

Reinventing Canada for the Twenty-first Century
Notes for remarks for the University of Toronto Lecture Series
Deborah Coyne – March 8, 2007

Today, all politics is global. The key to Canada's future and the future of the planet involves Canada's role in the world and the world in Canada....Yet Canada's influence and effectiveness on the international stage depends on maintaining our internal coherence and stability, ensuring environmental preservation coincides with economic prosperity, and strengthening our commitment to greater equity and economic and social justice. We must have our act together at home, and implement domestic policies which attract world-wide respect, if we are to have credibility and a knowledge base from which to act internationally.

Canadians are encountering the future much faster than we ever have before. The internet has drawn us into global affairs in ways that were unimaginable even 20 years ago. Instant messaging, "skyping", Google-talk, podcasts, blogs, all allow Canadians to connect with one another and with people outside Canada to an unprecedented degree. PhD students with laptops run private broadcasting productions over the internet.

Much of what globalization involves may be exciting and innovative and, in any event, is unstoppable. Yet globalization is equally unsettling and generates great insecurities, financial and otherwise. When jobs are phased out because production of some goods or services is shifted to a country with lower costs, workers and their families suffer. When yet another head office leaves Canada, we are diminished individually and collectively.

Globalization has also created a bewildering 21st century global community. Our world is still composed of sovereign states. But we are irreversibly interdependent thanks to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) including huge philanthropic foundations from Bill Gates' to Bill Clinton's, to multinational corporations, to terrorist groups and extreme religious fundamentalists. All have the power to change national and international agendas, and do not respect national boundaries.

The intensity of transnational flows of money, goods, people, technology and troubles, not least of which is pollution,¹ is without precedent. Global commerce and communication and rising concern over human rights have blurred the lines of sovereignty and increased the relevance of domestic developments to international relations. All domestic policies, from environmental to social to economic, now have a global dimension.

Indeed, today, all politics is global. The key to Canada's future and the future of the planet involves Canada's role in the world and the world in Canada.

The world urgently needs bold and visionary national leadership on the part of all nation states, including Canada, to strengthen the capacity of international institutions and to undertake concerted international action to address complex and daunting problems – from massacres in Darfur and elsewhere, to nuclear weapons proliferation, to climate change, to international trade and development.

Sadly, the political anemia of our international institutions, most notably, the United Nations, reflects the anemia of most national governments, including Canada's – entrenched elites avoiding their responsibility to act in the general interest, and citizens increasingly questioning the ability of national institutions to perform effectively and fairly.

¹ Global Progress Report 2007, *Current History*, December 2006.

Yet Canada's influence and effectiveness on the international stage depends on maintaining our internal coherence and stability, ensuring environmental preservation coincides with economic prosperity, and strengthening our commitment to greater equity and economic and social justice. We must have our act together at home, and implement domestic policies which attract world-wide respect, if we are to have credibility and a knowledge base from which to act internationally.

But all this requires good government and good citizenship. Good national government will require bold and visionary national leadership to provide the essentials of Canadian citizenship – clean air, clean water, safe streets, our parks, healthcare, child care, parental leave, public education, equality of opportunity, and adequate income and other supports – and to ensure that our diversity remains our strength.

Good citizenship requires engaged committed citizens working together in the public interest, exercising the responsibilities that go along with the rights of citizenship.

We must ask at least as much of ourselves as we do of our governments.

As citizens of a country with so many resources and opportunities, we all need to be responsible and contribute, whether we are preserving the environment, ending the gun and gang violence and the scourge of drugs that afflicts our cities, helping those on the margins of society, and ultimately contributing to greater peace and humanity around the globe.

Of course the natural reaction to all the uncertainty – whether environmental, economic, social – that surrounds us is to try to control our own environment, save our jobs, lower taxes, focus on our own community, devise local solutions, and wall off as much of the external/global uncertainty as possible. It is a testament to the strong and compassionate character of so many Canadians that we resist this temptation to cocoon ourselves. Just look at the thousands of Canadians involved in everything from operating food banks, to finding shelter for the homeless and more affordable housing for those living in poverty, and taking care of seniors and disabled Canadians.

Constrained as we are by our frenetic lives and the relentless demands of consumerism, most of us do nevertheless try to do our best to find time to contribute to our communities and to create a better world for our children and grandchildren. If asked, most of us would probably say that we try to be good citizens, whether it is coaching a kids' sports team or fundraising for a charity. We would also say that we wished our lives were less intense and less stressful so that we could contribute even more to the good citizenship counterpart to good government; that we wished society, our employers and our leaders, placed greater value on volunteering and citizen engagement.

Let me just mention one example of the hundreds of citizen-driven environmental initiatives underway across the country. Last year, residents of a Toronto neighbourhood² formed a group to purchase solar energy panels, and then installed the panels on their roofs. These people are now producing their own electricity, not to save money, because the initial outlay of cash is significant. They are doing it because it is the right thing to do. Now there is a website, www.ourpower.ca, that helps other communities to learn how to adopt this successful model. The Tragically Hip and Steven Page of the Barenaked Ladies have helped to compile a CD whose proceeds go to support the initiative.

Another group in Toronto has formed a company, EnWise Power Solutions, to help individual households and businesses undertake affordable energy conservation and renewable energy initiatives. These are all Canadians who refuse to sit back and wait for politicians to take the lead. They are using their own power, the latest in environmental technology, and the internet to change the world.

² Riverdale Initiative for Solar Energy (RISE).

It is unfortunate that when citizens are willing to contribute so much to the future of the country, we have a federal government offering so little national leadership. We have a federal government that is in the business of putting the government out of business, transferring significant fiscal power away from the federal government to the provincial governments, and talking about what divides us rather than what unites us in moving forward. Our national government, with some exceptions, continues to be consumed with petty politics, outdated ideologies, power plays to find the Holy Grail of a majority government, costly and useless opinion polls to gauge, not important matters, but merely the popularity of the government.

The preoccupation of our political class with manipulating power has discredited politics as a whole in this country, and must be abandoned if the values of democracy are to endure into the future.

Our governments and political elites no longer seem to want or need publicly engaged citizens. The growth of the state into universal healthcare, public education, social security, portable pensions, immigrant settlement, and so forth means that too often we have sat back and wrongly taken for granted Medicare, employment insurance, public education, public pensions, progressive taxation and the successful integration of the growing numbers of new Canadians. Public institutions seem to run on automatic pilot, with no need for our active engagement. Professional armed forces are available with no need for conscription.

