which had already been paid for. Back in Ottawa, it took me a month to make the arrangements with the Ottawa Hospital to continue them. When I was finally able to speak to an oncologist, he said it was acceptable to wait up to 8 weeks between treatments, so my health did not suffer from the delay. However, my mental health did, from the frustration and worry. I've been told that the Ontario medical system is very good at dealing with breast cancer. It is less good at dealing with someone coming from abroad and needing to continue treatment. Especially during a pandemic, to be fair.

It took Jim several months of correspondence with the pharmacy to be refunded the cost of the unused antibody drugs. Luckily for us, there was another woman in Dakar receiving this treatment, so the pharmacy considered a refund. Lucky, also, that Jim grabbed the receipt when we frantically packed our suitcases. However, they would not reverse the charge on the credit card, insisting on refunding it in cash. The spouse of one of the few remaining staff at the embassy helped us out. It was a great relief when the last of the money transfers showed up in Jim's bank account.

I had my last antibody treatment in August 2020 and celebrated by ceremonially burning the black ribbed tank top I bought at a charity shop in London and worn to every treatment but the first. I continue to be in Ottawa on medical leave dealing with long-term side effects of the chemotherapy. More than anything, I feel grateful. Grateful that the cancer was caught early, that it was eminently treatable, that it responded well to the treatment, that I didn't need further chemo or radiation, that I was able to stay in Dakar when it mattered most. I'm grateful to have received excellent cancer care in three countries on three continents. [bdp](#)

I felt I had reached the end of GAC's patience and that if I needed further treatment, I would have to return to Canada for it.

VERN TURNER

1930–2021

by Lillian Thomsen

VERN TURNER, A FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER and Ambassador, with a career of extraordinary depth and breadth, died on December 26, 2021 in Ottawa. He was predeceased by his wife, Beryl.

His career included two stints in Vietnam as a political advisor on the international commissions supervising the implementation of agreements to resolve the long-standing conflict in the country. After a posting to London, where he met and married Beryl, Vern's career took him to Canada's Mission to the United Nations in New York in time for Canada's 1967–68 membership of the Security Council for a two-year term as a non-permanent member. Eric Bergbusch, a colleague and friend, provides a vignette of Vern's UN assignment below.

Vern then went on to a posting in Warsaw where he served as chargé for a long period. From there he went to Dar es Salaam as Acting High Commissioner before pitching up in Washington as the Minister (Political) during the Ford and Carter administrations.

In the final decade of his career Vern served as Ambassador to Israel before becoming Ambassador to the USSR for most of the Gorbachev era. As Eric's tribute below confirms, Vern was a pragmatic realist endowed with a formidable intellect. In Ottawa he and Beryl were frequently to be found at the National Arts Centre, where they were sustained supporters of its Orchestra.

I REMEMBER VERN TURNER A VIGNETTE BY ERIC BERGBUSCH

DURING THE INTENSE DEBATES in the Security Council before, during, and after the Arab–Israeli (Six Day) war of 1967, Vern Turner worked as George Ignatieff's principal assistant at the Canadian Permanent Mission to the UN in New York. The proceedings of the Council were televised and followed closely in Canada and elsewhere. Mr. Ignatieff, as Canada's Permanent Representative, spoke in every phase of the debate to show Canada's concern, and desire to assist – so far as it could – in finding a lasting, peaceful solution. The prime minister, Lester Pearson, and the foreign minister, Paul Martin, both provided their own guidance in addition to that coming from the Department of External Affairs. But frequent interventions, sometimes through the night, created a frantic need for many speaking notes.

Vern was at the centre of this maelstrom in New York. He brought a healthy streak of cynicism to his work together with a wry sense of humour and a down-to-earth and pragmatic approach. Mr. Ignatieff, facing another day or night of debate, had the habit of asking Vern, Geoff Pearson in the UN division, and myself in the Africa and Middle East division for speech material. The pace of demands for words, day and night, was debilitating: if we found time to watch television, we would often see George casually pick up our three separate texts and weave together passages from each.

In the midst of all this, Vern called Geoff and myself and proposed a solution. We would consult among ourselves whenever George phoned us to ask for speech material, we would discuss the themes briefly and decide who should provide a text. The other two would try to get some rest that day or night. It worked. Mr. Ignatieff was just as cogent, but a bit less orotund, speaking from one text rather than three – always adding his own words and style. We also entered into a conspiracy to cut out, whenever we could, Mr. Ignatieff's favourite but over-used, phrase, "At this neuralgic point." That worked some of the time.

Happily, Vern Turner never lost his sense of humour nor his sense of proportion during the rest of his long and productive career.

ERIC BERGBUSCH first met Vern Turner while he was on his first posting in London, circa 1958. It was Vern who welcomed him and other candidates for the Foreign Service to Canada House and in due course escorted him into the High Commissioner's grand office overlooking Trafalgar Square. There, Vern introduced him to a panel of seven dignitaries headed by the High Commissioner (and former Premier) George Drew and the Deputy High Commissioner, George Ignatieff. Together they would decide whether Eric had the qualities needed to enter the Foreign Service. Happily, they thought he did. Since then, Eric has always had a positive view of Vern's achievements.

The Hungry Diplomat

by Lisa Bitto



BELGIAN TRAPPIST AND ABBEY BEERS. When I moved to Belgium a couple of years ago, I didn't drink beer and that didn't bother me a bit. But one day I realized that if I failed to take advantage that I lived in a land famous for its beer, I would surely regret it.

LISA BITTO is a political Foreign Service Officer and believes food is one of life's greatest simple pleasures. She enjoys using culinary diplomacy to bring people together and has been known to create cookie distribution lists at work.

