

March–April 2005

Diplomat &

INTERNATIONAL CANADA



A Bold New Court

CHRISTINA SPENCER EXAMINES THE
INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT
ON THE EVE OF ITS FIRST CHARGES

LLOYD AXWORTHY LOOKS AT
JUSTICE IN A POST-IRAQ WORLD

Philippe Kirsch, president and top judge
of the International Criminal Court



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What Frank McKenna takes to Washington
Allan Thompson critiques Canada's immigration policy
Canada's trade minister and his critic on trade with China
Why the Commonwealth and the Francophonie still matter



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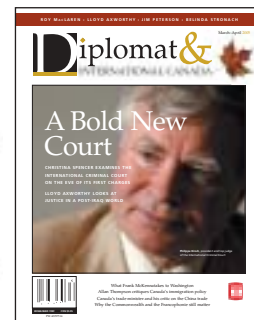
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The ICC comes of age

Canada's place at the global table is under scrutiny these days. The recently released report by former Bombardier president Robert Greenhill took to task the country's performance in everything from peace-keeping to foreign aid donations; the federal government's long-anticipated International Policy Review has been sent to Oxford for a revamp by author and international affairs commentator Jennifer Welsh; and books such as Andrew Cohen's *While Canada Slept* are still inspiring debate (the latest issue of Canada's foreign service workers' magazine *bout de papier* devotes 11 pages to it.)



JENNIFER CAMPBELL

BACK FROM A TRADE MISSION

TO CHINA, TRADE MINISTER

JIM PETERSON AND CONSERVATIVE

PARTY TRADE CRITIC BELINDA

STRONACH OFFER THEIR VIEWS

ON HOW TO HARNESS THE

OPPORTUNITIES THAT ECONOMIC

JUGGERNAUT OFFERS.

Looking back to the days when Canada was a more respected participant on the international scene, we offer a critical view of the International Criminal Court as it prepares to tackle its first charges. Award-winning writer Christina Spencer went to The Hague to interview Philippe Kirsch, the Canadian who is making things happen at the ICC. Lloyd Axworthy, foreign minister at the time of the ICC's creation in 1998, is credited with Canada's success in making the court a reality. He writes about the challenges ahead.

Meanwhile, March is the month both the Commonwealth and Francophonie celebrate their successes and ponder the future. Historian Chad Gaffield looks at the relevance of such international organizations while British High Commissioner David Reddaway defends the Commonwealth and French Ambassador Daniel Jouanneau gives us a Francophonie primer.

On the heels of a trade mission to China, Trade Minister Jim Peterson and Conservative party trade critic Belinda Stronach offer their views on how to harness the opportunities that economic juggernaut offers.

In Delights, we offer Egyptian eats, Austrian waltzing, Moroccan art and a guide, compliments of wine columnist Stephen Beckta, to how Ontario's new "bring your own bottle" legislation will operate in practice.

Back page columnist Allan Thompson looks at a topic of interest for all diplomats posted to Canada: the country's immigration policy. Flip to the back to see what he suggests as a solution.

Finally, House of Commons Speaker Peter Milliken and Senate Speaker Dan Hays, both good friends to all heads of mission in Ottawa, talk about their roles. For those who don't know, their jobs involve a lot more than reining in unruly politicians.

Send us your comments.

Jennifer Campbell is editor of *Diplomat*.

UP FRONT

Brigitte Bouvier, now an official photographer for the Prime Minister's Office, shot this photo of Mr. Kirsch when he was visiting Ottawa last spring. Mr. Kirsch is the president and top judge at the International Criminal Court and



spoke to writer Christina Spencer about the future of the courtroom for the world. *Diplomat's* package includes this story, as well as an essay by Lloyd Axworthy, a strong proponent of the ICC and the man who was foreign minister at the time the court was born.

CONTRIBUTORS

Christina Spencer, author of *Here Comes the Judge*



Writer Christina Spencer, taking advantage of a Canadian Association of Journalists-CIDA Fellowship, recently travelled to Africa (she's shown here with medical students in Ethiopia). After reporting on the International Criminal tribunal for Rwanda, she stopped in The Hague on her way home to interview the president of the International Criminal Court on Canada's contributions to international law and the court's current investigations, many of which centre on Africa.

Allan Thompson, *Diplomat's* Last Word columnist



"In April 2004, I joined Romeo Dallaire and his wife Elizabeth on their journey to Rwanda. It was my third trip to the country but in some ways, the most remarkable. I am hopeful that my next major writing project will be a book on Dallaire's life in the decade since the Rwanda genocide."

Canada's waning worldliness

More grist for the declinist school of Canadian foreign policy. "Making a Difference?", the interim report of an entity called the External Voices Project, concludes that Canada's international performance and reputation have declined since 1989. Drawing on the views of "thought leaders" from inside and outside Canada, author Robert Greenhill, visiting senior executive at IDRC, points to some Canadian accomplishments internationally – the landmine treaty, the International Criminal Court, restrictions on trade in blood diamonds and protections for civilians and children in war – but focuses mostly on the country's waning influence abroad. "Interviewees from around the world noted a major deterioration in Canada's performance in at least three major areas: in our relationship with the United States, in our leadership role in development, and in the international significance of our peacekeeping and other international security activities," he writes.

On Canada-U.S. relations, Mr. Greenhill quotes one well-informed Canadian thus: "Ten years ago, we had little influence in Washington. Now we have less." And don't get him started on peacekeeping (oops, too late...). According to his interviews, descriptions of Canada's military include the terms "atrophy," "confusion" and "irrelevant."

There's no explanation in the interim report of what Mr. Greenhill's methodology was, how he selected his interviewees or how he weighted their responses. But a more thorough final report is promised later this year. In the meantime, some data nuggets from the report:

- Canada spent \$243 billion on diplomacy, defence and development in the 15-year period from 1989 to 2004;
- Over the next five years, it will spend \$100 billion on the same 'Three Ds';
- Today, Canada contributes less than two per cent of the troops engaged in UN-run or other internationally sanctioned security operations;
- Doctors Without Borders (MSF) puts more professionals on the front lines globally than do the Canadian Armed Forces. Mr. Greenhill reports that MSF has 1,800 foreign professionals deployed; Canada has 1,600 troops. – CS

Selective surgery

Canada's ailing medicare system just can't catch a break. The latest assault comes in the pages of *Foreign Policy* magazine, where economics columnist Kenneth Rogoff warns the United States – and presumably the rest of the world – against adopting the state-driven Canadian or British health-care model. He notes that Canada has used its government monopoly to restrain doctor's wages and drug prices. "But if all countries squeezed profits in the health sector the way Europe and Canada do, there would be much less global innovation in medical technology," he glowers. "Today, the whole world benefits freely from advances in health technology that are driven largely by the allure of the profitable U.S. market." In fact, Rogoff opines, "In Canada, the horrific delays for elective surgery remind one of waiting for a car in the old Soviet bloc." His message: Marxism and medicine don't mix. – CS

Farewell to the Queen

Canada's Queen lost a little of her symbolic power at the end of 2004 as Prime Minister Paul Martin removed her name from the documents new ambassadors and high commissioners present to the governor general. Traditionally, the governor general had accepted letters of credence on the Queen's behalf but now they are directed to her alone. The Prime Minister's Office called it a way to indicate the governor general's role in international affairs but monarchists cried foul saying it was yet another way to diminish the monarch's presence. The move, which had the Queen's consent, predictably had republicans cheering. – JC

Global communities

Community foundations from around the world, which have joined forces to share information and learn from each other, will meet in Ottawa in April. And diplomats from the participating countries are invited to take part.

Six years ago, The Transatlantic Community Foundation Network was established with participants from 11 countries. Monica Patten, president and CEO of Community Foundations of Canada, explained that "the community foundation movement saw considerable growth after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the emergence of democracies in the



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former Soviet Union, so involvement of newly developing foundations in these areas was key to building the network.”

Community foundations, Ms. Patten said, develop funds, usually permanent ones, to sustain their communities. In addition, they encourage volunteerism and create a culture of giving. “(In new democracies), building funds comes later than it does in North America. First there has to be the cultivation of the notion of giving of private means for public good,” she said.

Representatives from community foundations in Canada, US, Mexico, UK, Germany, Italy, Russia, Czech Republic, and the Carpathian Region will meet in Ottawa. Visit www.tcfn.etc.be for more information. – LC

40 years of diplo-training

Okay, so the elevators in the Dunton Tower at Carleton University can be a bit dodgy. But if you make it to the 13th or 14th floor, you’ll step out at the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, whose MA program in International Affairs makes it Canada’s foremost training ground for tomorrow’s diplomats and foreign policy experts. “NPSIA,” as it is cryptically dubbed by the cognoscenti, celebrates its 40th birthday this year, and in that short history has graduated more than 2,000 students. The faculty at one time included Lester Pearson; nowadays it boasts among its instructors Derek Burney, former ambassador to the U.S., and Michael Hart, former top trade negotiator. Current Director Fen Hampson, quoted in *Carleton Now*, predicted a challenging future for NPSIA: “We’re seeing young Canadians who are very internationally minded. The school cannot rest on its laurels.” Here’s to 40 more. – CS

Ending poverty

Capitalizing on the compassion Canadians and other global citizens have shown during tsunami relief efforts, a partnership of international non-government groups has launched a web campaign to “Make Poverty History.” The Canadian Coalition for International Cooperation, which counts almost 100 NGOs among its membership, summarizes the groups’ admittedly-ambitious agenda in just 14 words: “More and better aid. Trade justice. Cancel the debt. End child poverty in Canada.” No less a

figure than Nelson Mandela kicked off the U.K.’s launch of this anti-poverty initiative in Trafalgar Square in early February, amid throngs of delighted Mandela fans and anti-poverty activists. Details of the Canadian campaign are on its new website: www.makepovertyhistory.ca (but the U.K. site, www.makepovertyhistory.org, is more fun.) The worldwide coalition has also launched a white armband campaign. – CS

Reviewing the Review

Jennifer Welsh, the Canadian-born Oxford professor in international relations who has been given the onerous job of reinventing Canada’s foreign policy, isn’t talking. But, for those who have reviewed her body of work over many years, it’s easy to see why Prime Minister Paul Martin finds in her a kindred



Her lips are sealed

spirit. Mr. Martin, Ms. Welsh and Michael Pearson, the lead official on the International Policy Review (IPR) from Foreign Minister Pierre Pettigrew’s office, all look longingly at the Axworthy years of foreign policy when Canada had moral influence on the world.

While Dr. Welsh will probably provide the central organizing principle that was supposedly missing from Mr. Pearson’s year-in-the-making draft, the manner in which the PMO handled the “outsourcing” has touched off a furore. Bizarre is a commonly used word to describe the situation. Still, an official who has worked on some aspects of the IPR said he expects Dr. Welsh to only ‘fiddle at the edges,’ confirming she has only a short-term contract from Foreign Affairs.

It should surprise no one if the IPR finally brands Canada as a “model citizen” – a favourite expression of Dr. Welsh. Canadians may buy into such an idea, but will the rest of the world? – GA

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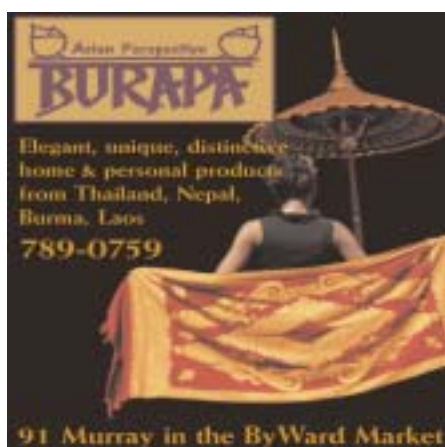
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Historic moment

Iraqi Ambassador Howar Ziad cast his vote in his country's first elections in 50 years, amid a throng of reporters and photographers. Tentative at the time, he cast a sigh of relief after the elections went more smoothly than many anticipated, and drew 60 per cent of voters, a

much larger turnout than expected because of threats of violence from militants. Still, he admitted that he himself was surprised by the impressive turnout. Looking ahead, Mr. Ziad admits there are still many challenges but he remains optimistic about his country's future. – JC



Iraqi Ambassador Howar Ziad speaks to Ottawa reporters after casting his ballot in the January election.



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A peaceful middle east

Mahmoud Abbas didn't jockey for his current position behind the scenes, but instead won an election fair and square. Had he done it the old-fashioned way it might have been tougher stepping into Yasser Arafat's shoes. But in a few weeks, the president of the Palestinian Authority has already achieved what Arafat could not – a level of trust with the Israelis, his colleagues in the Fatah movement, the violent fringe of the Palestinian liberation movement (Hamas, for example), and the international community led by the U.S.

Mr. Abbas wears his hard-won stature lightly. As Dennis Ross, the chief U.S. Middle East peace negotiator under both George Bush Sr., and Bill Clinton, recounts in *The Missing Peace*, he understands his limitations.