Our leaders no longer appeal to a “public purpose”; only to the needs of customers, client-citizens. Some observers refer to this as an era of “personal democracy”. Conditioned as we are to be consumers, customers, shoppers, clients, we prefer to influence politics on our own terms.

The political party has thus been sidelined as an instrument of mass organization, despite attempts to “brand” itself to appeal to the individual “consumer”. In its place, we have a huge range of here-today gone-tomorrow networked-based organizations, and celebrity-based populism.

Once we used to be concerned about the increasing inequalities of wealth and we supported action to narrow the gap. Now, too often, spurred on by ubiquitous reality TV, our response is: this is a good time to be rich and famous, how do we join the ranks?

Yet very soon in the 21st century, we will face a call to mobilize citizens for the common good, much as we did in 1936 when desperate economic conditions finally brought apolitical people together to find a way forward.

The trigger for such mobilization will be environmental catastrophes, more acts of terrorism, a pandemic. Whatever it is, we will be knocked off the incessant merry-go-round of extreme and unchecked consumption that has driven globalization. We will face a sudden need for public funds and collective action, and commensurate levels of taxation. The responsibilities of citizenship will finally emerge on a par with the rights of citizenship.

The only way to avoid a cataclysmic event is for our national leadership to start now to promote a cultural transformation that redefines wealth as well-being, **not** well-having.

We need leadership to encourage us to live intelligently and frugally, **not** wastefully.

We need to build a Canada where achievement is measured by our commitment and responsibility to our fellow citizens, **not** by our level of consumption.³

The time is long overdue to take action into our own hands to ensure bold and visionary national leadership. In the recent and not so recent past, too many Canadians have settled for mediocrity in national politics by joining the 30% to 40% of those eligible voters who do not vote in federal elections. We must find and turn out to vote for those leaders and representatives who are sincere and authentic promoters of good national government and who want to get things done. These are the politicians who are driven by what is right, and by genuine commitment to public service, to good government and good citizenship.

Together with our leaders, we need to imagine our common future together:

- a Canada that is a model multinational democracy, in which our diversity is our greatest strength;
- a Canada that is the greenest country on the planet – clean air, clean water, clean energy, a sustainable social economy – with a national government able to pursue greater equality and an end to poverty and unemployment;
- a Canada that plays a vigorous and respected role on the world stage in all areas.

What we do today must be directed by this clear image of the future. We cannot sit back passively and assume that the future will unfold on its own.

So, what action can we take to assure our common future in each of these three areas?

I. Ensuring our diversity remains our strength

We can look back at the 20th century and agree that Canada achieved a great deal. Nationally, we completed the transition from colony to fully independent nation with our own constitution and Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We built a social safety net – universal Medicare, employment insurance, pensions and so forth – that for a time was second to none. Our economy, while continuing to be resource intensive, expanded vigorously into the knowledge and service sector areas.

Internationally, our influence waned in the late 20th century as our military atrophied and our international personality blurred with multiplying provincial initiatives abroad. Nevertheless we still remain a reasonably significant player on the world stage, a member of the G-8 and other groups and, most importantly, a magnet for immigrants from every corner of the globe.

Canadians should be proud that we have built the most fascinating, diverse and cosmopolitan society in human history – a pluralist, multicultural state, dedicated to equality of opportunity and the pursuit of social and economic justice, solidified in the entrenched Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Our country is now a beautiful work-in-progress that offers itself to a troubled world – a world increasingly challenged by religious and sectarian friction – as a model of how the future can work.

³ We will have to find an alternative measure of our collective well-being to complement the purely economic measurement of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The proposed Canadian Index of Well-Being (CIW) is a different kind of statistical indicator. The CIW determines the quality of life in Canada reflecting a broad range of factors: the availability of healthcare, literacy rates, the quality of air and water, the cost of adequate housing and the value of unpaid work.

For over fifty years, Canada has been at the leading edge of how to build a successful society with a constantly evolving set of citizens and cultures. Religion and ethnicity are less and less defining features. We have always had an innate sense of mobility and internationalism from John Humphreys (among other things, the influential drafter of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights after World War II), to Louise Arbour, to Stephen Lewis.

More and more Canadians define themselves as world citizens. More and more Canadians have multiple identities. As journalist John Ibbitson and author Pico Iyer argue, the most potent social force shaping us today is the mixture of cultures. How can we speak of a single culture when someone is part Cree, part Jew, and part Romanian, part Thai? What does community mean when people come from everywhere – where former enemies meet as friends, or at least as neighbours?

But having said all that, there is no road map or historical precedent for what Canada has now become.

When asked to describe what we have become, one common response is we are “tolerant”. But while we must place a high value on tolerance of the increasing diversity within Canadian society, this is not enough to sustain the new multiethnic reality. Tolerance cannot be an end in itself. We owe each other much more than tolerance.

If our destiny is to show the world that a progressive, vigorous, multiethnic democracy can thrive in the 21st century and be a model for the world, then there is much to be done. Too often we sit back and think that diverse cultures and languages will simply come together without effort, that there is no threat to liberal democracy.

Our ability in Canada to accommodate our diversity, to respect justice and equality, is the central issue of our time. Our diversity as a society is a great source of strength, but also a source of great responsibility.

It is the responsibility of all of us to fight to ensure that our diversity does not lead to exclusion. And this duty to fight shall never end.

It is not enough to provide rights, although rights are the bedrock of our society.

It is not enough to be tolerant, although tolerance is essential.

The kind of society we must build is based on responsibility, our duty to each other – to respect each other, to help each other.

We have to inspire and demand from ourselves the discipline to understand, celebrate, and protect what makes each of us unique. Preserving the dignity of our neighbour preserves the dignity of us all.

So, to begin with, we have a responsibility to ensure that immigrants to Canada have real equality of opportunity. The evidence is clear that the latest wave of immigrants, while perhaps better educated than their predecessors, face more difficulties with respect to employment, reuniting their families, proper housing and health services.⁴ Especially among the young, there is a real sense of exclusion as the disaffected lash out against a society that fails to give them equal opportunity in practice.

