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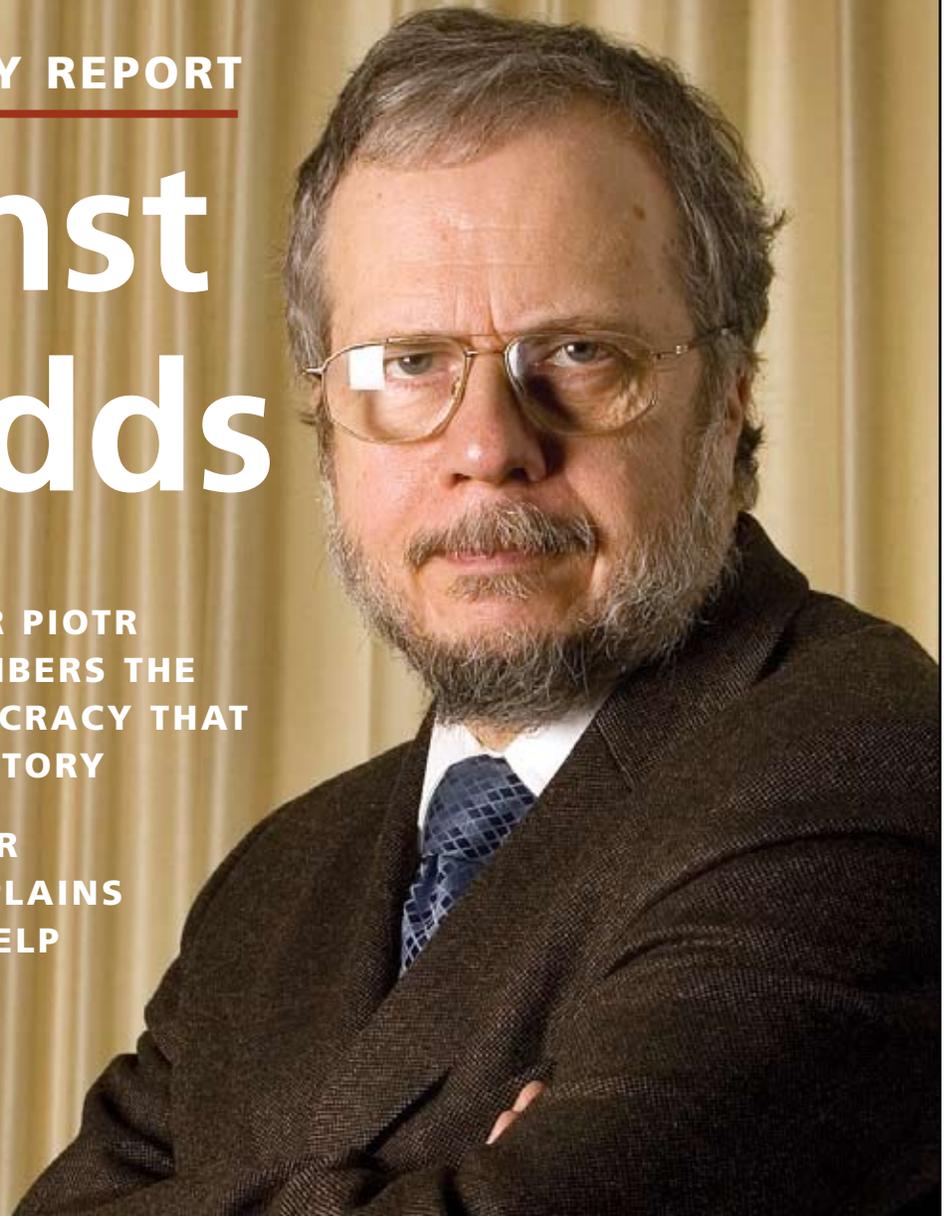


**THE DEMOCRACY REPORT**

# Against All Odds

**POLISH AMBASSADOR PIOTR  
OGRODZINSKI REMEMBERS THE  
STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY THAT  
CHANGED WORLD HISTORY**

**DEMOCRACY SCHOLAR  
DAVID DONOVAN EXPLAINS  
HOW CANADA CAN HELP  
TO TIP THE BALANCE**



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George Abraham on Canada's forgotten hero diplomat



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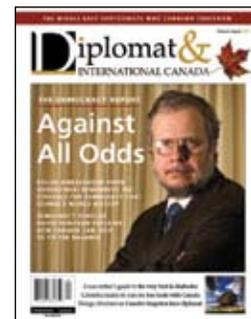
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Volume 19, Number 1

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## The democracy divide

**M**ore than three billion people live in democratic countries. That's the good news.

The bad news is nearly three billion do not. Nearly half of those who don't, live in China and prospects for their freedom don't look promising – at least not in the foreseeable future.

Several organizations monitor democracy worldwide and what you think about it probably depends on which one you've read most recently, but the big two – Freedom House and the Economist magazine – both show with their analysis that there are fewer true democracies in the world than one might think. As our cover package notes, *The Economist* reports that, as of 2007 (based on 2006 data), there were only 28 “full democracies” in the world. There were another 54 “flawed democracies.” Authoritarian states numbered 55. Freedom House has different measures but the big picture looks about the same in its accounting. And Freedom House analysis suggests there's a slide – that things might be getting worse.

The numbers demonstrate that democracy is a fragile, precious thing, one for which many have shed blood, sometimes achieving their goal, sometimes losing. Just as the picture looks bleak in some parts of the world, there are glimmers, gleams and bright-shining beacons in others. South Korea and India are robust, noisy, vigorous examples, sharply improved from their state in the 1970s, and Afghanistan is preparing for another election, in 2009, despite Taliban attacks. In parts of Africa – Ghana and Rwanda to name a couple – things are hopeful. For our cover story, we asked Polish Ambassador Piotr Ogrodzinski to share his country's tale of struggle and hope. The package starts under the *Solidarnosc* banner on page 12.

Our venerable copy editor, Roger Bird, and contributing editor Daniel Drolet, teamed up to give us a report on the state of democracy, and details from a Canadian Commons committee report that wants to

### UP FRONT

Photographer Brigitte Bouvier took our cover image of Polish Ambassador Piotr Ogrodzinski. Ms. Bouvier said her subject was a serious and busy man but was nevertheless immediately accommodating as soon as she came through the door of the embassy. Mr. Ogrodzinski wrote our cover story, which kicks off our report on democracy. The package begins on page 12.



JENNIFER CAMPBELL

ramp up this country's role in spreading democracy. On the same topic, David Donovan, research director at the Centre for the Study of Democracy at Queen's University who testified before the committee,

offers an essay on an idea the centre proposed. The academics suggested a Canadian democracy-promotion organization and the committee backed the idea. But the government didn't, at least in its initial response to the report. Mr. Donovan outlines why it should reconsider.

Finally, we have a map that shows the state of democracy across the globe. It's fascinating to look at the geographical expanse of democracy in some parts versus the vast regions of authoritarianism in others.

There's much else to read. Up front, we have an encouraging series of cartoons from the Middle East, denouncing terrorism. And Research in Motion boss Jim Balsillie shares his reasons for pumping \$80 million of his own money into public policy bodies such as the Centre for International Governance Innovation. Writer Don Cayo brings us a look at the importance of agriculture in any solution to the plight of three-quarters of the world's poorest people while George Abraham takes us inside two books on diplomacy and offers an additional feature on David Goldfield, the author who rescued a Canadian diplomatic hero from anonymity.

Culture editor Margo Roston offers a look inside the home of Danish Ambassador Poul Erik Dam Kristensen while Margaret Dickenson serves up the sweetest dish of all – dessert. Also, check out our expanded travel section's feature on a Hawaiian nature preserve's effort to reclaim part of the archipelago from alien plant life, and a how-to guide – everything from where to swim, to how to get there and how to get cheap rum – for beautiful Barbados.

Jennifer Campbell is *Diplomat's* editor.



## CONTRIBUTORS

**Piotr Ogrodzinski**, author of “Poland's march to freedom”



Before coming to Canada as Poland's ambassador in 2004, Piotr Ogrodzinski worked on his foreign affairs ministry's Northern Hemisphere files for seven years. Just before his appointment, he was director of the department of the Americas. Mr. Ogrodzinski has worked for foreign affairs since 1993. Prior to that, he was an academic, teaching at the Polish Academy of Sciences from 1978. He has a PhD from the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the Polish Academy of Sciences and a master's from the University of Warsaw. Mr. Ogrodzinski was a member of the Solidarity movement in Poland.

**David Donovan**, author of “From Here to Real Action Worldwide”



David Donovan has worked for the Centre for the Study of Democracy at Queen's University (CSD) since 2004, and as research director from 2006 – 2007. Mr. Donovan has published a number of papers through the CSD, most notably *The Democracy Canada Institute: A Blueprint*, which he co-wrote with Thomas Axworthy and Leslie Campbell. Mr. Donovan has a research grant to study European democracy assistance organizations in Stockholm, Sweden. He appeared before House of Commons and Senate committees to discuss Canada's role in democratic development and has recently accepted the prestigious Sauvé Scholarship for young leaders at McGill University. Email [dgrd@queensu.ca](mailto:dgrd@queensu.ca) to reach him.

## Cherry blossom diplomacy

If Southern Ontario appears to have a little Japanese flair these days, thank the Japanese government's consulate-general based in Toronto. Satoshi Hara, the consul general in 2000, came up with the idea of planting 3,000 of Japan's trademark sakura trees, also known as cherry blossom trees, across the province as a mark of friendship.

"We started the program to celebrate relations between Japan and Canada," said Michael Gaade, Sakura Project coordinator at the consulate in Toronto.

The diplomats considered planting some in Ottawa but realized the temperatures are too cold for the delicate trees. Instead, they dot the landscape in warmer parts of the province. "Past a certain area, the growing conditions aren't optimal," Mr. Gaade said. That means Ottawa and Thunder Bay are out of luck.

"The trees we plant are the same variety as the ones in Japan because we want Canadians to enjoy the same kinds of trees as the Japanese people," Mr. Gaade said. The varieties being planted in Canada are Yoshino and Akebono.

"We've chosen to plant them in pub-



This sakura tree was planted in Toronto's High Park in 2001 by then Consul-General Satoshi Hara.



CONSULATE STAFF

Japan's consulate general in Toronto has planted 2,300 cherry blossom trees across Ontario, to celebrate relations between the two countries. Here, Toronto deputy mayor Joe Pantalone, Toronto Economic Development Corporation CEO Jeffrey Steiner, and Consul-General Koichi Kawakami plant a tree in the city.

lic places, and also in places that have relations with Japan," Mr. Gaade added. Hamilton, for example, is twinned with the Japanese city of Fukuyama. They've also planted trees in Niagara Falls, on the land of the Niagara Parks Commission, and in Toronto's High Park. York University and the University of Toronto also enjoy some of the flowering trees as does the city of Kingston, which is as far east as they figured they could plant.

The first tree was planted in 2000 and they've since planted some 2,300 trees in 44 different locations across the province.

"Japanese people hold tremendous affection for sakura trees, whose beauty is the source of a great deal of happiness," said current Consul-General Koichi Kawakami. "I hope that all Ontarians can enjoy Sakura blossoms, this year and into the future."

The project does accept donations

to: Sakura Project, Consulate General of Japan in Toronto, Suite 3300, Royal Trust Tower, TD Centre, PO Box 10, Toronto, Ont., M5K 1A1.

This year marks the 80th anniversary of relations between Japan and Canada. Japan set up a legation in Ottawa in 1928 while Canada set up its mission in Tokyo the following year. The embassy is supporting events from coast to coast that showcase all aspects of the Japan-Canada relationship, including politics, economics, business, science and technology, culture, and education. Japanese artist Mitsugu Kikuchi, who lives in Ottawa, designed the logo which represents the Canadian and Japanese flags and the changing seasons. The slogan for the celebration is "Miles Apart – Minds Together." See [www.ca.emb-japan.go.jp](http://www.ca.emb-japan.go.jp) for more information on the festivities planned for Ottawa, Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Montreal.

In our September-October 2007 issue, we published a series of extreme cartoons from the Middle East that graphically depicted Jews as Nazis, war-mongers, serpents, plunderers and world dominators.

In this issue, we run an answer from moderate Middle Eastern cartoonists whose pens are stilled in many Middle Eastern countries – as elsewhere – where the press is not free.

Both cartoon collections are a project of the non-profit, Washington, D.C.-based Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI). It translates and brings the Middle East to the world on its huge website of print and broadcast media (<http://www.memri.org>) www.memri.org.) It also offers its own trend analysis.

The cartoons, compiled by Elad Glass, a master's student in Middle East Studies, were published in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, the UAE and London – and one from Syria, “an opposition cartoon,” says Yigal Carmon, MEMRI president and founder. “That cartoon found its way into a website. The Syrian regime does not publish counter-terrorism cartoons. They close down (opposition) media whenever they pop up there.

“We take elements of the more popular expression of public opinion such as cartoons,” says Mr. Carmon, “because they are a reflection of public opinion, especially of trends. These cartoons legitimize public criticism of terrorism, criticism which is on the rise in the works of reformists and liberals in editorials and news articles.

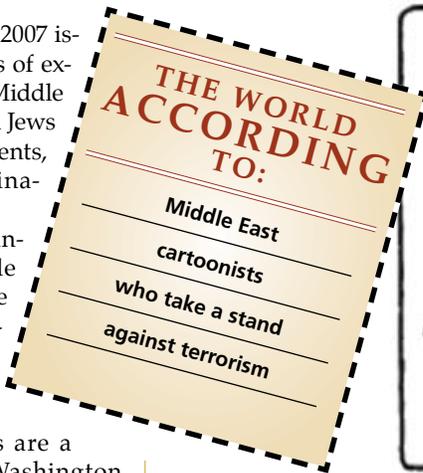
“There is a moderate voice that is rising up despite all the pressure – intimidation by the Islamists on one front and the regimes on the other.

“The voice against terrorism continues and grows in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt. The voice is rising in North Africa – Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Pakistan. The PLO is against the terrorism of Hamas. These states allow the criticism of terrorism more because they are fighting terrorism themselves.”

And where the regimes suppress those voices, those pens, in Iran, for example, he says, “people are being arrested all the time and put on trial for it.”

“So, more and more,” says Mr. Carmon “there is room for cartoons against terrorism.”

Compiled by Donna Jacobs



"Terrorism"  
Source: Al-Hayat (London), July 20, 2007.



"Dad, can you booby-trap this car for me? I want to play with it with my friends."  
Source: Al-Ittihad (UAE), July 9, 2007.



"Terrorist Thinking!!"  
Source: Al-Riyadh (Saudi Arabia), May 18, 2007.



The hooded figure is labeled "Extremist Leaders"; the shield is labeled "The Deceived Youth."  
Source: Al-Sharq Al-Awsat (London), May 5, 2007.



Source: Syria News (Syria), July 10, 2007.



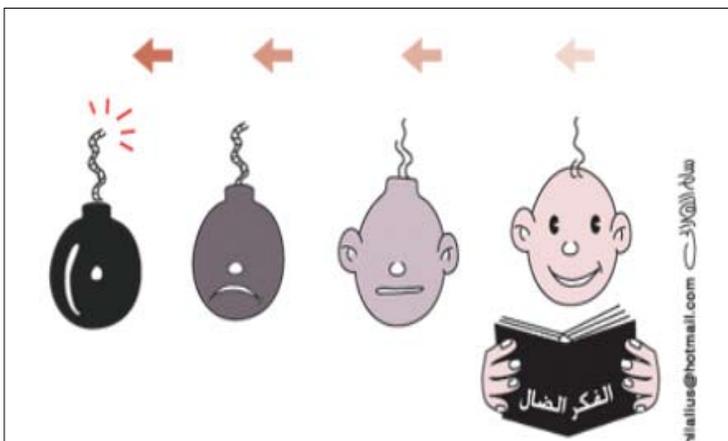
The bomb threatening to crush the world is labeled "Terrorism."  
Source: Al-Watan (Qatar), July 19, 2007.



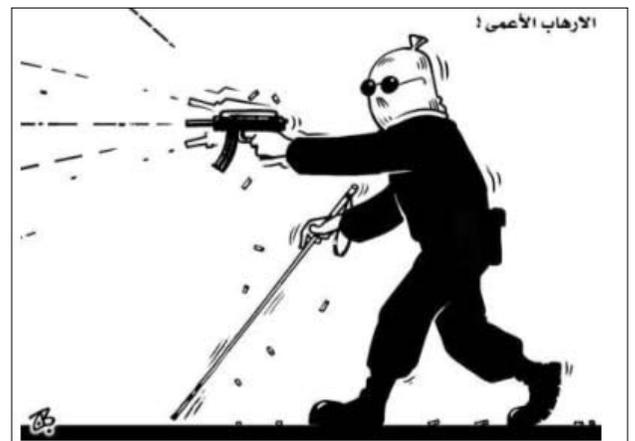
The figure on the left, labeled "Admissions and Registration Director for Terrorist Organizations," says to the figure on the right, labeled "Student": "You were not admitted to the University?! Don't be angry, we will accept you to our university, ha-ha... I mean, our organization."  
Source: Al-Watan (Qatar), July 19, 2007.



The caption inside the heart says "The Virgins of Paradise."  
Source: Al-Watan (Saudi Arabia), August 29, 2007.



The title of the book is "Misguided Ideology."  
Source: 'Okaz (Saudi Arabia), May 19, 2007.



"Blind Terrorism."  
Source: Al-Yawm (Saudi Arabia), May 1, 2007.

## Colombia's case for free trade with Canada



**FIRST NAME:** Jaime

**LAST NAME:** Giron-Duarte

**CITIZENSHIP:** Colombian

**PRESENTED CREDENTIALS AS  
AMBASSADOR:** March 24, 2006

**PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE:**  
India, New York (UN), Jordan,  
Egypt and Kenya.

Since June last year, Canadians have heard of Colombia more often. The reason? That's when Canada and Colombia launched negotiations for a free trade agreement.

The news might have gone unnoticed had it not been for the objections by some labour and human rights organizations regarding human rights in Colombia, and, in particular, violence against union members.

