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Recently, Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland announced that Canada had no intentions of entering bilateral negotiations with the United States as a precursor to any trilateral discussions with both Mexico and the U.S. in upcoming talks to “renew” the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which U.S. President Donald Trump has called the worst trade agreement in history. Recent stories emanating from both Ottawa and Toronto seemed to indicate otherwise and reflected long-standing concerns on the part of some Canadian diplomats and trade negotiators that Canada should go alone with the U.S. and let Mexico sink slowly into the sunset. Why? Because, as they rightly point out, there are many very contentious issues that stand between the U.S. and Mexico that hardly concern Canada at all. Think drug smuggling on an industrial scale, illegal border jumping and that wall that Trump keeps insisting Mexico will pay for. Better for Canada not to get hit in the crossfire, that reasoning goes, and on the surface, the argument may look reasonable to some Canadians.

In fact, it’s a very bad idea.

We sought to enter the U.S.-Mexico free trade talks in the early 1990s so as not to allow the U.S. to control North American trade as a hub, with Canada and Mexico as spokes. It was a good idea then and it’s a good idea now. There are most certainly issues such as North American defence, where bilateral negotiations with the Americans are natural and apt. But when we sit down, alone, across the table from the Americans, we are the mouse negotiating with the elephant. One reason why we readily joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1949 was that we thereby gained the partnership of a whole lot of mice with whom to ally ourselves in dealing with the U.S. Today, we must not allow the Trump administration to intimidate us. They are, of course, the far more powerful partner, but we have our own national interests to guard. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is right not to be lecturing the U.S. how it governs itself, but he must not cultivate the idea of Canada trembling before Trump and changing our long-standing support of multilateralism into a strictly bilateral framework in the case of our most important trade relationship. We should also not write off Mexico because it is a potentially huge market for Canadian products and services (and vice versa) even if we basically ignored it since NAFTA was created. North America as a single market was a good idea in 1992 and it still is. The U.S. has not pressured us to abandon Mexico; why should we do so on our own? The adage still works: we hang together or we will hang separately. It won’t work for us to duck behind the barricade and let Mexico take all of Trump’s fire. Mexico isn’t going away and the Mexicans will lose whatever trust they still have in us. One way or another, we will still have to deal with them. Better to keep the faith now than to sink to the table later. So, bravo to the Trudeau government for signalling that we will not throw Mexico under the bus. Other Canadians should let the government know clearly that we are behind them, and behind Mexico also.

THE GLOBAL EXCHANGE

Our regular readers will certainly notice our name change. We decided to go with a new title reflecting our newer globe spanning and broader areas of interest. This began with our name change in 2015, our addition of more broadly based fellows, and our change of Board. We welcome any reactions you may have.

David Bercuson is Director of the Centre for Military, Security and Strategic Studies at the University of Calgary, Area Director, International Policy for the School of Public Policy, University of Calgary and Program Director, Canadian Global Affairs Institute.
Say what you will, United States President Donald Trump is clearly committed to keeping his campaign promises. There’s no escaping the resulting disruptions and consequences. His quick re-opening of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) leave Canada with an uncertain and mostly defensive trade policy agenda.

At the same time, the new president appears keen about deal-making and eager to declare early victories. Therein lie a potential opportunity and a way forward for Canada.

In short, we should ultimately be seeking a new and broad-based trans-Atlantic-Pacific partnership deal.

We have already signalled our willingness to take the first step of updating NAFTA. In this, we have little choice; however, to do nothing more could expose us to collateral damage from the likely more adversarial U.S.-Mexico negotiations.

To offset this, we should take the second step of proposing new trilateral trans-Atlantic trade talks.

As expected during her visit to Washington last week, British Prime Minister Theresa May obtained agreement to pursue a bilateral trade deal. May needs to fill the gap left by Brexit; Trump is amenable.

Proposing Canada’s participation in such talks would make sense for us on every level, economically, geographically and historically. We need NAFTA but this initiative would provide fresh focus and, if successful, a complementary arrangement. Having recently concluded our own trade agreement with the European Union, it would also address the gap for us that will result from Brexit.

As a third step, given that our prosperity depends so much on open global trade, we should pursue a replacement for the TPP, though coming at it from a different direction.

The next opportunity to do so may be within the otherwise ineffectual Commonwealth group, which is at long last holding its inaugural trade ministers’ meeting in London.

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in early March. Among its members, along with the United Kingdom and Canada are such notable TPP signatories as Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Malaysia.

Canada should propose to these like-minded partners the pursuit of a new trade agreement, one that mirrors as much as possible an eventually updated NAFTA in order to attract the U.S. and welcomes any future partners who wish to accede. This is precisely how the TPP emerged from the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) group: a small coterie of like-minded countries combining efforts to formulate binding trade rules.

In short, we should ultimately be seeking a new and broad-based trans-Atlantic-Pacific partnership deal.

There would be no need to start from scratch, as there is much worth saving in the TPP. Of course, to bring along the Trump administration repackaging would be imperative.

Filling the gaping hole on the Asia flank is perhaps the greatest challenge.

With the demise of the TPP, China will have even more favourable access to Asian markets when negotiations on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) are soon completed. This is not good for many reasons, not least because Canada is shut out.

Japan may be the bridge. While it is also a party to the RCEP process, it signed the TPP because it wants new trade arrangements with the West as well. Its first impulse now will be to seek new bilateral deals. But there is no reason why we cannot propose a broader negotiating umbrella with Japan included.

...harmonizing North American, European and Asian/China trade rules should be our future ambition...

While past failures in advancing the World Trade Organization’s agenda certainly offer a cautionary tale, harmonizing North American, European and Asian/China trade rules should be our future ambition, no matter how difficult it may seem at the moment.

