

ACTION CANADA

Building Leadership for Canada's Future

Policy Perspectives

**Opinion Articles
by the 2007/2008
Action Canada Fellows**

Canada 

Introduction

Communicating relevant, timely opinions and ideas to the public is an important skill in shaping public policy. That's why Action Canada works with Fellows to develop their skills to write for publication, especially op-ed articles to appear in national and local newspapers.

Getting published and being persuasive in print is challenging. In 2007/2008, eminent Canadian journalists Andrew Cohen, Alain Dubuc, John Fraser, Stephen Hume, Roy MacGregor and Jacquie McNish shared with Fellows their insights on writing and gave them feedback on what they had written. As well, Action Canada writing mentors Dr. Mark Winston, Academic Director of Simon Fraser University's Centre for Dialogue and Dr. Antonia Maioni, Director of the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada, worked intensively with Fellows to develop their writing skills.

We introduced op-ed writing skills to the Action Canada program three years ago, and since then numerous Fellows have had their articles published in major Canadian newspapers. This year Fellows have been published in *The Globe and Mail*, *Corporate Knights*, *Toronto Star* and *Human Security Bulletin*.

I am pleased to present in this compilation the 2007/2008 Fellows' op-ed articles. They demonstrate how this group of emerging leaders views major issues facing our country and relating to our fellowship year theme of Canada as a World Leader.

Cathy Beehan

Chief Executive Officer
Action Canada

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The excitement of the U.S. Presidential race is undeniable. 10,000 people show up to Barack Obama's campaign rallies every day. Participation is up in all age categories, most strikingly among youth. According to the Wall Street Journal, in the first 18 Democratic contests participation by voters under 30 had increased over 2004 by 170%.

Gradually, and inevitably, this excitement has spilled into Canada. With our precarious minority government and endless election speculation, many political observers are wondering aloud if there's anything Canada can learn from the U.S. Presidential race, specifically from the Obama campaign.

CBC's popular At Issue panel recently looked at what Canada can learn from Obama. The lessons highlighted by the panelists, some of Canada's most experienced political observers, have become conventional wisdom.

One commented that Canadians don't have the appetite for change American's do, following eight years of the Bush administration. Another said that if Canadian politicians want to engage young people they need to prioritize issues important to them.

These observations, while correct, miss the bigger lesson for our public leaders of Obama's candidacy. That lesson is one I see every day as Executive Director of an organization that develops leadership skills in New Brunswick's most promising young people. What Obama does is practice a style of political leadership that mobilizes supporters behind a shared vision of the future.

Elements of his approach are specific to America, he is both a representative and a product of a deep desire of Americans to no longer be split by red vs. blue, black vs. white, or citizen vs. immigrant. But like Churchill, Gandhi, King and other great leaders, he uses this context to inspire supporters to work towards their vision.

Including people in this vision is a hallmark of his speeches. He mentions this almost as often as he speaks of change. One typical quote now found on his website says, "I'm asking you to believe not just in my ability to bring about real change in Washington...I'm asking you to believe in yours."

What Obama does is practice a style of political leadership that mobilizes supporters behind a shared vision of the future.

When individuals donate even as little as three dollars to his campaign they are able to connect with other donors from across the country over the internet. The campaign calls these donors 'owners' of his campaign to encourage a sense of shared responsibility.

Obama's ability to build and share a vision with his supporters has inspired many Canadians. In fact, a recent poll of Canadians on the country's foreign policy indicates that a politician would have broad appeal if they were to inspire Canadians towards a shared vision of our role in the world.

Canada's World, an initiative out of Simon Fraser University to spark a national dialogue on international policy, released a poll showing 88 percent of Canadians think it's possible for the country to strengthen its role in international affairs.

The poll also indicated that Canadians don't have an accurate view of our current stature. The results conclude that Canadians want to play an important role in the world and think we're more active than we actually are.

There's an opportunity for a leader to apply the lessons of Obama's candidacy and build a vision for Canada's as a leader in international affairs. If our political leaders do not accept this challenge, we will continue to be more excited by leaders in countries other than our own.

Tim Coates

Raised in Fredericton, New Brunswick, Tim Coates is the Executive Director of 21inc, an action tank that is creating the capacity for change in New Brunswick by incubating new leaders and engaging provincial stakeholders in a process that translates ideas to action. In 2007, Tim completed a master's degree in public policy with a concentration in political advocacy and leadership from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. He received his BA in economics from St. Thomas University. Tim's experiences are wide-ranging. They include working with an emerging network of grassroots organizations and NGOs that are trying to revitalize New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina; working on regional economic development with the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency; publishing research and advocating on refugee policy; and participating in a Canada International Development Agency internship in India to evaluate micro-finance projects. He also spent one summer as a tree planter. In 2005 Tim was named one of New Brunswick's 21 leaders for the 21st Century. He moonlights as an occasional print journalist, with work appearing in *The Boston Globe*, *The Daily Gleaner* and *The Telegraph Journal*. Tim lectures in economics at St. Thomas University, he enjoys playing volleyball and hockey, and grooving to James Brown.

I missed Stephen Harper's first speech in Iqaluit. I was working as a physician at the regional hospital when he made his August 2006 visit to Nunavut, to promote a singular message: we must assert Canadian sovereignty in the North.

This vision seemed locally irrelevant from my perspective at the hospital, a Southern crisis imposed on the North, where there are so many pressing issues debilitating communities. What significance does a military presence have to a community faced with profound poverty, overcrowding and lack of economic opportunity?

Harper's focus on the protection of the land alone is replaying the patronizing and colonialist attitudes of past governments that considered the North as land rather than people. Sovereignty as a concept is weak if its focuses narrowly on power and jurisdiction over a nation. To be complete, it also must assert the presence and vitality of its nation's people.

Any Inuk elder will tell you that there is no way to separate the land from the people. Yet, with all the focus on land protection, social conditions cripple the health of the people of Nunavut. These struggles deplete the true meaning of sovereignty.

Our Canadian government has a history of imposing northern "solutions" in the name of national cohesion. Canada was anxious to assert its Arctic presence during the Cold War era; we relocated a community of Inuit from Northern Quebec to Resolute Bay, one of the northernmost communities in Canada. This move was devastating for individuals, who were deliberately misled and moved to a climate and landscape completely different than their own. Many nearly starved over their first winter. They felt like "human flagpoles," all in the name of Canadian sovereignty.

Ottawa knew then, as it does now, that an active human presence legitimizes our northern claims. Harper even has adopted the catch phrase: "Use it or lose it" when talking

about sovereignty - a slogan that highlights how he misses the point.

"Use it" to Harper means patrol ships that will provide surveillance of Arctic waters, akin to establishing a barrier around land that most of us know nothing about. Anyone at all familiar with the land knows that the North needs investment in health, education, and living conditions as much as it needs surveillance.

The most profound statement of sovereignty would be healthy, autonomous northern communities. The people of Nunavut define the Arctic and its connection with Canada far more than the land alone.

The most profound statement of sovereignty would be healthy, autonomous northern communities. The people of Nunavut define the Arctic and its connection with Canada far more than the land alone. By investing in human potential in the North, our government could have lasting effects far more meaningful than a mere military presence.

Harper also has an opportunity to embark on devolution, which would give Nunavut the same control over its own resources that the provinces enjoy. With this autonomy, the people of Nunavut could begin a path towards sustainable development.

Inuit communities have a personal interest in protecting the North. It is their home, source of survival, and heritage, and thus yields perspectives of great value. The military was conducting a training exercise while I was there to recover a foreign military satellite that had crashed on a remote island. The navy did not have any ice-reinforced ships to land the rangers into this isolated area. They had to contract local hunters to do the support work. Yet there was no Northern representation when Harper traveled to Washington to discuss Canada's position on northern waterways. By this and other

omissions, our government has missed an opportunity to harness the local knowledge and understanding that would create true sovereignty.

Stephen Harper was scheduled to take a small military boat to the Navy ship awaiting him in Frobisher Bay at the end of his August 2006 trip. However, the boat broke down, leaving Harper and his attendants stranded. A local fisherman rescued and escorted them safely to the ship waiting in the bay.

This symbolic experience should have taught Harper one important lesson about the Canadian Arctic. It is one that I, as a Southerner, who had the privilege of working in Nunavut, came to appreciate. We have more to learn than we have to teach. The people of the North are deeply invested in their environment and their heritage, and they are the stewards at the core of what makes Canadian sovereignty important.

One elder in Iqaluit mused that people from outside the Arctic have brought the people of Nunavut many valuable material things. But no Southerner has brought a “piece of land” to the table. “This land is a part of the people of the North,” he said. “We will share it with others but we won’t give it away.”

Mr. Harper, meet your ambassador for Arctic sovereignty.

