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Devoir de mémoire. Une activité post-carrière. CÉRÉMONIES DU 80^e ANNIVERSAIRE DU DÉBARQUEMENT EN NORMANDIE

Par Gabriel Lessard



L'auteur déposant une couronne de fleurs à la Place des Canadiens à St-Contest.

Ces dernières années, mon épouse Corinne et moi coordonnons nos voyages en France avec les anniversaires du grand débarquement de 1944 en Normandie. Nous avons même eu l'insigne occasion

de dormir au dernier étage de la première maison libérée sur le continent européen. C'est la maison dite canadienne qui surplombe la plage Juno à Bernières-sur Mer. Rien n'illustrait au petit matin que d'aussi

dramatiques événements s'y étaient produits.

Or, nous y étions à nouveau ce 6 juin pour commémorer le 80^e anniversaire du débarquement.

Ce pèlerinage en Normandie fut absolument mémorable. Le maire et les citoyens de Saint-Contest, l'une des quatre communautés de la plaine de Buron, près de Caen, où les soldats canadiens se sont illustrés en combattant les forces nazies, nous ont reçus avec de grands égards et beaucoup de dignité. Nous avons participé à plusieurs commémorations où j'ai eu l'honneur de prononcer quelques mots et de déposer des couronnes de fleurs que la municipalité de Saint-Contest avait eu la délicatesse de marquer à mon nom.

La cérémonie au carré rénové et embelli de la Place des Canadiens à Saint-Contest, où j'ai déposé une couronne de fleurs en compagnie du maire Philippe, a été plus



Maison canadienne à Bernières-sur Mer.

particulièrement émouvante. La municipalité y a même fait installer une plaque de bronze qui porte mon nom et celui du maire. De plus, ce dernier m'a fait l'immense honneur, à la fin de notre séjour, de me gratifier d'un certificat qui me fait citoyen d'honneur de cette ville.

Vous vous demanderez fort judicieusement à quoi je dois toute cette attention. Mes mérites personnels n'y sont pour à peu près rien, sinon que je fais partie des Comités Juno-Canada et Juno-Canada-Normandie qui ont pour mission de faire fleurir le devoir de mémoire.

Ces attentions, ces honneurs, je les dois d'abord à tous nos héros morts sur ce champ de bataille. Une visite aux cimetières canadiens normands de Cintheaux (le plus grand cimetière canadien en Europe avec 2960 stèles) et de Béný-sur-Mer (2049 stèles), où des milliers de pierres tombales alignées au couteau et portant des âges la plupart du temps sous la vingtaine, saurait certainement vous tirer une larme. Ces jeunes héros sont morts à l'aube de leur vie... Les Normands gardent un souvenir

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Stèle commémorative à la plage Juno.



Square du capitaine Michel Gauvin.

reconnaissant, vibrant et vivant de leurs sacrifices. C'est d'abord à eux que je dois toute l'attention dont Corinne et moi avons été l'objet. Oui, je me souviens et nous continuerons à nous souvenir d'eux.

Ces visites en Normandie m'ont offert d'autres moments de réflexions. L'un de nos grands ambassadeurs est aussi un héros de guerre. Michel Gauvin a été le chef de la délégation canadienne près la Commission

internationale de Contrôle et de Surveillance (ICCS) au Vietnam en 1973. J'en étais le plus jeune membre, six mois après mon entrée au Ministère. Je me suis donc retrouvé avec beaucoup d'émotion à Colomby-Anguery où se trouve le « Square du capitaine Michel Gauvin ». Le poème très touchant qu'il a écrit en mémoire d'un de ses camarades y est reproduit sur une stèle. Ce texte ajoute une tonalité de grande humanité à un patron que j'admire toujours. Il a été un exceptionnel soldat et un exceptionnel ambassadeur. ■

La carrière diplomatique de Gabriel Lessard a débuté au Vietnam en 1973. Il y retournera 32 ans plus tard comme Ambassadeur du Canada. En congé sans solde de 1977 à 1980 chez Alcan d'Afrique et du Moyen-Orient, il a œuvré comme directeur de la Francophonie de 1989 à 2002 et directeur exécutif adjoint au Secrétariat de l'Évaluation du Renseignement du Conseil privé de 2002 à 2005.

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Charles Ritchie and the Hippopotamus

By John Graham

“ I am in the midst of an argument with the Department at home. What a jealous old hippopotamus the Department is ... ”

Charles Ritchie, *Storm Signals*, Washington, February 18, 1963.

A small library would be needed to accommodate the works of authors from the Department of External Affairs (currently Global Affairs) and the other offices gathered under similar nomenclature from its origins in 1909. Most I haven't read, but it is fair to say that within this library is a treasure of well-written, insightful, and above all, highly entertaining non-fiction. Picking out the best would be stimulating, but hugely time consuming. That said, my favourite is the set of four diaries from 1927 to 1972 by Charles Ritchie. Not all will condone his undiplomatic candour, but critics may recall that full disclosure is often a feature of the most readable diaries and that in this case it is unlikely that publication was in mind when pen was put to paper.

There is a temptation to enlarge on the role of candour in these diaries, especially as they are primary sources of colour, piquancy and, of course, history. Included is the tumultuous meeting at Camp David in April 1965, following a speech at Temple University in which Pearson advocated a pause in the bombing in Vietnam. An enraged LBJ unloaded his bile on the Prime Minister with his rich command of epithets. There are flattering mini-portraits of Mike Pearson, UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld, foreign minister Howard Green, many others, and a distinctly unflattering portrait of Prime Minister MacKenzie King.

My high opinion of Ritchie's diaries is shared by more credible reviewers, including C.P. Snow,

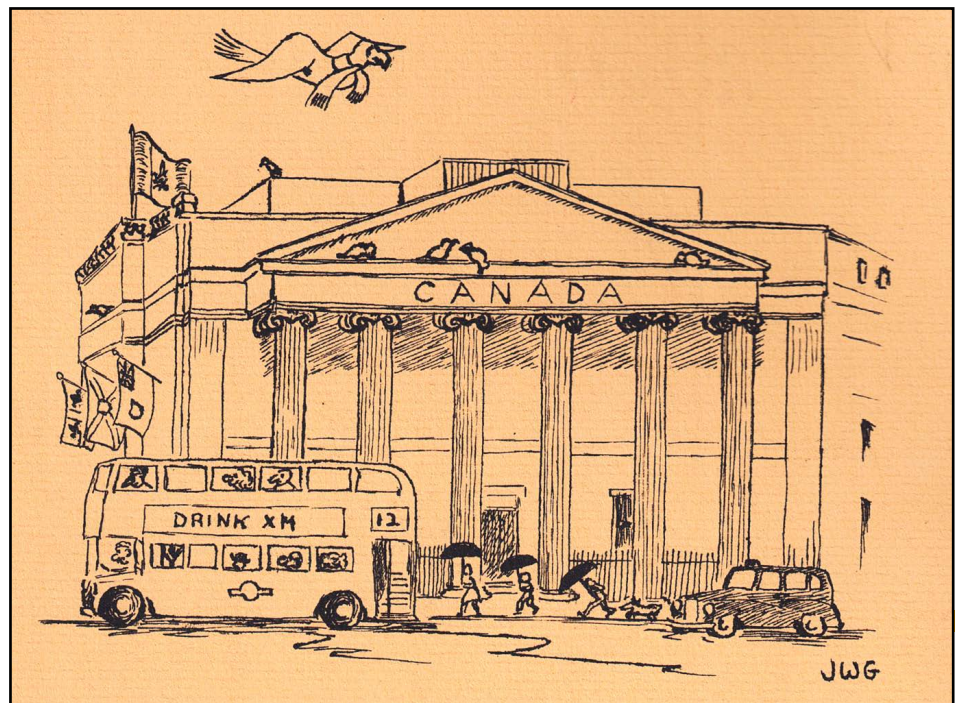
William French, Ken Adachi and notably the jury for the Governor General's Award for non-fiction ("The Siren Years").

In his first volume, "An Appetite for Life", Ritchie, then an undergraduate at Oxford, writes that he intends to speak to former Prime Minister, Sir Robert Borden, a friend of his father, about a career in External Affairs. It's unlikely that Borden interceded – Ritchie would have told us. He made his own way through exams and the interview – and didn't stop: Ambassador to the Republic of Germany (West

Germany), Deputy Under-Secretary, Ambassador to the United Nations, Canadian Representative to NATO, ambassador in Washington (JFK, LBJ) and High Commissioner to London. My connection with him was Canada House in London, where he was my boss for almost four years. (My immediate chief was the wise and dyspeptic Louis Rogers.)

For the uninitiated, a summons to Mr. Ritchie's office in Canada House was an intimidating experience. His door, and most importantly his privacy, were discreetly protected by Betty Burgess, his secretary. That door opened onto a space the size of a ballroom, hung with a colossal crystal chandelier, eighteenth and nineteenth-century royal and equestrian portraits and carpeted with one of the two largest Persian rugs in England – the mate is in Windsor Castle. Past the floor-to-ceiling windows that look out

Cartoon by John Graham



When we close on the ship, order them to leave Canadian waters!

Lorsque nous approcherons du navire, ordonnez-leur de quitter les eaux canadiennes !

onto the statue of Horatio Nelson and the fountains of Trafalgar Square, his huge antique desk was at the far end - a hike of perhaps seventy feet. Many years before, someone is alleged to have informed the then High Commissioner that the only office in Europe more opulent than his belonged to Benito Mussolini.

Ritchie was uncomfortable with excessive imperial splendour, but equally concerned that architectural vandalism (occasionally favoured by the Department) should not despoil it.

