



CANADA IN THE WORLD: THE FUTURE OF FOREIGN POLICY

Scientific Cycle 2023–2026

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CANADA IN THE WORLD: THE FUTURE OF FOREIGN POLICY



The 2023-2026 scientific cycle of the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, titled *Canada In the World: The Future of Foreign Policy* is proposed in the context of major changes taking place in the world.¹ The pace of change has accelerated with seismic shifts in technology over the past two decades, as well as an expansion of world actors, integrating new cross-regional alignments to strengthen cooperation across democracies.² Cities and private companies are furthermore emerging as independent foreign policy actors and hubs of innovation, with greater collaboration between the public and private sectors.³

Since 2016, the global landscape has, at the same time, been marked by an

unprecedented mix of challenges – compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic. These prevalent challenges include climate change, mass migration and refugee movements, rising authoritarian states, major political movements such as Brexit, a mounting global debt, wealth gap, religious conflict, war, and the changing nature of conflict and security.⁴

These significant shifts in the global order have put into question the very foundations upon which Canadian foreign policy is based, rooted in multilateralism, the promotion of democracy, human rights, and global trade.⁵ Contextually, since the 1990s, international cooperation has increased in regard to major global events, whether they be terrorist attacks, military interventions,



or economic upheavals to advance and support democratic principles. This manifested in the reliance on multilateral institutions such as the United Nations, NATO, and the G7 and G20, as well as innovative diplomatic cooperation initiatives such as the Arctic Council, which reinforced their legitimacy as global decision-making bodies, a situation that played to Canada's strengths and offered the country greater international influence.

In recent years however, traditional conceptions of multilateralism have been confronted by shifting global power dynamics. The growing Sino-American confrontation has accelerated a retreat of the United States from an internationalist worldview.⁶ Political instability and polarization in the U.S.⁷ have "propagated deeply into America's once-esteemed institutions".⁸ And while the international community recently responded multilaterally to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the precariousness of political and economic cohesion has become a national concern in countries around the world.

During the Second World War, in 1941, British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, described Canada as "the linchpin of the English-speaking world"⁹ for its friendliness and loyalty to its allies in the U.S. and in Europe, playing a critical role bridging the Old and New Worlds. Perhaps a politically convenient statement months before the U.S. was attacked by Japan and drawn into the war, Churchill repeated the sentiment beyond the war years.

Historically praised for its role as "a well-governed, orderly, prosperous, peaceful state",¹⁰ Canada is now searching for a renewed role in the emerging new world order.¹¹ Developments in the U.S., Canada's largest trading partner and military ally, have significantly impacted Canada's role in this complexified international order.¹² Canada's waning international influence has also been evidenced by two unsuccessful attempts to gain a non-permanent seat on the United Nations (UN) Security Council, in 2010 and 2020, disrupting its long-standing membership of 60 years.¹³ This caused a shock to the Canadian electorate¹⁴ prompting an urgent need to rethink its traditional approach to international policy and the strategies it deploys.¹⁵



This framework paper encourages reflection, dialogue, and creative knowledge exchange on Canada's existing strengths and opportunities that can be leveraged for the future of Canada's foreign policy. Emerging global issues and topics are informed by an interdisciplinary group of leaders in government, academia, communications and media, and non-profit sectors (please see Annex C).

The 2023 Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation Scholars, Fellows and Mentors and its wider community are also invited to reflect on key questions by contributing their views and experiences, representing a plurality of perspectives on these issues that may help carve a path to modernize and reinvigorate Canadian foreign policy and leadership on the world stage.



FRAMING CANADA'S FOREIGN POLICY

Canada's foreign policy and its implementation are defined on the Global Affairs Canada website, as follows:

“Global Affairs Canada manages Canada’s diplomatic and consular relations with foreign governments and international organizations, engaging and influencing international players to advance Canada’s political, legal and economic interests, including poverty reduction, the empowerment of women and girls, the promotion of a rules-based international order, international peace and security, human rights, inclusive and accountable governance, peaceful pluralism, inclusion and respect for diversity and environmental sustainability”.¹⁶

In the context of the interconnectedness of our nations, Canadian foreign policy may also be explored through an immersive definition – that is, not only as Canada *and* the World, but also Canada *in* the World,¹⁷ taking an approach adopted widely by international historians. While Canada has often been described as an intermediary or “middle power”¹⁸ between major powers like

the United States, Britain and Russia, it seems long due “for Canada to finally shed its middle power syndrome”.¹⁹ An alternate interpretation could also examine how Canada may be considered as an “entrepreneurial state (...) playing the role of catalyst or facilitator; and placing an emphasis on coalition-building and cooperation-building”.²⁰

Framing foreign policy may also be realized through a practical lens, as an object to be known, interpreted and acted upon, a practice that emerged as a consequence of the free press and democratization.²¹ In this sense, Canada’s actions and commitments towards the path to Truth and Reconciliation²² to bring about profound change, acceptance, and acknowledgement in its relationships with its Indigenous Peoples may also contribute to renewed international relations.²³ As such Canada’s external relationships are not devoid of its actions and policy decisions within its own borders and there are opportunities for Canada to demonstrate leadership internationally by reflecting progressive domestic policies in foreign policy.



