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A LITTLE BIT BETTER THAN THEY FOUND IT: CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY EFFECTIVENESS AND THE HARPER GOVERNMENT

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Exercise Solo Flight

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EXERCISE *SOLO FLIGHT* – EXERCICE *SOLO FLIGHT*

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Lord Baden-Powell once wrote, “Leave this world a little better than you found it.”¹ Words to live by, indeed, but the imperative is just as applicable to national governments with only slight revision - Leave this *country* a little better than you found it. Such has been the task of each successive Canadian government since Confederation. The effectiveness of their efforts can be judged from various perspectives – economic, military, social, etc. – and can be viewed through a domestic or international lens (or both). Canada’s reliance on external trade and its proximity to - and close alliance with - one of the world’s foremost powers in The United States of America (US), makes Canadian foreign policy of particular interest in analyzing the effectiveness of an Ottawa regime. It is no surprise, therefore, that the foreign policy of the current Canadian government, led by Prime Minister Stephen Harper (Harper Government), has been the subject of scholarly debate and public critique since 2006. The resultant preliminary research has largely centred on efforts to describe the Harper brand of foreign policy in relation to what has come before, or to clarify the motivations for government action. While some have concluded that the Conservatives have indeed left Canada better than they found it, others are significantly more critical. This paper seeks to add to that debate by evaluating the impact of the current government’s foreign policy using criteria based upon the national interests of Canada. The Harper Government has not yet produced a comprehensive foreign policy statement, so the determination of these interests will require some interpretation.

The Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD) website offers two areas of international focus for the Harper Government: the pursuit of peace and security through the rule of law, democracy, human rights and religious freedom; and creating the most

¹ Lord Robert Baden-Powell, Farewell Letter to Scouts, 1941.

favourable conditions for Canadian businesses to compete internationally.² Evident in these two focus areas are three foreign policy objectives: (1) promote and maintain economic prosperity at home; (2) contribute to the maintenance of a stable and secure international system; and (3) promote Canadian values around the world. Admittedly, the Prime Minister may have more foreign policy objectives than those that can be interpreted from government policy, but the three objectives detailed above cover a sufficiently broad policy space to facilitate an analysis of the effectiveness of Canada's foreign policy under the Harper Government. This analysis will therefore be undertaken across three specific foreign policy issue areas: A) international trade; B) diplomatic relations; and C) rhetorical consistency. Each of these issues map naturally to one of the three foreign policy objectives detailed above and, as a whole, they encompass a sufficiently broad spectrum of possible foreign policy action short of military force. This paper will show that although Canadian foreign policy under the Harper Government has enjoyed relative success in the arena of foreign trade policy, it has done little to enhance global stability and order or to effectively project Canadian values internationally.

TRADE POLICY

Trade is equivalent to more than 60 per cent of our annual gross domestic product, and one in every five jobs is directly linked to exports...That is how important trade is to us.

- Ed Fast, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, *Canada's State of Trade 2014*

² Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, "Foreign Policy Home Page," <http://www.international.gc.ca/cip-pic/index.aspx?lang=eng> (accessed 02/21, 2014); and Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, "Trade Home Page," <http://www.international.gc.ca/commerce/index.aspx?lang=eng> (accessed 02/21, 2014).

In the introductory chapter of his book, *A Trading Nation*, trade policy expert Michael Hart makes a statement germane to any discussion of Canadian foreign policy; “Canada has always been a trading nation. From earliest days, Canadians have relied for their livelihood on exports to bigger and wealthier markets.”³ This inescapable fact has led Ottawa to cultivate strong trading relationships with its economically dominant allies. Until the end of the Second World War the primary ally was the United Kingdom, but as Britain failed to regain its dominance in the post-war environment the US quickly drew the eye of Canadian business. As per the *Trade and Investment Update 2014*, 75.8% of Canadian merchandise exports were to and 52.1% of Canadian merchandise imports were from the US.⁴ While this relationship of economic dependence brings considerable benefit to Canadians, it might also be viewed as vulnerability. The “Nixon Shock” of 1971 highlighted this weakness and resulted in an attempt by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau to seek new markets for Canadian business in order to insulate Canada from US protectionism and market volatility.⁵ The success of the “Third Option” in expanding Canadian business into non-traditional markets was debatable, but the desire to increase Canadian penetration into global markets has seen resurgence in the trade policy of the Harper Government.⁶ The 2008 financial crisis once again highlighted the vulnerability associated with economic dependence on the US and the Harper Government has since pursued economically attractive alternatives. This search has yielded bilateral trade or commercial agreements with the

³ Michael Hart, *A Trading Nation: Canadian Trade Policy from Colonialism to Globalization*, Vol. 16 (Vancouver, B.C.: UBC Press, 2002), 10.

