

Presenting Credentials

By John T. Holmes

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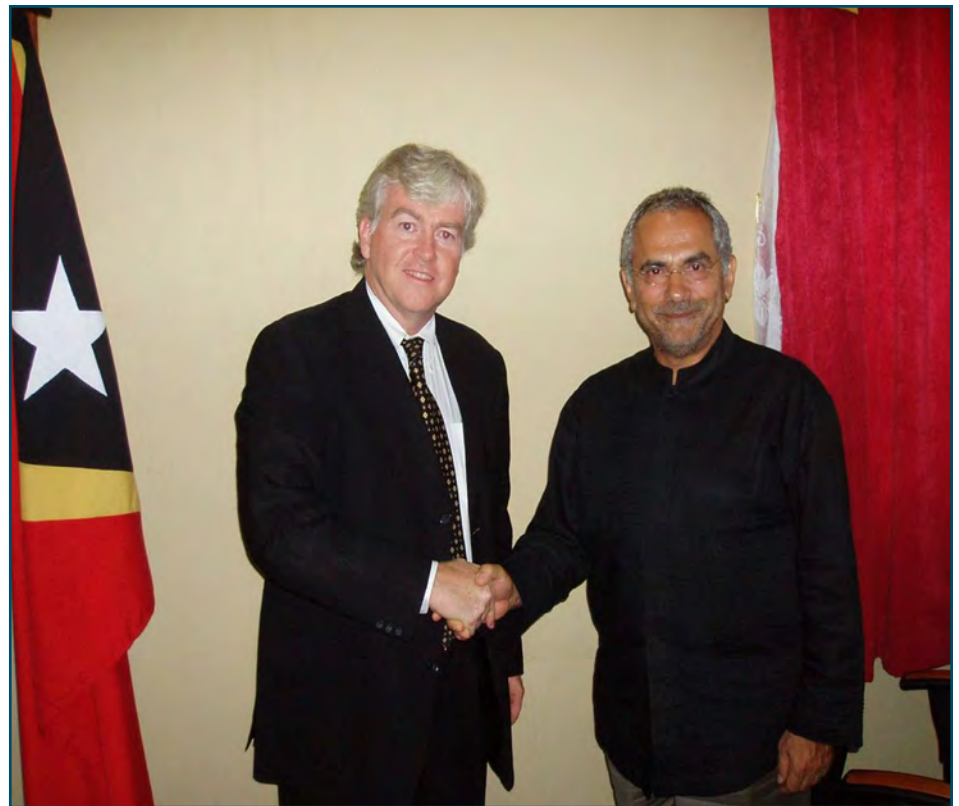
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Presenting credentials to Ramos-Horta.

For many diplomats, the opportunity to participate in the presentation of credentials ceremony with the new head of mission is a highlight of their career. Meeting kings and queens, presidents and prime ministers is not something that happens every day. For the lucky few chosen to be the head of mission, the ceremonies are often the crowning achievement of a career. Ask any former HOM about their experience and you are likely to hear a detailed, and possibly long-winded, story of the time they

presented their credentials to some head of state. They will describe, as applicable, the incredible feeling of being picked up by the local protocol officials in a special vehicle (horses and carriages are an increasingly rare instance, but are still used in Canada on occasion), the escort by motorcade to the head of state's palatial offices, the inspection of the military guard, the playing of 'O Canada' and, finally, the handover of the official paperwork formally accrediting them as Canada's representative in that country.

I was incredibly privileged to participate in nine of these credentials ceremonies over the course of my career. Some, such as my meeting with King Abdullah II of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in 2003, the first time I presented my credentials to a sovereign, and the ceremony with President Abdullah Gül of Türkiye in 2012, went according to plan with precise timing, colorful pageantry and fascinating discussions on national and regional politics. Some of the other ceremonies required a degree of courage, patience, adaptability and, well, diplomatic tact.

In 2005, I was appointed non-resident Ambassador to Iraq, the first Canadian head of mission to be accredited since the first Gulf War in 1991. I was pretty excited, but my spouse, not so much. As Carol recounted in her memoirs, *Triple Sex & Other Tales from an Ambassador's Wife*, on being informed that I had been chosen to represent Canada in Iraq, she retorted, "From what, a list of one?" Carol had a point.

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The situation in Iraq was anything but normal. As of 2004, Canada operated a small mission within the UK's diplomatic compound, led by a small cadre of brave and outstanding colleagues. However, the decision to appoint an ambassador was delayed until Iraq approved a new constitution and elected a new president.

My colleagues in Baghdad had everything arranged by the time of my arrival in September, 2005. A security detail met me at the airport and whisked me by a British helicopter into the Green Zone in downtown Baghdad, flying low over the Tigris River and rising only to skirt the many bridges traversing the river. Despite the risks, I was thoroughly enjoying myself until the pilot set off a series of exploding flares, ostensibly to disrupt a possible missile strike. But I suspect the aim was to entertain the troops who laughed at my shocked reactions.

The next day, I went to the Foreign Ministry to drop off a copy of my credentials. My colleague and I were loaded into an armoured vehicle with two heavily armed security guards in the front seat, and four more in the chase vehicle behind us. Although the Foreign Ministry was less than a kilometre outside the Green Zone, the security protocol required enhanced protection.

Sporting a bullet-proof vest over my suit and carrying my military helmet, I trudged through the halls of the non-air-conditioned Foreign Ministry to hand over copies of my credentials to the deputy minister. Fortunately, President Talabani's office was inside the Green Zone, so that I could dispense with the military gear during our meeting.

I expected my next ceremony, in Jakarta, Indonesia, to be a return to normality, but that wasn't the case. I arrived in August, 2006, hoping that I could present my credentials to President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono quickly, so that I could commence my official

duties. However, the President had had a busy summer dealing with several deadly terrorist attacks, as well as ongoing relief efforts in Aceh, following the 2004 tsunami, and in Yogyakarta, following the volcanic eruption of Mount Merapi. I chafed at the bit as the Foreign Ministry was unable to provide a timeline for the ceremony and as the number of ambassadors awaiting their ceremonies grew.

Finally, in November, we secured a date and were asked to assemble at a hotel near the Presidential Palace to facilitate logistics. It was a departure from the usual practice of being picked up at the official residence. But I didn't mind as I was relieved that the ceremony was finally happening. At the hotel, the Chief of Protocol informed us that, because of the number of colleagues presenting their credentials, we would be transported to the Presidential Palace in mini-vans, rather than in individual vehicles. I heard a murmuring of discontent among my colleagues at the affrontery. The other elements of the ceremony were clearly outlined with one exception. Despite requests for clarification, the Chief would not, or could not, assure the ambassadors that we would have an individual meeting with the President. Before a full-scale rebellion arose, we were ushered out to the vans.

I was shepherded towards the last of the vehicles, a decrepit-looking van, badly in need of a new paint job. The driver had the side door open and was struggling to move the middle seat so someone could sit in the rear. Looking around, I noticed that I was the youngest, and fittest, of my colleagues, so I volunteered to sit in the rear. The motorcade left in a cacophony of sirens and roars from the police escort and zoomed along a wide boulevard decorated with flags. It was a spectacle I would have enjoyed had I not been bouncing along in the back of a van with shock absorbers that had seen better days. As we pulled into

the palace compound, the protocol officer told us that we would have to hurry to get in position for the start of the ceremonies. The motorcade screeched to a halt in a laneway between the palace and the assembly point and everyone jumped out to get into position.

Everyone, that is, except me. I waited for the driver to come back and move the seat blocking my egress, but he had mysteriously disappeared. I tried to flip the catch myself but it refused to budge. I rocked the seat in frustration, but that only got me sweatier. I yelled “menolong” (help!), one of the few Bahasa Indonesian words I had learned, but there was no one around to hear my plaintive pleas. I was on my own and had to figure this out myself. I crawled over the seat in front of me, twisting my body to squeeze past the two headrests, rolling over onto the seat below. Unfortunately, my momentum carried me right over onto the floor. I managed to extricate myself from the van but then realized my suit jacket and pants were covered in dust and dirt. As I frantically brushed

myself off, an irate protocol officer scurried up and told me I was delaying the start of the ceremony, as if this whole fiasco had been my fault.