An anecdote may offer another glimpse of his nature. Late one morning I was invited by Mr. Ritchie to join him and his other guest, John Halstead, then an assistant under-secretary in External Affairs, for lunch at the Traveller's Club nearby on Pall Mall. After drinks the three of us headed for the washroom, a cavernous chamber fitted with enormous marble urinals. Halstead and I went from the urinals to the washbasins to wash our hands. Mr. Ritchie proceeded directly from the urinals to the dining room. When the two of us joined him at the table, a slight frisson hung in the air. Mr. Ritchie looked at us and remarked dryly, "I don't know about you two, but my privates are generally cleaner than my hands."

After rereading "The Siren Years" 1937-45 and "Storm Signals" 1946-62, I tried an experiment. I opened a diary at random and read the entry or entries for that day. Rewarded by what I found, I repeated the process and, to my surprise and delight, found that I was never disappointed. At the risk of being accused of writer's sloth but encouraged by my test, I decided that the most effective way to present the author's gift would not be by way of a critique, but with a small selection of quotations illuminating his wit, humanity and intuitive grasp of the Byzantine nature of foreign policy. Bursts of cynicism are also represented.

Herewith from the forward of "Diplomatic Passport":

"The Department of External Affairs at that time (1936) was small as was Canada's place on the map of international politics. Its future was being shaped by a handful of unusually gifted men who shared the belief that Canada had its own role to play in the world and a conception of what that role should be. They worked together without feeling for respective rank, without pomposity, with humour, despising pretence, intolerant of silliness and scathing in their contempt for self-advertisement. They were my mentors, later to become my friends."

Washington, November 3, 1937

(On Etonians in the British Foreign Office)

"What happens to them at Eton? However innocent, stupid or honest they may be they always look as though they had passed the night with a high class prostitute and had spent the early part of the morning smoothing the ravages with the aid of creams, oils and curling tongs."

London, January 19, 1944

"Talked to George Ignatieff about this ghastly raid on Sofia where we have wiped out the whole centre of a town, which has no shelters, is built of wood and is inhabited by people most of whom seem to be pro-Ally. The horror of these destructive attacks on the cities of Europe! It is such a revolting way of waging warfare and no-one seems to realize what we are doing..."

London, April 22, 1944

"Went down to the House of Lords and heard a pretty thin debate on the Empire. They just do not know much about the subject... No one in the House showed any real understanding that Canada is a nation with a soul of its own. They all say it, but none of them really understand it."

English Channel, June 17, 1944

(Life on board a Canadian-manned landing craft on the coast of Normandy 11 days after D-Day. Ritchie was delivering a message, composed by him, but formally attributed to PM Mackenzie King, to Canadian Troops at the beach-head).

"Life at such close quarters could be hell, but in fact, it was carefree and cheerful. It was an efficiently run ship, but not run on any orthodox Royal Navy lines but in a peculiarly Canadian way - the lack of fuss and feathers, the humour and the horse-sense with which the whole business is handled. Between the three officers they knew how to run the ship and keep happy... a crew including a French Canadian, a Dukhobor, a lumber jack, an ex-rum-runner and a Newfoundlander. They were a tough, good natured lot who would have been impossible to manage with spit and polish. (On the pictures of pinups, one remarked) 'if only they moved - it is having them suspended like that in one position that gets on one's nerves.'"

Train enroute to the San Francisco conference that set up the UN. April 21, 1945.

"Luncheon with MacKenzie King and was charmed by the fat little conjurer with his flickering, shifty eyes and appliqué smile. ... - he seems very pleased with his own cleverness and with his own survival."

Paris, August 21, 1946

"The Manchester Guardian compares the Peace Conference to the situation described in Sartre's play "Huit Clos". Like the characters in Sartre's Hell, the nations are trapped by their own past actions and cannot escape. The situation is frozen. The delegates can only repeat endlessly the same arguments and the same gestures. Profound disillusionment and weary cynicism characterize all the delegations

except the irresponsible and ebullient Australians.”

Paris, May 9, 1947

“What a stewpot of jealousies UNESCO sounds. God preserve me from having anything to do with it. ... they think they are “men of good will” and progressive. They make no allowance to themselves for their egotism and love of power.”

Paris, June 21, 1948. In discussions with Lady Diana Cooper at a dinner party... : “I cannot understand it. Am I invisible, or inaudible?... no-one pays attention to me. She fixed me with her azure eyes. “Something must be done about that.” Something was - with Nancy Mitford as her lieutenant, Diana organized a Ritchie Week, a week of non-stop parties, dinners, even a ball. She roped in half Paris ... a clutch of coloured balloons inscribed “Ritchie Week” were let loose over Paris. (In conversation with her husband, Duff, I said “You don’t think , do you, that now we have an “embarrass de Ritchies?” Lord Cooper “politely demurred.”

Bonn, June 15, 1954

“Received today by Chancellor Adenauer. The more I see of him the more impressed I am. He is a very wise and wily old man, much subtler than the other German politicians, making them seem raw and provincial.”

New York, October 1, 1959

“... Those who think that they have got a nice tame Canadian in the new Minister are very much mistaken. He (Howard Green) is a very shrewd politician. He is also admirable in his pursuit of objectives in which he tenaciously believes, particularly in the field of disarmament.”

On appointment as Ambassador in Washington, January 15, 1962.

“I hear on all sides that the present government is extremely unpopular in Washington”

“The old neighbourly relationship between our two countries was never, of course, based on equality between us, but the inequality was less glaring than it now is.” ... “they have developed a complete impermeability to advice, criticism or comment of any kind, combined with the patient courtesy that one extends to the well-meaning irrelevance.” (The mutual aversion of Kennedy and Diefenbaker had poisoned the relationship.)

The final quotations (below) are not taken from diary entries, but from Ritchie’s unsurprisingly sound valedictory reflections on his forty years in the foreign service.

Storm Signals, pp156 – 165

“Serving Canada abroad is an enlightening experience. The Canadian identity emerges very clearly when seen from the outside and when Canada appears as an actor on the international stage. Any foreign diplomat who has had

the experience of negotiating with Canadians would recognize on sight our particular Canadian mix of goodwill and hard-headedness, of friendliness and touchiness. He would also, I think, respect the Canadian instinct for conciliation and realistic acceptance of limits of the possible, mingled though it is with a strong dose of self-righteousness. These qualities do not seem to be more Anglo-Canadian than French-Canadian. Indeed, seen from abroad, all Canadians, whatever their differences or origin, seem much more like each other than like any other race or nation, including the races from which they spring... ■

John Graham, a frequent contributor to FORUM, enjoyed a long and distinguished career in External Affairs and then the Organization of American States. He is an author of note, and among his career highlights has been his work as chief cartoonist for the Ottawa-based Manor Park Chronicle.

More on “Canada Declassified”

Tim Sayle and Sam Eberlee of the University of Toronto are assembling a massive number of Canadian classified documents, now de-classified and available as a number of “briefing books” on a variety of issues. The material is organized carefully on the “Canada Declassified” website, and is accompanied by clear explanatory notes.

Of interest to FORUM readers will be the briefing book on “Canadian Intelligence Activities in Vietnam”, which is available by clicking on the link below (or copying this link to your browser):

[Canadian Intelligence Activities in Vietnam • Canadian Intelligence Activities in Vietnam • Canada Declassified](#)

Another briefing book, recently assembled and published, is on the Canadian connections to the activities of Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean, two of the “Cambridge Five” spies recruited by the Soviet Union in the 1930s. It is available at this link:

[Two of the Cambridge Five: Canada’s Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean Dossier • Two of the Cambridge Five: Canada’s Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean Dossier • Canada Declassified](#)

For more of their work, or on the availability of other material, see their home page, as well as the explanatory notes on the Canadian Foreign Intelligence History Project. These efforts are pulling old documents out of Library and Archives Canada and placing them in unclassified fashion on the web, for the reading pleasure of everyone.

Vive la poste diplomatique !

Par **Gérald Cossette**

Ce n'est pas seulement au sein de Postes Canada que se produisent des bavures. Que dire de celle qu'avait commise le contracteur qui agissait comme service postal au Affaires extérieures au milieu des années 80s.

J'étais alors agent de pupitre pour la première fois, « responsable » des pays nordiques et de la Finlande au bureau de l'Europe de l'Ouest quand le Canada décide d'inviter le roi de Norvège, Olav V, à faire une visite d'État au Canada.

C'est bien connu, en Norvège le roi Olav V, quoique très respecté pour avoir tenu tête aux Nazis comme officier du haut commandement militaire norvégien durant la deuxième guerre mondiale, est aussi reconnu pour ses exploits sportifs – olympiens à la voile et au saut en ski, et son sens commun.

C'est par une invitation officielle que livre notre ambassadeur au bureau du roi que doit se faire cette démarche diplomatique. Malheureusement, ni le contracteur, ni moi n'en savent rien et celui-ci envoie l'invitation officielle directement au bureau du roi plutôt qu'à notre ambassade à Oslo. Assurément, le contracteur s'est dit, pourquoi envoyer cette missive à l'ambassade du Canada quand la poste norvégienne peut très bien le faire ? Nul besoin d'impliquer une tierce partie dans cet exercice.

Le plus surprenant de l'affaire c'est que le roi, sans prétention, signe lui-même la note de transmission dont son bureau renvoie la page couverture à Ottawa. Quelle ne fut pas la surprise de tous et toutes quand le document apparaît dans le pigeonier de la direction, signé de la main du roi ! L'événement malheureux ne s'arrête pas là. Le sous-ministre adjoint s'en mêle. Il demande une enquête approfondie pour comprendre les



Le roi de Norvège, Olav V

tenants et aboutissants de ce qui s'est passé. Comment le ministère a pu être aussi cavalier alors que l'on parle d'une visite d'État ?