Rebecca Comley

Physician Rebecca Comley’s medical practice experiences in remote Nunavut communities and inner-city Vancouver left her with a keen interest in public health and health care delivery in Canada’s remote and Aboriginal communities. Rebecca grew up in Smithville, a small agricultural community in southern Ontario. She earned a BSc in biochemistry at Queen’s University before completing an MD at McMaster University, where she was active in student government and the class valedictorian. After completing her residency in family and emergency medicine, she worked in a variety of clinical settings, including urban emergency medicine, general practice in the Canadian Arctic, and out-post medicine in Antarctica. Her most rewarding experience was her clinical work in Nunavut, where she became increasingly aware of population health issues and the impact of public policy on communities’ health. This interest motivated her to complete a Master of Public Health at Harvard University, where she specialized in health policy and management. She is currently an emergency physician at St. Paul’s Hospital in Vancouver.

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There is a unique experiment going on in Canada, unlike anywhere else in the world. We have empowered 11 Yukon First Nation groups to establish their own governments through self-government agreements that facilitate many of the same powers as a Territory. These powers are entrenched in constitutionally-protected Final and Self-Government Agreements that elevate Canada to a world leader in recognizing the rights of Indigenous peoples.

These accomplishments, however, are largely unknown to Canadians. My own First Nation is no longer an Indian Band governed by the Federal Indian Act. We have negotiated to become a legitimate level of government in Canada.

Canada's constitutional recognition of indigenous governments stands as testimony to a tolerant society that celebrates diversity and rewards those who strive for a better life.

I returned home three years ago to lead the ratification of Carcross/Tagish First Nation's Final and Self-Government Agreement. The question I now ask myself is: Can we move beyond a historically dysfunctional relationship with the Canadian Government?

Our Agreements provide us the tools to achieve self-reliance, exercise self-determination in accordance with our own cultural principals and values, and become active members within the constitutional framework of Canada.

Our vision is to ensure that our citizens are healthy, self-reliant and educated. As one example, the University of Victoria and the Justice Institute of British Columbia run full certificate programs in our rural community. Our first cohort, which included a number of grandmothers, graduated last month.

Members are improving their lives. For example, a friend of mine who spent her entire life in the prison system recently

completed her parole period, and showed me her certificate in traditional parenting she earned in anticipation of her first grandchild being born. Last summer she showed me, at the age 60, the first pay cheque she ever received. She wanted to return to jail to proudly 'show her first cheque to her 'other family'.

I wanted to provide her an equivalent amount so she could frame her accomplishment. These are the types of days that illustrate and validate my hope and belief that we are indeed progressing.

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Our First Nation will be the first indigenous government in the world to implement our own legislation based on our traditional virtues and values. It was legislation that stripped First Nations of culture through the Indian Act. We believe it also will be legislation that will in part re-establish our traditional practices in a modern context.

The Family Act, our first legislation, recognizes the importance of the child and family within our First Nation. Its objective is to ensure that First Nation children, who are over-represented within the current Yukon child-welfare system, are provided with the proper services that keep them safe, healthy and connected to their Clans, community and family. Raising our children in a culturally appropriate and safe environment will ensure we have a generation of new leaders who understand our teachings and traditions.

Our government is trying to move beyond enabling our citizens to cling to a culture of dependency fostered through the Indian

Act. With this in mind, our social assistance program is temporary; once a job is offered or a healing plan established, the clock starts ticking when social assistance will be discontinued for those who feel unearned money is a right. Our people are responding positively to our efforts to encourage self-sufficiency.

We now tax our own citizens to build our own-source revenues. Traditionally our potlatch system would redistribute wealth among our people, and we view taxing as a modern way to share our community's wealth.

Our Government is solid on a foundation of good governance reflective of our traditional ways: a clan-based governance structure that ensures no one person could easily succumb to corruption. Decision-making powers are distributed across six Clan leaders who represent families and the voice of all of their members, providing checks and balances as well as equal opportunity for all members.

In partnership with Canada we have rejected the Indian Act and welcome the responsibility to govern ourselves. However, there remains much pain in the community. We still have citizens who wake up to blue skies and spend the day looking for a cloud.

Ultimately, we have negotiated for the opportunity to flourish and see our people live a life sought by other Canadians – to be safe, healthy, and to be proud of their Nation. The tools, the timing and the opportunity are there – the choice is ours.

Justin Ferbey

Justin Ferbey is passionate about implementing legislation based on traditional virtues and values that he believes will regenerate aspects of his inland Tlingit and Tagish culture. A Ganaxtedi clan member of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation in the Yukon, Justin returned to his community to help lead the establishment of Canada's latest self-governing First Nation. He chaired a federal and territorial committee to bring the Final Agreement to a ratification vote and is also the First Nation's senior government official/ executive director. He oversees the negotiation of programs and services, taxation, impact-benefit agreements and other business-related activities, while also advising the Council of Yukon First Nation Leadership on the development of treaty-related fiscal architecture. He assisted in restructuring the entire First Nation Government and Development Corporation, and engaged in many community consultations to ensure that a foundation of good governance was reflected in the renewed organizations. He is currently the chair of a First Nation advisory circle struck to encourage investment and create a stable environment for economic development. He serves on the Native Education College Board of Governors in BC, and also sits as a director on two investment committees. Justin previously worked as a fiscal advisor to a number of chief federal negotiators at the Federal Treaty Negotiation Office. Justin holds a BSc in neuropsychology from the University of Lethbridge. He also spent some time studying martial arts, Korean and Japanese in Asia before returning to Vancouver to earn a certificate in commerce from the Institute of Indigenous Government. He will soon complete a certificate in dispute resolution at the Institute of Justice in BC, and is pursuing an MBA at the University of Liverpool.

Imagine if everyone who wanted to make change, made it. Imagine if anybody who had passion for an issue and wanted to act on it, acted on it. I believe that if young leaders treated making change like a car trip, change would follow.

I have been a university student for seven years, first as an undergraduate and now in medical school, I have been surrounded by students who are passionate about issues. But most of that passion does not translate into action, and change. Young Canadians struggle with the complexity of issues, and vacillate in choosing their change-making. But, I want to offer a simple mind tool: Making change is as simple as getting off the couch and into the car, and asking for directions.

I got off the couch in 2005. I am still asking for directions.

My passion was untapped for most of my youth. Making change seemed to be reserved for “others,” those willing to dedicate themselves entirely to seemingly complicated issues. I was not a peacemaker in elementary school, a prefect in high school, or involved in student government in university. Like many students, I fed my interest by reading about issues and occasionally listening to speakers. For most of my life, including the first three years of university, I decided not to engage any issue.

That shifted 3 years ago. I got off the couch, into the car and asked for directions. That journey would lead to the growth of Canada’s largest Darfur advocacy organization – a network of students from across the country – STAND Canada. We started from a few meetings at Western University, added a group of people at a conference, and are now represented on 26 campuses. We went from hardly knowing what a member of parliament was to having met with dozens of M.P.s and bureaucrats on what Canada can do to make a concrete difference in Darfur. We started with some generic petitions and now use 1800GENOCIDE, a toll-free hotline that walks Canadians through talking points for Darfur,

picking an M.P. to speak to, and delivers their voice directly to the office of Canada’s elected leaders. And this journey continues.

I will share my journey with you, walking through how I got off the couch and into the car, asking for directions. Along the way I will provide some lessons I learned.

The first step in making change is “getting off the couch.”

Getting off the couch

The first step in making change is “getting off the couch.” On the couch, you are a passive observer – you have passion for the issue, but that motivation to change remains untapped. Getting into the car you enter a position where you can let your passion drive you.

For me “getting off the couch” meant a drastic change in actions. In my first years of university, I attended speakers on campus, read about issues in campus newspapers, and responded to discussions that others started. When “I got off the couch” I was organizing speakers on campus, writing about issues in the paper, and starting my own discussions.

But what got me off the couch: I decided to lead. I believed that I could change the world, as many of my contemporaries do. But, a quote from Anne Frank that I stumbled triggered something in me:

“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.”

I realized that by sitting still I am NOT improving the world, now. If I wanted to “improve the world”, but I “did nothing, I was failing. And with that, I said to myself “I am going to do something.”

A few small things helped me begin to lean towards deciding to lead:

- Open yourself to opportunities to get engaged. Attend lectures, go to group

discussions, discuss issues with other students. If you are stimulated more frequently, you are more likely to get engaged.

- Enter discussions. The decision to “do something” seems overwhelming, especially with the image of change that can only be led by Obama or Martin Luther King in mind. However, my experience suggests that the first step in “doing something” is simply to enter a discussion. Get the ideas out of your head and into the world. That is it.
- “Practice” leading. Watch other groups and see how they work. Participate in a human rights campus group, for example, because you care about the issues, but also because you want to learn how to get things done with a group of peers.

Getting off the couch is about making a decision to lead. That decision becomes easier after opening yourself to being engaged, entering discussions and practicing “leadership.” Getting off the couch and into the car puts you in a position to drive to make a difference.

Roll down the window and ask for directions

You are now sitting in a car without direction. You are now in a position where you want to make change, but don’t know what to do, or how to do it.

Just as if a tourist were renting a car in a new city, the next step is to roll down the window and ask for help. Conversations will guide any driver in setting direction and making progress. The questions can really be about anything: where am I going, how do I get there, what obstacles are in the way, or even do you like my car?