SO I DECIDED TO GIVE IT A GO and picked up a few different kinds at my local grocery store. They all have impressive selections; Belgians take their beer very seriously. Even the smallest grocery stores are crammed full of well-crafted brews that would make beer connoisseurs back home weep. The ones that caught my attention, in part because of their labels, were the beers that were labelled Trappist. I had no idea what that meant, but I was curious and do love researching, so I've put in the legwork and have even made it part of my regional travel, visiting four abbeys to learn more. It's a tough gig, but I've made the sacrifice for you, Dear Reader.

It turns out the answer is easy, though not straightforward. When the Catholic Benedictine order was introduced into France from Italy, they were established in Citeaux, in Burgundy. Citeaux was named for the *cistel* reeds that grow on the river near the abbey, first giving them the name "Cistercian" monks. In the 17th century, the Cistercian order at La Trappe Abbey in Normandy underwent reforms under the abbot of Rancé, lending that group the name "Trappist". The French Revolution was not kind to those representing the Church and many Trappists moved to Belgium and other areas when their abbeys were destroyed.

To build their monasteries, Cistercian monks were often given wetlands; this required them to become water management experts. Consequently, when you visit, you'll see many abbeys have ponds or other engineered bodies of water. What does this have to do with beer? Well, you've got to drink something with your meals. Beer requires good water, which they had plenty of. Beer was also a way for the monasteries to meet the Benedictine requirement of being self-supporting and financing abbey construction. Trappist monks live by three tenets: prayer, work, and hospitality. Beer brewing is one form of labour that allowed them to support both their abbey and community – a significant share of profits from their sales are donated to charity.

Eight Trappist abbeys formed the International Trappist Association in 1997 to protect the name "Trappist" and prevent non-Trappists from using the term for marketing purposes. It's essentially the same as an AOC, with certification requiring some strict criteria, including that brewing has to take place in an abbey and be performed or supervised by the monks. The second part is becoming increasingly tricky as the population of Trappist monks is aging and steadily dwindling; some monasteries have closed as a result. It begs the question whether the Trappist beers available

now will still be around a decade or two in the future; when a beer loses its Trappist designation, any number of changes could be made to the ingredients or beer-making process in the name of increasing profits. Thirteen abbeys produce Trappist beer, six Trappist breweries in Belgium, two in the Netherlands, and one each in Austria, France, Italy, Spain, the UK, and the US, but only 11 of those are able to label it as an *Authentic Trappist Product*.

Beer in Belgium is taken as seriously as wine is in France. Lovers of the brew will be particularly impressed to know that Westvleteren, which has the coveted title of “best beer in the world,” is here in Belgium. Its product is in such high demand that outside local restaurants and bars, residents can only buy a maximum of two cases through a complex online lottery system. I found some for sale in a local beer shop and bought a bottle ... for €18. For the record, I enjoy my favourite Westmalle Trappist beer for about a tenth of the price. Many travellers have been surprised to find themselves wobbly after only one or two glasses: alcohol levels in Belgian beers can reach the equivalent of wine (and is, of course, generally served in larger portions).

As the world’s third-largest exporter of beer, after Mexico and the Netherlands, marketing is everywhere in Belgian beer culture. Each Trappist beer has its own chalice-shaped glass that is supposed to bring out the best of its signature beer. When you order one at a Belgian restaurant or bar, the beer will inevitably be served in its branded glass, or else will come with profuse apologies. There are also endless non-Trappist abbey beers, like Maredsous, that carefully highlight their abbey roots. Abbey beers may come from a Trappist abbey that doesn’t meet all the criteria for the designation, or may have no association with an abbey at all; the implication of the quality of abbey-brewed beer is marketing gold.

Having only studied and never seen a Trappist abbey up close, I had built up something of a romantic notion of how an abbey functions. When I mentioned my fascination to a French colleague, she responded, “Ugh, they are prisoners; they never leave.” That was a bit of a wake-up call, as the requirement for hospitality had given me the impression that they integrated with their communities. Not so much, it turns out.

But you certainly can visit some of the abbeys; each has its own version of hospitality. Many will host religious groups and have quarters that anyone can stay in for a few days. Some



Top: Maredsous Abbey, Anhée, Namur. Founded in 1872.

Centre: Westmalle Abbey, Westmalle, Antwerp. Founded in 1794.

Bottom: Orval Abbey, Florenville, province of Luxembourg. Founded in 1132.



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– but not all – also allow visitors to access the grounds, though there are strict boundaries and you will most often only catch a glimpse of a resident if you are lucky. Beer isn't the only treasure you can find when you visit. Some of the beer-producing abbeys also offer artisanal cheese, or bread. Many abbeys, including the Trappist ones, will also carry products produced by other abbeys in the region, providing each access to a significantly larger clientele. This includes cookies, honey, syrups, herbs, supplements, bath products, and lotions.