The enigmatic Trump may turn out to be a bilateralist to the core, immovable on any such global trade initiatives. And new initiatives won’t make his “America first” policies any easier to deal with at the negotiating table. But then again, he might just see victory in pursuing international agreements that are even grander and more ambitious than those of his predecessor.

It would be better for Canada to take bold initiatives to advance the principles of free trade than simply to play defence.

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We want your feedback!

CGAI is always looking for ways to improve! Along with the recent name change, we are also planning to adjust the content of our Quarterly Journal, as well as the delivery method, in order to ensure our audience receives quality research in a timely and convenient manner. Please take the time to complete our 8 question survey, as we value your input. The survey can be accessed directly using the Survey Monkey address below. A direct link is also available on our ‘Global Exchange’ webpage at www.cgai.ca.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/9ZN9WD3
The relationship between Canada and the United States is about the relationships between the people of our two countries. From our shared beginning as colonies, our families and economies have been interwoven. As evidenced during the American Revolution through the plight of families divided between patriots and loyalists, we are two sides of the same coin. U.S. President Donald Trump is arguably the inevitable next chapter in American politics, the same way that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau exemplifies the character of a Canada determined to be a world leader, despite (or because) of its middle-power status. The differences between these two leaders are the results of two separate political pendulums, each operating at its own pace and at separate spots within the cycle.

The concerns on how the relationship between these two leaders plays out should not eclipse our two nations’ reality. As trade is not conducted between governments, relationships are not managed by heads of state or government. The U.S.’s complex political environment includes lawmakers in Congress, at the state level and municipal leaders — the proximity between the two countries has created an intricate web, more resilient for the number of threads. No place is this more visible than on the northern frontier of the American Midwest.

Chicago was placed in exactly the right spot to serve as the hub for commerce in the U.S. The city is on the banks of Lake Michigan, roughly halfway between the resources of the Great Plains and the western frontier and the eastern markets. A northern-tier city, Chicago is in temperament much like Toronto. The threads that pull Chicago and Toronto together include the full range of human experience, from sports to the arts, business, government, diplomacy, individual relationships and families. Today, Canada is Chicago’s number one market for exports of goods and services. Businesses with cross-border

Philosophy and ideology have never been the basis of the relationship between these neighbours and should not become so now.
connections include companies such as BMO/Harris, Bombardier, Manulife, Boeing and Motorola.

The nuts and bolts of the bi-national relationship are the same as those between Chicago and Toronto. The idea that two men define it is, in the simplest terms, ridiculous. While photographers, headline writers and meme practitioners alike may have adored the bromance of Trudeau and former president Barack Obama, and pundits delighted in the awkward moments between Obama and former prime minister Stephen Harper, the bilateral relationship is not about hugs, handshakes or shared jokes. As Canadians and Americans alike will remember in the days and months ahead, the business of the bilateral relationship is just that – business.

The roadmap forward in these times of crisis-driven narratives is one of incremental steps and transactions. Philosophy and ideology have never been the basis of the relationship between these neighbours and should not become so now. The peer-to-peer meetings that took place the week before the prime minister went to Washington are far more substantive than the meeting between the leaders. The real work of government is done in the preparation for those cabinet-level meetings.

The pre-clearance agreement signed almost two years ago is emblematic of the work done by the two bureaucracies, literally years in the making. In two trips to Washington, the Trudeau government has managed to use this agreement, still to be put into force, to bring cohesion to the discussion and joint statements. But the reality of the work done on that agreement, on those deliverables, is that it is incremental, slow-moving, and the result of hundreds of person-to-person relationships developed over time.

Which brings us back to where the relationship between the U.S. and Canada is the most deeply felt — our families. The bloodlines of our two countries are more intertwined than any supply chain. What unites us is our common ancestry, not just because of our shared history as colonies, but our stories of immigration. There are families spread out on both sides of the border that originate on other continents. Finding yourself on one side or the other of the 49th parallel is as much a trick of fate as anything else. But these are the connections that create the layers and multiple facets that will facilitate the success of the relationship in the long run.

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In anticipation of both the 2017 Federal Budget as well as the yet-to-be announced results of the Defence Policy Review, it is useful to contemplate what will be and what should be. If the budget and the defence review produce what is now widely expected, it will result in a forecasted increase of capital expenditure as well as a tilt towards a policy based more on peacekeeping. All of this must be juxtaposed against an increasingly strident United States president demanding that countries such as Canada do more to pull their weight. When contemplating the expenditure of dollars on defence, there is a trifecta that all governments seek to win: First, spend in a way that maintains, improves or grows capability and/or capacity; second, do so in a way that provides some sort of regional economic investment; and last, at worst make it politically neutral and more ambitiously (naively?) politically advantageous. It is somewhat idealistic to believe that the successive Canadian government’s priority has been considered in this order.

Most news regarding budgets tends to focus on large capital programs. The army, navy and air force have continued to walk down paths of modernization with their basic structures and capabilities being reflected in a capital program that gives them a more modern version of essentially the same equipment we have seen over the past 40 to 50 years. But this is only part of the budgetary and policy story. True capability is a multiple of people, their training, their equipment, and the support systems and infrastructure that sustain them. Reducing or prejudicing one comes at the expense of the others. In the main, the whole is very much greater than the sum of its parts.

The stereotypical teenage hacker sitting in his parents’ basement can do more than the CAF. This has to change.