Policy leaders and analysts may also need to examine the necessary resource investments for Canada's foreign policy objectives to materialize, supported by statistics and strong data, quality analysis, and collaboration among funding programs and international institutions.²⁴

CANADA IN THE WORLD: FOREIGN POLICY HALLMARKS

As famously stated by the late Canadian diplomat and commentator John Wendell Holmes, and re-cited, the “best public policy emerged out of an appreciation of history and context”.²⁵ The hallmarks of Canada's global engagement, as well as critical analysis seem to have mostly focused on its 20th century contributions by most eminent foreign policy and history experts (see Annex A).²⁶

Canada is, for instance, widely recognized for its key role in the development of the UN's first, large-scale peacekeeping operation during the 1956 Suez Canal crisis in Egypt through the leadership of former Minister of Foreign Affairs (later, Prime Minister) Lester B. Pearson which helped defuse the rift within NATO and the

Commonwealth between major powers, including the United States, Britain and France.²⁷ Other significant milestones include the negotiation of the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement signed in 1988, which became the predecessor of the North American Free Trade Agreement with the inclusion of Mexico in the 1990s (now the Canadian-US-Mexico Agreement, renegotiated and effective as of July 2020); Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy's leadership in the adoption of the 1997 Ottawa Treaty banning anti-personnel landmines,²⁸ and creation of the “Responsibility to Protect” norm adopted in 2005 – a non-binding political commitment of UN Member States to protect populations from genocide, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleaning and war crimes.²⁹ Canada was also a leader in the creation of the International Criminal Court in 2002; as well as the 1996 Ottawa Declaration which established the Arctic Council as a leading intergovernmental forum composed of eight Arctic nations,³⁰ six Indigenous permanent participants³¹ and observer organizations and states, promoting cooperation in the Arctic.³² Demonstrating the precariousness of such international agreements, the Arctic



Council paused its work after Russia's invasion of the Ukraine in 2022, throwing the future of many scientific research projects into doubt.³³

Following Canada's unsuccessful attempts to secure a UN Security Council seat, some have expressed concerns over the country's fading recognition on the international stage.³⁴ Others feel that "it will be up to future historians to assess whether Canada is indeed back or if it ever left".³⁵ Rooted in the Foundation's pillar *Canada and the World*, critical questions may include how "the ideals and foreign policy prescriptions that have served Canada in the past align with the truly disturbing array of challenges we face" today?³⁶ And what are the core values of Canada's foreign policy that remain relevant today versus paradigms that should be changed?

EMERGING 21ST CENTURY CHALLENGES FOR CANADA'S FOREIGN POLICY

Exercising Leadership in a Shifting Global Environment

Since 2016, Canada's ability to preserve its democratic institutions and processes,

economy, social fabric, and values has been affected by a shifting global environment.³⁷ It has been straddling power dynamics between the West and the East,³⁸ increased protectionist policies, as well as the rise of authoritarian regimes, with increasing confrontations between the U.S. and China, the world's greatest economic powers, and both trading partners with Canada.³⁹

Canada has had to grapple with the difficult choice of either taking a more hardline approach in its bilateral relationship with authoritarian countries or continuing a policy of engagement due to economic or past relationships.⁴⁰ Notably, despite Canada's denouncement of China's "mass incarceration of the Uighur minority population in Xinjiang, the encroachment of Hong Kong's democracy, and its expansion in the South China Sea",⁴¹ it has not officially banned Huawei 5G technology from its networks, contrary to its "Five Eyes" allies,⁴² the U.S., Australia, the UK and New Zealand.⁴³ At the same time, following the detention of Canadian citizens Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor, which occurred in retaliation for Canada's arrest of Huawei's CFO Meng Wanzhou in 2018,⁴⁴



Canada took the lead in launching the Declaration Against Arbitrary Detention in State-to-State Relations in February 2021.⁴⁵ This Declaration has been hailed as a positive first step and endorsed wholeheartedly by 69 nations to date.⁴⁶ The question remains how its execution or sanctions to those who contravene its articles may be strengthened in years to come?⁴⁷

In parallel, Canada's other economic alliances are also experiencing the effects of shifting dynamics on the world stage. For instance, in March 2020, Canada ratified the Canada-U.S.-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) which replaced NAFTA, with a number of concessions to satisfy the United States' increasingly protectionist requirements. These include tariffs on steel and aluminum, as well as on goods from China and elsewhere, and US domestic policy around taxation and deregulation.⁴⁸ In 2018, Canada successfully concluded negotiations for the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement, which assures improved market access in Asia.⁴⁹ However, Canada is not yet a member of the Association of Southeast

Asian Nations⁵⁰ or the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity with 13 countries that encompass 40 % of the world's GDP.⁵¹ Further, Canada was not included in two joint security partnerships, QUAD, which includes the U.S., India, Japan and Australia, and AUKUS, composed of the U.S., Britain, and Australia.⁵² On a more positive outlook however, Canada's economic alliances have extended across the Atlantic in recent years, with the 2016 signing of the Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement,⁵³ and an EU-Canada partnership concluded with regards to raw materials in 2021.⁵⁴

The global geopolitical shifts have also influenced the existing dynamics within the G7, where more traditional language around free and open markets has been replaced to put a heavier focus on increasing threats to the international order by authoritarian countries and global problems such as climate change and Covid-19.⁵⁵ Much of the economic focus of discussions has instead been relinquished to the G20, whose members now account for about 80% of global GDP⁵⁶ and include major economies like India and China.⁵⁷ An initial proposal



was also advanced by the UK to grow the G7 into D-10, a forum of 10 leading democracies, to confront China and improve resilience in global supply chains.⁵⁸

The Russia-Ukraine conflict has also impacted other reputable international cooperation and democratic alliances. A salient example is the declaration by Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and the U.S. on March 3, 2022 to boycott meetings of the Arctic Council under Russian chairmanship, and a second statement on June 8 to resume cooperation on previously approved Arctic Council projects that do not involve the participation of Russian leadership. The Arctic Council has previously been known as a successful “cooperative regime that has few if any equals”.⁵⁹ It has led to significant diplomatic initiatives such as a 2011 Report issued by the Senior Arctic Officials on criteria for observer participation, among which applicants must recognize Arctic States’ sovereignty, and legal framework applicable to the Arctic Ocean (incl. the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea),⁶⁰ as well as the 2004 Arctic Climate Impact Assessment.⁶¹ Disputes within the Arctic