Un peu ébranlé, je dois apparaître devant le SMA pour lui expliquer la situation. C'était pourtant simple, le contracteur, ignorant des pratiques diplomatiques, avait tout simplement posté la lettre directement au palais royal norvégien. Ça me semblait aller de soi. Pas pour un SMA habitué au bon fonctionnement de son secteur et du ministère! Pas pour un SMA dont la carrière a reposé sur le décorum de la diplomatie traditionnelle. Piteux, je dois donc m'enquérir des événements qui ont mené à ce faux-pas. Quand on y pense vraiment. Quelle perte de temps! Pendant que j'essayais de comprendre comment se faisait-il qu'un contracteur à qui rien n'a été expliqué – tout comme à moi, ait pu

faire une telle bourde, pendant ce temps je ne faisais pas mon travail! C'est à se demander quel était mon vrai travail ? De plus, de la façon dont se comportaient envers moi les cadres de mon secteur, c'était comme si j'étais fautif dans cette affaire. J'aurais dû savoir. J'aurais dû deviner puisque la formation était défailante, pour ne pas dire non-existante. Cet accident m'a t'il coûté une promotion ? Je ne le saurai jamais. Mais il a sûrement milité en ma défaveur.

Je saisisais l'importance de comprendre comment la chose s'était produite, pour éviter qu'une telle erreur ne se matérialise à nouveau, mais « l'obsession » du pourquoi me dépasse toujours, puisqu'une réponse au pourquoi n'aurait jamais su satisfaire tout le monde.

Quoi qu'il en soit, la visite d'État a eu lieu avec toute la fanfare qui se rattache à un tel événement. Le moment le plus apprécié par le roi fut sûrement la visite à Calgary des installations olympiques, particulièrement la rampe de lancement du saut à ski. Pour le reste de la visite, l'adjoint du roi fut très occupé à réveiller son patron à la fin des discours et des présentations alors que ce dernier roupillait paisiblement avant de remercier poliment ses convives pour leur contribution à sa visite.

Il faut dire que le roi avait déjà 84 ans lors de son passage au Canada. ■

Gérald Cossette était sous-ministre délégué lors de sa dernière affectation à AMC.

Photo : Wikipedia

Transatlantic Dialogue

The Transatlantic Dialogue, a regular series of discussions among former senior foreign service representatives of Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom, now has a regular place on You Tube, where zoom events of the past are stored for future use.

The fifth Dialogue event was held on 5 June, 2025, and its theme was: "The Future of NATO". The Canadian speaker was Kerry Buck, formerly Canadian ambassador to NATO and now a senior fellow at the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa.

The recording of this event can be found at the following address:
<https://youtu.be/zBqjiSegOas>

This series will continue into 2025 and beyond.

Forging Connection Across Continents: The new Canadian Diplomatic Family Network. (CDFN)

By *Patrick Pilon*

Behind the scenes of international relations, another crucial community exists: the families and partners who accompany Canadian diplomats on their global postings. Their journey, while rich with unique experiences, brings its own distinct set of challenges – navigating unfamiliar cultures, managing career transitions, raising families far from home, and maintaining a sense of belonging amidst frequent moves.

Yet, in these challenges, they saw opportunity. United by their shared journey, a handful of GoC spouses decided to pool their talents and experiences, creating a network that would not only connect them but also amplify their voices.

It was out of this shared reality that the **Canadian Diplomatic Family Network (CDFN) / Réseau des familles de diplomates Canadiens (RFDC)** was born. Based on a fundamental understanding: **when professional diplomats' spouses work together, they can create an indispensable community, develop essential tools,** and gather vital resources specifically for their peers. **By creating this network, the CDFN can identify spouses' challenges and advocate directly with GAC and other Departments and Agencies posting their employees abroad.**

The CDFN was founded on the principle that no diplomatic spouse or dependent should feel alone. With dedication and ingenuity, **350 members** located in more than **65 countries** are now part of that community that transcends borders.

Driven by volunteers, they envisioned a space where spouses could share stories, swap advice, and find solace in knowing others understood their path. From Ottawa to Myanmar, the CDFN became a lifeline, offering practical tools like guides to navigating Foreign Service Directives (FSDs) and sharing the official department documentation to apply for a securing security clearance to work at missions. They organized webinars where seasoned spouses dispensed hard-won wisdom, from decluttering and packing for a first posting to managing mental health abroad. Each initiative is a thread, weaving a tapestry of support that grows stronger with every contribution.

“It’s about turning isolation into connection—one shared story, one useful tip at a time,” says Heather McCrimmon, CDFN co-president.

The genesis of the CDFN lies in the collective wisdom of those who have walked this path. Recognizing **that the most potent support comes from shared experience,** diplomatic spouses and partners themselves took the initiative. Pooling their knowledge – lessons learned about settling into new cities, insights into navigating local systems, strategies for maintaining personal and professional well-being – **can transform the experience for everyone.**

From this collaborative foundation, the CDFN evolved into a dynamic, volunteer-driven, non-profit organization. Its mission is clear: connect the diverse community of families and partners associated with Canada’s diplomatic service and advocate for them!

How does the CDFN accomplish this?

- 1 Building Community:** The CDFN acts as a vital hub, weaving connections between families dispersed across time zones and continents.
- 2** Through online platforms, planned local meet-ups, and shared communications, they **combat the isolation** that can accompany overseas life, **fostering a sense of solidarity and shared identity.** New arrivals find welcoming voices, and seasoned veterans offer invaluable mentorship.
- 3 Developing Tools:** Recognizing recurring needs, the network facilitates the creation and sharing of practical tools. This might range from checklists for international moves and guides for navigating the posting process, resources for managing dual careers or supporting children’s education abroad. These aren’t generic templates; they are tools honed by the real-world experiences of the members themselves.
- 4 Curating Resources:** The CDFN serves as a trusted repository of information. It gathers insights on everything from navigating healthcare systems in different countries to understanding the specific policies of Global Affairs Canada as they pertain to families. By centralizing this knowledge, often scattered or hard to find, the network saves families precious time and reduces uncertainty.

What sets the CDFN apart is its **spirit of advocacy**. Spouses decided to contribute to shape a better future for diplomatic families. They conducted surveys, like the one capturing the voices of 253 spouses, revealing the need for better employment opportunities, language training, and retirement planning. Armed with data, they are engaging with policymakers, advocating for resources and representation that would ease the unique burdens of diplomatic life. Their efforts ensure that families aren't just surviving postings but flourishing in them.

"We are stronger together, the more voices = the more we can accomplish!" says Marie-Andrée Poupart, CDFN co-president.

The CDFN's story is one of collaboration. When professional diplomats' spouses work together, they don't just build a network—they create a legacy. They crafted a community where a spouse in Tokyo can find advice from one in Sao Paulo, where a new posting feels like a shared adventure rather than a solitary leap.

"Every article we publish becomes part of a growing toolkit—something future members can

lean on when they need it most," says Patrick Pilon, CDFN Communications Chair.

Laurent Devlin, newly elected board member of the organisation, about to leave for his first posting as a spouse, got involved with the CDFN even before leaving!

"What better way to learn about this new world of diplomatic expatriation!"

People have had questions and similar issues before us. Let's use the power of community knowledge!"

Through their tools and resources, they empower their peers in every corner of the world!

Spouses and partners within the diplomatic community are not just accompanying diplomats; they are active agents in building a resilient, informed, and mutually supportive network.

Through their tools and resources, they empower their peers in every corner of the world!

"So many members told us they craved ongoing professional growth, we're just answering that call," says Mojgan Legault, Research and Training Chair.

Recognizing that the challenges of diplomatic life extend beyond spouses, the CDFN is also expanding its focus to include teenagers and Third Culture Kids (TCKs). These young nomads often face repeated transitions, identity shifts, and emotional strain as they grow up across borders.

"Our families are whole units, and supporting children through these changes is just as critical," says Chelsea, Family Matters committee Chair. *"We're committed to developing resources that help TCKs feel seen, supported, and empowered—wherever their passports may take them."*

By working together, the CDFN volunteers ensure that no family feels alone, transforming the challenges of diplomatic life into shared journeys of growth and connection.

Check out the CDFN website : www.cdfn-rfdc.com

Become a member : members.cdfn-rfdc.com ■

Patrick Pilon is communication and membership chair, Canadian Diplomatic Network



Photo courtesy of Philip Pilon

CDFN gets together in Ottawa, 8 May, 2024.

A Man of Unique Integrity: Yvon Beaulne

By Daniel Livermore

I first met Yvon Beaulne in 1976. I was then a new recruit to the foreign service, in my first substantive job in External Affairs. He was already a seasoned senior diplomat with a lengthy track record of Head of Mission assignments, then in the gentle denouement of a distinguished career. He was the Director-General of the Middle East and African Affairs Bureau in External Affairs, and senior management and our Minister had selected him to be the Canadian representative to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, which met annually in Geneva. I was the human rights desk officer in the United Nations Bureau. In that capacity, I was expected to prepare for UN meetings and generally act as his junior “gopher”. It was a role I previewed in Ottawa for a year before continuing in New York, where I had similar duties at the Canadian mission as the officer dealing with the UN’s “Third Committee”, which dealt with human rights.

