FORUM

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A Contemporary Canadian Citizenship Ceremony – Emotions and Lessons

By Ian Ferguson

Photos: Ian Ferguson

Mr. Marwan Abou Diwan waving a flag given to all participants.

Anyone attending a ceremony to swear in new Canadian citizens would find it a moving occasion full of symbolic moments and, of course, an event with lasting legal impacts for those inducted. On November 15, I had the honour of being invited to such an event involving a friend, Marwan Abou Diwan, originally from Lebanon.

The ceremony was presided over by Scott Jones, President of Shared Services Canada, assisted by a Clerk Amevi Aziato. A total of 51 new citizens from 33 countries took the oath. When I asked for a list of the countries represented, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) advised that this could not be provided "for privacy reasons." That seems like a bit of a stretch of the notion of privacy.

Although the majority of new citizens are now sworn in virtually, my friend Marwan received an invitation for an in-person event and accepted. IRCC advised that clients were invited based on "operational considerations." The Government remains committed to hosting inclusive, celebratory, in-person events across the country. Clients

can, however, request a change of format and the Department attempts to accommodate their preferences.

Marwan landed in Canada in 2021. He has Masters degrees in Social Work, Religious Sciences, and Living Languages / Translation. He works as Clinical Manager of the Couples and Relationships Department in the Counselling Group of Jewish Family Services in Ottawa. In addition to English, and French, he speaks Spanish, and is learning Biblical and conversational Hebrew. He also has a basic knowledge of Aramaic, Turkish, Italian and Danish.

In his opening remarks, Scott Jones mentioned that his grandparents had arrived here in 1905. He noted that Canadians must move forward together and encouraged the audience to explore and research as they enter this exciting next step in their lives. He noted the rights of citizens, including the right to vote and run in elections, and their equality before the law.

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Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) poster evolving work by the Group of Seven artists.

Among citizens' responsibilities, he cited voting, respecting the law, serving on juries, and protecting the environment.

A new feature, introduced in 2024, was a 5-minute video "Welcome, there is room" or "Bienvenue, il y a de la Place". Produced by Indigenous film-makers, it featured First Nations, Métis and Inuit spokespersons extending their welcome in their own languages. The speakers also conveyed the shared responsibility of all Canadians to promote reconciliation. The video can been viewed on the IRCC YouTube channel, in English or French, via these links : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZvXHowmRl5M

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5bOjR3_tM60

In welcoming remarks on his video, the Prime Minister spoke of Canadians' shared responsibilities to welcome newcomers and raise one another up. He noted that all had come to Canada by a unique route.

The swearing in was done collectively by the inductees, and visitors were invited at the same time to renew their citizenship by reciting the following oath:

"I swear (or affirm)
That I will be faithful
And bear true allegiance
To His Majesty
King Charles the Third
King of Canada
His Heirs and Successors
And that I will faithfully observe
The laws of Canada
Including the Constitution
Which recognizes and affirms
The Aboriginal and treaty rights
of First Nations, Inuit
and Métis peoples
And fulfil my duties as
a Canadian citizen."

It is notable that new Canadians do not swear allegiance to a flag, a geographic entity, or a constitution but to the sovereign who represents the country. After the oath, the inductees sang the national anthem for the first time sing as citizens, either the bilingual version or in their choice of an official language.

When I asked Marwan what the day meant to him he replied: "The Citizenship Oath Ceremony is an important milestone in my journey. Attending an in-person ceremony surrounded by family and friends made it even more special. It is a tangible and beautiful sign of belonging to the Canadian family and its values!"

A few housekeeping announcements at the end caught my attention. The new citizens were advised not to laminate their certificate, and to wait a few days before applying for

Marwan receiving his citizenship certificate from Mr. Scott Jones, President of Shared Services Canada, assisted by the Clerk Amevi Aziato.

their Canadian passports. They were also invited to download the mobile CANOO App, managed by the Institute for Canadian Citizenship, a non-profit NGO. The App unlocks for a year thousands of free cultural experiences such as museum and park entries, entertainment tickets, and Canadian products at discount. The Institute quietly provides a range of helpful services, and deserves to be better known.

IRCC recognizes that citizenship ceremonies remain an important Canadian tradition. If you would like to attend a ceremony, it is not necessary to know the person or family involved. Since 2022, you can check upcoming dates via the following link which also indicates which in-person ceremonies are open to the public: https://secure.cic.gc.ca/CeremonyCeremonie/en/Home

These moving ceremonies remind us of the significance of Canadian citizenship, something people born here too often take for granted. That significance is worth noting at this time of growing public concern about levels of immigration. ■

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.

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Espions Féderaux

Par Gérald Cossette

Pendant le référendum de 1995, j'étais à Ottawa. Mais dans les années qui ont précédé cet événement important, j'ai servi à Washington (1989-93). L'Administration américaine était préoccupée par les changements qui s'opéraient en Europe et ma position aux affaires politico-militaires et aux relations Est-Ouest faisait en sorte que peu de questions m'étaient posées concernant le référendum au Québec et son effet sur la stabilité du pays.

Si mes différents contacts officiels ne se préoccupaient guère de ce qui se passait chez nous, certains observateurs de la scène politique qui n'appartenaient pas à l'administration se risquaient, eux, à poser des questions sur ce qui militait en faveur de la souveraineté du Québec. Ils n'étaient pas intéressés par la position officielle du gouvernement du Canada, mais pensaient qu'un francophone québécois s'exprimerait plus librement sur la question de l'unité nationale que le suggéraient les points d'intervention fournis par Ottawa. C'est dans cet atmosphère plus ouverte, avec des gens qui cherchaient honnêtement à comprendre les tenants et aboutissants du débat référendaire, que je me suis retrouvé, chez un ami, face à une douzaine de personnes qui me questionnaient et commentaient sans cesse sur la question de la souveraineté.

Plusieurs, d'origine polonaise ou de certaines pays du Moyen-Orient, étaient très peu réceptives à l'argument de l'exploitation historique des Québécois par les « Anglais ». Je me suis fait dire : « c'est de la vielle histoire. Tous les pays/peuples qui ont vécu sous le joug de quelqu'un d'autre sont dans la même situation. Aujourd'hui ce n'est plus le cas au Canada, de quoi vous plaignez -vous ? » Je dois dire qu'il n'était pas toujours facile d'aller au-delà des points d'intervention officiels, même si les gens s'attendaient à plus d'un agent francophone originaire du Québec.

Mais l'événement le plus frustrant fut la rencontre avec M. Jacques Parizeau. Venu à Washington à l'invitation de Centre des relations internationales de l'Université John Hopkins, celui-ci était l'orateur invité à un discours public qui regroupait le « Canada Watchers Group » de la région de la capitale américaine. Après avoir répondu aux questions de l'audience, M. Parizeau prit son temps pour quitter la salle, généreux avec ceux qui manifestaient un intérêt certain pour la question nationale. C'est à ce moment que moi et deux autres francophones ont eu la bonne idée (du moins pensait-on que c'était une bonne idée) de se présenter comme des agents de l'ambassade. Du haut de son arrogance légendaire M. Parizeau nous a répondu : « ah des espions fédéraux ! » J'étais encore jeune à l'époque mais surtout impressionnable et je n'ai pas su quoi répondre. Aujourd'hui je lui dirais qu'il est plutôt rare que les espions se présentent ouvertement.

Dans tous les cas, les Américains étaient sensibles à la question nationale parce qu'elle aurait pu entrainer au nord de leur frontière une instabilité dont l'Administration n'avait pas besoin à ce moment. 30 ans plus tard, c'est eux-mêmes qui risquent d'entrainer l'instabilité. ■

À sa dernière affectation au ministère de Affaires extérieures, du Commerce international et du Développement, Gérald Cossette était sous-ministre delégué.

Québec Référendum 1995

En octobre 2025, le dernier référendum québécois aura 30 ans. Nous invitons les anciens agents à partager, par l'entremise de FORUM, la façon dont ils/elles ont vécu à l'étranger cet événement. geraldcossette11@gmail.com.

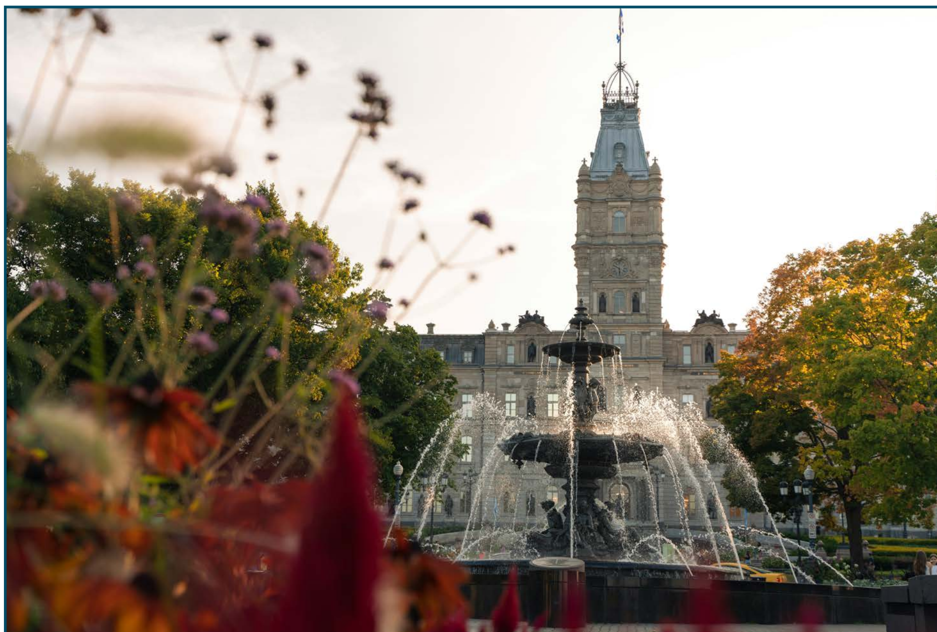

Photo : ziyao-xiong-jv-nu, Unsplash

Québec Parliament.

Canada and the International Criminal Court

By John Holmes

On November 21, 2024, the Hague-based International Criminal Court (ICC) issued arrest warrants for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant for alleged crimes against humanity and war crimes committed in the aftermath of the Hamas attacks on Israel on October 7, 2023. Coupled with the March 2023 warrants issued for Russian President Vladimir Putin, the ICC's actions have placed the Court at the forefront of two of the most devastating conflicts happening today.