Council have otherwise remained very limited, although Canada has outstanding land and water disputes with Denmark over Hans Island (the so-called “Whiskey War” was settled in June of 2022), the United States in the Beaufort Sea, and internal waters claims in the Northwest Passage.⁶² Such claims have been argued to be surmountable at a diplomatic level, while the priority now seems to lie in the importance of renewing Canada’s cooperation with its circumpolar neighbours in the wake of the Russian invasion of the Ukraine – a volatile new chapter in international relations.⁶³

Canada’s relationships on the African continent may also benefit from a renewed foreign policy approach that solidifies a previously intermittent engagement caught between extractive industries’ reliance on African natural resources and the need to limit exposure and entanglements in competing security and development pressures.⁶⁴ Policy as well as private sector literature have called for Canada to pay closer attention to long-term trends which show great investment promise in African countries. While new democratic



institutions are being established and recognized, albeit at different speeds, the new value chains in Africa have been shown to be moving away from the extractive industries and developing in 21st century sectors of telecommunications platforms, agribusiness and energy, whilst sub-Saharan Africa is emerging as the only place with birth rates at replacement level or higher.⁶⁵ Moreover, immigration from African countries has grown exponentially since the 1970s, including many migrants from French-speaking African nations who have settled in Quebec, and is increasingly creating opportunities to recruit skilled migrants.

Similarly, the leadership that Canada demonstrated in the 1990s to occupy a long-empty seat at the Organization of American States has since developed as an “on-again, off-again” approach to inter-American affairs, all too often influenced by the governing political parties’ strategic interests and a long-standing preference to prioritize relationships with the United States.⁶⁶ There are nevertheless significant areas for diplomatic representation, as well as security interests, that Canada could

optimize in the southern hemisphere. Additionally, there are opportunities to strengthen its relationship with the Pacific Alliance regional trade block between Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru⁶⁷ and the continuation of key commercial ties with Canadian companies such as Scotiabank, CIBC, and Bombardier operating in the region, as well as several billions of dollars of direct investment holdings of Canadian firms.⁶⁸

It is important to evaluate the strategic value of these alliances for Canada, and whether or not it should adapt its foreign policies, relations, strategies, communications and/or contributions to be a part of them, as well as increase its global engagement with other bilateral, regional, or international networks.

The Value of Maintaining Unity in a Polarized Era

As stated by Timothy A. Sayle, “if there is a pattern to Canada’s national security history, it is that, for more than 150 years, the viability and integrity of the state has been preserved first and foremost by



ensuring that Canadians remain united.”⁶⁹ Partisan unity regarding Canada’s position has also proven to be beneficial in reducing the opportunities for political exploitation through hybrid and cyber operations, including trolling, hacking and exploitation of social media.⁷⁰

In past years, Canadian political unity has nevertheless been infiltrated by pernicious partisan politics through growing media mis/disinformation and the unravelling of democracy which put the United States’ institutions in peril during the Capitol Hill attack on January 6, 2021.⁷¹ Deep partisan divisions were most evident in Canada early in 2022 when a convoy occupied the capital to protest against Covid-19 vaccination mandates and the invocation of the Emergencies Act.⁷² In contrast, consensus among Canadians and the country’s leading political parties is strikingly present in relation to its tough stance against Russia in the defence of Ukrainian sovereignty.⁷³

These examples invite us to examine other worldwide events or relationships that may influence Canada’s civic unity and democracy, as well as strategies, actions and

national or international collaborations that Canada can undertake to avoid potential threats or risks of paralyzing polarization.

Canadian Foreign Policy in the Global Digital Ecosystem

Largely recognized for its immeasurable benefits for free expression, social and economic progress,⁷⁴ in the past decade, the digital revolution has also, paradoxically, caused a level of disruption of our world’s democracies.⁷⁵ The world is contending with novel threats to democracy, security, and human rights posed by a global digital ecosystem.⁷⁶ Political exploitation through hybrid and cyber operations on social media have been infiltrating democratic processes; governments and platforms are implementing censorship and distortion to counter mis/disinformation; filter bubbles or echo chambers imposed by social media platforms’ design and algorithms are making civic engagement across ideological lines more difficult and diversity is being challenged by major platforms’ market dominance.⁷⁷ Technologically modern “smart cities”, increasingly serviced by 5G wireless networks, are using different types



of electronic methods to collect data, eroding any practical anonymity in our daily lives.⁷⁸ Finally, with the ubiquitous proliferation of online data, cyber security breaches have become prevalent in Canada and across the business world,⁷⁹ including extortion, criminal harassment, indecent/harassing communications, uttering threats, identity fraud, and child pornography.⁸⁰

Canada has undertaken national initiatives to tackle these challenges.⁸¹ Protecting the public against cross-border cyber events nevertheless requires a larger coalition of players to multilateralize a rapidly evolving “digital-industrial complex”⁸² dominated by a very small number of large and adversarial players – namely: China, where data is principally controlled by the state; the U.S., where data is largely controlled by digital platforms led by the Big Five (Alphabet, Amazon, Apple, Meta, and Microsoft); the EU General Data Protection Regulation which puts the individual at the centre of governance, and other countries “drawn into the undertow of one or the other regime”.⁸³ Canada has also taken firm positions against global tech companies, including an

investigation by the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada into Facebook (now Meta), which unearthed serious contraventions of Canadian privacy law and failure to protect Canadians’ private information. More broadly, interdisciplinary collaboration from experts in international relations, technology, security, business, criminology, law and many other fields may help inform other technological or geopolitical initiatives where Canada can channel its collaborative efforts to protect Canadians against digital threats.