Yvon Beaulne was an extraordinary, legendary character. Bald, rather stout, always impeccably dressed in a suit, never without a tie and jacket, he was everyone’s image of a favourite uncle or a beloved grandfather. He spoke both English and French with an eloquence, range of vocabulary and taste for expression that could rival anyone in government, Pierre Trudeau included. He was from the Ottawa region and was educated at the University of Ottawa. His English had only the slightest lilt of a francophone accent, which he sometimes accentuated for emphasis. As I learned years later, he had been an actor in his youth, and he continued to play the actor as a seasoned diplomat. He could feign anger. He could hold his temper



Photo courtesy of the United Nations

Yvon Beaulne, left, when he was Ambassador to the United Nations, at the UN with Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and UN Secretary-General U Thant, with Mr. Trudeau’s foreign policy adviser, Ivan Head, on the right, 1969.

and feign patience. He could be charming and beguiling. As I was also to learn, he had a genuine, principled sense of rightness about him which I rarely saw replicated in the day-to-day activities of government.

More than that, Mr. Beaulne (as we knew him, always addressing him thus, never by his first name) had a stubborn insistence on doing the right thing. Even prior to his tenure at the Commission on Human Rights, this trait had led to strained relations with senior management. Typical of his views was the position he took on one occasion during a meeting of the Commission, when we received instructions from Ottawa that we were to vote for an Argentine candidate for one of the more junior UN human rights bodies. As Argentina was then staggering under the burden of an oppressive military

regime, Beaulne was outraged that we would vote for any Argentine candidate. I explained the logic of the instructions, namely, that bilateral negotiations had produced an agreement that Argentina would vote for a Canadian candidate running for office in another body, if we would vote for Argentina for this human rights body. It was a typical “vote swap” arrangement. But Mr. Beaulne was having none of it, and his response to my explanations was polite but curt. “Then you vote for him”, he told me, “because I refuse.” True to his words, when the vote took place during a Commission session, he got up and left the room. I had to cast the Canadian ballot.

I saw his kindness and generosity on many occasions. On one occasion, in the late 1970s, Mr. Beaulne heard that our immediate neighbour in most of our UN meetings, the

Byelorussian representative, Lev Maximov, was retiring late in the year from the Byelorussian foreign service. Maximov spoke excellent English, and we used to speak to him regularly, although sometimes through the thick fog of smoke emanating from his always-lit cigarettes. The following day, Mr. Beaulne brought a present to our meeting. It was an English-language Bible, the King James version, and Mr. Beaulne explained to Maximov, in his slow, careful, and sometimes deliberately-accented English that, even if Maximov was not a Christian, there was much to be learned from the Bible, and it was a useful text to study when one had time for reflection in retirement. Maximov was genuinely touched by the gesture, a gift that must have violated one or two of our protocol or security instructions.

On another occasion, I saw his sensitivity at work at one of our many cocktail events. The Soviet representative in those years of the Commission was Valerian Zorin, a ruthless, notorious, former Stalinist also known as the “Butcher of Prague” for his organization of the Communist take-over of Czechoslovakia in 1948 and the murder of the Czech leader Jan Masaryk. He also had been the Soviet ambassador to the UN in the early 1960s, when he had a memorable, historic confrontation in the UN Security Council with the US ambassador, Adlai Stevenson, at the time of the Cuban missile crisis. By this time, around 1977 or 1978, he was a rather old man, in poor health, seemingly only partly in command of his surroundings.

Naturally enough, at the Commission on Human Rights, he was quite deservedly treated as a “pariah”, and virtually no one would talk to him (language barriers being the other obvious problem). But Mr. Beaulne demonstrated courtesy and

consideration to the Cold War adversary despite the obvious differences between our two countries. At one of our initial cocktail events, he wandered over and initiated a conversation. The Soviet delegate, obviously delighted that someone had broken the isolation into which he had been cast, visibly changed his demeanour. While Soviet behaviour did not change materially, Zorin became a little less miserable, his interventions less nasty, and he became one of Mr. Beaulne’s regular interlocutors for the rest of the Commission sessions.

One of Yvon Beaulne’s delightful characteristics was his complete inability to manage paper. If we had a speech prepared for his delivery at the Commission, we had to hold on to five or six copies, because he left them in washrooms, restaurants or on the desks of various meeting rooms. We did not trust him with secure communications, and almost never showed him classified telexes or messages from Ottawa. He did not seem to care. In my four years of working with Yvon Beaulne, he never once wanted to review one of my outgoing messages, nor was he ever interested in seeing the incoming telegrams from Ottawa.

Never one to heed instructions, least of all messages of instructions from Ottawa (which he held in high, and sometimes deserved, contempt), Mr. Beaulne left most of us in the delegation to do our own thing. In the 1970s, before the human rights area became a small international industry, we divided the work functionally, each member of our small Canadian delegation taking on one or two “situations” or thematic areas, preparing reports and drafting recommendations on each. These we discussed with Mr. Beaulne at daily meetings which were more like coffee chats than formal, organized sessions. Once he had the essence of what we wanted to do, or

where matters stood, he led a short discussion, then generally nodded agreement and accepted our views as to the Canadian position, or insisted that we do more. In contrast to the usual circumstances that confront junior officers, our problem was more in restraining his enthusiasm than trying to convince him to be bold.

Mr Beaulne also became the natural leader of the Western Group (essentially the Western Europeans, Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand), a development that led eventually to his selection as Chair of the UN Human Rights Commission. When there were difficult and divisive issues before the Western Group, or sharp divisions over tactics, it usually fell to Mr. Beaulne to sum up a discussion and advise on a way ahead. He was unfailingly courteous to all sides, and his views were almost always the appropriate solutions. But he also had a mischievous side. At the Western Group meetings, in which there were no interpreters, he preferred to speak French. This struck those of us in the Canadian delegation as normal, but we always suspected a more mischievous motivation. He knew in speaking French that the Europeans (and possibly a few others) would understand what he was saying, while the Americans would not. They had to remain silent as he summed up the proceedings.

During his tenure as Chair of the Commission in 1979, Mr. Beaulne ran into a lot of procedural problems during the sometimes raucous debates. He compounded the difficulty by forgetting about the microphone in front of him. At one point, as delegates were waving their hands to get the floor in a procedural argument, and the American delegate insisted on speaking, Mr. Beaulne was heard to say quite audibly “Not him again!” At another point, with confusion reigning as the meeting ended,

he was heard to say to the UN official who acted as secretary to the commission “Now what do we do?” No one held these incidents against him, and all of the delegations appreciated his willingness to conduct the proceedings in the most transparent manner possible.

Mr. Beaulne was also the ideal person to deal with the human rights “activists” that formed the human rights movement in Canada in the 1970s and early 1980s. When we assumed a seat on the UN Commission on Human Rights in 1976, it was the first time Canada had sought and been elected to the Commission since the 1960s, our first and only term on that body (and despite the fact that the UN’s Human Rights Division had been headed by a distinguished Canadian jurist, John P. Humphrey). Mr. Beaulne therefore decided to organize a consultation with Canadian NGOs interested in human rights to exchange views about the issues on the Commission’s agenda.

In the late 1970s, with only five to ten such NGOs interested in human rights and able to represent

themselves in Ottawa, the meetings were small and relatively brief. The NGOs themselves were well-organized and well-informed, but they also tended to be antagonistic to the government and highly critical by nature. Only later did the meetings become formal two-day events, with a pre-negotiated agenda and almost set-piece presentations by each side. During his time at these meetings, Mr. Beaulne was always attentive and careful with the NGOs, patiently explaining Canadian policies, expressing outrage at human rights abuses in other countries, and promising Canadian action. And yet he was always realistic. A person of rock-solid integrity, he never promised what he could not deliver. Nor did he fail to deliver once he had made a promise.

I always believed that Yvon Beaulne had an instinctive, visceral respect for human rights, anchored in his youth in the francophone community in Ottawa. I suspected that he did not appreciate the legal niceties of the UN’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights, nor the many compromises that went

into its formulation in the late 1940s. He never commented on some of the philosophical views under consideration by the Commission, and he probably never attempted to articulate a grand philosophical vision of where he wanted to move Canadian policy in the human rights area. His vision was not a legalistic view of human rights, nor one anchored in the courts or anything like what became the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It was more an instinctive will to advocate the right thing, as well as to weigh cases of morality and justice against the framework of his values. It was a definition of human rights from his own background and conscience, informed by a long career in the foreign service. As a working method in a complex UN environment, and as a model for others to follow, it worked. I was always grateful to External Affairs for the four years I spent in jobs that allowed me to work with Yvon Beaulne. ■

Daniel Livermore, a foreign service officer for more than three decades, is the co-editor of FORUM.

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Bonanza – Epilogue

By Jack Adams

This article is a continuation of “Bonanza,” which appeared in the June 2024, Issue #12 of Forum. It was mentioned there that, although for Canada, the nightmare of this hostage-taking incident was finally over, for the Nicaraguan organizations, the FUAC and CENIDH, the situation would turn tragic. This, then is their story.

Within eight months, Camilo Turcios, along with the other two leaders of the FUAC would be dead. The Annual Report of CENIDH, (the Nicaraguan Human Rights organisation founded by Dra. Vilma Nuñez de Escorcía) for the year 2000 details their assassinations and the lack of government investigation. The same Report indicates that in November 1999, after Marengo released his hostages, Guarducci and Rocha, these same three leaders appeared at CENIDH headquarters and swore that a plan existed to kill them. An anonymous ex-military officer confirmed that the plan existed and was now being implemented. The Report goes on to specifically identify those involved as the Ministry of Government’s Representative in the North Atlantic Region, two representatives of the army and one representative of the National Police. Some ex-members of the FUAC and two ex-Contras were also implicated.