⁴ Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development. Office of the Chief Economist, *Canada's State of Trade: Trade and Investment Update – 2014* (Ottawa: Canada Communication Group, 2014), 45-46.

⁵ Mitchell Sharp, "Canada-U.S. Relations: Options for the Future," in *Partners Nevertheless: Canadian-American Relations in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Norman Hillmer (Toronto: Copp Clark Pittman, 1989), 126-143.

⁶ John Hancock, "The Third Option: An Idea Whose Time has Finally Come?" *International Journal* 70, no. 2 (2015), 322-338.

European Union (EU), the Republic of Korea (South Korea) and China - negotiations for a trade deal with India and Japan are ongoing. Each of these negotiations will be explored in greater detail below and the entire trade portfolio will be analyzed against the government's foreign policy objective of the promotion and maintenance of economic prosperity to determine its efficacy.

Canada entered into trade negotiations with the EU in May of 2009 with a goal of deepening economic integration. Given shared cultural heritage, interests and values, the EU was a natural target for Canadian economic ambitions. The complexity of the agreement and the need to include Canadian provincial representatives resulted in protracted negotiations, but in 2014 the Canadian government and the EU negotiating team finally concluded the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). This agreement is touted as Canada's "most ambitious" trade deal in history, yielding preferential access to the European economy not enjoyed by Canada's economic competitors.⁷ Once ratified, CETA, coupled with the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), will give Canada an advantage in two of the world's largest markets and access to over 800 million consumers.⁸

It is Asia, however, that is on the economic rise, a fact not lost on the current Canadian government. Over half of the world's population is located in Asia, but protectionist trade regimes have traditionally limited Western market penetration. Two Western allies and bastions of Western-style democracy in the Asia-Pacific, South Korea and Japan, serve as US footholds in the region. The Harper Government is seeking a similar gateway to the region, but on purely

⁷ Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, "Canada-European Union: Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)," <http://www.international.gc.ca/trade-agreements-accords-commerciaux/agr-acc/ceta-aecg/index.aspx?lang=eng> (accessed 04/18, 2015).

⁸ Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, *The Canada-EU Trade Agreement in Brief* (Ottawa: Canada Communications Group, 2014a).

economic grounds. This desire is embodied in the recently concluded Canada-Korea Free Trade Agreement (CKFTA) and the ongoing negotiations for a Canada-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (CJEPA).

The South Korean market is the fourth largest in Asia and the 15th largest in the world.⁹ The expansion of the South Korean economy over the last 30 years, in particular, has been extraordinary. Its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has grown six-fold and realized an average annual growth rate of 6.5% since 1980.¹⁰ The sustained growth of the South Korean economy and Canada's desire to establish an economic foundation in Asia led to the commencement of trade talks between the two states in 2005. These talk culminated in 2014 with the signing of the CKFTA, Canada's first FTA in Asia.¹¹ The most attractive aspect of the agreement to Canadian businesses and consumers is the agreement to eliminate 98.2% of Korean tariffs on Canadian imports and remove 97.8% of Canadian tariffs on South Korean goods entering Canada.¹² This duty-free trade environment provides Canadian businesses the opportunity to establish more robust trade relationships with entities in Asia without being subject to protectionist barriers. Much the same is being sought in trade negotiations with Japan. The Harper Government's commitment to a trade agreement with Japan is evident, with trade talks beginning in 2012 and seven rounds of negotiation completed as of November of 2014.¹³ Although the CKFTA and the

⁹ Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, "Canada-Korea Free Trade Agreement (CKFTA) Main Page," <http://www.international.gc.ca/trade-agreements-accords-commerciaux/agr-acc/korea-coree/index.aspx?lang=eng> (accessed 04/18, 2015).

¹⁰ Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, *Canada-Korea Free Trade Agreement (CKFTA) - Overview* (Ottawa: Canada Communications Group, 2015c), 7.

¹¹ Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, *Canada-Korea Free Trade Agreement (CKFTA) Main Page*, 1.

¹² Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, *Canada-Korea Free Trade Agreement (CKFTA) - Overview*, 8.

¹³ Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, "Canada-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement - Main Page," <http://www.international.gc.ca/trade-agreements-accords-commerciaux/agr-acc/japan-japon/index.aspx?lang=eng> (accessed 04/18, 2015).

CJEPA are important trade initiatives, it is impossible to ignore the fact that the overwhelming majority of Asian opportunity for Canadian business resides in China and India.