Some questions are about the destination. “Where am I going?” Since you are probably not an expert in pushing your issue, ask someone who has made progress. We wanted to make a difference, but how? We first spoke with students in the US who were starting their own Darfur advocacy group, the Genocide Intervention Network, about their strategy. I had many late-night conversations with a counterpart on strategy

heavily influenced by Samantha Power’s book, “America in the Age of Genocide,” and the concept of building domestic political incentive to intervene abroad. Couple that with learnings from Lt Gen Romeo Dallaire in Rwanda shared through “Shaking Hands with the Devil,” and we had a good working strategic objective that hasn’t really changed: “build political will for Canadian leadership on Darfur.” We had our destination.

We didn’t know answers, but we knew to ask questions.

Some are about directions to that destination. “How do we get there?” In Sept 2007, cities around the world were coming together for a Day for Darfur. We went about organizing a rally, based on a series of questions: how do I plan a rally, who should we be targeting to attend, how do we get thousands of young Canadians to attend? We didn’t know answers, but we knew to ask questions. We had NGO leaders, media experts, friends of friends all eager to share their experience in the hopes that it would progress our cause. In the end, we worked with nearly a dozen NGOs and Senator Romeo Dallaire to plan a rally that 2000 Canadians attended. The rally served as a catalyst for renewed media interest in the cause, the inspiration for a new crop of students in Darfur advocacy and a discussion on parliament hill in the House of Commons about Darfur. We reached a point in our journey where we didn’t know a way forward. We rolled down the window and asked for directions that moved us forward on our journey to making change for Darfur.

In the three years, the exercise for making change has been a drive with constant question-asking. We have asked:

- MPs for advice and help on how to set up an effective press conference
- Expert students to critique our policy
- Former organizers of successful political rallies how to organize a rally
- Founders and leaders of young Canadian NGO how to set priorities for a young organization

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- Consultants who work with social entrepreneurs on how to build strong teams
 - MP advisors for advice on election strategy
- And we are still asking questions: how can we mobilize thousands of Canadians to call 1-800-GENOCIDE and tell their MPs to act on Darfur? What will it take to make aggressive and immediate response to genocide a cornerstone of Canadian foreign policy?
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Your decision to get off the couch and into the car and ask for direction will come with benefits for yourself, people around you and society as a whole.

We had little direction when you get into the car the first time, but sense of direction improves as you continue to ask for directions.

Constant pursuit of change

The journey, it turns out, is a constant pursuit of change – a journey to a destination nobody has been to before. You just keep asking questions. Looking back after driving for a while, progress is evident and changes can be seen. But looking forward, even after years on the road, change remains elusive/undefined.

Your decision to get off the couch and into the car and ask for direction will come with benefits for yourself, people around you and society as a whole.

For me, it has meant new experiences, relationships, skills, and opportunities far beyond those available to most 20-somethings. The people I work with, in STAND and in other ventures, see what it is to make change happen, and I am continuously motivated by what they accomplish. For society as a whole, there are discussions amongst young Canadians about what Canada can do for Darfur on over 50 university and high school campuses. To me, that is the impact of deciding to lead change.

I recently shared a conversation with 16 young, ambitious, accomplished Canadians.

Their journeys to date were all different, but impressively have made impact: helping lead a first nation through self-governance, developing young leaders in New Brunswick, leading policy development for an almost prime minister, creating a 100% ethical supply chain to produce t-shirts whose profits are shared with a leading charity. The topic of conversation: what's next for each of them?

Despite a clear demonstration of having “made change”, the ideas these young Canadians had of their future was vague. “I want to be in development and that’s about all I know” “Should I work here or here” “Should I enter a new line of work?” “Should I start my own venture and go solo”? These young leaders, looking back, felt like they had made change, but looking forward there were more questions than answers. They were off the couch, and years into their journey still asking for directions.

And that is my point: making change is a journey to a new, unique destination. Your journey is one nobody has ever made before in its entirety. You do not need to see the exact steps to get to your destination before you get off the couch. You can make change by just getting off the couch and asking for directions. After some driving, you will be able to look back and see that you have had an impact. However, the path forward will still look hazy. And that path will only become clearer as you ask for directions.

Conclusion

There is a critical gap Canada must bridge in order to be ready for the challenges we, as a nation, face ahead. That gap is the difference between the passion for making social change within Canadian youth, and actual efforts towards change.

We young Canadians have a laundry list of challenges facing our future. We need to be ready for it. We need an army of Canadians to make change at home and abroad. But for all those issues, the journey is easier than it appears: it starts with getting off the couch and into the car, and asking for directions.

Benjamin Fine

Ben Fine is co-founder and Executive Director of STAND Canada, a national organization dedicated to mobilizing a critical mass of Canadians to end the crisis in Darfur and respond to future threats of genocide. The organization is represented on 25 university campuses and 40 high schools, and its voice continues to grow. Ben learned about Darfur's plight in summer 2004. It reminded him of the Polish concentration camps he visited in high school and he decided to act, founding STAND in February 2005. In his advocacy for Darfur, Ben has met with MPs, cabinet ministers, senators and former Prime Minister Paul Martin, authored op-eds in the Toronto Star and National Post, spoken at rallies and appeared on MTV Live. Ben completed his second year of medicine at the University of Toronto in 2008. In 2006 he earned a MSc in chemical engineering practice from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, which included work on engineering projects at Cabot Corp. near Boston and Novartis in Basel, Switzerland. His current interests lie in innovation and efficiency in health care working currently with the Centre for Complex Care in Innovation at Toronto General Hospital, and previously at Cancer Care Ontario. In 2005, Ben received a gold medal from the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Western Ontario, where he earned his undergraduate degree. In 2004 he was a semi-finalist in the As Prime Minister competition. While in Boston, Ben rowed for MIT's lightweight crew and recently, proudly, completed his first 10k run. Ben says he enjoys nothing more than a good laugh.

Published, La Presse, 30 March 2008

Were you aware that we are already in the middle of the International Polar Year? Even though annual themes might not always command your fullest attention, this one should at least pique your curiosity! There is a great deal at stake as various parties strive to get control of the Arctic. It is therefore high time that Canada took action and that we rise to the occasion in an innovative fashion, in order to ensure the sustainable development of this region which occupies a goodly portion of our large country.

According to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the territories of Canada, Denmark, the United States, Norway and Russia extend up to two hundred nautical miles from their coastlines. These five countries possess territories which front onto the Arctic Ocean, and are employing different methods to claim the seabeds as well as the international waters in the ocean over and beyond their territorial zones.

The motivation behind these movements is easy to understand: Arctic seabeds contain billions of tons of petroleum and gas. On the eve of a petroleum crisis, these natural resources are ever more precious and are now becoming more accessible due to the fact that global warming is contributing to a progressive meltdown of the permanent ice pack on the surface of the Arctic Ocean.

Recently, both Russia and Denmark mounted expeditions to attempt to demonstrate and justify scientifically that the North Pole and part of the surrounding ocean belongs to them. These countries base their claims on the hypothesis that the Lomonosov Ridge, a chain of mountains at the bottom of the ocean under the North Pole, is in fact a natural extension of their respective territories, in the one case, Siberia and in the other, Greenland.

As far as the United States is concerned, it does not recognize the Northwest Passage, lying between the islands of the Canadian

archipelago, as belonging to Canada. The U.S. also contests the straight line which starts at the Pole and delimits the Beaufort Sea between Alaska and Canada.

In the meantime, Canada is militarizing the Arctic under the new policy of Stephen Harper's government, suggesting thereby that Arctic sovereignty is best affirmed by a show of force. Realistically, should Canada persist in playing the military card, the chances are quite high that it will lose out in that particular battle against the United States and Russia.

Should Canada persist in playing the military card, the chances are quite high that it will lose out in that particular battle against the United States and Russia.

Recourse to diplomacy would seem the wiser option, and Canada should definitely put greater emphasis on this much more promising avenue. Indeed, here is a wonderful opportunity for Canada to affirm its leadership by organizing a first Arctic Summit, which could bring together the five countries concerned, including representatives of First Nation peoples, for round-table discussions. The main actors involved would be able to discuss and exchange openly about their intentions and expectations with regard to the future of the North.

An Arctic Summit of this kind would be a source of fresh ideas and an ideal forum for considering a broad partnership, a form of international cooperation for the development and sharing of the region's resources. This initiative would present a concrete example of responsible development of natural resources in a context of globalization and sustainable development.

It is obvious that by coordinating and combining the efforts of each party so that everyone involved is working towards the same constructive goal, it is going to avoid much wasted time and energy, as well as human and material resources. Yet the larger question remains: how to convince the major powers that this proposition is the best

solution they are likely to find, and that it will not only be acceptable and achievable, but will also procure genuine advantages for all concerned?

Considering the style of politics it values, Norway is likely to be a highly motivated ally with regard to this initiative, since this country has already declined to develop certain natural resources on its own territory for ethical reasons. Currently, it is in the interest of the United States to improve the image it has created by its past activities and this particular opportunity should certainly be welcome to them. Given the relations they have enjoyed with Russia historically, the United States must surely see some advantage in Canada playing a role as mediator in this question, which will allow them to establish a new contact with the Russians and open up new negotiating space.