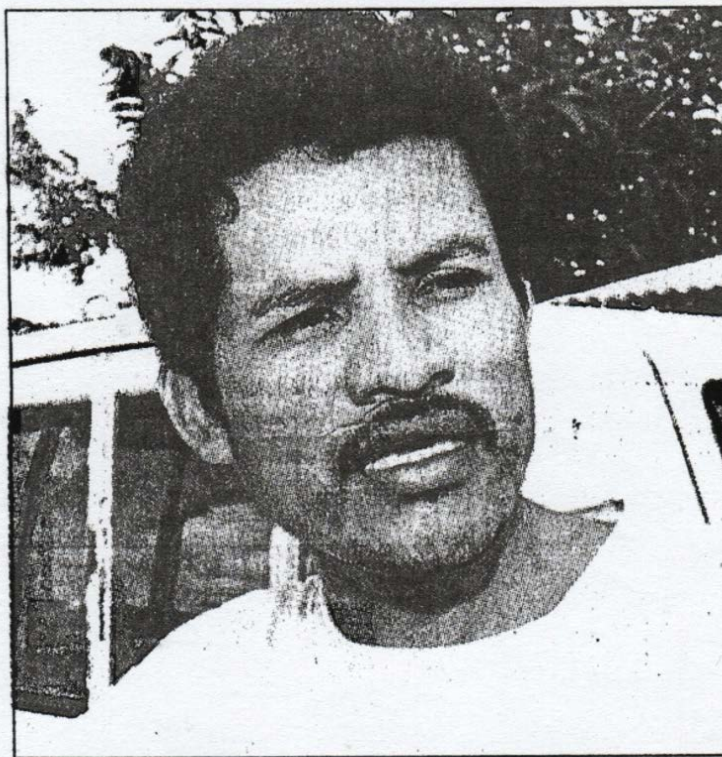
The first to be assassinated was *Tito Fuentes*, FUAC’s second in command. He resided in Siuna and was responsible for the Canadian-funded project that FUAC was implementing in the region. On the afternoon of 2 January 2000, after lunching with *Camilo Turcios*, he was riding home on his bicycle. Suddenly, three men stepped into the road with AK 47’s and brought him down in a hail of bullets at point blank range. He was left in a pool of blood, bicycle strewn across his bullet-riddled body.

The CENIDH Report names the three who carried out the actual shooting and outlines the half-hearted investigation by police and judiciary which followed.

On the arrival of Tito’s body in Managua, *Camilo Turcios* told the gathered press that the next one to be executed would be himself. He further indicated that those responsible for his coming murder

would be the military intelligence branch of the army. On the night of 15 March 2000, his prophecy came true.

Turcios received a call at home from “*el Pufe*”, a former commando and one of his trusted colleagues. He said that he would be arriving at the highway junction of Boaco, an hour’s drive from Managua with another injured colleague from FUAC. This latter required transport to the hospital in Managua, and would *Turcios* meet them and transport him the rest of the way? According to *Turcios*’ wife, Doribel Cáceres, who accompanied him that night, they were met there by *el Pufe*, who guided them into an obscured parking area beneath the trees. Here, a small group of men armed with automatic rifles suddenly appeared, ambushing them at point blank range.



Camilo Turcios no dijo que plagiarios liberarán al canadiense y al militar secuestrados. LA PRENSA/G.FLORES

Contemporary press photo of Camilo Turcios.

Turcios' last words as he fell from the cab of his truck were: "Kill me but spare Doribel".

When the fusillade was over, Turcios' riddled corpse lay on the ground by the front wheel, his bodyguard hanging dead, over the edge of the seat. Doribel Cáceres, slumped in the back seat, was left for dead. Somehow, she survived, but with a severed spine would be an invalid for the rest of her life. More than forty bullet holes would be found in the front and sides of the pickup.

Dra Vilma personally visited the scene during her investigation, speaking with local inhabitants around Boaco as well as the police. Although the noise from the ambush was loud and close to town, it was seven hours before the local police arrived to investigate. Even though "el Pufe" was known to have been involved, the judiciary never investigated him. He eventually disappeared from public view. That left José Francisco Moncada Calderón, known as "Damián Rodríguez" as the last of the three principal FUAC leaders still alive.

On the 20 March, shortly after the death of *Camilo Turcios*, Damián had appeared at CENIDH to provide a declaration against the army accusing them of plotting his imminent assassination. This was widely reported in the press at the time. He told Dra Vilma at CENIDH that he was being constantly harassed.

On 13 August, Damián left Managua, apparently for a meeting with Marenco at a finca some 45 km west of Bonanza. He was accompanied by two colleagues. On arrival, he was given a handheld radio with which he could contact Marenco. On pressing the transmit button, the radio exploded in his face, killing him instantly. CENIDH conducted a follow-up but as in the previous cases, little investigation was done by the authorities, and no one was ever



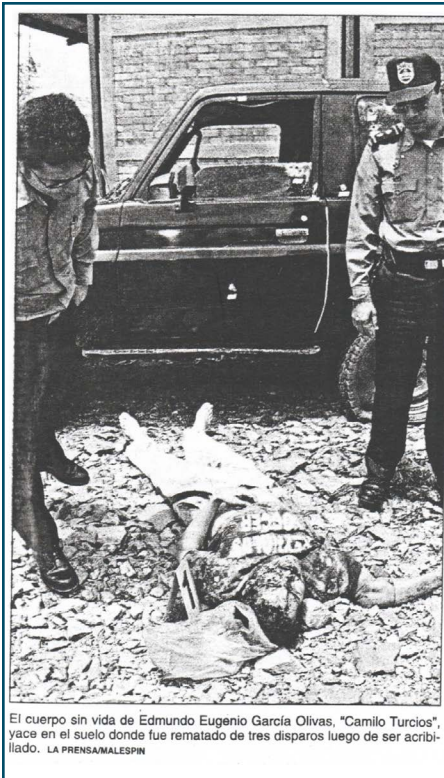
Contemporary press photo of Damian.

charged. Now, the only remaining leader of the FUAC was José Luís Marenco himself, who together with his gang of approximately thirty colleagues, continued to roam freely through the bush.

Attention was now focussed on Marenco. The military began a large buildup of manpower and equipment in the area in the spring of 2001. Small, agile groups of specially trained troops began entering the woods to follow the outlaws. Marenco also broke his followers into smaller groups, making them more difficult to track. A few gave themselves up. Regular skirmishes resulted in the capture or death of others. On the 14 August, after a tipoff from Marenco's cellphone signal, both he and his trusted lieutenant *Amarú Falcón* perished in a firefight with the army. In an attempt to keep their deaths secret from the military, the surviving members of the group cut the heads from both corpses and buried them separately. However, the deception was soon discovered, and with it ended the existence of the FUAC hierarchy.

Although CENIDH and the FUAC accused the army of being responsible for the killings of Turcios, Tito and Damián, nothing was ever admitted, proven or followed up properly. Rumours circulated that the assassins, being ex-FUAC and demobilised Sandinista army regulars, carried out a "settling of scores" with their leaders. They thought either that a lot of money had been paid by the Canadians for Guarducci's release or that the army, at the time of the 1997 Peace Accords had paid the leaders a large extra amount that remained secret. No proof of either exists.

In a press conference a few days after the return of the hostages, Minister Alvarado mentioned that he felt that both Guarducci and Rocha had suffered from the "Stockholm Syndrome". But looking at the promises made by the Chamorro government at the initial demobilisation of 1990, and later the Alemán government in December 1997, these promises made to the FUAC were never kept. However, instead of stepping up to right a clear wrong, it appears the



El cuerpo sin vida de Edmundo Eugenio García Olivares, "Camilo Turcios", yace en el suelo donde fue rematado de tres disparos luego de ser acorralado. LA PRENSA/MALESPIN

Camilo Turcios' body following his assassination, Contemporary Press.

Alemán government decided to solve the problem by eliminating the complainants. The sad fact is that if demobilisation had been properly thought out from the beginning and fairly implemented, none of this might have happened.

A few weeks before the release of Guarducci and Rocha, I had written a memo to Ottawa. In it I stated that I was optimistic for a positive ending to the hostage affair and gave my reasons for this. I urged that when it was over, all of us who had been involved should come together and record lessons learned. That meeting never took place but in May 2000, a "Protected" document from Ottawa landed on my desk. It was entitled "Kidnapping, Hostage Taking and Hijacking, Canadian Policy, Procedures and Practices from a Consular Perspective". It was a draft amendment being proposed to be added to the existing Consular Manual and contained much positive information that I could

relate to from our recent experience in Bonanza.

The kidnapping had a profound effect on me personally. Our Canadian ambassador had been advised to come to Nicaragua to work out of my office while I was in Bonanza. Shortly after the Liaison Committee received its first bona fide contact with the Marenco group, the ambassador and I had a difference of opinion so serious that I felt compelled to advise Ottawa of my feelings. Our relationship never recovered.

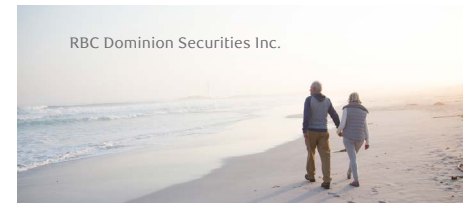
A few months prior to the end of my posting, our new Canadian Ambassador in Costa Rica arrived for her first visit to Nicaragua. She came for a familiarisation tour as well as to present a *Certificate of Recognition* signed by the Director General of the Consular Office and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. This recognition, although it had my name on it, was for all of us, especially our Nicaraguan partners who had worked so tirelessly on our behalf for the freedom of the two hostages.