China has recently emerged as Canada's second largest trading partner in volume, and given its position as a manufacturing powerhouse and the world's largest consumer of energy resources, it is clear that a close trading relationship is essential for Canada's continued economic prosperity.¹⁴ For a variety of reasons, not least of which is the authoritarian nature of China's communist regime, Canada's ability to establish agreements favourable to Canadian business has been limited.¹⁵ Despite this impediment, Prime Minister Harper signed a Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (FIPA) with China in 2012 that came into force in 2014. In contrast to China, India is a young and rapidly developing democratic country and may represent a more attractive market for the Canadian government in the short term. To that end, Prime Minister Harper and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently committed to the completion of the Canada-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) by October of 2015.¹⁶

The Harper Government has significantly expanded Canadian access to foreign markets during its mandate. However, the difficulty in assessing the overall efficacy of such an aggressive trade policy since 2006 is attribution. While it can clearly be demonstrated that Canada's economy has continued to grow under the current government, it is challenging to ascertain if it is precisely the government's policies that have facilitated that growth. One method

¹⁴ Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, *Canada-China Economic Complementaries Study* (Ottawa: Canada Communication Group, 2012); and Charles Burton, "Canada's China Policy Under the Harper Government," *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* (01/30; 2015/02, 2015), 6.

¹⁵ Nathan W. Allen, "Keeping Rising Asia at a Distance: Canadian Attitudes Towards Trading Agreements with Asian Countries," *International Journal* 70, no. 2 (2015), 287.

¹⁶ Jason Fekete, "Indian Prime Minister Modi Inks Uranium Deal, Talks Trade with Stephen Harper," *Ottawa Citizen*, sec. Politics, April 15, 2015.

of analysis that could help to resolve the ambiguity would be the examination of trade data by state in commodities directly affected by one of the agreements. However, there is either insufficient, or no data to gauge the impact of the CETA (not yet ratified) or the CKFTA (completed in 2014). The most common national indicator of economic growth and prosperity is GDP and Canada's GDP has continued to grow since 2006 with the exception of 2009-2010 due to the global financial crisis.¹⁷ More specifically, Canada's inflation adjusted per capita GDP hit an all-time high in 2014 at \$37,519.66 (USD).¹⁸ Using both general market expansion and specific GDP metrics it appears that the Harper Government has indeed left Canada better than it found it in 2006 through the promotion and growth of economic prosperity.

DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

Ottawa's success in promoting Canadian economic prosperity is laudable, but other facets of the Harper Government's foreign policy – such as diplomatic relations – must also be considered. Diplomacy, or state-to-state interaction and negotiation, is one of the main tools of foreign policy. Some scholars dubbed the period immediately following the Second World War until the 1950's Canada's "Golden Age" of diplomacy, wherein Canada deployed skilled statesmen to influence global outcomes in support of Canada's national interests.¹⁹ Whether it is accepted that Canada has slowly descended from the zenith of its diplomatic acumen or argued that the rest of the world has just "caught up," it seems apparent that Canada's relative

¹⁷ Trading Economics, "Canada GDP Annual Growth Rate ," <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/canada/gdp-growth-annual> (accessed 04/18, 2015).

¹⁸ Trading Economics, "Canada GDP Per Capita," <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/canada/gdp-per-capita> (accessed 04/18, 2015).

¹⁹ Escott Reid. "Canadian Foreign Policy, 1967-1977: A Second Golden Decade?" *International Journal* 22, no. 2 (Spring 1967, 1967), 171.

importance in international relations has diminished since the end of the 1950's.²⁰ Nonetheless, Canadian governments since this golden age of diplomacy have still managed to influence and lead international movements of global consequence. The Progressive Conservative government of Prime Minister Mulroney led efforts to end Apartheid in South Africa and Canada spearheaded the campaign to ban anti-personnel landmines under the Liberal government of Prime Minister Jean Chretien. Both of these achievements advanced the security and stability of the international environment through multilateral diplomacy. The transition from a Liberal to Conservative government in 2006 marked a change in Canadian international behaviour that has been called "The Big Break" by John Ibbitson, a "Diplomatic Counter-Revolution" by Adam Chapnick, and a "turn away from liberal internationalism" by Roland Paris.²¹ In order to determine what impact, if any, this shift has had on the efficacy of Canadian foreign policy, it is necessary to explore several key diplomatic relationships that the Harper Government has highlighted through speech and deed as vital to Canada's foreign policy, specifically: Canada-Israel/Palestine; Canada-Russia/Ukraine; and Canada-US.