Nobody should dismiss any continuing effort to modernize the current capability of the Canadian Armed Forces. This, however, cannot be the sole metric in determining if Canada is carrying its full share of the load, and equally important, preparing itself for the future. Decisions on defence spending, especially capital programs spending, have far-reaching multigenerational impacts. In this regard, it is important to look through the lens of 2030 and beyond to at least 2050 when evaluating any decision. In that regard, the government’s

...
commitment to the defence of Canada must figure as prominently, and arguably more so, than those capabilities that are better suited for expeditionary-type roles such as those within NATO.

One of the ways in which we will be able to determine if the current government is falling prey to the short term is to assess how much focus and associated funding are provided for such elements as cyber, space-based capabilities and our northern region. The cyber requirement should be self-evident but there remains a sense in many quarters that the military can outsource this to other government departments. Unless there is a fundamental shift in their authority, let alone their capability, this approach will continue to doom the Forces to operating with an increasingly large arm tied behind their back. The key to deployed operations, including the Liberals’ focus on peacekeeping, is intelligence. An increasingly vital element of understanding the operating environment is the intelligence gleaned through cyber-capabilities. There is no theatre of operations in which cyber-activities won’t play a dominant role. This is not a future need; it is an integral part of military operations today and needs to be addressed today. Furthermore, it must not be considered as a supporting activity, let alone an add-on, but rather as a central capability deserving of its own concept of operations, with an associated body of doctrine consistent with the law. The Canadian Armed Forces have, at best, minimal integral cyber-capabilities. The stereotypical teenage hacker sitting in his parents’ basement can do more than the CAF. This has to change.

It takes years, in fact generations, to create truly new capabilities...

So, too, must be the supporting space-based capabilities. For deployed operations, abroad and at home in the North, the lack of a robust and dedicated space-based system that enables intelligence and communications is a vulnerability that will continue to inhibit full awareness and therefore national command and control. For a nation that prides itself in possessing a leading space industry, it remains a puzzle as to why the CAF continues to be so reliant on others in this domain. This is never more evident than in the North’s situation. We are well past the time where tokenism of a true capability to operate in the North will suffice. The major platforms in the Defence Acquisition Guide continue to indicate a preference for internationally deployed discretionary operations versus a focus on providing capabilities in Canada’s North. Any modelling of the climate change effects in the North, which this government has fully recognized, leads to an understanding of how drastically the landscape will change in the next 30 years. A look at what Russia has invested over the last decade as well as China’s ever-growing ice-breaking fleet should be considered harbingers of what is to come.

It takes years, in fact generations, to create truly new capabilities, but this is what will be required if Canada’s government wishes to ensure that its military can meet the challenges of tomorrow, all of which are rapidly becoming today’s reality. Canada’s history on defence policy and the supporting budgets have a consistent track record of over-promising and under-delivering. Great fanfare is made of large budget increases but these are more often than not scheduled for after the next big election. They are not supported by the authority to spend allocated money and are eventually re-profiled to ever more distant time horizons. The rhetoric is strong, the results less so.

With Canada’s history of promising funding that never appears in the size or timeline promised and a paucity of defence policy reviews over the decades, it is vital that we get the few policy reviews we do have pointed in the right direction. If history is any indicator, the next chance might not happen for decades. By then, it will be too late.

Mike Day is a retired Lieutenant General and a former commander of Joint Task Force Two (JTF 2). He runs an Investment and Consulting Business, is a member of the Advisory Board to the Bragg Family Companies, a Fellow of the Canadian Global Affairs Institute and active in a number of Veteran Support initiatives.
The government of Canada’s Main Estimates 2017-2018 were released February 23, 2017 and contain mixed news for the Department of National Defence (DND) — some good news, some bad and some ugly.

The one piece of good news is that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s government has adhered to its campaign pledge to maintain DND’s existing spending plans. DND has an annual built-in budget increase known as the “escalator.” Beginning in 2008, the escalation was increased to two per cent a year, and the 2015 Budget promised that the escalator would rise to three per cent for 10 years, starting in the 2017/2018 fiscal year.

During the campaign, the Liberals committed to “maintain current National Defence spending levels, including current planned increases.” The Minister of National Defence’s mandate letter provided him that same direction verbatim. The 2017/2018 estimates provide DND with “an increase in the annual escalator on defence spending as announced in Budget 2015 to provide long-term and predictable funding.” While the escalator’s value is not identified specifically, it provides DND with an additional $550 million in funding for 2017/2018. If the Liberals keep the escalator at three per cent, it will provide a highly beneficial, long-term increase, as this funding increase compounds over time. To date, these additional funds have been applied to DND’s Vote 1 operating accounting, giving it increased funding for Operations and Maintenance.

The bad news, however, is that even with the increase in Vote 1 funding, in nominal dollars DND’s funding is essentially unchanged since last year, increasing by only 0.1 per cent to $18.666 billion. More troubling is that over the last several years, adjusted for inflation, defence spending is down considerably. The allocated spending for DND in 2017/2018 is roughly three-quarters of the amount provided in the Main Estimates from 2010/2011 (see Figure 1). In historical context, these Main Estimates are on par with those from 2007 or 1994. Stated otherwise, the purchasing power of projected defence spending is effectively back to where it was just before the combined Paul Martin and Stephen Harper governments’ spending increases took effect (in 2007) and roughly equivalent to where it was midway through the “decade of darkness” after the Cold War (in 1994).

The ugly news relates to capital funding. For 2017/2018 just $3.1 billion is being allocated to buy new equipment and build infrastructure, down from $3.5 billion the year

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before. In historical perspective, even in nominal dollars, this is the least amount of money allocated for DND capital spending in a decade (see Figure 2). Adjusted for inflation, DND has just over half as much money to buy new equipment and build infrastructure as it did in 2010/2011 (see Figure 3).