New studies also show that second-generation immigrants may now have less of an attachment to the idea of Canada than their parents, and visible minorities in particular are having a tougher time finding

⁴A recent Statistics Canada report estimates that 41% of immigrants now in chronic low-income categories have university degrees, compared to 13% in 1993 before the immigration laws were changed to encourage more educated immigrants to come to Canada. Jeffrey Simpson, “Why our immigrant assumptions are off”, *The Globe & Mail*, February 5, 2007.

adequate economic opportunity. As a steadily increasing proportion of new immigrants are visible minorities⁵, there is no room in Canadian society for latent and not so latent discrimination, prejudice or racism and anti-Semitism.

Canadians, particularly employers in Canada, must identify what barriers are preventing visible minorities from advancing their careers, and then address those barriers with positive action.⁶ We need to solve the foreign credential problems once and for all, and provide adequate infrastructure to help new Canadians maximize their potential – language training, settlement services, internship programs that provide work experience, expeditious certification mechanisms to recognize foreign credentials.

Next, we have a responsibility as citizens to help pull our communities together to figure out how some of our young people are so marginalized to the point that they have no empathy, no compassion, no conscience.

How do we repair this tear in our social fabric? Is it because we have turned our backs on critical social programs? Do we attach too high a value to materialism? Do we lack good citizenship, social solidarity, strangers helping strangers, friends responsible for friends? Have we spent too much time talking about our differences, instead of what unites us?

We must find the answers with an urgency and determination unparalleled in recent times.

We also have a responsibility to ensure that the fundamental values of equality of men and women, and non-discrimination, are never dismantled under the guise of “less government”, or through misguided accommodation of outdated cultural norms.

This requires a refusal to pander to prejudice and parochialism. This requires moral leadership.

In this I am proud of the fact that Canada has not only defended same-sex marriage as a legal requirement of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, but also as a logical extension of the basic ideals of equality and diversity that underpin our inclusive society.

Finally, we have a fundamental responsibility to ensure that all persons, whatever their religious, ethnic or national background, whatever their gender, age, language or social status, are treated in a humane way.⁷

For example, you have the right to practise the religious faith of your choice. You then, however, have a responsibility **not** to express prejudice and incite hatred and discrimination against those of different beliefs.

Religion must not be a weapon; it should be a positive force that helps us explain our mortality, our significance in the universe, how to distinguish between right and wrong, how to establish a peaceful community life and discharge our responsibility for our fellow human beings.

⁵ In 1971, visible minorities constituted less than 1% of the Canadian population and about 10% of the new immigrants, while in 2001 visible minorities represented 13.4% of the population and over 75% of new immigrants. Note that according to Statistics Canada, by 2001 the number of so-called ethnic enclaves with more than 30% of the local population belonging to a single visible majority, had risen to 254 in Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver, from a mere 6 in 1981.

⁶ According to a recent report of the Conference Board of Canada, “although Canadian organizations say they value diversity, they have not yet fully committed their policies, practices and resources to embedding diversity in their operations.” *Report on Diversity: Priorities, Practices and Performance in Canadian Organizations*, December 2006.

⁷ This is proposed in Article 1 of a Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities, drafted in 1997 by the InterAction Council (a group of respected former world leaders).

The responsibility of citizenship in a strong multiethnic democracy also requires that we respect some civic limits to free speech. The purpose of freedom of expression is to broaden public discourse, and encourage citizens to talk with each other. Its purpose is **not** to increase misunderstanding and mistrust. If freedom of expression serves to produce unnecessary conflict, then it is our responsibility to figure out the civic limits to such freedom.

The restraint among Canadians with respect to the discussion and publication of the cartoons of Mohammed, regarded as blasphemous by most Muslims, should be applauded. This was an instance where the publication of the cartoons did not serve to broaden public discourse and civil debate.

A harmonious cosmopolitan society on the scale of Canada depends on the pursuit of positive initiatives that encourage people of all faiths and backgrounds to come together, to work towards common goals. Public education is of course among the most important means to this end. Faith-based initiatives, including private faith-based schools, must be carefully monitored to ensure that they contribute to greater mutual understanding and harmony and a respect for our core values of justice, equality and diversity. For example, in England, faith schools are now required to follow guidelines on teaching tolerance and respect for other faiths, and will be encouraged to twin with schools from different religions.

Another useful public initiative was the Ontario government's decision to refuse to allow faith-based arbitration in family law, something that would have led to increasing divisions within Canadian society. Faith-based arbitration is not consistent with our goals of ensuring that our diversity remains our strength, and respecting the fundamental value of equality of men and women.

II. Ensuring bold and visionary national leadership of a sustainable social economy

The future of the planet, peace and humanity depends on the ability of great religions, great cultures, and great nations to get along with one another, to respect one another, to have compassion. To this end, Canada has a great deal to contribute.

But equally, the future of the planet depends on our ability to live sustainable lives, to lessen our footprint on the planet, and to do so as urgently as we might face a world war. We must imagine life in 10, 15, 20 years – we do not have the luxury of declaring a century to be ours.

At no time in our history have we been in more need of bold and visionary national government. There is so much unfinished business – ensuring environmental protection coincides with economic prosperity, social justice and the dream of equal opportunity which for too many is not the reality.

Let me set out some examples of this unfinished business.

Why, in 2007, does our national government act so incoherently on the environment? Why, in 2007, do we not have a Minister of the Environment on a par with the Minister of Finance, so that ecological principles are integrated every step of the way into our budget, investment and planning processes? In the recent past, we finally recognized the critical link between economic development and social justice, coining the phrase “social economy”. Now we must refer always to the “sustainable social economy”.

Why, in 2007, do we still not have national standards for healthcare services available to Canadians under Medicare? Why should Canadians in some provinces have access to physiotherapy, extensive services for autistic children, adequate cancer treatment, or MRIs, but not in others?

Why, in 2007, do we have unacceptable levels of poverty, too many working poor, too many hungry children, and third-world conditions among Aboriginal Canadians? Poverty is the greatest threat to political stability, social cohesion and the environmental health of the planet.

Why, in 2007, do we not have a meaningful sustainable national housing strategy that provides stable long-term funding for new affordable housing initiatives and their ongoing operating costs, as well as the delivery of new rent supplements?⁸ We should recognize once and for all that the social housing sector is a critical component of economic development and a major contributor to a more sustainable social economy. For example, housing projects should be viewed, as they are in Britain and the U.S., as a significant driver of community renewal.