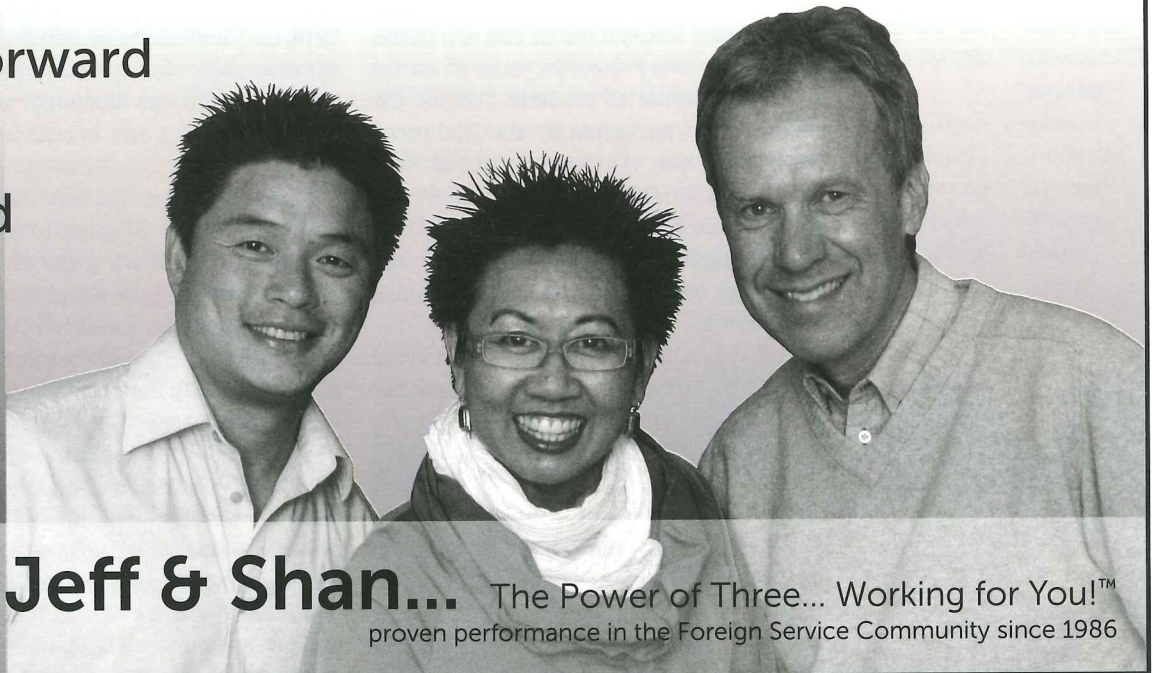
Learning about the history of Trappist brewing has made me appreciate the beer here so much more. Enjoying the offerings, as well as visiting the abbeys, has added a layer of richness to my time in Belgium. If you are lucky enough to get the chance to visit, I especially recommend Orval Abbey, near the French border, where significant effort has gone into explaining the abbey's story that begins with a trout returning the lost wedding ring of an Italian countess. Whether you are a die-hard beer drinker or not, it is well worth taking in a glass of a thousand years of history. 



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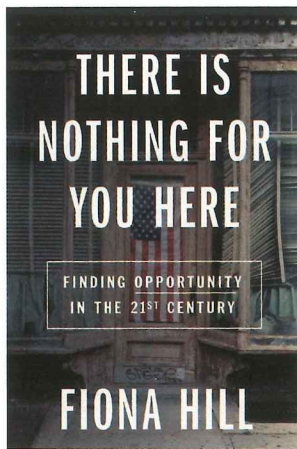
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BOOK REVIEW // CRITIQUE DE LIVRE

There is Nothing for You Here

Finding Opportunity in the 21st Century

reviewed by David MacDuff

BY FIONA HILL

HARPER COLLINS

OCTOBER, 2021, 432 pp, \$43

ISBN 9780358574316

DAVID MacDUFF is a career Foreign Service Officer whose experience includes Canada–US and Canada–Asia relations. He is also the founding chair of the North America Study Group of the Canadian International Council, National Capital Branch.

THE “IMPROBABLE FIONA HILL,” as the author calls herself, emerged into the limelight in the first impeachment trial of former US President Donald Trump in 2019. Previously a respected Russia expert in the think tank circles of Washington, D.C. and a professional staff member of the White House’s National Security Council, she was called to testify about the Trump Administration’s relations with Russia and Ukraine.

Hill gained attention not only for her bird’s eye perspective of Trump’s White House, but also her unlikely personal story. She was born in 1965 in the former coal mining town of Bishop Auckland, County Durham (northeastern England) to a coal miner turned hospital porter and to a nurse, about as far away from the halls of power in the US capital as possible. Amidst her unprivileged background, the industrial decline of the 1980s was woven into her daily experience and the context for her life chances. Indeed, the title of the book refers to blunt advice from her father: she had to get out if she wanted to maximize her potential.

Hill did indeed depart Bishop Auckland physically, although she has retained her distinctive accent and it is clear that she never lost her familial and emotional ties of place. Indeed, these ties constitute the backbone of the book: how forgotten places and people across the United Kingdom and the United States formed the basis for the populism reflected in the election of Trump and the victory of the Brexit side in the UK referendum in 2016.

There is Nothing for You Here, is divided into four parts: “The Coal House,” in which Hill discusses her upbringing; “A Divided House,” detailing her experience in the United States during her studies for her Ph.D. in Russian history at Harvard; “The White House,” covering her service

as Senior Director for European and Russian Affairs at the National Security Council; and “Our House” in which she unveils her policy proposals to address persistent underdevelopment and divisions based on class and race.

Many readers will focus their attention on Part III, consistent with the interest that has motivated the publication of a raft of books on the internal machinations of the Trump White House. For her own part, Hill found that, despite her professional expertise as a think tank researcher, author of a leading book on Vladimir Putin, and former member of the National Intelligence Council, if she was thought of at all by the President and his advisors, it was merely as a secretary. Hill memorably refers to him calling her “darling” as he tried to summon her attention to revise a press release to be issued following a telephone call with Putin. Ultimately, the title of Chapter 10, “Russia Bitch”, tersely summarizes Hill’s standing among the political staffers in the White House.