As we wait to see what Budget 2017 and the Defence Policy Review do for the Department of National Defence, the Main Estimates are a pessimistic indicator of the Canadian military’s fate. In the context of active discussion of defence burden-sharing and defence spending, Canada plans to spend less this year on defence, after inflation, than it did the year before.

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1https://www.liberal.ca/files/2015/10/New-plan-for-a-strong-middle-class.pdf
2https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/canada/tbs-sct/migration/hgw-cgf/finances/pgs-pdg/gepmpdgbpd/20172018/me-bpd-eng.pdf, 11-123.
Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s government wants to make mediation an area of foreign policy focus, but has yet to outline what it intends to do in this respect. Of course, Canada may decide that its engagement will consist of supporting other mediators, primarily financially. However, this would hardly be a return to the role of Canada as a country that is directly involved in trying to make things better, which Liberal statements have indicated is a priority. Thus, if in addition to supporting other mediators, Canada decides to become an active mediator itself, there are at least four sets of issues to consider.

First, Canada must consider what types of mediation it wishes to be involved in. Activities aimed at conflict transformation involve advocating policies designed to sweep away the status quo in societies riven by long-standing conflict. Involvement in mediations seeking to manage the conflict on the way to a negotiated resolution may be seen as safer but may be criticized by some for lacking the imagination to address the deep-rooted causes of a conflict. How much does Canada wish its mediation activities to be a form of advocacy of certain causes or ideas, as opposed to more traditional and quiet forms of even-handed mediation? While advocacy has its satisfactions, few countries of Canada’s size that specialize in mediation find it works for them.

Second, the question of mediation and international justice must be considered. Often, if they are to stop fighting, those involved want an amnesty from war crimes prosecution. It does not have to be an either/or matter; there are means of achieving a degree of justice for the victims of conflict, while persuading the fighters to stop. However, these means can fall short of standards of justice for war crimes outlined in international law. Any country wishing to play a role as a mediator must consider this matter carefully and be prepared to deal with sometimes morally messy compromises.

Third, does Canada wish to establish criteria for its involvement in mediation? Intuitively, mediating conflicts where we have expertise in the matter being disputed makes sense. Few countries active in mediation actually do this in practice. Being too specialized in the apparent cause of the conflict may cause the mediator to miss the fact that the stated issue can be a cover for a much deeper set of problems. Instead, experience reveals that those who mediate tend to recognize that the investment in an

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overall expertise in mediation per se is the key to success. Moreover, a detailed set of criteria adopted by one government may not be acceptable to another. One of the lessons of other mediators is that these involvements take a long time and may span the lifetimes of several governments; bipartisanship will be required if the necessary long-term approach is to be achieved.

Finally, experience suggests that any Canadian approach to mediation will need to be multi-layered and support efforts at different levels. Canada should therefore identify and support those Canadians active in mediation at other levels (sometimes known as Track Two and Track 1.5) as an investment in opening doors to potential official involvement in mediations. This is the model countries like Norway and Switzerland have used with great effect. In addition, support should be given to Canadian actors able to foster civil society initiatives designed to make a peace process as broad and inclusive as possible.

All of this suggests, at the least, that an inventory of those Canadians who have shown a proven aptitude to do this work at each level is necessary as well as a strategy to provide them with long-term support for their efforts. We also need a mechanism (perhaps informal) to promote cross-references, where appropriate, between their work and the development of Canada’s official mediation capacity. Above all, creativity and flexibility are required. In a larger sense, we are not so much talking about Canadian support for mediation, but rather Canadian support for peace processes — with mediation as part of a much bigger effort.

Peter Jones is an associate professor in the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs at the University of Ottawa and a Fellow with the Canadian Global Affairs Institute. He has been involved in numerous negotiations and mediations in the Middle East and South Asia, both as an official and at the Track Two level. He is the author of “Track Two Diplomacy: In Theory and Practice”, published by Stanford University Press.
As Western defence ministers and heads of state gathered in Munich last month for their annual security conference, the situation in Eastern Ukraine was among the topics of discussion. Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland held bilateral discussions with Ukraine’s president and minister of foreign affairs, and said Ukraine was on the agenda during conference working sessions. Canada has since signed a free-trade agreement with Ukraine.

For Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan the focus was mostly on Russian sanctions and the Ukrainian military training program that Canada is running in partnership with the Americans and the British. Canada announced on Monday, March 6, it would renew its contribution to the training program until 2019.

This, despite the fact that the conflict in Eastern Ukraine shows no sign of easing; on the contrary, it has recently taken a turn for the worse. Clashes in the industrial town of Avdiivka between Ukrainian and pro-Russia separatist forces in the first two months of 2017 saw some of the deadliest violence since 2015. As has been the case since the conflict started, both sides blame each other for violating the two-year-old Minsk ceasefire agreement.

That the conflict has re-escalated while the West deliberates is no coincidence. The Ukraine did the same thing two years ago in an effort to focus western attention when G7 leaders met in Munich. In response, Western leaders strengthened sanctions on Russia in the belief that Russia had direct influence over Russian separatists. It is clear that the sanctions regime is having little short-term effect on Russian behaviour and only a marginal effect on its economy. But for Ukraine, a country that has received over half a billion dollars in loans and aid from Canada, there are real benefits to having the West exert continued pressure on Russia.

For one, Kyiv cannot afford to have the United States, Europe and Canada lose interest in Eastern Ukraine in the same way the West has lost interest in Crimea. Nor can Kyiv afford to have the sanctions regime crumble amid its own stalled reforms at home. Owing billions of dollars to the West, Kyiv needs all the attention and resources it can muster to avoid economic and political collapse.