Canada has a long history of diplomatic relations with Israel which began in 1949 after the creation of the state in 1948.²² The Harper Government has added a new passion to Canadian support for Israel. In the 2013 Speech from the Throne Canada-Israel relations featured prominently with the proclamation that "Our Government defends Israel's right to exist as a

²⁰ John W. Holmes, "Merchant-Heeneey Revisited: A Sentimental View," in *America's Alliances and Canadian American Relations*, eds. Lauren McKinsey and Kim Richard Nossal (Toronto: Summerhill Press, 1988), 181.

²¹ John Ibbitson, "The Big Break: The Conservative Transformation of Canada's Foreign Policy," *CIGI Papers*, no. 29 (April 2014), 1-18; Adam Chapnick, "A Diplomatic Counter-Revolution: Conservative Foreign Policy, 2006-11," *International Journal* 67, no. 1 (Winter 2011/2012, 2011), 137-154; and Roland Paris, "Are Canadians Still Liberal Internationalists? Foreign Policy and Public Opinion in the Harper Era," *International Journal* 69, no. 3 (2014), 274-307.

²² Government of Canada, "Canada-Israel Relations," http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/israel/bilateral_relations_bilaterales/index.aspx?lang=eng (accessed 04/20, 2015).

Jewish state, the lone outpost of freedom and democracy in a dangerous region.”²³ This commitment to Israel has translated into a fundamental change in Canada’s position vis-à-vis the Middle East peace process. Until the election of the Harper Government in 2006, Canada had promoted itself as an “honest broker” in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, recognizing the claims of both sides and facilitating negotiations for peace.²⁴ The Canadian government’s *Canadian Policy on Key Issues in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, which sets out Canada’s official position, speaks of support for a two-state solution and recognizes both Israeli and Palestinian concerns.²⁵ The government’s vow “not to go along to get along” and statements of government representatives appear to show a different reality in practice.²⁶

In a 2008 speech in celebration of Israel’s 60th anniversary, Prime Minister Harper described Israel’s plight in Manichean terms: “Our government believes that those who threaten Israel also threaten Canada, because, as the last world war showed, hate-fuelled bigotry against some is ultimately a threat to us all, and must be resisted wherever it may lurk.”²⁷ Government representatives issued four news releases in 2011 condemning attacks on Israeli citizens.²⁸ During the same year, there were no negative press releases made about Israeli retaliatory air

²³ Government of Canada, "Speech from the Throne to Open the Second Session of the Forty First Parliament of Canada," <http://www.speech.gc.ca/eng/full-speech> (accessed 04/20, 2015).

²⁴ Andrew Robinson, "Canada's Credibility as an Actor in the Middle East Peace Process: The Refugee Working Group, 1992-2000," *International Journal* 66, no. 3 (Summer 2011, 2011), 696, 717-718; and Zachariah Kay, *The Diplomacy of Impartiality: Canada and Israel 1958-1968* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2010), 107.

²⁵ Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, "Canadian Policy on Key Issues in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," http://www.international.gc.ca/name-anmo/peace_process-processus_paix/canadian_policy-politique_canadienne.aspx?lang=eng (accessed 04/20, 2015).

²⁶ Government of Canada, *Speech from the Throne to Open the Second Session of the Forty First Parliament of Canada*, 1.

²⁷ Stephen Harper, "Prime Minister's Speech for Israel's 60th Anniversary," <http://www.pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2008/05/08/prime-ministers-speech-israels-60th-anniversary> (accessed 04/20, 2015).

²⁸ Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, "News Releases - 2011," <http://www.international.gc.ca/media/minpub-index/news-communiqués/2011/index.aspx?lang=eng> (accessed 04/20, 2015).

strikes that allegedly killed and injured Palestinian civilians. In April of 2013 the Canadian Foreign Minister, John Baird, “reaffirmed the close and special friendship” between Israel and Canada.²⁹ Clearly the Harper Government has adopted a more pro-Israel approach to Middle Eastern diplomacy than its Liberal predecessors which has served to distance the current government from the role of international “helpful fixer.” Although this change may be lamented by those who viewed Canada’s contributions as a mediator in the Middle East peace process as a valuable means of increasing the country’s prestige and influence, it is of little consequence in terms of international peace and stability. Canada is not the only possible purveyor of mediation services and the peace process, such as it is, continues to evolve without Canada as a facilitator.