Colombians and their government share these concerns. But they must be considered in the wider context of the overall situation of the country and the fast and profound changes that have taken and are taking place there.

Colombia has a long history of democracy and economic and political stability that is not well known. Although it has faced drug-trafficking and terrorist acts by illegal armed groups for more than four decades, the country has shown plenty of evidence of its democratic resilience with independent institutions, a vibrant and critical press and the co-existence of different political parties and ideologies in elections and in legislatures.

Colombia, with 44 million inhabitants, is the fifth-largest economy in Latin America. It is an oil producer and exporter and has initiated innovative contracting methods that have allowed unprecedented growth in the number of signed contracts and in the size of the area for exploration. Self-sufficient in electricity and with a significant potential to export it to neighbouring countries, Colombia is also a producer of natural gas and the world's fourth-ranked exporter of coal.

Since 2002, thanks to domestic consumption and private investment, Colombia's economy reached a growth rate of 6.8 per cent, the highest in the last 20 years. Non-traditional exports multiplied by two; unemployment came down by seven points; local and foreign investments are booming.

Resources for social programs increased from 13.4 per cent of GDP in 2002 to 16.3 per cent in 2007, four times higher than defence costs. Among other factors, increasing social expenditures helped three million Colombians move out of poverty and another three million out of extreme poverty. Over the same period, the minimum wage has appreciated by 10 per cent and the number of people covered by the subsidized social security system has doubled.



None of these figures would have been reached without the "Democratic Security Policy" introduced by the government of President Alvaro Uribe and aimed at consolidating the control of all the territory by the state, guaranteeing the security of all Colombians from illegal armed groups, pursuing sound economic policies to improve quality of life, and guaranteeing fiscal sustainability.

That policy is based on the understanding that pluralistic political debate depends upon the existence of a secure environment. It's a policy that has zero tolerance for terrorism and zero tolerance for human rights abuses; a policy that has drastically curtailed the influence of illegal armed groups and demobilized nearly 40,000 of their members and a policy

that has reduced the overall violence in the country. Homicides are down by 40 per cent, kidnappings by 88 per cent and terrorist acts by 63 per cent. In short, the democratic security policy is one that shows a completely different Colombia six years after its launch.

But what about human rights and concerns regarding the violence against unionists? Colombia is also doing everything in its power to eliminate violence against all members of its society, including union members.

Violence in Colombia is not targeted against union members because of their union activities. The more than 200 union members killed in Colombia five years ago were part of 32,000 assassinations in the country that year. But by 2007, murder rates were down by 40 per cent for the general population and 87 per cent for union members.

While continuing to reduce general violence, the government is aggressively pursuing a two-prong strategy of protection and prosecution to secure the safety of unionists.

The protection program, funded almost entirely by the national budget (US \$34 million in 2007), has been greatly strengthened to ensure the safety of key segments of the society. With the exception of city councillors, the largest single group protected by this program is union members. Although not all union leaders are in the program, not a single labour leader under its protection has been a victim of violence. The program is the only one of its kind in the world and has been recognized as such by the United Nations and the Inter-American Human Rights Commission.

As well, a special team composed of 115 prosecutors and investigators at the Office of the Prosecutor General – which is completely independent from the government – is pursuing cases of violent acts against labour union members.

All those efforts have been recognized. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has, for the first time in more than 20 years, removed Colombia from its labour watch list. Last November the Council of Ministers of the European Union recognized the efforts of the Colombian government to improve human rights, and the extra means made available by the government to protect human rights

defenders, witnesses, journalists, trade unionists and other persons at risk. In addition, the EU acknowledged steps being taken to independently investigate, expose and punish politicians and public servants with links to self-defence groups and those involved in illegal drugs.

There are more unions in Colombia than ever before; they are being afforded rights and protections above and beyond those endorsed by ILO. Furthermore, the increased budget and the special unit to

**TRADE AND INVESTMENT APPEAR TO BE THE MOST EFFECTIVE MEANS TO COMBAT POVERTY, INEQUALITY AND VIOLENCE, TO STRENGTHEN THE ECONOMIC MOMENTUM COLOMBIA HAS GAINED, AND TO COUNTERACT DRUG TRAFFICKING AND THE CORRUPTION AND VIOLENCE IT FUELS.**

investigate and prosecute anti-union violence are starting to produce convictions and sentences.

That said, the government is well aware that more must be done. The improvements so far need to be consolidated. The efforts by the government of Colombia require the understanding of countries eager to extend the reach of democratic values. Colombia has identified Canada as one of those countries.

Trade and investment appear to be the most effective means to combat poverty, inequality and violence, to strengthen the economic momentum Colombia has gained, and to counteract drug trafficking and the corruption and violence it fuels.

To re-engage with the global business community, Colombia has completed free trade agreements with the United States, Central America and Chile, and is pursuing negotiations with Canada, EFTA (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) and (as a member of the Andean Community) an association agreement with the European Union.

Negotiating a free trade agreement with Canada will strengthen links between the two countries with a legal instrument to further improve labour, environmental and human rights conditions. It will make a significant contribution to the security and prosperity of the Americas.

**Jaime Giron-Duarte is Columbia's ambassador to Canada.**

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## Mr. Blackberry discusses his huge investment in foreign affairs

Peterborough native Jim Balsillie runs Research in Motion, the Waterloo company that makes the ubiquitous Blackberry. The Harvard MBA grad and avid “beer league” hockey player also finds time to think about foreign policy. That’s why he committed the major endowment that established the Centre for International Governance Innovation, a think-tank focussing solely on international affairs. Five years later, he founded the Waterloo-based Balsillie School of International Affairs. In September, he created the Canadian International Council. He’s invested more than \$80 million in the three initiatives. *Diplomat* editor Jennifer Campbell sat down with him to discuss his philosophy and his philanthropy.

**DM:** How does a guy who’s at the helm of hugely successful tech company get so interested in public policy that he spends millions establishing an institute, a council and an international affairs school?

**JB:** I guess I do it because I can. I think a lot of people would do it if they could. I think they’re important. I think capacity to contribute in these areas is really important. If there’s value, you’ll put resources to it. And if you put resources to it, then naturally capacity will come. Whether that’s building a good hockey team, hospitals or a great road system, it starts with value. These issues are very important in my mind, and a lot of people’s minds, and they justify being given a lot of resources to build capacity in every sense: In policy, advocacy, debate, in political capital. And the truth of it is, there’s a lot of sea-change happening in the past couple of years. You can open the paper on any day and the nature of what’s on the front page is very different than it was. Not long ago it was constitutional issues, healthcare line-ups and regional disparities. You look at it now and our foreign-engagement issues in many respects dominate the public’s attention in a way they really didn’t. Whether that’s an awakening or they’re just so intense you can’t ignore them – I don’t know.

**DM:** You’re not so involved in deciding what’s studied though, are you?

**JB:** I sort of believe in separating the power and the glory in a sense. Just because I raise money for a hospital doesn’t



Jim Balsillie, co-CEO of Research in Motion, which makes the Blackberry, has invested more than \$80 million in an institute, a council and a school of international affairs, all based in Waterloo.

mean I’m the one who should be cutting into your brain. I’m not a world leader in that and I haven’t studied for a few decades. But maybe foreign issues are a bit like hockey where everyone kind of feels they’re an expert. Everybody’s got an opinion. My interest is that the institutions be high-functioning. At RIM, I don’t go around sticking my nose in the engineering labs. I’m pretty comfortable knowing what I do and don’t know. That’s probably a distinctive competency of mine. I’m not contending with anyone for intellectual victories and that helps because the fact that I’m not trying to get my way but I am availing resources, I suspect makes me fairly trusted and effective. The moment I start trying to get my way, I just start joining camps. Right now, I’m campless – by choice. In my corporate job, I am deeply in a camp. I advocate RIM and Blackberry and wireless. But here, I’m not.

**DM:** Did you study international affairs?

**JB:** A little bit – just at the undergraduate

level. I’m fairly aware and reasonably up-to-date and engaged in these types of things but no more than many, many other citizens and not to as great a degree as a practitioner or an academic. Enough to have a general interest, for sure.

**DM:** What are your aspirations for the three organizations?

**JB:** One, domestic capacity-building, and that’s highly inter-related with the value equation. Do we value these things, do we resource them, do we build capacity? There’s lots of anecdotal stuff in the past generation about diminished capacity domestically, in the foreign service and the fact that I had to bail out the CIIA (Canadian Institute of International Affairs). The membership of the organization was 1,300 nation-wide. Membership of the Council of Foreign Relations in Chicago is 15,000. There’s no way to respond to that other than the obvious statement that there was no value given to it. That there was only one question on foreign relations in the

last leadership debate (during the federal election) is factually irrefutable.

Two, will CIGI, as an unaligned global think-tank – and also the school that’s starting up and the CIC – make a positive contribution to getting the ball rolling down the field in these complex files?

**DM:** What are the biggest accomplishments so far?

**JB:** CIGI has done countless things, both seen and unseen. It’s looked at key issues like the energy and nuclear file, peace and conflict, and, in many respects, we’re leading the whole study of the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) side. And with IGLOO (a global resource tool on-line), we’re networking a lot of these issues around the world. Getting alignment of activities and leveraging is a big contribution. It may not be as sexy but the fact is that we’re highly involved in bringing these guys together and kind of being the host of that party and also being a full participant. And there’s lots more to come. It’s only been five years so we’re just starting to get our legs.

**DM:** What is the biggest policy issue facing Canada?

**JB:** My own opinion is that it’s the whole energy file, how it relates to security. The whole nuclear non-proliferation issue, the environmental element, the economic element. In my mind, it’s an easy statement to make. Nuclear non-proliferation and carbon footprint – those are both at the level of insidiousness where it’s hard to even comment.

**DM:** How do you divide your time between RIM and these three projects?

**JB:** I have to be involved in the fundraising side, to bug people for money. I’ve got to chair the board meetings and help recruit key people. It’s a chair role. But I enjoy attending things. I like to listen but I rarely comment.

**DM:** Is it 90 per cent RIM versus 10 per cent in terms of time?

**JB:** Oh yes, at least 90. RIM is my day job.

**DM:** Why do you live in Waterloo?

**JB:** Because that’s where my house is (laughs). That’s where RIM is. Why would I leave? You’ve got to live somewhere, you might as well live at home.

**DM:** You play hockey?

**JB:** Two or three times a week. It’s just pick-up – beer leagues.

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# SOLIDARNOŚĆ



# Poland's march to freedom

In this personal essay, Polish Ambassador **Piotr Ogrodzinski** argues that democracy can take many forms and is always worth fighting for, as he did in the *Solidarnosc* movement

**A**t the beginning of the 20th century, no country had a government founded on elections in which all adult citizens could participate. Today the right to participate in elections is constitutionally guaranteed to all adult citizens in 119 of the world's states, as Fareed Zakaria points out in his 2004 book, *The Future of Freedom*. According to Freedom House, the vast majority of states identify

themselves as democratic, though far fewer can reasonably be said to match the definition. Since the introduction of this concept – in ancient Greece up to the American and French Revolutions – democracy was thought to be only a little better than anarchy. It was reviled as the rule of the multitude. Today, the concept has such a powerful positive connotation that even obviously authoritarian regimes think it necessary to legitimize their rule by holding fake elections.

Democracy is usually defined by a set of institutions and concepts that include free elections, an open, public sphere, government under rule of law, civil control over military, among others. All of these combine to create a state capable of containing and fostering freedom of the people, for the people and by the people. Democracy is a vessel that contains freedom. But today there is a paradox. In some countries, people are enslaved by their political systems but they feel free because of their drive to freedom and their demand for the democratic institutions. And in other countries, people living in democracy may be overwhelmed by an excess of choice and they are therefore losing a sense of political direction.

The century-long experience of my country seen through the eyes of three generations – the “Weltanschauungs” of my father, myself, and my sons – shows how the idea of democracy can evolve and change its meaning. My father, born in newly independent Poland after 123 years of partition between three empires, experienced the calamities of war, occupation the totalitarian power of Nazi Germany and later “liberation” by yet

THE WORDS OF JOHN PAUL II  
FROM HIS FIRST PILGRIMAGE  
AS A POPE TO POLAND IN 1979  
THAT “THE FUTURE OF POLAND  
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another totalitarian regime – Stalin’s Soviet Union. His generation sought freedom either by emigrating to the free world or by doing its best to accept the logic of history and adapting to reality in as decent a manner as possible.

Only some years back did I learn that, in 1941, my father narrowly missed summary execution by the NKVD (that era’s KGB) which was retreating in panic from Lvov before attacking Nazi troops. This generation spent its most hopeful time – its youth – under extreme circumstances.



Polish Ambassador Piotr Ogrodzinski showed Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean around an exhibit on the *Solidarnosc* movement brought to Canada. The ambassador himself was involved in the underground movement.

Democracy for them meant a sovereign Poland. But with Soviet “liberation,” that became an impossible ideal.

My generation, born into the Polish People’s Republic, took the meagerness of life under socialism as a given, but, step by step, discovered that it didn’t work because of its economic inefficiency and its false ethics. Initially, we lived practicing opportunism by pretending to believe in the ruling ideology and being preoccupied by small things. It was the grayness of “a little stability” or – as the Czech writer Milan Kundera called it – the unbearable lightness of being. Our experience and sense of history were based on a chain of strikes and political upheavals of 1956, 1968, 1970, 1976 and 1980-81.

As a five-year-old boy in October 1956, I watched a demonstration from a window of our apartment. I was awed by the intensity of emotions evoked by this marching Behemoth. As a high school student in March 1968, I accompanied my parents to a fantastic theatre production of Adam Mickiewicz’s *Forefathers* that was banned by censorship the very next day. The criticism of Czarist Russia in the play was enthusiastically identified by the public with condemnation of Soviet domination. This is where the difficult road to *Solidarity*, *Solidarnosc*, as we called it, began. While students and intelligentsia protested

and censorship, the workers helped police to brutally pacify them. When, in December 1970, the workers went on strike and were shot at by the army, professionals and students stayed passive. In June 1976, the workers went on strike again and this time professionals and students helped the persecuted workers and their families. In the great strike of August 1980, workers refused to sign the final agreement until they were assured that intellectuals, professionals and students arrested for helping them would be let free. The words of John Paul II from his first pilgrimage as a Pope to Poland in 1979 that “the future of Poland will depend upon how many people are mature enough to be nonconformist” were a piece of ingenious statesmanship.

For 16 months – between August 1980 and December 1981 – we participated in a unique mass movement called *Solidarity*. Some 10 million Poles, in a country ruled by an authoritarian regime, organized their activity based on the nonconformists’ approach to democracy. *Solidarity* in its essence was an open organization. As a journalist working for NTO, a regional *Solidarity* bulletin, I would travel through Poland and was welcomed by complete strangers as if I was a good, old friend. There was little suspicion – and a lot of enthusiasm and good faith.

Democracy within an authoritarian

regime could not last – in fact, we expected a violent end to our “festival of freedom.” But we waited so long for the end, and time and again, it did not come. So when, on Dec. 13, 1981, the government sent tanks into the streets, we were surprised. But the Polish tradition of underground movements was so strong by then that it was clear to us what we had to do, and how. Some 100,000 activists throughout Poland risked opposing the grim reality of martial law. When I think of those days, I am moved by the bravery of people who let us use their homes for meetings of our underground organization. We could not meet in public places since the police constantly watched them. Every few months we had to change apartments and find new people who were afraid but felt obliged to help us.

In April 1989, under pressure from acute economic shortages, the Communist regime initiated negotiations with the democratic opposition supported by the Catholic Church. The 1989 Round Table Accord was reached because of the persistent drive for freedom of the underground activists and the disillusioned people. What we negotiated was a semi-free Parliamentary election that eventually brought about creation of the first Communist Bloc government headed by a non-communist prime minister.

It was the beginning of the end of communism in Europe. The first domino had fallen. Czechoslovakia and Hungary followed our example. East Germans started to travel by the thousands to Poland and then to Czechoslovakia and Hungary, which opened their borders for the German exodus, allowing them to enter West Germany through Austria. Soviet Union President Mikhail Gorbachev refused to help the weakened East German communist government. The Germans literally walked away from communism. Just six months after the Polish elections, the Berlin Wall was taken apart, piece-by-piece, by enthusiastic citizens. The erasing of the political dividing lines, started by the jubilant Berliners, went so far, that today, with Poland in the EU and in the Schengen Group, you can cross the Polish-German border without even showing your identification.

Remembering our victory of the June 1989 election, I am still stunned by our ignorance of the basic rules of general elections. I belonged to a unit responsible for publicity. All of us, including

some university professors, had been worried that an estimated 70-per-cent support for Solidarity candidates would not give us a decisive majority in Parliament. It took a young sociologist from outside our unit to explain that 70 per cent, if evenly spread throughout the country, would give us every single seat that was open to free electoral contest.

I also remember the advice (based on a whole week in Poland) of a well-mean-

IN EACH COUNTRY, THE FORM OF  
DEMOCRACY HAS TO ADAPT TO  
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ing prominent Western public relations firm that we should campaign with the slogan “Put on pink spectacles” – as if the main issue facing us was a lack of optimism. How we laughed. The poster we created was based on a promotional still from the movie *High Noon*, with Gary Cooper marching alone against the enemy wearing a “Solidarity” badge instead of the sheriff’s star, and carrying an election ballot instead of a gun. We were engaged in a struggle between good and evil.

During those elections, my eldest son (then 13) took part in the “poster battle” in the streets. He put back our election posters whenever communist activists tore them down. I remember him complaining that my generation had already done all the exciting stuff

and left them nothing to do. Soon he, my younger sons and their peers, developed contempt for politics. This generation, born in freedom, takes democracy for granted and stays out of what it calls the petty quarrels of politicians. They enjoy and consume freedom but do not feel obliged to foster democracy.