The warrants elicited predictable reactions from those affected, with criticism focused on the ICC's meddling in sensitive political/military matters and for its jurisdictional over-reach. Not to be outdone in hyperbole, President Trump issued an Executive Order on February 6, 2025, declaring that any effort to investigate, arrest, detain or prosecute citizens of the United States or its allies (who aren't party to the ICC) "constitutes an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy" of the USA. For now, Trump's ire is directed at the Court itself, specifically the Prosecutor, Karim Khan, who faces a variety of sanctions. However, since all 125 ICC members, including Canada, the EU, Australia, New Zealand and the UK, are obligated to surrender anyone indicted by the Court, the Executive Order places the US on a collision course with many of its closest allies.

Is there any basis for Trump's outrage or for the criticism from Israeli and Russian sources? How can the ICC assert jurisdiction on states which are not a party to the 1998 Rome Statute of the ICC? And if the Court does have the ability, why, as Israel has contended, shouldn't it have the right

The UN Diplomatic Conference opens in Rome, June, 1998.

Photo courtesy of the UN 7671603

to investigate first? The answers to these questions go back to the origins of the Court and the adoption of the Rome Statute. Canadians are generally aware of the leading role the country played in the creation of the Court, including the fact that a Canadian, Philippe Kirsch, chaired the main negotiating committee. Less well known is the fact that virtually all the key elements of the Rome Statute contain a Canadian fingerprint.

The United Nations took up the idea of an international criminal court soon after its formation, with a view to making permanent the types of tribunals created at Nuremburg and Tokyo. The Cold War prevented any real progress until 1989. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the horrific crimes committed during the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda, for which the Security Council created specific tribunals, accelerated work on a permanent court. In 1995, the UN established a preparatory committee, chaired by the Dutch Legal Adviser, Adrian Bos.

Canada played an active role from the outset. An interdepartmental delegation, led by Foreign Affairs Canada's Legal Bureau, and composed of officials from Justice and National Defence, were active in early negotiations. Canada also initiated and chaired a group of like-minded states, from Europe, Latin America, Asia and Africa, which coordinated its positions and which worked closely with a growing body of NGOS lobbying for the court.

Despite some progress, the negotiations bogged down by 1996. In essence, a Catch-22 situation had developed. Delegations were reluctant to compromise on their positions without a clearer picture of how the Court might work, while negotiating the big issues couldn't happen until delegations began to compromise. Bos established sub-groups on the key issues, such as defining the crimes, jurisdiction, the court's procedures and cooperation, and named coordinators to lead negotiations. However, delegations insisted on including options and square brackets (indicating no agreement on the text) throughout their drafts. In the 1996 session of the General Assembly, the

Photo courtesy of the UN 7312912

Ratification ceremony for the International Criminal Court, with Chair Philippe Kirsch, second from the right.

Like-minded Group, supported by the NGO community, decided to press the issue by setting a time-frame for completion of the preparatory committee's work and the convening of a diplomatic conference, hoping that this might spur progress on negotiations. While the UN General Assembly approved a conference for 1998, the first committee session of 1997 disappointingly followed past practise with little progress.

At the August 1997 session, I introduced a Canadian proposal on "complementarity", which headquarters colleagues had drafted. To my surprise, Chairman Bos asked me to coordinate the negotiations. While Canadians were active in other working groups, this was the first opportunity for Canada to lead the negotiations on a critical topic. I decided to try a different approach from other coordinators, using skills I learned from Kirsch as his aide-de-camp in the negotiations on two UN counter-terrorism instruments. The key to the informal 'Kirsch Rules for Chairing' were to allow delegates enough time to discuss all of the various options and proposals and then, at the right moment, to table a chair's text and insist that it be the only basis for negotiations. Easy in theory, but challenging in practice, especially when colleagues in other groups allowed delegates to dictate the process. Balancing a certain naiveté ("forgive me, I'm new to this process") with firmness, I was eventually able to push through a consensus text.

The agreement on complementarity was a watershed for the negotiations. It was the first major section of the draft statute to be agreed in principle, and it allowed work to advance in other, interlinked areas. Because the draft recognized the primacy of domestic jurisdictions to investigate and prosecute, with an exception where states cannot or will not do so, states were more willing to compromise in other areas.

Before the Rome Conference began, Bos organized a couple of technical meetings to prepare the draft statute. At the second meeting in May 1998, Bos pulled me aside and asked me to set up an urgent call with Kirsch. I soon learned that Bos had been diagnosed with cancer and the treatment would prevent him from chairing negotiations in Rome that summer. He asked Kirsch to step in, a solution welcomed by the Western group and the NGOs and one which made sense given Kirsch's extensive expertise as a chair. However, on my return to New York, I learned that other regional groups were determined to nominate another candidate. They had nothing against Canada and Kirsch, but the main committees at the Rome Conference were already dominated by Western candidates. It took weeks of behind-the-scenes lobbying, and some creative horse-trading, to secure Kirsch's appointment.

In Rome, the coordinators resumed their work after the formal opening of the Conference in June 1998. Throughout the hot Roman summer, and amidst the hoopla of the World Cup soccer tournament in France, delegates worked long hours in the poorly air-conditioned FAO building, trying to resolve the outstanding issues and complete the statute. By week four of the conference, there remained only a few key issues unresolved, but they were the most fundamental. Agreement had been reached on most of the crimes to be included, with some innovations such as crimes against women and children (a Canadian priority), using the Genocide Convention and Geneva Conventions and Protocols as the guides. However, many delegations insisted on including the crime of aggression in the statute, despite the fact that there was no agreement on a definition or the role the Security Council would play in the determination of the crime. The Security Council's role in triggering the Court's jurisdiction was also controversial because of the veto power of the Permanent Five. NGOs wanted the Court to have universal jurisdiction, given that the crimes to be included were universal in nature (meaning all states accepted that they were obligated to prevent and punish these crimes). However, many states were leery of such a broad mandate for the Court, while at the same time failing to agree on an alternative.

It was left to the "Bureau", composed of Kirsch and the principal coordinators, to decide what to do as time ran out on the conference.

The challenge was to strike a balance between the demands of the Like-minded Group and the NGOs, who wanted the strongest possible Court, and some of the major powers which bridled at restrictions on their sovereignty and to their ability to act. Of the latter, the USA was the most important. The Clinton Administration was generally supportive of the Court and its delegation was led by the State Department's ambassador for war crimes, David Scheffer. The Americans were active in all the working groups and contributed significantly to the draft statute. Unfortunately, as the conference neared the end, it became clear that Scheffer's mandate was to ensure that the ICC's jurisdiction did not apply to Americans. This exceptionalism angered the NGOs and threatened the broad consensus that was emerging. Our delegation did everything we could to assist the USA, such as strengthening the complementarity provisions, but Canada could not support the American proposals to limit the Court's jurisdiction to the nationals of states parties to the statute or to give the Security Council the sole right to trigger the Court's investigations. Last ditch appeals by Foreign Minister Axworthy to Secretary of State Madeleine Albright failed to sway the Americans.

The final draft, Kirsch's text, was a balanced compromise which, predictably, pleased few but which enjoyed the broadest possible support. The crime of aggression was included in the text but was left to be defined and enacted at a later stage. Because some of the war crimes were an advance on international law, the text allowed states joining the ICC to opt out of the war crimes provisions for an initial period of seven years. The Security Council was given a key role allowing it to refer situations to the Court and to seek deferrals of investigations if the Council was seized with sensitive negotiations but was not given a veto over the Court's jurisdiction. Finally, the jurisdictional axis was limited to crimes committed by nationals of states parties to the statute or to crimes committed on the territory of a state party (essentially the same as for tourists travelling abroad). The Americans, confident of defeating the proposal, called for a vote in both Kirsch's committee and in the final plenary and were shocked at losing by substantial majorities. When the results were announced, spontaneous applause and cheering erupted and delegates hugged and cried in relief and joy.

Photo courtesy of the UN 7774386

Press conference introducing the President and newly-elected prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, April 22, 2003. From left to right, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein of Jordan, Judge Philippe Kirsch, President of the ICC, and Luis Moreno Ocampo, the newly-elected Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

The adoption of the Rome Statute was just one important step in the creation of the Court. A Preparatory Commission was established to draft a number of critical associated texts (e.g., the Rules of Procedure, Elements of Crime, the agreement with the host country), which Kirsch chaired, and Canada and other like-minded states began a campaign to convince states to ratify. By 2002, the requisite number of states (60) had done so, including Canada, and in 2003, the International Criminal Court was established in the Hague, with 18 judges elected, including Kirsch, who went on to become the court's first President.

Since its inception, the ICC has faced challenges and criticisms, from being too expensive to being too slow in its work. Both the Bush and the first Trump Administrations were hostile to the court, while President Obama decided to work with the ICC in the case of Sudan, securing a Security Council reference which ultimately led to charges of genocide against the former Sudanese leader. The Biden Administration was initially prepared to work with the Court, but the issuance of arrest warrants against Netanyahu and Gallant was a bridge too far.

The Israelis and Americans are furious that the Court assumed jurisdiction on the basis that Palestine is a state which had adhered to the Rome Statute. In the view of some experts, Palestine does not meet the traditional criteria for statehood, as it does not exercise control over its territory. However, as the ICC ruled, this is a political question and in the face of overwhelming recognition of Palestine as a state by the international community and the UN acceptance of Palestine's adherence to the Rome Statute, the Court had no choice but to accept that Palestine is a party. Israel also argued unsuccessfully in a preliminary case that it should have the first right to

Photo courtesy of Kim Prost

The Canadian delegation in 1998: from left to right, Don Piragoff (Justice), Valerie Oostervelt (DFAIT), Kim Prost (Justice), Lloyd Axworthy, John Holmes (DFAIT), Darryl Robinson (DFAIT) and Gilbert Laurin (DFAIT). Missing is Alan Kessel (DFAIT).

investigate alleged crimes and Israel's appeal is now before the ICC's appeal chamber. However, even if it loses and the cases proceed, the accused and/or the Israeli government on their behalf could at any stage challenge the prosecution on the basis of complementarity. To do so, Israeli officials will have to convince the ICC that credible investigations are underway in Israel examining the role of the accused in the crimes they are alleged to have committed. Of course, the issue may be moot, given that the ICC's weak enforcement mechanisms make it unlikely that Netanyahu, Gallant, Putin and their co-nationals will ever appeal in the Hague. Nonetheless, the same was said of Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic during the height of his reign and yet he ended up on trial before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

The true value of the International Criminal Court is something that is difficult to measure and, perhaps, impossible to prove. The reputational harm of being charged by the Court for the most heinous crimes is likely to deter some political and military leaders. And while the Court's reach is weak and not universal, the fact that any accused faces the real risk of arrest in Canada, Australia, the EU and much of Latin America is something. Those of us Canadians who were part of the team that created the court, including Kim Prost, now a judge in the Hague, are justifiably proud of our role. ■

John Holmes, a former ambassador to Indonesia, Jordan, Turkiye and the Philippines, worked in the legal bureau at Foreign Affairs Canada; he should not be mistaken for other famous or infamous namesakes. He has written previously for FORUM, and his partner, Carol Bujeau, is a member of FORUM's editorial board. Her book, "Triple Sex & Other Tales of an Ambassador's Wife" *was published by Burnstown Publishing.*

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Jeux de miroirs entre les nationalismes québécois et hongrois.