The U.S. diplomat characterizes Arafat as an enigmatic "decision-avoider," but reports that he was constantly reminded by Mr. Abbas and others that only the late Palestinian leader had the moral stature that would allow him to compromise on major issues. In the view of both Mr. Ross and Mr. Clinton, he didn't. Both say it was Arafat who dropped the ball at the Camp David talks in the dying days of the Clinton White House, talks that were the closest the Palestinians came to reaching a comprehensive deal with Israel.

The Missing Peace reports that Mr. Abbas was among those who "would remind (Ross) that only Arafat had the moral authority among Palestinians to compromise on Jerusalem, refugees, and borders ... you see us as more moderate, but we cannot deliver, only he can." But so far, the student of Arafat is already doing better than his predecessor ever did.

Canada reaches toward the Muslim world

Given the festering sore that Palestine represents, continuing to poison relations between the West and the Muslim world, Foreign Affairs Canada is trying to do something about it. Through its Muslim Community Working Group, the department has been working for five months and consulting with Washington and London to develop a "forward-looking, strategic approach," to relations with Islamic nations and those with significant Muslim populations, in keeping with recommendations made by the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

The committee headed by Liberal MP Bernard Patry recommended Foreign Affairs develop a "permanent mechanism" to deal with such issues. In its report – tabled twice in March, 2004, and again in October, 2004, because of the intervening elections – the committee recognized the role of religion in international policy and affirmed the "compatibility of Islam with democracy and respect for human rights." Amr Moussa, the Arab League secretary-general, and Pakistan President Gen. Pervez Musharraf appeared before Dr. Patry's committee in September, 2003, during a state visit. Early indications are that the working group will recommend increased Canadian support for countries such as Pakistan that advocate moderation within an Islamic constitutional framework.

India's ambiguity towards aid

India has been doing somersaults over aid, first turning it down outright in the wake of the tsunami and then adjusting that by accepting funds for long-term reconstruction. The new Manmohan Singh government, which appears amenable to international opinion, has said it will accept foreign aid from even "small donors" such as Canada. It wasn't long ago that, much to Ottawa's chagrin, India repaid \$439 million into the consolidated government fund. This softer policy also applies to foreign investment. A cabinet minister visited Canada's oil patch early in February, and practically begged. "If it weren't for the remaining shreds of my self-respect I would go down on my knees and say please, please come," he said.

The Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute (SICI), the institutional link between the two nations, tried to argue that India's repayment be used by the Canadian government to put SICI on a firmer financial footing, but that proposal found no takers in Ottawa. SICI president, Arun Prabha Mukherjee, who continues to lobby Ottawa, said she welcomed India's new aid policy. Asked if India was being insular during the tsunami tragedy, she said, "India did not reject offers of aid, but said that it first wanted to use its own resources. The people of India and its diaspora have given a lot of money and it is only fair that aid go to the worst-hit countries like Sri Lanka and Indonesia."

George Abraham, a Nieman scholar, is a contributing editor to *Diplomat* and an Ottawa writer. (georgeabraham@rogers.com).



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Shyamala B. Cowsik High Commissioner for India



Ms. Cowsik is a professional diplomat. Before joining the Indian foreign service, where she was the first woman to top the country-wide list of successful candidates on the exams, she completed a Master's degree in physics.

She was first posted to Geneva, after which she became first secretary at the embassy in Washington. She moved on to Bangkok before a posting in Belgrade and then returned to India to head up a division at the foreign ministry. Her first head-of-mission posting was to the Philippines. From there, she went to Washington, as deputy chief. She then served as high commissioner for Cyprus and, afterward, moved on to the Netherlands.

Ms. Cowsik has a 22-year old son, Sidhartha. Her interests are classical music, reading and trekking.

Sadaaki Numata Ambassador of Japan



Mr. Numata was born in Hyogo Prefecture in 1943.

After joining the foreign ministry, he went to University College at Oxford, where he obtained his masters degree in arts. He then spent two years in the

embassy in London. He returned to Tokyo for six years before being posted to Jakarta. Two years later, he was assigned to Washington. Back in Tokyo, he served as a director in the economic affairs bureau, the Japan-U.S. security division and, the North American affairs bureau.

He held postings in Geneva and Australia before returning to Tokyo. He later became deputy head of mission in London. He was ambassador to Pakistan, where he served until 2002 before returning to Tokyo as ambassador in charge of Okinawan affairs.

He is married to Kyoko Numata and they have two children. His interests include singing folk songs, fly fishing and skiing.

Romy Vázquez de González Ambassador of Panama



Mrs. Vasquez has a masters in business from an institute for technology in Mexico. Her career began at the Inter-American Development Bank in Washington and she started working as a diplomat with the foreign ministry in 1984 when she became an economic adviser for the Embassy of Panama in Mexico. From 1987-88, she worked in the same job, this time at the embassy in Ecuador before she returned to Mexico for two more years. For the past 10 years, she has worked as director-general of a international leather and accessory trading company in Mexico.

Since political relations between Canada and Panama are good, Mrs. Vasquez says she'll concentrate on trade relations, specifically in the areas of marine or ports technology, during her time here.

Mrs. Vasquez is married to Mario Gonzalez and they have a son and a daughter. She speaks Spanish, French, English, Italian and Portuguese.

Jamil Haidar Sakr Ambassador of Syria



Mr. Sakr was born in 1948 in Hama, Syria. He graduated from the University of Damascus, with a bachelor degree in French literature. But he wouldn't join the foreign service until 1980 when he became a staff member at the foreign ministry. He was first posted to France and Libya, each for one year, and then spent five years in the Czech Republic before being sent to Germany for a year. He then spent five years at his country's embassy in Washington. At Syria's foreign ministry, he worked as director of the department of Asia and director of the department of the Americas.

Mr. Sakr speaks English and French and his mother tongue is Arabic. He is married to Hend Hassan and has two children.

Musaed Rashed Al Haroon Ambassador of Kuwait



Dr. Al Haroon comes from an academic background. Born in 1951, he joined the Youth Care Department at Kuwait University as a supervisor in 1972. By 1980, he was dean of student affairs. Five years later, he joined the foreign service, becoming a cultural counselor at the Kuwaiti embassy in Washington. He returned to Kuwait University four years later to teach educational administration. That same year, he became under-secretary,

first for the ministry of high education and later for the ministry of education. From 1998-2001, he was permanent representative at UNESCO and became minister of education and higher education from 2001-03. He rejoined the foreign ministry in 2004.

Dr. Al Haroon has a masters degree in educational management from San Francisco University and a masters in educational psychology from Indiana University, as well as a PhD in education from the same institution. He also studied at Harvard University in Cambridge.

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Diplo-Dates

March 3

Bulgaria's National day

March 6

Ghana's National day

March 10 – 13

Baltic Film Festival: The Canadian Film Institute hosts its fifth festival of films from the three Baltic nations, Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia. The Baltic Film Festival is organized in collaboration with the Embassy of Lithuania, the Embassy of Latvia, and the Estonian Film Foundation. For information, visit CFI's website: www.cfi-icf.ca or phone (613) 232-6727.

March 12

Mauritius' National Day

March 13

Latin carnival: More than 15 Latin American embassies are presenting a music and costume celebration with workshops and a parade at the Museum of Civilization, 1-4 p.m.

March 17

Ireland's St. Patrick's Day



PHOTO: CYLLA VON TIEBEMANN

March 17-19

The National Ballet of Canada presents Cinderella at the

National Arts Centre. To find out more about this ballet, visit www.national.ballet.ca or phone the NAC at (613) 947-7000.

March 20

Tunisia's Proclamation of Independence Day

March 23

Pakistan's National Day



NATIONAL GALLERY OF CANADA

March 23 – June 5

ItuKiaġatta!: The National Gallery of Canada presents this exhibition featuring more than 45 sculptures from the TD's collection of Inuit art. ItuKiaġatta, is an Inuit expression meaning "How it amazes us". With works from the historic period to the mid-20th century, the collection represents an early, vital period in the development of Inuit art.

For information, visit www.national.gallery.ca, contact the National Gallery of Canada at (613) 990-1985.

March 26

Bangladesh's National Day

April 2

7th Annual International Ball:

This year, the ball will have a New Zealand flavour with a special "kiwi" theme. Tickets cost \$200 and can be purchased at by calling David at 563-1983 ext. 630 or Michael at 841-6006.

April 4

Senegal's Independence Day

April 15-17

Ottawa Art Festival: Exhibition and sale of original art. This event raises funds for The Kidney Foundation. It takes place at the Aberdeen Pavilion, Lansdowne Park. For more information, visit www.ottawaartfestival.com or contact Crystal at 724-9953.

April 16

Denmark's National Day

April 17

Syria's National Day

April 18

Zimbabwe's National Day

April 26

Tanzania's Union Day

April 27

Sierra Leone's Republic Day

South Africa's Freedom Day

Togo's National Day

April 28-30

A night at the Opera: Filumena is an all-Canadian production to be shown during the National Arts Centre's Alberta Scene. For information, see www.albertascene.ca or call 947-7000.

April 30

Netherlands celebrates the Birthday of Her Majesty Queen Beatrix

May 3

World Press Freedom Day

May 5 to 23

Canadian Tulip Festival: The 2005 edition of the Canadian Tulip Festival will commemorate the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II and the gift of tulips to Canadians with the theme "A Celebration of Peace and Friendship." For information, visit www.tulipfestival.ca or call 1-800-66-TULIP or (613) 567-4447.

May 6

WaterCan's Embassy Dinner: Once again more than 50 embassies and high commissions will be sharing their culture through food and drink at this popular 11th annual dinner. For more information, visit www.watercan.com or call (613) 230-5182.

May 6-8

Festival of Quilts: The Ottawa Valley Quilters Guild presents this festival at the R.A. Centre, 2451 Riverside Dr., in Ottawa. See the website, ottawavalleyquiltersguild.org/ or contact j.g.morin@sympatico.ca for more information.

If you have an upcoming event, please send details to diplomatmagazine@sympatico.ca or call (613) 789-6890.

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Here Comes the Judge

As the International Criminal Court prepares for its first cases **Christina Spencer** reports from the Hague on the controversies that surround it as well as the Canadian who heads it.

It is a crisp winter morning in The Hague, and a Canadian feels immediately at home amid the layers of snow still smudging the city after a recent storm. The bracing weather has not deterred the city's cyclists, pedalling to work along the icy paths that lace the urban core.

On any given day, a transplanted Canadian may ride anonymously among these hearty Dutch souls. Philippe Kirsch, former Canadian diplomat and now president and top judge of the International Criminal Court, has been known to arrive at work on two wheels rather than four, a habit he shares with the court's chief prosecutor and its registrar. Cycling to the court is a good idea, since few cab drivers seem able to locate its temporary offices. A visitor could be dropped by accident at the headquarters of the International Court of Justice or the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. The ICC, in early 2005, is still the lowest-profile member of The Hague's international legal triumvirate.

But that's about to change – and perhaps the opportunity to bike anonymously to work along with it. Judge Kirsch's court, which has been quietly hiring staff and honing its mandate, should face its first legal proceedings by summer. Sources expect charges soon against some members of the Lord's Resistance Army, a destructive guerrilla force engaged in a free-for-all of looting, maiming and child kidnappings in northern Uganda. This crisis was referred to the ICC by the Ugandan government itself in early 2004, and the prosecutor's office has been quietly probing to see if the LRA's actions meet the tight criteria for prosecution.

Even without the Uganda case, the court's profile has been slowly rising. In January, Canada, Australia and New Zealand urged the United Nations' Security Council to refer the conflict in the Sudanese region of Darfur to the ICC after a UN Commission of Inquiry recommended it.

Popular culture has also been catching up with the court – including the release of the film *Hotel Rwanda* and the documentary of Roméo Dallaire's harrowing *Shake Hands with the Devil*. All deal with the carnage that wracked Rwanda in 1994. In Europe, meanwhile, world leaders recently commemorated the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. Genocide, the crime that links the horrors of Rwanda to those of Nazi Germany, will be a focus of the ICC, whose task is to prosecute the world's worst criminal acts – crimes against humanity and war crimes. As public interest deepens, Judge Kirsch must have his court ready for action. He vows it will be.

"The building of an organization like this – both an international organization and a court – was quite difficult," he admits this winter morning, seated in his sparse 15th-floor office. "There were a lot of new issues that were not expected. But I think we are consolidating the court now, quite effectively. It is not a piece of cake yet, but I think we really are moving in the right direction."

One senses growing pains during even a brief visit. Offices are Spartan studies in white-washed walls and bland industrial carpeting in the temporary location. Security passes work for some doors and not others (my guide inadvertently shattered a glass gate after we were accidentally "locked in" near the pre-trial chamber). A

message board contains the tentative, hopeful slogan, "We are a good story." With luck and dedicated lawyers, that will be true.

It is unlikely, though, ever to be a "piece of cake." Even before trying a case, the ICC has faced controversy. Some critics argue it will be dominated by frivolous or politically motivated charges. The Americans, dead-set against a permanent court while supporting temporary tribunals, say its statute creates "a prosecutorial system that is an unchecked power." Others think the court's independence may interfere with peace talks or amnesties aimed at ending wars. Finally, some ask whether an international court, drawing on many different legal traditions, can maintain high standards. Perhaps only an unthreatening Canadian – and only one with Philippe Kirsch's unique diplomatic and legal background – can pull this off.