Under Michael Flynn, U.S. President Donald Trump’s recently departed national security advisor, it appeared the White House understood correctly that a lifting of sanctions on Russia should not come free of obligations. Instead, it should be tied directly to real commitments from Russia, which may have included collaboration in fighting Islamic State. Even with Flynn gone, there

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remains little indication that sanctions on Russia are the kind of leverage the Americans need to satisfy their own foreign policy objectives. If sanctions are relaxed, Kyiv should be concerned because that would signal a departure from the status quo. Kyiv cannot afford reconciliation between Russia and the West.

Indeed, Ukraine stands to gain the most from a “frozen” conflict in Eastern Ukraine. Simply put, the Ukrainian army is not strong enough to continually antagonize the 35,000 to 40,000 military forces that are now part of the self-proclaimed separatist states of Donetsk People’s Republic (DNR) and the Luhans People’s Republic (LNR). Nor is Kyiv prepared to absorb the political impact of an aggressively pro-Russian population. Any shift towards reclaiming Eastern Ukraine, now or in the near future, would easily weaken an already unstable government in Kyiv.

Nor is it clear in which direction Ukrainians want their government to go. Ukrainian public opinion is clearly divided on whether a clean break or renewed hostilities are warranted, making any shift from the status quo unlikely. On the one hand, according to a Razumkov Centre survey, 42.1 per cent of Ukrainians support suspension of economic ties between Ukraine and the DNR and LNR (including payments of social benefits, energy supply and coal exports) until the Ukrainian government restores full control over these territories. On the other hand, 36 per cent of Ukrainians are not in favour of breaking completely from the region despite the possibility of ongoing hostilities.

The war also offers a beleaguered government a convenient diversion from problems closer to home. Ukraine continues to suffer from a series of corruption scandals, not the least of which is President Petro Poroshenko’s own “Panama dossier.” However, other problems persist. The departure of former finance minister Natalie Jaresko, who failed to modernize the country’s corrupt financial system, is a blow to Poroshenko’s reform goals. Endemic corruption in the health system, weak regulations on small businesses and growing nationalism among the country’s right are all significant. Public trust in government institutions and elected leaders continues to be very low and is falling. About 24 per cent of Ukrainians have expressed support for Poroshenko and his policies, while only 17 per cent have confidence in Ukraine’s parliament.

Until Ukraine shows some economic stability and its leaders display reasonable political legitimacy and effective authority, inertia, if not a frozen conflict is the most likely scenario. The work of the Trilateral Contact Group on the implementation of the Minsk agreements has been rather slow and has not shown any progress. The group’s last meeting in September accomplished little and a follow-up discussion was cancelled because of the Avdiivka situation. Talks resumed on March 3.

As a result, there has been no real progress on key issues, including planned elections in the Donbass, and border controls with Russia. Both sides blame each other for the breakdown in talks. For almost a year the international media have not paid much attention to the ongoing confrontation, despite the fact that around 500 Ukrainian soldiers and volunteer fighters have lost their lives, with more than half of them in non-combat situations.

Canada, which has strongly come out in favour of the Ukrainian government despite concerns about corruption and the rule of law, is in no position to offer its services as a mediator. Under the government of former prime minister, Stephen Harper, Canada was instrumental in drafting the original OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) agreement that became the Minsk agreements, despite its vehement anti-Russian stance. There is even less room for Trudeau to manoeuvre. That is because renewed commitments to training Ukrainian soldiers and deploying several hundred of our own in the Baltic states under NATO command are clear indications of Canadian bias.

Such policies are at odds with the Trudeau agenda to rejuvenate multilateralism. Indeed, despite the Liberal government’s desire to seek a seat on the United Nations Security Council, countries such as Ireland and Norway have done more of the kind of mediation that would justify Council membership. And if peacekeeping were the path that would put Canada back on the Council, then that strategy also appears to be on hold now. The best that Canada can do is work with the Ukrainian government to ensure it doesn’t collapse and support the OSCE in its effort to monitor the situation. Should the sanctions regime hold, we can expect a frozen conflict for quite a while. Perhaps someday we will see a UN peacekeeping mission deployed in Eastern Ukraine, but not today or in the near future.

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THE RUSSIANS ARE COMING—BETTER GET READY

By BRETT BOUDREAU

Whenever one thinks of Russia’s recent antics on the world stage, you have to concede they have brilliantly exploited information age tools to confuse audiences about what is truth, what isn’t, and to set their own narrative. The returns have been massive and out of all proportion to the modest investment.

Much nefarious activity has recently been attributed to Russia or its proxies. There has been mischief afoot to influence the Brexit vote, the American, German and Dutch elections, encouraging the National Front in France, and credible claims of trying to engineer a coup in Montenegro to replace the government with one less inclined to NATO membership. British intelligence warned against threats to its politicians, government officials and think tanks, offering training against Russian hackers. The U.S. Justice Department has just charged two former Russian intelligence officers and two hired associates for cyber-crimes. And, SACEUR Gen. Philip Breedlove called the campaign to wrest Crimea from Ukraine “the most amazing information warfare blitzkrieg we have ever seen.”

Later this year, Canada will deploy 450 soldiers to Latvia and lead a six-nation NATO Battle Group including forces from Albania, Italy, Poland, Slovenia and Spain. They will liaise closely with other Battle Groups in the region led by Germany, the UK, and the U.S., to collectively demonstrate NATO resolve against any physical incursion into the Baltics.

Russia is far too clever to send troops across the border of a NATO member, which would trigger the Article 5 provision and a strong Alliance military response. Instead, the Canadian deployment will be targeted with a significant disinformation campaign of industrial scale and scope. The recent mini-brouhaha over Foreign Affairs Minister Freeland’s family background is just a small taste of what is to come.