The ceremony itself went well. But, as I expected, there would be no individual meeting with President Yudhoyono. We were ushered into a conference room and told that the President would go around the table greeting us and briefly discussing bilateral relations. As the first few ambassadors began the conversation with the President, I scanned my notes to decide which of the talking points I would use in the limited time available. The first point was not, in fact, a bilateral issue. Ottawa wanted me to encourage Indonesian efforts to mediate in the North Korean missile crisis. I glanced at my colleague to the right, the new North Korean Ambassador, who was sporting a tiny picture of the then Supreme Leader, Kim Jong Il, on his lapel, and I thought that I might skip that talking point.

The collective meeting of ambassadors (a gaggle, a murder, a horde?) had one advantage. I was able

to hear the priorities of colleagues not all of whom focused on the usual trade and political imperatives. The Greek ambassador, for example, had two priorities: translating Homer’s *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* into Bahasa and convincing the Indonesians to change their law on religions to recognize the Orthodox church. To my surprise, and President Yudhoyono’s, there were about 1000 Indonesians who belonged to the Orthodox church. I later learned that the Greek envoy’s goal was not taken with the same degree of seriousness by the Indonesians. To the former’s consternation, a senior Indonesian official told the Greek ambassador that his co-religionists should just indicate they were Roman Catholic or Protestant when applying for their national ID card. When the ambassador told me of this discussion, he muttered that he would choose Hinduism or Buddhism before he would identify with the other Christian faiths (I think he might have said heresies).

A few months later, I was off for my first visit to Timor Leste to present my credentials there. The tiny country in the Indonesian archipelago achieved independence in 2002, following a long conflict with Indonesia. The struggle had also produced bitter rivalries within the independence movement, which erupted in internecine violence in 2006. By 2007, calm had been restored to the island, with the election of the Nobel Peace Prize laureate, José Ramos-Horta as President. I was excited to meet the legendary independence leader, who was known to so many Canadian colleagues who met him in the halls of UN buildings in Geneva and New York as he promoted Timorese independence. Ramos-Horta, I was told, was intelligent, courteous and rakishly charming, with a mischievous sense of humour.

The Wednesday afternoon credentials ceremony was a modest



The author presenting credentials to King Abdullah of Jordan, September 2003.

affair, featuring a half dozen non-resident ambassadors, most of us from Jakarta. During the protocol briefing, we learned that the government had decided to declare Friday a national holiday, creating an extended period of leave as a result of an important religious festival on the Thursday. This threw all our plans up in the air, as most of the ambassadors planned to meet government officials on that Friday. Leaving early was not an option since there were only two flights a week to Jakarta and the next one was Saturday morning. During our group meeting with the President, I sat there wondering what I was going to do for two days with everything closed. As if reading my mind, Ramos-Horta said that he hoped the extra holiday would allow the visiting ambassadors to get to know Timor Leste, its culture, cuisine and people. Feeling a bit mischievous, I piped up and said that since our calendars were now free for the next two nights, we would be available for dinner should anyone wish to invite us. Taking the hint, Ramos-Horta whispered to his staff and then invited us to dinner at his residence on the Friday night.

My chutzpah certainly paid off. It was a magical evening, set in the gardens of Ramos-Horta's hillside retreat with views of the capital city of Dili and the surrounding bay while peacocks and other exotic birds entertained us with their songs. Ramos-Horta, a renowned raconteur regaled us with stories of the struggle for independence. What was amazing was that there was no rancour or bitterness in the tales of torture and mistreatment at the hands of the occupying Indonesia forces. The President had chosen to take the high road and forgive his former enemies, a policy that was both practical, given Timor Leste's reliance on its powerful neighbour, and inspiring.

By the time I got to the Philippines in 2016, I was a seasoned hand at presenting credentials, but nothing

before could prepare me for the meeting with President Rodrigo Duterte. Although still in his first six months of office, Duterte was already an international phenomenon with his notorious drug eradication policy, which essentially involved the police shooting known drug dealers and users. The body count from the campaign was rising rapidly, as were stories of mistakes by the police resulting in the deaths of numerous innocent people. While I was keen to present credentials, I was nervous about raising human rights with the mercurial President, not knowing whether my intervention might be my last. Carol was also invited to the ceremony, which I was both pleased and concerned about. Never shy with her opinions, I warned Carol that I would handle the human rights issue with the President.

The ceremony went well until the moment when the President invited me to a separate room for the bilateral meeting. To our surprise, Duterte invited Carol to join us for the discussions and then proceeded to direct most of his comments towards her, even though I was doing all of the talking. It dawned on me that Carol's *décolletage* may have been the reason for the President's sustained interest. At one point, when I needed to stress a particular concern, I slowly moved my head in front of Carol's bosom so that I could make eye contact with the President. The discussions went well, even when I raised human rights and other sensitive concerns. Duterte was charming and funny, as well as surprisingly humane. He was concerned about my bloodshot eye (which I later found out was a case of conjunctivitis), offering me some Visine which he pulled from his pocket. I later learned from the colleague who followed me that Duterte had joked that the new Canadian ambassador was a boozier.

The one challenge I had during the forty-minute meeting was

understanding the President's comments, given his soft-spoken voice and accented English. In response to my question on China, the President mumbled something about the need to avoid conflict at all costs, given the risks of a nuclear war which would leave us all looking like (I think) 'alien mutants'. On human rights, the President segued into his own experience of having been abused in his youth by a Catholic priest and sought Canada's support for banning the Roman Catholic Church, a proposal on which I demurred. Finally, I got to Canada's trade agenda and mentioned the interest of Philippines Airlines in the purchase of new Bombardier aircraft. The President responded with a rambling story on having visited Montreal years earlier looking to buy a small aircraft and how his then wife had dissuaded him by reminding Duterte of the tragic death of country singer, John Denver.

As we left the Presidential Palace, I instructed the staff who had accompanied me to write down everything they heard, or thought they heard. I figured that between the five of us, we could put together an accurate and coherent report. However, I wanted to let Ottawa know as quickly as possible that I had presented credentials and was now official. So I typed up a brief email on my phone and sent it off. After noting the details of the ceremony, I summarized our discussions as follows: "Had an excellent meeting with President Duterte in which we discussed alien mutants, John Denver and abolishing the Catholic Church. Report to follow." ■

John T. Holmes is a former Ambassador to Indonesia, Jordan, Turkiye and the Philippines, and should not be mistaken for other famous or infamous namesakes. Carol Bujau's book, Triple Sex & Other Tales of an Ambassador's Wife is available at Burnstown Publishing or Books on Beechwood.

Une belle époque des relations Canada-Chine

Par Gilliane Lapointe

Le 13 octobre 1970, après de longues négociations qui ont duré 19 mois à Stockholm, le Canada et la République populaire de Chine ont établi des relations diplomatiques. Peu après son élection, le Premier ministre Pierre Elliot Trudeau, qui connaissait déjà la Chine pour y avoir effectué deux voyages en 1949 et 1960, avait demandé au ministère des Affaires extérieures d'initier ces négociations. Cette annonce a marqué la fin des relations diplomatiques avec la République de Chine (Taiwan). Une ambassade canadienne a rapidement vu le jour à Pékin et un chargé d'affaires chinois est arrivé à Ottawa en 1971.

Lorsque des délégations chinoises ont commencé à venir au Canada, elles surprenaient parfois leurs hôtes en demandant à visiter la maison natale du docteur Norman Bethune, un Canadien devenu un héros très connu en Chine mais que relativement peu de gens connaissaient dans notre pays. Pourquoi Bethune? Qui était-il? Norman Bethune, né en 1890 à Gravenhurst, Ontario, s'est rendu en Chine en janvier 1938 où il a rencontré Mao Zedong. Mao s'est montré heureux d'accueillir un médecin qui pouvait porter main forte à ses troupes dans le nord-ouest de la Chine où elles s'étaient réfugiées après la Longue Marche et où ses troupes faisaient face à l'armée nationaliste de Chiang Kai-shek au moment où, par ailleurs, l'invasion japonaise battait son plein. Dans la région, les forces de la 8^{ème} Armée de Route étaient très motivées et se battaient avec acharnement, mais les blessures graves étaient fréquentes et, avant l'arrivée du docteur Bethune, les soins médicaux appropriés faisaient sérieusement défaut. Fort de l'expérience acquise en Espagne pendant la guerre civile où il avait, entre autres innovations, mis sur pied



Le discours de M. Sharp à Pékin, avec l'auteur, 1972

des unités mobiles de transfusion sanguine, Bethune ne mit rapidement à la tâche. Dans des conditions particulièrement difficiles où il manquait non seulement de matériel mais également d'aide spécialisée, il a opéré des centaines de blessés pendant de longues heures, jour après jour, et formé du personnel médical pendant plus d'un an et demi. Un jour, il se blessa à la main lors d'une de ces opérations; sa blessure s'infecta et quelques jours plus tard, le 12 novembre 1939 il mourut de septicémie.