Born in 1947 in Belgium, Judge Kirsch came to Canada at 14 with his family. He joined the foreign ministry in 1972 after obtaining his Master of Law degree from the University of Montreal, and was first posted to Peru. He served twice at the UN, as first secretary and legal adviser to the Canadian mission, then as Canada's ambassador and deputy permanent representative. In 1999, he became ambassador to Sweden.

Judge Kirsch chaired or served on several UN legal committees and was Canada's ambassador and agent to the International Court of Justice (which focuses on legal disputes between states). But his "big break" came in 1998, when the Dutch diplomat charged with chairing an international conference in Rome on the creation of a permanent criminal

court fell ill. Judge Kirsch was elected his replacement. By all accounts, it was Judge Kirsch's diplomacy and mastery of his brief that brought the "Rome Statute" of the ICC into being despite an atmosphere heavy with suspicion and acrimony. Even then, while 120 nations approved the treaty, several major powers – including the United States and China – did not. (Bill Clinton reluctantly signed up later, but his successor, George W. Bush, rescinded approval.)

Next, Judge Kirsch was elected chair of the commission charged with putting the Rome Statute into action. The court formally came into existence in July 2002, after the required 60 states had ratified its statute (there are now almost 100 ratifications). Judge Kirsch was elected ICC president in 2003, a six-year, non-renewable term. He is also a judge in the ICC's appeals division.

Scratch the surface of any international criminal tribunal – Rwanda, Yugoslavia, Sierra Leone – and you'll uncover Canadians working for the prosecution, the defence or the court registries. The ICC is no exception. Does Judge Kirsch observe a particularly Canadian hue to his court? He's reluctant to say so. "We have an obligation in the court to reflect the world as a whole. To me, it is absolutely indispensable in the longer term that the court achieve universality. Part of the way of doing that is to ensure that the judges of the court, the staff of the court are broadly represented geographically. So I think it would be wrong on my part to attribute a special role to Canadians."

That differs from what he told *Canada World View* in 1998. Then, he proudly stated the court would carry "a significant Canadian imprint." For instance, he noted, Canada and allied nations pushed for, and obtained, court jurisdiction over internal armed conflicts, not just wars between nations; legal provisions for sexual crimes and crimes against children; a degree of prosecutorial independence; and finally, something called complementarity – the power of the court to take legal action only when national legal systems are unwilling or unable to investigate or prosecute. A more cautious Judge Kirsch remarks today that dedication to international criminal justice is "consistent with the Canadian psyche ... Canadians, in terms of contributing to the development of a common culture, have a great deal of experience." He smiles. "I'll say that much."

Does his desire for a "universal" system mean, as the critics have charged, lowest-



BRIGITTE BOUVIER, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN

"We have an obligation in the court to reflect the world as a whole," says Philippe Kirsch.

common-denominator justice, something short of Canada's own rigorous standards? "You will find 180 nations saying the same thing," he replies. But after the Rome conference, when he chaired the preparatory commission for the court for nearly four years, all countries agreed, unanimously, on the rules of procedure and evidence, and on the actual definitions or "elements of crime." "I think that means that states found a way of developing a system that was acceptable," says the judge. "You don't argue with unanimity."

If you're the United States, however, you do argue – mainly over whether the court could be a political tool against you in a world unhappy with America. At any given time, the U.S. has a presence in more than 100 countries, many of which are parties to the ICC. These countries could, in principle, arrest anyone on their soil, regardless of nationality, and whisk him off to the court. In the U.S. view, there is no predicting when or where politically motivated legal harassment of Americans might occur.

Judge Kirsch won't comment directly. Instead, he says, "We know that despite all the safeguards that have been included in the constitutive instruments of the court, there remains some apprehension. In my view, any apprehensions of political motivated prosecutions are completely unfounded. But if those apprehensions remain, the only way of eliminating them and therefore increasing further the support for the court is for the court to meet expectations – to meet exclusively as a judicial body that delivers justice fairly and effectively without any political overtones."

In fact, if any region were to express concern over court "bias," one might expect it to be Africa. That is where three ICC investigations are focused: Uganda,

the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic. In addition, the UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda operates in Tanzania, and a "hybrid" special court runs in Sierra Leone to try the worst excesses of that nation's civil war. Is Africa getting undue judicial attention?

Not according to Judge Kirsch. "The court can only base its action on where the most massive crimes are committed in situations that are within the jurisdiction of the court." In addition, he recalls that at the Rome conference, the sub-Saharan Africa states were "extraordinarily strong supporters of the ICC." The current investigations in Africa weren't initiated by the prosecutor, he points out; they were referred by the African nations themselves.

Africa has already made a huge contribution to the international criminal law through the Rwanda Tribunal. The president of that court, Judge Erik Møse of Norway, also notes that his tribunal has been an effective training ground.

The ICC's real impact will not only be measured by whether it is fair but also by whether it helps prevent crime. Will the world's worst criminals, knowing they may be subject to a modern-day Nuremberg Tribunal, curb their excesses? This is Judge Kirsch's hope.

"There's no question now if you look at the newspapers in the past year or so, that you realize that some people in the world are thinking about the court in the context of the possible commission of crimes, either because they want to avoid them or because they are worried about the impact of the court. I think this is the beginning of the development of a culture of deterrence."

But, he warns, "It is going to take a long time. The court is not instant coffee." After all, it took decades to establish a permanent institution – albeit one still negotiating for a permanent building somewhere among The Hague's bicycle paths. Even Philippe Kirsch can't meet unrealistic expectations. Pragmatically Canadian, he simply counsels patience and open-mindedness. "The court needs to be allowed to play its role without impediments." Over time, the ice will melt.

Christina Spencer, former editorial pages editor of the Ottawa Citizen, is an award-winning journalist. She recently returned from the Rwanda Tribunal in Tanzania, and the International Criminal Court and International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague.

A Court Worth Having

One of the ICC's founding fathers argues that there's reason to be hopeful that it just might work.

By Lloyd Axworthy

International diplomacy is not usually seen as a joyous occupation. If economics is the dismal science, then the world of international negotiation can be viewed as a grim place, only partially leavened by stuffy dinners and false expressions of bonhomie.

But occasionally, there is a moment where a surprise outcome, after months, if not years, of hard-scrabble work, brings joy to the hardened heart.

Such a moment occurred six years ago in a cavernous chamber on the outskirts of Rome when the International Criminal Court was born. Long will I recall the spontaneous outbreak of applause, cheering and - if you can imagine - hugging and backslapping, as we heard the results confirming an overwhelming endorsement of the treaty that would launch the 21st century's most important new global institution.

For me, it was an affirmation of two defining propositions and one compelling hope I had carried in my political knapsack while at the Canadian foreign ministry. It affirmed the human security concept - the belief that security had to be defined in terms of protection of individuals. It also showed the emergence of a new diplomacy, one that brought civil groups together with like-minded countries to collaborate on creating new humanitarian norms and the practices and institutions to make them achievable.

Out of the confluence of the two, I hoped it would be possible to truly anchor an international justice system that would offer an alternative to the realist, "might makes right" school of diplomatic practice I found so morally bankrupt. It would provide a way of dealing with the dark side, the underworld of global-



ICC-CP/WM VAN CAPELLEN

ism - an underworld that used the tools of global networks of information, transportation, finance and organization, allowing predators to prey on the vulnerable and establish international connections that could overwhelm the capability of nations to protect their citizens.

Signing the treaty, of course, was only the beginning. It ushered in an intense period of activity to promote ratification, build the institution and carefully nurture the foundations of an objective, fair system of justice. It represented a high watermark achievement as the new millennium took hold.

But then we entered the dark ages - what Jane Jacobs describes as "a cultural collapse." Accepted wisdom and common practice collapsed as dramatically as

the concrete and girders of the World Trade Center on Sept. 11. It became a time of terror and counter force, where thought of human rights was shuffled to the backburner. Those who believed in an international justice system were scoffed at by the new apostles of extremism and empire. We witnessed the clash between two global networks: one of terror, unbound by territory, linked by thin tendrils of finance and communications, single-mindedly dedicated to the destruction of its enemy; the other centred in the world's most powerful state, but with spokes and connections encompassing powerful worldwide nodes of military, diplomatic and economic power.

The chattering classes decided we were entering an age of unfathomable threat and the only way to meet such danger was through massive overwhelming power. We were told to discard old-fashioned notions of rule of law and cooperative global action. The case of the court was in doubt and faced implacable opposition

from the Bush administration and complicit retreat from former advocates such as the British and Japanese governments.

But, history sometimes plays jokes on politicians and academic sycophants. There just might be reason for renewed sense of purpose and, if not the wild jubilation of six years ago, then grounds for prudent optimism. Recent weeks saw the ICC prepare to lay its first charges against predators that kidnap Northern Ugandan children and force them into servitude. This has renewed hope that we're at the threshold of a new system of global justice. The time is ripe for human rights activists and government and civil organizations to establish standards to fit the changing context. If we simply dig in our heels to try to preserve the ground previously gained, or become too involved in

mechanics we'll lose the chance to set bold new standards that I would argue are still very necessary.

Of key importance will be the way the ICC handles the delicate balance between justice and peace in its first cases in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda. This is the first time there will be a major judicial intervention while the conflict continues. It could end up protecting people by drawing attention to the conflict, thereby deterring further crimes and compelling reforms by government. At the same time, it raises concerns about the impact the indictments might have on hardening positions and making local, tribal forms of reconciliation more difficult. Interesting that in the

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case of Uganda the announcement took place at the same time as a peace committee was conveyed on a tour of world capitals. Arrangements were made for the group to meet with Luis Moreno-Ocampo and assurances were given - but there is still a residual concern that must be met. This highlights the need to work with local people, appear to be impartial, be timely and thorough in investigation. The court must also develop, in consultation with the local community, the right mix of mechanisms and combination of international law and traditional justice mores to create a system tailored and compatible with tradition and custom. This could be one of the most valuable contributions of the ICC to the broad concept of the "Responsibility to Protect" - the ability to demonstrate how justice can lead to a sustainable peace grounded in local agreement, acceptance and engagement.

Along with being an instrument of justice, the ICC can also play the role of a

powerful motivator for peace negotiations, as was evidenced in the former Yugoslavia, where within twenty four hours of being indicted as a war criminal, a previously defiant Slobodan Milosevic was at the table, ready to negotiate.

Last month, the UN Commission report on Sudan recommended the Security Council refer the matter to the International Criminal Court for prosecution, calling the move "the only credible way of bringing alleged perpetrators to justice." This might also shame the perpetrators into stopping the killing now instead of waiting another year, at a loss of more than 100,000 more lives, for George Bush's idea of assembling a special tribunal.

The post-Iraq war hangover may herald a rehabilitation of the concept of international justice as particularly relevant to the post-Iraq war period and fill the gap left by the U.S. come-uppance in Iraq, where its power could make easy pickings of the military campaign but not in keeping the peace.

Recent weeks have seen a shift of focus from the man-made violence in Iraq and Sudan to the natural calamity affecting South Asia. This tragedy has reminded us that we live in a world without borders, even though we still organize ourselves politically by drawing lines in the sand.

The powerful waves of destruction that wreaked havoc in South Asia may also help shock the rest of the world out of its preoccupation with counter-terrorism and force it to rediscover the meaning of security in our globally interdependent age.

The revelations of abuse of Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib are also shifting the debate with the courts re-asserting prisoner rights. The United States' inability to receive renewal of its exemption resolution is a portent of the altered state of global politics away from the assertive "might makes right" crusade for dominance. The show trial of Saddam Hussein by a court with no credibility is a lesson on the stupidity of unrestrained power when contrasted to the recent decision of the chief justice of the Sierra Leone tribunal to excuse himself on potential grounds of bias, thereby setting a standard for fairness and objectivity. The truly innovative developments in the treatment and compensation for victims and witnesses creates the foundation for a justice system in touch with the needs of the people, not the conquering power or the rapacious predators, and is a base for forging a form of loyalty and trust for jus-

tice amongst those who have been the violated.

The occasion of the first charges being laid by the International Criminal Court against the war criminals of Northern Uganda may demonstrate that some light is piercing the Dark Age. We may be in a position to draw forth the idea of an international justice system as a guidepost for the future; a means by which to address the global atrocities in the world without the self-righteous victor's justice now on display in Iraq. This occasion suggests the global public domain is alive and well and has emerged from the post-9/11, anti-terrorist shadow that tried so hard to suppress it. This is a time to celebrate the possibilities that lie ahead. Graham Greene once wrote, "Once in a while a door opens and lets the future in". This is such a moment.

Lloyd Axworthy was Canada's foreign minister six years ago when the International Criminal Court became a reality. He is now president of the University of Winnipeg and the UN's special envoy for Ethiopia and Eritrea. His book, Navigating a New World, was published in 2003.

THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

WHAT IT IS: A permanent international court with jurisdiction over the most serious global crimes - genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. The court will also have authority to prosecute the crime of aggression once a definition is agreed.