Canada's International Commitments to Climate Change: A Global Challenge

In October-November 2021, 197 attending parties negotiated the Glasgow Climate Pact at the 26th UN Climate Change Conference (UNCCC) held in Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom. The pact was the first to explicitly commit to phase down unabated coal power and inefficient subsidies for fossil fuels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.⁸⁴ More than 100 countries with 85% of the world's forests, including Canada, agreed to end deforestation by 2030.

Despite these positive advancements, there remains much concern around the extent of nations' capacity to honour their previous commitments, made, for example, through the 2005 *Kyoto Protocol of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Policy* and the 2015 *UNCC Paris Agreement*.⁸⁵ So far, Canada's Kyoto Protocol commitments to reduce its GHG by 6% below its 1990 levels have not been met. In 2018, it was ranked as the 10th GHG emitting country in the world.⁸⁶ It has also established new GHG reduction

commitments to 30% below 2005 levels by 2030 in its 2016 *Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change* and *A Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy* plan announced in 2020.⁸⁷

Drawing on the Foundation's pillar *People & Their Natural Environment*, there is an opportunity to investigate critical questions regarding climate change and the potential for interdisciplinary collaborations leading to innovative recommendations. This may inform how Canada can mitigate climate change impacts – among others, by obtaining essential provincial and territorial buy-in, adapting its industry practices, increasing international cooperation, protecting Indigenous and community livelihoods, and responding to the great divergence in public opinion.

AXES OF LEADERSHIP AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR A REINVIGORATED CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY

As Canada navigates the shifting world dynamics, there is also a compelling case to be made about leveraging its existing strengths and areas of emerging opportunity



for a reinvigorated foreign policy. The following sections propose certain axes of leadership that Canada's foreign policy may thrive in, offered through consultations with multistakeholder experts and supported by the literature. While non-exhaustive, they serve as a basis for discussion.

Canada's Official Development Aid

In 2018, the OECD reported that Canada's official development aid (ODA) had declined since 2012 and represented only half of the 0.5% that Canada spent on aid over the previous 30 years.⁸⁸ This fell considerably short of ODA targets set by the Pearson Commission's breakthrough report on foreign aid in September 1969 of 0.7% of Gross National Product by 1975 and no later than 1980.⁸⁹

The current government has been working to rebuild its global assistance portfolio.⁹⁰ In 2021, Canada ranked 6th in terms of ODA volume and 13th among OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) countries.

Canada has contributed billions of dollars towards immunizations, essential health,

nutrition and population services, social safety, infrastructure, access to water, better sanitation, renewable energy, a Blended Climate Program, a Global Financing Facility in Support of Every Woman/Every Child and the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund.⁹¹ Its regional aid focus has also changed over the decades, at times influenced by parties' differing priorities.⁹² Concretely, the current government has prioritized international development assistance to Sub-Saharan African countries that is aligned with its Feminist International Assistance Policy.⁹³ At the Summit of the Americas held in California in June 2022, Canada committed \$26.9 million to slow the flow of migrants from Latin America and the Caribbean this year, and an additional \$118 million for initiatives to promote gender equality, health and pandemic response spending, democratic governance and digital access and anti-disinformation measures.⁹⁴

Through the lens of the Foundation's pillar *Responsible Citizenship*, there are also various lines of inquiry based on recent research that may inform the impact of government aid on non-governmental



operations, including a “plethora of structures of their funding sources, programmatic activities, development philosophies and personal motivation, all of which influence their operations in Canada and abroad”.⁹⁵ Repercussions of ODA have also increasingly been seen on a global health level – most recently in relation to the devastating impacts of the pandemic. Oxfam Canada reports, in this regard, that in 2021, 163 million people were pushed into poverty and that more than 80% of all vaccines went to G20 countries, while less than 1% reached low-income countries.⁹⁶ It is thus particularly relevant to examine how Canada ensures accountability of its foreign aid policies and programs and targets “the countries where the needs are the greatest and focus on poverty reduction”.⁹⁷

The Significance of Canada As A Country Of Immigration And Its Foreign Policy

One of Canada’s most attractive, salient, and recognized features is its reputation as a country of immigration.⁹⁸ Canada’s leadership on this front and its openness towards welcoming newcomers was especially evident in recent years compared to the U.S. and Western European

countries, such as Hungary, Germany, the Netherlands, and Italy, which adopted more restrictive policies.⁹⁹ In 2017, for example, the net migration rate for Canada was 5.7%, whereas it was 3.9% in the U.S.¹⁰⁰

Despite positive initiatives such as a new electronic Express Entry system and the Federal Skilled Worker Program, skilled immigrants – even in Canada – still face numerous barriers affecting their socio-economic well-being and health. Key studies have shown that they contend with a lack of information and guidance, recognition of foreign credentials and previous work experience, as well as prejudices, stereotypes, and discrimination.¹⁰¹ These challenges seem to contrast with Canada’s current need to address a labour shortage, including more than one million vacancies since May 2021, as its workforce is reaching retirement age.¹⁰² Quebec’s diverging positions on its stagnating immigration targets – despite a workforce shortage of 224,000 in the first trimester of 2022, are also critiqued in the provincial media.¹⁰³

Moreover, the alarming situation of 27.1 million refugees¹⁰⁴ around the world



compels us to consider Canada's role in responding to this growing crisis. Notably, half of these refugees are under the age of 18, and form part of the 89.3 million people who have been forced to flee their homes.¹⁰⁵