Why, in 2007, do we not have a federal minimum wage, together with tax provisions that significantly assist the working poor, and which lead the way in establishing a standard of fundamental decency for low-income Canadians?⁹

Why, in 2007, do we still not have effective protection for workers who lose their employment due to global forces? Denmark has something called *flexicurity* which effectively funds EI at 80% of the lost wage while a person looks for new employment. Another option popular among EU circles is wage security which supplements the wage of a person who has lost a higher-paying job.

Why, in 2007, are securities traders unable to deal with a single national securities commission? Regulations and standards, not to mention registration fees, vary considerably across the 13 provinces and territories despite the valiant efforts of the Canadian Securities Administrators, the umbrella group for all the securities commissions.¹⁰

Why, in 2007, do we not have a national sales tax that consolidates the GST and provincial sales taxes, something that would be welcomed by almost all business people in Canada?

Why, in 2007, do we have valuable businesses, such as pulp and paper mills, shutting down and throwing thousands out of work, thanks to a shortsighted lack of investment in creating more efficient mills that could be reusing mill residue to produce energy, fuels or chemicals (biorefineries)?

Why, in 2007, is there no national ban on lawn and garden pesticides? Why is it that a dangerous weed killer 2, 4-D is still available in Canada yet banned in Denmark, Norway, Sweden and elsewhere?

Why, in 2007, are we so slow in removing toxic chemicals from ordinary exposure? Why did we not recently ban the sale of **all** products containing the dangerous contaminant – polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) – flame retardants that have been proven to interfere with thyroid hormones, and to play a role in the emergence of attention deficit and hyperactivity disorders in children? Instead we only prohibited production of products with PBDEs in Canada, not the huge quantity of imported products. Why, to take just one of many possible examples, does the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* allow sulphur dioxide concentrations up to 115 parts per million (ppm), while Australia mandates only 80 ppm?

Why, in 2007, have we not yet imposed stronger fuel-efficiency standards on the auto manufacturers in North America, and ensured their commitment to hybrid vehicles on a par with Toyota and Honda?

Why, in 2007, are we not moving vigorously toward a national electricity grid, something that should have been built years ago? This would, among other things, help accelerate the closure of Ontario's dirty coal-fired plants and could generate 2800 new megawatts of power in Ontario by 2015.

⁸ See e.g. Michael Shapcott, *Framework for the Blueprint to End Homelessness in Toronto*, Wellesley Institute, 2006.

⁹ See, for example, the recommendation of Professor Emeritus and labour law expert Harry Arthurs, in his 2006 report following a two-year inquiry into the *Canada Labour Code*.

¹⁰ A registration reform project commenced in 2004 will take until at least the end of 2007 only to consolidate and simplify some of the registration requirements across different jurisdictions. For example, the number of categories for individual registration will be reduced from 239 to 30.

Why, in 2007, have we been unable to fulfill straightforward international obligations such as to establish national parks in each of the country's 39 natural regions pursuant to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity that we signed in 1992?¹¹

Why in 2007, do we not have a bold national strategy to provide substantial financial assistance to the best and the brightest in our scientific community, supporting a wide range of "bottom-up" excellence-driven research similar to the European Union's European Research Council?¹² Only free wide-ranging scientific innovation will ensure the necessary advances in such critical areas as renewable energy sources, energy conservation, environmental causes of ill-health, and waste reduction.

Why, in 2007, does Canada not invest much more in education at all levels? A better educated, more innovative work force is essential to Canada's future well-being. But whereas the U.S. increased public spending on education by 3.3 percent a year since 1993, Canada only managed a paltry 0.2 percent a year.¹³

Why, in 2007, are corporate expenditures on research and development and investment in the latest equipment and technology to boost productivity among workers, so dismal?¹⁴ Why do energy companies, for example, that are racking up gigantic profits, put more effort into buying back stock than improving their R&D efforts, especially in green technologies?

Why, in 2007, do we still have a national economy dragged down by a myriad of inter-provincial barriers to trade? Why does our national government not take effective action to eliminate interprovincial barriers to trade, instead of settling for the anemic Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) signed in 1994?

A recent Conference Board survey¹⁵ found that one-third of all businesses surveyed said that non-tariff barriers hindered their competitiveness, and 26% of them said they had lost business because of them. Each province still has, for example, its own rules for accrediting everyone from engineers to plumbers. Businesses crossing provincial borders face multiple registrations.

Until the path-breaking Alberta-British Columbia bilateral Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement in August 2006 (effective 2007), trucks used to have to unload their loads at the border and repack them according to the different regulations in the two provinces. Crossing to the state of Montana was easier. Now with the Alberta and British Columbia economies essentially open to each other, a gain of some \$4.8 billion in national income is expected. Imagine what would happen if all provinces pursued open trade within Canada!

Finally, why, in 2007, have we not settled once and for all the provision of adequate stable long-term funding for the CBC, and the requirement that the president and CEO of the CBC be answerable to the CBC Board and accountable directly to Parliament and the people of Canada? More generally, Canadians are well ahead of our current leadership in recognizing that a vibrant artistic sector and vibrant cultural industries are essential elements of both a sustainable social economy and our Canadian identity.¹⁶

¹¹ In 2002, at the South Africa World Summit on Sustainable Development, Prime Minister Chrétien promised 10 new national parks over 5 years. As of 2007, only 3 had been completed and Québec refuses to countenance any land given up to the national parks in its 4 natural regions. (Québec has two national parks – in Shawinigan and the Gaspé).

¹² John Polanyi, "You want innovation? Liberate Canada's scientists", *The Globe & Mail*, February 21, 2007.

¹³ See discussion in Peter Shawn Taylor, "In Pursuit of Prosperity", *Maclean's*, March 19, 2007.

¹⁴ Ibid. In 2005, U.S. businesses invested an average of \$8000 per worker in all forms of machinery, equipment and software, compared to \$5700 for Canadian firms.

¹⁵ Ann Golden, *Mission Possible: Sustainable Prosperity for Canada*, Conference Board of Canada (2006).