It is of the highest importance that we identify alternatives to the military projects in order to convert the North into a viable and prosperous region by adopting policies of sustainable development. The Arctic Summit could serve as a trampoline for such an initiative. An achievement of this kind would also carry very prestigious overtones for Canada, represent a major step forward and not be without symbolic significance for humanity at large.

This article was originally written in French.

Marc Fournier

Marc Fournier began a doctorate in computing science at the European University of Strasbourg in 2004 and will defend his thesis in 2008. Marc specializes in the development of 3D scanners for capturing and reconstructing digital 3D models from physical objects. His articles have appeared in journals and at international conferences and he recently won the prize for best article at Computer Graphics International 2007 in Brazil. Marc began his education at André-Laurendeau CÉGEP in Montréal, where his diploma in physical technology won the prize for best final-year project. Marc continued his studies at Montréal's École de Technologie Supérieure, where he obtained his bachelor's degree in electrical engineering followed by a master's degree in systems technology. He also received a prize for best master's thesis in 2002 as well as the Governor General's Academic Gold Medal. Marc has received numerous scholarships, notably from Canada's National Sciences and Engineering Research Council, the Canadian Space Agency, and Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada. Over the course of his training, Marc gained experience in carrying out research projects at Quebec's Institut National de Recherche Scientifique, the Institut de Recherche en Électricité du Québec, and the Institut National d'Optique. Following his master's degree, Marc worked as project manager at the Centre de Photonique de Montréal before beginning his doctorate. Marc also participated in various extra-curricular and social activities. In 2000, he was on the winning team for a North-American university engineering championship and he received the Award of Excellence for Sciences and Technology Applications in the Concours Forces AVENIR. In 2002, Marc took part in an international cooperation project in Ecuador to provide humanitarian aid in an isolated village in the Andes Mountains.

It's tough to win a majority government in Canada.

A poll from Nanos Research last month reported that only 46% of Canadians felt comfortable or somewhat comfortable with a Harper-led Conservative majority; only 39% said the same of a Dion-led Liberal majority.

Most polls indicate that if an election were held today we would end up with another Conservative minority. Minority governments have been common throughout Canada, and have functioned successfully. It's possible that Canadian simply just don't like their current political options; perhaps we're comfortable with the status quo.

What is concerning, however, is the possibility that there is no current political coalition capable of winning a majority government. There are no themes, policies, principles, or proposals that resonate in all parts of this country and cut across demographic categories. Indeed, the Conservatives are having problems appealing to women voters; Liberals are having problems with men. Conservatives are weaker in the Atlantic Provinces; the Liberals are weak in the West.

Democracy is supposed to be our broadest collective exercise, mediating between our individual interests and common aspirations. Successful political leaders are those not just capable of appealing to our self-interest, but also skilled in identifying and articulating a common vision that appeals to our common aspirations.

Canada already has the materials with which to build a strong national vision if only we could see our potential. The challenge for political leaders will be how best to express a common vision for all of Canada and to bind together the tiles of our Canadian mosaic with common purpose. There must be two parts to this national mosaic, the tiles and the glue.

Canadians are not bound together by language, ethnicity, or religion. Instead, the source of our common identity is in our

shared values, character, aspirations, and experience.

Canadians value compassion and tolerance, evidenced by contemporary Canadian heroes like Rick Hasen, Terry Fox, and Romeo Dallaire. We honour those who are guided by compassion and quiet determination, not cut-throat conquerors.

Canadians are not bound together by language, ethnicity, or religion. Instead, the source of our common identity is in our shared values, character, aspirations, and experience.

Canadians are innovative, often out of necessity. We live in a harsh and enormous land, that has inspired us to innovate in blasting a rail line through the Rockies, transmitting radio waves across the Atlantic, technological developments like the Canadarm and the Blackberry, and building the Confederation Bridge to Prince Edward Island.

We Canadians value our democracy and its institutions. In 1758, the Nova Scotia House of Assembly met for the first time in Halifax, marking the birth of parliamentary democracy in our country. We often think of Canada as a young country, but we enjoy a continuous tradition of parliamentary democracy, freedom of the press, and responsible government stretching back 250 years.

These characteristics are the source of our common purpose and ultimately our common destiny. To fulfill our purpose does not require us to engage in an endless debate about Canadian identity. Whether or not we realize our full potential will instead depend on our resolve to act like Canadians in the service of humanity's interest. The world will know we are Canadian not by our outward appearances, but by how we conduct ourselves at home and abroad.

If our actions make us Canadian, then we should be asking ourselves and particularly our political leaders:

If we are truly compassionate, what are we doing to alleviate human suffering today? What are Canadians doing about the ongoing HIV/AIDS crisis, crushing poverty among hundreds of millions worldwide, or organized criminal gangs profiting from the trafficking of human beings?

If we are innovative, how are we contributing to the challenges of living in an integrated relationship with our natural environment?

If we are committed to democratic values, what are we doing to combat declining levels of civic engagement and political participation among Canadian youth, or the challenges posed by tyranny and oppression in places like Afghanistan, Haiti, Burma, and Zimbabwe?

Canada has the ability to play a leadership role on any number of these challenges. We don't lack compassion; we don't lack innovation; we don't lack a commitment to democratic values. The only question is do we have the will to lead?

Among our political leaders, whoever offers the best answers to these questions and can articulate a clear common purpose for our country deserves the opportunity to govern Canada. That party will have my vote.

Nicholas Gafuik

Nicholas is the director of program development for the Manning Centre for Building Democracy, an organization that prepares people for principled political participation. Nicholas is responsible for planning and executing all Manning Centre programs. He holds a MA in history from McGill University, where his thesis focused on Canadian cold war foreign policy and the origins of peace-keeping. He also holds a BA in history (first-class honours) from the University of Calgary and is currently working on a certificate in project management at the University of British Columbia. His interests include Canadian identity and historical memory and Canadian federalism. He is also interested in environmental policy and developing a stewardship ethic. He is a founding director of the Alberta Environmental Stewardship Coalition (www.AlbertaStewardship.ca), which is working to advance stewardship as a principle and in practice for government, business, and private citizens in Alberta. Nicholas was a 2003 finalist in Magna International's As Prime Minister competition. He served as an international election observer for the Ukrainian parliamentary elections (March 2006), the Ukrainian presidential elections (December 2004), and the Cambodian parliamentary elections (July 2003). Nicholas is a native of Alberta, but is currently living in Ottawa.

Canada's international role has dwindled drastically over the last decades, and our identity as a global player is taking a beating.

We have failed to meet international standards through treaties we have signed. Two among many examples are the Kyoto Protocol and our considerable shortfall in meeting our promise to contribute 0.7 percent of Canada's gross domestic product toward international aid.

Our current contribution to our most cherished icon, peacekeeping, would sorely disappoint Lester B. Pearson, former Canadian prime minister known internationally as the father of peacekeeping.

Canada is 55th on a list of 108 nations that contribute to UN peacekeeping missions, according to the United Nations Association of Canada. We contribute 126 personnel, over eight missions, compared to countries like Bangladesh, Pakistan and India, each with over 9,000 personnel.

There was a time when Canada led the world in peacekeeping, dating back to our first UN missions in 1947. This was nine years before Pearson, Canada's foreign affairs minister in the 1950s and prime minister in the 1960s, introduced the idea of UN peacekeepers to the world.

Our contributions have dwindled dramatically since the 1956 Suez Crisis in Egypt, the conflict that fueled Pearson's inspiration for the blue beret UN peacekeepers. Then we offered some 1,100 peacekeepers for that one mission alone.

Canada is trading on our past peacekeeper. We are no longer the mediators of the world, and our flag rarely flutters in war and conflict zones. Canadians may be ambivalent about combat missions such as Afghanistan, but we have always fully supported our peacekeepers.

In a world increasingly afflicted with poverty, climate change, development issues and

more, our global peacekeeping efforts should be front and centre, with a focus on reclaiming Canada's leadership.

Peacekeeping is not the only commitment which Canada is abandoning. We have a proud history of establishing other, non-peacekeeping types of assistance such as police training. Although much like peacekeeping we do not always live up to our national image.

If Canadians value our role as leaders on the international stage, we must hold our leaders more accountable. It's our job, as Canadians, to expect more and demand contributions that will make us proud and allow us to once again reclaim Canada's position as a global leader.

Pearson visited Sri Lanka in 1950, to witness first-hand the inequality of the developing world, and that trip inspired him to help create the Colombo Plan, the world's foreign aid program that was designed to provide a framework within which international cooperation efforts could be provided to raise the living standards of people in the Asia-Pacific region

Later, Pearson chaired the Pearson Commission during the 1950's that established 0.7 per cent of the GDP as the magic number for global aid. Canada has never come close to reaching that target.

Some nations, especially in Europe, are striving to reach this goal. Canada is conspicuously absent. Our current commitment and contribution stands at about 0.26 per cent (or \$3.0 billion), less than half of the 0.7 per cent target. We can achieve more.