Canada is a signatory to the 1951 *Convention relating to the Status of Refugees* and incorporated its language in *Canada's Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*.¹⁰⁶ It is a signatory to the *Global Compact on Refugees*¹⁰⁷ and the *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration*,¹⁰⁸ voluntarily entered into by a majority of UN member countries.¹⁰⁹ In 2021, Canada also had one of the highest shares of ODA allocated to refugees and asylum seekers compared to other DAC countries of the OECD.¹¹⁰ It has worked with over 15 countries interested in adopting sponsorship programs for refugees.¹¹¹

Notwithstanding these milestones, concerns have been raised about Canada sliding towards a "two-tiered" system which provides differentiated timelines for government sponsored refugees from countries such as Syria, in 2015, or Ukraine, in 2022, or from designated countries of

origin considered *safe* by law,¹¹² while other refugee claimants continue to wait for years.¹¹³ There also seems to be a gap between refugee claimants' access to healthcare compared to the rest of the Canadian population, despite the creation of the Interim Federal Health Program.¹¹⁴ And although the digital platform economy has provided new possibilities for migrant workers, sociopolitical inequalities continue to be reproduced within this new form of non-unionized labour.¹¹⁵

Considering the Foundation's pillar *Human Rights & Dignity*, there are critical questions to explore about how Canada can continue to serve as a leader on the world stage in protecting refugees and migrants across the world. How can Canada honour its Global Compact agreements and adopt a more cooperative approach to optimize the overall benefits of migration, as recommended by Dr. François Crépeau, former UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights?¹¹⁶ While there is no "silver bullet" solution, how can Canada increase and diversify development and funding opportunities to increase humanitarian support for asylum seekers, identified by the Honourable Lloyd



Axworthy, Chair of the World Refugee and Migration Council, as a clear need around the world?¹¹⁷

Opportunities For Canada’s Foreign Policy in Education and Research

At the last Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) held in Kigali, Rwanda on June 25, 2022, Canada announced the creation of a Canadian International Development Scholarship 2030 with a contribution of \$80 million. This program supports a consortium between Colleges and Institutes Canada and Universities Canada with the West African Economic and Monetary Union, the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences, and the Association of African Universities.¹¹⁸

Such initiatives have become a central priority since the federal government released its international education strategy in 2014, in which it planned to double the size of its international study base from 239,131 in 2011 to more than 450,000 by 2022.¹¹⁹ Canada is a highly desirable education destination – its international student enrolment increased by nearly 18%

from 2015 to 2016 alone¹²⁰ (ICEF, 2017), on top of an 83% increase from 2008 to 2015.¹²¹ In 2014 the Association of Canadian Deans of Education also released the Accord on the Internationalization of Education, which promotes inclusive and sustainable international mobility experiences, ethical and reciprocal research and teaching partnerships, curriculum internationalization premised on global justice, and long-term institutional commitments to internationalize. There are furthermore opportunities to increase educational partnerships and collaborations within the international Francophonie given that French is one of Canada’s official languages.

At the same time, internationalizing education comes with a number of challenges, among which there exists inequality between research universities (also among nations), as well as the inevitable risks of “brain drain”, i.e. unidirectional flows of people, capital and knowledge often disproportionately concentrated in the Global North.¹²² While higher education contributes to global competition in places like Canada,¹²³ some



have voiced concerns that universities seem to be treating internationalization as a means of generating revenues to make up for declining domestic enrolment.¹²⁴

Furthermore, with internationalization comes a need to develop frameworks that may ensure pluralistic thinking, ethics, and equity in higher education institutions and relatability across cultural differences.¹²⁵

Diversifying Canadian strategic alliances, as discussed above, may also benefit from the unique contribution of researchers willing to collaborate on a transnational scale.

Government programs that support such initiatives may also have the effect of contributing to the democratization of knowledge (including translation of research in various languages) and building new country partnerships.¹²⁶ There is much consideration that could be given to the role of Canada's federal granting agencies,¹²⁷ in supporting growing international research collaborations, as well as organizations like the International Development Research Centre.

It may also be relevant to examine ways in which the legacies of the current system

work against accessing innovative knowledge and quality research produced in developing countries, the most emblematic example being the role of international bibliographic databases that provide journal rankings that underrepresent journals from developing nations. It is also interesting to analyze the possibilities of new technologies, journals and services, as well as the potential of altmetrics,¹²⁸ among other recommendations to bring "better knowledge discovery, increased productivity and new ways of measuring impact to the scientific elite", in a way that may serve all scholars.¹²⁹

Creative Industries, Arts and Culture

A 1994-1995 white paper foreign policy review by a Special Joint Parliamentary Committee had called for culture to be a "third pillar" of Canadian foreign policy.¹³⁰ The notion of "cultural sovereignty" had been an important political issue in Canada at that time, with mounting sovereignty debates in Quebec, and Canada's conclusion of a free trade agreement with its neighbour to the south.¹³¹ Since then, however, there has been variable protection of Canada's



cultural sectors through foreign policies, while its advocacy interests were represented, to an extent, by the Canadian Conference of the Arts (assumed by *Mass Culture / Mobilisation Culturelle* in 2019). The North American Cultural Diplomacy Initiative is another such multi-disciplinary network which seeks to advance scholarship and research on cultural diplomacy in North America and around the world.

In 2016, Canada adopted the Creative Canada Policy Framework, charting a course towards the continued growth and investment of Canada's creative sector with a significant five-year funding commitment to Canada's Creative Export Strategy of \$125 million.¹³² The Canadian Council for the Arts has thus created a suite of programs and initiatives that support Canadian artists to go abroad as well as "more direct initiatives to build political, economic, and cultural synergies with public sector institutions of other countries".¹³³ Arts and culture can also be used to communicate or brand Canada's international image, identity, and values in creative ways, while strengthening diplomatic ties and cross-

cultural understanding.¹³⁴ The continued success of Canadian artists, actors, and musicians globally, and particularly French-Canadian creators, creates further opportunities for Canada to lead internationally and strengthens its position as an influential entrepreneurial power.