Deterrence, reassurance and confidence-building missions are the most challenging of all operations to publicly explain: counter-insurgency (Afghanistan), counter-terrorism (Daesh), peace-restoration (UN), domestic response and humanitarian support missions are all considerably easier. There are four main reasons for this.

First, “being there” activities like joint exercises, neighborhood patrols, hockey games amongst soldiers

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and attending community events can’t compare to the drama and news value say, of special operations forces helping direct fire onto Daesh positions.

Second, the Baltic States are democratic, enjoy a high quality of life, and are deeply supportive of the deployment. There are no dams to rebuild, no schools to repair, no humanitarian support needed, and no villages to wrest from insurgent groups.

Third, for Russia, the information effect is central to its operational effort. The capability is massively resourced, remarkably well done, and is always ‘on’ across multiple information channels, backed by the fearless use of diplomacy, military and economic instruments of national power.

Fourth, NATO militaries including Canada have been slow to evolve a response to these new threats, excepting some investment in cyber defence. The military mindset is still based on a career of training for physical battlegrounds and the use of kinetic weapons, not missions fought in the information space. Little has been done, for instance, to change the organization, structure, doctrine and policies necessary to best employ and empower our capabilities to fight today’s Internet-driven, inform-influence-persuade campaigns.

What should Canadians expect?

Bad behaviour on the part of any national force will be used to discredit the others, and fictitious improprieties will be created. Watch for ‘honey-traps’, stories of women being molested or raped, reference to occupying forces and the ‘mistreatment’ of the local Russian-speaking population. Thugs may be hired to elicit reactions by soldiers including fighting: these ‘impromptu’ events will be filmed and used against NATO forces.

On-line Canadian news sites will feature massive amounts of commentary from ‘trolls’, people paid to engage in and dominate the on-line space. Spouses of deployed members might be phoned and told their loved one has died. Soldiers could receive legitimate-looking emails or posts claiming a major crisis at home requiring their immediate attention. Social media accounts of soldiers will be studied for vulnerabilities, and exploited. This is all carefully designed to destabilize, distract and discredit.

What can the Canadian-led Battle Group do in response? For starters, replace a platoon of infantry with a platoon of communications practitioners. Require every nation in the force to provide people to assist the information campaign. Deploy with spokespersons fluent in Russian and Latvian and embed staff with long experience of serving or living in the region. Monitor media and social media 24/7 in Russian, the Baltic languages, and those of countries providing forces. Put mechanisms in place to share information amongst the deployed forces, NATO HQ Brussels, back home – and to react quickly.

Detail and enforce a social media strategy. Ensure the tenor and tone of all public communications is professional and appropriate. Equip all patrols with Go-Pro cameras so that events staged to incite NATO responses can be discounted with imagery. Lastly, the Government and especially Defence needs to do more to educate politicians and the public about what is happening, and to forewarn families of deployed forces, the public and media.

Communications technology, particularly the Internet and smart phones, has changed how operations are conducted – particularly non-combat missions – and evolved much faster than our military forces and security institutions have been able to adapt. This upcoming deployment will be the most challenging communications effort of our generation. Let’s hope we learn early this time, not after-the-fact.

Brett Boudreau (Col, Ret’d), is a former public affairs officer, and a Fellow with the Canadian Global Affairs Institute.
A NEW GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE: PEACE IN SYRIA OR SYRIA IN PIECES?
by ROLF HOLMBOE

On February 23 a new round of Syria peace talks was due to start in Geneva under United Nations leadership. Since the last round in 2016, the Assad regime and Russian, Iranian and Hezbollah allies have made crucial advances on the battlefield, whereas support for rebels has dwindled and their bargaining position eradicated.

While this strategic change may seem to further a political solution, it actually undermines it. Russia and Iran are using the imbalance in bargaining positions to impose their version of a political settlement, not to negotiate a sustainable one.

What kind of political solution could emerge?

The regime’s hard-won battlefield advances have made it almost impossible to demand the departure of Syria’s President Bashar al-Assad as a prerequisite for political talks. Even the Turks have reluctantly admitted this. A political solution with Assad — even in a transition phase — means that there will be no trust and no real commitment to a solution. And at worst, after a while, Assad — surprise, surprise — would find a way to stay on after all.

It would probably be possible to establish joint political and military mechanisms, such as a transitional government and a joint military command, but they would be hollow. Assad and his narrow group of henchmen would not survive a political solution that does not leave them in total control of the security establishment. The opposition would only be offered influence over the soft social and economic agendas and the promise that Assad would remain aloof from government, but he would have to be in firm “shadow control” of hard security.

The armed groups would never give up control of their respective areas, even if they co-operate in a joint military council. No single group, not even the regime, has the power to take and hold the other parts. Syria’s fragmentation would just become more entrenched and the sides would be arming themselves for the next round of fighting.

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Control over resources is another key element, not least for the country’s reconstruction. Assad controls the five biggest cities and the bulk of the physical and economic infrastructure, so development would be very uneven between regime and rebel areas. Assad is further poised to take over the central Syrian oil and gas fields once Islamic State collapses, and he has already written off most of the oil and gas resources to Russia and Iran as payment for their support. They would be looking to the West to finance Syria’s reconstruction.

A peace deal would just take the form of an extended ceasefire, untenable in the long run, and there would be no real transition. Without trust and confidence-building, Sunnis would still be quietly forced out of regime areas and refugees and displaced persons would not return in any great numbers.

**What kind of political solution is needed?**

Rebuilding trust and confidence and devising a system of power sharing with checks and balances are at the heart of a sustainable solution.

A large stabilization intervention, as in Iraq or Afghanistan, is unlikely in Syria. So only co-operation between the regime army and moderate rebels under integrated command in a joint military council would be able to check the inevitable spoilers, and they would be the only guarantors of peace and stability. This can only happen if the regional sponsors of the various groups are part of the deal and help in keeping their proxies tied to the arrangement.