Since I started my work at the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1993, our country has steadily supported democratization in Eastern Europe. After all, more democracy meant more security for all, including Poland. It has always been free Poland’s policy to support the countries of East Central Europe (that were, and are, going through the process of democratic transition) in their bid to join NATO and the EU. In 1997, I was posted in Washington and a year later, I watched from the public galleries as the U.S. Senate solemnly ratified Poland’s accession to NATO. What a glorious day. After six consecutive generations, since 1795, faced hardship and disillusionment in their struggle for a sovereign Poland, I now have a tremendous feeling of belonging to the seventh generation of Poles who, I am convinced, have prevailed and succeeded.

Assisting in the construction of democratic institutions is obviously a worthy cause. In each country, the form of democracy has to adapt to specific traditions and the value of those institutions has to be learned in practice. But sensitivity to cultural diversity and tradition should in no way deprive us of the satisfaction that, in Afghanistan, girls are going to school and women are elected to parliament. This change made Afghanistan more free and will make it more affluent. Whenever people dare to demand democracy, we should rejoice and try to help. In 2006, Poland wished Ukraine success in its Orange Revolution. Emotionally identifying with young Ukrainians from Kiev’s Majdan, we were recalling our own Solidarity experiences, and regaining our sense of direction.

Having observed democracy at work in various parts of the world and in Poland, I am strongly convinced that we should never forget what a tremendous privilege it is. We should never take freedom for granted; we should always foster and protect it. For democracy, without citizens’ will to use their political freedom, is but an empty vessel.

Piotr Ogrodzinski is Poland’s Ambassador to Canada.

# MPs offer young democracies a helping hand

Three billion people live in democracies. Three billion do not. The advance of democracy isn't guaranteed – and some democratic countries are slipping back into repression. How can Canada help reverse this disturbing trend?

By Roger Bird and Daniel Drolet

A couple of years ago, in Rwanda, people walked, some of them for up to four hours, to the nearest soccer field or marketplace for a low-tech, low-budget election. To vote, they lined up behind the candidates of their choice. Soldiers with guns encouraged candidates not to look around to determine who their supporters were. After a few hours, officials counted the people standing behind each candidate, and everyone walked home again. There were no penalties for people who chose not to vote this way, but most did. Democracy seemed worth a considerable effort.

In the second half of the 20th century, encouraged by freedom rhetoric from the West, citizens of Hungary and the former Czechoslovakia both took to the streets and joined clandestine organizations under the guns of the Soviet occupiers of their countries. They were trying to throw off the deadweight of phony “democracies” imposed at the end of the Second World War. They failed in the face of military invasion in 1956 (Hungary) and 1968 (the “Prague spring”). People died, or went to prison and thousands of people fled to the West. Later, as the Soviet Union collapsed, these efforts were reborn successfully.

Democracy requires not just effort, but money and lives. Consider how fast the term “ramp ceremony” has entered the language of Canadians as its soldiers fight to assist a democracy mission in Afghanistan.

At another extreme, a democracy struggles under the stern watch of a nearby anti-democratic government. Taiwan must wend its way, in full awareness of China's authoritarian power – and specific threats – across the Formosa Strait.

Experts talk about a current worldwide “collapse of respect for political parties,” the nuts and bolts of democracy even though many constitutions (including those of Canada and the U.S.) don't even mention them.



Relishing the right to vote: Afghan women line up to vote in the country's 2004 election.

Kenyan democracy remains in trouble following a contested presidential election on Dec. 27. Some Kenyans – like people in many countries – consider their tribe, ethnic group or language community at least as natural an expression of identity as a political party. In an arena where political parties are tribal, political conflict can turn violent at any time.

In Eastern Europe before the collapse of the Soviet Union, government had been the purview of the Party. Emergent democracies in the former Soviet Bloc required the participation of people who had been ideologically against democratic reforms. Yet even doctrinaire communists took quickly to democratic elections in many of these countries.

In some countries, Big Pharma, Big Oil, and Big Mining companies have budgets way in excess of the local governments, and big business does not always speak the language of democracy. Even in the most powerful democracy in the world, Congress has struggled to square this circle: Encourage people to contribute to political parties, but at the same time control contributions from big corporate power in any guise.

Around the world, democracy is a work

in progress. More than three billion people now live in countries that are democratic by some definition – and nearly three billion do not. Democracy routinely advances and recedes, haunted by backsliding in places where anti-democratic forces are winning, at least for now.

Democracy in trouble makes the world a more dangerous place, so there are organizations – Canadian and otherwise – that keep a close eye on the democratic project, noting efforts which flourish, and those which wobble and fail. Last year, a group of MPs turned its attention to democracy and decided it was time for the Canadian government to go further than these watchdog NGOs and set up some kind of machinery to bolster it.

In response to a report entitled *Advancing Canada's Role in International Support for Democratic Development*, prepared by the Commons committee on foreign affairs and international development, the government said it would think about it.

It particularly wanted to think about the committee's main recommendation, to set up a formal foundation for what the foreign aid trade calls “international democracy development.” That really needed further study, the government said.

As of February, the government had not yet begun work on that study. However, according to DFAIT spokesman Bernard Nguyen, it had scheduled for the end of February the “second annual democracy dialogue” with members of the Democracy Council, an informal group made up of government and NGO members. It has already set up a Democratic Transitions Fund in DFAIT's Glyn Berry Peace and Security Program.

And, Mr. Nguyen says, it continues to draft the whole-of-government policy statement on democracy support (promised by May).

The committee MPs were tromping where angels fear to tread, looking into one of the most contentious areas of inter-

national development.

Democracy is hard. Democracy is expensive. Democracy doesn't just happen. People can't even agree on its definition. The term is so loaded that in 1987, two special rapporteurs appointed by then-prime minister Brian Mulroney's government even advised against using the word "democracy" in the title of any organization created to promote it.

"This terminology ... has acquired an ideological, political and cultural meaning which differs profoundly from one region of the world to another," they said. "Coming from a Western industrialized country, it risks being interpreted as an intention to impose on our co-operation programs in this area our own concept of democracy."

As a result, if democracy is not to be perceived as a form of neo-colonialism, its promoters have to be sensitive to local issues, cultures and concerns. Today's MPs agree.

"There is near consensus that democracy cannot be implanted from outside," their report says. "Democratization is a long, difficult and inherently indigenous process – one that should be supported but not imported from abroad."

Looking at such a world, the foreign affairs committee began public hearings in September 2006 on whether, and what, Canada should do to assist democratic development in the world and protect it when it came under siege. Those hearings ended a year ago. MPs from all parties concluded that "Canada is still punching below its weight in this field," and that supporting democracy worldwide was in line with Canada's international traditions.

Their report's 28 recommendations include the concerns familiar in any government effort – co-ordinate efforts, concentrate them where they can do the most good, avoid overlap with existing institutions, learn from the mistakes of others. But the big idea, and the radical departure from what Canada has been doing up to now, was to set up an arm's-length foundation to promote democracy, and allow it to advise political parties in other countries about multi-party government.

The foundation would report to Parliament and be funded or endowed with enough money "to put Canada among the world leaders in the field."

Should it come about, the foundation would have its work cut out for it. *The Economist* magazine's snapshot of democracy worldwide in 2006 shows that almost half of the world's countries can be consid-



An Afghan woman registers to vote in the 2004 presidential election. The country is preparing for another in 2009, despite Taliban attacks.

ered to be democracies, but the number of "full democracies" is relatively low (only 28). There are 54 "flawed democracies," 55 authoritarian states and 30 hybrid regimes. A patchy picture. "Only one Asian country, Japan, makes the grade," as a full democracy and "almost 40 per cent of the world's population still lives under authoritarian rule (with a large share of these being, of course, in China)."

Yet, as Vidar Helgesen, secretary-general of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, told a world congress of political scientists two years ago, "Democracy – the idea that people have the right to control their government and that a government is legitimate only if and when it is controlled by the people – has acquired an almost unique global hegemony, hardly matched by any other world view in modern history."

Canada's current democracy development efforts around the world are not co-ordinated through any one agency. In addition to such organizations as Rights and Democracy (set up by Parliament in 1988 and first headed by Ed Broadbent), there has been a small "democracy unit" inside the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade since 2006. Other work is done by the Canadian International Development Agency.

CIDA sees four "essential elements" in any real democracy. These were spelled out to the committee by Josée Verner, then

minister of international development co-operation:

- strong political institutions working under the glare of free news media;
- the rule of law under an impartial judiciary;
- accountable human rights practices and institutions, and
- an effective, non-corrupt public sector.

Other organizations and experts offered the committee different definitions of democracy. Nobody thought democracy was perfect, anywhere.

"There isn't some template that says to people, here's a perfect democracy," said committee member and Halifax MP Alexa McDonough, during an interview. This lack of a clear definition makes it difficult to measure progress.

"We need to be a lot clearer about what we mean by democratic development and good governance," development consultant Ian Smillie told the committee. "Good governance ... cannot be transferred hokus-bolus like pizza from a delivery truck. It must be earned and learned."

If the proposed democracy foundation gets government approval, it will benefit from the scrutiny democracy – and its failures – receives from a cluster of democracy monitor organizations.

One of them is Freedom House, an NGO founded in 1941 by Eleanor Roosevelt and Wendell Willkie, fresh from being crushed by FDR in a run for the

**Excerpts from testimony and submissions to the *Advancing Canada's Role in International Support for Democratic Development Report* from the Commons Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development ([www.parl.gc.ca](http://www.parl.gc.ca)):**

**Defence Minister Peter MacKay, testifying as Minister of Foreign Affairs:**

"The most striking feature of the 20th century was the rise of democracy as the pre-eminently acceptable form of governance. Democratic governance has been accepted as a universal norm. "I believe we should make democracy promotion not just a priority for government, but for our entire society... "The true test of strength—of belief, commitment, and courage—is your ability to stand for something when there is personal risk or discomfort and when there is some cost to the person, country, or organization, yet you do it anyway on principle. I believe that democracy is a principle worth fighting for and standing for.

"Canada's reputation as a fair player confers clear advantages: we were never a colonial power; we do not have great power ambitions; our motives are not suspect; our agenda is not hidden; and there is a tremendous depth of goodwill for Canadians. It's partly because of our advocacy, but more so because of our active support for democratic values."

**Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages Josée Verner, testifying as Minister of International Cooperation :**

"When the time came to draft the Afghan constitution, CIDA worked together with people from Rights and Democracy from Montreal. These people worked together with some 60 Afghan female NGOs in order to ensure that the rights of women would be included in the constitution."

**Edward Broadbent, former MP and NDP leader and the first president of Rights and Democracy:**

"Our foreign policy must help the development of democracy, and this should be done by persuasion, trade, and aid, and by the development of globally enforceable human rights law."

presidency. This historical fact is significant in that Eleanor Roosevelt and Mr. Willkie were looking at totalitarian regimes triumphant on battlefields in Europe and Asia. There was plausible talk (and not just by the Nazis and Communists) about how democracy's day was done, that it was too flabby and indecisive to stand up to regimes with a ticket to destiny. Still, they kept the faith, and the Commons committee is part of a continuing worldwide attention to democracy's health.

Freedom House, with headquarters in Washington and 11 offices in Eastern Europe, South Africa, Mexico and Asia, measures democracy. Its latest report (published in 2007, based on findings in 2006) is pessimistic.

It sees "a systematic effort to weaken or eliminate pro-democracy forces ... among authoritarian regimes in the former Soviet Union." As well, "governments in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America have also taken steps to diminish freedom of assembly, smother civil society, and silence critics."

Headings in the Freedom House report sum it up: "Latin America: successful elections amid crime and upheaval," but the following commentary says, "Democracy will remain incomplete ... if governments fail to curb corruption, strengthen the rule of law, and protect the rights of minorities and the indigenous." It warns of an ethnic divide between people whose ancestors came from Europe, and indigenous peoples.

In the Asia-Pacific region, it was "a year of setbacks," including the military coup that ousted Thailand's democratically elected president, Thaksin Shinawatra. In China, there was "little evidence of openings toward political freedom or enhanced individual liberties."

Freedom House even saw challenges to democracy in the United States because of the administration's anti-terrorism efforts. And it noted other challenges in European countries as their democratic practices struggle to integrate their new, large immigrant populations.

Freedom House concluded that democracy and freedom suffered setbacks in 2007. "The number of electoral democracies dropped by two," says Freedom House. "One country, Mauritania, qualified to join the world's electoral democracies in 2007. Developments in three countries – Philippines, Bangladesh and Kenya – disqualified them from the electoral democracy list."

*The Economist* magazine, in its 2007

"Democracy Index," posted a "negative watch list" on eight countries. It warned of possible constitutional crises in Taiwan and Bangladesh (none occurred) and cautioned against possible flawed elections in Armenia, where the country continues to struggle economically because of conflict with Azerbaijan.

For Russia, the magazine warned about the country's "trend towards curtailment of media and other civil liberties," and flawed parliamentary elections. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the Council of Europe later agreed, saying the December vote "took place in an atmosphere which seriously limited political competition." Garry Kasparov, the chess star who heads The Other Russia coalition of opposition groups, denounced the vote as "the most unfair and dirtiest in the whole history of modern Russia."

*The Economist* said Nigeria faced a possible military takeover, that the Burundi government was cracking down on the opposition and "could slide from a hybrid regime to authoritarianism." In 2007, Guinea, also on the list, saw a corruption scandal that cut foreign aid so drastically that the government couldn't pay its bills. The magazine warned of a risk of a military coup in Guinea-Bissau.

It had one "positive" watch-listing for Hong Kong, seeing improvements in civil liberties and democratic political practices after Donald Tsang's election as chief executive.

In a world alive to reports like these, Canada's foreign affairs committee went to work and wrote up its report. The government responded and promised, among other things, to co-ordinate this country's democracy efforts and assess its capacity to help develop democracy in the world. And to get things started, it promised a whole-of-government policy statement for democracy support.

But it stopped short of endorsing the committee's main recommendation: Set up a formal foundation for international democracy development.

Alberta Conservative MP Kevin Sorenson, the committee chair, was philosophical about the caution surrounding the democracy foundation idea. In a letter in the January-February issue of the *Literary Review of Canada*, he said his colleagues weren't expecting immediate endorsement of all their ideas:

"We knew that the idea of creating a new independent foundation for international democracy support would be



Kenyan democracy remains in trouble after a contested presidential election in December.

controversial .... we will be satisfied so long as what emerges is a substantially improved cart with enough horsepower to pull it."

There was near consensus on the committee that Canada is well-placed to undertake the promotion of democracy in the world. Canada "enjoys some unique credibility and with it some unique opportunities," then-foreign affairs minister

**WE SHOULD STAND UP AND PROVIDE OURSELVES WITH THE MEANS, OR, IN PAUL MARTIN'S WORDS, WITH THE TEETH TO MATCH OUR APPETITE OR AT LEAST PART OF OUR RHETORIC. "AFGHANISTAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, MIGHT BE OUR LAST HURRAH."**  
— DOUGLAS BLAND

Peter MacKay told the MPs. "Canada's reputation as a fair player confers clear advantages."

It is an advantage to be used: "Canada has a huge political capital by way of reputation around the world," said Rashed Drayman, the Ghana-based director of Canada's Africa program. "We need to 'spend' this capital and make a difference ... by being innovative, responsive and above all, take risks."

Canada's moral capital comes from several sources. One is simply not being the U.S., which is hamstrung by its image internationally right now. As Marina Ottaway, director of the Middle East

program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace put it, "the democracy promotion agenda of the Bush administration is dead."

Gerald Hyman, former director of USAID's office of democracy and governance, noted that Canada can be active in many places the U.S. cannot – for example, Cuba. And Christopher Sands, an associate with the International Republican Institute, said Canada may be of particular assistance in explaining the concept of "loyal opposition," a product of our British-style parliamentary system.

Another Canadian advantage stems from our bilingual and multicultural realities: "It is clear that Canadian democracy itself has some unique strengths – e.g. the promotion of tolerance and the forging of a common identity across major cultural, linguistic and regional differences in Canada," says a paper quoted by the committee that had been written for the Los Angeles-based Democracy Council.

The committee was mindful that democratic development could run afoul of governments. While some argued that Canada should take a stronger pro-democracy stand in China, for example, that approach has risks. A China scholar quoted by the committee suggested that Canada's overall relations with China be citizen-centred, not regime centred. This means talking to people who are "reform-oriented" in a country where it can be dangerous to be reform-oriented.

The committee's idea of a Canada democracy foundation is one that would act as a clearing house for democracy ideas, and would undertake public outreach and

**Douglas Bland, chair, Defence Management Studies Program, School of Policy Studies, Queen's University:**

"My worry today is that except for a small cadre of Canadians who are actually serving in the Canadian Forces or in the foreign service or in government or non-governmental humanitarian agencies, Canadians don't have much stomach for an international role much beyond rhetoric, even when we're fighting alongside allies to aid people who wish to be free.

"If you think otherwise, look at who serves and at the appalling state of the Canadian armed forces—a consequence of government decisions over many years not to properly fund Canada's military capabilities. That decision is reflected by some politicians across the political spectrum who say we are actually not funding armed forces, for instance, because that's what Canadians think is proper.

"My point today is that if we have an appetite for an international role, and if we believe that it is in our own interest to aid others who are struggling for freedom and liberal democracy, then we should stand up and provide ourselves with the means, or, in Paul Martin's words, with the teeth to match our appetite or at least part of our rhetoric. "Afghanistan, ladies and gentlemen, might be our last hurrah."

**Gareth Evans, president of the International Crisis Group:**

"Democracy is best conceptualized as a human rights issue. This enables the promotion of democracy worldwide to be credibly portrayed as a genuinely universal value, rather than just a Western hang-up, and (while not pretending that "universal human rights" is an easy sell in many parts of the world) that is helpful in terms of getting buy-in."

**Thomas Axworthy, chair, Centre for the Study of Democracy, Queen's University:**

"Local government, municipalities, is the building block of democracy. ... In democracy transitions we tend to almost instantly race towards national elections. In virtually every study I have looked at, I'm convinced that the investment in local municipalities, local government, and local elections, is the way to allow the arts of democracy to foster and build."

**Diane Éthier, professor of political science, University of Montreal:**

"I believe experts would say that if you want to help countries become democracies, first help them achieve economic and social development, and later you will be able to focus on establishing democratic political institutions."