The shift away from the role of balanced mediator has been reinforced by Canada’s diplomatic interaction with Russia in response to the crisis in Ukraine. There had been a rapprochement between Russia and the West after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1991. At the same time, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) expanded its membership to include states of the former Warsaw Pact, much to Russia’s displeasure.³⁰ Russia’s military intervention in Ukraine and its annexation of the Crimea in 2014 have rekindled old flames of distrust. Despite growing economic linkages between the two countries, the Harper Government’s reaction to the crisis has been swift and clear and includes military, economic, and diplomatic dimensions. Canada immediately deployed six CF-18 fighter jets to the region, which were followed by a Royal Canadian Navy frigate in the Black Sea.³¹ Economic sanctions have been

²⁹ Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, "News Releases 2013 - Canada Reaffirms Special Friendship with Israel," <http://www.international.gc.ca/media/aff/news-communiqués/2013/04/9a.aspx?lang=eng> (accessed 04/20, 2015).

³⁰ Derek Averre, "NATO Expansion and Russian National Interests," *European Security* 7, no. 1 (03/01; 2015/04, 1998), 16-20.

put in place to pressure Russia into withdrawal.³² The Prime Minister has been vocal on Canada's opposition to Russian actions in the Ukraine and made the following comment to Russian President Vladimir Putin during the G20 summit in Brisbane: "I guess I'll shake your hand but I have only one thing to say to you, you need to get out of Ukraine."³³ The latest move in this escalatory regime of actions by Ottawa was the deployment of 200 Canadian ground troops to Ukraine to provide training to indigenous military forces.³⁴ These responses to Russian aggression in the Ukraine again showcase the Harper Government's preference for taking sides in support of allies and alliances, eschewing the role of the tactful and balanced facilitator of negotiation. As a country of only 35 million souls and possessing a small military, Canada lacks the power to seriously influence global outcomes. The role of steady and reliable ally, however unglamorous, is Canada's best means of contributing to international peace and stability.

There is no relationship more important to Canada than that with its southern neighbour, the US. Canada must cultivate a strong partnership with the world's foremost power in order to ensure its own continued success. Indeed, Nelson Michaud goes so far as to say that "much of Canada's international influence depends on its relationship with the US," and further submits that if Canada's relationship with the US is weak, Canada cannot hope to maintain international respect.³⁵ Even if one is unwilling to accept Michaud's assertion, Canada's economic and

³¹ Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, "Backgrounder - Canadian Participation in NATO Reassurance Measures," http://www.international.gc.ca/international/nato_bg-ukraine-docinfo_otan.aspx?lang=eng (accessed 04/20, 2015).

³² Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, "Canadian Sanctions Related to Russia," <http://www.international.gc.ca/sanctions/countries-pays/Russia-Russie.aspx?lang=eng> (accessed 04/20, 2015).

³³ Stephen Chase, "Harper Tells Putin to 'Get Out of Ukraine' in G20 Encounter," *The Globe and Mail*, sec. Politics, 14 November, 2014.

³⁴ Stephen Chase, "Canada's Decision to Send Troops to Ukraine 'deplorable,' Russian Embassy Says," *The Globe and Mail*, sec. Politics, 15 April 2015.

military dependence on the US cautions against taking this relationship for granted in an analysis of Canadian foreign policy.

The story of Canada-US relations under the Harper Government has two sides: continental and international. Continentally, the relationship between the two states has cooled significantly. Internationally, Canada is closely aligned with and supportive of the US. Icy continental relations are the result of professional disagreement and the spillover of domestic political considerations into continental issues, but this is nothing new.³⁶ As John Ibbitson points out in his November 2014 contribution to *The Globe and Mail*, the relationship between the leaders of Canada and the US has its ebbs and flows.³⁷ When the Harper Government came to power in 2006, the relationship with the US was at a particular low. The decision to stay out of the US-led 2003 Iraq war, the softwood lumber dispute and the decision to step away from Ballistic Missile Defence strained the “special relationship.” Prime Minister Harper set about improving the relationship by reaching an agreement on the softwood lumber dispute, expanding Canada’s commitment to Afghanistan and negotiating the Beyond the Border accord.³⁸ But the honeymoon was not to last. Lack of American blessing for the Keystone XL pipeline and disputes over Buy American provisions and country-of-origin product labelling have cooled the relationship.³⁹ The tension between Canada and the US is evident continentally, but on the international stage the two states maintain a more functional relationship. In 2011 Canada stood

³⁵ Nelson Michaud, "Soft Power and Canadian Foreign Policy-Making: The Role of Values," in *Readings in Canadian Foreign Policy: Classic Debates and New Ideas*, eds. Duane Bratt and Christopher J. Kukucha, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2011), 445.