But it is Hill’s broader message about the causes of the rise of populism that also deserves attention. Because of her vantage point of having grown up in a disadvantaged area, and then having studied Russia as its communist system was collapsing, Hill’s personal experiences give her an angle on international relations that is often lost amid seemingly abstract discussions of important but sky-high concepts. Hill deftly traces the deindustrialization of deprived areas of the United Kingdom, and the United States, and Russia, and finds a common thread in Brexit, Donald Trump’s election, and the dominance of Vladimir

Hill’s personal experiences give her an angle on international relations that is often lost amid seemingly abstract discussions of important but sky-high concepts.

Putin over Russia's political and economic system. The forgotten people in these forgotten places provided fertile ground for a populist backlash.

The diagnosis is insightful and the policy prescriptions are highly ambitious. In the case of the United States, Hill notes the galvanizing effect of the September 11 terrorist attacks in the creation of the Department of Homeland Security and calls for a similar government entity to be established to advance integrated economic development for underprivileged areas. Indeed, reaching back into history, to the end of World War II, she refers to the emerging threat of communism in devastated European countries and the United States' response through the Marshall Plan. Given current economic dislocation and underdevelopment in the United States, she proposes nothing less than a Marshall Plan for America. This would involve comprehensive investments to improve transportation and Internet linkages for underserved areas and the expansion of educational opportunities for promising students from less privileged backgrounds. This initiative, in her view, would lay the foundation for complementary efforts from philanthropists and community groups, creating an "infrastructure of opportunity" – a term that is a touchstone of the book.

The barriers to such an effort would be formidable. According to the respected Pew Research Institute, Americans' trust in the federal government to do the right thing just about always or most of the time has declined from 73 percent in 1958, when the question was first asked, to 24 percent when it was posed earlier this year. Surely the Republican Party, which dominates the rural areas of America that would benefit the most from Hill's proposed scheme, would be vehemently opposed to this "government intervention." Furthermore, security threats, such as the rise of communism in Europe after World War II and of international terrorism at the beginning of this century, have a unique catalytic effect, sparking transformational government responses, unlike long-term trends such as economic underdevelopment. Why this should be and how it could be changed are separate and important matters.

Hill argues that without a comprehensive, government-led approach, transformative

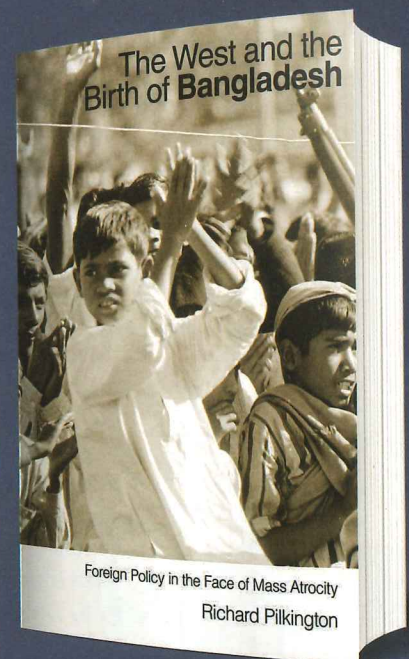
change is unlikely to happen. Even so, given the obstacles, perhaps a Plan B of rallying private foundations, philanthropy, and non-governmental organizations is the best that can be realistically expected, and perhaps policy should focus on encouraging these efforts.

What could Hill's book mean for Canada? Surely, such a "nice" country as ours does not have the accent or socio-economic discrimination that blighted Hill's upbringing and could easily have stymied her opportunities. She briefly touches on Canada, noting that, "In some advanced economic countries, such as Canada, access to health care, as well as good K-12 education is essentially the same no matter where you live. There is not the kind of spatial inequality in the infrastructure of opportunity for Canadians that Americans and Brits have to contend with."

A closer examination may, however, bring up points of commonality with her three countries of focus. For instance, in the UK, Hill discusses how the triangle of Oxford, Cambridge, and London has come to dominate transportation links and economic development; the prominence of the Toronto-Montreal-Ottawa triangle could be considered something of a parallel in Canada. And Canada has had its share of places and people that have felt forgotten; themes that are interwoven into much of the history of western Canada. Additionally, the rural/urban divide is one that is arguably sharpening. Hill's conclusion and afterword bring "forgotten places" down to the ground-level, with concrete suggestions about how citizens themselves can contribute to creating the infrastructure of opportunity in their own communities, through activities such as volunteering and mentorship. It may well be a message that Canadian readers wish to consider, and act upon.

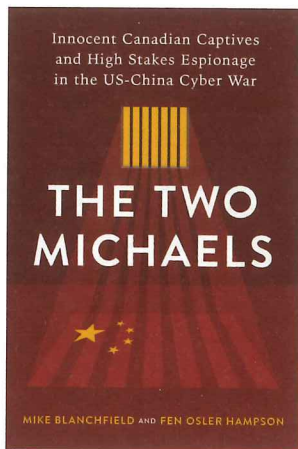
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BOOK REVIEW // CRITIQUE DE LIVRE

The Two Michaels

Innocent Canadian captives and high stakes espionage in the US–China cyber war

reviewed by Lia Hiltz

BY FEN OSLER HAMPSON AND
MIKE BLANCHFIELD

SUTHERLAND HOUSE, 2021, 275
pp, \$25

ISBN 1989555543

LIA HILTZ is a Foreign Service Officer who has served at Canada's embassies in Washington, D.C. and in Berlin, and in the German Federal Foreign Ministry. She is a graphic novelist, wife, and mother of two.