**Jean-Louis Roy, president, Rights and Democracy (International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development):**

"Two billion people will be born in the next 20 years, 90 percent of them in the south of the world.

"I believe we have to recall something that we all know — sometimes, it is better to repeat things — that half, or exactly 50 per cent of the world population, is under 25 years of age.

"There are 1.2 billion humans between the ages of 10 and 19. In all those countries where we work, in all those countries in the South, populations will increase over the next few years, and the dominant age group will be composed of people between the ages of 10 and 25. We have to speak to these young people about democracy, we have to find innovative means and have real programs to give them."

**George Perlin, emeritus professor and fellow, School of Policy Studies, Queen's University:**

"There are no concerted country strategies. Aid is delivered in bits and pieces, reflecting the preferences and specific competencies of donors... some forms of aid are offered by multiple donors (duplication of programming), while areas of important need get no support. We could do work in Canada to develop strategic plans for democracy assistance in the particular countries where we want to intervene."

**Jean-Pierre Kingsley, testifying as chief electoral officer of Canada:**

"Democracy promotion is challenged by the growing perception in some parts of the world that democracy is not bearing fruit in terms of improving the day-to-day lives of the people. Setbacks will occur, but this does not mean we give up.

"In my view, there is no alternative to democracy."

research, though some MPs feared it could become a "bureaucratic monster."

"But as part of increasing Canada's overall international assistance, we do want to add significant new capacity to Canada's contribution to international democratic development," the committee members concluded. "Frankly, we are not convinced that minor modifications and additions to the status quo will do the job."

The foundation idea was not unanimously accepted by the committee.

The Bloc Québécois and the NDP dissented. The Bloc was uneasy about spending money on a new foundation but leaving current aid targets in the lurch. "Deciding to set up and fund a Canadian foundation that is expected to become nothing less than the 'world leader' in democratic development assistance, without defining exactly what that is, and especially without explaining just how the foundation differs from existing bodies, is literally incomprehensible," said the Bloc's dissenting report.

It worried too about democracy support being used as a foreign policy tool "guided more by the self-interest of donor countries than by the needs of the people in the recipient countries."

The NDP criticized the committee report for ignoring the link "between the social and economic rights of the poor" on the one hand, and democratic development on the other.

"One of the reasons I was so very, very critical of the report is I think it was driven from day one by a decision that had already been made by the government to make a sharp shift away from meeting our international obligation to seriously commit to the Millennium Development obligations in favour of so-called democracy development," Alexa McDonough said in an interview.

The UN-mandated Millennium Development goals would be costly, and as always in foreign aid, the devil is in the financial details. For decades, Canada has been committed — on paper — to increasing its development assistance to 0.7 per cent of GDP. That goal has been reaffirmed many times over the years, without ever having been attained. It stood at 0.3 per cent in 2005 and 2006 — well below the levels of the U.K. and Nordic countries. Nonetheless, CIDA, the largest source of Canadian funding for democratic development, spent more than \$375 million on democratic governance programs in 2005.

Despite those figures, one witness,

Kevin Deveaux, a former member of the Nova Scotia legislature, who now works for the UN in Vietnam, said that "for \$25 million a year, for example, Canada could be a serious player in 10 countries around the world. If we pick those countries appropriately, based on our history, based on our diversity, I think we can have a lot of impact in those countries."

The committee report said more money needed to be spent — but in new sectors.

It wanted more support for the "array of small organizations already operating in the area of democratic development, usually with CIDA funding."

And then it waded into a really controversial area: "Furthermore, we believe that Canada should become active in sectors such as political party development ... through a funding channel that is at arm's length from the government. Political parties have long been considered essential to the process of democratic development, yet Canada has never been involved in aiding political party development. The committee believes that this should change."

If it does change, it will do so in a field where other countries are very, very cautious. Dutch and Norwegian political-party-assistance organizations advised the MPs to stay away from party-to-party tutoring and concentrate on general multi-party development ideas.

The other big issue is which countries to help. The report concluded: "Canada should concentrate its efforts in countries where it is already heavily invested with much at stake, and where it is capable of making a difference by sustaining high levels of democracy and peace-building assistance over long periods of time."

So it's a huge task, and one the government seems cautiously willing to take up. "Supporting freedom and democracy is a key priority for the government of Canada," says the government's official response to the committee report. It adds that the government is committed to focusing and maximizing Canada's efforts.

"In doing so, we can make a real difference in supporting democracy and improving the lives of citizens around the world."

But no Canada democracy foundation just yet.

*Roger Bird taught journalism at Carleton University for many years and is chair of the editorial advisory committee of *Canadian Geographic* magazine. Daniel Drolet is an Ottawa writer.*

# From here to real action worldwide

An authority on democratic development says it's time for Canada to engage

By David Donovan

**D**emocracy is one of the most contested concepts in political science, chock full of “shoulds.” As such, aiding democratic development can be tricky, with lots of debate on just how democratic a particular country actually is as it negotiates the road to full democracy.

Transitions to democracy from authoritarian regimes are necessarily messy, fraught with setbacks, and require the long-term focus of those wishing to assist. So, the government of Canada should be applauded for its recent consideration of a more significant role for this country in promoting democracy abroad.

In July 2007, the House of Commons committee on foreign affairs and international development released *Advancing Canada's Role in International Support for Democratic Development*, a report recommending an enhanced role in international democratic assistance for this country. Subsequently, the October Speech from the Throne outlined the government's general commitment to the idea.

But the government's official response to the committee's report in November failed to address the committee's concrete recommendations – specifically the creation of an internationally focused Canadian democracy-promotion organization.

Instead, the government called for further study (in addition to the committee's extensive research), and the release of a whole-of-government policy statement on democracy support in the spring of 2008. While it is important to ensure that any new initiative is carefully planned, unless the whole-of-government statement moves to create such a democracy-promotion organization, Ottawa risks giving in to entrenched organizational interests in the Canadian democracy assistance community that are reluctant to give up their turf, and of studying a good idea to death.

One only needs to look at the last attempt to create a new foreign policy institution – the Canada Corps. An organization focused on democracy and

governance assistance and youth engagement abroad was an idea with enormous potential, but because of a lack of political will, it became defunct.

The committee has already undertaken much of the necessary research to move forward with its other recommendations, which include:

- a new arms-length Canada foundation for international development;
- a centre for policy in democratic development;
- independent evaluation of all public funding of international democratic development;
- an initiative by Parliament involving the creation of a centre for multi-party and parliamentary democracy;
- a “whole-of-government and whole-of-Canada” policy framework on support for international democratic development.

It is important that the government create a central organization to ensure Canada contributes to international democracy assistance in a co-ordinated and effective manner. It's time. But first, it would be helpful to consider some background on democratic transitions and how they occur, to look at Canada's current role in democracy assistance abroad, and to examine other organizations active in democracy promotion, whose structures Canada could emulate.

In his groundbreaking, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, Samuel Huntington defines a wave of democratization as “a group of transitions from non-democratic to democratic regimes that occur within a specified period of time and that significantly outnumber transitions in the opposite direction during that period of time.” Between 1974 and 1990, the world saw the transition of approximately 30 nations from non-democratic to democratic political systems, which, according to Dr. Huntington, constitutes “the third wave of democratization” (the first two waves occurred

between 1828 – 1926 and 1943 – 1962).

Support for Dr. Huntington's claim can be found in Freedom House's *Freedom in the World* survey ([www.freedomhouse.org](http://www.freedomhouse.org)), which quantitatively measures the degree to which nations are free and democratic. Results of this survey show that the number of “sovereign states” has increased substantially over Huntington's third wave and beyond. The most dramatic cases of democratization have occurred in three major regions: Asia-Pacific, Central and Eastern Europe, and Latin America.

Although there has been an overall trend towards increased democratization in the world, there have also been setbacks. Twenty-two countries that had moved into the ‘free’ category between 1974 and 1991 have since lost their ‘free’ status. In *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation*, Larry Diamond points out that some prominent third-wave democracies have been regressing and that the proportion of electoral democracies seems to be reaching equilibrium. This has led Dr. Diamond to conclude that the third wave reached a period of stasis, in which the number of new democracies may be offset by those democracies that will regress under authoritarian regimes. Dr. Diamond, therefore, recommends supporting and bolstering the existing third wave democracies that he characterizes as shallow, illiberal, or only tentatively liberal – with the possible occurrence of a fourth wave of democratization – thus the need for more players in the international democracy assistance community.

Over the third wave of democratization, several international democracy promotion organizations have been created and strengthened, in Europe, North America, and in many new democracies themselves. Now, beyond the third wave, democracy promotion has taken an even more prominent role on the international

(Continued on page 24)



**MAPPING DEMOCRACY AND KEEPING SCORE**

The Economist Intelligence Unit defines democracy as “a set of practices that institutionalize freedom, and thus ultimately protect it.” It lists among these practices majority rule, free and fair elections, protection of minorities and respect for human rights. It bases its own global democracy index on an assessment of each country’s electoral processes, civil liberties, political culture and public participation, scoring 167 countries on a final scale of 1-10, in which 10 is perfectly democratic and 1 is wretchedly authoritarian. The list below includes each country’s rank and final score.

*The Economist's guide to global democracy*

| Country            | Rank | Score |
|--------------------|------|-------|
| <b>DEMOCRACIES</b> |      |       |
| Sweden             | 1    | 9.88  |
| Iceland            | 2    | 9.71  |
| Netherlands        | 3    | 9.66  |
| Norway             | 4    | 9.55  |
| Denmark            | 5    | 9.52  |
| Finland            | 6    | 9.25  |
| Luxembourg         | 7    | 9.10  |
| Australia          | 8    | 9.09  |
| Canada             | 9    | 9.07  |
| Switzerland        | 10   | 9.02  |
| Ireland            | 11   | 9.01  |
| New Zealand        | 11   | 9.01  |
| Germany            | 13   | 8.82  |

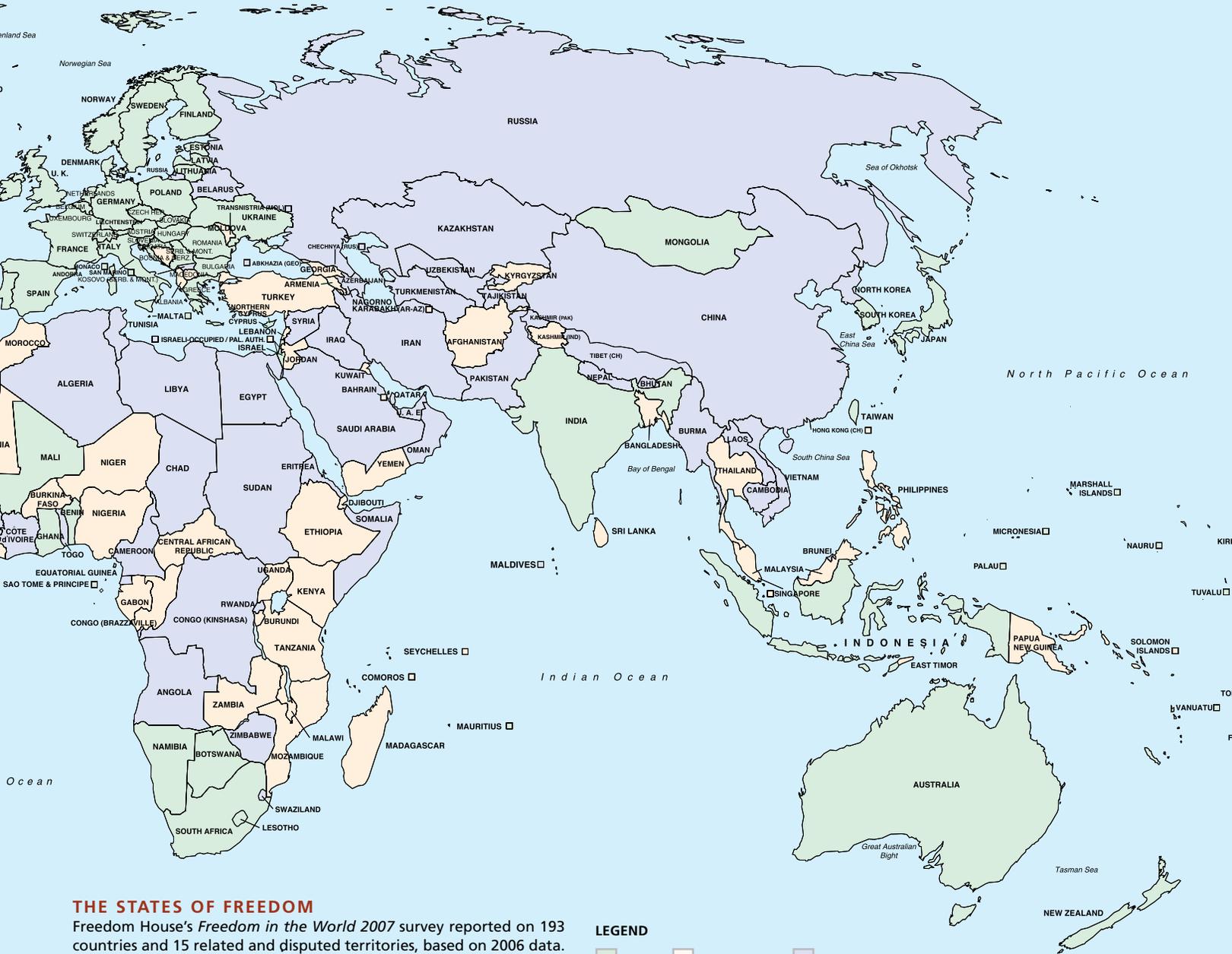
|            |    |      |
|------------|----|------|
| Austria    | 14 | 8.69 |
| Malta      | 15 | 8.39 |
| Spain      | 16 | 8.34 |
| US         | 17 | 8.22 |
| Czech R    | 18 | 8.17 |
| Portugal   | 19 | 8.16 |
| Belgium    | 20 | 8.15 |
| Japan      | 20 | 8.15 |
| Greece     | 22 | 8.13 |
| UK         | 23 | 8.08 |
| France     | 24 | 8.07 |
| Mauritius  | 25 | 8.04 |
| Costa Rica | 25 | 8.04 |
| Slovenia   | 27 | 7.96 |
| Uruguay    | 27 | 7.96 |

**FLAWED DEMOCRACIES**

|              |    |      |
|--------------|----|------|
| South Africa | 29 | 7.91 |
| Chile        | 30 | 7.89 |
| South Korea  | 31 | 7.88 |
| Taiwan       | 32 | 7.82 |
| Estonia      | 33 | 7.74 |
| Italy        | 34 | 7.70 |
| India        | 35 | 7.68 |
| Botswana     | 36 | 7.60 |
| Cyprus       | 36 | 7.60 |
| Hungary      | 38 | 7.53 |
| Cape Verde   | 39 | 7.43 |
| Lithuania    | 39 | 7.43 |
| Slovakia     | 41 | 7.40 |
| Brazil       | 42 | 7.38 |
| Latvia       | 43 | 7.37 |
| Panama       | 44 | 7.35 |
| Jamaica      | 45 | 7.34 |
| Poland       | 46 | 7.30 |

|             |    |      |
|-------------|----|------|
| Israel      | 47 | 7.28 |
| Trinidad    | 48 | 7.18 |
| Bulgaria    | 49 | 7.10 |
| Romania     | 50 | 7.06 |
| Croatia     | 51 | 7.04 |
| Ukraine     | 52 | 6.94 |
| Mexico      | 53 | 6.67 |
| Argentina   | 54 | 6.63 |
| Serbia      | 55 | 6.62 |
| Mongolia    | 56 | 6.60 |
| Sri Lanka   | 57 | 6.58 |
| Montenegro  | 58 | 6.57 |
| Namibia     | 59 | 6.54 |
| New Guinea  | 59 | 6.54 |
| Suriname    | 61 | 6.52 |
| Moldova     | 62 | 6.50 |
| Lesotho     | 63 | 6.48 |
| Philippines | 63 | 6.48 |
| Indonesia   | 65 | 6.41 |

|             |    |      |
|-------------|----|------|
| Timor Leste | 65 | 6.41 |
| Colombia    | 67 | 6.40 |
| Macedonia   | 68 | 6.33 |
| Honduras    | 69 | 6.25 |
| El Salvador | 70 | 6.22 |
| Paraguay    | 71 | 6.16 |
| Benin       | 71 | 6.16 |
| Guyana      | 73 | 6.15 |
| Dominican R | 74 | 6.13 |
| Bangladesh  | 75 | 6.11 |
| Peru        | 75 | 6.11 |
| Guatemala   | 77 | 6.07 |
| Hong Kong   | 78 | 6.03 |
| Palestine   | 79 | 6.01 |
| Mali        | 80 | 5.99 |
| Malaysia    | 81 | 5.98 |
| Bolivia     | 81 | 5.98 |



**THE STATES OF FREEDOM**

Freedom House's *Freedom in the World 2007* survey reported on 193 countries and 15 related and disputed territories, based on 2006 data. To come up with its rating for whether a country is free, partly free or not free, it looks at political rights and civil liberties. The map above indicates the colour-coded results of that survey. Visit [www.diplomatonline.com](http://www.diplomatonline.com) for more information on its methodology.