A transitional government would need a double layer of checks and balances. First, the real power-holders are the armed groups and while the mistake of not including them in transitional political power should be avoided at all cost, it has to be checked. There also has to be a check on the very real possibility that the new politics will disintegrate into personal rivalries and squabbling. In the beginning power would very much be with military commanders and the trick would be to slowly negotiate this over to the civilian government in a way that does not antagonize those commanders. A transitional government would be responsible for rebuilding the state systems of administration and services and a national security council would ensure the buy-in of military commanders and their assistance in making it work at the local level.

Also, the political system would depend strongly on the regional sponsors.

Then, there is the question of transition to what? A deal should avoid at all cost the usual short-term import of an electoral system as the basis for democracy. In a country that has known no democracy and in which politicians have no real connections to the electorate, the key challenge is to build democracy from the bottom up. There should be a national dialogue in which would-be politicians go out and give their perspectives in a string of thousands of organized political meetings at all local levels. Elections should start with the municipal level to slowly build buy-in to a democratic process at the level most visible to the electorate.

Achieving peace and stability in Syria is entirely doable, but ambitions for stabilization, concrete results, ups and downs, and time needed should be realistic. The first long phase will be difficult and tumultuous under any scenario.

The key is a settlement among the regional powers, making them guarantors of transition, just as in the case of the Lebanese civil war that ended in 1900. Another key is to stay the course and check any spoiler, slowly building a new Syria from the bottom up, rather than from the top down.

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While most of us were paying attention to the dramatic presidential transition in the United States, another dramatic presidential transition was taking place on the other side of the Atlantic. Gambia’s President Yahya Jammeh, who came to power in a military coup in 1994, has transferred power to his democratically elected successor, Adama Barrow. The stereotype of Africa is of countries having “one man—one vote—once” and then being led for decades by despots like Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe. Mugabe is soon to celebrate his 93rd birthday in a national park near the unmarked graves of some of the 20,000 political opponents he had killed in the 1980s. He gets a lot of international publicity, but he and the stereotype he represents are relics from a different century.

Africans in the 21st century want democracy and are willing to take action to achieve and expand it. Take the recent Gambian example. It wasn’t easy. Jammeh accepted his surprise loss in the December 1 presidential elections. Then, one week later, he changed his mind and tried to cling to power after fearing he could be tried for human rights abuses and corruption. International pressure kicked into action, not from France, the United Kingdom or the United States, but from the member states of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Barrow was protected. Resolutions were passed. Diplomatic delegations led by presidents met with Jammeh. Finally, they applied military pressure with Senegal leading soldiers from five nations and Nigeria sending its newest warship. Jammeh finally agreed to leave office and go into exile. This was the latest example of ECOWAS acting to make clear that they will no longer accept the instability and economic damage that come with military coups and leaders clinging to power.

More Canadians noticed the results of South Africa’s municipal elections...

Many more African countries held elections in 2016 and changed their governments without the drama and tension seen in Gambia. Canadians may be excused for barely noticing that three of Africa’s smallest countries — Cape Verde, Sao Tome e Principe and the Seychelles — all had peaceful transitions of the party in power. More Canadians noticed the results of South Africa’s municipal elections where the African National Congress (ANC), the
champion in the fight against apartheid that has dominated all the country’s elections since 1994, lost power in most big cities including, embarrassingly, Nelson Mandela Bay. Bad news for the ANC is good news for democracy. Seventeen parties ran candidates and three formed governments in different municipalities. To the north in Zambia, President Edgar Lungu was elected to a full term and his party won a majority in the National Assembly for the first time after four elections.

In Ghana, President John Mahama was recently part of a delegation to visit Gambia’s Jammeh to tell him that it is not the end of the world to accept an election loss.

Ghana also inspired some constitutional revisions that were subject to a referendum in neighbouring Côte d’Ivoire in 2016, including a broader definition of citizenship and the formalization of traditional chiefs as a component of modern government. The revisions passed. Later, in the first parliamentary elections under the new constitution, the coalition supporting President Alassane Ouattara won a majority but lost seats. Seventy-five independent legislators were elected, filling a historic high of 29 per cent of the seats in the National Assembly.

On the face of it, the final piece of good news for democracy in Africa in the past year sounds like the old negative stereotype. Teodoro Nguema Obiang Mangue, vice-president of Equatorial Guinea and son of Africa’s longest-lasting dictator, is under criminal prosecution in France. However, this is the first time France has criminally prosecuted a sitting vice-president of any African country. What’s more, Swiss authorities impounded his expensive cars (who knew Sweden made cars worth $2.8 million each?) and convinced Dutch authorities to seize his $120 million yacht pending further investigation. In so doing, France and Switzerland, traditionally playgrounds for African politicians with dubious sources of income, have served notice that the playgrounds are closed. This news has been cheered by many Africans, including the Fédération des Congolais de la Diaspora who worked diligently with Transparency International and Association SHERPA to press for these charges.

In an interesting example of a serpent swallowing its own tail, Nguema’s tiny dictatorship, Equatorial Guinea, is where Gambia’s Jammeh has gone into exile. As Africans make democracy the norm, would-be dictators have fewer and fewer places to hide. That is good news for Africa and for everyone.

Darren Schemmer is a former Canadian High Commissioner to Ghana and Ambassador to Togo. He is also a Fellow with the Canadian Global Affairs Institute.