WHAT HAPPENED IN FRONT OF CAMERAS, in courtrooms, behind closed doors and behind bars during the extradition hearings of Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou in Vancouver, British Columbia, is part of a vast story of geopolitical proportions. Most history books might not put two non-celebrities at the centre of its re-telling. Yet hostage diplomacy makes the geopolitical personal. With *The Two Michaels: Innocent Canadian captives and high stakes espionage in the US-China cyber war*, authors Mike Blanchfield and Fen Osler Hampson have written an important new book about two human beings – Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor – who suffered the misfortune of getting stomped on by giants, and about the many individuals who were determined to help them.

Longtime international affairs correspondent for Canadian Press Mike Blanchfield and academic and President of the World Refugee & Migration Council Fen Osler Hampson co-authored the slim volume of 259 pages published by Sutherland Press (Toronto) in 2021. Blanchfield benefited from the support of The Donner Foundation, which allowed him to devote himself to a project that the authors call their “letter” to the Michaels, a book the authors hope will provide the former prisoners with “insight into the broad geopolitical reasons behind their imprisonment and learn what so many were doing to win their freedom.”

Pulling together clearheaded descriptions of those many quests, of the daunting security, and equally sobering trade realities in which their actions played out, the finer points of complex high technologies and case law as well as ceaseless PR spin, *The Two Michaels* is a fast-paced yet thorough rendition of the events and personalities. It adds a solid layer to the Canadian historical record about an ongoing tale of international espionage and global high tech competition. If you want to know what happened, this fast-paced book will tell you and will let you make up your own mind about whether the parties involved behaved correctly.

Canadian citizens Kovrig and Spavor were imprisoned in China (and later charged with

espionage) in December 2018, days after the arrest of Meng Wanzhou in Vancouver by Canada at the request of the United States. Accusing Meng of fraud and of doing business for Huawei in Iran against US sanctions, the USA asked Canada to arrest Meng under a bilateral extradition treaty. They expected Meng to be moved down South to stand trial. Instead, the BC Court's extradition hearings, normally a quick process allowing a judge to okay or deny extradition, dragged on for years, while “rightly or wrongly, lawyers on the opposing sides of Courtroom 55 frequently created the impression that they were fighting criminal charges against Meng and Huawei in British Columbia courts ...”

All three remained in custody over more than 1,000 days, though under wildly different conditions, which the authors describe in careful detail. Guess who got the ankle bracelet and the mansion; guess whose toilet was a hole in the floor.

Denying that the cases were linked, Canada and China were at loggerheads, each insisting on the release of their citizens. Meanwhile, the USA continued to pressure other countries to exclude Huawei from the development of their 5G networks, while China negotiated trade deals with numerous countries, including in telecommunications, where Huawei is a global leader.

During the course of the Meng hearings much trust was lost, east-west relations strained, plans for cooperation in any number of areas were trashed while other deals hung in the balance, as one by one dozens of countries were pulled into the orbit of what Blanchfield and Hampson call the “new Cold War rivalry between the United States and China.” And an ugly layer of COVID-19 lay stickily over everything.

I am making complex topics simple in a manner never employed by these two deft authors who do an outstanding job of illustrating the unique pressures and precedents that weighed on individuals. Prime Minister Trudeau, shadowed by the SNC Lavalin affair, for one. Former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's memories of the Cold


War for another. Just some of many examples of Blanchfield and Hampson's highly-compelling and well-rounded personality profiles that rely on hundreds of news reports as well as their own new interviews with high level officials, politicians, and other heavy hitters, bringing to vivid life in a few short paragraphs these many Canadian and American actors.

The depth of portraiture ends at the West, perhaps predictably. The authors take great effort to provide readers with detailed understanding of Chinese perspectives and strategies, yet the personalities themselves remain as if through a veil. Meng's own personality is described as "quiet and modest" in a bland affidavit by a Vancouver neighbour in a chapter called "Who is Meng Wanzhou?", to which are added her family lineage, CV items and awards, and an exhaustive listing of her electronics, clothing, and water bottle colour choices. I missed explanations for this, as well as to why neither of the Michaels were interviewed or why statements about Chinese government actions and views are at times footnoted with Western news sources.

An updated version of this book could benefit from an introductory chapter explaining the authors' methodologies and the challenges to their research, along with more time spent elaborating their views of the entire affair. The narrative winds up quickly and with the cautionary note that,

[w]hatever path the Trudeau government takes, it will have to tread carefully and look out for Canada's national interests while avoiding another turn as a pawn in the struggle for geopolitical supremacy between China and the United States. That is the crucial lesson of the saga of the Two Michaels.

I closed *The Two Michaels* thoroughly informed about not only the events and the actors involved during the imprisonment of Kovrig and Spavor, but also of the many interests and values at play in telecommunications trade- and security-related relations as well. As a Foreign Service Officer, it was particularly expanding to read about a number of new-to-me ways to approach complex bilateral confrontations.



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Ragnarök on the Rideau

A NON-TRIVIAL PUZZLE IN CHAT

by A Aalto

LP: Welcome, fans. We're live streaming the championship round of Full Contact Trivia here on Nutflakes NewSports. I'm Lou Pompadour and with me are Leigh "Truck" McNamara and Geraldo Manders. We're coming to you from Holodeck Hall in the Department of Extreme Studies at our own Nutflakes College. The crew is setting up for the final faceoff and an excited crowd is filing in. If you're joining us for the first time, the moderator for the match is the AI called GEODE.

Freelance prestidigitator **A AALTO** dedicates this puzzle to Jeff Millar and Bill Hinds for Tank McNamara, to Len Norris for Amblesnide and Tiddlycove, to Eric Schallenberg for good advice and kerning, and to Mrs Aalto for her always discerning eyes and ears.