**LEGEND**

- Free
- Partly Free
- Not free

**HYBRID REGIMES**

|              |     |      |
|--------------|-----|------|
| Albania      | 83  | 5.91 |
| Singapore    | 84  | 5.89 |
| Madagascar   | 85  | 5.82 |
| Lebanon      | 85  | 5.82 |
| Bosnia and H | 87  | 5.78 |
| Turkey       | 88  | 5.70 |
| Nicaragua    | 89  | 5.68 |
| Thailand     | 90  | 5.67 |
| Fiji         | 91  | 5.66 |
| Ecuador      | 92  | 5.64 |
| Venezuela    | 93  | 5.42 |
| Senegal      | 94  | 5.37 |
| Ghana        | 95  | 5.35 |
| Mozambique   | 96  | 5.28 |
| Zambia       | 97  | 5.25 |
| Liberia      | 98  | 5.22 |
| Tanzania     | 99  | 5.18 |
| Uganda       | 100 | 5.14 |

|            |     |      |
|------------|-----|------|
| Kenya      | 101 | 5.08 |
| Russia     | 102 | 5.02 |
| Malawi     | 103 | 4.97 |
| Georgia    | 104 | 4.90 |
| Cambodia   | 105 | 4.77 |
| Ethiopia   | 106 | 4.72 |
| Burundi    | 107 | 4.51 |
| Gambia     | 108 | 4.39 |
| Haiti      | 109 | 4.19 |
| Armenia    | 110 | 4.15 |
| Kyrgyzstan | 111 | 4.08 |
| Iraq       | 112 | 4.01 |

**AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES**

|          |     |      |
|----------|-----|------|
| Pakistan | 113 | 3.92 |
| Jordan   | 113 | 3.92 |
| Comoros  | 115 | 3.90 |
| Morocco  | 115 | 3.90 |
| Egypt    | 115 | 3.90 |

|               |     |      |
|---------------|-----|------|
| Rwanda        | 118 | 3.82 |
| Burkina Faso  | 119 | 3.72 |
| Kazakhstan    | 120 | 3.62 |
| Sierra Leone  | 121 | 3.57 |
| Niger         | 122 | 3.54 |
| Bahrain       | 123 | 3.53 |
| Cuba          | 124 | 3.52 |
| Nigeria       | 124 | 3.52 |
| Nepal         | 126 | 3.42 |
| Cote d'Ivoire | 127 | 3.38 |
| Belarus       | 128 | 3.34 |
| Azerbaijan    | 129 | 3.31 |
| Cameroon      | 130 | 3.27 |
| Congo         | 131 | 3.19 |
| Algeria       | 132 | 3.17 |
| Mauritania    | 133 | 3.12 |
| Kuwait        | 134 | 3.09 |
| Afghanistan   | 135 | 3.06 |
| Tunisia       | 135 | 3.06 |

|            |     |      |
|------------|-----|------|
| Yemen      | 137 | 2.98 |
| China      | 138 | 2.97 |
| Swaziland  | 139 | 2.93 |
| Iran       | 139 | 2.93 |
| Sudan      | 141 | 2.90 |
| Qatar      | 142 | 2.78 |
| Oman       | 143 | 2.77 |
| Congo DR   | 144 | 2.76 |
| Vietnam    | 145 | 2.75 |
| Gabon      | 146 | 2.72 |
| Bhutan     | 147 | 2.62 |
| Zimbabwe   | 147 | 2.62 |
| Tajikistan | 149 | 2.45 |
| UAE        | 150 | 2.42 |
| Angola     | 151 | 2.41 |
| Djibouti   | 152 | 2.37 |
| Syria      | 153 | 2.36 |
| Eritrea    | 154 | 2.31 |
| Laos       | 155 | 2.10 |

|                |     |      |
|----------------|-----|------|
| Eq Guinea      | 156 | 2.09 |
| Guinea         | 157 | 2.02 |
| Guinea-Bissau  | 158 | 2.00 |
| Saudi Arabia   | 159 | 1.92 |
| Uzbekistan     | 160 | 1.85 |
| Libya          | 161 | 1.84 |
| Turkmenistan   | 162 | 1.83 |
| Myanmar        | 163 | 1.77 |
| Togo           | 164 | 1.75 |
| Chad           | 165 | 1.65 |
| Central Africa | 166 | 1.61 |
| North Korea    | 167 | 1.03 |

(Continued from page 21)

stage and demand for it remains high in developing democracies throughout the world.

Thomas Carothers, vice-president for studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington, notes that, broadly speaking, there are two main paths for democratic reform. The first sees an authoritarian or dictatorial regime collapse in the face of popular uprisings. This happened in Afghanistan, Russia, and most emerging democracies in Eastern European and Latin America.

The second path takes place when the regime gradually releases control through liberalization. Then, social, economic, and political reforms are expanded in a manageable way and the goal of consolidated democracy is eventually achieved. This happened in Taiwan, Chile, South Korea, and Mexico.

#### Canada's current role

In 2005, the Centre for the Study of Democracy at Queen's University released a report entitled *The Democracy Canada Institute: A Blueprint*, which I co-authored with Thomas Axworthy and Leslie Campbell. In it, we called for the creation of the Democracy Canada Institute as an independent, non-profit, and non-partisan organization to support and strengthen international democratization. A key feature of our paper was the importance in this effort of assistance to political parties. Canada does little of it.

Political parties and politicians are often maligned in the press and in the public, with universally low favourability scores when compared to almost any other organization or profession. However, parties play a necessary and essential role in a democracy by aggregating the citizenry's diverse political interests. It is necessary that political parties be competitive to allow for those diverse interests to be properly represented.

Robert Dahl, in his work, *Democracy and its Critics*, lays out a number of conditions which must be met in order to classify a given country as democratic. Among his conditions are that elected officials be chosen and removed in free and fair elections, and that citizens be allowed to form political associations or parties, and be able to compete in those elections.

Providing assistance to political parties in developing democracies is essential to creating effective opposition movements.

Opposition parties in developing democracies typically lack necessary resources – both knowledge and financial – to compete with what may be authoritarian regimes working to suppress political opposition. Specifically, democracy assistance to political parties could include campaign training, electioneering, and media relations.

In his latest book, *Confronting the Weakest Link: Aiding Political Parties in New Democracies*, Thomas Carothers has this to say about political parties in developing democracies: "... it is difficult now to envisage a genuine democracy – with real political alternatives open to citizens and broad-based representation of citizens' interests – without political parties or some organizations very much like them." Support for political parties, then, is an essential element of assisting a country in the midst of a democratic transition.

Canada's political parties have highly developed grassroots organizing models that are relevant in many developing countries. Unlike the large, publicly funded European parties or the private money-reliant American parties, Canadian political parties are decentralized, volunteer-driven, have modest budgets with both private and public funding and operate under strict political spending limits.

But our research showed that no Canadian organization does significant work in this area. For instance, while CIDA has a large budget dedicated to democratic governance, none of it goes to work with political parties. The Parliamentary Centre engages in support for legislatures in developing democracies, but because of its requirement to appear neutral, it cannot work formally with the political parties in those legislatures. If Canada seeks to make a more significant impact on democratic development abroad, it should seriously consider enhancing its capacity in political party development.

Furthermore, most Canadian organizations that provide democracy assistance abroad do not make this their sole focus. Democracy assistance is just one of many objectives and in many cases only makes up a fraction of their overall budgets. An organization like Democracy Canada or the institution recommended by the Commons committee would add a key coordinating piece to Canada's democracy assistance community.

Because Canada lacks a central democracy-assistance organization, more often than not Canadians contribute to other

organizations and other countries' aid and foreign policy objectives – some 30 Canadians work for the National Democratic Institute in Washington, for example, Canada is losing some of its brightest democracy practitioners, who therefore contribute primarily to U.S. or European foreign policy.

#### Democracy assistance in other countries

Political party-assistance organizations are thriving in many European countries, and operations are expanding in the Netherlands and Sweden. New ones have been created in Finland and Norway. Because Canada is a relatively late arrival in this field, we can learn from their best practices as we set about creating a new Canadian institution.

Among the most applicable models are the National Endowment for Democracy in the U.S., the Westminster Foundation for Democracy in England, and the Netherlands Institute for Multi-party Democracy.

Multi-party organizations provide differing degrees of oversight to the democracy-assistance projects. The Netherlands institute, for example, employs a proportional representation from the country's seven major political parties to undertake program activities while maintaining a permanent, non-partisan staff to manage its overall policy approach. It served as a model for the analogous organizations created recently in Norway and Finland.

The multi-party model is intriguing because it allows political parties to work with sister parties in partner countries, while at the same time having the benefit of the oversight of an umbrella organization to ensure policy coherence. Such a model could translate well into the Canadian context and was one of the principal models investigated by the Commons committee.

Canada has a wealth of democratic experience to share with emerging democracies. A Canadian institution rooted in a federal, ethnically diverse and bilingual country would have a significant impact in assisting developing democracies. The Commons committee laid out the road map. It is now up to the government to transform its democracy-assistance value statements into concrete actions.

David Donovan is a *Sauvé Scholar* at McGill and a senior research associate at the Centre for the Study of Democracy, Queen's University.

# Agriculture is one answer

Three out of four of the world's poorest people live in rural areas and yet the worst-off countries devote only about four per cent of government revenue to rural issues, Don Cayo writes

**H**undreds of millions of people have escaped the worst of poverty in recent years by fleeing to the struggling and chaotic, but ultimately prospering, cities of the developing world.

But what of those who can't or won't?

Three-quarters of the world's profoundly poor people – 2.1 billion who get by on less than \$2 a day, and 880 million with less than \$1 – still live in the countryside, and most of them scratch a living from tiny patches of thin soil. Never in this generation or the next will the cities be able to take most of them, and never can they take them all.

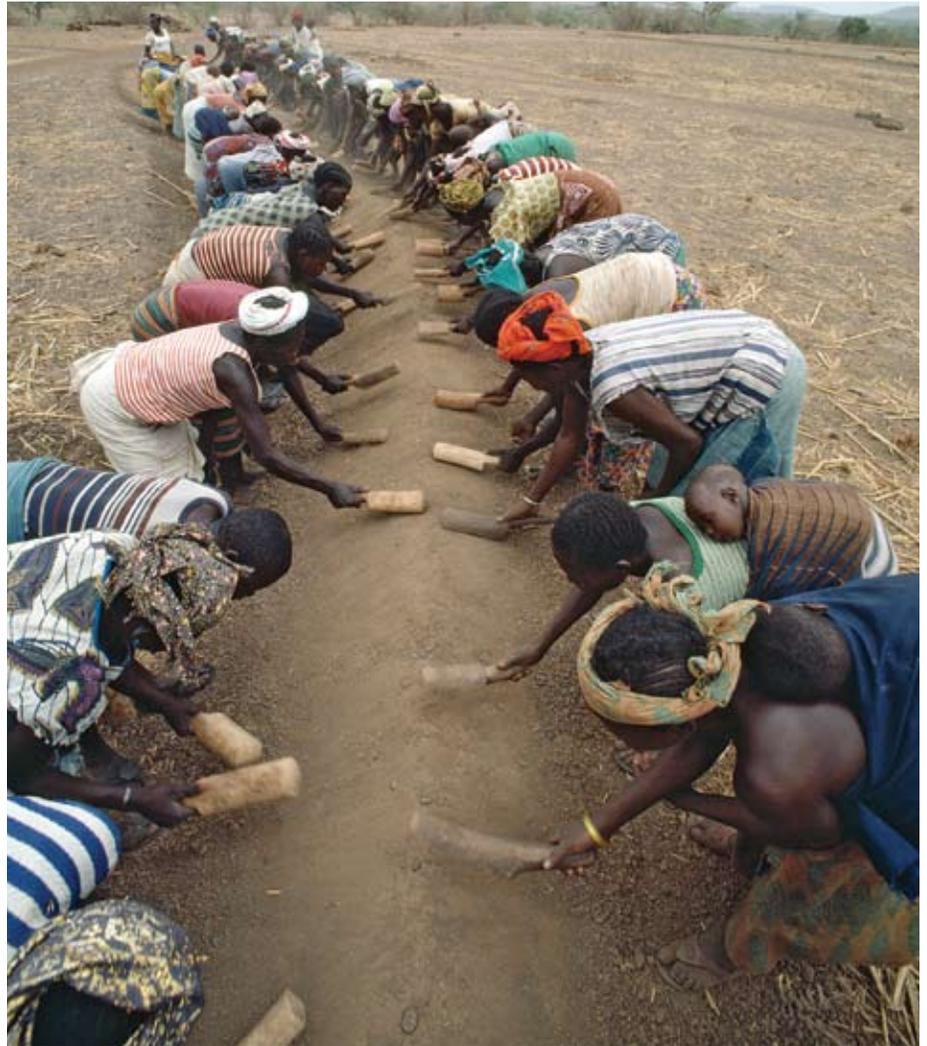
Despite rapid urbanization, poor, mainly agrarian countries are still home to 417 million people, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa. In these places, agriculture accounts for more than a third of GDP and almost two-thirds of employment. With a few large corporate farms earning a good deal of the cash, small-holders are left with very little. For example, in Malawi, fully half the people get by on what they can scratch from their fields. They live in chronic risk of hunger, or even starvation.

In other countries that have gone a little further down the road to a modern, urbanized economy, farms still provide a fifth of GDP and well over two-fifths of the jobs. And in the better-off developing countries, mostly in Eastern Europe and Latin America, one twelfth of the wealth is earned by those workers – a quarter of the total – who've missed out on the rush to the cities.

So, though the percentage of rural people may continue to shrink, the absolute number of them is destined to remain huge for a long, long time. And if the world is to make progress in its war on mass poverty, it must find ways for those who stay on the farm to earn more and live better.

This won't be easy. It's not just drought and pestilence that make so many farmers so poor in so many parts of the world. Unrelenting man-made woes are every bit as much to blame.

Nor is a solution to be found simply by boosting productivity, though Asia's green



Women from the town of Koena, Burkina Faso, terrace the soil to control erosion.

revolution of recent decades has been a vital under-pinning for its rapid industrialization, and similar breakthroughs will, without doubt, have to be an integral part of the solution in the many countries that still lag behind.

But the World Bank's book-length 2008 report, *Agriculture for Development*, notes that when farmers find a way to produce more of a staple regional crop – such things as cassava, yams, sorghum or millet, which rarely trade internationally – the price usually goes down.

Typically, when a backward country's

farmers gain the tools and techniques to start producing more efficiently, each one can feed more people. This frees up workers who are then available to drive a modern urban economy. Yet the benefits that follow will be anything but equally distributed.

The growing ranks of city-dwelling wage earners will find not only that they can earn more than they ever thought possible when they were villagers, but also that the price they must pay for their food goes steadily down. Meanwhile, those back on the farm have more to sell

### KENYAN BEANS SKIRT PROTECTIONIST RULES

Ester Njuguna relies on little more than a hectare of land to feed her children and pay their school fees. The Kenyan woman, who lives near Gatumbu, grows, in more or less equal measure and depending on the season, beans, cabbages, bananas, sweet potatoes, paw paws, maize, sugar cane and avocados.

Most of her harvest goes directly into the mouths of her family of 10. Except the beans. They end up on some of the finest tables in Europe, having sold for six to eight times the price of the cheapest can on the grocery store shelf.

A company called Frigoken, founded by the Aga Khan Development Network, provides the link between European chefs and Ms. Njuguna.

Frigoken buys the inputs like seed and fertilizer in bulk, and provides them at cost, with interest-free loans, to more than 25,000 farmers who agree to devote 1/16th of a hectare to a high-end bean crop. It maintains a bean-buying station within a half-hour walk of every producer, and it collects the beans daily.

In return, the farmers plant according to Frigoken's schedule, and they pick and deliver daily – often just a handful at a time – for the 20-25 weeks their beans are in season.

Frigoken has rigorous standards. Each bean must be straight and small, not quite so thick as a pencil, and unblemished. But farmers can make 4,000 to 5,000 shillings (\$65-\$80) from each of five crops a year, and Frigoken gets up to 70 tonnes of beans a day. For Njuguna this is almost all the cash she ever sees, but it's enough to send her children to school – a priority for every Kenyan mother. And for Frigoken, it's an entree into an elite niche market.

The daily hand-picking, says manager Karim Dostmohamed, gives Frigoken a leg up on quality that can never be matched in the developed world, where labour costs are just too high.

And hand-processing continues at every stage – washing, grading and re-grading, and then packing.

Dostmohamed is well aware that many African products run afoul of Europe's legendary agricultural protectionism, but he says it's a problem for Frigoken.

"We're selling a product they can't produce, so no one objects."

than they ever dreamed possible, but their earnings stagnate or even drop. So the gap between urban and rural income grows ever greater.

There is certainly a role for foreign aid in boosting farm productivity and improving the lives of rural people. The World Bank Report notes the more a country depends on agriculture – and, almost by definition, this means the poorer it is – the lower the percentage of public spending it devotes to farms and farmers. The worst-off countries devote only about four per cent of government revenue to rural issues, and almost all this paltry spending comes from foreign aid.

Nor does aid have to stop where it is now. Jeffrey Sachs, director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University and the man behind a UN-led effort to cut 1990's mass poverty levels in half by 2015, suggested when he was in Vancouver a couple of years ago that Canada – a chronic laggard in meeting its own targets for foreign aid – could play a much more central role if it wanted to.

CIDA, the aid arm of the Canadian government, is notorious for scatter-gun spending – a little bit here, there and everywhere, but rarely a focused effort for long enough to make a real difference. Dr. Sachs pointed out how the green revolution that set the stage for prosperity in Asia and Latin America bypassed sub-Saharan Africa, making it a logical place to focus our efforts. This deprived region remains in urgent need of a champion to assist it down the road of food security and agricultural efficiency – a role well suited to Canadian expertise, interests and wealth.

Not long after Dr. Sachs made his suggestion, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation teamed up with the Rockefeller Foundation to pledge \$150 million U.S. for a green revolution in Africa. But there is still a lot of room for a country like Canada to take it farther and faster.

It's hard to argue with Dr. Sachs's analysis that CIDA needs a tighter focus, and his view that fostering more productive farms would be a worthy, practical target. But even more striking is the potential of lifting import restrictions and killing the farm subsidies that are rife in almost every rich country.

"By removing their current level of protection, industrial countries would induce annual welfare gains for developing countries estimated to be five times the current annual flow of aid to agriculture," the World Bank says. "With full trade liberalization, international commodity

prices are estimated to increase on average by 5.5 per cent."

Thus the best thing the rich could do for the poor is to inject some life into the stalled Doha Round of world trade negotiations. Better technology, better methods, better tools, better health and education for farm populations – these important things that donors can give are still less effective than simple access to our rich marketplaces.

The report notes that business opportunities can open up if high-value commodities have access to world markets. It mentions aquaculture in Bangladesh, supermarket vegetables in Latin America, specialty coffee in Rwanda, horticulture in Guatemala or Senegal, and more. The story on this page (See "Kenyan Beans" at left) of the high-value beans grown on farms in Kenya is example of market potential and how small-holders can profit from it.