Hundreds of millions of these dollars never reach the people, counting instead as

phantom aid and further reducing the real impact of our contribution. A 2005 report by the international development agency ActionAid showed that almost half of all global aid pays for consultants and other associated costs such as research, training and administrative costs that are accrued in the donor countries. These dollars, though associated with foreign aid projects, remain in the industrialized world.

If Canadians value our role as leaders on the international stage, we must hold our leaders more accountable. It's our job, as Canadians, to expect more and demand contributions that will make us proud and allow us to once again reclaim Canada's position as a global leader.

This is an attainable vision for Canada - an identity that could be forged in present achievements, rather than past glories.

Oliver Madison

Oliver Madison is president of Me to We Style Inc., a social enterprise committed to providing ethically manufactured, quality apparel for socially-conscious consumers. It also financially supports a charity partner, Free the Children. Oliver was previously a principal at Octavian Capital, a Toronto-based, boutique corporate finance firm specializing in small to mid-size enterprises. His responsibilities included business development, raising equity and debt capital, and advising management on growth opportunities and business strategy. Prior to Octavian Capital, Oliver worked in corporate finance at Brown Brothers Harriman's New York office, where he advised the principals of private and closely held public companies about mergers and acquisitions and analyzed potential investments for the firm's mezzanine and private-equity funds. Oliver graduated cum laude from Harvard College with an AB in economics and a citation in German. He completed his Level III Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) exams in 2004.

I will never forget Isatou Jallow. I met her at a health clinic in Gambia where she'd brought her sick infant to be saved. It was too late, and I watched her stoically grieve the loss of her child.

Isatou was strong because she had no other choice – she's poor.

Grief is a luxury not afforded to the 1.2 billion of the world's poorest who, like Isatou, eke out a living on less than a dollar a day, living in what is called "extreme poverty."

She had to worry about harvesting her small plot of groundnuts; a decent crop was her only hope for generating enough money to keep her remaining children alive and send them to school.

We can do a much better job of easing this crushing burden of poverty with our \$4.6 billion dollars of foreign aid. We will, if a bill before the Senate's Foreign Affairs Committee this week gets through the Senate before an election is called.

Bill C-293, known as the "better aid bill," is a private members bill introduced by Liberal MP John McKay. It proposes a legislative mandate for the portion of our foreign aid we call 'official development assistance' (ODA) to target poverty reduction, and requires that it take into account the priorities of aid recipients, like Isatou.

This isn't the case currently. In 2000, only 26% of Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) projects listed poverty reduction as their primary objective. Our aid is unfocused. By trying to be all things to all people, it ends up being little to few.

The bill also provides a much needed transparency and accountability mechanism for our aid spending. CIDA's Development Assistance Program is the government's second largest discretionary grants program, yet the CIDA's Minister is only required to report to Parliament on the agency's plans and performance – not on how it spends ODA.

The bill requires the Ministers responsible for distributing our development assistance to provide Parliament with both a narrative report of how our funds are distributed within 6 months of the end of the fiscal year, and an accompanying statistical report within 12 months.

This would end our shameful practices of inflating our ODA statistics to include all foreign aid spending, and diverting ODA funds away from addressing global poverty to fight the war on terror.

Our aid is unfocused. By trying to be all things to all people, it ends up being little to few.

The 28% increase in aid spending between 2001 and 2004 that was earmarked for Iraq and Afghanistan was recorded as ODA. Reconstruction in Iraq and our military operations in Afghanistan have become significant components of our foreign aid, but they aren't development assistance.

This bill has been a long time coming. The principles it embraces are not new ideas.

As early as 1987, the House Foreign Affairs Committee published a report calling for a clearer mandate for our ODA and recommending a charter based on poverty reduction. Similar recommendations were made by parliamentary committees in 1994; the 1995 policy statement "Canada in the World" and the Auditor General's 1998 report on CIDA.

It's not a Liberal bill either. Both the NDP and the Conservatives introduced similar bills in the two previous governments. In 2005, Stephen Harper sent an open letter to then Prime Minister Paul Martin, co-signed by the NDP and the Bloc Québécois leaders, calling for the government to take urgent action to establish poverty reduction focused ODA and develop an accountability mechanism for reporting to Parliament.

But the Conservatives now oppose the bill. They were the only party to vote against it in the House, and Conservative Senators are using stall tactics to delay its passage through the Senate, where it's been since last November.

Their critics argue the bill won't fix CIDA. The bill is not designed to do so – it's designed to change how we spend our development assistance, not the government agencies that distribute it.

They've also raised concerns over the consultation clause – that aid recipients have a say in how it's spent – warning that it will add layers to an already bloated bureaucracy. Fifty years of development has taught us otherwise: listening to what the poor need, instead of telling them, is the only way to achieve long-term results.

This bill won't fix all that ails our aid program, but it is a step in the right direction.

The international community has called for it repeatedly through the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development; Canadian taxpayers deserve it; and over a quarter of a million individual Canadians and 800 organizations have pledged their support for it through the Make Poverty History Campaign.

Their voices are loud and clear: this bill needs to get through the Senate before its orphaned by an election. They're speaking for Isatou in the hopes one day she'll be able to speak for herself. I hope the Senators are listening.

Shauna Mullaly

Shauna believes passionately in engineering's capacity to drive positive social change. She is pursuing a master's degree in biomedical engineering with a focus on international development policy. For her master's thesis she is developing a model for the sustainable acquisition and diffusion of medical technology in developing countries. As part of this experience, she worked at the Medical Research Council (U.K.) in the Gambia, West Africa in the summer of 2006. Shauna, who is co-president of the Carleton chapter of Engineers Without Borders (EWB), also served on the executive committee for the 2006 EWB national conference, the largest, annual, international development gathering in Canada. She represented Carleton at the 2006 United Nations conference on youth and UN reform, and participated in the African Union Summit 2006 Women's Forum on gender-responsive governance in post-conflict societies. As part of her work in the engineering community, Shauna co-founded the Engineering Outreach and Recruitment program at Carleton. Building on this, she founded and chaired the Go Eng Girl! event, which connects young girls with female role models in engineering. She also helped design a new course at Carleton about technology and international development. A powerful role model to youth, Shauna frequently presents her views on engineering and international development to elementary and high-school students. She has also tutored at-risk, pregnant teens. In 2006 she was a YMCA Women of Distinction Young Trailblazers award nominee. In 2007 she received the Carleton University Board of Governors' award for Outstanding Community Achievement. Shauna is happiest when travelling and meeting new people, and spending time at her cottage on Prince Edward Island.

Whether or not he ultimately wins the Democratic Party nomination, Barack Obama has changed the face of US politics. As the Harvard graduate son of an African goat herder, he gives inspired voice to America's growing cultural complexity and its critical place in an interconnected world.

But many Canadians misunderstand what Obama means. Is he a change away from Bush, the Iraq war and neo-conservatism? Absolutely. Does he represent a generational shift, America's first opportunity for post-boomer politics? Also true. But more fundamentally he represents a revolution against baby boomer politics writ large. He seeks to transcend, rather than relive, the divisive political agenda of the 1960's.

Neither Hillary Clinton nor John Edwards understand this. Both concentrate their message on bringing back the Left of their youth. Edwards appeals to the union and labour left, while Hillary's core boosters are the center-left baby boomer establishment. Obama, in contrast, appeals to an emerging generation of progressives. In Iowa he received 57% of the under 30 vote, who came out in record numbers. Hillary got 11%.

This younger generation, like Obama, isn't familiar with traditional liberal progressive politics. The New Deal is ancient history and the liberal agenda of the 60's and 70's is their parents' mythology. Their only experience with a democratic president is Bill Clinton, whose major accomplishments – eliminating the deficit and 'reforming' welfare – weren't particularly progressive in nature.

Obama's generation is shaped by the service economy, globalization, the internet and the telecommunication revolution – in short a post-industrial world. The old progressive agenda, built for the industrial revolution, is increasingly out of touch to a demographic that wants to join the knowledge economy. Take for example, Obama's much misunderstood position on NAFTA. Unlike Clinton's plan for sectoral protectionism, he neither wants to end or water down the

agreement. He intends to enhance it by incorporating labour and environmental standards – something progressive Canadians have sought for years.

The Left and centre-Left in both the United States and Canada have been reactionary in their response to these economic changes. American Democrats as well as the NDP and Liberals have spent much of the last three decades defending the status quo and opposing efforts to renew or reform the progressive institutions their forefathers built.

He appeals to those who neither fear markets, nor see government as a panacea, but value a society that provides equality of opportunity. As a result young people across the political spectrum see Obama as a means of overcoming the polarizing politics of the past.

In contrast, Obama and his supporters want to establish a neo-progressive agenda. They want a New Deal for the 21st century, capable of grappling with the challenges and opportunities of the post-industrial revolution.

In pursuit of this agenda he is striving to create a new governing majority. Obama speaks not only to Democrats, but actively seeks out pragmatically driven Republicans and Independents. He appeals to those who neither fear markets, nor see government as a panacea, but value a society that provides equality of opportunity. As a result young people across the political spectrum see Obama as a means of overcoming the polarizing politics of the past.

Could such a movement emerge here? Possibly, but no one has tried.