Par Guy Archambault

Je suis un baby boomer québécois typique. Ma jeunesse a été profondément marquée par la question nationale. A Montréal, au début des années '60, de nombreux francophones avaient l'impression d'être des citoyens de seconde classe. J'éprouvais de l'humiliation, par exemple lorsque, dans les grands magasins du centre-ville, j'avais droit à des commentaires méprisants quand je m'adressais à un commis anglophone en français. L'humiliation : puissant carburant des mouvements nationalistes et des révolutions.

Pas étonnant que de nombreux Québécois de ma génération aient considéré le mouvement indépendantiste comme émancipateur. D'autant plus que dans les années '70, ce mouvement avait un visage ouvert et progressiste, incarné par des personnalités comme René Lévesque ou le poète Gérald Godin. Le nationalisme conservateur de Maurice Duplessis et de Lionel Groulx, contre lequel s'était insurgée la génération précédente (celle de Pierre Trudeau et du même René Lévesque) nous était étranger. Notre nationalisme était celui de Frantz Fanon ou d'Aimé Césaire, pas celui de Charles Maurras.

Au début de ma carrière (j'ai joint le service extérieur en 1982), il m'arrivait de dire à des collègues anglophones que j'avais de la sympathie pour le mouvement indépendantiste québécois et que j'avais voté « oui » au référendum de 1980. J'avais alors, parfois, l'impression de tenir à leurs yeux des propos scandaleux.

C'est imprégné de cette sensibilité au nationalisme que j'ai occupé le poste de conseiller politique de l'Ambassade du Canada à Budapest entre 1993 et 1997. En Hongrie, comme au Québec, le nationalisme était un important moteur de la vie politique. Ce nationalisme s'enracinait dans le souvenir du traité de Trianon de 1920, un diktat impitoyable qui avait puni la Hongrie, État autonome au sein de l'empire austro-hongrois jusqu'en 1918, pour sa participation à la première guerre mondiale, et l'avait amputée de 70 % de son territoire.

Trianon n'avait été que le premier chapitre d'un siècle catastrophique pour ce petit pays d'Europe centrale. La suite, ce fut une alliance-soumission avec l'Allemagne nazie dans les années '30 et '40 puis le joug soviétique à partir de 1945. A la fin du 20ème siècle, la présence de fortes minorités hongroises dans des territoires appartenant désormais à la Roumanie, à la Slovaquie ou à la Yougoslavie ravivait constamment le souvenir douloureux de Trianon et alimentait un nationalisme identitaire, ethnique et conservateur.

Malgré la distance historique et géographique séparant la Hongrie du Québec, j'étais fasciné par les parallèles entre leurs situations, comme cette curieuse coïncidence qui situe en 1867 l'établissement de la double monarchie austro-hongroise et de la confédération canadienne. Dans les deux cas, une nation dominante (l'Autriche, le Canada anglais) et une nation en état d'infériorité (la Hongrie, le Québec) trouvaient un compromis dans lequel la nation fragile acquérait une certaine autonomie.

Le parallèle entre la Hongrie et le Québec était particulièrement intéressant quand on l'abordait sous l'angle des minorités. Comme s'il s'était agi de poupées russes, la nation hongroise minoritaire de 1867 contenait ses propres minorités, Roumains, Juifs, Gitans et autres. Si la Hongrie se sentait dominée au sein de l'empire autrichien, on l'accusait d'être dominatrice à l'égard de ces minorités. Ces dernières se tournaient vers le pouvoir central de Vienne qui, lui, avait tout intérêt à accepter le rôle de protecteur des minorités en Hongrie.

Le Québec et le Canada ont connu une situation semblable… un siècle plus tard. En effet, à la fin du XXème siècle, le Québec se considérait comme une nation opprimée et exigeait une autonomie accrue, pouvant aller jusqu'à l'indépendance, mais son essor national était perçu comme une menace par les minorités anglophones, autochtones et allophones, qui voyaient dans le gouvernement fédéral un protecteur.

Les parallèles ne s'arrêtaient pas là. Dans la période récente, le Québec et la Hongrie connurent des bouleversements culturels et sociaux dramatiques: le Québec pendant sa « révolution tranquille » des années '60 et '70, la Hongrie après l'effondrement du communisme à la fin des années '80. Les hiérarchies traditionnelles (Église et notables au Québec, parti communiste en Hongrie) furent bousculées ainsi que

les valeurs patriarcales dont elles étaient porteuses. Les sociétés sont entrées avec une certaine brutalité dans le courant dominant libéral occidental. Ces bouleversements, accueillis comme une libération par beaucoup, ont fragilisé l'identité de larges secteurs traditionnels de ces sociétés.

Autre point commun : un contexte linguistique précaire, celui des Magyars d'Europe centrale écrasés entre les géants germanophones et slaves et celui d'un petit peuple francophone dans l'océan anglophone nord-américain. Les nationalistes québécois craignent l'anéantissement sous les coups du multiculturalisme canadien et de la culture anglophone nord-américaine hégémonique. La Hongrie, après avoir survécu aux brutalités extrêmes du nazisme et du communisme stalinien, se sent maintenant menacée par l'Union européenne qui, en imposant des valeurs libérales, risque, aux yeux des nationalistes, de détruire l'identité de ce petit pays à la langue et la culture hétérodoxes.

Malgré ces remarquables similarités, le nationalisme québécois incarné par René Lévesque apparaissait progressiste, humaniste, ouvert sur l'avenir et sur le monde tandis que le nationalisme hongrois, conservateur, résistait à la construction d'une Europe centrale libérale et apaisée, intégrée aux institutions européennes.

C'est dans ce labyrinthe de miroirs que, en 1995, j'assiste, de loin, au déroulement de la campagne du référendum sur l'indépendance du Québec. Je considérais l'indépendance comme une option légitime et j'avais du respect pour les souverainistes progressistes parmi lesquels j'avais plusieurs amis. Cependant, je craignais qu'une courte victoire du « oui » nous plonge dans une longue période d'incertitude et d'instabilité. Cette période serait particulièrement

"...le nationalisme québécois incarné par René Lévesque apparaissait progressiste, humaniste, ouvert sur l'avenir et sur le monde...."

problématique et risquée pour les Québécois qui représentaient le Canada à l'étranger. Une émotion complexe m'habita lorsque je vis mon ancien ambassadeur Lucien Bouchard, pour qui j'avais travaillé à Paris de 1986 à 1988, enflammer les foules en faveur de l'indépendance.

Le 30 octobre, en apprenant la victoire du « non », j'ai eu l'impression que rien n'était réglé compte tenu de la division de l'électorat en deux blocs égaux et antagonistes. Ce soir-là, Jacques Parizeau fit son discours tristement célèbre séparant les Québécois entre « nous » et « le vote ethnique ». Je ne reconnus pas la voix de René Lévesque et de Gérald Godin mais celle de Maurice Duplessis et de Lionel Groulx. Avec en écho le discours des nationalistes conservateurs hongrois.

Aujourd'hui, en Hongrie, le nationalisme populiste et conservateur s'est installé au pouvoir, nourri par les angoisses identitaires vis-à-vis de la modernité libérale occidentale. Viktor Orban instrumentalise les souffrances économiques et le malaise culturel, souffle sur les émotions et les fantasmes, en particulier la peur de l'homosexualité, de l'immigration et du multiculturalisme, sans oublier le sentiment d'injustice au sujet du traité de Trianon et du sort des Hongrois des pays voisins.

Ce retour du balancier vers la droite, on le constate aussi dans d'autres pays occidentaux, notamment aux États-Unis, au Canada et en France. Au sein du mouvement nationaliste québécois s'affirme désormais un courant conservateur et identitaire, parfois teinté de xénophobie, qui renoue, sans toujours s'en rendre compte, avec des racines profondes. Il semble loin, le temps où les indépendantistes québécois vibraient aux paroles de Gilles Vigneault : « Entre mes quatre murs de glace/ Je mets mon temps et mon espace/ À préparer le feu la place/ Pour les humains de l'horizon/ Et les humains sont de ma race ». Il y a toujours des indépendantistes progressistes et humanistes, mais ils ne portent plus le mouvement.

Dans ce 21ème siècle marqué par le recul des forces œuvrant pour la paix, les droits humains et la démocratie, l'Union Européenne et le Canada apparaissent comme des havres de stabilité libéraux, progressistes et prospères. Qui aurait pu imaginer qu'en 2025, la principale menace dirigée contre l'intégrité du Canada ne serait pas la sécession du Québec mais une annexion aux allures d'Anschluss par des États-Unis pris d'une fièvre chauviniste et mégalomane? Devant ce péril, certains nationalistes québécois se disent que le Canada, au fond, ce n'est pas si mal ! Les nationalistes hongrois, quant à eux, abhorrent la pacifique et généreuse Union Européenne pour flirter avec la Russie de Poutine plus despotique que jamais. Les destins de la Hongrie et du Québec ne cessent de montrer des parallèles déconcertants. ■

Guy Archambault a travaillé au ministère des Affaires étrangères de 1982 à 2010. Il a été en poste à Lima, Marseille, Paris et Budapest.

Jimmy Carter: an appreciation

By John Graham

Photo courtesy of the UN photo collection.

President Jimmy Cartier visits UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim in NY.