¹⁶ Canadian consumers spent \$25.1 billion on cultural goods and services in 2005, an amount that is 5% higher than the combined consumer spending on household furniture, appliances and tools (\$24.0 billion). The \$25.1 billion in consumer spending is over three

When we lay out all the unfinished national business, Canadians would be correct to ask whether we have allowed our national government to be dangerously weakened. In the absence of decisive action from our federal government in all these areas, have we allowed provincial premiers to expand their mandates into the vacuum?

One thing is very clear: The problem is **not** constitutional as many proponents of a diminished national government claim. The national government has all the powers it needs to act coherently in the national interest whether with respect to the social economy, environmental matters or global affairs.

For example, the environment has both national and global dimensions that clearly require vigorous national environmental protection policies. Too much pollution, too many toxic chemicals, too many greenhouse gases cross provincial and national boundaries. We need to silence the defeatist Canadian voices moaning about how difficult it is to take effective action because environmental regulation is a hodgepodge of provincial, federal and municipal jurisdictions. Canadians expect all those elected to public office to work together and not produce trivial acts of symbolic environmentalism and hypocrisy when it comes to the very survival of our planet.

The real cause of all our unfinished business and anemic federal leadership, is one of political will. Our federal politicians have lost the will to act firmly and forcefully in the national interest, and too often cave in to provincial intransigence. Especially since the early days of the Mulroney Conservative government in the 1980s, any initiatives that might have ruffled provincial feathers were dropped. So died any momentum towards a national securities commission, forceful legislation on the environment, a national disability insurance program and so forth.

At the same time as the federal government has weakened, the provincial and territorial leaders have increasingly organized themselves, most recently forming the Council of the Federation to try to arrogate to themselves more power. Journalist Jeffrey Simpson describes well how the annual meeting of premiers has “morphed into Canada’s equivalent of the Group of Eight Summit, with lavish banquets, superb entertainment, huge budgets, large retinues, security personnel everywhere, portentous and instantly forgotten communiqués and a ubiquitous aura of preening self-importance”.¹⁷

The Harper government continues the Mulroney example of unraveling the federal government. It is thus easy for Mr. Harper to buy into the provincialist/separatist rhetoric of “fiscal imbalance”, which he proposes to correct through changes in equalization payments,¹⁸ but more disturbingly through a significant reduction in federal taxes – personal, business and consumption – so that provinces can then move into the tax room themselves and impose their own taxes.¹⁹

times larger than the \$7.7 billion spent on culture in Canada by all levels of government in 2003/04. <http://www.arts.on.ca/PageFactory.aspx?PageID=1669>.

¹⁷ Jeffrey Simpson, *The Globe and Mail Newspaper*, July 29, 2006.

¹⁸ Of course the incomprehensible equalization formula needs to be revamped and simplified to ensure that national equity objectives are really being served. A return to the 10 province standard for the equalization of provincial revenues, with 100% of resource revenues included in revenue sources (as recommended by the Council of the Federation), so that all provinces can provide roughly the same standard of essential public services, is the best way to ensure horizontally equitable treatment among equalization-receiving provinces. At the same time, the principle of equal per capita transfers for healthcare, post-secondary education and social services should be pursued.

¹⁹ The reality is that it is primarily Québec driving the initiative to correct the alleged fiscal imbalance, since the term “fiscal imbalance” was coined by the 2002 Report of the Quebec Séguin Commission on the Fiscal Imbalance. As respected Québec commentator, Alain Dubuc, writes in his recent book, *L’Éloge de la Richesse*, Québec spends more per capita than any other province (\$1500 more per capita than Ontario), taxes its citizens most heavily and is the most indebted. Its university fees are the

The fact is that Ottawa's share of total revenues is the smallest of any central government in the developed world, and the fact is that Ottawa places the fewest strings on the money it transfers to the provinces – \$29.8 billion in 2006-2007 for health, social services, post-secondary education, and over \$11 billion for equalization, plus child care and some infrastructure spending.

If anything, Ottawa's national revenue base must be strengthened. A strong national tax policy is needed to lessen the chance that people will move to different parts of the country to avoid paying taxes.²⁰ Sales taxes, for example, should be consolidated at the national level with a national goods and services tax (NGST), rather than the Harper government route of a costly reduction in the GST which eventually will be offset by an increase in provincial taxes. For the national sales tax to work, revenue-sharing accords would be entered into with the provinces, perhaps using the Australian model. In Australia, the federal government allocates the GST revenue using equalization-type criteria.²¹ In Canada, the federal government could turn over funds to the provinces according to where it is collected, and then the revenues could be equalized according to the standard equalization formula. This is essentially how the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) works in three Atlantic provinces.²²

Shifting more and more tax room to the provinces jeopardizes tax harmonization and prevents the federal government from using transfers to achieve national equity and efficiency objectives. The better option is to increase the transfers from the federal government to the provinces and maintain national tax revenues at appropriate levels. Maintaining national tax revenues will also involve the removal of all special tax incentives for oil and gas production, provisions which are unnecessary in light of the booming energy sector and rising oil and gas revenues. We absolutely must ensure adequate national revenues for the numerous pressing matters of national concern such as immigration settlement, clean energy initiatives, wage adjustment or wage security programs, and so forth.

We also need a strong national presence in the funding of the huge investments required in our municipal infrastructure and public transit.²³ This is a matter of national concern. We need to articulate a national vision of the kind of sustainable livable cities we want to build.

Finally, we must implement a better independent mechanism to deal with the issues of fiscal federalism and fiscal balance, and henceforth ensure rational cooperative action as opposed to ill-considered politicized steps serving some short-term objective. Australia has a Commonwealth Grants Commission, and South Africa has a Financial and Fiscal Commission to facilitate cooperative outcomes. Canada must establish a similar body.

lowest in North America; it has \$7 a day child care, a provincial drug plan, low hydro rates, not to mention an international presence to rival the federal government – 28 missions/offices abroad with the Québec flag flying, among other locations, next to the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin. Yet despite the fact that all provinces, including Québec, have the same fiscal capacity as the federal government – the same access to corporate and personal taxes, the same ability to collect tax revenues, Québec refuses to increase taxes or cut spending, and cannot create more revenue through economic growth. Instead, Québec demands the money from the rest of Canada.

²⁰ Much of this commentary re fiscal federalism is inspired and adapted from the thoughtful writings of Professor Robin Boadway at Queen's University, whose most recent article appeared in *Policy Options* (September 2006).