Peu de temps après, Mao Zedong écrivit un article à la mémoire de Norman Bethune (Bai Qiu'en en mandarin) dans lequel il faisait l'éloge de l'esprit internationaliste de ce benévole étranger venu du lointain Canada pour aider la Chine dans des moments difficiles. Cet article n'était qu'un des très nombreux de l'écrivain prolifique qu'était Mao. Cependant, pendant la révolution culturelle (1966-76) Lin Biao, le successeur présumé de Mao, entreprit de choisir parmi les écrits de Mao, trois articles que tous les Chinois devaient lire et dont ils devaient s'inspirer pour le bien de la révolution. Un de ces

articles était justement 'À la mémoire de Norman Bethune'. Vers le milieu des années 60, la population de la Chine s'élevait à environ 750 millions et, comme dans tous les pays communistes, l'apprentissage de la lecture faisait l'objet de priorité. Les trois articles les plus lus, appelés en mandarin lao san pian, étaient donc lus et même souvent appris de mémoire par ce qui était à l'époque la plus grande population au monde, une population anxieuse d'obéir aux injonctions de ses leaders.

Au début des relations sino-canadiennes, lorsque les Chinois entendaient le mot Jianada, (Canada en mandarin), cela évoquait automatiquement pour eux le pays de Bai Qiu'en à qui Mao avait rendu hommage dans son article. Les agents du ministère affectés à l'ambassade du Canada à l'époque se rappellent avoir rencontré des Chinois, même très jeunes, fiers de pouvoir réciter en entier le fameux article. Les quelques délégations autorisées à voyager au Canada demandaient qu'une visite à la maison natale de Bethune à Gravenhurst fasse partie de leur itinéraire. Dans les années 70, la maison appartenait à l'église presbytérienne et le pasteur, son épouse et ses enfants y habitaient. Une maison familiale normale pour l'époque dans laquelle il y avait, entre autres choses, des affiches des Flintstones accrochées aux murs mais absolument rien à la mémoire de Norman Bethune.

Le Canada se devait de poser un geste pour reconnaître la grande importance attachée à Bethune par les Chinois. Lors de son voyage en Chine en août 1972, le premier d'un Secrétaire d'État aux Affaires extérieures du Canada, Mitchell Sharp a posé ce geste. Après avoir rencontré son homologue



M. Sharp au Musée Bethune à Shijiazhuang, avec l'auteur à droite; derrière Mitchell Sharp et avec des lunettes, Ralph Collins, premier ambassadeur du Canada en Chine.

Ji Pengfei, après avoir été reçu par le Premier ministre Zhou Enlai et avoir inauguré la première grande exposition canadienne à Pékin, M. Sharp s'est rendu à Shijiazhuang, capitale de la province du Hebei où est situé l'Hôpital international de la paix Norman Bethune ainsi qu'un musée qui lui est consacré. Là, devant une magnifique statue du médecin canadien, il a exprimé sa fierté de voir la mémoire de Bethune si bien reconnue en Chine, et prononcé un discours par lequel il annonçait la décision du Gouvernement canadien de reconnaître la signification nationale historique de l'activité humanitaire de Bethune aussi bien en Espagne qu'en Chine. Au même moment, le ministre canadien de l'Industrie et du Commerce, Jean-Luc Pepin faisait une annonce semblable à Gravenhurst en présence de son homologue chinois Pai Xiangguo.

C'est ce geste qui a mené en 1973 à l'achat de la maison natale de Norman Bethune par le Gouvernement canadien et sa transformation progressive en musée. Le musée a été inauguré le 30 août 1976 en présence d'une importante délégation chinoise, du Ministre du

Transport Otto Lang et de plusieurs personnalités canadiennes. Parmi ces personnalités, Chester Ronning, ancien diplomate canadien a ajouté une touche spéciale. Ronning, fils de missionnaires, né en 1894 à Fancheng dans la province chinoise du Hubei, était entré aux Affaires extérieures en 1945 et avait été affecté dans des missions canadiennes à Chongqing et Nanjing fin des années 40 et début des années 50. C'est lui qui avait dû fermer la mission canadienne à Nanjing lorsque l'engagement de l'armée chinoise pendant la guerre de Corée est intervenu et a mis un terme à l'intention du Canada de reconnaître la République populaire de Chine. Depuis cette époque, il aspirait au rétablissement de relations diplomatiques avec la Chine. Le jour de l'inauguration, Ronning âgé alors de 82 ans a pris la parole pour dire sa joie de voir, enfin, le rapprochement tant désiré et il l'a fait en chinois avec l'accent particulier du Hubei qu'il avait appris comme enfant à Fancheng ce qui lui a valu des applaudissements nourris de la délégation chinoise.

Pendant la rencontre avec le Ministre Ji Pengfei, M. Sharp a

soulevé la possibilité d'échanges d'étudiants entre le Canada et la Chine. Après l'établissement de relations diplomatiques avec le Canada, de nombreux autres pays avaient donné suite. La Chine avait donc besoin de former du personnel bilingue. Toutefois, pendant la Révolution culturelle, certaines autorités chinoises étaient quelque peu réticentes à envoyer de jeunes étudiants à l'étranger de peur de les exposer à l'atmosphère plus 'libre' des universités occidentales. A notre grande surprise, ils ont accepté assez rapidement et les premiers étudiants chinois sont arrivés à Carleton en mai 1973; les étudiants canadiens sont arrivés à Pékin à l'automne de la même année.

Sur le plan personnel, j'ai été très touchée lorsque, suite à cette rencontre en sortant du Palais de l'Assemblée du Peuple, M. Sharp, toujours aussi aimable et attentif, m'a demandé à moi, toute jeune agent mais seule parmi la délégation canadienne à parler mandarin, de monter dans sa voiture et de lui raconter ce que j'en avais tiré.

Dans le train qui nous menait de Pékin à Shijiazhuang, en préparant la traduction du discours de M. Sharp, il fallait trouver une traduction de Gravenhurst, un mot contenant des sons qui n'existent pas en mandarin. Avec l'aide d'un agent du Protocole, nous avons opté pour "Ge Lei Wen He Si Te".

Depuis 1976, le musée Bethune, dont les opérations sont gérées par Parcs Canada, continue à recevoir de nombreux visiteurs mais, depuis quelques années, les relations Canada-Chine s'étant sérieusement refroidies, il y a certainement moins de visites de délégations chinoises à Gravenhurst. ■

Gilliane Lapointe, ex-agent du service extérieur, accompagnait M. Sharp lors de sa visite en Chine en 1972, a agi comme interprète à Pékin et Shijiazhuang, et assisté à l'inauguration du musée Bethune à Gravenhurst en 1976.

Israel-Palestine: I Still Have Hope

By Jon Allen

In September 2023, Jake Sullivan, Joe Biden's National Security Adviser, said at an Atlantic Monthly conference: "the Middle East is quieter now than it has been in decades". What a horrifying difference a couple of months made.

The attack and its aftermath

The October 7 horrific attack by Hamas in southern Israeli settlements and the ensuing war in Gaza in which up to 22,000 Palestinians have been killed has brought untold death and injuries to largely innocent civilians.

I have been emotionally torn over the past three months as I hold in my heart my feelings of sympathy for the many thousands of dead and injured innocent Palestinians, on the one hand, and for the families of the dead and injured Israelis and the hostages still being held, on the other. Understanding and dissecting the Hamas attack, this war and its antecedents may be complicated, but sympathizing with the death and destruction that it has produced on both sides is not.

I've also been distressed by the hate, extremism, and rampant anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and anti-Palestinian and Arab racism that has been generated by so many people, especially the young demographic between 18 and 35, many of whom don't understand that this a complex and longstanding conflict and that there is plenty of blame to lay on both sides.

Prior to the Oct. 7 attacks, Israel was already in crisis. The country had just experienced 39 weeks of massive protests against its far-right-wing government's efforts to



Photo: Courtesy Rozana

Women for Women project

push forward a judicial coup, and various religious reforms. Missing, for the most part, from the protests, however, was any attention to the treatment of Arab Israelis in Israel or of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Israel will continue to be an imperfect democracy as long as it discriminates against Arab Israeli citizens of Israel, and it will continue to violate international law as long as it occupies the West Bank and Gaza and expand its illegal settlements.