³⁶ Laura Dawson, "Bad Neighbour Policy could Leave both Canada and U.S. as Losers," *The Globe and Mail*, sec. Business, 27 Jan 2015.

³⁷ John Ibbitson, "Obama, Harper Don't Like each Other, and Only a New Leader can Thaw Relations," *The Globe and Mail*, sec. Politics, 21 Nov 2014.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Dawson, *Bad Neighbour Policy could Leave both Canada and U.S. as Losers*

with the US in opposition to the acceptance of the Palestinian state into the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).⁴⁰ It has joined the fight against ISIS in Iraq and recently expanded the mission to Syria at the behest of the US.⁴¹ It has backed the US in condemnation of Russian aggression in Ukraine. When it comes to international behaviour, the Harper Government has demonstrated that it is a steadfast ally of the US.

Canadian diplomatic relations under the Harper Government have introduced a new edge to Canada's foreign policy. No longer is Canada to be the "honest broker" and "helpful fixer" of the international community.⁴² The Harper Government has promoted Canada as a strong supporter of allies and alliances with no room for compromise. Instead of Canada "punching above its weight," affecting global outcomes to a degree disproportionate to its level of power, Canada now appears content with being a small power - albeit a vocal one - in a rather large global environment. Does this change of role represent a net loss for Canada in terms international stability and security? Probably not. Canada still plays an important part in supporting the actions of its more powerful allies who, in turn, act to guarantee the stability and security of the international environment. Given its relative power, Canada cannot expect to impact global security and stability in a meaningful way. In sum, the Harper Government has relegated Canada to playing a bit-part on the international stage, but regardless, the show will go on.

⁴⁰ United Nations, "General Assembly Votes Overwhelmingly to Accord Palestine 'Non-Member Observer State' Status in United Nations," <http://www.un.org/press/en/2012/ga11317.doc.htm> (accessed 04/21, 2015).

⁴¹ Stephen Chase, "Government Votes to Extend, Expand Military Mission Against IS," *The Globe and Mail*, sec. Politics, 30 Mar 2015.

⁴² Paris, *Are Canadians Still Liberal Internationalists? Foreign Policy and Public Opinion in the Harper Era*, 275.

RHETORICAL CONSISTENCY

For in foreign policy, as in some other dimensions of life, an ostentatious claim to superior virtue can be the last refuge of the impotent.

- Denis Stairs, *Myths, Morals and Reality in Canadian Foreign Policy*

If Canada is to maximize its reliability and predictability as an ally, it must maintain rhetorical consistency; it must endeavour to “walk the talk.” Much of the “talk” emanating from Ottawa since 2006, and particularly since the election of a majority government in 2011, has been centred on the promotion of Canadian values. The 2013 Speech from the Throne explicitly stated that “Canada seeks a world where freedom—including freedom of religion, the rule of law, democracy and human dignity are respected.”⁴³ This value-based element of Canadian foreign policy has been termed “principled” foreign policy by representatives of the Harper Government. John Baird, then Minister for Foreign Affairs, remarked in his 2011 address to the United Nations (UN) General Assembly that principled foreign policy “is the Canadian tradition. Standing for what is principled and just, regardless of whether it is popular, or convenient, or expedient.”⁴⁴ Despite these bold assertions, Canada has exhibited behaviour that is in open competition with, or outright violation of, the principles of respect for the rule of law, respect for democracy and respect for human dignity. Consider, for example, its continued relationship with Saudi Arabia; its abandonment of democracy promotion; and the recent cuts to development assistance funding.

⁴³ Government of Canada, *Speech from the Throne to Open the Second Session of the Forty First Parliament of Canada*, 1.

⁴⁴ John Baird, *Address by the Honourable John Baird, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to the United Nations General Assembly*, 26 Sept 2011).

Canada is vocal in its opposition to human rights abuse in China, Russia and Iran but no mention is made of Saudi Arabian transgressions. The Saudi regime permits clerics to rule the population through brutal application of their interpretation of Islam. To a principled observer, there should be little difference between beheadings conducted in Syria by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and Wahhabi henchmen who behead adulteresses in Saudi Arabia.⁴⁵ In the category of religious freedom, Saudi Arabia does not fare much better. Raif Badawi, the husband of a woman who has been granted asylum in Canada, has been sentenced to 1,000 lashes for speaking against Islam.⁴⁶ In spite of this low regard for human rights and religious freedom, the Western world continues to maintain a close relationship with the House of Saud. Notwithstanding its rhetoric regarding respect for human rights, Canada is no exception. The Harper Government has actively courted the Saudi elite throughout its mandate; in January of 2015 then Foreign Affairs Minister, John Baird, characterized his planned meeting with one of the Saudi royal family as a “Priority A” during the World Economic Forum in Davos.⁴⁷ Despite obvious violations of human rights, the Canadian government also approved a \$15B arms deal that would see hundreds of General Dynamics Light Armoured Vehicles (LAV 6.0) sold to the regime.⁴⁸ The relationship between the Harper Government and Saudi Arabia is a glaring example of Canadian rhetoric regarding the application of a “principled” foreign policy standing in stark contrast to its support of an oppressive regime.