KEY DATES: 120 nations voted in Rome to establish the court in 1998; its jurisdiction starts with crimes committed after July 1, 2002. Ninety-seven countries have currently ratified the Rome Statute.

AUTHORITY: The court can exercise its power if the accused is a national of a country that is party to establishing the court, or if the crime is committed in a country that is party to its statute. The Security Council or the UN can also refer a situation to the ICC.

COMPLEMENTARITY: The court can only act where state justice systems are unable or unwilling to prosecute. It is complementary to national criminal justice systems.

OTHER COURTS: Ad hoc criminal tribunals currently exist to prosecute crimes in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. A special "hybrid" UN-national court operates in Sierra Leone.

Perfectly Frank

A former New Brunswick premier takes his direct style and a 16-hour-a-day work ethic to Washington.

By David Stonehouse



Frank McKenna, long-time New Brunswick premier, will now try his hand at diplomacy in Canada's most vaunted ambassadorial post.

NOEL CHENIER, THE TELEGRAPH JOURNAL

In his past lives as corporate titan and political leader, Canada's new ambassador to the United States made a habit of tucking notes in his pockets – small declarations of discipline, reminders of principles that ground him.

"Be optimistic," Frank McKenna would scribble to himself. Call home. Be decisive. Eat right. Exercise.

"His to-do lists are a bulwark against the pace of his life," author Philip Lee explains in his biography, *Frank: The Life and*

Politics of Frank McKenna. "He is sucked easily into the vortex of work until he is whirling so fast that he loses sight of the kind of man he aspires to be."

As his nation's man in Washington, a post he started this month, he will be whirling. As a man of seemingly boundless energy and determination, he will be impatient to accomplish. As a man of considerable political experience, he will relish the high politics that marks everything in Washington. As a veteran of the corporate boardroom, he will bring busi-

ness savvy to a post often dominated by trade issues.

"He is a no-nonsense type of guy. He will walk into a room looking for solutions – he never walks into a room looking for problems," says Donald Savoie, a friend of the ambassador and a respected public policy analyst.

"He'll bring commitment and energy to the job to a level that is not common at all. I suspect people who work at the embassy in Washington better gear up to move onto the fast track because he will

push them – he will push them extremely hard.”

Hard work has been a hallmark for Mr. McKenna, who quickly built a national profile for himself out of an ambitious and reformist agenda as premier of New Brunswick – a small and largely rural East Coast province of about 725,000 people.

He swept into power in 1987 after an election that witnessed his Liberal party capturing the unheard of – all 58 seats in the legislature – and governed for a decade. He worked tirelessly in office, often arriving by 7 a.m. and staying until 11 p.m.

He aggressively pursued jobs for New Brunswickers and stretched its resource-dependent economy to include new sectors revolving around technology. He installed a call-centre industry that some hailed as an effort to modernize the economy and bring pride to New Brunswickers through the jobs it created. Others, however, were critical, calling the call-centre industry's jobs transient and low-paying with conditions likened to sweatshops.

His outlook and brash persistence – he would fly to Toronto and other corporate centres often to meet with CEOs and pitch job-creation in person – made him a favourite among Canada's business elite.

He would give companies millions of dollars to create jobs in his province, but at the same time he was a determined cost-cutter and he set about reforming everything from health care to education to welfare with an eye to saving money and boosting efficiency.

Born in the tiny New Brunswick village of Apohaqui to a poor pig-farming family, Francis Joseph McKenna was raised by a grandmother who instilled a sense in him that he was destined for a higher calling – either the priesthood or politics.

“One of the things, I think, that drives him to work so hard is that he always felt like an imposter – that someone was going to blow the whistle on him and reveal him to be just an ordinary guy and not the super-politician that he appeared to be,” Mr. Lee said after the biography was published. “He was determined that he was going to work harder than everyone else – no one was going to be at the office before he was, no one was going to know more about the workings of government than he was.”

When others in his government and the Liberal party opposed free trade, he supported the North American Free Trade Agreement. And because of New

Brunswick's reliance on cross-border industries like forestry, mining and fisheries, Mr. McKenna became well-versed in trade issues.

He reluctantly stepped down as premier in 1997 – holding to a promise he made to his wife that he would stay in the job only for 10 years.

Julie McKenna, a university sweetheart who has been married to him now for nearly 33 years, hails from a political family that left her with a sour taste of the consuming nature of politics. She treasured her privacy, hated having to schedule time with her husband through his executive assistant and eschewed the tea-

BORN IN THE TINY NEW
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PRIESTHOOD OR POLITICS.

party circuit. She essentially raised their three children alone.

After retiring from the premier's job, Mr. McKenna settled into a life as a corporate lawyer, often working from a seaside home he had built on New Brunswick's southeast coast.

In the fall of 1999 came a jolt: Julie McKenna was diagnosed with breast cancer. “The fear was debilitating. I couldn't breathe. I didn't hear what the doctor was saying over the phone. I thought I was going to die,” she recalled.

It was detected early and intensive treatment was successful. But the scare gave them both pause to ponder life. She broke out of a cocoon of privacy to lend her name to promote breast cancer awareness and fundraising efforts and he started reconsidering his priorities.

Though he settled into a quieter and more comfortable life that gave him more

time for family and his golf game, deep down he is a workaholic and could not resist the innumerable opportunities that floated his way.

Big names in business like United Parcel Service, Bank of Montreal and Noranda brought him on as a corporate director. He bought a small cabinet-making enterprise to run as a family business. Media conglomerate CanWest Global Communications Corp. tapped him to be its chairman.

And those who know him doubt he is done with elected office. He is often touted as a potential leader for the federal Liberal party, a possibility for prime minister.

Over the last several years, he has wooed some of the biggest names in business to Atlantic Canada, by convincing former world leaders – Bill Clinton, Tony Blair and George Bush Sr. – to come to golf and speak at private networking gatherings he's hosted.

“If he has got something in mind, he goes for it,” says Mr. Savoie. “He decided on those people and went after them with a sense of tenacity that would bowl over a lot of people.”

And he will need that to be heard in his new post.

“Canada basically has no visibility in Washington, except amongst those directly working on U.S.-Canadian relations,” says Larry Birns, executive director of the Council on Hemispheric Affairs, which is based in the U.S. capital.

Birns argued that his business connections may work against Mr. McKenna as he tries to woo Democrats in Congress, saying: “There is a distinct segment of the Democratic party who feel that corporate America has an inordinate influence – disproportionate to its numbers or its strength – in policy-making.”

Allan Gotlieb, a former Canadian ambassador to the U.S., disagreed that Mr. McKenna's background could be a liability.

“Because the Congress is the centre of so much lobbying, it is a kind of zoo as to who gets priority,” says Mr. Gotlieb, who had made no secret before Mr. McKenna's appointment of wanting a career diplomat in the post. Still, he lauds the skills the man brings. “I think that with his background, personality and political ease in dealing with people, he will be as-set on [Capitol] Hill.”

David Stonehouse is a writer who lives in New Brunswick.

Frank McKenna's challenge as Canada's foremost envoy

By Roy MacLaren

The appointment of Frank McKenna, the former premier of New Brunswick, as ambassador of Canada to the United States has been warmly welcomed across the country, a tribute to the regard in which he is held nationally.

Familiar with the principal issues and evolving trends in Canada-U.S. relations, from his three consecutive terms as premier of his native province, his wide understanding of public policy and private initiative has since been reinforced by his more recent directorships in a range of corporations including financial services, communications, and natural resources. His participation in the annual meetings of the New England governors and Eastern Canadian premiers has supplied additional insights into what makes the Canada-U.S. relationship virtually unique in international relations.

Sharing a continent presents a seemingly endless range of questions, especially when one of the two countries is currently the sole superpower. Canadians – unlike Americans – understandably concentrate much of their diplomatic thinking on cross-border issues, but Frank McKenna will find in Washington an administration now seeking new directions with that emerging superpower, China, and the increasingly dynamic politics of India, Russia and Brazil. If the United States is somehow able to extricate itself from Iraq, Mr. McKenna will presumably work with an administration eager to refresh trans-Atlantic ties, as well as review enhanced roles for a reformed United Nations and a faltering World Trade Organization. In Washington, there are many voices, but he should be able to make Canada's heard by building upon our long commitment to multilateral diplomacy.

On bilateral questions, Mr. McKenna knows from his many years of collaboration with state governors that even in the highest reaches of Washington, "all politics is local", requiring continuing contact with senators and congressmen through Canada's multitude of consulates in



THE TELEGRAPH JOURNAL

Frank McKenna may find missile defence isn't the hot-button issue it appears to be in Canada, writes former Liberal cabinet minister Roy MacLaren.

every region of the country.

Mr. McKenna will find that the search for a new equilibrium in bilateral relations will – at least for Canada's part – reflect the fact that in social values, broadly speaking, Canadians have felt increasing divergencies from Americans. Such divergent thinking is reflected in environmental priorities, to take but one example, but Mr. McKenna's long tenure

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as premier will have given him useful insights into differing policies. On matters military, the new ambassador will probably find that people, on either side of the border, don't deem it necessary for Canada to identify its contribution, or lack thereof, to the U.S. missile defence system in the short term. Trade and investment for the most part goes forward smoothly, although the use by the United

States of so-called trade remedies – the central flaw in the Free-Trade Agreement – will need the same vigilance that his predecessors have displayed and with which he was familiar in the case of U.S. complaints about exports originating in New Brunswick. Equally, border regulation will be well known to a former premier knowledgeable about the direct interest of U.S. as well as Canadian corporations in the unhindered flow of the massive volume of cross-border shipments (which to a significant degree are intra-company transfers). The United States imports more oil and petroleum products from Canada than any other country, another area of shared interest in cross-border facilitation.

Mr. McKenna will understand that an incremental approach rather than some "grand design" is the most promising route in ensuring the mutual recognition of the benefits of NAFTA. There is no real interest either north or south of the 49th parallel, in any attempt to adopt the political imperative of the European Union by seeking, for example, a common market or customs union. Further, the incremental approach familiar to Mr. McKenna in domestic policy formulation, will warn him off that beguiling but ultimately one-sided concept of harmonization.

An earlier premier of New Brunswick, Sir Douglas Hazen, came close to being Canada's first representative in Washington, but the exigencies of the First World War prevented his appointment as "high commissioner" in the United States. Now we shall see how able a successor Mr. McKenna can be in filling that role in which the close friendship and support of the prime minister – which he certainly has – can play a major part in Canadian public policy.

Roy MacLaren was minister of international trade from 1993-1996 and Canada's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom from 1996-2000. He chairs the Canadian Institute of International Affairs.

Don't Squander Trade Chances with Emerging China

By Belinda Stronach

China matters to Canada – more with each passing day. Chinese production and U.S. consumption are the twin engines of the global economy. China now rivals Japan as Canada's second-largest trading partner, with a goal of quadrupling trade by 2010.

Paul Martin went to China for a few days last month and much of the standard language of diplomacy was produced. I agree that such periodic meetings between national leaders are important. They are tools that can create deadlines and a sense of urgency among officials engaged in floundering negotiations. They can also be catalysts for new lines of inquiry and new directions.

But this kind of visit is worthwhile only provided there is sustained follow-up and purpose. The track record does not foster much confidence. A former Liberal Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien, visited China more than 10 years ago with a huge Team Canada mission along with every provincial premier. Yet, a decade later, his successor went back to China with Canada still lagging far behind our competitors in seizing the potential of China and market share.

For example, in the past four years, China's GDP has expanded by 40 per cent but Canada's exports have only risen by 17 per cent. The Americans and Australians have increased their exports by three times that rate, and the Japanese four times.

On another front, there are more Canadian trade commissioners assigned to traditional markets in Europe, and based in London and Paris combined, than to the land of expanding opportunity that is China.

There is a long list of important issues in Canada's relationship with China, including human rights concerns. There are international fora in which to deal with the latter, where Canada must play an active role. From that long list, here is a selection of six specific goals that



**...MORE THAN 100 OTHER COUNTRIES
HAVE SOME FORM OF INVESTMENT
PROTECTION AGREEMENT WITH CHINA,
BUT CANADA STILL DOES NOT HAVE ONE.**

Canada needs to pursue in developing a balanced and mutually advantageous trade relationship with China.

A continuing expansion in two-way Canada-China trade and investment is good for the prosperity of both countries, but the time has long come to nail down a reciprocal investment agreement containing mutual standards, firm guarantees and a reduction in regulatory and other obstacles in China that impede the provision of services in sectors where Canadian firms excel; more than 100 other countries have some form of investment protection agreement with China, but Canada still does not have one.

China has enacted recent liberalization measures in such sectors as financial services, and the prime minister offered an "ambitious program of technical assistance" to help China meet its WTO accession commitments, but the Government of Canada must work to ensure that

these liberalization laws and regulations are enforced on the ground, particularly the measures relating to intellectual property rights, piracy and counterfeit goods.