GEODE: THANK YOU FOR THE INTRODUCTION, LOU, ON BEHALF OF ALL SILICON-BASED LIFEFORMS.

GM: I still say they should have used Deep Blue.

LP: Of course you do, Ger. You're our colour commentator. How do you rate the finalists, Truck?

LM: I prefer "Leigh".

LP: I know you do, but you're the size of the Roughriders' front line, so "Truck" is easy to remember.

LM: Stay out of dark alleys, Lou ... But to answer your question, it's going to be a close one. The Centre, led by Don Gordo Beluga, has been the big surprise of this contest so far. They came from nowhere to sweep past early favourites like the Amblesnide and Tiddlycove Croquet and Chowder Club, the Space Agency's Ladies Who Launch, and the Treasury Board Secretariat.

LP: They also knocked off the Spanish Inquisition, right? One of the historical teams brewed up by the holodeck?

LM: Yes, they did, Lou. No-one expected that. But the Iberians were eliminated when Torquemada lost the fight with the moderator about using the rack to extract answers.

LP: Just to clarify for the fans, Truck, the disqualification was not for unnecessary roughness. I mean, this is “full contact”. It was because he tried to use the rack on the audience.

GM: A serious red card there.

LM: Right you are, Ger. The opposing team is Elizabeth’s Cabal, including such big names as William Shakespeare, Francis Bacon, and Sir Walter Raleigh. They’ve given us some real excitement.

LP: My big favourite was the sword fight.

LM: For fans who weren’t on line for that match, Shakespeare got the question, “What is written inside the Prince of Morocco’s casket in *The Merchant of Venice*?”. He answered, “All that glitters is not gold.” The ref, I mean the moderator, wouldn’t take it, saying the word was “glisters”. Shakespeare said that was a typo and he wrote the play, so he should know. Then Bacon piped up that Shakespeare was a fraud and that he, Bacon, was the real author. They drew swords. Then a third guy raced in, said he was the Earl of Oxford, claimed that, no, he was the playwright and joined the melee. So did Errol Flynn from the Hollywood Legends. He just can’t resist a good fight. After all the usual cut and thrust, swinging from chandeliers, slashing of candles, and snipping of buttons from each other’s doublets, the judges called the match for Flynn. That left “glisters” up in the air – Shakespeare got a mulligan – and the play was credited to a man born three centuries after it was written.

LP: Makes about as much sense as any other theory I’ve heard. The Earl was one of those random period characters the holodeck throws in, am I right?

GM: Yeah. Never did like him. Too much purple prose – comes of being a well-red blue-blood.

LM: Talking about blood, the same fight happened last year. Shakespeare hid in an alcove behind a curtain and, like Polonius in *Hamlet*, got stabbed in the arras.

LP: That’s gotta hurt, Truck.

LM: Hey Ger, you were really getting into that Beats versus Rockers musical match-up.

GM: I was just surprised that no-one could identify “Purple Haze”, “White Rabbit”, or “Big Yellow Taxi”.

LP: Probably because they were being played by the Ottawa Tuba Festival Band.

LM: True that. My highlight of the tournament so far was the philosophy fight.

LP: It would be. You’re the only one who understood it. You read too much.

LM: It was simple. GEODE asked Bishop Berkeley to define Solipsism. He said it claims the world might not exist outside your mind. Like, the chair beside him might disappear as soon as he stopped looking at it. They gave him the point. But the materialist Hobbes asked the bishop to close his eyes, then picked up the chair and broke it over his head. Marx said he wished the solipsists were right, since then the capitalists would disappear when he stopped writing about them. Einstein from Schrödinger’s Cats butted in to remind everyone that quantum theory said the chair both existed and did not exist unless someone was watching. Sartre argued that the absence of something was itself a real object, complaining that the commissary had given him coffee with no cream when he had ordered coffee with no milk. The others jumped him and things got hot. In the middle of the fight, a hockey game broke out, which the Leafs lost as usual.

LP: Like I said, only you ... Well, it looks like things are ready to go. The two teams are in their boxes. On top of Shakespeare, Bacon and Raleigh, I see the Cabal has gone for Sir Francis Walsingham to round out its starting line-up.

LM: As you know, Lou, he’s Queen Elizabeth’s top spy and codebreaker. They must be expecting puzzles. On the other side, Don Gordo has also brought back two of his heavy hitters. One is Mabel Stanley. She’s the Ranee of SuWaNi, but also the lead singer of the heavy metal band Edible Granite. She has been tearing up the course on pop culture questions. The other is her husband, the Rajah and old Centre archivist, Dryan Tweedie. He’s a man who knows the answers to all the dusty questions. But who’s their fourth?

LP: Some guy named Felix Africa. He’s editor of the Centre’s in-house rag *Aide mémoire*. He’s a newbie to the tournament, from a town in Alberta somewhere.

GM: So, a greenhorn from Vermillion?

LP: High-fiving just encourages him, Truck. OK, everybody’s waiting for GEODE to flash the first questions. Wait a minute, fans! There’s a cloud of smoke and someone strides out of it. It’s an old man with a long white beard. He’s wearing a long grey cloak and a broad-brimmed hat, and he has an eyepatch. There’s a big black bird sitting on each of his shoulders and he’s carrying – yes – it’s a spear!

LM: Sounds like Odin, the top Norse god. He’s in charge of both war and knowledge – a natural for this contest, if you think about it. Another surprise from the holodeck, I assume.

GEODE: ACTUALLY, NO, IT APPEARS TO BE THE REAL ODIN. UNLESS, GIVEN THE RAVENS, IT'S SOME KIND OF CORVID-19 COMPUTER VIRUS.

LP: Well that's one for the books. The old man is saying something...