In the West Bank, those settlements were expanding faster than ever before, and new illegal outposts were being constructed. Settler violence against Palestinians was rampant, including what people on both sides of the Green Line called a pogrom in the Palestinian town of Hawara. Over 100 Palestinians had been killed by IDF soldiers and settlers since the beginning of 2023, while

over 30 Israelis were murdered in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and in parts of the West Bank in terrorist incidents.

Ironically though, prior to October 7, it was eerily quiet in the Gaza Strip where the Netanyahu government was under the impression that the Gaza strip and Hamas were under control.

The massacre by Hamas terrorists resulted in the largest number of Jewish civilians killed in one day since the Holocaust. The horrific nature of the attack, the numbers of innocents killed and injured, and the abject failure of the Israeli defence and intelligence apparatus that day are key to understanding the almost universal support in Israel, even until today, for a decisive and no-holds-barred military response. And it is in part why rationale arguments for a more cautious and strategic way forward were rejected.



Nurses from Israel and the West Bank, Specialist Nursing Hub Project

Suffice it to say, the attack was extremely well planned. Some 2200 terrorists entered southern Israel, and Hamas fired some 3000 rockets in one day. The ease and success of the Hamas mission – killing 1200, wounding 3300, and taking some 240 hostages, seems to have gone beyond Hamas' wildest dreams.

Israel's response

After three and half months of war, three months of bombing and leveling approximately half of the buildings of northern Gaza, the IDF has encircled Gaza City and the tunnels where they believe Hamas military and political leaders had been hiding. Approximately 23,000 Palestinians are believed to have been killed and over 50,000 injured. Those who have survived have been largely starved of food, water, medicines, and fuel. Approximately 1.3 million Gazans have moved to the south, creating a massive humanitarian crisis of its own. Gazans are now exposed to multiple health shocks as well as bombs and artillery fire.

Rozana Canada and its affiliates in the US, the UK, Australia, Germany, Israel, and Palestine, raise funds and implement projects each of which involves both a Palestinian and an Israeli component.

While acknowledging Israel's right to self-defence and sympathising with the trauma Israelis are suffering, and understanding that fighting inside Gaza, a densely populated urban area where Hamas uses the civilian population as human shields, leaves Israel in a difficult place, these factors do not justify the siege and collective punishment that Israel initially imposed; nor the trickle of humanitarian supplies that it has permitted to enter Gaza up to now; nor the massive number of deaths

and injuries of innocent Palestinian men, women and children.

Israel can't order 1.3 million Palestinians to move to the south of the Gaza Strip and continue to bomb there. It should realize that its actions will further radicalize Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank and Muslims worldwide. It must realize that eliminating an ideology is far more difficult than killing Hamas' leaders and destroying its infrastructure if that is possible. And it should have realized that its bombing campaign and the massive death toll only increases Hamas' popularity, allows it to declare victory and paints Israel as a pariah globally.

So, What's next?

In Israel, I predict that Bibi Netanyahu will be ousted soon after the war ends. Some 80% of Israelis want him to resign and hold him responsible for their national trauma.

Hopefully, a new Israeli government will work with the US to install an interim force and eventually a Palestinian governance mechanism. Reconstruction and the delivery of humanitarian aid will be the first priorities.

For the West Bank, the best-case scenario would see new leadership leading to improved governance and new elections. Hamas would not be allowed to participate in any elections. This all will take considerable time, goodwill on both sides time, and patience.

Two things give me hope going forward. First is that the notion of a two-state solution is now very much back on the table. President Biden, Justin Trudeau, EU leaders and former Israeli PMs, Ehud Barak, and Ehud Olmert are all saying that now is the time to give this option a chance. They are joined by hundreds of ex-IDF generals, chiefs of staff, and former heads of the Mossad

and the Shin Bet (Israel's domestic security service). I believe that over time (and it will take time), Israelis will finally realize that a permanent separation from Palestinians is a far better solution than a continuing Occupation.

Four years after the Yom Kippur War, Anwar Sadat spoke in Israel's parliament. The historic handshake between Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat on the White House lawn took place after the first Intifada. No one believed that Apartheid would end in South Africa when it did. No one saw the Berlin Wall falling when it did. No one thought the Protestants and the Catholics in Northern Ireland could make peace after 400 years of fighting. Israelis and Palestinians can also surprise us.

My second ray of hope is the Canadian non-profit that I chair

called Rozana Canada. Our goal is to build trust and respect between Palestinians and Israelis via the health sector. Rozana Canada and its affiliates in the US, the UK, Australia, Germany, Israel, and Palestine, raise funds and implement projects each of which involves both a Palestinian and an Israeli component.

Our aim is to build up Palestinian health capacity by funding the training of Palestinian and Israeli doctors, nurses, and other health professionals and by equipping Palestinian medical teams with Israeli technology to offer primary health care to women and children in remote West Bank villages.

We transport Palestinian patients, mostly women and children, to their medical appointments in Israeli hospitals from West Bank and Gaza checkpoints for their ongoing treatments, e.g., pediatric oncology

and kidney disease. And we train Palestinian and Israeli psychologists in PTSD in children.

Despite the conflict, in addition to supporting our transportation and primary health care projects, we are also continuing to train our 500 nurses and taking advantage of our trained psychologists to provide psychotherapy to currently affected Palestinian and Israeli children.

Rozana is currently running an emergency appeal. If you would like more information and/or wish to donate, please click on the link: <https://www.projectrozana.ca/campaign/10/emergency-relief-appeal> ■

Jon Allen is a former Canadian ambassador to Israel and Spain and is currently a Senior Fellow at the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy and the Chair of Rozana Canada.

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Historique d'un monument dédié au service extérieur

Par Michel Desloges

Tout a commencé le 21 septembre 2013 avec l'attaque terroriste au centre commercial West Gate à Nairobi qui a pris la vie de notre fille Annemarie Desloges, en poste au haut-commissariat, détachée d'IRCC à l'Agence des services frontaliers du Canada.

Au printemps 2014, Madeleine et moi avons assisté en tant qu'invités d'honneur au gala de remise des prix pour les agents des services extérieurs. À cette occasion, nous avons proposé, entre autres, que soit érigé un monument en l'honneur et à la mémoire des diplomates canadiens tombés au service de leur pays. Immédiatement le sous-ministre Daniel Jean, le sous-ministre associé Peter Boehm et le Président de l'Association des anciens chefs de mission (RHOMA), Jacques Roy, se sont déclarés volontaires pour mener le projet à bonne échéance. Depuis, leurs successeurs, nous à AMC, Patrimoine Canada et la CCN menons le projet à terme. Le projet fut à risque d'être remplacé par une murale à AMC, et donc seulement accessible aux employés du ministère.

Mais après des interventions bien ciblées, Ian Shugart, alors sous-ministre aux Affaires extérieures, a confirmé, le 11 juin 2018, le financement et l'emplacement de l'oeuvre d'art.

Le projet a commencé pour la construction d'un monument, mais Daniel Jean dès le début avait été averti que ça prendrait un minimum de dix ans avant que nous puissions entamer les démarches selon les critères de Patrimoine Canada. Ainsi le projet, désormais appelé : « Oeuvre d'art commémorative », gardera la même dédicace malgré son changement de nom.

L'Oeuvre d'art commémorative d'Affaires mondiales Canada sera un hommage durable aux employés du gouvernement du Canada qui œuvrent dans les missions d'Affaires mondiales Canada à l'étranger. Elle reconnaîtra le dévouement et les sacrifices consentis par ces personnes et leurs familles au service du Canada à l'étranger. L'oeuvre saluera et honorera de

façon explicite les employés du gouvernement du Canada qui ont perdu la vie dans l'exercice de leurs fonctions avec Affaires mondiales Canada et au service de leur pays en incorporant leurs noms au sein de l'oeuvre pour que chaque visiteur puisse commémorer leurs sacrifices.

En décembre 2021, on m'a demandé de participer au comité de sélection en tant que représentant des familles. Il y avait un représentant de l'Association des anciens chefs de mission (RHOMA) ainsi que deux architectes paysagistes reconnus et le responsable des expositions de la Galerie nationale. 36 propositions ont été reçues et examinées de janvier 2022 à février 2023, et l'équipe MacDonald a été choisie comme concept gagnant.