China's decision to impose an export tax on textile and apparel shipments to prevent a disruptive import surge into North American markets is welcome; at the same time, we need to leave no doubt about our intention to keep a close eye on textile and apparel imports and to exercise our negotiated right to impose safeguards in the event of serious injury to Canadian producers.

The prime minister must secure China's assurance that its recently announced free trade negotiation with the 10 ASEAN nations, once negotiated, will surpass the WTO test for a preferential free trade area, and will not discriminate against Canada and other WTO signatories.

Both countries must treat national regulations governing GMO products as science-based and not arbitrary and disguised restrictions on trade; this is important to Canadian canola oil producers, and, given China's growing expertise in biotechnology, to China's rice farmers as well.

Finally, the prime minister resolved on Jan. 20, "to address the problem of global warming" in cooperation with China. That country is poised to replace the U.S. as the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the next decade, so he must follow up those words with action that leads to a long-term approach to global warming that involves all countries, including China, and all greenhouse gases.

These benchmark issues are litmus tests of the ability to grow the relationship with China in a smart way. All require attention and follow-up with dedicated resources.

Belinda Stronach is the Conservative party's trade critic.

It's Time to Tap China's Enormous Potential

By Jim Peterson

Last month, I travelled with business people and delegates from across the country to China on the biggest trade mission led by a trade minister. During our visits to Shanghai, Beijing and Hong Kong, business leaders, citizens and political leaders met with Canadians to develop new relationships and gain a better understanding of each other.

I am pleased to report that we achieved great success. Canadian and Chinese companies signed more than 100 agreements and forged countless relationships. Such ventures, as well as the interest shown by the 376 Canadian business leaders and delegates who joined me in this mission, demonstrate growing private sector awareness within Canada of the significant opportunities that China's economy offers.

Chinese industries are moving rapidly up the value chain, especially in the manufacturing sector. More and more Canadian companies and organizations understand the need to participate in this transformation and are doing business in China. Canadian companies and government see that the train is leaving the station and they want to catch it. In today's interdependent world, China's continued success is vital to our continued success. Canadian companies have to start thinking about a China business plan, or better yet, have one in hand.

The breadth of Canadian industries represented on the trade mission, including agri-food, energy, mining services, financial services, education, information and communications technology, and transportation, clearly shows our excellent commercial relations have plenty of room to grow. Indeed, in recognizing the importance of our trading relationship, Canada and China have committed to quadrupling trade by 2010.

There is no doubt Canada has begun to take action. China is Canada's second-largest single-nation trading partner. In the first 11 months of 2004, bilateral trade between Canada and China increased by



CHINESE INDUSTRIES ARE MOVING RAPIDLY UP THE VALUE CHAIN, ESPECIALLY IN THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR.

31 per cent to reach \$28 billion. In terms of exports, growth was an exceptional 41.9 per cent to \$6.0 billion over the first eleven months of 2004, compared to the same period in 2003. Imports from China increased by 28.5 per cent in the first 11 months of 2004 to reach \$22 billion.

China is important to us for many reasons. As a nation which depends heavily on international trade, we are attracted by China's rising incomes, rapid industrial expansion and increasing openness and market orientation. To remain competitive, we are helping our companies integrate rapidly into the complex global production chains that China both hosts and in which it participates.

As a nation of 32 million people, we need an ambitious immigration program to help maintain an innovative and educated workforce. Since 1998, China has been the largest source of new permanent settlers in Canada. Our country is much richer for the contributions made every day by more than one million Chinese-

Canadians. In fact, one in every 32 Canadians is of Chinese origin and Chinese is the third most spoken language in Canada.

Canada is also important to China. From Norman Bethune to Prime Ministers Pierre Trudeau, Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin, Canada has been a tireless proponent of China's global engagement. We have worked with China on a broad range of political, economic and development issues and have contributed to major infrastructure projects, including the installation of two Canadian CANDU nuclear reactors in Quinshan as well as work on the Three Gorges Dam. In addition, Canada provides China with access to the world's largest market through the North American Free Trade Agreement.

While there is some bilateral investment between both countries, there is enormous untapped potential. As minister of international trade, it is my responsibility to help put in place an infrastructure that will galvanize commercial flows between both countries. That's why Canada and China are working on a foreign investment protection agreement, enhancing air service between both countries, and deepening our co-operation in the natural resource and energy field.

Canada has the technology and resources to help China achieve its economic destiny and, as our past indicates, we have every intention of being a partner in the future. With a superior healthcare system, stable competitive financial sector, world-class communications and transportation infrastructure, and abundant natural resources, Canada is an excellent investment destination.

It is clear that our two nations offer a wealth of opportunity to the world. From the economic dynamism of China, to the strength and stability of Canadian economy and business, our two countries can provide a vibrant partnership to benefit citizens of both nations.

Jim Peterson is Canada's minister of trade.

A Global Paradox

As Canada celebrates Commonwealth Day and *la Journée Internationale de la Francophonie*, Chad Gaffield ponders the relevance and importance of the two organizations while member states weigh the benefits of economic integration against the desire for cultural sovereignty

The continuing reconfiguration of national and political boundaries and alliances is a surprising feature of our times. In the light of history, it was only a moment or two ago when everyone thought the world would soon be neatly divided into distinct and sovereign countries. And these countries were expected to look increasingly similar as modernization slowly but surely swept over the globe. Did anyone predict that the early 21st century would be characterized by competing forces of globalism drawing people together on the one hand, and profound cultural, religious and political forces driving us into separate, sometimes hostile camps on the other?

The month of March provides an occasion to reflect on such questions as we celebrate Commonwealth Day and *La Journée Internationale de la Francophonie*. Both represent the forces that try to draw the world together while preserving local identities.

Canada is one of a handful of countries in both associations, and here the word Commonwealth still conjures up images of British imperialism despite the fact that national self-determination is one of the pillars that now support the organization. The notion of the Francophonie currently resonates much better in Canada although efforts to bolster the French language certainly do not generate enthusiasm from sea to sea to sea. What often gets overlooked is that both organizations have changed in keeping with the changing times, and their priorities now converge in many ways. The key difference remains language. English is the sole working language of the Commonwealth while the promotion of French is a priority for the Francophonie.

What is perhaps most surprising about current geo-political reconfigurations is that they are underpinned by opposing rationales, one view favouring integra-

tion as a way to achieve national objectives, the other separation. For example, the emergence of the European Union reflected the increasing conviction that economic growth depended upon the integration of neighbouring national

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economies. Not that long ago, the creation of specific national currencies (and then passports and so on) was seen as essential to sovereignty.

This belief has largely given way to a new confidence that national identity does not depend on such trappings. But at the same time as the EU was offering a new model of continental integration, the rationale of separation underpinned the creation of new European countries that clearly prized their ethnic, cultural and linguistic heritage. One conclusion might be that economic forces now propel societies toward international unions while

socio-cultural preoccupations can drive them apart. These competing forces explain why the increasing use of English as the working language of the EU is now raising profound questions about personal and collective identity.

The examples of the Commonwealth and the Francophonie offer a different way to think about how historic ties and identities might lead to an improved quality of life. The dropping of "British" from the Commonwealth's official name following India and Pakistan's independence in 1947 was part of a shift that de-centered London in favour of former colonies that spoke of freedom and equality, and paid little heed to the original British connection.

Among the Commonwealth's 53 members (and the organization does have its share of strange friends – it's hard to imagine the similarities between Pakistan and Australia; Gambia and Grenada), Mozambique became the first without historic ties to Britain to join in 1995 and francophone Cameroon followed soon thereafter. Talk is mostly about democracy, human rights, and social development, and it's no surprise that Commonwealth Day 2005 has the slogan "Education – creating opportunity, realizing potential."

The social and cultural objectives of the Commonwealth are similar to some of the ambitions of the Francophonie with the exception of language. From its early days in 1970, the centre of the Francophonie was in the former French colonies and the association now includes more than 63 countries and governments on five continents. Like their Commonwealth counterparts, the members of *L'Agence Internationale de la Francophonie* emphasize the importance of teaching and research as well as democracy, peace and human rights. However, not only are the members of the Francophonie explicitly linked by their use of



ALAN KING

the French language, they are also committed to its preservation and promotion. In his message concerning this year's celebrations, the secretary general of the organisation, Abdou Diouf emphasizes "toute la richesse de la diversité de nos cultures..." (translation: all the richness of our diverse cultures.)

In the late 19th century, some observers in Canada agreed with a common prediction that English was becoming the language of the world through its role in international commerce. By the mid-20th century, dreams of the future took this

sentiment further in predicting that everything from fertility rates to social structures were converging on trails blazed by western societies. In this view, a global culture was emerging as societies around the world increasingly pursued similar objectives "our (western) way."

The experience of recent decades has called such predictions into question, and the daily news offers stark reminders about the vast differences in cultures and economies around the world despite continued noise about the power of globalization. Commonwealth Day and *La*

Journée Internationale de la Francophonie could prompt us to think about how we see differences such as those of language and culture relating to values that we view as universal, and why we think the world's experiment in diversity versus globalism will – or will not – lead to democracy, human rights and peace worldwide.

Chad Gaffield is a history professor at the University of Ottawa and the 2004 recipient of the J.B. Tyrrell Historical Medal given every two years by the Royal Society of Canada.

Two Multitudes

In Defence of the Commonwealth

By David Reddaway



Every March, people in the member states of the Commonwealth celebrate Commonwealth Day. But does the Commonwealth do any good for anyone? Does it make a difference?

Some argue that the Commonwealth is an anachronism from Britain's colonial past, with little relevance to the modern millennium; a talking shop that doesn't deliver any real benefits. Have they got a point? I don't think they do. Nor, clearly, do all the governments who choose to

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ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT STATES
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continue to be members: 53 countries covering vast areas of the globe, from Africa to Asia, from the Pacific to the Caribbean, from Europe to North America; 1.8 billion people – nearly 30 per cent of the world's inhabitants – with populations of member countries ranging from India with more than one billion, to Tuvalu with just over 11,000. The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of independent states who think it's in their interests to be members and who see the organization as a force for good. And today's Commonwealth doesn't have "British" in its terms of reference, even if it did emerge from an increasingly distant imperial past.

It is on this basis that the Commonwealth has demonstrated its resilience and relevance, evolving all the time as a modern, innovative body whose members work collectively to improve the quality of people's lives worldwide. They work to foster democracy; and to promote human rights.

Of course we've had disagreements and divisions – that's inevitable in any family. We'll almost certainly have more. But we stick together as a group because we share a belief that the challenges that face all nations today, among them poverty, climate change, HIV/AIDS and terrorism, can best be tackled through international co-operation, and because we believe that the Commonwealth, talking and working together, can play a valuable part in this effort.

So, Commonwealth representatives meet regularly to discuss how best to make progress on this agenda which, in real terms, means how to change people's lives for the better. The Commonwealth can bring a unique perspective to that effort, drawing together people from big and small countries (60 per cent of its members are small states), from the developed and developing world, and from land-locked countries and island states. The Commonwealth draws strength from the fact that we are joined together by a shared history and common working language, similar systems of law, public administration and education, and shared values. Also noteworthy is that every member, regardless of size or wealth, has an equal voice in discussion and decision-making.

The Commonwealth is like a painting of strong, vibrant colours, full of dynamism and diversity. The challenge is how best to tap and channel these strengths.

To meet this challenge, each year the Commonwealth chooses a theme on which to focus. This year, education is the theme. There are nearly 75 million children in the Commonwealth who lack access to basic education. These children clearly need schooling to make the most

of their opportunities. Education will help safeguard the vulnerable. It will raise awareness of democratic values and social justice. As a leading Commonwealth educator has said: "If we continue to leave vast sections of the people of the world outside the orbit of education, we make the world not only less just, but also less secure". Difficult to argue with that. And good, from a Canada-based viewpoint, to see the important work being done by the Vancouver-based "Commonwealth of Learning" to raise education standards across its member countries.

So, we are right to celebrate Commonwealth Day. The Commonwealth is a force for good. Its members should not be shy about making full use of it to help build a stronger international community and a more secure, just and prosperous world.

David Reddaway is the British High Commissioner.

The Francophonie does more than promote French

By Daniel Jouanneau



On March 20, international day of the Francophonie, we will be celebrating our language and the ties that bind 120 million francophones around the world.

The Francophonie brings together countries that share French as a common language – 53 member and associate States and 10 observers. Policy decisions take place at the summits, which occur every two years, and gather together the heads of state and

government. The IOF is run by a secretary-general who is elected by the heads of state and government. A ministerial conference takes place each year, and the High Council of Francophonie sits permanently as consultative body.

From the beginning, the governments of Canada, Québec and New Brunswick have played an active role within the IOF.

Originally built around a linguistic denominator with various cultures, the Francophonie was the first international organization to forge the concept of cultural diversity. In less than 10 years, it has become a useful and necessary player on the global stage. Recently, it has discovered new ambitions and expanded its mission to promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

The Francophonie plays, henceforth, an important political role in promoting peace, in keeping close contact with the

also expect negotiations for a new Convention on Cultural Diversity to be completed before the end of the year. In addition, next December, the WTO Ministers will be in Hong Kong for the final phase of the Doha round.