²¹ The Australian equalization system is much more complete than the Canadian one. It is a net system insofar as the top states effectively get equalized down, and the bottom states, up. It also includes both "revenue equalization" and "needs equalization".

²² Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Québec has its own form of harmonized sales tax and, unlike the Atlantic provinces, collects it for the federal government. Special accommodation can be made for this, as has been done in the past with respect to pensions.

²³ Toronto mayor David Miller's One Cent Solution moves us in the right direction. One percent of the GST revenues should be dedicated to municipal transport and infrastructure across Canada.

In order to facilitate a stronger and more coherent national presence in many other critical areas of public policy, we need similar arms-length but accountable mechanisms to ensure that good government in the interests of all Canadians prevails, not petty wasteful politics.²⁴

For example, an independent Criminal Justice Council could advise the government on changes to the Criminal Code whether with respect to new crimes, or penalties and sentencing. This would ensure that Criminal Code amendments were not simply knee-jerk reactions to short-term political pressures.²⁵ In addition, the process of federal judicial appointments should involve a meaningful system of non-partisan advisory committees as recommended by the Canadian Bar Association and adopted in part by one of the House of Commons justice committee's reports in 2005.²⁶ Unfortunately, Mr. Harper's partisan attack on the existing system of screening committees, however much reform is required, takes us backwards!

We should have an arms-length national health commission, overseen by a non-partisan board of outstanding citizens, to tackle issues such as:

- national standards in terms of coverage,
- how to ensure that Canadians do not have to leave the country for essential medical treatments or take governments to court to pay for essential medications or treatments,
- what is the acceptable degree of private delivery of public services, and
- how to ensure the portability of Medicare across the country.²⁷

The Commission would also examine levels of healthcare funding as a percentage of GDP and propose changes to ensure that healthcare does not swamp our federal and provincial government budgets to the detriment of the environment, education and emergency preparedness.

Aboriginal lands claims should be settled by a tribunal of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members, not the courts. The same arms-length body could advise on how to avoid more Kashechewans, eliminate the third-world conditions on many of our reserves, and focus on the education and other deficits behind the tragically high suicide levels.

We may also need some sort of arms-length body to examine the closing of so many locally based head offices, and the takeovers of Canadian companies by foreign state-owned entities. Even gold magnate Peter Munk of Barrick Resources and Gerry Schwartz of Onex Corporation have expressed concern about the outsourcing of decision-making to Switzerland and California. Canadian icons, from the Hudson's Bay Company to our heritage hotels, beer and steel companies, are currently bought up by foreign interests with no protest.²⁸

²⁴ Meaningful senate reform should also eventually be achieved in such a way as to enhance the responsiveness and transparency of the national government.

²⁵ The Council would serve as a standing advisory body with both a statutory power and duty to keep the working of the criminal justice system under comprehensive, structured and measured review. The federal government would be statutorily required to consult the Council on all major legislative or other changes that it proposed for the criminal law and/or criminal justice system, including sentencing proposals. The Council could also initiate proposals for change.

²⁶ Indeed we could adapt such a system to all appointments to all federal tribunals and abolish patronage altogether.

²⁷ Currently, for example, Québec refuses to allow its residents to access healthcare in other provinces on an equal basis as do all other provinces. Québec residents must pay healthcare professionals in other provinces and then request and receive a refund from the Régie, often at a lesser rate than was charged.

²⁸ E.g. Inco and Dofasco Inc., Falconbridge Ltd., Molson Inc., Fairmont Hotel and Resorts Inc., Sleeman Breweries, Vincor International Inc., Inniskillin and Jackson-Triggs.

The Special Challenge of the Environment

Of all the challenges facing us in the early 21st century, none is more in need of strong, continuing national action than environmental protection.

Reputable scientists around the world agree that we are now in a race between environmental destruction on a global scale, and sustainable solutions. With the alarming evidence of rising global temperatures, the loss of polar ice, and the increase in carbon dioxide concentrations, now at 378 parts per million and rising exponentially (while for 650,000 years the CO₂ concentration never went above 250-300 ppm), it should not be surprising that we slip into collective despondency about the future of the planet. Philosopher Ronald Wright argues that “we are logging everywhere, building everywhere and no corner of the biosphere escapes our hemorrhage of waste... Our ‘system’ is a suicide machine, in no one’s interests.” The evidence continues to pile up – coral reefs off Australia extinct by 2050; bogs of west Siberia melting, alone containing as much carbon as 73 years of man-made emissions; serious impacts on food production and water availability; and more extreme weather events.

But some modest optimism is justified. For example, Jared Diamond, the author of the 2005 bestseller *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*, argues that although we have only 50 years to turn things around, human wisdom can triumph over circumstance.

We all have children, nieces, nephews, grandchildren who need safe food, clean air and water, and who want to see living oceans and forests. Yet Canadians have increased our greenhouse gas emissions by 30% since 1990, contrary to our Kyoto commitment of a 6% reduction between 1990 and 2012 levels. Clearly we have much to do to bring down emissions, although particular attention will have to be placed on the oil production in the Alberta tar sands which will contribute nearly half of Canada’s growth in GHG from 2003 to 2010 unless steps are taken to counter this trend.

The Project Green approach of the most recent Liberal government was a good beginning with its emphasis on information programs, energy-efficient labels, the Green Building Council, advertising, audits, subsidies to wind generators, efficiency grants to homeowners and other incentives.²⁹ But real progress on “bending the curve of emissions”³⁰ urgently requires much more energy conscious building codes, fuel efficiency regulations for new cars and trucks, good urban planning and public transit, “green taxes” and tough near-term, regulated emission-reduction targets for industry, together with a cap-and-trade system.³¹

In addition, well-targeted incentives should be available to persuade both individuals and businesses to proceed with possibly costly renovations and a wide range of efficiency improvements and renewable energy initiatives. The federal government also needs to ensure that municipalities and regional governments are able to pursue initiatives such as a significant reduction in the cost of public transit, and much more advanced recycling and waste reduction programs.

A modest carbon levy could also be visibly imposed on the end user of fuels and electricity in order to create a fund to reduce other taxes and/or support initiatives to reduce waste, increase efficiency and promote low emission technologies. A similar carbon levy or offset on air travel is equally necessary as

²⁹ The primarily voluntary approach has its limits. Under the Climate Change Voluntary Challenge and Registry Program (VCR), only a miniscule .04 megatonnes of greenhouse gases (compared to the reduction of 270 megatonnes of CO₂ emissions required to meet our Kyoto obligations) were reported by Canadian industries.