In retirement, and with the encouragement of External Affairs, I plunged into the fascinating and often dodgy world of election monitoring in distant places. My work as head of "democracy promotion" at the Organization of American States brought me into increasing contact with the Carter Center in Atlanta and membership in the recently formed and Carter based "Friends of the Inter-American Democratic Charter". It was in this context, both in Atlanta and in election monitoring missions abroad that I had the good fortune of getting to know former president Jimmy Carter and his wife Rosalynn.

Carter had one unearned asset: his smile. It was wide, almost ear to ear and when switched on, it was dazzling and brought to mind a mischievous cartoon. Carter is on a stage flashing his smile at a large audience and saying "First ahh would like to thank mah dentist…". Of course, he had other, more formidable assets.

We didn't meet on this occasion, but my first sighting of Carter was a presidential inauguration in Panama in 1985. Only months before, and to some dismay in Republican quarters, President Carter had turned over the management and sovereignty of the Panama Canal to the Panamanians - the most significant reversal of America's colonial acquisitions (– and now, according to the President Elect, a monumental error which he has undertaken to put right.) As can be imagined, Carter's arrival in the huge conference hall in Panama City was received with tumultuous applause.

Somewhere in my memorabilia is a thank you note addressed to me from Mr. Carter. He had been leading a Carter Center election monitoring team in Venezuela of which I was a member. This was early in the Chavez government, and the election was not remotely clean. A veteran, and non-Carter friendly correspondent of the Wall Street Journal, was covering the election. Discarding the facts, she savaged Carter's judgement on the election – to such an extent that, shocked, I wrote to the Journal setting out the facts as I saw them and the letter was published.

It was during a refreshment break in a relatively non-violent Jamaican election that a small group of observers (including me) were treated to a piece of Carter history as recounted by the former president. Judges in Oslo were expected to announce the winner of that year's Nobel Peace Prize, and as the day approached, there was increasing excitement in the Carter home. It was known that Carter was on the short list. But as he explained to us, he had been on the short list before, and the Carter family had stayed up through the night waiting for a call that never arrived. Thinking that they would be disappointed again, both Jimmy Carter and Rosalynn had gone to bed.

Sure enough, that night the phone rang. The call was answered by an officer of the Secret Service assigned to the Carter home. The agent, of Latin American extraction, spoke imperfect English. However, when informed that the call was from Oslo, he understood the significance and ran to the Carter bedroom. In his excitement his English failed him. He could only shout "Senor Presidente! El telephono! el telephono!

The Carters understood. ■

John Graham joined External Affairs in 1957 and after head of mission assignments in Guyana and Venezuela, and five years as DG for Central America and the Caribbean, left External to become the first head of the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy In the OAS. He participated in many election observations; was the International Mediator in the Dominican Republic election crisis of 94; chair of the former Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL); and member of President Carter's "Friends of the Inter-American Democratic Charter." His books include "Whose Man in Havana – Adventures from the Far Side of Diplomacy" *and* "Potholes and Politics, a Cartoon Portrait of Ottawa".

Don Page and the Mysterious Article on Canadian Intelligence

By Kurt Jensen

Veterans of the Canadian foreign service were saddened to learn of the death of Don Page. He died in Langley, British Columbia, on November 14, 2024, at the age of 85. Don was an historian of Canada's external relations, and he received his Ph.D. from the University of Toronto in 1972. He then joined the Department of External Affairs and almost immediately became involved in preparing volume one of what eventually became a three-volume history of the Department.

Along the way, Don had to wrestle with many problems. One was what he later called "the intrigue behind the scenes" involving the former Minister and High Commissioner to London, the Hon. Paul Martin Sr. Don left the project rather than continue to struggle over the emerging departmental history manuscript. He then joined the Policy Development Bureau at External Affairs, where he was charged with drafting the Department's response to the massive Hockin-Simard Report on foreign policy. In 1989, after more than a decade and a half in External, Don moved to British Columbia to become Vice-President of Academic Affairs at Trinity Western University, where he built on his already strong academic foundation. Don's obituary can be found by clicking on the following link: Donald Page Obituary - Langley, BC

Over the course of his departmental and academic career, Don made numerous contributions to the history of Canada's external relations. One of those contributions was highly unusual and remains in the realm of speculation to this day. It started around 1980, when Don drafted a paper on intelligence issues for the Director of the Historical Division at External, A. E. Blanchette, ostensibly as a contribution to the

Don Page at Trinity Western University

future history of the department. The paper was based on unclassified or minimally-classified records and included material from External Affairs and National Defence that had been in the public domain for at least a decade. It was also based on interviews with George Glazebrook, Gilbert Robinson, Arthur Menzies, Gordon Hilborn, Marcel Roussin, Sir William Stephenson, Earle Hope, and Mary Oliver, all giants in the early history of Canadian intelligence. The use of these interviews had been sanctioned by External's Security Division, as long as the sources were not named.

Don wanted to publish the article but could not do so, because publication by someone in the pay of the Canadian government would have acknowledged that Canada had been engaged in the collection of SIGINT (signals intelligence). Because Canada had never acknowledged that historic reality (and would not do so until about 1983), publication by an official was unacceptable.

The "five-eyes" community weighed in on this weighty issue. External Affairs consulted the Communications Security Establishment (CSE), and they in turn consulted Canada's intelligence allies, who immediately pushed back. They essentially advised that anything that could be construed as official confirmation of wartime intercept activity should await the analysis of major partners as to what could be released without damage. As a junior partner in the "five eyes", Canada followed the direction of its senior partners.

Don's paper, however, was delivered at an intelligence seminar at York University in 1984. The US NSA asked about the paper, but was reassured by the conference organizer that it would not publish the paper. But within months, Peter St. John, an academic at the University of Manitoba, published an article in the journal "Conflict Quarterly" (fall, 1984), that bore a striking similarity to the Don Page paper. Don reported the issue to his director in External Affairs, as well as to the Director General of Security, James Bartleman. That appeared to close the file.

How did Peter St. John get the paper, and what was Don Page's role? Don and St. John were friends, and Don had written a paper that could not be published. It's almost inescapable that Don saw the importance of the paper and the appropriateness of its disclosure but decided to respect governmental guidelines in a highly literal way. Since Don could not publish the document as a government employee, a non-governmental individual could publish it without consequence. And so that was done.

Today, the Peter St. John (Don Page) article remains an important, timely contribution to an understanding of Canada's foreign intelligence history. It was made possible in an unusual way, one that apparently broke no rules, and was reported appropriately through the External Affairs chain of command. The authorship of the paper goes to Peter St. John, but give credit to Don Page for being the author behind the scenes.

Kurt Jensen is a member of the editorial board of FORUM and a long-time member of the Canadian foreign service. His speciality in retirement has been the history of Canada's intelligence system.

Hurricane Mitch

By Jack Adams

Mudslide during Hurricane Mitch, 1998

In the blue morning sky, we stood there, craning our necks to see, scarcely breathing. The tiny speck, just above the horizon grew larger, ever so slowly. Two bright pinpricks of light appeared, one on either side of the speck. It began to take on the shape of an aircraft. Approaching us, it dropped down heavily on the tarmac. Blasting past, we could read the logo of the Royal Canadian Air Force faintly visible on the fuselage. Finally, our persistent efforts of the past week had paid off!

It's mid November,1998. Hurricane Mitch has hung over Honduras and Nicaragua for close to a week, bringing high winds and torrential rains. The deadliest Atlantic storm in over two hundred years, it packed peak winds of two-hundred eighty-five kilometers per hour and produced rains of fifty inches in some areas over a five-day period. In Nicaragua, the problem was this extensive rainfall. It destroyed infrastructure, caused rivers to change course completely, and washed-out bridges, many along the much – travelled Pan American Highway. At Casitas, one of many volcanoes in the chain running from north to south through the centre of the country, Mitch washed away one whole side of its cone. This caused massive mudslides which buried the towns of Porvenir and Rolando Rodrigues, resulting in the deaths of more than two thousand inhabitants, mostly poor farmers working the higher slopes. During the first few days the Nicaraguan government, under President Arnoldo Aleman, refused to call in international assistance. Eventually, pressure became so intense and the need so obvious that he finally relented.

The international community swiftly sprang into action. Under the leadership of the UN Development Program and its local office, heads of the various diplomatic missions began regular meetings to plan how best to use our resources and co-ordinate efforts. As Head of Mission, responsible locally for the Canadian International Development Program (CIDA), Canada was called on to participate fully.

Our first act (we were the first donor to step forward) was to donate thirty-five thousand US dollars for fuel so the Nicaraguan military helicopters could immediately begin rescue efforts. Next, DFAIT decided to see if our Department of National Defence's Disaster Assistance Response Team DART, could be brought in to help. This unit operates out of CFB Trenton and draws specialists from across Canada. They come together at short notice, and together with their Hercules aircraft loaded with equipment, fly to any part of the world where disaster calls for their services. A field hospital, once set up, can supply up to 50,000 litres of purified water per day, serve 250 – 300 outpatients per day in its medical facility, and care for 10 inpatients per day. Along with this comes its own engineering company, logistics support platoon, security platoon and civilian advisors who act as liaison between the unit and local government officials.

I had been called by Ottawa to meet a Canadian Forces Hercules carrying the advance party for the DART. They needed to see for themselves the situation on the ground, to decide if and where they could locate the unit. When the Hercules landed, I was surprised to see how much equipment was stored in the hold. Vehicles, medical supplies, engineering plant, 16 tons in all, filled every available space.

Before their arrival, our office had arranged for the use of the Presidential Russian Mi-8 helicopter for the next morning for a reconnaissance flight. We took off with about eight Canadians and the Nicaraguan air force crew. Each of us had a window. A scene of utter devastation, lay below. It showed wrecked infrastructure, rivers carving out whole new courses through the

tortured land, ninety-two bridges, either damaged or destroyed; 70% of the roads unusable or destroyed; agricultural lands flooded; bloated corpses of cattle floating in stagnant water; between 500 and 800 thousand people left homeless. To make matters worse, over 75,000 live landmines, left in the ground from the Contra Civil War, had now shifted to new positions and had to be located all over again. An important part of our Canadian program here was the continued support of this mine clearance operation.