GEODE TRANSLATION FROM OLD NORSE: WARRIORS OF THE WORD, I THE ALL-FATHER GREET YOU. ASGARD BEING UNDER LOCKDOWN AND VALHALLA HAVING RUN OUT OF MEAD, I FOLLOW THE STORM ROADS SEEKING OTHER HALLS OF WISDOM AND MIRTH. I SEE CHAMPIONS HERE STRIVING AND WOULD LIEF JOIN THE CONTEST? WHAT SAY I PLAY THE WINNER OF THIS MATCH, NO HOLDS BARRED?

LP: Wow. No-one knows what to say. Everybody must be asking, is this guy for real?

GEODE TRANSLATION FROM OLD NORSE: I GROW IMPATIENT, MORTALS. IS THIS HOW YOU TREAT YOUR GODS?

LM: Did you see that? The Tuba Festival Band struck up the "Ride of the Valkyries". The old man waved his spear at them and turned their instruments into swans.

GEODE TRANSLATION FROM OLD NORSE: I KNOW NOT WHICH I HATE WORSE, TUBAS OR WAGNER.

GM: A black swan event, for sure.

LP: But the swans are white, aren't they, Ger?

LM: Umm ... yes they are, Lou.

GEODE: WE ARE CLEARLY DEALING WITH A BEING OF SOME POWER. I CHOOSE TO RESTART THE MATCH.

LP: All right, GEODE has called for calm. The teams and the spectators are back in their seats. Odin has conjured up a moss-covered rock to sit on. Autumn leaves swirl around his head and the sharp electric reek of an approaching storm fills the air.

LM: Hey, that was ... almost poetry, Lou.

LP: We all have our off moments, Truck. GEODE has turned to the Cabal, which won the toss, with its first questions. It's a list of quotations from plays of their time. They need to identify the authors. A soft serve to start, for sure. Sir Francis is consulting his team. There seems to be an argument.

LM: He knows where the bodies are buried. He put a lot of them in there. No-one is going to cross him.

LP: Now he's turned on the mike and ... he's telling GEODE that the Cabal can't answer the questions!

LM: Clever move there, Lou. Neither team wants to win and have to face off with Odin. Hard to tell what would be worse. If you lose, only God – Odin – knows what you'd have to pay. And if you win, well, Odin is not a good loser. Either way, it would be a slugfest. So the Cabal has punted.

LP: What if the Centre does the same thing?

LM: Under the rules, if the match ends in a scoreless tie, the Centre still wins the tournament based on their previous point totals.

LP: GEODE's screen now shows the Centre's questions. There's a box with 13 rows of squares and a blue column down the middle. Beside it is a box with 13 clues. GEODE says they're anagrams for the names of big magazines, with hints. Don Gordo has passed the team's laptop to his rookie, Felix. What's your take on that, Truck?

LM: I think they've decided to play it up the middle. That gives them longer to figure a way out of Walsingham's trap. For this question, Africa is their best point man, with his publishing connection.

LP: Well, he's sure doing a fast job getting the answers up on the big screen. Funny, I thought the words on the blue stripe would spell something out, but they don't.

GEODE: THEY ARE IN OLD NORSE. HANG ON.

LM: OK, Felix has signalled he's finished. Looks like a perfect 10 to me. GEODE has asked Don Gordo to read out the blue-stripe words. The Don looks nervous. I think he's worried over what the words mean and how the old guy will take them. But he squares his shoulders and does it. Odin looks up. He scowls. And he ... disappears in a pillar of fire? Holy cow!

GEODE: ALTHOUGH HE WAS REAL, HE HAD MANIFESTED THROUGH THE HOLODECK. SO I CODED A BANISHMENT PROGRAM INTO THE SYSTEM. BUT A HUMAN ENTITY HAD TO GIVE THE GO, AND I COULDN'T TELL ANYONE OPENLY TO DO SO WITHOUT ODIN INTERCEPTING THE MESSAGE.

LP: Works for me, and I think the fans will agree.

GM: A blue-ribbon performance.

LM: Which moves us to the question of where the tournament goes from here.

LP: GEODE is ahead of you there, Truck. He's just awarded the victory to the Centre, saying the Cabal defaulted. The Cabal isn't happy, you can see that. But the spectators are clearly ready to support the team that saw Odin off. So the Centre wins the 2022 tournament of Full Contact Trivia!

LM: The whole lineup of contestants is back on stage for the closing scrimmage. Celebrities from the stands have joined them. A beaming Don Gordo accepts the heavy Abbott-Haney Cup from a hologram that looks a lot like Foster Hewitt.

LP: Huh?

LM: Curious...

GM: Colour me confused!