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In responding to the Supreme Court challenge of the five-year limit of voting rights, the government has proposed in Bill C-33 to extend voting rights indefinitely to Canadians resident abroad, no matter how short their residence in Canada. This is more generous than the standard comparator countries of Australia and New Zealand, which require a formal renewable declaration or visits (six and three years respectively), the United Kingdom, which has a 15-year limit, and the United States, which requires filing of taxes.

In essence, any citizen who left Canada as a baby or small child would have unlimited voting rights. As such, the proposal disconnects voting from any experience of living in Canada, being subject to Canadian laws, accessing Canadian public services or paying Canadian taxes. It thus devalues the votes of Canadians who do reside in Canada and are subject to these day-to-day realities of Canadian life.

To date, the government has not articulated why it chose this unlimited approach, apart from resorting to the phrase, “a Canadian is a Canadian is a Canadian,” without acknowledging that this argument was made in the limited context of revocation of citizenship in cases of terrorism, and the need to treat Canadian-born and naturalized Canadians equally before the law.

...using government data, we know that the number of expatriates holding valid Canadian passports is approximately 630,000 adults who have lived abroad for five years or more.

Advocates of expanding voting rights over the current five-year limit have argued that Canadians living abroad contribute to Canada and the world, and many retain an active connection with Canada, whether it is business, social, cultural, political or academic. These Canadians' global connections should be valued as an asset. The Internet and social media make it easier for Canadians to remain in touch with Canada and Canadian issues. Non-resident Canadians pay income tax on their Canadian income and property tax on any property they may own in

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Canada. Their vote is unlikely to affect the overall electoral results.

This is argued using a general estimate of over one million expatriates without any assessment of the degree of connection those expatriates have with Canada. However, using government data, we know that the number of expatriates holding valid Canadian passports is approximately 630,000 adults who have lived abroad for five years or more. We also know that the number of non-resident Canadian tax returns, a deeper measure of connection, was about 140,000 in 2013 (the last year for which information is available). And while it is hard to assess the potential interest of long-term Canadian expatriates in voting, the data for those who qualify under the current rules suggest there is not widespread demand.

While one of us (Griffith) believes in a more restrictive approach and the other (Vineberg) believes in a more flexible approach, we recognize the government is committed to expanding voting rights. We see three main options:

Double the current limit to 10 years. This would align with two parliaments as well as passport validity. While it would not address the concerns of all expatriates, it would expand voting rights;

Provide unlimited voting rights to expatriates who have lived 25 years or more in Canada. This recognizes their long-term connection and experience with Canadian life as well as the concerns of expatriate seniors who have contributed to CPP and receive CPP and OAS benefits;

Modify the proposed approach with a minimum residency requirement of three years. This ensures a minimal connection to Canada, aligned to citizenship requirements, with only a valid Canadian passport being acceptable evidence of citizenship. However, this modified version of Bill C-33 does not fundamentally change our objection to again essentially unlimited voting rights.

In the latter options, this should be combined with the creation of two overseas constituencies to recognize that expatriate interests are different from those of resident Canadians and address any concerns that the expatriate vote could influence the results in particular ridings.

Notwithstanding which approach is chosen, administrative simplicity based on the current Elections Canada process should be maintained. Elections Canada should also be required to conduct an evaluation of the impact of any such change following the next election.

The government does not appear to have thought through the implications and options regarding expanding voting rights and appears to have listened only to advocates for expansion, rather than a broader range of Canadians. We favour a combination of the first two options and hope that parliamentary review of Bill C-33 will result in changes that respect a balance between expanded expatriate voting rights and the interests of resident Canadians.

Andrew Griffith is the author of “Because it’s 2015…” Implementing Diversity and Inclusion, Multiculturalism in Canada: Evidence and Anecdote and Policy Arrogance or Innocent Bias: Resetting Citizenship and Multiculturalism and is a regular media commentator and blogger (Multiculturalism Meanderings). He is the former director general for Citizenship and Multiculturalism. He has worked for a variety of government departments in Canada and abroad and is a Fellow with the Canadian Global Affairs Institute.

Robert Vineberg is the author of “Responding to Immigrants’ Settlement Needs: The Canadian Experience” (Springer, 2012) as well as a number of scholarly articles on the history of immigration policy. He is the former director general of the Prairies and Northern Territories, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (now Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada) and has worked for a number of federal departments in Canada and abroad.
IAN BRODIE
Ian Brodie is former Chief of Staff to Prime Minister Stephen Harper and is currently an Associate Professor of Law & Justice at the University of Calgary.

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Laura Dawson is the Director of the Canada Institute at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington D.C.

JEAN CHAREST
Hon. Jean Charest is a former Premier of Quebec and Federal Cabinet Minister. He is a partner at McCarthy Tétrault LLP.

RICHARD FADDEN
Richard Fadden was the National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister from 2015 to 2016, and from 2009 to 2013 he was the Director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Services.

BOB FOWLER
Bob Fowler was Canada’s longest serving Ambassador to the United Nations. He also served as Canada’s Ambassador to Italy.

DAN HAYS
Hon. Dan Hays is a former Senator and is currently a Senior Partner with Norton Rose Fulbright.

RAY HENAUTL
General (Ret’d) Raymond Henault served as the Chairman of the NATO Military Committee in Brussels, Belgium from 2005-2008, and is a former Chief of the Defence Staff.

JOHN MANLEY—CHAIR
Hon. John Manley is President and CEO of the Business Council of Canada and former Deputy Prime Minister of Canada.

ANNE MCGRATH
Anne McGrath is deputy chief of staff to Rachel Notley, Premier of Alberta, Canada. She had been with the National Director of the New Democratic Party of Canada, and chief of staff to Jack Layton, the late leader of the NDP.

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Marie-Lucie Morin served as the National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister from 2008 to 2009 before becoming an Executive Director at the World Bank.

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