We returned to Managua with little hope that the DART could be deployed. To be useful, it had to be placed in a central location and the affected population come to it. This would not be possible. The DART, being a large field hospital, required heavy vehicles to transport it over robust roads and bridges to its setup location. These no longer existed. Eventually Cuba would supply small medical teams to travel to the villages. This was exactly what was required, and the Cubans did so in an effective manner.

So, with an air of resignation I had to bid the crew farewell as their Hercules left. If we had been successful, it would have been the first deployment ever of the newly minted DART. As it turned out, they would set up on the north Coast of Honduras, near San Pedro Sula. Meanwhile, I was left to meet the hoard of Nicaraguan reporters at the airport to explain that Canada couldn't help in this case. When I finished meeting with the local press I had to do a phone interview with the CBC. A lot of hype had accompanied the DART, so everyone was pretty deflated when it was found it wouldn't be used here.

Some days later, I received a call from the British Ambassador.

"Jack, is there any chance Canada could supply a large aircraft to airlift food to the Atlantic Coast?"

Photo: Courtesy, Canadian Armed Forces.

DART personnel treat a patient in Honduras in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch.

He quickly related to me that, before Mitch struck, the Royal Navy had been carrying out fleet exercises in the Caribbean with one of its helicopter carriers. The Miskito population living in communities along the shores of the Rio Coco, the river forming the border between Honduras and Nicaragua, had lost their subsistence crops due to the heavy rainfall. Now, they were starving, with little shelter and no crops or potable water. If we could somehow get a large plane load of beans and rice, their staple diet, to the airport at Puerto Cabezas on the Atlantic Coast, their helicopters could ferry it up the river in smaller amounts to the starving villagers. I told him:

"Leave it with me, I'll need some time to work on it."

"Jack, we don't have much of that," he responded tersely.

After putting down the phone my thoughts raced quickly through the options. Canada was already flying weekly Airbus flights from Trenton to Managua, bringing donations of food and clothing provided by Canadian Non-Government Organisations. The Airbus could carry thirty-two tons, but it needed a much longer runway than was available at Puerto Cabezas. We needed a STOL (Short Takeoff and Landing) aircraft. From my recent experience with the DART, I knew the Hercules could carry sixteen tons. That would be enough to supply all the villages until other means could be found to get food to them, and the Hercules was a STOL aircraft. What made the picture perfect in my mind was that the DART was now set up in Honduras, only a one hour's flight from Managua. A continuous chain of Hercules aircraft ran from Trenton, with supplies to Honduras, returning empty to Trenton for the next load. If we could take an empty Hercules, ready to return to Trenton, and simply bend its return journey a bit south to Managua, we could have it loaded, send it off to the Coast where it would unload, then continue its return trip back to Trenton. We needed one DART aircraft for about a day, and it would be of tremendous benefit here. I thought it fit together perfectly.

I immediately set to work. First, I called Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, the Nicaraguan Minister of Defence. He immediately responded that if we could get the aircraft to Managua, his forces would start loading it the minute it landed, no matter what the hour. Then, with the numbers given to me by Gail, the Admin Officer

Photo: Courtesy, Canadian Armed Forces.

A more recent version of the Hercules the Canadian Forces used in Central America after Hurricane Mitch.

sent up from our embassy in Costa Rica to help, I called Ottawa and asked to speak with the Department of National Defence Liaison Officer. That office was located at Foreign Affairs in the Pearson Building. The officer was out, but I left a message on the voice mail as to who I was and kindly call me back as soon as they got my message. I left both my office and home numbers. Then I phoned the Flight Operations Center at Trenton and passed my idea to them. They told me it was feasible, but they couldn't act without authorisation from higher up. Eventually I got the name of the Deputy Liaison Officer from DND, catching him on his cell phone while he was driving outside Ottawa. After bringing him up to speed he said he'd discuss it with his superior and get back to me. Then I waited for a phone call, any phone call from Ottawa giving us the go-ahead.

By next afternoon I still hadn't heard anything. The British embassy called asking what was happening. I told them I was still working on it. They said time was running out, their fleet couldn't stay around much longer without something definite. I called Ottawa again. The Liaison Officer still did not answer. I left another message and added that time was getting short. I called Trenton; they still hadn't been given any orders regarding our situation. I called the Liaison Officer again. This time I managed to get the person. Brusquely I was told that what I wanted was impossible and it wasn't going to happen. I said I couldn't take that as the final answer and slammed the phone down. I was reluctant to advise the British that Canada couldn't come through, that we couldn't be relied on. Dejectedly, I climbed into my vehicle and drove home. Through dinner that night I related to my wife Marilyn what was going on and the embarrassment I felt for Canada's lack of initiative. I lay in bed, dejected, staring at the ceiling. Just before midnight the telephone jarred me out of my thoughts. It was the Trenton Operations centre.

"We've got a Hercules heading your way. It will be there at 10:00 tomorrow morning, can you handle it?"

"Of course!" I shouted ecstatically into the phone.

I could hardly believe it. I jumped out of bed and called the Minister of Defence, whose home number he had given me earlier. He said he would be at the airport and his troops ready to load the aircraft first thing. Then I called the British Ambassador and told him Canada would provide the aircraft. He immediately contacted his people so that they would be ready to off load when it arrived on the Coast. So, Gail and I were now standing side by side, watching excitedly as our Hercules touched down in front of us.

As the aircraft commander emerged from the side door at the front of the aircraft, we introduced ourselves. The first thing we had to do was move the massive aircraft over to the hangar where the food was stored. We left him to handle that while we walked down the tarmac to the hangar. The Minister was there waiting for us with his small band of troops, ready to begin loading. Once the Hercules taxied over, it swung around with its tail facing the hangar. The rear ramp lowered, revealing a cavernous, empty space where the sacks of frijoles and arroz would soon be loaded. The Loadmaster walked down the ramp and took over details of the operation. At that point, the rest of the crew joined us from the flight deck. I introduced them to the Minister, then we took a picture with all of us wearing special hats we had made up for the occasion. The crew invited Gail and me up to the flight deck while the loading was in progress. We needed to discuss how the remainder of the operation would proceed.

The flight deck was a spacious affair. With plenty of windows, the visibility was outstanding. The two pilots sat side by side at the front, instruments arranged in front of them with another four or five seats distributed behind and to either side. The Flight Commander sat immediately aft of the Co-pilot seat. My eyes strayed to a small brass plaque affixed to the ceiling above the pilot. It read that it was from Lockheed-Marietta of Georgia, builders of the plane and congratulated the Canadian Armed Forces in maintaining this aircraft in airworthy condition for such a long time. Apparently, it had been one of the first aircraft off the line in the nineteen fifties. I shook my head in disbelief. We have such a professional

group of men and women serving in our armed forces, but we fall short in giving them the latest equipment to work with! Seeing these guys with the Canadian flags on their uniforms brought a lump to my throat!

The Loadmaster entered from the rear of the cockpit and advised that loading was just about complete. With that the pilot in command, said he wanted to talk with any local pilot who was familiar with the airport where they were now headed. Local knowledge is indispensable! I led him over to the flight shack of the small airline that regularly flew to the coast. All their pilots knew the airport at Puerto Cabezas. Once inside, I began speaking in Spanish to the pilots gathered there. One of them replied in perfect English, asking what our pilot would like to know. Then followed a discussion of prevailing winds, turning points for approaching the runway, condition of the tarmac surface. After a few minutes, the Canadian pilot was satisfied. We thanked them all and returned to the Hercules. After handshakes all around, the crew climbed through the side door and up onto the flight deck. The rear ramp had already been closed so the Hercules was ready to roll. With a wave to the pilots, Gail and I retreated to the side of a nearby shed to watch the takeoff.

Once the four engines had been started and were running smoothly, the pilots slowly increased the propellors to fully coarse pitch. We were immediately hit with an almighty blast of wind and gravel flying in our faces. Our bodies were flattened against the side of the building and the heavy wooden shutters propped up had their supports blown away. The shutters came crashing down on our heads. Chastised, but not seriously injured, we quickly sought refuge behind a corner of the building. The Hercules lumbered down the tarmac, taking its place in line for takeoff from the active runway.

I grabbed my cell phone and quickly phoned the British embassy. I advised them that our loaded aircraft was on the way. They had about one- and one-half hours to get ready to receive it. Once that was done, Gail and I headed back to the embassy office in Managua. Later, I received a call from the Assistant Liaison Officer in Ottawa. I still remember his words:

"Jack, I don't know how you did it, but you won't be getting any more aircraft from us"! With that he shut off his phone.

That night, at home I received another call from the Trenton Operations Centre. The voice on the other end of the line said:

"Do you want another Hercules; we can get it down to you tomorrow!"

"Thanks so much," I replied, *"you've already done more than you can believe. We've accomplished what we set out to do."* The aftermath of Hurricane Mitch would occupy a good portion of my time for the rest of our four years in Nicaragua. But I knew, that after this initial success, we could accomplish anything we set out to do if we worked together. ■

Jack Adams was a CIDA officer for thirty-one years. In Nicaragua, he was head of mission from 1998 to 2002. He and his wife, Marilyn, now live on the BC coast.

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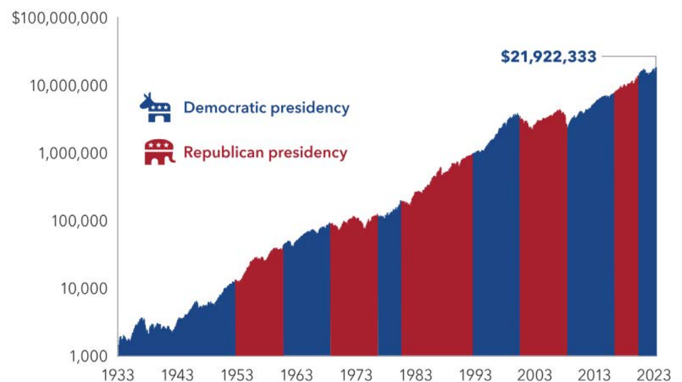

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Political Prisoners and Oppressed Persons Designated Class

By Raph Girard

The civil war in El Salvador was the issue in 1982 that prompted Minister Lloyd Axworthy to seek Governor-in-Council approval for an Immigration Regulation to enable Canada to admit qualified political prisoners and others for humanitarian reasons. Centuries-long tensions between landowner-supported military governments and the peasantry erupted into civil war in 1980, with the formation of the Farabundo Marti Liberation Front (FMLF). The assassination of Cardinal Oscar Romero by death squads and mass shootings by the military at his funeral late in that year galvanized dissident groups to action, leading to the formation of a guerilla army to conduct an armed struggle against brutal tyranny and oppression.