L'oeuvre d'art, d'une superficie de 15x40 mètres et d'un budget d'environ \$5 millions, tout inclus, sera érigée sur la pelouse de l'édifice John G. Diefenbaker, au 111, promenade Sussex. Ce site a été choisi parce qu'il appartient



Photo : Polymetis

à AMC et qu'il ne nécessite pas de financement ou d'approbation supplémentaire, ainsi réduisant les formalités administratives. L'oeuvre d'art sera située sur l'espace vide du côté de la cafétéria du bâtiment.

La ministre Joly, en tant ministre de Patrimoine Canada, a approuvé le processus de sélection en 2021 et a donné l'approbation finale du projet

en tant que ministre d'AMC en mars 2023.

La construction débutera ce printemps. Etant donné que cette dernière se prolongera jusqu'en novembre 2024, la cérémonie d'inauguration officielle aura lieu au printemps 2025 pour pallier à des imprévues et des conditions hivernales.

Michel Desloges a pris sa retraite en 2005 après 35 ans avec le Service extérieur. Il a terminé sa carrière en tant que Conseiller et Consul à New Delhi après plusieurs affectations à l'étranger. ■

Pour plus de photos voir POLYMETIS. Ou <https://www.polymetis.net/#/gac-memorial/>



Photo : Polymetis

History of a monument dedicated to Foreign Service

By Michel Desloges

It all started on September 21, 2013, with the terrorist attack at the West Gate Mall in Nairobi that took the life of our daughter Annemarie Desloges, who was stationed at the High Commission, on secondment from IRCC to the Canada Border Services Agency.

In the spring of 2014, Madeleine and I attended the Foreign Service Officer Awards Gala as guests of honour. On that occasion, we proposed, among other things, that a monument be erected in honour and memory of Canada's diplomats who had fallen in the service of their country. Immediately, Deputy Minister Daniel Jean, Associate

Deputy Minister Peter Boehm, and the President of the Association of Former Heads of Mission (RHOMA), Jacques Roy, declared their willingness to bring the project to a successful conclusion. Since then, their successors, those of us at GAC, Canadian Heritage and the NCC, have been bringing the project to fruition. The project was at risk of being replaced by a mural at GAC, and therefore only accessible to departmental employees. But after well-targeted interventions, Ian Shugart, then Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, confirmed on June 11, 2018, the funding and location of the artwork.

The project began as the construction of a monument, but Daniel Jean had been warned from the beginning that it would take a minimum of ten years before we could begin the process according to the criteria of Canadian Heritage. Thus the project, now called "Commemorative Work of Art", will keep the same dedication despite its change of name.

Global Affairs Canada's Commemorative Artwork will be a lasting tribute to Government of Canada employees working at Global Affairs Canada's missions abroad. It will recognize the dedication and sacrifices



made by these individuals and their families in the service of Canada abroad. The artwork will explicitly salute and honour Government of Canada employees who have lost their lives in the line of duty with Global Affairs Canada and in the service of their country by incorporating their names into the artwork so that each visitor can commemorate their sacrifices.

In December 2021, I was asked to participate in the selection committee as a family representative. There was a representative from the Association of Former Heads of Mission (RHOMA), as well as two renowned landscape architects and the National Gallery’s Exhibition Manager. 36 proposals were received and reviewed from January 2022 to February 2023, and the MacDonald team was selected as the winning concept.

The artwork, which measures 15x40 metres and has a budget of approximately \$5 million, will be erected on the lawn of the John G. Diefenbaker Building at 111 Sussex Drive. This site was chosen because it is owned by GAC and does not require additional funding or approval, thus reducing red tape. The artwork will be located on the empty space on the cafeteria side of the building.

Minister Joly, as Minister of Canadian Heritage, approved the selection process in 2021 and gave final approval of the project as Minister of GAC in March 2023.

Construction will begin this spring. As the latter will last until November 2024, the official inauguration ceremony will take place in the spring of 2025 to compensate for unforeseen events and winter conditions. ■

Michel Desloges retired in 2005 after 35 years with the Foreign Service. He ended his career as a Counsellor and Consul in New Delhi after several overseas postings.

For more photos see POLYMETIS. Or <https://www.polymetis.net/#/gac-memorial/>

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Features

On photography

By Victor Rakmil

Landscape photography is a popular type of photography. The subject in landscape photography is the overall scene or a feature of the landscape, for example, a mountain (a point of focus). We are looking for a view that captures the viewer's interest – features that intrigue, stand out, and certainly not a flat image.

The photos here are in black and white to better illustrate the points I want to make. The photos were all taken on the same day at the Mer Bleue Bog in the east end of Ottawa. (The NCC has a good website on the bog: Mer Bleue – National Capital Commission (ncc-ccn.gc.ca).

The first photo shows some common issues with landscape photography.



There is a leading line that the eye can follow, but there is nothing at the end. The sky is not great, but it shows how you can demonstrate motion in a photograph with clouds. Some landscape photographers insist on clouds. They are very nice to have in

most landscapes. I would normally avoid shooting most landscapes on a very overcast day, but it's not a rule.

The second photograph shows how easy it is to improve a landscape by taking a different perspective – in this case a move to the right. Same sky,



but the foreground is more interesting. Landscape photographers are keen on having elements in the foreground, such as rocks, flowers etc.

The third photograph is one I would publish. It has an interesting foreground, sky and leading lines making a nice balanced composition.

You don't necessarily need a wide angle lens (24-35mm). Any wider and you will get some distortion. You can also use a telephoto. The lens is less important than the other technical issues raised below.

Given the range of light, bright sky to dark ground, some photographers use graduated neutral density filters (expensive and finicky to use). The filters are half grey and half clear. These can be used to darken a bright sky, for example. You get a more even exposure, but, depending on the light, you would need to choose between a set of filters to use. Some have special holders that attach to the camera and hold the filters for precision use. The glass filters can be very expensive.

I don't recommend the cheaper screw-on filters; they provide little latitude in a precise capture of what you want, dark or light. It's possible with good software to do virtual neutral density adjusting of a photograph's range of light and dark. Lightroom, for example, has this feature.

High Dynamic Range Photography (HDR) is where a series of shots of the same subject at different exposures are combined to take advantage of the range of resulting light. Stand alone programs exist, but several processing software applications have this feature. The photos shown are HDR shots. Whatever you do in processing, working with contrast is an important element of black and white landscapes.

Another consideration is depth of field, or more accurately hyperfocal distance, that will get all or most of your scene in focus. Shooting at F16 or higher won't necessarily get everything in focus. You have three choices to calculate the hyperlocal distance:

1. A free smartphone app for determining the best setting for the size of your camera's sensor, the length of your lens and f stop for your lens.
2. The cheat I use is to shoot 2/3rds of the way into the scene. or
3. You might want the background or foreground out of focus.

Finding landscapes is probably one of the harder challenges. Here in Ottawa we are lucky; we have the Gatineau, the River and several other places that provide opportunity. Farmland has promise. I am an opportunistic photographer. I went to Mer Bleue to photograph birds, ended up with some nice dragonfly photographs and the landscapes you see here.

I hope the above is helpful and that you find time to experiment with landscapes. If you have any questions please forward them through the Forum and I will be pleased to answer what I can. ■



The CIC Marks 100 Years of International Indigenous Relations

By Ian Ferguson



Photo: Courtesy Wikimedia CC

Image of Deskaheh from The Graphic (a newspaper), 1922.

On November 20, 2023, the Canadian International Council (CIC) arranged an event titled “100 Years of International Indigenous Relations.” A panel of indigenous representatives from the US and Canada took the stage at the Global Centre for Pluralism in Ottawa.

In 1923, Levi General (Cayuga), commonly known as Deskaheh, a traditional Chief from the Grand River travelled to Geneva seeking recognition at the League of Nations. Deskaheh found allies in Ireland, Panama, Persia, Estonia, and the Netherlands. However, Great Britain, with U.S. and Canadian backing, lobbied to deny his request. Deskaheh then went on a speaking tour, with

the support of the City of Geneva, drawing attention to his petition titled “The Redman’s Appeal for Justice.” Some scholars consider his trip a foundational event leading eventually to an international indigenous movement. Deskaheh’s family was harassed while he was abroad, and he was denied re-entry to Canada. Exhausted and ill, he died in the U.S. of pneumonia in 1925, about 5 months after his return from Europe. His family was denied permission to travel to visit him.