CONCLUSION

In past years, the tumultuous complexity of global shifts in interstate dynamics and power have caused several experts to weigh in on how Canada's government may recalibrate its foreign policy.¹³⁵ This Scientific Cycle on *Canada in the World* focuses on the future of Canada's international engagement and foreign policy. It recognizes that:

“Canada’s long tradition of responsible engagement in international affairs has become an important and integral part of our identity. Through experiences such as immigration, travel and instant global communications, Canadians themselves have undergone a profound shift in their understanding of the world and their place in it (...) Canada’s public international role has changed significantly in recent years. We have a clear need to rethink foreign policy and reflect on the opportunities and challenges of our role in the future”¹³⁶

While *Canada and the World* is at the heart of this Scientific Cycle, the areas of inquiry

in this landscape create ample opportunity for examination through the lens of the Foundation's other themes: *Responsible Citizenship, Human Rights & Dignity*, and *People & Their Natural Environment*.

As Canada navigates through unprecedented times in the 21st century, there is still an abundance of opportunity for this nation to thrive and maintain its international leadership. Canada's foreign policy hallmarks, its current framing, opportunities, and commitment to its core values are promising and inspiring. This scientific cycle invites those from a plurality of perspectives and disciplines – from international relations to politics, to business, management and communications, environmental studies, economics, sociology, health, technology, language, and culture – to engage with one of the most pressing priorities for Canada in the years ahead: establishing international leadership in a rapidly changing world by reflecting long-standing Canadian values through its foreign policy and practice.



ANNEX A

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE HALLMARKS OF CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY (1899 – 2015)

Canada's foreign policy history is marked by its important position among powerful nations – from its colonial past with Britain and France, to the development of a strategic continental relationship with the United States,¹³⁷ and a niche between the U.S. and the Soviet Union during the Cold War.¹³⁸

Late 19th – Early 20th Century

Canadian identity became a subject of contention between British loyalists,¹³⁹ those that favored a stronger alliance with the U.S.,¹⁴⁰ and, proponents of Canadian patriotism in the early 20th century.¹⁴¹ These opposing approaches threatened to split the country at different intervals, such as during the Second Boer War in 1899 (Canada's first foreign war), when it agreed to send 600,000 soldiers overseas, despite the opposition of French Canadians.¹⁴² By 1919, Canada began to extend its

engagement with the world, viewing multilateralism as a counterweight to continentalism.¹⁴³ As a recent combatant of the First World War, Canada was a founding member of the League of Nations in 1919.¹⁴⁴

1920 - 1947

In the 1920s, Canada established its own embassies in Washington, Paris and Tokyo. With the Statute of Westminster signed in 1931, it gained the power to negotiate and sign treaties without London's endorsement and took complete control over its military policy. During the Second World War, Canada strengthened its military and trading ties with the U.S.¹⁴⁵ It emerged with a robust economy and became the world's third largest navy and fourth largest air force.¹⁴⁶ It presented refined proposals for the establishment of both the World Bank



and the International Monetary Fund at the Bretton Woods Conference.¹⁴⁷ In 1945, Canada became a founding member of the UN and World Health Organization.¹⁴⁸

Canada also became the headquarters of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) of the United Nations in 1944. This raised Canada's profile in hosting international conferences, including the conference of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization in October 1945.¹⁴⁹ Canada was also one of the founding members of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1947.¹⁵⁰

1948 – 1970

In 1949, Prime Minister St-Laurent, with his Secretary of State of External Affairs, Lester B. Pearson, were the pioneering country representatives of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to protect the UN security role as the Cold War between the U.S. and the Soviet Union was emerging.¹⁵¹ Canada is also largely remembered for its key role in developing the UN's first, large-scale "Emergency Force" peacekeeping operation through the leadership of Lester B. Pearson to defuse the rift within NATO

and the Commonwealth between Britain and France, following the latter's invasion of Egypt after the nationalization of the Suez Canal.¹⁵²

During this period, Canada also became a founding member of the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development in 1960. At the 1961 Commonwealth Conference, Diefenbaker was the only white leader to oppose apartheid in South Africa. In 1959, when Fidel Castro assumed military and political power, Canada continued to allow trade with Cuba, while cautiously navigating this position to avoid ensuing tensions with the U.S. and with respect to its obligations with the bi-national North American Air Defence (NORAD) arrangement and NATO.¹⁵³

Canada also signed the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea in December 1982 and ratified it in November 2003. With the longest coastline in the world,¹⁵⁴ Canada has a wide range of interests in the sea and has contributed substantially to the development of the law of the sea and in shaping the Convention.¹⁵⁵



1970-1982

During the Liberal government administration of Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Canada was admitted into the exclusive Group of Seven (G7) major industrialized nations in 1976.¹⁵⁶ It maintained bilateral relations with Cuba during the Cold War and officially recognized China in 1970.¹⁵⁷ Canada was also a founding member of La Francophonie, established in Niger in March 1970.¹⁵⁸ Furthermore, although Canada helped develop nuclear weapons during the Second World War, and was equipped with nuclear warheads from 1964 to 1984, it has never used or tested a nuclear weapon. It was a signatory to the 1970 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and has actively advocated for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.¹⁵⁹

1982-1990

One of Canada's signature achievements in the 1980s, under Conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, was to negotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement. Canada also became a founding member of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum in 1989 and joined the Organization of American States in 1990.¹⁶⁰ It further

committed to the UN military coalition assembled by the U.S. to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi invasion and supported UN missions in Somalia and the former Yugoslavia.¹⁶¹