Some years later in October 2008, a three-quarter hour-long video entitled "High Stakes in Bonanza" was produced by Cineflex International, chronicling the personal side of the Guarducci kidnapping. It tells a graphic and moving story of Manley and Rocha's daily life as captives, told from the point of view of Manley, Dione and Tom McGrail, but it leaves out entirely the behind-the-scenes efforts of CENIDH, Dra. Vilma, Dr Alvarado and the Canadian government who worked so tirelessly with the mining company to gain the hostages' safe release. It does mention *Camilo Turcios*, but Manley understood him to be simply a messenger between Bonanza and Marenco. In fact, I'm certain that it was *Turcios*, as FUAC Commander in Chief,

who convinced Marenco that his only option was to release his hostages.

In 2023, CENIDH, along with thousands of other NGO's operating in the country, had its licence to operate revoked by the current Ortega – Murillo government. Dra. Vilma Nuñez, along with more than three-hundred other Nicaraguan nationals have been illegally stripped of their citizenship. ■

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 in the BC coast.



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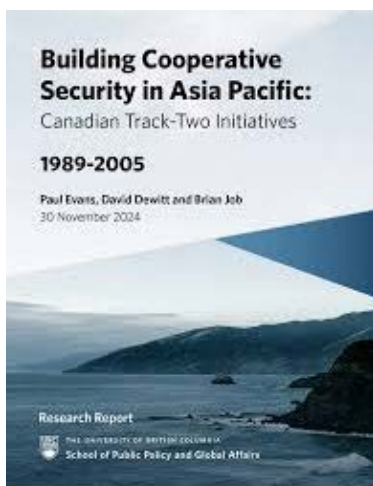
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Books in Revue/ Critiques de livres

Paul Evans, David Dewitt and Brian Job: *Building Cooperative Security in Asia Pacific: Canadian Track-Two Initiatives, 1989-2005*

University of British Columbia, 2024

Stewart Henderson



Evans, Dewitt, and Job's comprehensive examination of Canadian Track-Two initiatives in the Asia Pacific region represents a landmark contribution to our understanding of middle power diplomacy and Canada's distinctive role in fostering regional security dialogue during a pivotal period of post-Cold War transformation.

Drawing on their extensive firsthand experience and deep scholarly expertise, the authors provide an insightful analysis of how Canadian academics, think tanks, and civil society organizations helped shape the regional security architecture between 1989 and 2005. Their work represents not just a historical documentation but a masterful analysis of the mechanisms and principles that made Canadian Track-Two diplomacy

particularly effective during this period of regional transformation. The paper's greatest strength lies in its detailed documentation of how Canadian Track-Two initiatives served as vital laboratories for testing new security concepts and building informal networks of trust among regional stakeholders.

The authors convincingly demonstrate how Canada's perceived status as an "honest broker" – lacking major territorial disputes or military presence in the region – enabled Canadian institutions to play a constructive role in facilitating dialogue on sensitive security issues. This positioning, combined with Canada's commitment to multilateralism and its established relationships with regional actors, created unique opportunities for Canadian-led initiatives to bridge divides and foster innovative approaches to regional security challenges. The authors skilfully illustrate how this special status allowed Canadian facilitators to push boundaries and explore new ideas in ways that might have been impossible for representatives of larger powers. The methodological approach deserves special praise. The combination of historical analysis, case studies, and personal insights provides a rich, multi-layered understanding of how Track-Two diplomacy actually works in practice.

The paper benefits enormously from the authors' direct involvement in many of the initiatives they describe, allowing them to offer insider perspectives while maintaining scholarly objectivity. Their careful attention to both the formal structures of Track-Two processes and the informal dynamics that often determined their success offers valuable insights for practitioners and scholars alike. The authors excel in their nuanced analysis of the institutional dynamics that characterized successful Track-Two initiatives. Their detailed

examination of how Canadian organizations navigated the complex web of regional relationships, institutional rivalries, and competing national interests provides valuable insights into the practical challenges of informal diplomacy. The paper's discussion of how Canadian facilitators maintained credibility while pushing for progressive change in regional security thinking is particularly illuminating, offering important lessons for contemporary practitioners.

The authors' analysis of the role of key institutions - including universities, think tanks, and government-funded research organizations – helps explain how Canada was able to sustain long-term engagement despite changes in its own political leadership and funding priorities. Particularly noteworthy is the authors' analysis of how Canadian-led Track-Two processes helped incubate and develop key institutional innovations in Asian regional security cooperation. Their discussion of the role of the North Pacific Cooperative Security Dialogue (NPCSD) and similar initiatives in laying the groundwork for what would become the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) offers important historical insights into the evolution of Asia Pacific's security architecture.

The authors skilfully demonstrate how Canadian initiatives helped translate abstract concepts of cooperative security into practical institutional arrangements, often serving as crucial testing grounds for ideas that would later be adopted in formal diplomatic settings. Their detailed examination of specific cases shows how Canadian-led dialogues helped regional actors develop shared understanding and common approaches to security challenges, even when formal agreements remained elusive. The paper excels in highlighting the unique characteristics of Canadian Track-

Two diplomacy during this period: its emphasis on inclusive dialogue, its focus on building intellectual and institutional capacity in regional partners, and its commitment to long-term relationship building rather than short-term policy wins. The authors make a persuasive case for how this approach helped establish enduring networks of expertise and trust that continued to influence regional security discussions long after specific initiatives concluded.

The analysis of how Canadian facilitators balanced competing demands - maintaining academic rigour while ensuring policy relevance, fostering frank dialogue while respecting political sensitivities - provides valuable insights into the art of Track-Two diplomacy. One of the paper's most valuable contributions is its detailed examination of how Canadian initiatives helped develop and disseminate new security concepts in the region. The authors' trace how ideas about cooperative security, human security, and multilateral engagement were introduced, debated, and refined through Track-Two processes, eventually influencing official policy discussions and institutional development.

This intellectual history helps explain both the evolution of regional security thinking and Canada's role in shaping it. The authors' analysis of how specific concepts moved from Track-Two discussions into official policy demonstrates the important role of informal diplomacy in conceptual innovation and policy development. The paper's treatment of the relationship between Track-Two initiatives and official diplomacy is particularly sophisticated. (Note: this reviewer, working in the Policy Planning Staff and later in the Asia Pacific Branch, was responsible for the initial structure of the North Pacific Cooperative Security Dialogue.) The authors explore how informal dialogues complemented

formal diplomatic processes, at times preparing the ground for official initiatives and other times providing alternative channels when formal diplomacy was constrained.

Their analysis of how Canadian Track-Two initiatives maintained productive relationships with both government officials and civil society actors offers important insights into the delicate balancing act required for effective "informal diplomacy". They acknowledge where initiatives fell short of their ambitious goals while demonstrating how even apparent failures often yielded unexpected positive outcomes in terms of relationship building and concept development. This honest appraisal strengthens their overall analysis and provides valuable lessons for contemporary practitioners about the importance of realistic expectations and long-term perspective in Track-Two diplomacy. Their discussion of the challenges faced by Canadian initiatives - including funding constraints, competing institutional priorities, and shifting domestic political environments - offers important insights into the practical difficulties of sustaining Track-Two engagement.

The historical analysis remains deeply relevant to contemporary discussions about middle power diplomacy and the role of Track-Two processes in regional security building. At a time when formal diplomatic channels are constrained by great power tensions, the authors' insights into the value of informal dialogue and network building take on renewed significance. Their examination of how Canadian initiatives helped manage great power dynamics while empowering smaller regional states offers valuable lessons for current efforts to maintain cooperative security dialogue in an increasingly polarized environment.

The authors' analysis of how Track-Two processes can help build resilience in regional security

relationships is particularly relevant to current challenges. The paper also makes an important contribution to our understanding of the role of individual leadership and institutional capacity in Track-Two diplomacy. Through their detailed account of key initiatives and personalities, the authors demonstrate how the success of informal diplomacy often depends on the skills, relationships, and credibility of individual facilitators and their institutional backing. This human dimension of Track-Two diplomacy is often overlooked in more theoretical treatments but is crucial for understanding both its potential and limitations. The authors' attention to the importance of personal relationships and trust-building in Track-Two processes offers valuable insights for practitioner training and institutional development.

A particularly valuable aspect of the paper is its analysis of how Canadian Track-Two initiatives adapted to changing regional circumstances over the sixteen-year period under study. The authors show how Canadian facilitators adjusted their approaches in response to evolving security challenges and shifts in the international environment. This adaptive capacity, they argue, was crucial to the long-term effectiveness of Canadian Track-Two diplomacy and offers important lessons for contemporary practitioners.

The paper's examination of the institutional infrastructure supporting Canadian Track-Two initiatives is especially illuminating. The authors detail how various Canadian institutions - universities, think tanks, government agencies, and civil society organizations - worked to maintain sustained engagement with regional partners. Their analysis of how this institutional network developed and evolved offers valuable insights for countries seeking to build their own Track-Two diplomatic capabilities.

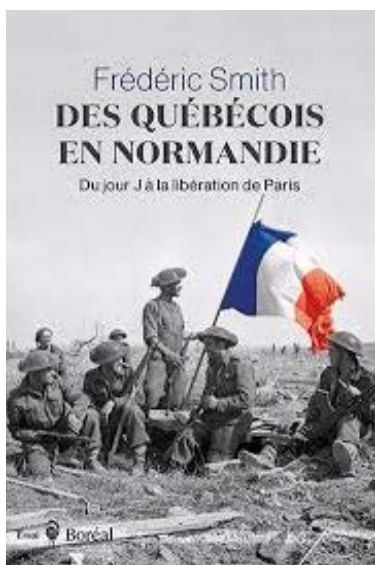
Their work not only documents a significant chapter in Canadian foreign policy but also provides a sophisticated framework for understanding the continuing importance of Track-Two diplomacy in regional security building. The paper stands as a testament to Canada's unique contributions to regional security dialogue and offers important lessons for future efforts to promote cooperative security in the Asia Pacific region.