³⁰ See the seven point program of the Climate Action Network.

³¹ Prime Minister Harper’s recent catch-up “greening” is clearly politically motivated and is too timid. In addition, the Asia Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate Change (AP6 – China, India, Australia, United States, Japan and South Korea), which Harper is considering joining, is both toothless and useless at this point, despite a membership that accounts for greater than half the global economy.

we now realize that aviation is by far a bigger carbon marker and more ruinous than even the properly-maligned SUV.

Practical straightforward targets must be established so that Canadians can easily measure our progress towards a carbon neutral society. This applies to everything from retrofitting houses, new efficiency standards for light bulbs that will effectively ban wasteful incandescent bulbs,³² cogeneration (which uses steam generated in a production process to produce new electricity), district heating networks (that convert household waste into fuel), research and development into renewable energy, the shift to biofuels like ethanol,³³ urban planning, even reforestation and afforestation. Canadians also need to have ongoing easy access to information about all the small but important steps that can be taken to address climate change such as installing new roofs with a light coloured material that will absorb much less heat, and paving roads with a lighter coloured material.

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in California stands out for his leadership on the environmental front. He has stared down the naysayers and insisted on an 80% reduction of emissions from 1990 levels, by 2050. Solar panels are now a mandatory standard option on all new homes. By 2010, 20% of California's energy must be generated by renewables – a requirement imposed on all utilities. Carbon dioxide emissions from vehicles must be cut by 30% by 2016 and new greenhouse gas emissions standards become effective with the 2009 model year.

New Californian regulations also establish the first low-carbon standard for transportation fuels. The carbon content of gasoline, diesel, ethanol and other fuels must be reduced by 10% by 2020. California also imposes an extraction fee on all oil pumped, essentially a tax on oil production, until 2017, to generate a fund of \$4 billion for research and development into alternative fuels. The aim is a 25% reduction in oil consumption in California by 2017.

III. Ensuring Canada plays a bold and vigorous role in the global community

As Canada searches for its role and purpose in the 21st century, we also need to rethink our role on the global stage. Are we content to be a neutral broker here and there with mixed success, or do we want to achieve something more concrete and vigorous?

Once again, bold and visionary national leadership is desperately needed.

As we confront our turbulent world, there is understandably a sentiment that leads Canadians to want to withdraw, put up a protective wall between Canada and the strife, bloodshed, and war overseas. But this is wrong. Canada has always been engaged in world affairs on all fronts – military, diplomatic, economic, social. After World War Two, we were one of the most important military powers in the world, and Canadians played a significant role in the establishment of the post-war international infrastructure – the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the North American Treaty Organization.

With the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Berlin Wall in the late 20th century, there were high hopes for the advancement of world peace and humanity. The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists turned back the Doomsday Clock significantly as we moved ahead, confident that the world was safe for democracy.³⁴

³² Canada could set new standards for light bulbs under the Canadian Energy Efficiency Act. Australia has now banned incandescent light bulbs effective 2010. California has done the same effective 2012, pursuant to the recent *How Many Legislators Does It Take To Change a Light Bulb Act*.

³³ According to experts, ethanol should not come from corn, but from cellulosic feedstock.

³⁴ In early 2007, the Doomsday Clock was reset much closer to midnight.

But all that quickly changed with 9/11 and the age of terrorism, as well as the “inconvenient truth” of global warming and irreversible climate change.

2006 was a particularly bad year for global governance. China, a permanent member of the UN Security Council, has been unacceptably slow to support a continued UN presence in Darfur, North Korea tested a long-range missile and a nuclear device, Iran openly pursued the nuclear bomb and called for the destruction of Israel, the Doha trading round collapsed, and the G-8 Summit in St. Petersburg broke off early. The U.S. remained the world’s only superpower, but its moral force and reputation steadily diminished.

Yet with both China and Russia behaving less than responsibly in the international arena, strong national leadership in all liberal democracies is critical. All liberal democracies, big and small, need to participate in networking and international agreements that result in effective cooperative action on global problems of energy security, economic inequality, ethnic conflicts, regional militarization, pandemics and global warming.

In the foreseeable future, national power will no longer depend primarily on military, or even economic, might; it will depend on social stability, access to safe, clean sources of energy, clean air and water, a good healthcare system and adequate national preparedness to enable a nation to withstand a pandemic. Even the United States appears slowly to be learning the lesson of Iraq the hard way: that even a powerful state such as the United States in a currently unipolar world, gains an advantage by supporting, and operating within, an international system of rules and institutions.

Over the next 20 years, the developing world will acquire 2 billion more people. Already approximately half the Arab population, and 54% of Iranians and 52% of Pakistanis are younger than 20 years old. This compares to about 25% in North America and Europe.³⁵

In the near future, hundreds of millions of poorly educated young people will lack the necessary skills for employment, and find very few employment opportunities except in the informal economy. They are living in the crowded mega-cities and will be attractive recruits for radical groups, alienated from the global economic, social and political system, and who consider the U.S. to be simply the home of Guantanamo Bay and Abu Graib. The young men in particular will rebel wherever they find themselves, whether the banlieus of Paris, or the streets of Somalia.

Such mass poverty is the greatest moral challenge/moral dilemma of our time.³⁶ Undoubtedly, fundamentalists and extremists of all religious and ethnic backgrounds draw support from alienated and angry citizens of developing countries – alienated from a world of excessive consumerism and waste; angry with the inequality of opportunity and growing inequalities of income and wealth.

The international community must continue to fully support international initiatives such as the Millennium Development Goals, established in 2000, which aim to reduce poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women by 50% by 2015. More specifically, the goal is to halve the proportion of people in extreme poverty between 1990 and 2015, achieve universal primary education by 2015, and reduce the mortality rate of children less than five years of age, by two-thirds. We must instill a sufficient sense of hope and progress in developing societies so that despair and anger do not send more masses into the arms of extremists.

But at the same time as ramping up international development initiatives, we must deal firmly with the corrupt self-interested regimes, in too many developing areas of the world, that rule by fear and threats,

³⁵ Peter Warren Singer, “America, Islam and the 9-11 War”, *Current History*, December 2006.