1990-2001

In the 1990s, Canada's foreign policy continued to focus on growing its economic ties, both with the U.S. through Canada's ratification of NAFTA in 1994 and on a multilateral level by joining the World Trade Organization, which replaced GATT.¹⁶² A significant milestone was also achieved at an Ottawa conference during which Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy challenged a delegation of 50 governments and 24 observers to adopt the Ottawa Treaty banning anti-personnel landmines.¹⁶³

The extreme violence, genocide and crimes against humanity experienced during Canada's peacekeeping commitments in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda conflict led Minister Axworthy to introduce the concept of "human security" as a priority parallel to "state security".¹⁶⁴ In 2000, Axworthy also notoriously set up the International



Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, which led to the initial creation of the norm of the “Responsibility to Protect” (R2P) in 2001 – a non-binding political commitment of UN Member States to protect populations from genocide, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleaning and war crimes.¹⁶⁵ The norm was adopted at the 2005 UN World Summit.

Canada’s multilateral leadership further resounded in the creation of the International Criminal Court when it became the first country to incorporate the obligations of the 1998 Rome Statute into its national laws through the *Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Act* on June 24, 2000. Canadian Philippe Kirsch was subsequently elected as judge of the ICC, where he served until 2009.

Canada once again took a central role in the creation of the G20 in Berlin in 1999.¹⁶⁶ This is recognized as “an astute initiative” recognizing the need to include emerging economic powers such as China.¹⁶⁷

Following the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy concluded in 1991,

Canada took the lead with the 1996 Ottawa Declaration to establish the Arctic Council as a forum for promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among Arctic States. Inuit leader and former Ambassador for Circumpolar Affairs (and current Governor General of Canada), the Honorable Mary Simon, spearheaded the creation of this high-level forum, in which Indigenous Peoples’ organizations would play an essential role.¹⁶⁸ This Council is particularly significant as it includes eight Arctic nations (Canada, Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States), as well as six permanent Indigenous representatives of these nations, the Aleut International Association, the Arctic Athabaskan Council, the Gwich’in Council International, the Inuit Circumpolar Council, the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, and the Saami Council, and several observer states and organizations across the world.¹⁶⁹ Canada was the first Chair of the Arctic Council from 1996 to 1998 and again from 2013 to 2015.¹⁷⁰



2001-2006

Following 9/11, Canada supported the U.S. to help overthrow the Taliban government in Afghanistan in the new “war on terror”. On the other hand, it declined participation in the invasion of Iraq and required more time for UN multilateral support and the investigation of the presence of weapons of mass destruction.¹⁷¹ Canada nevertheless continued to participate in Operation Apollo, the multinational naval patrol designed to intercept fleeing al-Qaeda and Taliban members, and ensured the presence of 31 Canadian Forces members in an exchange program with U.S. troops along the Iraqi border.¹⁷²

2006-2014

The subsequent Conservative government of Stephen Harper negotiated the Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA)¹⁷³ which expanded Canada’s trading

partners in 2014. The government reputedly managed to protect Canada against the worst effects of the 2008-2009 financial crisis and created the Financial Stability Board.¹⁷⁴ This government also extended Canada’s military mission in Afghanistan under NATO to 2014 and participated in NATO’s campaign against the Islamic State of Libya. Canada took a strong stance during this period to condemn Russia’s annexation of Crimea. The former PM also concluded negotiations to join the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which was eventually signed by the Liberal government in 2016.¹⁷⁵

Following the unsuccessful attempt of the government to secure a UN Security Council in 2010,¹⁷⁶ the former government reduced relationships with the Commonwealth and La Francophonie.¹⁷⁷ Hopes that Canada may regain a seat under the next Liberal government did not materialize in 2020.



ANNEX B

LIST OF QUESTIONS

The Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation invites its 2023-2026 Scholars, Fellows and Mentors, as well as its wider community, to reflect on a set of questions that may help inform critical analysis, dialogue and creative knowledge exchange on the future of Canada's foreign policy, based on the content of this Framework document. These questions are divided according to the Framework Paper's relevant sections. They are not aimed to be exhaustive or prescriptive, and all perspectives are welcomed in accordance with the Foundation's [Strategic Plan](#) that prioritizes a plurality of perspectives and a broad interpretation of diversity in all its activities.

FRAMING CANADA'S FOREIGN POLICY

How did foreign policy develop in non-Western countries or civilizations?

How does the framing or conceptualization of foreign policy influence its study, and

implementation for the future of Canada?

What are some of the gender and civilization hierarchies in Canada's history that are still entrenched in today's foreign policy?

What are the vital interests of Canada's foreign policy (upon which its survival depends), and, conversely, what may be some of the country's non-vital or aspirational foreign policy interests?¹⁷⁸

What are the resources, consultations and evaluations that need to be instituted to plan for a strong long-term vision and effective implementation of Canada's foreign policy?

Is (or *should*) foreign policy be the exclusive responsibility of the federal government and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and what is the role of other actors, stakeholders and layers of government (e.g., city, provincial)?



CANADA IN THE WORLD: FOREIGN POLICY HALLMARKS

What lessons can we learn or how does Canada's past affect its foreign policy today?

How might "the ideals and foreign policy prescriptions that have served Canada in the past align with the truly disturbing array of challenges we face" today?¹⁷⁹

How can literature, research, dialogue and policy better inform Canada's foreign policy with regards to its history, contributions and participation of Indigenous Peoples?

Are there recurring principles, themes or core values that have withstood time in Canada's foreign policy history? What are the principles, themes or core values that have changed and why?

How have women contributed to foreign policy over time and what are some important gender considerations in relation to Canada's foreign policy?