But, while the world has made some progress in liberalizing agricultural trade and reducing farm subsidies, it has been slow.

The issue has been on the agenda since the start of Uruguay Round of trade negotiations in 1986. Two decades later, support for farm products in OECD countries was only down from 37 per cent to 30 per cent. The European Union has since 2001 extended duty-free and quota-free access to UN-designated least developed countries, but this policy has limited value. Many of the designated countries are so far down the economic ladder they have little chance of exploiting any trade opportunity. And many that could – places like Ghana or Sénégal for example – are deemed too well-off to qualify for the exemption.

The unwillingness of rich countries to expose their farmers to the competition has been the biggest stumbling block in the on-again, off-again Doha Round. But there is some official optimism that it will conclude in 2008 with some progress. The World Bank continues to make positive statements, and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown has been trying to drum up support among world leaders to get the talks back on the rails.

I hope it happens. But the record is not encouraging.

Don Cayo is a Vancouver-based journalist who specializes in development issues. See <http://communities.canada.com/vancouverun/blogs/globalization/default.aspx> for his blog.

# Resurrecting a Canadian hero

A Peruvian hostage-taking foiled; a diplomat betrayed

by George Abraham

**D**avid Goldfield is a man of few words. Not for him the rambling, philosophical replies authors often give their interviewers. His first book, *The Ambassador's Word* (Penumbra Press), is like an image – short at 168 pages and brisk. It focuses on one man, Anthony Vincent, with almost laser-like precision, refusing to explore side stories from the pre-September 11 world that may have proved irresistible in the hands of less controlled writers.

Over the course of six years, Mr. Goldfield researched and walked the ground in Lima, Peru, that Mr. Vincent, a Canadian diplomat, walked during 126 tumultuous days in 1996-97. The Lima hostage crisis was a media event in Canada, Peru and Japan, including a blitz of coverage during a three-nation summit in Toronto called to save the 72 lives that hung in the balance.

That summit brought together Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto of Japan and President Alberto Fujimori of Peru, hosted by Canada's Prime Minister Jean Chrétien on Feb. 1, 1997. While encouraging Mr. Fujimori to negotiate with the rebels to ensure a peaceful outcome, the summit also provided evidence that the three governments were exploring the possibility of giving the hostage-takers passage out of Peru to a third nation such as Cuba. All of these negotiations took place under the watchful eyes and attentive ears of Mr. Vincent.

Yet according to Mr. Goldfield, the hero of the hour, Mr. Vincent, "fell off the face of the earth" soon after the crisis ended. *The Ambassador's Word* seeks to resurrect his memory.

Here's the gist of the story. On Dec. 17, 1996, a high-society reception at the Japanese ambassador's walled residence in Lima turned into a death trap when heavily armed Túpac Amaru guerrillas stormed in and held all 600 guests hostage. The Canadian diplomat was among the first to be released by the rebels, in return for an assurance that he and four other diplomats would mediate between the Túpac Amaru rebels and the government of President Fujimori. Over time, the rebels released their captives in batches, until 72 were left, including several Peruvian cabinet ministers and high-ranking officials.



David Goldfield walked the ground, in Lima, Peru, that Canadian diplomat Anthony Vincent walked during a 126-day hostage crisis in 1996-97 in which he conducted high risk negotiations.

Throughout the four-month siege, the Canadian ambassador carried out a to-and-fro mission between the Túpac Amaru and the Peruvian government, offering the hostages and the captors the only lifeline there was. His interlocutors on the Peruvian side kept up the pretense of trying to find a diplomatic solution, even as the rebels threatened to kill their hostages one by one. The crisis came to a sudden end on April 22, when the Peruvian armed forces burst into the embassy compound through underground tunnels, saving all but one of the hostages and killing all the armed rebels.

"Vincent is a great hero. I have admiration for what he did. Canadians – perhaps for cultural reasons – don't give credit to people like him. I wanted to try and make up for that," Mr. Goldfield told *Diplomat*. His job from 1998 to 2007 as regional director for Latin America with Export Development Canada put him in contact with Japanese and Peruvian citizens who were familiar with the events that gripped the attention of their nations at the time.

"They couldn't believe that he was not a Canadian hero. We – as Canadians – are not very comfortable, not having a tradition of recognizing such people."

Mr. Goldfield, who now runs an investment company that does a lot of work in Latin America, said he sees Mr. Vincent's shuttle diplomacy during the Lima crisis as being of the same order as Ambassador Ken Taylor's role in the Iran hostage drama. Mr. Taylor, he notes, was well known for years after helping rescue six Americans who escaped from their captors in the U.S. embassy siege in Tehran, in 1980, in the wake of the Iranian Islamic Revolution.

Mr. Taylor has been idolized because he was celebrated in the U.S. (winning a Congressional Gold Medal) and drew much media attention there. On the other hand, Mr. Goldfield's hero was acclaimed in Canada, Japan and Peru for a while and then largely forgotten, until an Ottawa neighbour decided he had too good a

(Continued on page 29)

# From statecraft to stagecraft

by George Abraham

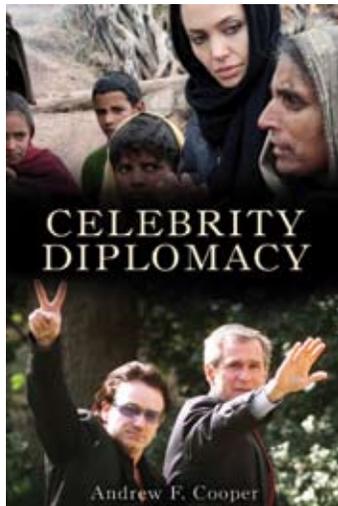
If diplomacy is traditionally defined, as it is in the *Penguin Dictionary of International Relations*, as the art of managing and conducting orderly relations in a multi-state, politically fragmented international system," its practitioners are facing an identity crisis as titans in other fields increasingly enter their arena. A Canadian academic, Andrew Cooper, has done much to explain and defend the expansion of the terms "diplomat" and "diplomacy" beyond the confines of the Pearson Building and Foggy Bottom. By his new definition, almost anybody with ample money, good looks, or a media megaphone can assume the diplomatic mantle.

Offering a more conventional window into diplomacy is David Goldfield, who represented Canada as a trade commissioner in Caracas from 1992 to 1995, but came to the profession after a career in international business. In Mr. Goldfield's world, a country's ambassador in a foreign capital represents the high priest of diplomacy and the embassy he occupies is hallowed ground. Though his book is more a narrative of a particular incident, it's clear he feels the diplomat is the one who should look after issues of international affairs.

The books reviewed below offer contrasting views of diplomacy in a post-Cold War world. The art has moved beyond classical statecraft, today encompassing international aid, defence, trade and public health. These changes are reflected in Canada's foreign policy establishment as well, but can wealthy philanthropists such as George Soros and Bill Gates really be designated as "celebrity diplomats?"

**Andrew Cooper, *Celebrity Diplomacy*, Paradigm Publishers, 2008, 150 pages**

In Dr. Cooper's view, the answer to the Soros-Gates question is yes. As associate director and distinguished fellow of the Centre for International Governance Innovation, and a professor at the University of Waterloo, the author obviously brings *gravitas* to his writing. His premise is that diplomacy no longer draws its legitimacy exclusively from states, and can include freelancers supporting a variety of causes. His examples include U2 singer Bono, fellow rocker Bob Geldof, Princess Diana,



billionaires Bill and Melinda Gates, Ted Turner and George Soros, actors Angelina Jolie, Brad Pitt, Audrey Hepburn and Richard Gere.

The author's key phrase is "celebrity as a galvanizing tool," and he uses this to impart the stamp of diplomacy to a slew of campaigns that these celebrities have been engaged in. Some of them have enjoyed the immunity that comes with the UN's blue passport, some have used their millions to promote causes dear to them, while others have cultivated access to important world leaders and become power brokers at events like the Davos World Economic Forum.

In a chapter entitled "The Bonoization of Diplomacy," Mr. Cooper brands the Irish rock star with the signature eyeshades as "the crucial pivot on which the entire ambit of celebrity diplomatic activities rests." The rock icon who first courted, then snubbed, former prime minister Paul Martin is also the pivot of the author's argument. As Bono is himself quoted in the book, "It is absurd, if not obscene, that celebrity is a door that such serious issues need to pass through before politicians take note." Bono's issues include debt, AIDS, trade and Africa (with the catchy acronym, DATA).

**David Goldfield, *The Ambassador's Word: Hostage Crisis in Peru 1996-1997*, Penumbra Press, 2007, 168 pages**

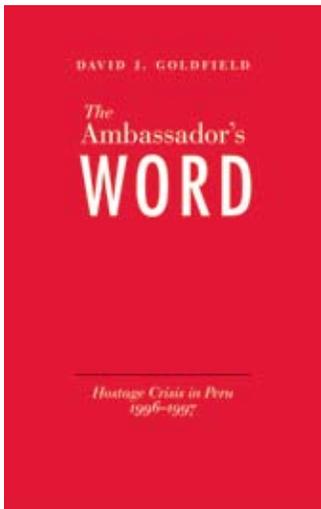
In late January, Canada signed a free trade agreement with Peru, a nation that

is deeply indebted to a former Canadian envoy to Lima who began his posting there in 1994. However, reportage on the agreement included no mention of Anthony Vincent, a Canadian who had been fêted in Peru, Japan and Canada for being an emissary between the Peruvian government and revolutionaries who laid siege to the Japanese embassy in Lima. The siege kept the three nations on edge for 126 days in 1996-97. Ironically, Mr. Vincent's posting to Lima came after he was rendered *persona non grata* by the Canadian government for his suspected involvement in the so-called Al-Mashat affair (the former Iraqi ambassador to the U.S. was fast-tracked for Canadian residency shortly after the first Gulf War).

This is how the author reports the aftermath of a parliamentary investigation into the Al-Mashat affair: "Vincent never tried to place the blame publicly on his political masters for the decision to allow Al-Mashat into Canada, and for his loyalty he was unceremoniously rewarded the shame of 'management leave,' the equivalent of exile to Siberia for a senior public servant." Not for him the naming and shaming stratagem, à la Bono.

Some would see Mr. Vincent's role in the Lima hostage crisis as being off the diplomatic beaten track, but he hardly became a celebrated diplomat in his lifetime or after. (He died in 1999 while posted as Canada's ambassador to Spain). Before Mr. Goldfield's book, this story went largely untold. According to the author's account, this foreign service officer had none of the panache of a Bono or a Jolie, shuttling between then Peruvian president Alberto Fujimori and the Túpac Amaru guerrillas with the quiet composure that only a professional diplomat can bring to his job.

*The Ambassador's Word* makes it clear that Mr. Vincent was not acting strictly on orders from Ottawa, nor was there any vital Canadian interests at stake when he accepted the role of "guarantor" between the Peruvian government and heavily armed rebels. Ultimately, it turned out that the Fujimori government had been playing for time all along, launching a rescue effort via tunnels that led to the killing of all 14 rebels and the saving of all but one of the 72 hostages.



As in most diplomatic efforts, it is hard to second-guess Mr. Vincent in hindsight. His masters in Ottawa recognized that their representative in Lima was chosen because “Canada was seen as a fair player on the world stage.” Yet the author records that “[Vincent] felt betrayed by the Peruvian government, that it had used him as a pawn.” Clearly, the ambassador felt responsible not just for his actions, but for the eventual outcome of the crisis. He did not see himself as mediating between right and wrong, but between two world views.

Mr. Goldfield’s book raises several questions about accountability and legitimacy, issues that should be just as relevant to Mr. Cooper’s world of celebrity diplomacy. Although the former envoy to Peru was honoured with the Order of Canada (presented posthumously), he joined the unsung thousands – without the name recognition and photo ops of their glitzy fellow-travellers – who have helped construct Canada’s international persona.

Take the Darfur crisis. Inaction in the face of ongoing genocide has not been for want of celebrity involvement: George Clooney, Ms. Jolie, Mia Farrow, Don Cheadle and Steven Spielberg have all been involved, to no avail. Lending a more realistic perspective, former UN deputy secretary-general Louise Fréchette says in the foreword to Mr. Cooper’s book: “Neither the demands nor the actions of celebrities are going to save the world, but their engagement (and often their generosity) can help convince many in the younger generations that solutions to problems come in unpredictable but robust guises.” That is an indispensable contribution, but it isn’t diplomacy.

George Abraham is *Diplomat’s* contributing editor.

(Continued from page 27)

story to ignore.

That neighbour was Mr. Goldfield. Mr. Vincent’s story was begging to be told, not just for his old-school diplomatic style in Lima but also for his involvement in the previous Al-Mashat affair. As the author says, “Rarely in a foreign service career does lightning strike twice.” In this series of events, Mr. Vincent took the fall for

HE HAD COME TO KNOW  
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AND TO ADMIRE THEIR INTENSE  
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ONES. HE REMEMBERED SITTING  
WITH SOME OF THEM, THEIR  
GUNS OUT OF REACH, TELLING  
THEM ABOUT LIFE IN CANADA.

political masters in Canada who decided to fast-track Mohammed Al-Mashat’s immigration application in 1991 despite the former Iraqi ambassador being an apologist for the regime of Saddam Hussein.

“[F]or his loyalty, he was unceremoniously rewarded the shame of ‘management leave,’ the equivalent of exile to Siberia for a senior public servant,” the author writes in his book.

Yet, soon after his rehabilitation, the envoy to Peru plunged into an activity that his government was not too enthused about. His own fellow “emissaries of hope” from Germany, Greece, France and Uruguay refused to play along and fled Lima soon after they were released by their Túpac Amaru captors. Mr. Vincent was the only one who kept his word to help mediate the stand-off between the guerrillas and the Lima government. Hence, *The Ambassador’s Word*.

What was it about Mr. Vincent’s temperament that drew him to such high-stakes and probably low- or no-reward diplomacy? “He was a normal guy in most

instances, but in certain instances, he was able to rise above the norm ... not bury his head in the sand, not take the course of least resistance.”

The author did not know his protagonist during his lifetime. Although they lived in the same Manor Park neighbourhood in Ottawa and met occasionally at diplomatic parties, Mr. Goldfield’s curiosity was stoked largely after the diplomat died in 1999, during a subsequent posting to Madrid. The seeds were sown during conversations with Lucie Vincent, who had accompanied her husband to the fateful reception at the Japanese embassy. She was among the first to be released, and also witnessed first-hand the mediation effort mounted by her husband, with meetings between the negotiators taking place in their Lima home.

On subsequent travels to Peru, Mr. Goldfield heard the reverence in the voices of those Peruvians who still talked about the former Canadian diplomat. He also noticed the unusually high level of security around the Canadian embassy in Lima and the stationing of a posse of armed Peruvian military guards. The security followed periodic threats against Canadian interests in Peru by Túpac Amaru.

The guerrilla group believes the Canadian always knew about the tunnel-borne rescue mission that eventually extricated the hostages. Mr. Goldfield had access to former hostages, diplomatic papers housed at Foreign Affairs headquarters in Ottawa, and some of the principal Peruvian government players of the time. He is convinced Mr. Vincent was not a stooge for the Lima government, and, in fact, felt betrayed when he heard about the rescue mission after the fact.

It is also true, Mr. Vincent’s notes reveal, that he sympathized with the rebels, whom he felt were very young and probably manipulated by their hardened leaders. Hence, the book records, “He had come to know the terrorists personally, and to admire their intense commitment, even though it was misguided and naïve. It was terrible to see them all killed, especially the young ones. He remembered sitting with some of them, their guns out of reach, telling them about life in Canada.”

This is not a story about a straitjacket diplomat. Mr. Goldfield hints there may be a movie based on his book eventually, but in the meanwhile he is trying to direct as much mileage as possible to *The Ambassador’s Word* and its hero, beyond the confines of Ottawa’s diplomatic community.

# Danish charm in Rockcliffe Park

Margo Roston



DYANNE WILSON

The Rockcliffe Park residence of Danish Ambassador Poul Erik Dam Kristensen was designed and built in 1972 by Danish architects.

**D**anish Ambassador Poul Erik Dam Kristensen and his wife, Else Philipp, live in a house that looks and feels like home to them.

But that's no surprise, considering their Rockcliffe residence was designed and built in 1972 by Danish architects to reflect the country they represent. Inside and out, from its long, low design and wooden beams, to the fixtures and furniture, the house is stunningly Danish-specific, while fitting in comfortably to a Canadian context.

Tucked into a slope that looks over Rockcliffe Park and the Ottawa River, the house is of post-and-beam design, built with Canadian cedar and pine, and set off with a low, sloping, cedar-shingle roof.

In the early 1900s, the treed property was the site of a large cottage owned by a man named John Askwith and conveniently located at the end of the streetcar

line that provided easy access to vacationers and visitors from Ottawa.

The property gained public notoriety early one morning in 1960 when a passing teenager discovered the body of 44-year-old Jean Bond, wife of a Bank Street tailor, on the lawn. Homeowner William Halliday reportedly slept peacefully through the night, and the crime has never been solved.

Nevertheless, nothing could be more peaceful than the area around the Lisgar Road residence these days. The front entrance is built intriguingly into a concrete retaining wall covered by a large wooden trellis. Inside, there's a paneled entrance hall and the floor is covered with dark red Danish tiles.

A spiral staircase leads up to the main floor and its large, open rooms: a reception area, a lounge, a dining room, library and kitchen, surrounded by floor-to-ceil-

ing windows and a long terrace. Because of the slope and the steepness of the roof along with the concrete wall of the terrace, this level of the house is not visible from the road. However from inside, the view over the park and the river is spectacular, especially in the winter.

While Danish in sensibility, the house has emphatic Japanese detailing. Sliding walls separate the rooms, with glass running from door top to ceiling, creating the effect of an open continuity.

Because the house was designed as an embassy residence, there is ample room for entertaining, including easy access to the terrace. The large, bright dining room can seat 24 at the main table or 32 when supplementary round tables are used.