Stewart Henderson served in Asia, Europe, the Middle East and headquarters focused on political-security issues, including the development of the North Pacific Cooperative Security Dialogue (NPCSD).

Frédéric Smith, *Des Québécois en Normandie. Du jour J à la libération de Paris*

Boréal, 2024

Par Jean Riopel



Frédéric Smith, qui s'intéresse à l'histoire du Québec pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale, entreprend dans ce livre de mettre en valeur les faits d'armes de régiments francophones depuis le débarquement de Normandie le 6 juin 1944 jusqu'à

la fin de la campagne de Normandie le 20 août à Falaise. Un de ses buts est de corriger un déficit d'attention dans les ouvrages historiques, surtout anglophones, sur la place accordée aux Canadiens-français dans l'effort de guerre canadien. Les unités dont Smith suit le parcours sont le Régiment de la Chaudière, les Fusiliers Mont-Royal, le Régiment de Maisonneuve et le 4^{ème} Régiment d'artillerie moyenne. Composés à l'origine de Canadiens-français et dirigés par des officiers francophones, ces régiments ont participé à des combats acharnés contre des forces allemandes aguerries, certaines fanatisées comme les SS et l'aile militaire des Jeunesses hitlériennes.

L'auteur a fait un travail remarquable de documentation, consultant les archives des régiments, les journaux de l'époque, la correspondance des soldats à leur famille, et d'autres sources. Dans ce livre, le lecteur n'est pas au niveau des grandes stratégies des généraux, mais à celui des soldats qui risquent leur vie à tout moment au front. Au fur et à mesure que les combats se déroulent, les pertes (soldats tués, blessés ou faits prisonniers) s'accumulent et rendent la tâche de ceux qui restent très difficile, moralement et physiquement. Les combats sont si âpres que, en trois semaines, le Régiment de Maisonneuve a déjà perdu la moitié de ses effectifs. La moindre intervention contre une ferme isolée ou un hameau peut se solder par la perte de 15, 20, 25 soldats tués ou blessés.

Si la description des combats chapitre après chapitre est parfois fastidieuse, Smith rend hommage aux simples soldats, sous-officiers et officiers en les mentionnant nommément et en décrivant leurs actes de courage. Ce qui m'a le plus frappé, c'est l'humanité de ces militaires sur lesquels on peut mettre un nom, l'âge, le village d'où ils proviennent, la raison pour laquelle ils se sont engagés. Compte tenu de l'époque,

l'aumônier catholique joue un grand rôle pour assurer le réconfort spirituel des soldats, ce qui cependant ne les empêche pas de le taquiner en remplaçant parfois le vin de messe par du whisky.

Un petit nombre de québécoises suit les régiments francophones en Normandie, surtout comme infirmières. C'est le cas de Paule Vallée dont le frère Pierre, officier du Régiment de la Chaudière, fut fait prisonnier dans les heures après le débarquement. L'hôpital militaire dont elle faisait partie s'installa à Bayeux à la mi-juillet et l'infirmière Vallée continua de s'occuper des blessés jusqu'à la fin de la guerre, n'étant jamais loin de la ligne de front.

Parmi les officiers québécois qui combattirent en Normandie, plusieurs accédèrent quelques années plus tard à de hautes fonctions. Je retiens quelques noms parmi ceux que cite Smith: Paul Sauvé, major chez les Fusiliers Mont-Royal, qui en 1959 succéda pour quelques mois à Maurice Duplessis comme premier ministre du Québec (Sauvé est réélu député en 1944 alors qu'il est au combat au nord de Falaise); Michel Gauvin, alors capitaine au Régiment de la Chaudière, qui sera ambassadeur du Canada à plusieurs reprises; le major Jacques Dextraze des Fusiliers Mont-Royal, qui poursuivra une carrière militaire pour devenir en 1974 chef d'état-major des forces armées canadiennes; Paul Mathieu, lieutenant-colonel du Régiment de la Chaudière, qui sera sous-ministre à la Défense nationale en 1947; Pierre Sévigny, capitaine au 4^{ème} Régiment d'artillerie légère, qui sera ministre au gouvernement fédéral de John Diefenbaker en 1959.

Il faut visiter les cimetières militaires canadiens, dont celui de Béný-sur-Mer en Normandie et d'Adegem en Belgique, pour réaliser à quel point les soldats morts au combat étaient jeunes, la plupart entre 18 et 20 ans. Ce fut le cas, parmi des milliers d'autres, d'un certain Gérard Doré,

qui, à ma grande surprise, était né à Roberval, ma ville d'origine. Il n'avait pas encore 17 ans lorsqu'il perdit la vie dans les environs de Caen. Il s'était vieilli de 3 ans pour pouvoir s'enrôler. Selon Smith, on le considère encore à ce jour comme le plus jeune soldat allié tué sur le front de l'ouest au cours de la Seconde Guerre mondiale.

Une question qui a beaucoup préoccupé l'historiographie québécoise est le plébiscite de 1942 qui avait libéré le premier ministre King dans toutes les provinces, sauf au Québec, de sa promesse de ne pas imposer la conscription. Si Smith en parle, il n'en fait pas un point central de son récit comme l'ont fait certains historiens au point d'occulter les actes de bravoure des militaires québécois et les raisons même de leur engagement. D'ailleurs, il n'y avait pas de conscrits dans les unités francophones pendant la période couverte par le livre de Smith. Ils étaient tous volontaires. Les premiers conscrits furent appelés en novembre 1944. Comme l'écrit Smith : "La mémoire collective a en quelque sorte survalorisé l'image du conscrit au détriment de celle du volontaire".

Plusieurs Canadiens-français joignirent des régiments anglophones ou bilingues, mais l'existence de régiments francophones était sans doute pour les québécois un incitatif à combattre auprès de compatriotes de la même langue. Néanmoins, la connaissance de l'anglais était essentielle pour les officiers de ces régiments afin de communiquer avec leur hiérarchie et avec les régiments anglophones. De plus, à mesure que les pertes s'accumulent, les régiments francophones durent accepter des recrues anglophones de sorte que le français perdit du terrain comme langue de communication entre les simples soldats. Il n'en reste pas moins que ces régiments et les hommes qui en firent partie ont contribué à écrire des pages exaltantes de l'histoire du Québec et du Canada. Il est

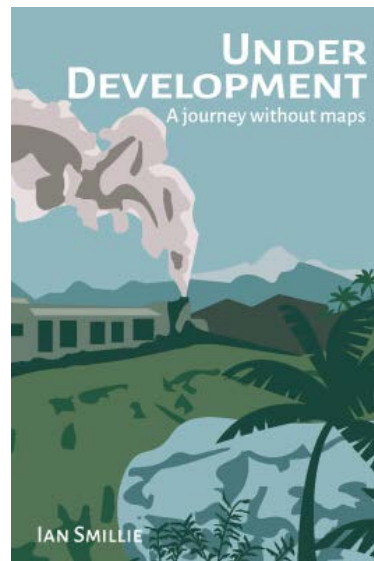
difficile de comprendre pourquoi ils font si peu la fierté du Québec contemporain. Espérons que ce livre contribuera à les faire sortir de l'oubli et à leur donner enfin toute la reconnaissance qu'ils méritent. ■

Jean Riopel a œuvré au Service extérieur canadien jusqu'en 2011. Lors de son affectation en Belgique de 2004 à 2008, il a contribué à de nombreuses activités de commémoration sur la participation canadienne aux deux conflits mondiaux.

Ian Smillie, *Under Development: A Journey Without Maps*

Rugby, UK: Practical Action Publishing <http://doi.org/10.3362/9781788534147> (2024)

By **Bernard Wood**



Under Development is the challenging and revealing memoir of Ian Smillie's five decades in the international effort to combat poverty. His extraordinary journey—"without maps" as the subtitle says—spans postings in diverse countries and travels to many others, terrible wars and famines, and close encounters with brutal villains, world leaders, celebrities, development workers, diplomats, soldiers, and ordinary

people struggling to improve their lives. His recollections are peppered with research as well as blunt judgements and opinions on major issues of a turbulent half century. Full disclosure: this reviewer has enjoyed a mostly collaborative, sometimes slightly rivalrous relationship with the author over most of the period.

Ian introduces himself and his formative influences in nineteen-sixties Montreal, not claiming any messianic zeal to save the world but clearly attentive to the issues of the Cold War, decolonisation, and the civil rights struggle. He confesses his recruitment on graduation as a volunteer teacher with the Canadian University Service Overseas (CUSO) in Sierra Leone and then Ghana was impulsive and fluky, but the experience captured him and set the course of his life. Eerily, his early links with Sierra Leone would re-emerge decades later in his leadership of the global campaign against blood diamonds.

Promoted to field management responsibilities with CUSO, the young BAG (CUSO shorthand for BA generalist) found himself in Nigeria during the civil war and humanitarian crisis in Biafra which roiled the international community and his own organization. After four years in Africa and a brief stint in CUSO's headquarters, he was recruited by the international relief NGO, CARE, as an assistant country director for its surging programme in the newly independent, shattered and impoverished Bangladesh, cynically labelled by some as a "basket case." Like his earlier field positions, this one offered fascinating and often bizarre challenges: NGO bureaucracy, feuding local and outlandish expatriate staff, and wild project improvisation, like negotiating with a shady Bangkok middleman for a massive cement purchase for an ill-fated CARE housing project. He left CARE after two years but remained committed to Bangladesh, and the

potential for the country's critical jute resources.