In 2023, an exhibition was organized in Geneva commemorating the 1923 event. Display panels were placed outdoors on the Quai Wilson, near the office of the UN High

Commissioner for Human Rights in the Palais Wilson, HQ of the League of Nations 1920-1936. Thirty panels addressed the themes of principles, justice denied, international allies, and anticipation of international indigenous law. Dr. Jolene Rickard (Cornell U.) from the Tuscarora nation, who spoke at the CIC event in Ottawa, curated the exhibition. Other partners included the City of Geneva and the Geneva-based Indigenous Peoples’ Centre for Documentation, Research and Information, known by its French acronym DOCIP.

The current Deskaheh title-holder, Chief Steve Jacobs, travelled from Syracuse for the inauguration in Geneva, and also addressed the CIC event. He noted the political as well as the spiritual dimension of his title and provided an update on current efforts to enhance the status of indigenous governments (i.e. not NGOs) at the UN. In the Q and A session, he was asked about the current population of the Six Nations Confederacy. He stated that his people, the Haudenosaunee (“People of the longhouse”) did not participate in censuses, but cited communities in Canadian provinces and U.S. states as far west as Wisconsin. (Online sources suggest that there are approximately 51,255 persons in Canada and 81,002 in the U.S. who identify as Haudenosaunee.)

Canadian scholar, Grace Li Xiu Woo, who has thoroughly researched the 1923 events, maintains their historic significance and notes: “...if we want to decolonise the future we must first decolonise our understanding of the past.” At the inauguration of the Geneva



The full CIC panel (left to right), Aidan Russell (Métis), CIC moderator; Dr. Jolene Rickard of Cornell University (Tuscarora), Chief “Destakeh” Steve Jacobs; Dr. Sheryl Lightfoot, Carleton University (Anishnaabe) and Chair of the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; the Hon. Brian Francis, N.S. (Mikmaq), Co-Chair of the Senate Committee on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

exhibition, Canada’s Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva, Leslie Norton, spoke in this vein when she stated:

“Canada remains deeply committed to continuing to work with international partners to address colonial histories and legacies of harmful policies, support economic development and well-being, and respect and protect Indigenous rights, including the right to self-determination. It is essential that Indigenous Peoples be heard in international venues, including here in Geneva at the United Nations, so that we may achieve one of the aims of this institution: international co-operation in solving pressing global challenges. Canada is determined to advance work in partnership with others and see this group of partners grow in size and strength, thanks to collaborative efforts towards reconciliation like the one we are gathered to recognize today.”

In the early 2000s, when I was posted in Geneva, Canada’s instructions tended towards toning

down the emerging Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Canada’s stance evolved quickly since then. In 2021, the UNDRIP Act received Royal Assent, providing a roadmap for Canada to work towards implementation of the Declaration with First Nations, Inuit and Métis. The first *UN Declaration Act Action Plan* was released in 2023.

Events around the centenary of this historic trip reveal both the gains made and the remaining challenges to fully integrating indigenous representatives at the United Nations while moving away from European concepts of sovereignty. ■

A Forum board member, Ian Ferguson worked at External Affairs, then DFAIT, from 1972 to 2007, with several assignments related to Africa and the United Nations and the occasional foray into Latin America and the Middle East. Since retirement he has earned an M.A. in Art History at Carleton University and volunteered as a docent at the National Gallery of Canada.

Transatlantic Dialogue

For your convenience, the following are links to You Tube presentations on the Transatlantic Dialogue among Canada, the US and the UK:

<https://youtube/vYbBDbfWKN8>

1st Transatlantic Panel Discussion – The Future of Foreign Policy and its Conduct Post-Ukraine
18 May 2022

<https://youtube/t3NDNItkEQA>

2nd Transatlantic Panel Discussion – Managing Rising Tensions in the Indo-Pacific
26 April 2023

<https://youtube/t3NDNItkEQA>

3rd Transatlantic Panel Discussion – Can the West win over the rest?
14 November 2023

Books in Revue/ Critiques de livres

Beaudoin, Pierre, La vie diplomatique, illustrée

Expliquée, Pierre Beaudoin,
2022, Montréal, 415 pp.
(également disponible en
version électronique)

Par **Gérald Cossette**

Ce livre n'est pas pour vous. Bien qu'il soit écrit avec passion et contienne beaucoup d'information, il remémore des anecdotes qui seront familières à ceux et celles qui ont servi à l'étranger. Il pourrait faire partie de la collection d'AmbCanada qui focalise sur les histoires racontées, dans un premier ouvrage, par les cheffes de poste, puis dans un second, par des agents dont certaines n'ont pas eu le privilège d'être à la tête d'une mission.

Ce n'est pas un carnet de voyage dans le sens où on l'entend normalement. L'auteur nous dit rarement ce qu'il a ressenti ou ses impressions à la vue d'un site ou plongé au cœur d'une situation quelconque. Ce livre est écrit pour le ou la néophyte qui croit que servir à l'étranger n'est que réceptions ou galas. L'ouvrage n'épargne aucun détail dans ses descriptions des événements auxquels a participé l'auteur. En plus des nombreuses anecdotes de voyage, certains chapitres expliquent succinctement les pratiques les plus courantes en diplomatie, que ce soit le rôle des missions à l'étranger ou à quoi servent les réceptions diplomatiques. Le livre a le mérite d'être écrit par quelqu'un qui a vécu longtemps à l'étranger et participé en de nombreuses occasions à des situations difficiles et peu communes. De plus, l'ouvrage est écrit par un

agent consulaire (MCO), ceux-ci étant trop souvent sous-estimés par ceux et celles qui se considèrent étant de vrais diplomates.

L'ouvrage, truffé de photos prise par Beaudoin, est de lecture facile. Chaque chapitre relate une anecdote. Lorsque ces derniers traitent d'une pratique particulière, l'auteur la met en contexte par un exemple concret pour en faciliter la compréhension. Le livre est un peu faible dans son explication de la politique étrangère (théorie de Kissinger sur la logique d'Etat) mais l'auteur ne se gêne pas pour faire des commentaires éditoriaux qui ne laissent pas le lecteur ou la lectrice indifférente à sa position.

Le chapitre le plus intéressant porte sur le retour au Canada, où on y parle des difficultés d'adaptation après un long séjour hors du pays (l'auteur ayant servi dans 10 postes, sans compter Ottawa). Il y compare la vie à l'étranger avec celle des gens qui ont toujours vécus ici, leurs champs d'intérêt, leurs connaissances des enjeux internationaux, leurs préoccupations quotidiennes. Il est évident à la lecture du livre que l'auteur a adoré sa vie dans le service extérieur canadien. Mais dans son chapitre sur le retour au Canada, il omet de dire que la vie en poste c'est aussi la prise en charge de ce que vous êtes par une institution. Il y a toujours quelqu'un pour faire quelque chose pour vous, que ce soit un employé recruté sur place, un agent de voyage ou un agent administratif.

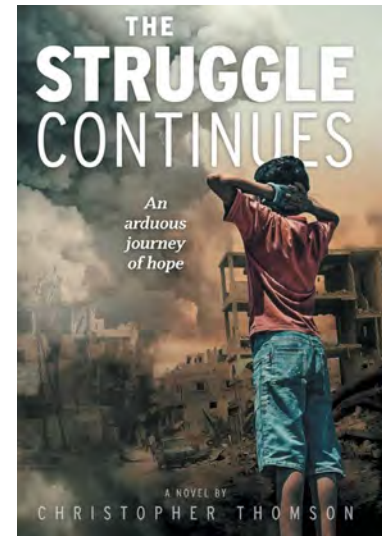
Ce livre est une contribution importante à la compréhension du grand public (et des médias) à la vie diplomatique, objectif du Forum des anciens du service extérieur.

Gérald Cossette est co-président du Forum des anciens du service extérieur canadien et ancien sous-ministre délégué aux Affaires étrangères.

Christopher Thomson, The Struggle Continues - an Arduous Journey of Hope

Victoria: Friesen Press, 2023

By **Hugh Stephens**



Chris Thomson's novel, "*The Struggle Continues-An Arduous Journey of Hope*", reminds us (if we needed reminding) that fighting and destruction have been part of the Middle East story for decades, and that the current violence taking place is but a sequel to many violent events that have taken place in the past, dating back to 1948 and beyond. While the current protagonists, Hamas, were not on the scene in the late 1970s, when this story takes place, Hezbollah, the IDF and the PLO/PLA certainly were, along with several other factions in southern Lebanon, such as the Christian Phalange movement and Major Saad Haddad's South Lebanon Army. At the centre of all this fighting is the future of the state of Israel--and the fate of the Palestinian people. In 2024 the Palestinians are confined to an increasingly moth-eaten West Bank and a zone of destruction in Gaza. In the 1970s, they had been driven out of Jordan and ended up in the weakest state in the region, Lebanon, itself a cauldron of competing warlords, fiefdoms, family feuds and religious rivalries.