⁴⁵ Anonymous, "An Unholy Pact," *The Economist*, <http://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21641199-western-leaders-must-do-more-push-saudi-arabia-reform-its-own-sake-well?zid=308&ah=e21d923f9b263c5548d5615da3d30f4d> (accessed 02/28, 2015).

⁴⁶ Stephen Chase, "Arms Deal with Saudi Arabia Under Fire After Flogging of Blogger Raif Badawi," *The Globe and Mail*, sec. Politics, 15 January 2015.

⁴⁷ Stephen Chase, "Canada's Arms Deal with Saudi Arabia Shrouded in Secrecy," *The Globe and Mail*, sec. Politics, 21 January 2015.

⁴⁸ Richard Blackwell and Stephen Chase, "Ottawa Touts Sale of Military Vehicles to Saudi Arabia," *The Globe and Mail*, sec. Politics, 14 February 2014; and Chase, *Arms Deal with Saudi Arabia Under Fire After Flogging of Blogger Raif Badawi*.

Democracy promotion initiatives became prominent in the 1980's and 1990's, spurred, to some extent, by the social science concept of democratic peace. Broadly stated, proponents of democratic peace postulate that democracies are highly unlikely to engage in armed conflict against one another.⁴⁹ Under the successive governments of Brian Mulroney, Jean Chretien and Paul Martin, democracy promotion became an increasingly prominent part of the Canadian international agenda. The International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development (Rights & Democracy) was created in 1988 in order to coordinate democracy promotion initiatives and Canada ramped up investment in these initiatives until the election of Prime Minister Stephen Harper in 2006.⁵⁰ In the early years of the Harper Government (2006-2008), democracy assistance continued to enjoy prominence in Canadian foreign policy and complemented the "principled" rhetoric emanating from Ottawa.⁵¹ The 2008 *Speech from the Throne* promised the creation of a new democracy promotion agency in order to improve governance and efficiency.⁵² This would mark the high point of Canadian democracy promotion as concerns over potential government interference in the operations of Rights & Democracy and the 2008 financial crisis conspired to move the Harper Government away from democracy promotion initiatives. Rights & Democracy was terminated in 2012, and no new multiparty democracy promotion agency has been created.⁵³ This abandonment of democracy promotion seems particularly poorly timed as *The Democracy Index 2014* indicates a trend away from

⁴⁹ Jack Snyder, "One World, Rival Theories," *Foreign Policy*, no. 145 (Nov, 2004), 57.

⁵⁰ Gerald J. Schmitz, "Canada and International Democracy Assistance: What Direction for the Harper Government's Foreign Policy?" *Occasional Paper Series Centre for International and Defence Policy*, no. 67 (2013), 5; and Neil A. Burron, "Reconfiguring Canadian Democracy Promotion," *International Journal* 66, no. 2 (Spring 2011, 2011), 391.

⁵¹ Schmitz, *Canada and International Democracy Assistance: What Direction for the Harper Government's Foreign Policy?*, 18.

⁵² Government of Canada, "Speech from the Throne to Open the First Session Fortieth Parliament of Canada," <http://www.parl.gc.ca/ParlInfo/Documents/ThroneSpeech/40-1-e.html> (accessed 04/23, 2015).

⁵³ Jeremy Martin Ladd, "Contemporary Developments in Canadian Democracy Promotion and the Way Forward," *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 20, no. 2 (05/04; 2015/04, 2014), 211.

democracy in developing countries which could, in turn, lead to an increased risk of conflict and human rights abuses.⁵⁴ The Harper Government's principled intention to support international human rights and democracy is difficult to recognize in its decision to terminate Rights & Democracy without a replacement.