Axworthy was vigorously lobbied by NGOs that advocated on behalf of refugees and others in the hemisphere, as represented first and foremost by the Inter Church Committee for Human Rights in Latin America. They wanted Canada to adopt a stance toward the region independent from the US, as well as offer assistance for victims of the war. Minister Axworthy had witnessed the sharp turn to the right of American policy toward the region with the election of Ronald Regan in 1980 and the reinstatement of massive military aid to the right-wing regime in El Salvador. The previous Carter administration had curtailed support to the Salvadoran military because of flagrant human rights abuses at the hands of the leadership.

Early in his mandate, Axworthy visited the largest refugee camp for Salvadorans, at Mesa Grande in Honduras, to make a first-hand assessment of how Canada might assist the victims of the oppressive actions of the regime. At that time, Roberto D'Aubuisson, the reputed organizer of the death squads that had killed Cardinal Romero and thousands of other opponents of the regime, was President of the Salvadoran Legislative Assembly

The Minister found that Salvadorans outside the country had no need and little interest to be resettled outside the areas where they had received first asylum. But the same was not true for opponents of the regime still in the country, particularly those imprisoned for opposition to the regime or suspected support of the FMLN. In discussions with the Department, the Minister asked that two avenues be investigated: aid to orphans who could be made available for international adoption; and relocation to Canada for prisoners who might be available for release into what would become permanent exile.

The Minister chose Sandra Simpson, herself the adoptive mother of more than 20 children, to go to San Salvador to determine if Salvadoran authorities would consent to having war orphans adopted by Canadian families – an enterprise that did not succeed, despite earnest efforts by Mrs. Simpson to convince the authorities that Canadian interest was entirely humanitarian. For political prisoners, the negotiations conducted by the Immigration Program Manager resident in Mexico City were more successful. They led to an agreement to permit the interview and selection of prisoners, provided that, once accepted for resettlement in Canada, they would immediately leave the country.

The policy decision was essentially that of the Minister alone and not one that he would necessarily have shared with Cabinet colleagues. The Immigration Act of 1976 had established Convention Refugees as a class of people who could be selected on humanitarian grounds. It also provided regulation-making authority to designate other classes of people in humanitarian need who might not fit squarely with the definition of refugee status contained in the Geneva Convention and Protocol.* In 1978, a designated class for Latin Americans had been created to facilitate programming in Chile, Argentina and Uruguay. It did not extend to El Salvador, nor did it specifically refer to selection criteria applicable to prisoners.

To provide a legal basis for the program that the Minister planned to launch, it would be necessary either to add El Salvador to the list of countries covered by the Latin American designated class or by the creation of an entirely new class. Either way, an Order-in -Council would be needed. But since there was regulation-making authority in the Act, Cabinet need not be engaged. Whether majority support would have been available for an initiative that could be seen as implied criticism of US foreign policy in the region was moot, since Axworthy was not required to seek it. At the time, Orders in Council needed only the signature of four Ministers, and these were routinely processed by the Privy Council Office without the need for pre-publication nor public consultations.

There were strong arguments to support a new regulation rather than

the simple addition of EL Salvador to the list of countries appended to the Latin American designated class. The Department had some experience dealing with people in physical confinement, initially in Chile and then later in Argentina and Uruguay, but the regulations did not specifically refer to the criteria to be used in selecting among the prisoners available for resettlement to Canada. The Department had issued administrative instructions to visa officers engaged in the Chilean and Argentine programs to ensure that those prisoners selected were guilty of nothing more than having engaged in activities that would be considered legitimate dissent in a democracy. But these were only instructions and did not have the force of law.

Consequently, if the designated class for Latin America were simply amended to include El Salvador, there would be no specific criteria in the regulation relating to prisoners. That lacuna would have to be filled once again by administrative instructions. In addition, the only regulation allowing the selection of oppressed minorities – people who were refugees in every sense of the word except for the fact that they were still in their own countries – were specific to Latin America. What was needed was a more specific regulation for prisoners and a more general regulation for oppressed minorities.

As a result, what was recommended to the Minister was a broader regulation that would apply generally to oppressed persons in any country and more specifically to prisoners who would have to comply with very clear limitations on the kinds offences that would enable selection. The language of the regulation read as follows:

84. Applicants must either meet the Convention definition of a refugee (excluding the requirement to be outside their country of origin), or as a direct result of acts that in Canada would be considered a legitimate expression of free thought or a legitimate exercise of civil rights pertaining to dissent or to trade union activity, have been

(i) detained or imprisoned for a period exceeding 72 hours with or without charge, or

(ii) subjected to some other recurring form of penal control.

Operationally, despite the small quotas for prisoners, which paled in comparison to the numbers for other humanitarian programs, the personnel resources dedicated to delivering that component were considerable. Identifying, interviewing and screening eligible candidates in the prisons took far more time than other more conventional forms of immigrant selection. Checks for health and previous criminality were often not possible to carry out, but efforts had to be made to exclude those either guilty of offences that are offences under the Criminal Code of Canada, or who had borne arms against the civil authority. Human rights groups assisted in identifying suitable candidates who would both be eligible and who would consent to be relocated to Canada, but even after provisional acceptance there was considerably more work to do. In some cases, commutation of sentences of the approved applicants would have to be negotiated with the authorities, and once completed, the prisoner would have to be escorted to an airport for immediate departure from the country. In the case of Chile, for example, where there were some 70 prisons scattered throughout the country, the prisoner program occupied all of the work time of one of the two visa officers assigned to Santiago.

After the passage of the Order in Council in November, 1982, giving expression to Axworthy's policy, 294 prisoners (including their dependents) were brought to Canada from El Salvador for resettlement in Southwestern Ontario. In previous programs, once 91 prisoners and their families had arrived from Chile, the upper limit on the program was increased to 200. The parallel program for Uruguay and Argentina was initially set at 100 prisoners. In the ten years following the overthrow of Salvador Allende in 1973, these programs brought to Canada fewer than 500 individuals. While the number may have been small, the impact of the program on those individuals and the people supporting them was life changing.

Minister Axworthy's initiative created a milestone in humanitarian immigration law and programming that endures to this day. Whereas the criteria for the selection of Convention Refugees for resettlement in Canada had become part of immigration practice from the early 1950s, similar treatment of oppressed minorities including political prisoners only became part of the regulatory framework in 1982.

*** A refugee is any person, who, owing to a well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.**

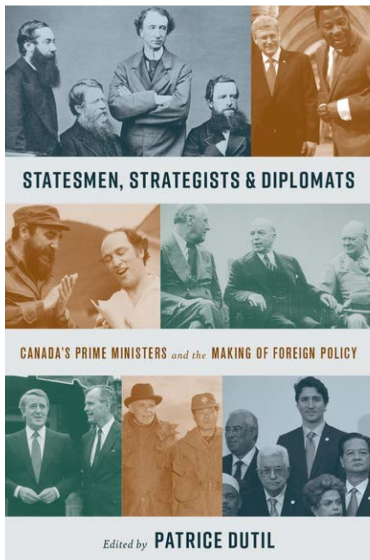
Raph Girard's foreign service career spanned 40 years, with emphasis on refugee law and policy. He was head of mission in Yugoslavia, Romania, and three other Balkan states.

Books in Revue/ Critiques de livres

Patrice Dutil, editor: *Statesmen, Strategists, and Diplomats – Canada's Prime Ministers and the making of Foreign Policy*

UBCPress, Vancouver, 2023.

Revue par Gérald Cossette



Le livre édité par Dutil aurait pu se titrer « Entre l'arbre et l'écorce » tellement les premiers ministres canadiens de toutes les couleurs et de toutes les époques ont été confrontés à deux réalités incontournables, soit l'unité nationale et la proximité des États-Unis (E-U).

Même si le bouquin se veut une comparaison de l'influence exercée par les premiers ministres sur la structure des instruments de politique étrangère, la teneur de celle-ci et le style de leadership démontré pour y parvenir, l'analyse des contributeurs et les époques varient trop pour qu'une comparaison soit honnête. Ceci dit, n'en déplaise aux Libéraux, c'est un PM conservateur (Brian Mulroney en collaboration avec Joe Clark) qui remporte la palme. Que ce soit pour le nombre d'initiatives ou l'importance internationale de ces dernières,

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le tandem Mulroney/Clark a su limiter les vagues du débat de l'unité nationale tout en promouvant une politique étrangère novatrice.

Certains diront que les PM ont une influence marginale sur la politique étrangère, ce à quoi s'oppose Dutil. Ce dernier argumente que la façon dont le PM gère la relation avec les E-U lui donne, ou pas, la flexibilité dont il a besoin pour agir internationalement. Tout comme le reste des 13 analystes, il reconnait cependant le poids des E-U dans le choix des politiques offertes au Canada.

Tous s'entendent pour conclure que les PM de tout acabit se sont toujours méfiés des professionnels de la diplomatie canadienne à l'exception du PM Chrétien qui a laissé main libre au ministre Axworthy et au MAECI, tant que les actions de ces derniers ne mettaient pas à risque son désir de réduire la dette ou de faire baisser la tension politique qu'engendre l'unité nationale. Certaines des positions prises par le Canada (le PM Chrétien aurait été le premier à invoquer l'article 5 de l'OTAN suite aux événements du 11 septembre) ont profité aux E-U. La rhétorique anti-américaine de l'époque jumelée à l'entreprise Team Canada ont laissé croire à un ralentissement de l'intégration à l'économie américaine, alors que nos exportations vers notre voisin du Sud continuaient de croître.

Le chapitre sur la politique étrangère du PM Martin laisse entendre que ce dernier, s'il était resté au pouvoir, aurait pu être influent compte tenu de ses idées bien que son manque de focalisation sur une nombre restreint d'enjeux aurait constitué un obstacle de taille à son succès.

L'auteur de l'analyse de la politique étrangère des PM Harper et Trudeau-fils n'a pas bénéficié du recul historique dont disposaient ses collègues, et ce chapitre ressemble davantage à du journalisme qu'à une analyse de politique. On y recense les activités et décisions de chaque leader mais elles ne sont pas mises en contexte comme le font la majorité des rédacteurs des chapitres du bouquin.