Thomson's novel is a story of a Canadian diplomat, two Palestinian families and the struggle that took place in the late 1970s and early 1980s in Lebanon over the presence of large numbers of Palestinian refugees (and armed PLA fighters) in refugee camps scattered on the outskirts of southern Beirut. There is the usual disclaimer about any resemblance to actual persons being entirely coincidental. Nevertheless, there are some striking parallels between the main protagonist, Alex Matheson, and the author.

Alex Matheson is on his first posting, assigned to the Canadian Embassy in Beirut, although he is taking cultural familiarization courses at MECAS (Middle East Centre for Arab Studies) in Shemlan, up in the hills behind Beirut. At that time, this is where young Canadian diplomats posted to the region went for some initial training in local culture and politics. While Alex was there, as regularly happened, fighting flared up between local Lebanese militias, including the well-armed Phalangists, representing the Maronite Christian community, and Palestinian groups. Alex and diplomats from other countries also at MECAS are ordered to return to Beirut, and he returns to his apartment in Raouche, an upscale neighbourhood not far from Beirut's coastal promenade, the Corniche.

That night, Alex and his family are awakened by gunshots being fired in or close to the building. During the fracas, someone takes the elevator to the floor of his apartment and pounds on the door. Alex and his family retreat and don't answer. The next morning, he sees blood stains on his door and when he goes down to the lobby, there is blood everywhere. His neighbour from the floor above, a senior PLO official, had been gunned down. This much of the story is factual, substituting Chris Thomson for Alex. From this

point on, it becomes an amalgam of fictional characters interwoven with (mostly) real events.

In the story, Salim, the son of the assassinated PLO official is selected by the organization to be groomed for future leadership. He is sent to Groton Academy in Massachusetts to study. Meanwhile, Ali, the son of the building's concierge, also Palestinian, has a grittier growing up, moving to Damour, a Christian enclave in southern Lebanon where he grows up fighting with Christian boys and eventually becomes radicalized.

We jump ahead a few years and by now Alex is posted to the Canadian Mission to the UN. (By sheer coincidence, so was Chris Thomson). There, owing to his previous posting to Lebanon, Matheson is assigned to cover Middle East, East Asian and African issues in the General Assembly and Security Council for the Delegation. Sometimes he has to sit in the Canada seat at the UNGA and vote on resolutions (pushing the red, yellow or green button). He works with the Mission's military advisor on peacekeeping issues, since Canada is a contributor to UNIFIL, (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon) the UN force established in 1978 to monitor the withdrawal of Israeli forces that had occupied southern Lebanon. Incredibly it is still there, ostensibly to monitor the "cessation of hostilities". Over the years, UNIFIL has suffered 329 fatalities. In the early 1980s, UNIFIL was in deep trouble from having been targeted by Saad Haddad's rogue Lebanese militia, which was supported by the Israeli Army. Matheson is selected to accompany a UN fact-finding mission to Lebanon, along with diplomats from other troop-contributing countries, to investigate incidents where UNIFIL troops had been killed. (Remember when Canada

used to contribute personnel to UN peacekeeping operations?).

Now we return to Ali, the son of the concierge, who has become increasingly radicalized as he witnesses the pain endured by the Palestinians in the camps, including the horrific massacres in the Shatila refugee camp in Lebanon, carried out by Christian militias aided and abetted by the Israeli Army. (An Israeli Commission of Inquiry came to the same conclusion, by the way). Salim, the son of the assassinated PLO official in Beirut re-enters the story as he and Alex meet up in New York, where Salim has been assigned to the Palestinian delegation. The story comes to an abrupt and shocking climax that will be revealed if you buy the book.

Chris has done a masterful job of capturing the essence of life in Beirut in the 1970s, from the smell of burning garbage to the plastic bags, chicken bones and blobs of oil fouling the beaches where the Canadian embassy had a beach house, to the tastes and smells of the food, to the ever-present clacking of the trictrac tiles. He and the reviewer share a couple of things in common. Both were posted to Beirut at about the same time. In fact, they first met in Vancouver, their common home, right after Chris had returned from his Beirut assignment in late 1974. The reviewer was about to replace him, occupying the same apartment where the assassination had occurred. The book evoked vivid memories of almost a half-century ago.

The story moves quickly through 65 concise chapters, alternating between characters and locales, including Beirut, New York, southern Lebanon and the camps, to northern Israel. The story itself, like the situation on the ground, is complicated. There are no clear-cut "rights and wrongs," although it is frankly sympathetic to the

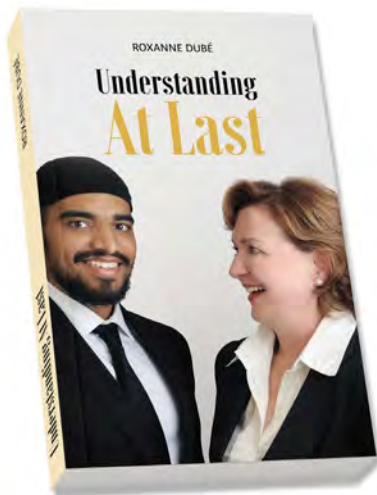
plight of the Palestinians and was written at a time when it was less common to express such sympathies. (“The Struggle Continues” was published before the Hamas-provoked conflict in Gaza and the massive Israeli response that has triggered widespread concern over the fate of the Palestinian people). It conveys well the hopelessness and desperation of a dispossessed people, underscored by its dramatic ending.

Hugh Stephens joined External Affairs in 1973 and served abroad in Beirut, Hong Kong, Beijing, Islamabad, Seoul and Taipei (as HOM). He was an ADM at DFAIT from 1998 to 2001, when he joined Time Warner as SVP, Public Policy for Asia-Pacific, based in Hong Kong.

Roxanne Dubé, Understanding at Last

Ottawa, 2023. Disponible en français : Enfin comprendre

By Rick Kohler



The tale of a top Canadian diplomat’s teenage son who lost his life in a violent encounter in Florida is now widely known. What is less known, however, is the back story – the ‘how’ the world of child-rearing is affected by a parent-child relationship within the context of mixed-race families.

In 2015, soon after Roxanne Dubé had taken up her new position as Canada’s Consul General in Miami, her son Jean was shot dead in a drug deal gone wrong, and her second son, Marc, who was sitting in the passenger seat of the ‘get away’ car – for all intents and purposes, innocently, was arrested and charged with serious crimes by Miami police.

Roxanne dealt with these challenges with fortitude and determination. Eventually her assignment as HOM was terminated, providing her the freedom to pursue legal justice in a harsh Florida correctional system. She was able, finally, to arrange for her remaining son, Marc, to return to Canada, free, so that both could start a new life.

As I read *Understanding at Last*, I was struck first by the rich detail so satisfying to one who is curious. More importantly, however, I was absorbed by the whole universe that lies behind such a story – how did it happen, why did it happen, and what might have contributed to avoiding what happened? I learned that parenting has more to do with it than a career in the foreign service.

Roxanne unflinchingly unpacks the overarching role that parenting has in setting the tone of a family’s behaviour when faced with all the subtle challenges of a mixed-race union. Roxanne’s husband, whom she met at university, Germano Wabafiyebazu, is a Black refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo, ten years her senior. Their children, Jean and Marc, emerged into a largely White Canadian society and quickly learned the challenges of being Black in a White world. While the boys rarely opened up with their parents about the discrimination they felt while navigating their way forward, there were stresses. And Germano too, as a caring father, worked hard to protect his boys from harm by limiting their relations with school

friends and their participation in popular sports like snowboarding and skateboarding. This created a dynamic for which Roxanne had to compensate as she moderated between father and sons.

In parallel, as I continued reading, I empathised with Roxanne in her role as a mother. If she seemed to assume her boys would be fine as long as they lived in an environment of sound home values, she learned how disconnected she was from their reality.

After much introspection into how she related to her children, as well as the challenges of raising mixed-race children in a prejudiced society, where discrimination still simmers beneath the surface, she also concluded that her oldest son would more than likely not have committed the crime he did if he was White, but, more importantly, that he certainly did not commit it because he was Black. Her attempt to analyse the significance of that phrase is deliberate. Her exploration of what she had seen in her own relationship with her children, as well as her own biases and prejudices as a privileged White person, are candid and clear.