Only once in their four years here has the couple entertained a large crowd indoors.

"And it was really crowded," says Ms.



DYANNE WILSON

The exterior of the home on a winter day.



DYANNE WILSON

Mr. Kristensen and Ms. Philipp, and their dog Sophie.

Philipp of the party they held in 2005 to celebrate the bicentennial of Hans Christian Andersen, Denmark's fabled writer of fairytales. They offered traditional fare to about 200 guests who enjoyed marinated

herring on rye bread, served with Aquavit, a distilled Scandinavian liquor, open-faced sandwiches and a rice dessert. "They really enjoyed the schnapps," laughs the ambassador, using the German word for any clear distilled drink.

A cook/house manager is a member of the household but, "I do all the gardening myself," says Ms. Philipp, noting that few diplomatic spouses indulge in one of her favourite activities.

The garden is visible from the study and the main reception room. There is a private entrance and access to the kitchen on the east side of the house away from the street. The top floor is where they spend most of their time, they say, where there are also a number of guest rooms.

Furnished in modern Danish teak and brightly coloured bubble chairs by award-winning designer Arne Jacobsen, the reception room walls are filled with art mostly by young Danish artists. Especially lovely is a six-branch silver candlestick from Georg Jensen, Denmark's internationally renowned silver company.

Few embassy residences in Ottawa are designed and built to represent their nation. Denmark's is a charmer in our diplomatic scene.

*Margo Roston is Diplomat's culture editor.*



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## The grand finale: A unique dessert

**W**hen it comes to entertaining, dessert is meant to be the grand finale of a meal with the hosts delivering their best shot. Although for some people dessert is the highlight of the meal, for others, it is not as important. In an attempt to charm and entice all those at the table, I've developed a strategy – always be creative and present dessert in unexpected ways – that will mean all those at the table will dive into dessert.

After all, dessert is the part of the menu where the expression "we eat with our eyes" is most accurate. Desserts demand to be special, attractive, inviting and even fun. We all have our reliable favourites, faithful recipes repeated with confidence. We strive to offer not only an appealing balance of flavours on our dessert plates, but also of textures, colours, shapes and heights. We can achieve this by being experimental, by letting ourselves be inspired, even playful.

In general, I shy away from traditional desserts such as crême brûlée, chocolate mousse, cake and pie unless I have come up with a brilliant garnish or serving idea. The wow factor is an essential element on my plates.

Over my years in the kitchen, I have found that being unique, offering something out of the ordinary, is always appreciated – be it the combination of ingredients, a clever twist to a classical recipe, the presentation or a serving technique. Therefore, eager to excite my guests, I opt to design my own original and very personal creations. My desserts include Berries and Cream Straw Sandwiches, Lemon Phyllo Napoleons, Tiramisu Wasabi Ice Cream Parfaits, Orange-Infused Lava Cakes, Goat Cheese Stuffed Fresh Figs and Caramel Mousse Chocolate Cups, to mention just a few. Sound complex? Not at all. By making components in advance or using commercially available products, my desserts quickly become simple, easy-assembly recipes.

Indeed, it is amazing how one's imagination can be stimulated with a few basic products such as berries, fruit, ice cream, whipping cream, a variety of sweet sauces as well as chocolate, pastry or meringue cups. Novel containers (e.g., mini/



MARGARET  
DICKENSON

small flower pots, sake cups, oriental porcelain spoons, unusual shaped serving bowls and plates) can also make a rather ordinary item extraordinary. For example, there is no doubt that my "Flower Pots of Decadent Chocolate Mint Ice Cream"

and "Ultimate Coffee Spoons" owe much of their popularity to their intriguing presentations. Anyone can do something similar or more adventurous.

There are other simple creative tricks: piping guests' initials on individual dessert plates with melted chocolate, adding playful drizzles of sauce, serving a dessert flambée, adding welcomed freshness with seasonal berries, edible flowers and/or fresh herbs.

When serving desserts, keep portion sizes reasonable. To minimize the risk of potentially moveable desserts such as chocolate cups, meringues or pastries, fix them into position with a drop of caramel sauce or chocolate hazelnut spread. Such desserts in particular, should be served with a fork and spoon so that they may be secured in

place with the fork (held in the left hand) and cut with the spoon (right hand).

As much as dessert is part of a meal, I equally believe it should be included as part of every finger-food event. A drinks party, cocktail party, reception or garden party can become so much more if taster desserts (mini portions) are served after the (savoury) hors d'oeuvres. Guests relish a sweet finishing touch before their departure. This can be something as simple as petits fours, or something more exotic. When it comes to taster desserts, my imagination enthusiastically shifts into high gear with recipes from Saucy Chocolate Blueberry Cocktail Spoons and Toffee Chocolate-Dipped Strawberries to Blackberry Butterscotch Fondue. Indeed the serving of taster desserts makes any finger-food event more of a culinary experience and even at times, more like a meal.

Please be inspired. Bon Appétit!

Margaret Dickenson is author of the international award-winning cookbook *Margaret's Table - Easy Cooking & Inspiring Entertaining* and is creator and host of *Margaret's Entertaining Minutes* on Rogers TV. See [www.margaretsenseofoccasion.com](http://www.margaretsenseofoccasion.com) for more.



LARRY DICKENSON

**Ice Cream Meringue Nests with Honey-Mustard Dessert Vinaigrette**

My unusual dessert vinaigrette can ultimately claim the credit for the success and originality of this recipe. The vinaigrette's sweet, tart, sharp dimensions graciously counter-balances the sweetness of the ice cream and baked meringue while enhancing the natural flavour of the berries.

Makes 4 servings

4 meringue nests (diameter: 3 inch or 8 cm), widely available in grocery stores and bakeries

2 tsp (10 mL) hazelnut chocolate spread  
1 1/3 cups (325 mL) maple walnut ice cream, homemade\* or commercial

1/4 cup (60 mL) Honey Mustard Dessert Vinaigrette\*\* (room temperature)

1 cup (250 mL) fresh berries (i.e., blueberries, blackberries or raspberries)

Garnish (optional)

edible flowers or sprigs of fresh mint

1. To make individual servings, secure one meringue nest on each of four large dinner plates with a small dab of hazelnut chocolate spread. (Note: This may be done in advance.)

2. Just before serving, fill each meringue nest with ice cream (1/3 cup or 80 mL), drizzle lightly with Honey Mustard Dessert Vinaigrette (1 tbsp or 15 mL) and sprinkle with fresh berries. Garnish plates with edible flowers and sprigs of fresh mint. Serve immediately.

\* To make the Maple Walnut Ice Cream, mix 1/3 cup (80 mL) of coarsely chopped walnuts with 1 tbsp (15 mL) of maple syrup; set aside. Beat 1 tbsp (15 mL) of maple extract into 2 cups (500 mL) of softened vanilla ice cream; fold in the chopped walnuts and freeze. The ice cream retains its quality for months.

\*\* To make the Honey Mustard Dessert Vinaigrette, in a small bowl, carefully whisk together until smooth 1/4 cup (60 mL) each of buckwheat honey and lemon juice as well as 3 tbsp (45 mL) of olive oil (extra light tasting) and 3/4 tsp (4 mL) of sandwich mustard. (This makes more than 1/2 cup or about 150 mL.) Store the vinaigrette refrigerated in a well sealed jar until 20 minutes before required. Whisk it well before using.

**TIP:** Design your own recipe using an ice cream, fruit and sauce (e.g., chocolate, butterscotch, fruit purée) of choice. (Note: Taste-test to ensure your combination works before serving it.)



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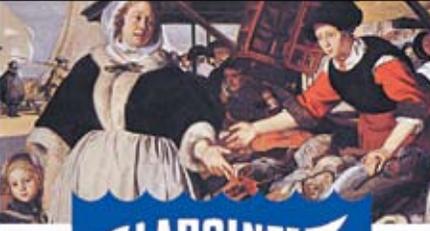


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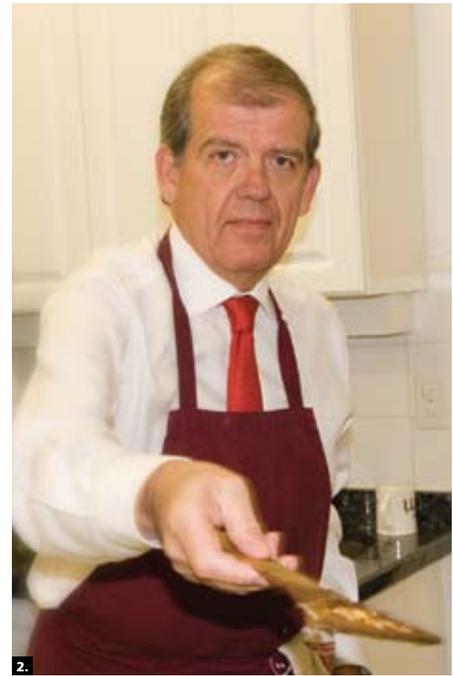
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**THIS PAGE** 1. Kati Kangro-Hallik, secretary at the embassy of Estonia, joined dozens of others who took to the slopes at Camp Fortune for the Ottawa Diplomatic Association’s ski day Jan. 26. (Photo: Sam Garcia) • 2. The embassy of Belgium participated in a special ceremony to mark the official opening of the Winterlude ice sculpture replica of Menin Gate in Ypres. The monument lists the names of some 7,000 Canadians who died near Ypres and have no known grave. (Photo: Dyanne Wilson) • 3. Syrian Ambassador Jamil Sakr and his wife Hend Hassan took part in the National Capital Commission’s Diplomat’s Day Feb. 10. (Photo Frank Scheme) • 4. Every Friday during winter, the Canadian Federation of University Women’s diplomatic hospitality group gets together at a different home to snowshoe. This event was hosted by Eva Hammond. Shown: Lin Lee, right, wife of Taipei representative David Lee, and Marlene Hewitt. (Photo: Ulle Baum)



**THIS PAGE** 1. The Viennese Winter Ball took place Feb. 2 at the National Gallery of Canada. Austrian Ambassador Otto Ditz, shown here with his wife Maureen, was the honorary host. (Photo: Dyanne Wilson) • 2. Mexican Ambassador Emilio Goicoechea and his wife Juliette Gayle Ohleyer at the Viennese Ball. (Photo: Dyanne Wilson) • 3. From left: Slavica Dimovska, first secretary at the embassy of Macedonia, and Gligor Delev, a Canadian-Macedonian, who climbed Mount Everest. The embassy hosted a reception for him. (Photo: Ulle Baum) • 4. Greek Ambassador Nikolaos Matsis paid a courtesy call on Ottawa Mayor Larry O'Brien Jan. 22. ( Photo: Roger Lalonde) • 5. The Viennese Winter Ball adds a little magic to Ottawa in February. • 6. Liberal Leader Stephane Dion and his wife Janine Kriber attended the Viennese Ball. • 7. Swiss Ambassador Werner Baumann and his wife Susanna also attended the Viennese Ball. (Photos: Dyanne Wilson)



**THIS PAGE** 1. EU Ambassador Dorian Prince appeared at the St-Laurent Academy Elementary & Junior High school's international fair Feb. 8 where the children represented 26 different countries. Mr. Prince officially opened the fair. • 2. Mexican Ambassador Emilio Goicoechea traded diplomacy for gastronomy Dec. 18 when he cooked alongside his executive chef for a dinner he offered for auction at the Boys and Girls Club Big Art Event in November. (Photo: Dyanne Wilson) • 3. The Canada China Art Association hosted a Spring Festival Gala at the National Arts Centre Feb. 24 and a launch Jan. 22 at the offices of Gowling Lafleur Henderson LLP. At the launch, from left: Ying Hou, director of Canada China Art Association, Caiyun Li, first secretary at the Chinese embassy; and Lolan Merklinger, president of the Canada-China Friendship Society Ottawa. • 4. To mark the 58th anniversary of India's Republic day, High Commissioner Rajamani Narayan hoisted the flag and read the president's address at the high commission Jan. 26.



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## New Heads of Mission

**Honoré-Theodore Ahimakin**  
Ambassador of Benin



Mr. Ahimakin is a career civil servant who joined Benin's foreign service in 1977 as head of the America division. A year later, he was posted to Nigeria and soon became chargé d'affaires for Nigeria and Cameroon. He has served as chief of protocol (1985-87), head of the Europe division, assistant-director for international organizations, and then first counsellor in the U.S. (1993-97). He then worked as a minister-counsellor responsible for political affairs, economic development and relations between Benin, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. In 2000, he took over as assistant-director of the Africa and the Middle East division and served as director of the same division from 2002 until he came to Canada.

Mr. Ahimakin, 52, studied at Université du Dahomey in Benin and the National University of Benin. From 1985 to 1987, he studied social sciences at the Université Libre de Bruxelles and at the Institute of European Studies. He is married and has five sons.

**Ginte Damusis**  
Ambassador of Lithuania



Before coming to Ottawa, Ms. Damusis was ambassador-at-large in security policy, and, from 2005 to 2007, she served as national coordinator for Afghanistan where

Lithuania leads a provincial reconstruction team. She was head of Lithuania's NATO mission from 2001 until 2005, the period of Lithuania's integration process.

Ms. Damusis was ambassador to Austria (1998-01) and was accredited to Slovenia (1999-01), Slovakia (1999-01) and Croatia (2000). She did stints with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Conventional Test Ban Treaty Organization in Vienna.

She joined the foreign service in 1992, and helped establish Lithuania's United Nations mission where she was counsellor (1992-96.) Prior to this, she was director of the Lithuanian Information Centre in New York (1979-1991) and also worked as a journalist.

She holds degrees in political science and history from Wayne State University and speaks Lithuanian, English, German, basic French and Russian.

**Abraham Abraham**  
UN High Commissioner for Refugees



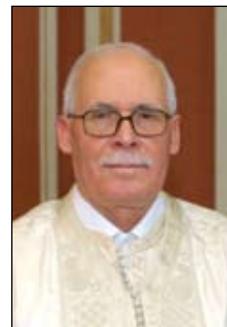
Mr. Abraham has spent his entire career with the United Nations. After articling at a law firm in London, he joined the UN office in Geneva, and moved from there to Thailand, and later, Vietnam, Somalia, Sri Lanka, and Guinea before he returned to Geneva where he worked as a senior program officer at UNHCR headquarters from 1992-1995. For the following two years, he was head of the South Asia desk.

For a year between 1997 and 1998, he was deputy representative at the branch office in Kigali. For the following four years, he headed sections at UNHCR headquarters. In 2002, he became special advisor to the office of the director of the Africa bureau and a senior evaluation officer at headquarters. From 2003 to 2007, he was acting UNHCR representative in Nepal before his appointment to Canada.

Mr. Abraham was born in Tanzania but now holds Indian citizenship. He is mar-

ried with four grown children. He speaks English, French, Swahili and Hindi.

**Sakri Mouldi**  
Ambassador of Tunisia



Mr. Mouldi has spent most of his career on foreign postings. He joined his country's foreign affairs ministry as secretary of foreign affairs in 1979. He worked as secretary at the embassy in Niger from 1981 to 1986 and as counsellor at the embassy in Jordan from 1986 to 1988. He held the same position at the embassy in Ethiopia from 1990 to 1993 and then in Côte d'Ivoire from 1993 to 1994. He was consul at the consulate in Naples, Italy from 1995 to 1997 and was Tunisia's ambassador to Iran from 2001 to 2006.

During his short stints at home, he held several positions including head of the legal service, deputy-director of administrative affairs, and member of the minister's foreign affairs cabinet. He was director of the Arab Maghreb department and director-general of political and economic affairs and cooperation with the African Union.

Mr. Mouldi, 55, is married and has two children. He speaks Arabic, English and French.

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**Emil Stojanovski**  
Third Secretary

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Deputy High Commissioner/Acting High Commissioner

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**Mohammad Emdad U. Mian**  
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**Vladimir Dyatko,**  
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**Maxime Sib,**  
Counsellor

Cambodia  
**Kosal Sea**  
Ambassador (based in New York)

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Second Secretary

**Xinping Li**  
Second Secretary

**Yuzhen Tian**  
Second Secretary

**Jinlan Shi**  
First Secretary

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Counsellor

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Minister-Counsellor

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**Andreas Nicolaides,**  
First Secretary

Czech Republic  
**Emil Papis,**  
Defence, Military & Air Attaché

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**Tomas Enrique Roa Familia**  
Counsellor

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**Fithonatul Mar'ati Firdiansyah**  
Third Secretary

**Siam Subiaraharja**  
Attaché

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**Efraim Tibi**  
Attaché

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**Yoshihiro Abe**  
Second Secretary

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**Thamer Abdalla Mohammad Adwan**  
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Ambassador

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**Akuranage**  
**Weerasinghe Pathiraja**  
 Minister

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**M. Hlophe**  
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 Deputy Head Of Mission

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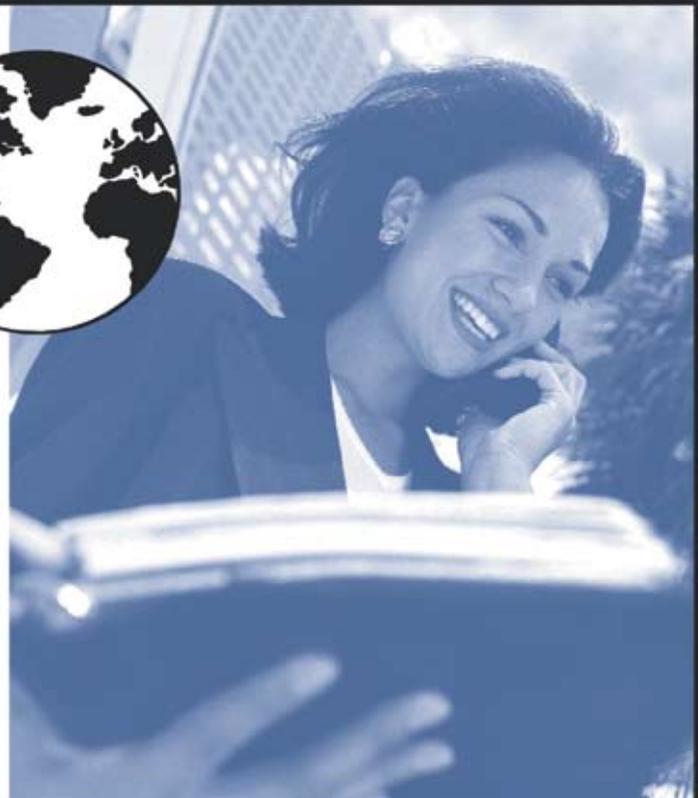
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# Erin Go Braugh!