The NDP parallels John Edwards, relying on a well organized core of supporters. But their anti-market rhetoric is tired. The Greens are receiving close scrutiny from frustrated young progressives, but are hindered by their extremist fringes.

And the Liberal Party? The wedge politics of Hillary, not the transformative approach of Obama, has been ascendant for too long.

This is in part because transformative politics requires a painful process of introspection and a willingness to let go of past battles. Not since the Kingston Conference in 1960 has the party been willing to challenge its core assumptions and principle policies. In contrast, few ideas from the 2006 renewal process worked their way into the platform. More importantly, it never sparked a broader discussion about the party's identity, vision and direction.

Nothing characterizes this dichotomy better than the debate over the most sacred of cows – healthcare. There is wide agreement that the system is stressed, but the discussion remains stuck in the old debate of status quo versus privatization.

It is the advocates of wedge politics that foster this polarization by regularly employing a favourite Bush tactic: anyone who challenges the status quo is labeled anti-Canadian, much like Americans who opposed the war were labeled unpatriotic. The result is a political environment defined by fear, silence and stagnation. Is this the end result of 1960's progressivism?

If Obama successfully realigns the US political spectrum he will give voice to a new generation of neo-progressives. Canadians – a majority of whom pride themselves on being more progressive than Americans – won't stand idly by. They will demand change and will give a coveted majority to the party that responds to this new reality. That prize is now up for grabs.

Taylor Owen

Taylor Owen is a doctoral candidate at the University of Oxford where he is both a Trudeau Scholar and a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Scholar. Prior to this he was a Graduate Fellow in the genocide studies program at Yale University and holds an MA from the University of British Columbia. He has been the co-editor, and is currently on the editorial board of Security Dialogue, is associate editor of the St. Anthony's International Review, and has worked as a researcher at the International Peace Research Institute, the International Development Research Centre and the Liu Institute for Global Issues. He has served in numerous policy advisory roles and authored policy reports on issues that include small arms, landmines and peace-building. His academic work focuses on the definition, measurement and implementation of human security policies and initiatives. He writes widely on the causes and consequences of conflict and peace-building, and on Canadian, American and European foreign policy. He writes online daily at oxblog.com, ranked the second-best blog on international affairs by the Washington Post.

The soft-point hunting bullet enters the 11 year's old body, expanding to more than double its diameter and losing weight in fragments. The fragments cause multiple perforations of the tissue surrounding the bullet path, detaching pieces of muscle. Traveling over 2,000 feet per second, the bullet tears the child to bits.

Small arms and light weapons kill, in great numbers. Forty-seven of the 49 major conflicts during the 1990s were fought almost exclusively with the roughly 600 million small-arms weapons currently in circulation, about 100 million of them in sub-Saharan Africa. The human cost has been devastating.

The problem is a simple outcome of supply and demand. The global marketplace was flooded by overstock equipment from disbanded Communist forces following the end of the Cold War. Simultaneously, the market experienced heightened demand from a new breed of non-state rebels, guerrilla armies, warlords, and terrorists. The lines between the licit and illicit markets blurred, as dealers and brokers transcended domestic law through elaborate international networks.

International efforts to control small arms and limit illicit activity have collapsed time and time again. In 2001, the UN hosted a Global Conference aimed at eradicating the illicit trade. Talks were derailed by an obstinate American delegate who reminded conference goers of the United States' "constitutional right to keep and bear arms."

The 2006 UN Review Conference fell prey to similar politics. The conference could not reach agreement, let alone generate action, further weakening the movement to limit these weapons. Vehement US opposition to any future global follow-up caused many to consider the small arms control movement dead.

However, Canada stepped forward in the closing moments of the conference. In a remarkable display of international leadership, we attempted to salvage something from the

wreckage. Our government announced that we would host an informal meeting on global principles for the transfer of small arms, following up on our previous and ongoing influence in banning a sub-set of small arms, landmines.

Held in Geneva, but hosted by Canada, the August 2007 meeting was a success. The 111 states, 24 civil society organizations, and UN agencies in attendance worked together and made real progress identifying practical steps to reduce illicit trade, including improved authorization processes for the transfer of these weapons and related state obligations.

Canada must continue to play an active and independent role rather than fall prey to US sentiments, using our leverage as a global exporter and outspoken critic of small arms to move these talks forward.

They also discussed the possibility of an Arms Trade Treaty framework that would include common standards on brokering and licensing production, as well as specific controls and limitations based on their use or likely use in the country of import.

While the meeting provided a boost to the small arms movement, it remains to be seen whether the framework developed in Geneva will solidify in an agreement when all member states come together in July 2008 at the UN's Biennial Meeting.

Canada is a major small arms exporter with relatively high standards for controlling our own industry. According to the Norwegian Initiative on Small Arms Transfers (NISAT), Canada exported roughly \$375 million of small arms and light weapons in 2005.

Canadian exports to the US account for well over half of all exports, and represent the weakest area of an otherwise well regulated

market, with virtually no controls in place. Canadian exports to the US do not require permits and any uncomfortable talk of where those weapons might end up is avoided at all cost.

American intransigence on the issue of small arms control will be a key issue in upcoming preliminary meetings. The United States is the largest exporter of small weapons and the most heavily armed society in the world, with 90 guns for every 100 citizens, according to the Small Arms Survey. Clearly, the US has an economic and ideological aversion to controls.

Canada must continue to play an active and independent role rather than fall prey to US sentiments, using our leverage as a global exporter and outspoken critic of small arms to move these talks forward. In addition, genuine efforts must be made to increase transparency, particularly in terms of US exports, and export permits must be required for all arms shipments to the United States.

If Canadians are serious about export control internationally or the eventual adoption of an Arms Trade Treaty, we need to reform our current practices. Otherwise, Canada risks looking like a disingenuous actor rather than the principled leader we purport to be.

Emily Paddon

Emily Paddon is a graduate student in international relations and Trudeau Scholar at St Antony's College, University of Oxford. Her interest in international relations, and specifically, Canada's role in the world, stems from a concern for human security and its relationship with social, political, and military power in the modern world. Her current research explores the limits and validity of the principle of impartiality in UN-authorized interventions. Emily is the former managing director of the St Antony's International Review, Oxford's graduate journal of international affairs, and a tutor of international relations at Exeter College's Oxford Academy. She holds a BA from Brown University where she concentrated on the history of art and architecture, and international relations. In addition to her studies, she has worked at Goldman Sachs, the International Crisis Group, The Watson Institute for International Relations, and World Affairs Television. Her interest in human security and development also led to research projects and volunteer work in West and North Africa. In September 2007 Emily will begin a year at McGill University in Montréal as a Sauvé Scholar.

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Canada has been hiring private companies to do jobs that our military would traditionally do – including protecting our Prime Minister when he visits hotspots like Afghanistan. Unlike in the United States, Britain and South Africa, where serious allegations about misconduct by private military companies have spurred calls for reform, Canada has not debated the issue.

The Department of Foreign Affairs spent almost \$15 million last year on nearly two dozen private security firms to provide security for Canadian embassies in Nigeria, Pakistan and Haiti, and do unspecified work for Canada in Peru and Greece.

Little is known about the extent to which the Department of National Defence relies on private military and security companies. We know that one company, Saladin Security, provides protective security to dignitaries in Afghanistan, including Prime Minister Stephen Harper. Blackwater U.S.A., implicated in an incident in Iraq involving the indiscriminate killing of civilians, has provided specialized training in bodyguard and personal protective services for select members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

The private military and security industry is projected to reach US\$210 billion by 2010 worldwide. While Canada's piece of this pie is not significant, it only takes one allegation that a firm hired by our government has indiscriminately killed civilians in Afghanistan to stir up animosity against our soldiers.

We need to take a hard look at what roles these private firms are taking on, in order to protect our reputation and interests in Afghanistan and elsewhere, and whether sufficient safeguards are in place to ensure proper conduct.

What should we be doing to protect Canadian interests from lapses that might occur with private security forces? To start, the federal

government should ensure that its contracts with private military and security firms include key contractual protections, such as the ability to immediately remove individual contractors that run afoul of rules governing the use of force. A penalty clause could also be included for misconduct.

We need to take a hard look at what roles these private firms are taking on, in order to protect our reputation and interests in Afghanistan and elsewhere, and whether sufficient safeguards are in place to ensure proper conduct.

All private military and security contractors hired by the federal government should be fully vetted. This lesson was hard learned in Iraq by other governments, when an investigation revealed that a former British Army soldier who had been jailed for working with Irish terrorists, and a former South African soldier who had admitted to firebombing the houses of more than 60 political activists during the apartheid era, were working for private security contractors in Iraq.

The U.S. government is now requiring enhanced training in human rights and international humanitarian law among contractors deploying with their military. Inadequate training in these areas is a serious risk factor, so Canada should require the same of any contractors that it hires.

A further safeguard would ensure that every contractor hired by the Government of Canada abroad is subject to local or Canadian law in the event that a serious crime is committed. This is vital to ensure a sense of discipline and so that there is no "impunity gap" as was seen in Iraq, where private contractors had immunity from prosecution.