Jute was a focus for *Inter Pares*, a brand-new NGO that he started on a shoestring aimed at fostering more equal collaboration with partners in the Global South. Although his new creation was conceived with other disaffected CUSO alumni, after four years Smillie went back to try to right the mother ship, listing badly from leadership problems and ideological and separatist schisms. He made progress on some fronts but left after a few frustrating years. Going to Britain as a "trailing spouse," he planned to pursue his long-held dream of writing—not knowing, at age 38, "I would never again have a salaried job."

Starting with a history of CUSO, Ian's writing career bloomed and merged with a successful consulting practice and an international reputation as an authority and activist. He published on intermediate technology and industrial development, the flaws and strengths of development NGOs, humanitarian crises and assistance, and ultimately—harking back to his first exposure in Sierra Leone—to the deadly and corrupt traffic in conflict diamonds, where he was the prime mover in the high-profile global campaign for reform in the new millennium. Latterly, he focused on efforts to improve humanitarian assistance, recognizing how many critical development problems are linked to "complex emergencies" of conflict and other disasters.

Simply tracking what Ian calls his "peregrinations" is engaging enough, but he enriches his account with vivid stories—heartwarming, funny, scary, and scandalous. He brings to life the adventures, privations, and rewards of young volunteers in the early decades, then the frustrations in managing tense relationships with drunken experts and "Micky Mouse Marxist" staff, prickly host governments, and oblivious agency

and official donors' headquarters. Bravely, he spearheaded international exposure of the atrocious diamond-fueled crimes of the Liberian warlord, Charles Taylor, and was the first witness against him at the International Criminal Court. Among the endorsements for his book, *Blood on the Stone*, he proudly insisted on including one from Taylor—"Smillie is lying through his teeth."

Interwoven with the career odyssey and colourful yarns, the author expounds—at length—his views on different aspects of the development enterprise, piling up overarching "lessons." The book, he says, "is about one of the greatest imperatives of our time: the drive to end global poverty and why, despite exaggerated claims to the contrary, it isn't working." When he says, "I am often very critical of international development assistance," it is a massive understatement. His criticisms are frequently vitriolic, lambasting "its wastefulness and stupidities, the hijackings over 50 years in the name of donors' commercial and strategic interests, ... [and] a lot of aid money squandered, usually by donors before the cheque was written." Elsewhere he correctly points to failures of arrogance and cultural ignorance, inconstancy and faddishness, and a particular bugbear he labels "Obsessive Measurement Disorder." Many of us have seen examples of all these shortcomings but stop short of such blanket condemnation.

Ian castigates not just the "system," but most of the agencies, projects, and participants he encountered. He confesses to some of his own naïve errors, miscalculations, and fallible management, but is harsher with others. As a fellow outsider and evaluator, I understand the temptation to second-guess the people toiling on the inside. But he is plain wrong, for example dismissing Brian Mulroney's leading commitment

to ending apartheid; or downright offensive, when he belittles the careers of fellow CUSO alumni who joined CIDA, with a sideswipe reference to their "generously endowed early retirement." Like me, many will take offence that he ignores the record of constructive reform efforts in Canada and internationally and attacks the honesty and good faith of a "global aid establishment."

Clearly, Ian is bitterly disappointed that the development record has fallen far short of the dreams of the nineteen-sixties, while himself pointing to unrealistic expectations as an endemic problem in the field. Like so many of us, he was inspired by Barbara Ward's 1961 book *The Rich Nations and the Poor Nations*, written when the Marshall Plan was rebuilding Western Europe, and the Post-War multilateral institutions promised unprecedented potential for international cooperation in the spirit of the "Four Freedoms" proclaimed in 1941. Ward envisioned a concerted international effort by the "rich" nations of the North Atlantic and Japan to provide aid and opportunities for the de-colonizing "poor" nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

A hard reality underlies our disillusionment with aid to the Global South. Though both the Marshall Plan and Ward's vision had strong humanitarian motives, neither was just about "charity." Both were also aimed at political stability, growing trade and investment flows; in other words, both visions were inspired by the principle of "self-interest rightly understood" praised by de Tocqueville in early America (and cited by Smilie). But in the new drive for "Third World" development from the nineteen sixties on, few attributes of the Marshall Plan would apply. The stakes of enlightened self-interest were not clear enough to donor countries to mobilize comparable transfers of resources, or to withstand pressures to dilute aid to

meet shorter-term, less enlightened strategic and commercial interests. Conditions and cultures in these countries were more diverse and unfamiliar, and the time needed to understand and work with them was too long to sustain the requisite commitments, often giving way to simplistic, “cure-all” fads which Ian rightly condemns.

Many of the “poor” countries of the 1960s have since achieved enormous progress in reducing poverty, mainly through their own efforts. But huge gaps remain, and new challenges have emerged. Overall, the contribution of development cooperation has been complementary, sometimes catalytic. Despite these limitations, the overall record of development assistance is less damning than Ian’s rhetoric suggests, although the failure to open up “non-aid” opportunities—for example, by reducing protectionist barriers and subsidies harmful to developing countries—is worse. Other impediments, like the “brain drain” raise more complex issues.

In fact, a full reading of Smillie’s own text reveals a less bleak landscape. The Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) and its founder, Fazole Hasan Abed, gets a laudatory chapter (and a separate book) drawing out the lessons of locally-led initiatives, with responsive and patient outside support. As other success stories from his own work, he singles out the Aga Khan network of organizations in Africa and South Asia, Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka, AMREF Flying Doctors in Kenya, and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in Pakistan. He stresses: “There is plenty of evidence...from projects where poverty reduction is front and centre, that aid can and does work. Vaccinations work. Clean drinking water works. Literacy works.” We should add that girls’ education has proved one of the most powerful catalysts of development. Some of his South Asian examples show how integrated rural development projects can work, and he details how an intermediate technology project in Ghana helped prime the country’s

industrial revolution in the 1980s. Even further back, in the simpler times, he buoyed up discouraged young teachers by reminding them of the enduring impact of educating young people, embodied in his own proud lifelong links with some of his past students.

Whether you see the glass as half-empty or half-full, *Under Development* is an absorbing and passionate account of more than five decades of the fight against global poverty, written by an exceptional Canadian in the front ranks. It took a British publisher to make it available, but it is well worth the cost—in print or e-book form—for its insights on these momentous, complicated times in our international life and its guidance for the present and future. ■

Bernard Wood was the founding Director of the North-South Institute, CEO of the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security, and Director of Development Cooperation at the OECD in Paris. In 1985 and 1986, he served as Personal Representative of the Prime Minister in the Commonwealth fight against Apartheid.

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CFSAF



Our Fifteenth Issue!

This issue of FORUM marks an important milestone. It's our fifteenth issue, the culmination of five years of work on the part of the Canadian Foreign Service Alumni Forum (CFSAF), since our formation in the pandemic era.

The editors wish to express our appreciation to the many authors, photographers, reviewers and others who have contributed to FORUM over the past half decade, as well as our board and our graphic designer, Jan Soetermans, who has been with us since the beginning. They make this bulletin interesting and relevant to the concerns of today.

We also wish to thank our sponsors, Tradex, Beechwood, CANADEM, and the Royal Bank for financial

support as advertisers. Without this support, the publication of FORUM would be problematic if not impossible.

AmbCanada (formerly RHOMA, the retired heads of mission organization) and PAFSO, the Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers, have also been important partners and supporters. Together they represent a significant part of the Canadian foreign service, although CFSAF recognizes that many other departments and agencies are also part of our representation abroad.

We want to consolidate and expand on the work we've accomplished over the past five years. We welcome your suggestions and contributions. Talk to any of our board members and step forward to make CFSAF the organization you want.

Notre quinzième numéro !

Ce numéro de FORUM marque une étape importante. Il s'agit de notre quinzième numéro, l'aboutissement de cinq années de travail du Forum des anciens du Service extérieur canadien (FASEC), depuis sa création en pleine pandémie.

La rédaction tient à exprimer sa gratitude aux nombreux auteurs, photographes, critiques et autres personnes qui ont contribué à FORUM au cours des cinq dernières années, ainsi que notre conseil d'administration et notre graphiste, Jan Soetermans, qui nous accompagne depuis le début.

Grâce à eux, ce bulletin est à la fois intéressant et pertinent face aux préoccupations actuelles.

Nous tenons également à remercier nos commanditaires, Tradex, Beechwood, CANADEM et la Banque Royale, pour leur soutien

financier en tant que publicitaires. Sans ce soutien, la publication de FORUM serait problématique, voire impossible.

AmbCanada (anciennement l'ACMAR, l'organisation des chefs de mission à la retraite) et l'APASE, l'Association professionnelle des agents du service extérieur, ont également été d'importants partenaires et soutiens. Ensemble, ils représentent une part importante du service extérieur canadien, même si la FASEC reconnaît que de nombreux autres ministères et organismes participent également à notre représentation à l'étranger.

Nous souhaitons consolider et approfondir le travail accompli au cours des cinq dernières années. Vos suggestions et contributions sont les bienvenues. N'hésitez pas à communiquer avec l'un des membres de notre conseil d'administration et à vous engager pour faire du FASEC l'organisation que vous souhaitez.

FORUM

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