EMERGING 21ST CENTURY CHALLENGES FOR CANADA'S FOREIGN POLICY

Exercising Leadership in Shifting International Relations

How can Canada position itself as a leader or an "entrepreneurial state" within the shifting geopolitical and geoeconomics global landscape?

Which countries, regions, partnerships or initiatives should Canada prioritize or focus on to build stronger long-term and mutually beneficial economic, political or cultural alliances?

Who are the actors that should participate in developing such alliances and negotiations leading up to the conclusion of bilateral, regional or multilateral agreements?

What is the strategic relevance or value of groups such as the G8 or G20 and should other groups be formed? Which countries should be included in these groups and why?



The Value of Maintaining Unity in a Polarized Era

How can Canadians be encouraged to learn and to participate in democratic dialogue – online and/or offline, national and international – that allows for a plurality and, sometimes, opposing perspectives?

Can increasing open access to scientific knowledge improve relationships between citizens and countries?

Are there examples where Canadian unity was a strength in our foreign policy or international relations?

Canadian Foreign Policy in the Global Digital Ecosystem

How can big data or scientific or technological advancements help protect Canadians against security threats, while protecting their human and privacy rights at the same time?

What are some of the most effective local, national or international initiatives taken to

counter and protect against cybersecurity threats?

Are there ways to improve civic digital literacy in deciphering mis/disinformation versus credible sources or to assist citizens in detecting fraud or other sources of online intrusion?

Canada's International Commitments to Climate Change: A Global Challenge

What are some of the actions that Canada could take to attain its GHG targets by 2030?

What are the more sustainable, collaborative and inclusive practices or approaches that can be undertaken for a more cohesive global effort to curb climate change impacts?

How can Canada increase international cooperation and support for Indigenous Peoples and communities whose livelihoods depend on biodiversity conservation?



AXES OF LEADERSHIP AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR A REINVIGORATED CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY

Canada's Leadership in Developmental Assistance

How can Canada ensure that its foreign aid program and decisions target “the countries where the needs are the greatest and focus on poverty reduction”?¹⁸⁰

Should foreign assistance programs focus on poverty and inequality reduction in lower-income countries or also “in reducing poverty and inequality in marginalized communities even in middle-income countries”?¹⁸¹

How can the Canadian government ensure that it assumes accountability in its ODA expenditures?

What are the mutual benefits that foreign aid can bring back to a country like Canada? How and through which mediums or actors is Canadian ODA distributed across the world? How does this impact ODA and the intended outcomes?

Should Canada join international efforts or proposals to waive TRIPS provisions that counter vaccine equity and distribution? Otherwise, why are these provisions important to preserve?

How can domestic and international funding needs be better coordinated in order to ensure more available and swift delivery of vaccines in various countries?

The Significance of Canada's Foreign Policy as a Country of Immigration

How may Canada continue to serve as a leadership model on the world stage in protecting refugees and migrants across the world?

What measures or actions can Canada take to increase cooperative approaches that optimize the overall benefits of migration?¹⁸²

What initiatives can Canada participate in or create in order to increase development and funding opportunities to support asylum seekers, relocation and other important protection measures?



How can Canada improve its laws, policies and processes to better protect refugee claimants and migrants across the world?

Which experts, stakeholders, countries and/or other groups/individuals should be included in developing foreign policy on such issues?

Opportunities For Canada's Foreign Policy in Education and Research

Why are education and/or research important for Canada's foreign policy?

How can Canada's contributions to education or research improve Canadian

foreign policy and international collaborations?

Creative Industries, Culture and International Trade

How can Canada's international image, identity and values be communicated or branded on the global stage through arts and culture?

What is the role of institutions such as the Canadian Council for the Arts in creating programs and initiatives "to build political, economic, and cultural synergies with public sector institutions of other countries"?¹⁸³



ANNEX C

LIST OF EXPERT CONTRIBUTORS

The Foundation is pleased to share the names of expert contributors to this Framework Paper on the 2023-2026 Scientific Cycle *Canada in the World: The Future of Foreign Policy*. These experts are Alumni of the Foundation and part of an interdisciplinary group of leaders in government, academia, communications and media, and non-profit sectors. The expert

contributors shared their experience and perspectives on current events and developments in Canadian foreign policy and global affairs, as well as relevant topics discussed in the Framework Paper.

These expert contributors have agreed to share their names:

Karine Asselin, 2021 Mentor;
Director General, Consular Policy Bureau, Global Affairs Canada

Simon Collard-Wexler, 2009 Scholar;
Counsellor, Embassy of Canada to the Kingdom of the Netherlands

François Crépeau, 2008 Fellow;
Full Professor and Hans & Tamar Oppenheimer Chair in Public International Law, Faculty of Law, McGill University; Former Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants, United Nations

Robert R. Fowler, 2008 Mentor;
Former Foreign Policy Advisor to three Prime Ministers of Canada; former Canadian Diplomat and Special Envoy of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to Niger; Author



John Fraser, 2015 Mentor;

Executive Chair and, formerly, founding President and CEO of the National NewsMedia Council of Canada; Journalist and Author; former Master at Massey College

Alain-G. Gagnon, 2010 Fellow;

Canada Research Chair in Quebec and Canadian Studies and Professor of Political Science, Université du Québec à Montréal; Board Director and President-elect, Royal Society of Canada; Vice-President, International Association of Centers for Federal Studies

Samantha Nutt, 2011 Mentor;

Canadian Physician; Founder and Executive Director of War Child Canada

Jillian Stirk, 2015 Mentor;

Former Ambassador and Assistant Deputy Minister, Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada; Board Member at Equitas-International Centre for Human Rights Education; Associate, SFU Centre for Dialogue



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