The most reputable private military and security firms in the industry are open to accepting these safeguards. Their clients are

not just governments and companies, but also non-governmental organizations.

We should also question whether it would better serve our national interests to build up the capacity of our own Canadian Forces in areas that we have begun hiring contractors to fulfill. Recent polls find Canadians increasingly interested in our country demonstrating principled leadership abroad, and improving capacity within our own military would be consistent with that sentiment.

Renewal of our military to play a positive role globally has grown in recent years and it would be tragic for that to be thwarted by reliance on private firms for core security functions. Taking action to address concerns about private military and security firms would also be an important contribution by Canada to ensure stability in conflict-ridden areas like Afghanistan.

Canadian Military Police providing protective services are trained to uniform standards and subject to our National Defence Act. Hired contractors are not. We've already learned hard lessons from the Somalia Inquiry about the importance of clear command and control structures.

Surely, we do not need to learn those lessons again.

Benjamin Perrin

Benjamin Perrin is assistant professor at the University of British Columbia, Faculty of Law and faculty associate at the Liu Institute for Global Issues as well as the Peter Well Institute for Advanced Studies. His teaching and research interests cover domestic and international criminal law, international humanitarian law, comparative constitutional law and human trafficking. A member of the Law Society of Upper Canada, he served as a law clerk to the Hon. Madam Justice Marie Deschamps of the Supreme Court of Canada, and was senior policy advisor to the Hon. Monte Solberg, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. He was the assistant director of the Special Court for Sierra Leone legal clinic which assists the Trial and Appeals Chambers, and completed an internship in Chambers at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague. Benjamin founded The Future Group, a non-governmental organization that combats human trafficking. He served as its executive director from 2000-2006 and led its inaugural project in Cambodia. The organization works with victims overseas, assists with the extraterritorial prosecution of offenders, and conducts public policy research. Benjamin holds an LL.M. (honours) from McGill University, a J.D. from the University of Toronto, and a B.Comm. (with distinction) from the University of Calgary. He is the recipient of the Governor General's Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal, the YMCA International Peace Medal, the "Graduate of the Last Decade" award from the University of Calgary, and was named one of Canada's "best and brightest" by Maclean's magazine. Benjamin enjoys camping, canoeing, and cooking.

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Who do you trust with a burgeoning nuclear industry – us or the Russians?

Comparing the CANDU to the Russian equivalent is like comparing a box of candles to a box of dynamite. Like it or not, the world needs nuclear energy, and the world is better off with us supplying the technology rather than our competitors. Iran currently seeks a reactor. Should we sell it to them, or leave it to the Russians?

Canada currently supplies much of the world's uranium, so we're already hip-deep in the nuclear game. So why should we raise our stake in such a maligned industry? The CANDU is safer, contributes much less to the weapons-producing chain, and makes better and more sustainable use of the world's remaining uranium reserves.

The CANDU reactor is a national treasure that needs to be resurrected, re-polished and sold world-wide. Canada needs to embrace the new Advanced CANDU design, and back up that design up with a strong, international sales effort. The money the Conservatives government recently allocated to that design is a good start – but a real commitment means getting out in the world and aggressively selling it, starting in Ontario.

The CANDU has had more than its share of boon-doggles. There have been bribes by Canadian officials to purchasers, India purportedly 'cooked' the plutonium it needed for its first bomb in a CANDU design, there were massive debts incurred by Ontario Hydro largely due to the CANDU-based nuclear industry, and the American nuclear industry has determinedly and gradually improved the design of the light-water reactor, although it's still not as safe as the CANDU.

Each one of these setbacks has eroded the competitive edge of the CANDU and collectively they have led to many calling for the federal government to stop investing in the CANDU's future.

A nuclear power plant in Iran doesn't have to destabilize global politics. It's the ability to process or enrich the fuel, upgrading it from an energy-generating isotope to a weapon that is generating global panic.

Nuclear may scare us, but carbon-emitting fuels are becoming scarcer and scarier, and nuclear power has an important role to play in getting off the fossil carbon train.

India may have cooked some plutonium in a CANDU-based reactor, but it was further fuel-processing abilities that enabled them to produce a bomb. No refining process – no bomb. The CANDU is a small, much-needed piece in a larger nuclear puzzle.

The CANDU is unique in that it does not require enriched uranium in order to operate, unlike the Russian reactors that are to be built in Iran. CANDUs were originally designed to use natural uranium that comes (almost) right out of the ground, an un-enriched product that is not weapons-ready, nor particularly dangerous to handle.

Uranium-235, which is fissile and can by itself sustain a chain reaction, is the really dangerous stuff, but the natural uranium used by CANDU is made up almost entirely of U-238, which is not fissile and requires many fewer safeguards. CANDU fuel is a kitten compared to the tiger in the Russian nuclear plants.

If you use a CANDU, you have no need for the processing facilities that can make the fuel a weapon. That's why it's safer.

It's also more efficient, in a number of ways.

Using natural uranium, the CANDU is about twice as efficient as reactors using enriched uranium. The world has only got about 60 years of uranium left at current rates of use, and much less if China weans itself away from coal and grows its nuclear power base, so

efficiency is vital if existing uranium reserves are to last.

Waste reduction is vital, and disposing of nuclear waste is the most significant barrier to environmentally friendly nuclear power. If we double the energy we get from the fuel, we also cut the amount of nuclear waste produced in half

The CANDU also can recycle used fuel from competing 'light-water' reactors – notably those made by the Areva French and the U.S. Areva recently made overtures about buying Atomic Energy Canada – the makers of the CANDU – and one strong motivation they have to do so is because of the role the CANDU can play as the ultimate nuclear recycling depot.

Pretty much every country with a nuclear energy program uses these light-water reactors, and Canada should be actively pursuing these markets. The primary selling point is easy – the nuclear fuel will go twice as far if you have CANDUs to use.

The CANDU also can use a new and easier-to-handle fuel, thorium, a non-fissile material, that is less dangerous to handle than natural uranium and even more abundant.

Nuclear may scare us, but carbon-emitting fuels are becoming scarcer and scarier, and nuclear power has an important role to play in getting off the fossil carbon train.

The CANDU should be part of our participation in the nuclear game. By selling these reactors world-wide, we are adding value to our uranium production, while reducing global tensions around atomic weapons and carbon emissions as well.

Canada, with a renewed commitment to the CANDU reactor, could do much more than just feed the nuclear machine. We could, with a focused effort, ensure that machine is run safely and efficiently. The new Advanced CANDU design can put Canada back in the nuclear game, contributing to making that

game safer and more sustainable.

Who do you have more trust in to build the world's nuclear plants – us or the Russians?

Tom Rand

Tom Rand is the founder of an interactive voice response (IVR) software company, Voice Courier Inc. (VCi). He led its expansion to 100 employees in three countries, with revenue in excess of \$12 million US annually. In 2004, he founded Voice Courier Mobile Inc. to move into short message service (SMS) software. The VCi Group of Companies was profitable for each of the 12 years it was under Tom's control. He sold both companies in 2005. Tom holds a BSc in electrical engineering and applied mathematics from the University of Waterloo, a MSc in philosophy of science from the London School of Economics and a MA in philosophy from the University of Toronto, where he is now also pursuing a PhD in philosophy. In 2005 Tom founded VCi Green Funds to provide angel and venture capital to companies developing emission-reduction technologies. He is vice president of environmental science at Canadian Hydrogen Energy Company and sits on the board of Clean Energy Developments Inc., a geo-thermal energy provider.

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Canada avoided the Iraq War but its 2 million refugees are now the world's problem.

Forty years ago we sat on the sidelines of another ill-fated American war in Vietnam. But Canada dazzled the world by opening its doors to refugees when faced with the plight of millions of "boat people" marooned in the conflict's aftermath. It's time for a repeat performance.

Of course, settling refugees costs money. Joe Clark's post-Vietnam innovation was to share the financial burden with Canadian citizens, who fundraised with aplomb. A bold matching scheme hatched in 1979 saw Clark's government sponsor one refugee for every refugee sponsored by the private sector.

My mother's response was typical. She was a dean of students at McGill University's medical school and helped her students organize talents shows and bake sales to help refugees half a world away.

Canadians sponsored 20,000 refugees in four months. All told, Canada opened its doors to 77,000 boat people from 1975 to 1981. Decades later, my mother ended up teaching many children of these refugees at medical school, a fitting tribute to the power of a generous immigration policy.

Could we repeat that historic effort today for displaced Iraqis? We might never know. The number of government and private-sponsored refugees from the entire Middle-East has been capped at only 3,450 for 2008. Religious and community groups are clamoring to pay to settle more Iraqis, but to no avail. The government has shackled the private sector's generosity and limited its own contribution. So much for Clark's bold example.

There are legitimate concerns about security and radical Islam. Clearly Canada must employ rigorous screening procedures. But the threat is largely imagined. The specter of terrorist Arabs has achieved a prominence in

the Western sub-conscious unrivalled since the days of fear-mongering about Jews and the "none is too many" approach.