Official Development Assistance (ODA) is another important element of a government's foreign policy; it reinforces national values and is an effective means of demonstrating resolve to improve the lives of the least advantaged populations of the world. ODA, however, is not always dispensed with only the betterment of the target population in mind. "Tied aid" requires target countries to utilize ODA to procure required goods/services from the donor country. The practice of untied aid is therefore encouraged by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), but compliance is not uniform. Indeed, the average share of untied aid among Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members was only 81% in 2013.⁵⁵ Canada's commitment to the concept of ODA was evident from 2001-2010 as its volume of aid doubled to represent 0.34% of Gross National Income (GNI) and it successfully untied its food aid.⁵⁶ Under Stephen Harper's majority government the data is much less commendatory. Since 2010, Canada has cut its ODA to 0.24% of GNI which is significantly below the OECD target of 0.7% of GNI.⁵⁷ More specifically, in 2013 the Harper Government cut ODA by 11.4% and as of 2012,

⁵⁴ The Economist Intelligence Unit, "The Democracy Index 2014," The Economist, <http://www.eiu.com/Handlers/WhitepaperHandler.ashx?fi=Democracy-index-2014.pdf&mode=wp&campaignid=Democracy0115> (accessed 03/02, 2015).

⁵⁵ Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Development Cooperation Report 2014 - Mobilising Resources for Sustainable Development*, OECD Publishing, (2014).

⁵⁶ Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Canada: Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Peer Review 2012*, OECD Publishing, (2012).

⁵⁷ Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Development Cooperation Report 2014 - Mobilising Resources for Sustainable Development*, 20.

8% of Canadian ODA remains “tied” to Canadian industry.⁵⁸ ODA improves the lives of the world’s poorest people, facilitates development, and thereby reduces the likelihood of human rights abuses. If that ODA carries a Government of Canada stamp, it serves as an effective tool in projecting Canadian values abroad. Falling ODA volume and the continued use of tied aid does not align with the stated description of Canada as a country that demonstrates a “willingness to stand for what is right, and to contribute to a better and safer world.”⁵⁹

If Ottawa is committed to the projection of Canadian values abroad, it is imperative that its deeds match its rhetoric. Under the Harper Government, Canada has chosen to ignore the human rights violations perpetrated by Saudi Arabia, it has terminated its democracy promotion organization without replacement and it continues to reduce its ODA commitments. While there may be economic or political justification for each of these actions, they are not consistent with government rhetoric that brands Canadian foreign policy as “principled.” This lack of rhetorical consistency injects a level of uncertainty about Canadian motivations and values on the international stage. Without a clear set of guiding values, evident in practice, the promotion and projection of Canadian values abroad is unlikely to be successful. The unwillingness of the Harper Government to “walk the talk” has reduced the brand value of Canadian virtues and left Canada a little weaker than it was in 2005.

⁵⁸ Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, "DAC Member Profile: Canada," <http://www.oecd.org/dac/canada.htm> (accessed 05/08, 2015).

⁵⁹ Government of Canada, *Speech from the Throne to Open the First Session Fortieth Parliament of Canada*

CONCLUSION

The efficacy of Canadian foreign policy has been uneven across the three issue areas of international trade policy, diplomatic relations and rhetorical consistency. The Canadian economy is stronger today than it was in 2006, due in no small part to extensive government efforts to buttress Canadian economic strength through increased access to foreign markets. These efforts have also increased the prosperity of a vast number of Canadians. The Harper Government's commitment to allies and alliances – characterized by principled stands and a shift away from balanced mediation – has reaffirmed Canada as a stalwart partner of its powerful international friends. These strong relationships give Canada a trusted voice in conversation with powerful states that are capable of affecting global outcomes and ensuring international stability and security. This is as it has always been; Canada is a small country that lacks the means to tilt the global playing field. Canada must rely on its allies to insure the international system. The Harper Government contribution to international security and stability has left Canada no better or worse than it was in 2006; it has simply changed the flavour of Canadian international engagement. The rhetorical consistency of the Harper Government has been questionable. Government rhetoric speaks of values and principled stands against oppression, but some government action contributes to – or ignores – the plight of the oppressed. Canada continues to turn a blind-eye to the human rights offenses of the regime in Saudi Arabia, it has stepped away from democracy promotion, and Canadian ODA – as a percentage of GNI - continues to fall. The lack of alignment between Canada's stated values and the actions of the Harper Government on the international stage make the promotion and projection of those values exceedingly difficult. In the category of value projection, therefore, Canada may be worse off than it was in 2006.

The overall effectiveness of Canadian foreign policy under the Harper Government vis-à-vis national foreign policy objectives appears to be a wash. However, bearing in mind that international influence and the projection of values abroad remain difficult commodities to measure, especially in the short term, one must defer to tangible results – in this case, the improved economic prosperity of Canada since the arrival of the Harper Government. In spite of the global economic crisis of 2008, Canadians are more prosperous today than at any point in history. A little bit better than they found it? Indeed.

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