By Laura Neilson Bonikowsky

**M**any in Canada's history have come from Irish ancestry. Among the most prominent are Thomas D'Arcy McGee, Father of Confederation; Edward Blake, Ontario's second premier; Eugene O'Keefe, founder of O'Keefe Brewing Co.; former prime minister Brian Mulroney; and Québec Premier Jean Charest.

In Canada, when we observe St. Patrick's Day, we do more than honour St. Patrick, who promoted Christianity in Ireland and was a beacon of righteousness to the indigenous people. We celebrate the Irish presence in Canada and in Canadian history, often in Irish fashion with parades, music and a few pints in the many Irish pubs across the country.

Since 1824, Canadians have been "wearin' the green" and shivering in the cold at the annual parade in Montreal, North America's oldest St. Patrick's Day parade. The celebration, which rivals Dublin's own, venerates St. Patrick as the embodiment of freedom, forgiveness and love. St. Patrick's story mirrors that of the Irish who came to North America and gained prominence, for St. Patrick went to Ireland from England, arriving as a stranger, and adapted to his new home and became a leader.

Some argue that Irish explorers like Brendan the Brave arrived in Canada before the Norse. With little supporting evidence, this may be no more than blarney, but it doesn't diminish the significance of the Irish who began coming to Canada in the 17th century.

Canada's port of entry was Québec City, and many Irish immigrants, lacking the resources to travel further, settled in the area. They bridged the cultural gaps between the French majority, whose religion they shared, and the English minority, whose language they spoke. Today, 40 per cent of Québec's population claims Irish ancestry.

The largest influx of Irish immigrants began early in the 19th century, when a deteriorating economy and growing population wreaked havoc in Ireland. The Great Famine of the 1840s drove approximately two million people out of Ireland, hundreds of thousands of them to British North America. The preferred destination

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was America and thousands who came to Canada left by 1860.

Most of Canada's Irish communities were established before the famine. Of those who came during the famine, nearly a quarter didn't reach their destination. Thousands died of starvation or disease in the putrid holds of what became known



Thomas D'Arcy McGee

as the "coffin ships." Quarantined, they languished in ships anchored off Grosse Île. Within reach of help, they were "left still enveloped by reeking pestilence, the sick without medicine, medical skill, nourishment, or so much as a drop of pure water."

The "famine Irish" who survived provided cheap labour to fuel the economic growth of the 1850s and 60s. Like all of Canada's early settlers, they persevered in the face of adversity, establishing themselves in all areas of Canadian life, their traditions and folklore adding colour to the rich mosaic of Canada's cultural diversity.

For Canadians, a commemorative holiday provides an opportunity to celebrate all who struggled, and perished, trying to make a new life and those who welcomed strangers to a new land. In this sense, on St. Patrick's Day in Canada, everybody is Irish!

Laura Neilson Bonikowsky is the associate editor of *The Canadian Encyclopedia*.

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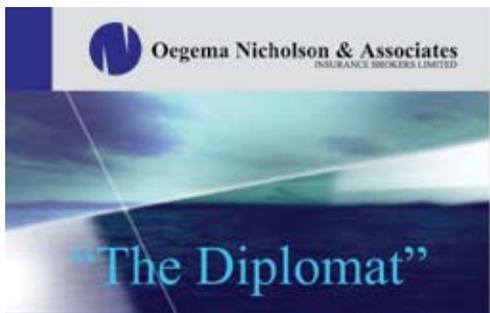
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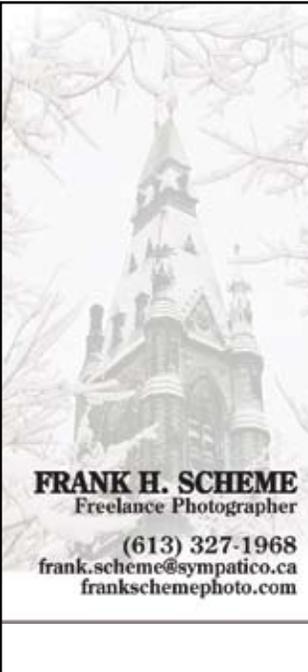
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# One of Earth's most beautiful places

## Barbados 101 and then some

by Sarah Close

**G**etting to Barbados, one of the most developed Caribbean Islands, from Canada is fairly straightforward thanks to direct flights from Ottawa, Toronto and Montreal.

When you arrive at the Sir Grantley Adams International Airport, move quickly to the customs area. The line-ups in customs are long and it's frustrating to have to wait an hour before your Caribbean vacation can begin. Make sure each person fills out an immigration form and put the torn-off portion in a safe place. You will need it when you leave the country.

The baggage claim area is the last opportunity for you to buy duty-free alcohol. Pick up everything you want, except rum. Rum is cheaper than water on the island, so no need to stress your biceps in the airport.

Consider renting a car – you'll get used to driving on the left side of the road – to facilitate getting around. Detailed maps seem scarce on the island; you might want to bring one.

Do not be surprised if you find some restaurant staff to be a bit rude – usually a smile and a joke will warm your server to you. Watch out for water-sport activity sales guys on the beach. Some are difficult to deter and some have also been known to rip tourists off – so take a watch to keep track of time you're gone, if, for example, you take a Jet Ski ride.

### Where to stay

When it comes to accommodations, you get what you pay for. We rented a beachside villa called Chateau de Mar in Shermans Village on the northwest coast. This gave us an excellent home-base for all of our adventures. With a full kitchen, we were able to decide between enjoying relaxed nights in or making a quick trip into nearby Speightstown for local fare. In Speightstown, try the ribs at Mango's By the Sea for dinner. Call ahead for reservations – it's a popular spot.

Or, if you have the budget, the very pricey (\$1,000-\$4,000 nightly room rate) Sandy Lane Resort on Sandy Beach, or the Crane Resort on Crane Beach (\$250-\$1,000 nightly) are among the best on the island. These northern Atlantic Ocean resorts are gated and boast PGA golf courses and pristine marble floors. Both hotels offer amazing service and immaculate condi-



Catamaran tours out of Bridgetown are popular with tourists who seek the unforgettable experience of swimming and snorkeling with sea turtles. The island has green sea turtles and leatherbacks along with hawksbill turtles, an endangered and protected species.

tions but if they are beyond the budget, they also offer brunch on Sundays so you can have a taste of luxury without remortgaging the house.

If you're looking for a boutique hotel, try The House, a delightful little spot that evokes the spirit of a local plantation house with hardwood floors and swinging ceiling fans on its large verandas. The only downside is its location on Paynes Bay Beach. Cruise ships tend to bus their passengers there and the major catamaran companies bring tourists to snorkel with the turtles so, at high season, the beach and water are jammed.

### White sandy beaches

When you arrive at the beach in Barbados, rent a couple of beach chairs. This should cost between \$5 to \$15, depending on the time of year, the beach, and your connections. The biggest mistake tourists make is cheaping-out on a beach umbrella. Even if you don't think you will use it, it is best to get one anyway. This prevents the lobster burn most tourists get on their first day.

My favourite beach on the southwestern Caribbean Sea coast is Acra. The mix of white sand and crystal blue water is something that must not be missed. Acra's rum shack is famous for its rum punches.

### BARBADOS IN BRIEF

Barbados, a southern Caribbean island, boasts one of the highest literacy and standards of living in the Caribbean. Its capital, Bridgetown, has a population of approximately 97,000, about a third of the island's overall population. The island, peopled by Arawak, then Carib Amerindians, was briefly occupied by the Portuguese and was under British control from 1625 until independence in 1966.

Originally, the major crop was tobacco but this was replaced by sugarcane in the 1800s. The British abolished slavery in 1834; women were allowed to vote in 1942 and Barbados became an independent state within the Commonwealth on Nov. 30, 1966.

If you are feeling a little peckish, I recommend having lunch at the water's edge at Champs Wine Bar and Restaurant. The food is delicious; I ordered ceviche (a citrus-marinated seafood salad) and grilled barracuda and potato-mash to enjoy with unbeatable views from the patio.

The West Coast has many lovely beaches, most notably Mullins. It is generally not too busy and the ocean is rarely very wavy, allowing you to float in the warm water all day long.

Be sure to take some time to see the world-renowned pink sand at above-mentioned Crane Resort. Go on a calm day as the Atlantic waters can get very rough. But be warned, the resort's Sunday brunch left much to be desired; the service was slow and the food was mediocre.

While you are on the Atlantic side of the island, try to stop in Bathsheba, which has some of the most aggressive surf and breathtaking views on the island. It's a refreshing change to the calm waters of the west coast.

While in Bathsheba, make reservations for the patio at The Roadhouse, with its delicious local cuisine and wonderful view. Alternatively, a delightful little hole-in-the-wall is Naniki. Off the main road, on a very steep incline, it serves traditional Bajan fare with a fantastic view overlooking both valley and ocean. It allows you to imagine what the island must have looked like before the British arrived in 1625 after the island was briefly occupied by the Portuguese. And Naniki also boasts some of the most pleasant wait staff on the island.

After a delicious flying-fish sandwich, make your way to the beach to sit in warm pools and watch surfers perform death-defying nautical acrobatics.

#### Attractions

My plan is always to spend mornings doing something cultural or touristy, then have lunch somewhere new and hit the beach in the afternoon. If you venture off the beach, best to go early to avoid the cruise ship crowds.

Harrison's Cave, inland, is probably Barbados' most popular stalactite-stalagmite rich cave. Also worth a quick stop is the Animal Flower Cave with its colourful anemones. It is not nearly as big as Harrison's Cave but seeing the water rush in from the Atlantic Ocean is stunning.

Another stop worth the trek is the St. Nicholas Abbey which is actually not an abbey, but rather an historic plantation house, fully restored to its turn-of-the-



Bathsheba, on the Atlantic Coast, is famous for its rugged scenery, rock formations, and pounding surf on white sands. A favourite for surfers, this fishing village makes a fine holiday hide-away for visitors who want to soak in nature's own whirlpools.

century glory. The tour takes you through the house, ending with a tasting of the house rum and a short movie with some interesting early footage of Barbados. It's also nice to have a quick bite on the patio off the back of the house. Despite churlish service, the sandwiches are delicious and presented on lovely china.

Unless you're traveling with kids, skip the Barbados Wildlife Reserve on the northwest coast with its tortoises and Barbados green monkeys in dirty cages and sad-looking deer. Likewise, take a pass on the Royal Barbados Cigar Co. tour in Bridgetown. Although it fits nicely into

the morning with the Mount Gay Rum Tour, the factory is small and it's less tour and more an open door through which you can see women rolling cigars.

If you are heading into Bridgetown for some duty-free shopping, it is worth stopping at the Mount Gay Rum Factory, which has pleasant, enthusiastic and informative tour guides. The tour is full of interesting facts about the rum and Barbados itself. As a bonus, you get to taste rum at the end.

If you're in Barbados over a Friday night, make the trip down to Oistins Fish Market near the capital of Bridgetown. It's



The lighthouse is the well-known symbol of the Hilton Barbados Hotel, on a tropical peninsula in the capital city of Bridgetown. There, more than 300 years of history joins 21st century shopping.



Barbados, like many islands, has two faces – the calmer waters of the turquoise Caribbean Sea with its coral reefs, ideal for snorkeling on its west coast and the lively surf of the Atlantic Ocean, pictured here, on its east coast.

mostly filled with tourists, but does serve a traditional fish fry that's worth trying. Wander up the lane and check out all the stands overflowing with knick-knacks. Grab a beer and get in line for food. The lines can be long and the food can run out with little notice. Finding a seat can also be a pain but the food is delicious and the atmosphere is not to be missed. And when dolphin is on the menu, the reference is to the dolphin fish (also known as mahi-mahi), not the hoop-jumping mammal.

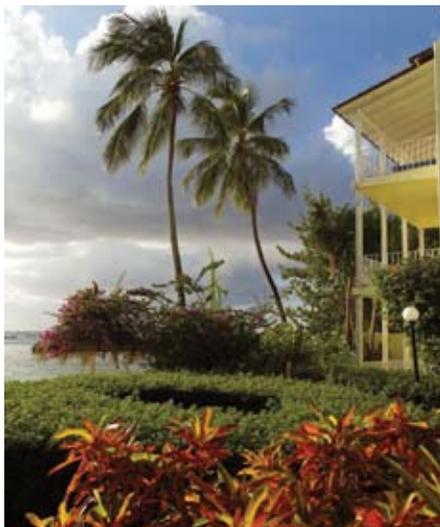
A catamaran tour is a must. A regular trip runs about four hours. Catamarans have an open bar and, depending on your

ship, a buffet. The tours usually start in Bridgetown, and sail up the west coast. The boat stops to let riders swim with the sea turtles at Blue Monkey Beach and then again to snorkel around a sunken ship in the Folkestone Marine Reserve before making its way back to Bridgetown. This is fun for the whole family and it gives a different perspective of the island geography.

If you're travelling with 10 or more people, try renting a private, smaller catamaran. Because ours was a private tour, we had it pick us up on the west coast, which meant we didn't have to brave the Bridgetown traffic. On a private tour, you're the boss of where you go and how long you stay.

If your party is smaller, you can try a tour group but you run the risk of being stuck on boat for four hours with people you don't like. Consider the time of day you go on the catamaran. Since all catamaran tours go to the same spots, it gets busy during the height of the day. I recommend going for the sunset cruise starting around 3 p.m. This allows you to hit both snorkeling spots with fewer people and you get to see a beautiful sunset on the water.

Going to Barbados on vacation can be summed up simply: It is one of the most beautiful places on Earth. When you see the turquoise of the ocean and icing-sugar feel of the sand between your toes, you're hooked.



The breathtaking coast of Barbados provides memorable scenes at dawn, day and dusk.

Sarah Close is an avid traveler based in Vancouver.

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(Continued from page 52)

dreds of years ago along with other useful plants like breadfruit, banana, sugar cane and coconut palm. Successive waves of immigrants have brought more and more non-native species. These include the guava fruit, the frangipani flowering tree from the West Indies, the mango from India and the umbrella tree from Australia. Perhaps the height of biological intrusion was reached during the 1920s, '30s and '40s when the U.S. government dropped eight million seedlings of non-native trees on Kauai in a reforestation scheme.

The long-term result is that 10,000 species have been introduced to Hawaii since Captain Cook's arrival, and they all threaten the 1,000 remaining native plants. The intruders often grow weed-like in the rich volcanic soil and rainy, hothouse environment. They squeeze out native species, leaving Kauai with very few stretches of truly native forest. Today, in an effort to stem the intrusions, tourists are subjected to agricultural inspections at ports of entry including airports.

Limahuli Garden's upper sections preserve some native species and also display examples of now-common Hawaiian flora that are non-native. Run by a non-profit trust, The National Tropical Botanical Garden, Limahuli was the preserve where a native flower, a variety of white hibiscus which grows 10 meters high, was saved from extinction in 1976. Although located at the end of the road along Kauai's rugged northern shore, Limahuli is easily accessible to visitors by car. Each day a gaggle of visitors takes the leisurely walk through the preserve to learn something of the Hawaii beyond the beaches and golf courses.

Admission is \$15 for adults and this includes a detailed self-guided tour book, optional insect repellent and the loan of walking sticks and parasols. A guided one-hour tour is also available for \$25 per person.

Limahuli Garden illustrates something often not realized by tourists to tropical destinations in search of sea and sand relaxing vacations: the virgin landscape is but an illusion. The hand of mankind has made a huge environmental impact even on this remote island of Kauai, and it started long before the tourism industry exploded after the Second World War.

**Fred Donnelly teaches history at the University of New Brunswick in Saint John, N.B.**



Limahuli Taro Terraces with Mount Makana in the background.



*Munroidendron racemosum*, which has no common name, at Limahuli Garden



Up close: The leaves of the taro plant, a staple which served the same function as the potato did in later European and North American diets.



MARIYU DONNELLY

Writer Fred Donnelly wanders through Limahuli Garden, part of the National Tropical Botanical Garden.

## Ecological mayhem in tropical getaway

Understanding the real story in a Hawaiian botanical preserve

By Fred Donnelly

**T**he island of Kauai is near the western end of the Hawaiian archipelago and a favourite of tourists seeking escape from the pressures of “civilization” on Oahu and Maui. Halfway across the Pacific Ocean between North America and Japan, it seems one of the more remote places on the planet to people who live on the far shores of the Pacific.

Kauai is a feast for the bemused visitor’s eyes. From Captain James Cook, who made the European discovery of the Hawaiian Islands in 1778, to present-day movie producers, Kauai gives a good impression of a pristine Eden as a good portion of it is heavily forested. This strik-

ingly beautiful mountainous scenery has been used as the backdrop for the film version of the musical *South Pacific* (1958), for *Jurassic Park* (1993) and for the opening waterfall sequence of TV’s *Fantasy Island*, to name a few which have adopted its familiar backdrops.

Yet all is not as it appears, as I learned on a visit to the spectacular Limahuli Garden on the northern edge of Kauai. This beautiful valley surrounded by sharp peaks – the result of volcanic actions eons ago – illustrates centuries of human impact on the Hawaiian ecological system. Its lower ranges consist of a series of terraces constructed 700 years ago by the an-

cient Hawaiians for growing taro, a staple which served the same function as the potato did in later European and North American diets. Taro needs a lot of water, so its early cultivators diverted a nearby stream in a clever system of irrigation. Here the visitor sees a little of the ancient Hawaiian system of ecological management known as “ahupua’a,” which means self-sustaining community.

Not only has the landscape been altered by human hands, but the taro plant is not even native to Hawaii. Inhabitants brought it from some other part of Polynesia hun-

(Continued on page 51)

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