À la lecture des différents chapitres, le lecteur vient à conclure que la politique étrangère canadienne n'est qu'un grand adolescent. Elle prend jour alors que le Canada se détache (certains diront peu à peu) de la mère-patrie britannique et plus souvent qu'autrement elle se veut une façon de se différencier des E-U.

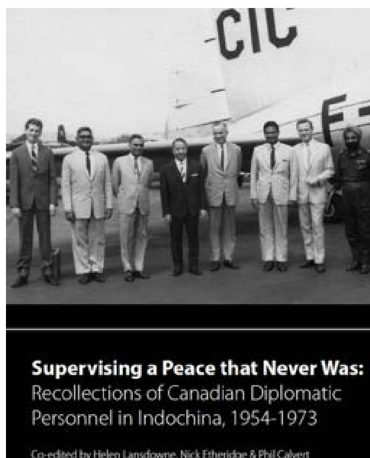
L'élection de M. Trump et la remontée du PQ et du Bloc au Québec (sans parler du comportement cavalier de Danielle Smith en Alberta) laissent entendre que la relation avec Washington et l'unité nationale resteront des priorités gouvernementales dans les prochaines années. La question se pose : malgré notre propension à penser que nous sommes plus influents que notre poids économique et notre stabilité politique ne le suggèrent, serons-nous capables d'agir au-delà de ces contraintes incontournables ?

Lors de sa dernière affectation au MAECI, Gérald Cossette, était sous-ministre délégué.

Supervising the Peace that Never Was

Recollections of Canadian Personnel in Indochina (1954-73), University of Victoria Press. 2023.

Review by John Graham



With "unexpected, unwelcome and unavoidable", Brendan Kelly's introduction to *Supervising the Peace that Never Was* encapsulates Canada's decision to serve as a member of the Indochina Peace Commissions in Saigon, Hanoi and Phnom Penh. Other grumbles and stronger epithets are employed by the veterans of what became a nineteen-year-long adventure, and frequently, ordeal. Terms emerge such as "total frustration" for the negativity of the Poles, "exasperating" for the fence-sitting of the Indians, "boring" for the isolation and limited options of Hanoi, and "scary" for the audible crump of warfare nearby and the loss of three Canadian colleagues when the Commission's charter aircraft disappeared, almost certainly shot down by North Vietnamese SAM missiles or antiaircraft artillery.

That tragedy, which killed the French crew of the aircraft, two members of the Canadian military ICCS support contingent and the Canadian Commission member in Hanoi is engraved on my memory. North Vietnam steadfastly refused to engage in a search for the missing aircraft. The officer from Hanoi was Douglas Turner, a friend and colleague from External Affairs with whom I had very recently exchanged correspondence. Not counting one of our commissioners, who was shot in Saigon by his lover's husband, we were fortunate that there were not more fatalities.

Supervising the Peace that Never Was is written by Helen Lansdowne, Nick Etheridge, and Phil Calvert – all Indochina veterans- for the Centre for Asia Pacific Initiatives at the University of Victoria. The latter two are both veterans of the International Commission for Supervision and Control (ICSC) in Vietnam. The book is published by the University of Victoria from whom it is available free of charge online at its website.

The experience of almost two decades in Indochina wrenched

the Department of External Affairs from its traditional North Atlantic moorings to a distant world where none of the antagonists were observing the guidelines set up by the Geneva conference of 1954 on the "Cessation of Hostilities in Indochina".

Canadians quickly found that many of the tasks they had taken on were impossible to perform. One officer, John Schioler, entitled the chapter of his recollections in Hanoi "Why am I Here?"* Another exclaimed "What the hell I am doing here and what good is it doing anybody?"

The contradictions inherent in the goals set out in Geneva led inevitably to discord between Ottawa and Washington. One clash was spectacularly uncomfortable for Prime Minister Pearson, who was on the receiving end of President Lyndon Johnson's legendary spleen. By 1965, Johnson was determined to stop communist expansion in the Far East (the problem of "falling dominoes") and was throwing everything, short of nuclear weapons, into the war with North Vietnam. The result, as is well known, was a human catastrophe, the unexpected resilience of Ho Chih Minh and his people, the famous escape of "the Boat People", the remarkable skill of General Giap and the equally unexpected huge American losses.

Inevitably, an enormous humanitarian and political disaster was taking its toll on the shreds of Johnson's composure. Soon after delivering a speech at Temple University in Philadelphia in which he called for a "pause" in US bombing, Pearson called on Johnson at Camp David. The meeting had been fixed before the speech at Temple. To say that the Prime Minister was received coldly would be an understatement. Clutching Pearson by his lapels, he shouted "You pissed on my carpet." In another age that would be tantamount to a declaration of war. Fortunately, senior US officials were accustomed to Johnson's tantrums. But It was a bad moment – vividly described by Charles Ritchie (then Ambassador in Washington) in his memoir, Storm Signals.

Clearly, there were very dark sides to the Indochina experience. Hence the need to ask, as many did "Was it worth it?" The costs were enormous. They included the disruption of many more pedestrian activities, a huge budget - as eventually one-third of the entire foreign service officer complement of the Department of External Affairs was drawn into the vortex. Many Canadians, especially from academe, condemned the enterprise as Ottawa following orders from Washington.

"Supervising the Peace that Never Was" and other volumes, including the equally excellent "Canadian Peacekeepers in Indochina (1954-1973)" edited by Arthur Blanchette, suggests a more positive verdict on Canada's involvement. A short list of the positive outcomes includes the following:

- A "pivotal" role in the diplomatic wrangling that led to the return of US prisoners of war;
- Similarly, a role in facilitating North Vietnamese agreement to the flight on foot of many thousands from the North to the South;
- More successful and more spectacular was escape by boat. The plight and adventures by boat became an international 'cause célèbre'. Canada's role in welcoming thousands to her shores led to the "Nanson Medal", an international tribute to the 'people' of a country for humanitarian service;
- Senior US military officers gave high marks for the "efficiency" of the Canadian military contingent, who played important logistic and other roles in the work of the Commissions in Saigon, Hanoi and Phnom Penh.
- Despite countless setbacks, the experience polished our reputation as peacekeepers, even among some, but not all, senior figures in Washington.

Indochina catapulted Canadian engagement in South East Asia and the South Pacific into a priority area. It seemed to many of us (including me, who was never in Indochina) that the exposure of so many officers posted to that difficult, violent, often ridiculous, frustrating theatre and all-season Turkish bath had earned us our spurs and a little more international respect.

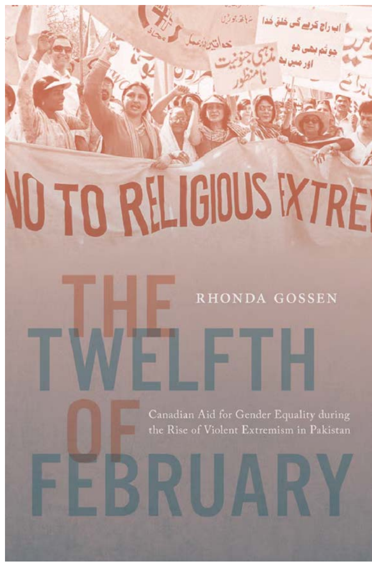
And what about the people of those countries, the victims of a seemingly endless, modern, brutal and devastating war? In their recollections, many of the authors write with warmth about encounters with the local people, but only in one case, that I recall, warmly about their leaders. I was particularly struck by John Schioler's description of an evening at the Commission mess at the Hotel Metropole in Hanoi. There were drinks, music from a record player and dancing. Ho (Ho Chi Minh) was there. He enjoyed dancing and spoke most of the languages of the foreigners, male and female, who were present. To John's astonishment, Ho asked him to dance. A sophisticated, but unpretentious man with a sense of humour, he was wearing his jungle suit and the customary black sandals made from an old automobile tire. ■

John Graham is a frequent contributor to FORUM. See his compressed biography at the end of the article on Jimmy Carter.

Rhonda Gossen, *The Twelfth of February: Canadian Aid for Gender Equality during the Rise of Violent Extremism in Pakistan,*

Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2024, 250 pages

Review by Ian Smillie



The *Twelfth of February* is an important book for several reasons. First, it describes the appalling war against women's rights in Pakistan over the past four decades, the relentless progress of Sharia law in the 1980s, the fallout from 9/11, the creeping shadow of Afghanistan, anti-Westernism and Talibanization, the advent of the hopeful Women's Protection Acts of 2011 and how things became even worse after that.

Second, it describes the work of a small army of very brave women and civil society organizations in leading the struggle for justice and change in Pakistan. Here we see the schizophrenia of various Pakistans, notably the feudal Pakistan, armed and dangerous and fearful of change, overlapping with a thoroughly modern Pakistan populated by clear-headed people who are as well educated and as well versed in the benefits of democracy and development as any others on the planet.

Third, it asks important questions about human rights versus culture, and what role outsiders, especially Westerners can play in such a debate. Gossen summarizes the problem: "The human rights versus culture debate, the definition of gender as identity, the politicization of the definition of culture, and the accusations that criticism of harmful cultural practices is racial paternalism, neocolonialism, and cultural imperialism are all mine field debates holding policymakers hostage to the culture question." (p 182) And she quotes an observer of the Taliban in Afghanistan who has a ready answer: "This is not cultural, it's criminal." (p 183)

Fourth, the book chronicles the evolution of Canada's aid program in its understanding of, and support for gendered human rights in Pakistan. This is rare enough – there is little reflection in the public domain of anything to do with Canadian development assistance. Even internally, lessons are not learned, and those that are learned are poorly remembered.

Between 1989 and 2009, CIDA became the preeminent donor in Pakistan where gender and development was concerned. This had nothing to do with the volume of CIDA spending – in the general scheme of things, it wasn't great. But for Pakistanis and other donors, CIDA was the go-to organization for knowledge and experience in the sector. It was also the leading donor on issues related to environmental issues, led by its support for IUCN and the Pakistan Environmental Strategy.

And then all that changed, almost overnight. CIDA stopped funding Pakistani civil society organizations, its gender lens went out of focus, and it abandoned the environment. Gossen says that Canada dropped the ball and that a generation of work and understanding was either picked up by other donors or simply relegated to the dustbin.