In a divided world, the Francophonie brings together, through a common language and shared values, countries from the five continents and from all levels of

development. It is a privileged forum for exchanges and co-operation on the great questions of today's world. It carries in that an ideal and a hope. Through dialogue, friendship and respect for each one's diversity, it contributes to more justice and more solidarity in our world.

Daniel Jouanneau is the French Ambassador.

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LINGUISTIC DENOMINATOR WITH
VARIOUS CULTURES, THE FRANCOPHONIE
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ORGANIZATION TO FORGE THE CONCEPT
OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY.**

United Nations, the African Union, and other regional organizations, in processes of mediation and conflict resolution. It also offers support for free elections.

In more recent years, the organization has placed development at the heart of its action. Without being an international financial institution, it can be a catalyst and a lever, in particular by helping its members access international financing.

As it gains influence and an effective plan of action, the Francophonie needs to look ahead. That is why, during the last summit, it adopted a strategic 10-year plan, that will allow it to play a greater role in the debates of our time.

The year 2005 will be decisive. The next G8 summit, in Gleneagles, under the British presidency, should give a boost to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and to the fight against climate change. Heads of state and government the world over will meet in September in New York to draw up a first assessment of the accomplishment of the Millennium Development Goals and complete the United Nations reform. We

GLOBAL VILLAGES

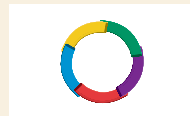
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LA FRANCOPHONIE



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The increasing role of parliamentary diplomacy

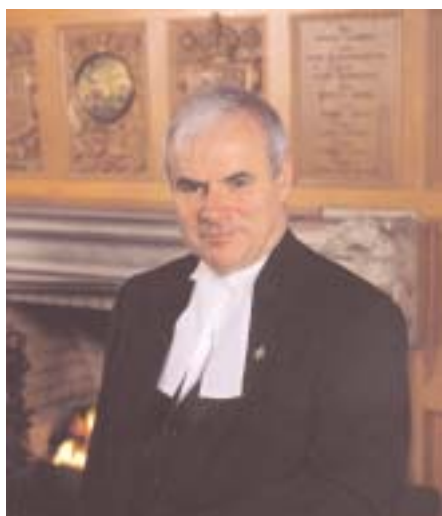
By Dan Hays and Peter Milliken

While interparliamentary relations have always been an integral part of the work of the Parliament of Canada, they have been given heightened importance and profile now thanks to the increased interdependence of nations in our global environment. As speakers, we are most often seen presiding over deliberations in our respective chambers or playing a role in the administration of our houses. What is perhaps less well known is the role we play in fostering diplomatic relations with other parliaments and countries.

Parliamentary diplomacy is an important complement to the diplomatic initiatives undertaken by the executive branch (the government) in our federal political system. It will receive even more attention now that we find ourselves in our first minority parliament situation since 1979. What follows is a brief description of how we as speakers — and all senators and MPs — contribute to interparliamentary relations, specifically the promotion of democracy, good governance and of the Canadian parliamentary system on the international scene.

Parliamentary Associations and Interparliamentary Groups: Canada's international parliamentary relations are carried out in part through parliamentary associations and interparliamentary groups. Though their activities and objectives may vary, the 12 associations to which the Parliament of Canada belongs, share similar characteristics. They promote the country's interests abroad on a continuing basis, operate on multilateral and bilateral levels, and are composed of members of the Senate and of the House of Commons.

Members meet regularly. At annual meetings they elect executive committees to coordinate and direct activities with their bilateral counterparts, or with the international secretariats of the multilateral organizations to which they belong. Each association has a secretary responsible for its day-to-day operations.



Peter Milliken, Speaker of the House of Commons



Dan Hays, Speaker of the Senate of Canada

PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY IS AN IMPORTANT COMPLEMENT TO THE DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN BY THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH (THE GOVERNMENT) IN OUR FEDERAL POLITICAL SYSTEM. IT WILL RECEIVE EVEN MORE ATTENTION NOW THAT WE FIND OURSELVES IN OUR FIRST MINORITY PARLIAMENT SITUATION SINCE 1979.

The Joint Interparliamentary Council (JIC) is responsible for determining budgets and administrative policy relating to parliamentary associations. Specifically, the council determines the level of funding to be distributed within the limits of the total allotments approved by the appropriate Senate and House of Commons committees.

In addition to 12 parliamentary associations, there are four official interparliamentary groups, and a number of unofficial ones, that operate within the Canadian parliament. These groups aim to strengthen relations between Canadian parliamentarians and those in the countries concerned and to foster mutual cooperation and understanding between

nations. These groups organize meetings and working luncheons for their members and, from time to time, welcome parliamentarians or officials from the different countries involved. Interparliamentary groups receive no funding. Their sole source of revenue is the membership fees they receive from individual parliamentarians.

Parliamentary Exchanges: The Parliament of Canada establishes and maintains relations with other parliaments, ranging from the simple exchange of information to formal visits conducted on a reciprocal basis. Such "parliamentary exchanges" enhance ties with other countries and facilitate exchanges of ideas, values, knowledge and experience. Parliamentary exchanges include our visits abroad as speakers of the Senate and the House of Commons, as well as visits to Canada by our foreign counterparts.

More specifically, an official visit can be described as a visit by a speaker-led foreign delegation officially invited by the speaker of the Senate and the speaker of the House of Commons. Official outgoing visits are initiated by an invitation of a speaker from another parliament. The result will be one of us leading a del-

egation of Canadian parliamentarians abroad. Such delegations are made up of members representing all political parties recognized in the chamber of the speaker leading the delegation, a key consideration in a minority government.

Parliamentary exchanges also include symposiums on the Canadian parliamentary system for senior officials from other parliaments around the world. For example, the Parliamentary Officers' Study Program is an opportunity for senior staff from other parliaments and Canadian provincial and territorial legislatures to learn about the Parliament of Canada. In this seminar, the three partners of the Parliament of Canada (the Senate, the House of Commons and the Library of Parliament) offer participants a chance to observe, discuss and exchange views with senior Canadian parliamentary officials on the various procedural, administrative and research services provided to parliamentarians. Held in English or French, the program comprises presentations, question-and-answer periods, opportunities to network, as well as site visits. The seminar is offered twice a year, in the spring and fall, over the course of nine working days.

Protocol Events: Courtesy calls to ambassadors and other foreign dignitaries allow us to participate personally on the diplomatic scene. These meetings can be highly effective given their intimate and confidential nature. They differ from another activity that we greatly enjoy: the annual receptions we host for the members of the diplomatic corps. These events afford an opportunity to all participants to network while learning more about Canada and our parliamentary system.

Other protocol-related activities include official events held on Parliament Hill, including welcoming of foreign heads of state and government or other senior parliamentary dignitaries; addresses to parliament by visiting head of state; ceremonies recognizing special events and arranging for all other special high-level parliamentary events.

Parliamentary Conferences: These are an excellent mechanism for a large number of parliamentarians to meet and exchange ideas. The Parliament of Canada regularly hosts such gatherings. For example, in the fall of 2004, Canada hosted the 50th Annual Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. This conference, for which Ottawa, Quebec

City and Toronto shared hosting duties, welcomed more than 600 delegates.

Given Canada's history as well as its geographic location, international affairs are conducted on a number of fronts: the Commonwealth, Francophonie, NATO, through traditional links with Europe and with the United States, but increasingly with Mexico, Central and South America, the Asia-Pacific region and Africa. It is not surprising that like us, parliamentarians are equally active in these areas and share our hope that these activities will continue to flourish in the future.

The initiatives outlined above are supported by the International and Interparliamentary Affairs Directorate of the Parliament of Canada.

Dan Hays is Speaker of the Senate of Canada. **Peter Milliken** is Speaker of the House of Commons.

For more information, consult the new links that are now part of the parliamentary website at www.parl.gc.ca. Alternatively, email IIAD@parl.gc.ca or phone (613) 943-5959.

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Introducing the Tetouan Ladies Orchestra

By Jennifer Campbell

Culture is a springboard for all other co-operation between countries, explains Moroccan Ambassador Mohamed Tangi as he offers mint tea and a tour of the art he's brought from Morocco to hang in his Aylmer home. In addition to the handful of paintings from his personal collection, he shows some works that belong to his government and that stay in the residence.

But the one he likes best is his own, a painting by a woman he says will someday be internationally recognized. The artist goes by one name, Meftaha, and in this creation five women sit on traditional Moroccan cushioned benches, each playing an instrument.

"My wife and I come from a small city in Morocco called Tetouan, on the Mediterranean coast and this city has the country's first national school of fine arts. It's also one of a few cities that has a music conservatory," Mr. Tangi explains. "And, it was the first city to have an all-ladies orchestra.

"It's called the Tetouan Ladies Orchestra and these ladies are part of it," he says, pointing to the painting.

Mr. Tangi favours it partly because it shows professional female musicians, colourfully dressed and seemingly happy. Two play the violin, holding it upright on their legs, treating it as a lap-cello. One plays the lute while another plays a "tar," an instrument that resembles a tambourine. The fifth lady plays the derbouka, a conga-like drum, tucked under the arm and beat with the other hand.

"Since September 11, people have spoken about the clash of civilizations and cultures and some propagate the idea that in Islam, women are oppressed, that it condemns music and that any artistic expression is forbidden," he said. "But by showing this painting, I bring proof that all this is wrong."

In the permanent collection, works by Farid Belkahia, who paints on sheepskin using natural products such as henna and charcoal, would fetch a fortune. Lassan El Glaoui is another star. A diplomat before he picked up the paintbrush, his paintings of Arabian horses and horsemen are sought the world over. The residence has two.

As he talks about his country's culture, Mr. Tangi pulls out a book called *Art and*



Moroccan Ambassador Mohamed Tangi says culture can be a vehicle for other forms of co-operation between countries.

Diplomacy. He finds it amusing that he's being profiled in a similarly titled feature, *The Art of Diplomacy*. "I think we might have to sue," he says with a laugh.

The book, produced by his country's current foreign minister, is a compilation of paintings involving diplomats. It includes, for example, a painting by a Brit named Seymour Lucas, which depicts Moroccan ambassador Mehdi M'Nebhi, presenting his credentials to King Edward XII.

Jennifer Campbell is editor of *Diplomat*.


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The hypnotic charm of Cairo

By Margaret Dickenson

“...conditions are such that one could easily dust three times a day.” This comment from a factsheet about Cairo drained the excitement from our nine- and 11-year-old daughters’ faces. Understandably so: They were responsible for all the dusting in our home at that time.

Our two-year posting to Egypt, between 1979 and 1981, was our favourite “family” post. It was where we first experienced the hypnotic charm of the Middle East which seems to accumulate in one’s soul, never to be forgotten. We can still feel the Egyptian sand between our toes. We long to take another ride on the sometimes cranky camels at the Pyramids, smell the spices, peruse the leather and incense of the Khan Khalili Bazaar, taste the pungent Arabic coffee or mint tea, see the majestic Nile dotted with elegant feluccas and hear the echoing call to prayers from the graceful minaret of the local mosque ringing through spaces super-saturated with buildings, people, donkeys, sheep, goats and traffic. For us, Cairo is still nothing short of a mysterious and infatuating ether suspended in an exotic mix reflecting modern life while offering remnants of the Pharaonic era.

There was so much that fascinated us – the continued use of traditional forms of dress, pottery, woodwork, modes of transportation, the wearing of numerous gold bangles even by the poorest.

And then there was the food. Here, we first tasted mango, pomegranate, persimmon and okra. In an “alley” restaurant equipped with simple picnic tables, we discovered delicious Arabic dishes – baba ghanoush, tahini, tabbouleh, falafel. Usually, we had little room left for the fragrantly spiced grilled lamb kebabs, chicken, shrimp or fish, all piled high on an extravagant bed of flat-leaf parsley. However, no-one could resist the decadently creamy Um Ali (“Mother of Ali”) dessert.

Pigeon was a delicacy. The birds were raised in palatial pigeon apartment towers for both their meat and their droppings – a natural and valuable fertilizer for the vegetable patch.

No matter where we ate in Egypt, we encountered tasty local flatbread. Heavy



MARGARET
DICKENSON

subsidies made the bread, distributed through neighbourhood kiosks, incredibly inexpensive. A chap on a bicycle, wearing a flowing galabiah, supplied our kiosk. With one hand on the handlebars, he used his other hand to balance a pyramid of bread arranged on a door-sized platform. When the inevitable mishap occurred, he would simply pick up the bread from the sandy street and continue on his way.

Despite having five very productive mango trees in our garden, the first year we only tasted the ripened fruit purchased on the local market. Our gardener, an aspiring entrepreneur, had convinced us that as our mangoes ripened they fell to the ground and were quickly infested with worms. His story worked until one day I came upon him selling bushels of mangoes to the very shop where I made my purchases.

We didn’t have any date trees, but fresh dates were also available at this same shop. To my husband’s delight, olives came in a dozen varieties, sizes and colours, ready to be ladled out of huge wooden barrels.