All of this makes this book relatable. It does not seek to moralize to others; instead, it tries to provide an honest testimonial. It also is evident that Roxanne’s intent is to focus more on one aspect of the crime: the role of the parent. In doing so, she invites the reader to reflect on issues of parenthood, and on their own approach to social justice and equitable inclusion.

On reading the book, I was drawn to contemplate the environment I knew, even though I have lived in many cultures around the world because of my profession. Essentially, I am a White Canadian who grew up in a White society. Yes, Canada is a multicultural nation, and we are proud of the way we have absorbed and celebrated immigration. But also,

like many Canadians, I tended to find satisfaction in believing that bias, prejudice and racism may well exist in Canada, but, per capita, we are largely tolerant and sheltered from what goes on elsewhere.

Roxanne's testimony demonstrates that a mixed-race family faces complex challenges, unknown to the majority. In her reading, Roxanne came across a non-profit organization called Project Implicit that offers an online test called an intercultural development inventory. Roxanne's score showed that she had a bias – relatively minor, but very real – towards Black people and other races compared to White people. In Shakil Choudhury's book, 'Deep Diversity,' he notes that biases are reinforced by societal mores and points out that research shows that we tend to have more empathy for people who are similar to us. It's our brain's way of protecting us from friction.

While the story makes clear that Roxanne's diplomatic life had little to do with the tragedy itself, there are several considerations for the foreign service.

In relating their journey in the legal system, Roxanne provides a detailed illustration of the nature, parameters and limits of Canada's consular service. Her story is an important reminder to the four million Canadians sojourning in Florida every year and to the others travelling internationally, to be vigilant in foreign environments. There is only so much our government can do to help. The Vienna Convention on Consular Relations that applied in her case afforded her son no more protection than it would to other Canadians in trouble with the law in Miami.

During his time in prison, Marc decided to convert to Islam, on his own and through his own investigation of the faith – there were no other Muslims around

him to apply influence. At first, Roxanne hoped this was a passing phenomenon, but realized over time how devout and respectful her son had become. Roxanne shed her discomfort as she learned the peace of mind Marc enjoyed and the healthy outlook on life his faith brought him. Marc enrolled in an Honours B.A. program in Social Sciences at Carleton U. He created an institute to teach Arabic. Today, as an office manager of the Ottawa Islamic Centre, he develops programs for newly converted Muslims, homeless people, youth at risk, and people caught in the justice system. He married in 2021 and in the summer of 2023 became a father of a little girl.

Global Affairs Canada welcomed Roxanne back into the fold and demonstrated the respect they considered her due by assigning her large responsibilities, Dean of the Foreign Service Institute and later Inspector General.

Roxanne's account of her relationship with GAC provides a reference about how the diplomatic service can approach situations significantly impacting Canada's image abroad with care and understanding.

After wrapping up her role as Inspector General, Roxanne found she was still profoundly impacted by the tragedy, and decided, as a result, to retire from the public service and to focus more of her efforts on intercultural, interracial connections. To that end, she has acquired multiple international and national certifications in these areas and now provides consultancy services to private and public leaders.

Richard (Rick) Kohler served 40 years in Canada's foreign service. Over nine postings he was a HOM twice, GAC's first Chief Information Officer, and survived three years as Chief of Protocol of Canada.

New book on Recollections of the ICSC

On 15 February, the Ottawa chapter of the Forum was pleased to welcome J. H. (Si) Taylor as its speaker. We heard a fascinating recollection of his first posting in External Affairs, after joining the Department in 1953. As was the case for about one-third of junior officers in External in the 1950s and 1960s, he was posted to Indo-China. From July, 1955, to July, 1956, he was assigned to the Canadian mission to the International Commission of Supervision and Control (ICSC) in Nanoi, North Viet Nam.

His recollections are also contained in a book published in 2023 by the University of Victoria Press, "*Supervising a Peace that Never Was: Recollections of Canadian Diplomatic Personnel in Indochina, 1954-1973*", edited by Helen Lansdowne, Nick Etheridge and Phil Calvert.

The book can be downloaded, free of charge, at the following address: CAPI Publications – University of Victoria (uvic.ca)

Who are they, and where are they now?

Photo: Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada, External Affairs Collection



Paul Martin, then Secretary of State for External Affairs, talks to new recruits in his office in the East Block, Ottawa, 1967. Let us know at: edit.forum99@gmail.com

Interesting Substack Blog on the history of Canadian Foreign Policy

For those interested in digging into the history of Canadian foreign policy, a new blog site run by Tim Sayle, of Trinity College, University of Toronto, will be something to turn to. It's called Canada Declassified, and relies mainly on digging into archival collections and filing requests under Access to Information legislation. Click on timsayle@substack.com. Look for a recent piece on Herbert Norman, which hints at the difficulties of trying to do research into Canadian foreign policy.

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The Canadian Foreign Service Alumni Forum (CFSAF) is a non-governmental organization consisting primarily of retired, or about-to-retire members of the Canadian foreign service, from several departments and various occupational groups. CFSAF's bulletin, FORUM, is published three times per year. Individuals wanting to subscribe to FORUM can send an email to: edit.forum99@gmail.com.

There are three different types of membership in CFSAF. First, there is an "annual membership." The fee is \$25 per year, and CFSAF will bill annually, roughly at the beginning of each calendar year. Second, there is a preferred option, to join as "life members," at a cost of \$200. This fee is paid only once. After that time, there is no hassle again about paying bills.

Third, our top level of membership is "benefactor". This is a life membership for which a member chooses to pay \$250 or more in support of the organization. It is a

one-time payment, although benefactors sometimes offer additional financial support in subsequent years. If benefactors concur, it is our intention to publish their names as a tangible sign of our gratitude for advancing CFSAF's work.

There are two different ways of paying for membership in CFSAF. The first and most convenient way is by electronic transfer. Payers can send their payments, for the appropriate amount, to the following email address: finance.forum99@gmail.com. This account has an auto-deposit feature. There is no need for a security question and answer.

Please accompany this payment with an email with your name and email address. We know who you are, but we don't know how to contact you!

The second method of paying is by cheque and mail. Send your cheque to the following address (again, please ensure to include your name and email address):

CFSAF/FASEC
c/o 11547 13th Ave NW
Edmonton, Alberta T6J 7A8

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Le Forum des anciens du service extérieur canadien (FASEC) est une organisation non gouvernementale composée principalement de membres retraités ou sur le point de prendre leur retraite du service extérieur canadien, de plusieurs ministères et de divers groupes professionnels. Le bulletin du FASEC, FORUM, est publié trois fois par an. Les particuliers peuvent s'inscrire à FORUM en envoyant un courriel à : edit.forum99@gmail.com. Nous n'envoyons pas FORUM aux personnes ; de même, si des personnes souhaitent se « désinscrire » de FORUM, elles peuvent envoyer un courriel à edit.forum99@gmail.com avec un message disant : « se désabonner ».

Il existe trois différents types d'adhésion au FASEC. Premièrement, il y a une «adhésion annuelle». Les frais sont de 25 \$ par année, et FASEC facturera annuellement, environ au début de chaque année civile. Deuxièmement, il existe une option privilégiée, celle d'adhérer en tant que « membre à vie », au coût de 200 \$. Ce frais n'est payé qu'une seule fois. Passé ce délai, on n'a plus à se soucier du paiement des factures.

Troisièmement, notre plus haut niveau

d'adhésion est "bienfaiteur". Il s'agit d'une adhésion à vie pour laquelle un membre choisit de payer 250 \$ ou plus pour soutenir l'organisation. Il s'agit d'un paiement unique, mais le membre "bienfaiteur" est libre de faire des dons supplémentaires ultérieurement. Si le bienfaiteur est d'accord, nous publierons son nom. Comme un signe tangible de notre gratitude pour l'avancement du travail du FASEC.

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Il est important que vous envoyiez un courriel avec votre nom et votre adresse courriel. Nous savons qui vous êtes, mais nous n'avons pas un adresse courriel pour vous contacter!

La deuxième méthode de paiement est par chèque et courrier. Poster votre chèque à l'adresse suivante (avec votre nom et votre adresse courriel):

FASEC /CFSAF
a/s 11547 13th Ave NW
Edmonton, Alberta T6J 7A8

FORUM

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