We would do well to remember that Iraq once boasted the region's most secular and modernized civil society. Where once Canada accepted refugees of communism, now we can accept refugees of terrorism. The refugee of our enemy is probably our friend.

By opening our doors to Iraqis and overseeing their successful integration into the Canadian fabric, we can demonstrate to the world that the supposed clash of civilizations is largely a clash borne of ignorance.

We risk far more by doing nothing.

The world faces a refugee time bomb. Two million Iraqis could provide the next generation of terrorist recruits if they remain displaced. They already are contributing to the destabilization of the region, much like the Palestinian refugees. Iraqis have streamed into neighboring Jordan and Syria, overwhelming public services and stoking local resentment.

Clearly Canada cannot diffuse this colossal problem on its own. But we can leverage our own contribution by shaming the nations who participated in the Iraq War. The so-called coalition of the willing has proved decidedly unwilling to address the human consequences of its invasion and occupation.

Our southern neighbor is by far the worst culprit. The United States has accepted a mere 1700 Iraqi refugees since 2003. America has even shut its doors to thousands of Iraqi translators now targeted for murder because of their collaboration.

Canada could chart a bold course against the chorus of western voices assuming adversarial positions against the Arab world.

By opening our doors to Iraqis and overseeing their successful integration into the Canadian fabric, we can demonstrate to the world that the supposed clash of civilizations is largely a clash borne of ignorance.

And there is a final, compelling reason to open our doors to Iraqi refugees: we need immigrants as much as they need us. Thousands of Iraqi professionals are among the displaced and Canada—especially Alberta—is experiencing an acute and worsening labor shortage. Canada could conceivably bridge this gap while at the same time diffusing a refugee crisis.

The road to increased Iraqi immigration might run through oil companies looking for laborers, irony be damned. Behold an improbable solution to the labor crunch from the oil sands boom: Alberta, meet Iraq.

Andrew Sniderman

Andrew Sniderman co-founded the Washington-based Genocide Intervention Network (GI-Net) to provide citizens with tools to prevent and stop genocide. GI-Net aims to change the way the United States and the international community respond to genocide by creating an active and powerful political constituency. While working for GI-Net, Andrew delivered speeches across the United States and helped oversee a national lobbying, mobilization and fund-raising effort. In the fall of 2005, Andrew interviewed executives of private military firms and researched the option of private intervention in Darfur. Andrew was born and raised in Montréal and graduated with a BA (highest honours) in philosophy and political science from Swarthmore College, Philadelphia and has been awarded a Rhodes scholarship. Andrew is also a two-time provincial badminton champion, an avid Argentinean tango dancer, and a balloon artist. In 2007/08 Andrew will work in Ottawa as a Fellow in the Parliamentary Internship Programme.

War changes the psyche of the nation. So does peace. What we are witnessing in the heated national debate and convulsions over Canada's mission in Afghanistan are the birth pangs of a new national psyche: no longer self-conscious peacekeepers, we are now reluctant warriors—slowly, surely, heroically (post-Manley, conditionally) being dragged into battle by a new, more bloody century.

The age of peacekeeping is dead. It has been dead for at least a decade. But its hold on the psyche of Canadians has only just started to wane. The daily public calculus of Canadian casualties of war which so unnerves our political leaders is the symptom not only of a civilized society which holds life dear, but of a people—of new, younger generations—that have no experience, no historical memory of war. Indeed, compared with our forefathers in the early to middle twentieth century, who saw bloodshed on an industrial scale on the European continent, we are all virgins and naifs.

The war in Afghanistan—notwithstanding the technocratic bon mots of the Manley report—is a rite of passage. In all its complexities, it is only slightly less understandable than it is winnable. That much seems clear. Still, our brave soldiers march onward, cutting their teeth in Kandahar, earning their street cred, building—or rather rebuilding—their reputation, and their confidence. And all the while, transforming the Canadian *geist*.

For all his consensus-building virtues, we did not need Manley to tell us that no reasonable cost in Canadian and allied bullion and bodies can propel Afghanistan into stable, peaceable modernity in a time frame that will not outstrip the present limits of Western patience. Any assertions to the contrary are either fanciful or patently disingenuous. Leaving aside the insoluble intrigues of Pakistan, Afghanistan is too huge, too complex, its population too proud and recalcitrant, to bow to the will of 2,500 Canadian soldiers and two score thousand other NATO and ISAF forces. It has mercilessly spit out larger, far more brutal forces, most recently the Soviet Red

Army—forces that were nary beholden to short-sighted parliaments, public auditors and voter demands for elegant exit strategies. Against such a disheartening presentation of the facts, and in the light of utterly unrealistic policy objectives (“developing” Afghanistan or “stabilizing” the region), the loss of dozens of young Canadian lives appears a terrible, scandalous waste. No other conclusion may seem reasonable.

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Unless, of course, we see things otherwise—as we well should. At the cost of less than a hundred soldiers and diplomats—each of their deaths in itself a terrible, personal tragedy—an entire society, an entire people is being dragged into a new, inevitable era. At the present rate of global disorder, this may well prove to be, in the history of mankind, a peculiarly bloody era indeed. Beyond Afghanistan, new wars, threats and challenges—some more existential than others—will test the national backbone. We had better ready ourselves...

At the cost of some 60,000 men, Canada graduated from World War One as a proud, independent power. At the cost of some 42,000 men in World War Two, we entered the Cold War as a global player of considerable seriousness. We lost some 500 men only years later in Korea. Mercifully, Canadian military casualties dropped dramatically—some 100 Canadian dead—in the peacekeeping age that followed. And with that drop came the historical and now deeply entrenched general Canadian belief that engagement in the world no longer necessitated casualties: that international influence (or even peace), if desired, could be

procured with a relatively low, near-zero blood constraint.

This view is now being shaken to its very core. A 'new normal' has set in. Win or lose in Afghanistan, we will be better prepared for the next time.

Irvin Studin

Irvin Studin is assistant director of the Nathanson Centre on Transnational Human Rights, Crime and Security at York University's Osgoode Hall Law School, where he also lectures and is a doctoral candidate in constitutional law. Irvin spent several years as a policy strategist and senior policy analyst for the Prime Minister at the Privy Council Office in Ottawa. He also worked as a senior policy advisor in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet in Canberra, Australia, and as a director in the Canadian Department of Public Safety. Studin has advised, lectured and written on issues on foreign policy, democratic governance and national security. He was co-author of Canada's first ever national security policy in 2004, and principal author of Australia's 2006 national counter-terrorism policy. Irvin holds degrees from the Schulich School of Business at Toronto's York University, the London School of Economics and the University of Oxford, where he studied on a Rhodes Scholarship. He is the editor of *What is a Canadian? Forty-Three Thought-Provoking Responses* (Douglas Gibson Books, McClelland & Stewart, 2006). In his past life, Irvin was an all-Canadian university athlete and dabbled in professional soccer in several countries. He and his wife, Alla, live in Toronto with their son, Noah.

Jane's op-ed piece has not been included because of publication restrictions due to employment.

Jane McDonald

Jane McDonald, who started her career in sustainable development with the World Wildlife Fund in France, is now the Executive Director of Sustainable Prosperity, a non-profit that works to build a greener and more prosperous economy for all Canadians. Prior to this, she was director of sustainable markets at Environment Canada and associate vice president of CO2e.com, the environmental brokerage arm of New York-based Cantor Fitzgerald where she helped companies manage the opportunities and risks of climate change by trading in carbon markets. She was also a member of Ontario Power Generation's task force to track long-term sustainability performance and worked at the World Business Council for Sustainable Development in Austin, Texas. Jane has also served as adjunct professor of environmental finance at the University of Toronto and as a board member for both Clean Air Canada Inc., the International Institute for Sustainable Development and the Research Network for Business Sustainability at the Ivey Business School, University of Western Ontario. Jane holds a BA in North American studies from McGill University and an International MBA from York University and l'École Supérieure des Sciences Économiques et Commerciales in Paris.

Gino's op-ed piece has not been included because of publication restrictions due to employment.

Gino Reeves

Gino Reeves is managing director of Place aux jeunes du Québec (PAJQ), an organization that seeks to counter the exodus of young Québeckers by helping them to find employment or establish businesses in regional Québec. Today, PAJQ has 70 service points throughout the province and its activities extend to the Yukon, Manitoba, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. It has also inspired similar initiatives in several regions of France. Originally from Gaspé, Gino has a master's degree in regional development. He is very interested in youth entrepreneurship and wrote his thesis on the subject of developing youth entrepreneurship for endogenous regional development. His past work experience includes stints as a graduate teaching assistant at the University of Québec in Rimouski, as a researcher at the Service d'aide aux jeunes entrepreneurs at Rimouski, as a rural development officer for the MRC La-Côte-de-Gaspé, and as a development officer for the Fondation de l'entrepreneuriat. He has also been involved in a number of committees, including a working group on community school development; the advisory committee for the Québec government's Défi de l'entrepreneuriat jeunesse; the Alliance de recherche universités-communautés; and the INRS's Insertion et participation des jeunes en région. His principal areas of interest include youth issues, land use, the environment, ethical consumption, entrepreneurship, globalization and information technologies.

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