When it came to cooking, I dreaded using and changing the beaten-up gas bottles. They also had a tendency of running out in the middle of a dinner party. One night when Larry was away, the gentle whistle of a leaking gas bottle actually awoke me. Terrified, I ran down our street to get a friend to help me carry the bottle into the garden, open the valve and let the gas escape. The next day, our Egyptian cleaning lady assured me that she had always checked the incoming gas bottles for leaks. Puzzled, I asked her how. “With a lit match” was her confident reply. I promptly put an end to that well-intended but dangerous technique.

Egypt’s mangoes and dates inspired me to create the following recipes. Enjoy.

Margaret Dickenson hosts “Margaret’s Sense of Occasion, a Rogers TV series which airs in September.” (www.margaretsenseofoccasion.com)

MACADAMIA MANGO SOUP



PHOTO: FROM THE AMBASSADOR'S TABLE

This is a wonderful, thick soup with true mango flavour. My secret is the strategic additions of heavy cream, white wine, pear liqueur, orange juice, ginger in syrup and coconut extract; but it is the soft crunch of chopped macadamia nuts which makes the soup exquisite. It may be served as part of a lunch or dinner menu. When served in shot glasses or tiny cups (e.g., sake cups), it becomes a perfect canapé soup for receptions. Makes about 2 3/4 cups (700 mL) or almost six half-cup (125 mL) servings.

1 1/2 cups (375 mL) coarsely chopped mango flesh*
2/3 cup (170 mL) heavy cream (35% fat)
1/2 cup (125 mL) dry white wine
2 to 3 tbsp (30 to 45 mL) pear liqueur
3 tbsp (45 mL) orange juice
3 tbsp (45 mL) coarsely chopped macadamia nuts, divided
1 tbsp (15 mL) finely chopped ginger in syrup
2 drops** coconut extract
Basic Sugar Syrup*** to taste, optional

Purée mango flesh in a blender. Transfer to a medium size bowl. Stir in cream, wine, pear liqueur and orange juice. (Sieve if mixture seems to contain fibers.) Stir in 2 tbsp (30 mL) of macadamia nuts, ginger, and coconut extract. If necessary, add sugar syrup according to taste (i.e., 1 tbsp/15 mL or more).

Place in an airtight plastic container and refrigerate overnight or at least for several hours, allowing flavours to develop. (Note: The soup may be stored refrigerated for up to 3 days or frozen for months.)

Serve Macadamia Mango Soup chilled. If desired, garnish with remaining chopped

macadamia nuts or according to personal taste (i.e., puréed kiwi flesh, drizzles of heavy cream).

* This amounts to two mangoes (if they weigh 12 oz or 350 g each). Mangoes must be ripe.

** i.e., less than 1/8 tsp or 0.6 mL. Avoid adding too much extract.

*** To make the Basic Sugar Syrup, dissolve 1/2 cup (125 mL) of sugar in 1/2 cup (125 mL) of water in a small saucepan over medium-high heat and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and allow mixture to boil gently until it is reduced to about 2/3 cup (170 mL). Store the sugar syrup refrigerated in a well-sealed glass jar for up to several weeks.

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GINNED DATES



PHOTO: "FROM THE AMBASSADOR'S TABLE"

Served with coffee, Ginned Dates always prove to be a special surprise. It is best to use unpitted whole dates which naturally retain their attractive shape; however, you should caution guests about the pits. Makes about 50.

1 lb (500 g) dates, whole and unpitted (excellent quality)
1/4 cup (60 mL) gin
1/4 cup (60 mL) vodka

Rinse dates carefully under gently running cold water; drain well. Place dates in a plastic container with a securely fitting lid; add gin and vodka. Cover tightly; turn gently to bathe dates. Refrigerate, turn occasionally and allow flavours to develop over at least several days before serving dates.* Serve Ginned Dates chilled or at room temperature.

* Ginned Dates retain their quality for months; their flavour only improves. If desired, add more alcohol over time.

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Dancing with Ditz

By Margo Roston

Otto Ditz is prepared to put his best foot forward at the this year's version of the Viennese Winter Ball at the National Gallery.

For the Austrian Ambassador, the best foot is his right foot, put forward for a traditional Austrian waltz.

But there's a problem.

"We start with the right, but here you start with the left," he laughs as he gets ready for one of the major social events of the Ottawa season. In his recently re-decorated Rockcliffe home, staff are moving tables and chairs and setting up to receive ball-gowned and tuxedoed guests for Austrian wine and nibbles before an army of limousines sweeps up he and his wife Maureen, along with their guests, for a stunning, old-world evening of dancing and dining.

Nonetheless, he'll be nimble on his feet as he welcomes 400 guests, thanks the debutantes (including his 17-year-old daughter Charlotte) and their cavaliers for dancing the Polonaise, and then



PHOTO: DYANNE WILSON

Austrian Ambassador Otto Ditz has adapted nicely to Ottawa, even if Canadians put their left foot first when starting the waltz.

whirls his wife around the dance floor.

It's Mr. Ditz's second ball in Ottawa, but just one of many he's attended over the years in different countries. No slouch on the dance floor, he learned Austria's national dance at school where waltzing was taught as an extra subject. Viennese balls are not just a part of dancing season in Austria, they have become one of the country's most recognized and charming exports.

"There's a ball in Russia and in Washington and New York," he says, all places where he has been posted. But never in Saudi Arabia, the location of his last appointment, he notes with a smile.

Mr. Ditz is also no stranger to Canadian winters. He was minister/counselor at the Austrian embassy here from 1986-1989, and Mrs. Ditz is from Toronto.

"There is a wonderful story about how we met," she tells me while watching her husband and daughter doing a fancy polka at the ball. They were both students in Paris in the '70s and met while Mrs. Ditz's aristocratic French boyfriend was out town. When he returned and found out there was a new man in her life, he challenged Mr. Ditz to a duel.

"He was serious," laughs Mrs. Ditz, but it never happened. Maureen married Otto in 1977 in his home town, a tiny village near Vienna.

Mr. Ditz admits that much of his work is cultural and he enjoys the embassy's longstanding association with the Thirteen Strings Chamber Orchestra, supported both by the ball and through a fundraising garden party and concert on the residence grounds each year.

"We bring music. With language and literature it is more difficult, but there are often requests for chamber music groups," he says. "Everyone understands good music."

On the first anniversary of his posting here, Mr. Ditz says he's very fond of Ottawa.

"I like it very much. It is cultural, it has color and lots of things happening." And he loves cross-country skiing. "Ottawa is as good as it comes. You can't complain."

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Margo Roston is Diplomat's culture editor.

How to bring your own bottle in Ontario

The Ontario legislature has updated the liquor licence act, making steps to “bring liquor legislation into the 21st Century”. Beginning Jan. 24, Ontario restaurants may choose to apply for a rider to their current Liquor Licence that would allow guests to bring their own wine (BYOW) for a corkage fee of the restaurant’s choosing. The Ontario government will also implement a program where restaurants can re-seal an unfinished bottle of wine for guests who wish to take home leftovers. This is an initiative I, as a restaurateur and sommelier, support whole-heartedly.

According to Rui Manuel Estevão, the communications director for Consumer Minister Jim Watson’s office, “Restaurants are still responsible for not over-serving their customers – regardless of where the bottle was purchased. When the new legislation comes into effect, public etiquette will dictate that the restaurateur is handed complete control of any bottle that enters the establishment. Whether the bottle is bought at the establishment or brought to the establishment, restaurant staff is responsible for opening and serving the wine. Once the bottle is professionally resealed at the restaurant, it must be transported by the consumer in accordance with current highway traffic laws. Much like a visit to a regular LCBO store, the consumer is then responsible for transporting the sealed bottle home – without opening it, ‘en route’.

BYOW has been in place for 18 years in Québec with great success. It is also available in Alberta, New Brunswick, Australia, New



STEPHEN BECKTA

PHOTO: PAUL COUVETTE

York, and dozens of other jurisdictions around the world. “It’s time that Ontario consumers and restaurateurs have the same positive opportunity as other diners around the world,” Mr. Estevão said.

Will this change dining in Ontario dramatically? Not at all. Alberta is the most recent province to adopt BYO legislation and only five per cent of restaurants have

WHETHER THE BOTTLE IS BOUGHT AT THE ESTABLISHMENT OR BROUGHT TO THE ESTABLISHMENT, RESTAURANT STAFF IS RESPONSIBLE FOR OPENING AND SERVING THE WINE.

signed on. I think a few more will sign up in Ontario, but it will most likely be a patchwork of individual rules and fees that vary wildly by restaurant. The key here is that you need a full liquor license to offer this service so, unlike Québec, the idea of bringing in a bottle of Yellowtail Shiraz to your local pizza place or entry-level Greek restaurant won’t happen I’m afraid. However, some nicer restaurants will be offering this service under their own terms. My restaurant, Beckta dining & wine, will be allowing diners to bring their own wine on Sunday and Monday nights for a \$20 corkage fee per bottle. This covers the costs of nice glassware, linen and staff needed to serve guests well in a fine dining establishment.

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Beckta dining & wine, Sun/Mon, \$20
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Fiori’s Ristorante, Fri/Sat, \$25
Rasputin’s Folk Café, everyday, \$7
Red Lobster on St. Laurent, everyday, \$10

When I worked in New York City, where BYOW has been legal for some time, I saw first-hand how the system worked. Here are a few things to consider:

- Bring out that “special” bottle for an anniversary or birthday to have some wonderful food matched with that wonderful wine.
 - Always call the restaurant first to inquire if they offer this service, what the corkage fee is and let them know of your intentions.
 - Avoid bringing in bottles that are already on the restaurant’s wine list.
 - Always tip based upon the full price the dinner would have been, should you have bought a wine from the restaurant (the servers perform the same services in both cases).
 - If you have a good connection with the server / manager / sommelier, offering them a taste goes a long way.
- Cheers!

Stephen Beckta is the sommelier and owner of Beckta dining & wine in Ottawa (www.beckta.com).

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Pakistani pleasures

By Ghazala Malik

Having fun in Pakistan is synonymous with eating well. Checking out restaurants is a favourite pastime people. Since there are no authentic Pakistani restaurants in Ottawa, most of us rely on



Ghazala Malik

our own kitchens for indulgence. A meal can be as simple as steamed rice and lentils or, as exotic as “shahi beryani” and “Mughlai korma”. Of course, one needs the necessary ingredients for home cooking. Luckily there are a few shops that cater to our needs. For “halal” meat and Pakistani Basmati rice one can visit “Sultan’s”, on 2446 Bank St. For spices, lentils, flour and certain indigenous vegetables, there is “A to Z Food Centre” at 489 Rideau St. and “A and M Food Market” on 382 Rideau St. The best thing nowadays is that one can buy pre-mixed masalas (spices) imported from Pakistan for all dishes. They are packaged by “Shan” and “National” and are available at the above shops with easy-to-follow instructions. Many trained and experienced chefs have turned to them for conven-



PHOTO: SAM GARCIA

Stores, such as A to Z Food Centre on Rideau Street, stock a number of traditional Pakistani ingredients.

ience. In addition, there is a large variety of ready-to-cook snacks which are delicious and easy to serve in minutes. Different kinds of breads are also available in convenient packs as are Pakistani desserts. Happy eating!

Ghazala Malik is married to Pakistani High Commissioner Shahid Malik.



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The Canadian report that changed the colonial world

By Laura Neilson Bonikowsky

Two nations warring in the bosom of a single state" was Lord Durham's assessment of the relationship between Lower Canada's French Canadian and British Canadian communities. The British government had sent John George Lambton, Earl of Durham, to British North America as governor general after the Rebellions of 1837. Durham was charged with determining Canada's "form and future government."

The rebellions arose from the discontent of the people of both Upper and Lower Canada with the colonial government, which was considered an impediment to the economic and social development of the colonies. In Lower

**RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT
WAS REJECTED, BUT THE BRITISH
GOVERNMENT ACCEPTED THE
RECOMMENDATION OF
UNIFICATION AND, IN 1840,
THE ACT OF UNION CREATED A
"SHOTGUN MARRIAGE"
OF UPPER AND LOWER CANADA
TO CREATE THE UNITED
PROVINCE OF CANADA.**

Canada, the rebellion expressed French Canadian nationalism in the face of an expanding English presence. In Upper Canada, it attempted to overthrow the power of the Family Compact and establish democratic, American-style government. The rebellions failed, but they made an impression on the colonial administration.

Lord Durham's report made radical proposals, for which there could be no consensus. The two main recommendations, based on his analysis of the causes of the rebellions, were responsible government and the union of Upper and Lower Canada. He criticized the Family Compact of Upper Canada, which, he said, was "a petty, corrupt insolent Tory clique."

Responsible government would see the executive drawn from the majority

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and minimizing America's influence. It would minimize the power of the oligarchy and bring market forces to bear in Upper Canada.

In Lower Canada, Lord Durham saw the problems as ethnic, not political. He recommended that the French Canadians, whom he described as "a people with no literature and no history," be assimilated by a union of the Canadas, with the English-speaking majority dominant. An ethno-centric Englishman, Durham believed that assimilating the Catholic French to British Protestant values would benefit the French.