Why? Gossen says the aid policy shift was brought on by "challenging geopolitics." Maybe, but there were other factors at play. The Harper government which took office in 2006, decided by about 2009 that it was going to halt Canadian government funding, in Canada and overseas, to a huge body of civil society organizations involved in development, the environment and human rights. This led to a defunding of established Canadian organizations such as Kairos and the Canadian Council for International Cooperation, and wholesale cutbacks to the likes of women's organizations in Pakistan.

Importantly, Gossen asks if the strategy, had it continued, gave enough thought to the village and grassroots level. She quotes two Pakistani activists writing in 1987: "Oppressed and victimized, rural women and the urban poor have remained untouched by the current movement which primarily expresses the concerns and fears of urban bourgeois women. If the women's movement is to take root in Pakistan, it will have to overcome… the gap separating its activists from the majority of women – a gap that in itself is culturally articulated." (p. 203)

An answer can be found in the work of BRAC in Bangladesh. BRAC, arguably one of the biggest and most effective NGOs in the world, understood from its early days that it had to tackle the gender problem on several fronts, at a policy level and at the grass roots. One of BRAC's most important initiatives is what it calls non-formal primary education: village schools, primarily for girls who have dropped out of the formal system, giving them literacy, numeracy, a wider view of the world and their place in it. BRAC works on rights, but it also works on new economic opportunities for women. And it understands that scale is important, not just in reaching a lot of individuals, but in demonstrating what is possible to shortsighted

governments and to aid agencies with limited attention spans.

Many of Pakistan's nascent civil society organizations in the 1990s made the pilgrimage to Bangladesh to study and learn from BRAC. I remember asking the director of one for his impression of the BRAC schools. They were very good, he said, but they were essentially un-Islamic – there was too much singing and playing, and inappropriate dress. The purpose of educating girls, he said, was not to change their place in the general scheme of things, but to make them more eligible for marriage.

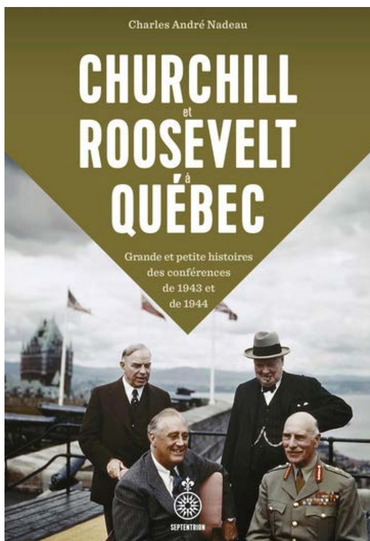
So, I guess, in those years, even in some of the most hopeful parts of Pakistani civil society described in *The Twelfth of February*, there was still a lot of room for improvement. ■

Ian Smillie, a longtime development practitioner and writer, is the author of Under Development, A Journey Without Maps.

Charles André Nadeau, *Churchill et Roosevelt à Québec: grande et petite histoire des conférences de 1943 et 1944,*

Septentrion, 2024

Revue par Jean Riopel



Le Canada s'est taillé une réputation enviable comme pays hôte, souvent initiateur et organisateur de conférences internationales de haut niveau. Le livre de Charles André Nadeau, un officier à la retraite de la marine canadienne, nous ramène à la genèse de cette expertise canadienne. Nadeau fait un récit détaillé des sommets que Winston Churchill et Franklin Roosevelt tinrent à Québec durant le deuxième conflit mondial, sommets qui eurent un impact sur le cours de la guerre et l'image internationale du Canada.

La préface que signe le directeur général du Château Frontenac nous apprend que ce livre répond au besoin de mettre à la disposition des clients de l'hôtel une monographie sur les conférences de 1943 et 1944. Nadeau a livré la marchandise avec des textes courts et bien documentés. Il a fait une recherche sérieuse, que démontre une bibliographie étoffée offrant une documentation variée (mémoires de participants, documents gouvernementaux déclassifiés, articles de journaux, etc.). Nadeau a aussi agrémenté son texte de plusieurs photos de participants et de lieux familiers de la vieille capitale.

Churchill et Roosevelt ont tenu plusieurs tête-à-tête au cours du conflit (notons que leur première rencontre eut lieu en août 1941 dans la baie de Placentia à Terre-Neuve, alors administrée par le Royaume-Uni). Pour la tenue des sommets de Québec (Quadrant en août 1943 et Octagon en septembre 1944), la structure est sensiblement la même. La durée est de deux semaines, la première consistant en travaux préparatoires menés par les stratèges militaires au Château Frontenac, la deuxième en sessions plénières avec Roosevelt et Churchill à la Citadelle de Québec où ils sont logés.

Selon Nadeau, le sommet de 1943 a été le plus déterminant pour le cours de la guerre. Les alliés progressent alors sur tous les fronts mais l'ennemi est loin d'être vaincu. Cette rencontre marque un tournant important car Roosevelt assume désormais le leadership. La grande décision prise à Quadrant porte sur le débarquement de Normandie que les américains imposent pour le printemps 1944, alors que Churchill voulait le retarder pour donner la priorité à la campagne d'Italie. Churchill et Roosevelt entérinèrent à Quadrant l'accord nucléaire entre les deux pays, accord dans l'exécution duquel le Canada était impliqué.

Quand a lieu Octagon en 1944, que Nadeau qualifie de transitoire, les alliés sont sur la route de la victoire. Churchill tente de convaincre Roosevelt de ses vues sur la conduite de la guerre dans le Pacifique, où les Britanniques jouent un rôle modeste. Roosevelt, redoutant le rétablissement de l'impérialisme britannique en Asie, résiste à Churchill. Celui-ci obtient néanmoins quelques miettes, comme la participation de la Royal Navy à certaines opérations navales, participation jugée inutile par les militaires américains. Par contre, la vive opposition de Churchill contribua à convaincre les Américains de mettre au rancart le plan Morgenthau qui visait à désindustrialiser l'Allemagne après la guerre.

Les anecdotes, qui font le pain de la petite histoire, abondent et donnent un relief souvent divertissant au récit de Nadeau. Il accorde un chapitre à la présence sur la délégation britannique d'août 1943 de Ian Fleming, le créateur de James Bond, à l'époque officier du renseignement dans la Royal Navy. Parfois il s'attarde sur des questions secondaires qui n'ont pas un lien évident avec les sommets, comme la visite au Canada du général De Gaulle en juillet 1944.

Le salon rose du Château Frontenac où les militaires se rencontrent fut témoin d'une scène particulièrement loufoque. Parmi les projets sur la table en 1943, il y avait le projet Habbakuk, une lubie de Churchill, qui consistait à créer "un immense porte-avion fait de glace et de pulpe de bois". Pour en démontrer la résistance, Mountbatten dégaina son révolver et tira quelques balles sur un bloc de ce matériau. Une

balle ricocha et rata de près l'Amiral King de la marine américaine. Les employés sidérés crurent un moment que la guerre avait éclaté entre les deux grands alliés! Churchill et Roosevelt donnèrent leur aval au projet Habbakuk, qui fut jugé irréalisable quelques mois plus tard.

Au début de Quadrant, Churchill et Roosevelt passent un après-midi à taquiner la truite au lac à l'Épaule au nord de Québec (au Québec, le terme lac-à-l'épaule est synonyme de réunion stratégique de haut niveau). Après Quadrant, Churchill s'accorde une semaine de vacances dans une pourvoirie du Parc des Laurentides où, avec sa suite, il est reçu par Frank Clarke, propriétaire de l'Anglo Pulp. Maurice Duplessis, qui était chef de l'Opposition en 1943 fut obligé de quitter sa chambre du Château Frontenac afin d'y loger un militaire. Un an plus tard, redevenu Premier ministre du Québec, le "Cheuf" fut autorisé à garder sa chambre pendant Octagon. Churchill lui fit la politesse d'aller le saluer au Conseil législatif.

De nombreux journalistes canadiens et étrangers couvraient les événements de Québec. En raison du secret des délibérations, ils n'avaient pas grand-chose à se mettre sous la dent et s'ennuyaient ferme. À un journaliste curieux, le ministre britannique de l'information Brendan Bracken crut bon d'expliquer "que les décisions prises ne seront révélées qu'à l'ennemi et sur les champs de bataille".

Quel était le rôle d'Ottawa dans la tenue des sommets? Force est de constater qu'il était très limité. Nadeau écrit: "À Québec comme ailleurs, les participants à ces conférences se limitent aux représentants du Royaume-Uni et des États-Unis. Le Président Roosevelt s'oppose à tout apport supplémentaire aux pourparlers." Le rôle du Canada se cantonnait à assurer la logistique, la sécurité des sites de rencontres, loger et nourrir les participants, et divertir les journalistes.

Mackenzie King était présent à Québec, accompagné des membres de son comité de guerre. Faute de pouvoir participer aux sessions des sommets, King dut se satisfaire de rencontres séparées avec Churchill et Roosevelt. Les nombreuses photos où King apparaît avec les deux grands font illusion. Dans un face-à-face avec Churchill en 1943, King insista, afin de calmer les critiques de l'Opposition, pour que Churchill intervienne auprès de Roosevelt afin que celui-ci reconnaisse en public le rôle important du Canada dans l'effort de guerre. Faveur accordée. En septembre 1944, King offrit à Roosevelt une participation canadienne dans la guerre contre le Japon. Offre acceptée.

On peut spéculer sur la présence possible, auprès de King, d'agents du service diplomatique canadien. C'était une occasion rêvée d'y faire leur classe sur la gestion de rencontres internationales. Il aurait été intéressant que Nadeau consacre quelques lignes à l'impact des sommets sur le rôle international en devenir du Canada. L'idée lui a probablement effleuré l'esprit car, à la fin du livre, il y a une photo de Lester B. Pearson qui préside une séance plénière au Château Frontenac lors de la fondation de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture en octobre 1945. Un an à peine après la tenue d'Octagon en septembre 1944, le Canada jouait maintenant un rôle significatif à une conférence des Nations Unis.

Le livre de Nadeau est à la fois instructif, amusant, et de lecture facile. Il constitue à ma connaissance la seule monographie sérieuse en français sur les sommets tenus à Québec lors du second conflit mondial. C'est une œuvre de mémoire utile qui fait réaliser au lecteur que ces sommets historiques furent le prélude d'un bel avenir pour le Canada sur la scène internationale.

Jean Riopel est un membre fondateur du Forum des anciens du service extérieur canadien. Il a œuvré en tant qu'agent de 1988 à 2011.

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