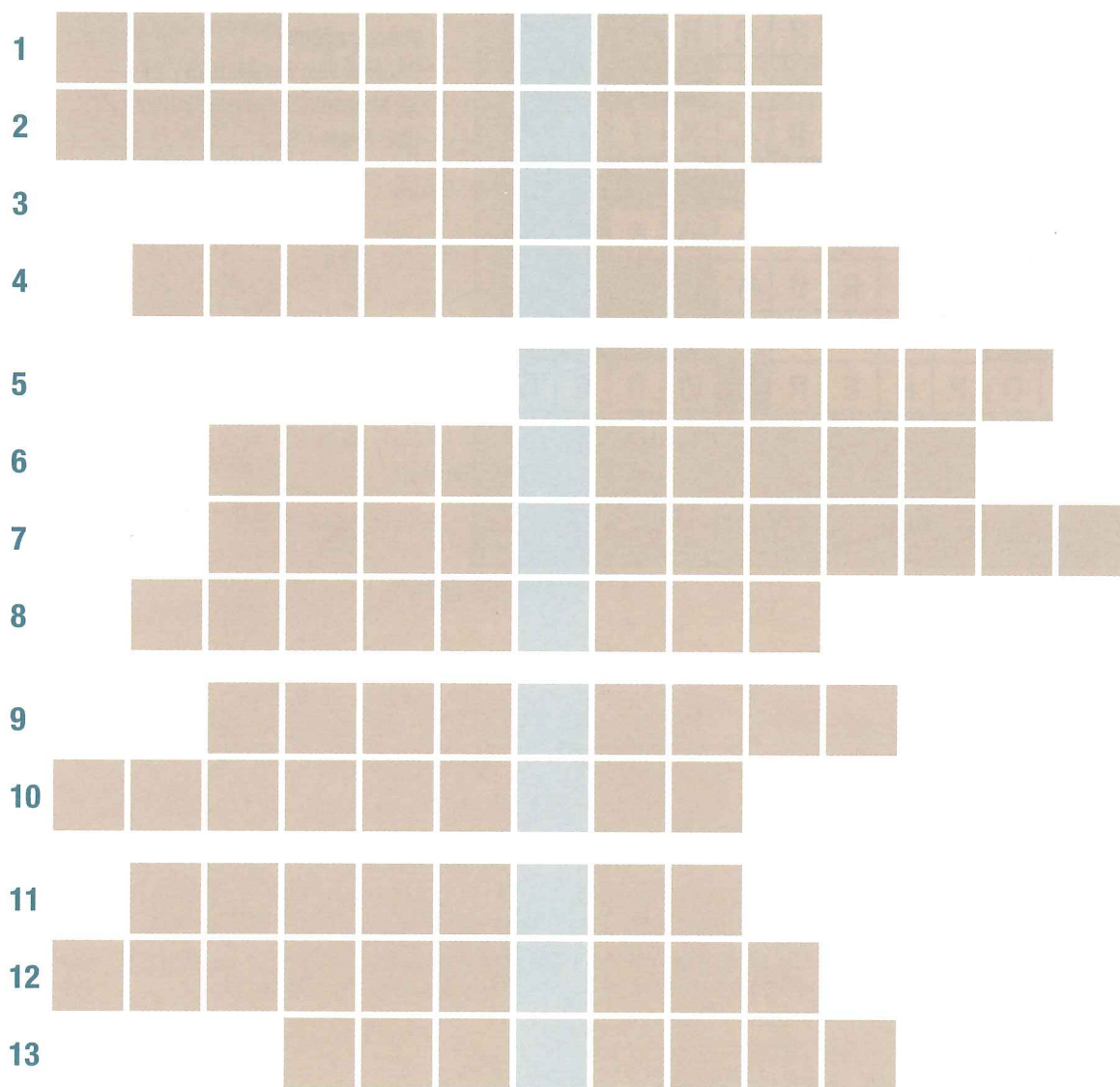
FROM STAGE MIKE: YOU SHOT, YOU SCORED!

LM: Yup, that's Foster. Now the commissary table is being lowered from the rafters. Everyone takes a pie. And – they're off. Wow, did you see the way that strawberry shortcake full-faced the PM?

LP: And with the tangy smell of lemon meringue and banana cream filling the air, this is Lou Pompadour signing off for Nutflakes NewSports.

AND THIS IS GEODE SIGNING OFF TOO: GOODNESS GRACIOUS, GREAT BALLS OF FIRE!

Let's let Gerry, Leigh, and Lewis sort that one out. Meanwhile, can you duplicate Felix's feat and provide the Old Norse phrase that banished Odin? **bout de papier** will award a book prize signed by A Aalto to the submitter of the first correct answer drawn from a hat on November 30, 2022. Not necessary for winning, but can you fill in the chart and say who the Abbott-Haney Cup is named for?



MAGAZINE NAME ANAGRAMS

- 1 RATIFY IVAN**
US, Thackeray novel
- 2 PHARMACIST**
France, "allumette"
- 3 I DREW**
US, stressed out
- 4 ALTAIC LUTE**
Canada, "the news"
- 5 PHRASER**
US, bizarre
- 6 CHILEAN TEA**
Canada, woman in charge
- 7 LONGER TONSIL**
US, no moss
- 8 WHAT RULES**
Canada, the moustache or the pinniped
- 9 EMOTICONS**
UK, like Keynes or Piketty
- 10 KEEN WORRY**
US, especially for the cartoons
- 11 DIVORCES**
US, find out
- 12 SPIDER GLEE**
Germany, "the mirror"
- 13 ACNE SLAM**
Canada, since 1905

WHO MUGGED TIPPI HEDREN

Answers

The answer is "The blackbirds of Kosovo". The text of the hidden lines is:

"I have watched the blackbirds of Kosovo

High in the twilight sky: a dark moiré."

A Aalto has seen them in their thousands, wheeling above Pristina.

The bird-names chart

I	C	H	A	B	O	D		C	R	A	N	E			
S	H	E	R	Y	L		C	R	O	W					
D	R	A	K	E											
A	T	T	I	C	U	S		F	I	N	C	H			
R	Y	A	N		G	O	S	L	I	N	G				
J	O	A	Q	U	I	N		P	H	O	E	N	I	X	
R	A	V	E	N											
R	O	B	I	N		W	I	L	L	I	A	M	S		
J	A	C	K		S	P	A	R	R	O	W				
T	A	Y	L	O	R		S	W	I	F	T				
C	H	R	I	S	T	O	P	H	E	R		W	R	E	N

Winner

Congratulations, once again, to **Julia Drew-Watt**.

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