Responsible government was rejected, but the British government accepted the

party in the assembly, thereby stimulating colonial expansion, strengthening imperialism

and recommending unification and, in 1840, the Act of Union created a "shotgun marriage" of Upper and Lower Canada to create the United Province of Canada.

Lord Durham's report was condemned by the Tory elite of Upper Canada. Montreal Tories supported unification because it would overcome French Canadian opposition to plans for economic development. French Canada opposed the union, determined to maintain its nationality. The goal for many nationalists in the east was not the attainment of responsible government but the dissolution of the union.

Though controversial, the Durham Report marked a watershed in Canadian independence. Responsible government was implemented by 1848.

Laura Neilson Bonikowsky is the associate editor of The Canadian Encyclopedia. See www.historica.ca for more.

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THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM UPPER RIGHT: Atis Sjanits, Ambassador of Latvia, right, presented National Revenue Minister John McCallum, with a commemorative medal in Ottawa. The medal was given for his work as defence minister in helping Latvia become a member of NATO. • The Viennese Ball • The National Capital Commission offered a tour of Winterlude sites followed by a brunch sponsored by the Westin. Lynette Murray, wife of Barbados High Commissioner Glyne Samuel Murray, cozies up to the Ice Hogs. Japanese Ambassador Sadaaki Numata and his wife Kyoko Numata pose in front of the Japanese entry in the ice sculpture contest. M. Amadou Diallo, ambassador of Senegal, and his wife Zineb Boutaleb, take in the sights with their son Malick. (photos: Sam Garcia) • Cuban Foreign Minister Phillipe Roque, second from left, poses with Bangladeshi High Commissioner Rafiq Khan, left, Ugandan High Commissioner Ceci Taliwaku and Kenyan High Commissioner Peter Ogego at a reception following a ceremony where all three Canadians, also appointed to Cuba, presented their credentials. (photo: Kenyan High Commission) • Juyena Khan, wife of Bangladeshi High Commissioner Rafiq Khan, hosted a luncheon for the Asia-Pacific Spouses' Group in February. Shown here are (left to right) Datin Cherry Ignatius, wife of Malaysian High Commissioner Dennis Ignatius; Alimaa Laagan, wife of Mongolian Ambassador Galsan Batsukh; Janette Kelly, wife of New Zealand High Commissioner Graham Kelly; Pattamavadee Devahastin, wife of Thai Ambassador Snanchart Devahastin, Mrs. Khan; Vietnamese Ambassador Thi Hoi Nguyen; Kyoko Numata, wife of Japanese Ambassador Sadaaki Numata, and Nini Win, wife of Myanmar Ambassador Aye U. (photo: Bangladesh High Commission)



THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM UPPER LEFT: More than 44 embassies got together to take part in a folkloric fashion and dance show at Library and Archives Canada. The Fondation du centre psychosocial pour enfants et adolescents d'Ottawa, a Vanier charity that helps children, received more than \$20,000 from the event. Shown here: Chinese dance group, Lithuanian dancers, Royal Thai dancers, and designer Richard Robinson with "Khadija" modelling his World Peace dress. • Saudi Arabian scholar Norah Bent Hamad Ben Abdul Aziz Al-Jameeh spoke on "The Saudi Arabian experience as part of the integrated global human culture" at the University of Ottawa. She's shown here with Saudi Arabian Ambassador Mohammed Al-Hussaini. (photo: Sam García) • David Leighton, chairman of the National Arts Centre, and out-going U.S. Ambassador Paul Cellucci at an event Mr. Cellucci hosted to drum up interest in the upcoming production of the opera *Filumena*, which is coming to Ottawa as part of the National Art Centre's Alberta Scene April 28-30. (photo: Fred Cattroll) • Newly arrived ambassadors generally pay a courtesy call on the mayor. French Ambassador Daniel Jouanneau and Mr. Chiarelli (right). Egyptian Ambassador Mahmoud F. Al-Saeed and Mr. Chiarelli (right). (photo: City Hall) • Out-going Sri Lanka High Commissioner Geetha de Silva and Maria Minna, co-chair of the Canada-Sri Lanka Parliamentary Friendship Group, at a memorial service on Parliament Hill. (photo: Arun Pandya)



Educating citizens of the world

Imagine you're in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia during the holiday season where you've just won a hard-fought world debating championship, competing against teams from prestigious universities in more than 300 countries. How would you celebrate?

Jamie Furniss climbed into a suffocatingly hot hazardous-materials suit to help transport tsunami victims for identification and burial in Thailand. His team mate, Erik Eastaugh, came back to Canada to mobilize friends and organize an around-the-clock marathon fundraising event to support the overseas relief efforts.

Moved by the tragedy, the two University of Ottawa law students showed themselves to be citizens of the world. They exemplified a commitment to international collaboration that universities like ours are working to nurture throughout the communities we serve.

Indeed, for generations, the University of Ottawa has been developing programs and solidifying relationships with overseas partners to ensure our students and faculty are connected to the global society in meaningful ways.

We offer exchanges with more than 150 universities in 36 nations. We engage in international development assistance activities to support human resources training in the developing world. And we host academic and cultural events that promote cross-cultural understanding and research ties.

Last fall, for example, when the Canadian Conference on International Health



GILLES PATRY

convened on campus, we signed a memorandum of understanding with Kenya Methodist University in support of the "ACANGO Initiative." (ACANGO is short for "academic-NGO".)

Building on the leadership of our dean of medicine, Dr. Peter Walker, and the director of the Centre for Global Health, Dr. Peter Tugwell, we are developing ways for academics and non-governmental agencies to effectively pool their resources. This collaboration – one among many – is pursuing improved care and management of HIV-AIDS in Kenya, Thailand and Malawi, and improved health for homeless, low-income and recent immigrant populations here in Ottawa.

Who benefits from such initiatives?

Everyone involved – at home and abroad. Faculty and staff members are enormously enriched by their international contacts, their exposure to other cultures, and their collaboration with researchers and agencies working in completely different environments. In turn, the institutions and organizations with which we partner gain from our knowledge and expertise, while learning about Canada's multicultural and democratic values.

At the same time, University of Ottawa students who participate in our programs are much better prepared – personally and professionally – to live and work in

our increasingly small and interconnected world. Their options include studying computer science in Taiwan, engineering in Germany or Japan, and law in countries from France to Mexico. In addition to learning the knowledge and tools necessary to compete in a global economy, they gain perspective and cross-cultural sensitivity that orients them to becoming responsible global citizens.

In this respect, the University of Ottawa is uniquely positioned. Offering courses in two important languages has placed us at the forefront of producing well-trained, multilingual graduates. Our location in the national capital is also an asset: we are able to draw on our established links with embassies and NGOs specializing in international issues.

Today, about six per cent of our 32,000 students come to us from other countries – close to 150 – and we're looking to increase that number. We support our international students through a mentorship program that helps them integrate into campus life and Canadian society. We invite those who remain in Ottawa over the winter holidays to share seasonal celebrations in Canadian homes. And every year during our campus International Week, the entire community has the opportunity to sample cultural performances, lectures and food from the variety of countries represented on campus.

The University of Ottawa's international dimensions are integral to who we are. Vision 2010, our strategic plan, lays out the values that define and drive us. Key among these is our stated commitment to deliver a wide range of nationally and internationally recognized programs at all levels of study. In addition, to training global citizens, we seek to help define the role Canada can play in the global economy.

In the process, we will need to remain flexible enough to adapt to the rapid changes of our increasingly complex and dynamic world. Intellectually accomplished and internationally conscious students like Jamie Furniss and Erik Eastaugh are poised to help us do just that.

Gilles Patry is president and vice-chancellor of the University of Ottawa

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How to fix Canada's immigration system

Someone once compared Canada's immigration department to an airline that just keeps booking tickets, even when all of the seats have been taken.

In one respect, the system works. It brings in the 230,000 or so newcomers that Canada wants each year.

But in another sense, the system is largely dysfunctional and forces tens of thousands of applicants in the skilled worker and family class to wait in line for years at a time. Canada just keeps taking their applications, even when officials know it could be years before some of these would-be immigrants make it to our shores.

Public attention to Canada's immigration system goes in fits and starts. We've been in another fit recently. And even some top immigration department officials - who insist the department doesn't entirely deserve its awful reputation - concede the time has come for Canadians to make some crucial decisions about what kind of immigration program they want.

In essence, the current system just can't cope with the volume of applications from people around the world who qualify under our rules to come here as independent immigrants or in the family class. And within Canada, more and more cases bounce out of an inflexible system and end up being dealt with by the immigration minister and MPs, creating concerns about political interference.

And yet, year after year, the immigration department succeeds in bringing in the 230,000 or so new immigrants that the government wants. A majority of those cases are processed in months, not years. The cases that take longer skew the average and capture the headlines.

The dysfunction is that the same system leaves hundreds of thousands in a frustrating backlog because we don't have the capacity to process their applications - or can't take them in without blowing up the fine balance between immigrants chosen for their skills and those selected for their family ties.

The government plans to bring in between 220,000 and 245,000 newcomers this year. About 60 per cent will be independent immigrants chosen for their



ALLAN THOMPSON

skills and the remaining 40 per cent will come in through the family class or as refugees and humanitarian cases.

But in the skilled-worker and family-class categories, there are nearly three quali-

fied applicants in the backlog for every one that is admitted. With more resources, or a policy shift, the department could speed processing of family class applications from spouses, children, parents and grandparents.

But time and again, Canadians have said they want a focus on independent

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FOR THEIR FAMILY TIES.

immigrants who are chosen for their skills and who have demonstrated they integrate and contribute to the economy more quickly.

How do we balance those competing interests?

Do we expand the family class and speed up processing, or shrink it and get rid of the backlogs - the way Australia has - by telling parents and grandparents up front that there is little chance they will succeed in gaining admission to Canada?

There hasn't been a politician yet who wants to make that choice and live with the consequences.

Instead, officials use red tape and delay to put an artificial cap on the family-class immigration stream, arbitrarily putting parents and grandparents in a secondary category behind spouses and children.

So family-class applications continue to accumulate like water behind a dam - and officials know this is a problem. Some say it is a legal dispute waiting to blow up.

Should we stick with a processing system that keeps applications in the queue indefinitely - creating enormous backlogs and frustration - or pursue a radical change in approach?

One proposal - given high level consideration some years ago, then set aside as unworkable - would radically change the way Canada selects immigrants, particularly in the independent class. What would happen if we only brought into the pipeline the applications that were likely to go forward within a short period of time?

A new model would look like the one used by universities to accept students. Would-be immigrants would apply to be part of Canada's annual intake. The most qualified applicants would get a reply within months that they were on their way to a new life and Canadian citizenship.

Those who don't make the cut would be told to try again next year, if they so desired. Their file would be closed and removed from the system. There would be no backlog.

And all this discussion about the system for processing immigration applications doesn't even touch upon another crucial area: How could Canada improve the system for getting new immigrants settled in Canada and break down barriers to employment?

Canadians should seize on the current focus on the immigration system to grapple with some of these tough choices.

Allan Thompson is an assistant professor of journalism at Carleton University. He writes a weekly column for the Toronto Star.

The Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia Supports Young Canadians

His Excellency Ambassador Mohammed Al-Hussaini and his wife Mrs. Iman Atallah hosted a very successful fund-raising dinner and recital to benefit the Canadian Music Competitions (CMC) on November 5th at the ambassador's residence. The funds raised from this enjoyable event attended by more than 70 guests will be used to support student participation in music competitions as well as to fund scholarships. Since its inception more than 40 years ago, the non-profit organization has been instrumental in promoting and developing an appreciation for music and the arts. Elizabeth Tang, President of CMC Ottawa, said the dinner and recital was "a truly memorable event."



Musicians gather at the home of Ambassador Al-Hussaini and his wife Iman Atallah, from left to right (back row) Gilberte Leclerc, Ambassador Al-Hussaini, Silvie Cheng, Tu Mach, Amièle Joannisse, Yannick-Muriel Noah, Parveneh Eshghi and Iman Atallah; (front row) Stanley Leong and Kerson Leong.



Guests enjoying the music recital at the home of the ambassador of Saudi Arabia and his wife.

In October, His Excellency Ambassador Mohammed Al-Hussaini hosted fourteen high school students from the Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes region of Ontario. The students learned about Saudi Arabia and the role of an ambassador. Ambassador Al-Hussaini enjoyed the opportunity to meet with the students and to share some of his many diplomatic experiences. Barry Devolin, MP from the riding of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, organized the visit as part of his "A Capital Experience" program for students from his riding. Mr. Devolin said the students found the visit "very valuable."



Ambassador Al-Hussaini (left) and Member of Parliament, Barry Devolin (top row, second from right) with high school students at the Royal Saudi Arabian Embassy in Ottawa..



Fourteen students from seven different high schools in the riding of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock visited Ottawa with MP Barry Devolin as a part of the first Capital Experience program organized by Mr. Devolin. The students are seen in front of the Parliament buildings with Mr. Devolin (far right).

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