³⁶ Mike Davis, *Planet of the Slums: The Monster at Our Door: The Global Threat of Avian Flu*.

and siphon off aid intended to advance the local social economy. They are guilty of manufacturing poverty to enhance alienation and anger for their own political ends.

Crises in states from Sudan to Afghanistan are potential threats to security at home here in Canada. Destabilizing civil wars are much more common than they were 40 years ago. As Rwanda and now Darfur demonstrate, the potential for horrific genocides is all too real. And rants by the president of Iran, on the verge of leading a nuclear power, advocating the elimination of the nation of Israel, are ominous.

Canada is one of 37 NATO and partner nations in Afghanistan, participating in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), sanctioned by seven United Nations resolutions. Yet somehow opponents of our participation repeat the untruth that we are there at the behest of George Bush and are following his blind lead into some foreign misadventure.

World peace is most certainly engaged in Afghanistan. We are right to be there, participating in a mission of great moral and strategic significance. An unstable Afghanistan can destabilize its nuclear neighbours – Pakistan, India, and, if it has its way, Iran. Prior to 9/11, the Taliban in Afghanistan provided the operational centre and a shelter for Osama Bin Laden.

We are not there to placate George Bush. We are there to ensure that the international community does not turn its back too soon as arguably it did in 2001 when the Americans sent a totally inadequate number of troops, limited to Kabul, to assist the Afghan people to achieve stability, peace and democracy. Building a functional sovereign and democratic state is not an 18-month job, a 3-year job or even perhaps a 10-year job.

History bears out the dangers of not sustaining outside help in nation-building projects. In Somalia in 1993, the United States and Canada quit at the first sign of trouble. Now Somalia is sinking once again into total chaos, and only significant prolonged international intervention will prevent the establishment of an extremist outpost on the Horn of Africa. In Haiti, the Americans left after restoring the deposed president in 1995, and despite some Canadian efforts to train police and military, Haiti eventually went down the road to anarchy and massive abuses of human rights yet again.

In Lebanon in 1983, the Americans bailed out after an explosion in Beirut killed 200 U.S. marines. Lebanon has never been able to shake off the ever-tightening yoke of Syria, and now the Hezbollah terrorists, standing in for Iran, have got away with putting most of their efforts into burying armaments under civilian housing rather than doing much of real benefit to the local population such as building schools and hospitals. This then has ensured instability and tension along the border with Israel, and has prevented meaningful progress towards a Palestinian-Israeli peace agreement.

In this light, the recent Israeli-Hezbollah war in the summer of 2006 should have come as no surprise. The long overdue arrival of international troops (15,000 French, Italians, Indians and Turkish) and their conspicuous presence along the Israel-Lebanese border is invaluable in the present circumstances. But the response should be from a beefed-up NATO, or ideally some day from a capable U.N. intervention unit, not an *ad hoc* after-the-fact coalition which is the product of some cajoling first of Italy and then of a reluctant France that simply did not want to be outdone by Italy.

In 1995 in Bosnia, for example, as soon as peace was agreed, the United States, Britain and France sent in 60,000 peacekeepers, and sustained the operation until the tipping point for stability in the region had been achieved. Now only 1,900 EU soldiers are needed to maintain order. This shows that an operation of sufficient scale and duration may be the only effective way to achieve our goals of greater peace and humanity.

All this should underscore for all Canadians how increasingly important our military role will be outside our borders, and the critical need to use military power carefully as an instrument of foreign policy in conjunction with diplomacy and development strategies.

A much more effective NATO or, ideally, vigorous U.N. peace-making units, is also urgently required in Darfur, and neighbouring Chad and Central African Republic, to prevent the first genocide of the 21st century. Well over 200,000 innocent black Africans have already been slaughtered, and the number is steadily increasing. General Romeo Dallaire, the most passionate and eloquent veteran of the horrors of Rwanda, argues persuasively that we need to rally Japan, Germany, India, Brazil, and the Scandinavian countries to commit resources and troops to NATO, as well as partner with Australia and New Zealand. United Nations Resolution 1706 gives the Security Council authority to authorize the intervention, and China, which is allying with Sudan and others to provide it with more secure energy supplies, has only barely been shamed into not using its veto to end all U.N. assistance.

We need a bold and visionary Canadian presence at all the bargaining tables around the world – from the peace tables of Northern Ireland, Afghanistan, Rwanda, Darfur, to the ongoing Kyoto conference negotiations, to the World Trade Organization, to the United Nations, and so many more.

When Canadians have put their shared values into action, whether in the cause of landmines or in the negotiation of the recent global convention to protect cultural diversity, we have proven our worth as global citizens and have won respect around the world.

But that is not enough. There is much more that we must do.

We must invest the necessary resources in our peacekeeping capacities, our military, our international activities, and our defence of North America. Our international reputation and influence is a source of pride, but is never something to be taken for granted. It is something to be earned and maintained through hard work and, at times, great sacrifice.

We must reinvest in our military capacities, even beyond the recent initiatives, and once again become an effective player in all domains of international affairs – defence, diplomacy and development. According to most expert observers, military expenditures currently hover about 1% of GDP and may have to eventually rise to at least 4.5%. In addition, we must increase our foreign aid level from the current pathetic level of 0.28% of GDP to the 0.7% level promised back in the 1960s.

We must continue to be in the forefront of the development of the international “responsibility to protect” doctrine, which is gaining support as the legal and ethical framework within which to protect vulnerable populations at risk from civil wars, insurgency, state repression and state collapse. We must also be in the forefront of the development of effective, innovative means of civil-military cooperation, providing essential military support for the delivery of humanitarian and development assistance within the context of the increasing number of complex conflict situations around the world.

But we must also be clear and firm in our denunciation of the current United Nations structure. We will not merit the respect of future generations unless we insist on the fundamental changes to the U.N. that will allow the world community to put an end to genocide in Darfur, Rwanda and elsewhere, put an end to the lethal arms trade and arms build-up.

The Security Council is fatally flawed by the vetoes of the five permanent members. Among other things, the renaissance of Asia – China and India – and the increasing power of states with oil and gas, notably, Russia, demonstrate how we desperately need a new structure of global governance that reflects the growing diffusion of power.

Suggestions for U.N. reform include expanding the Security Council to include 10 rotating members, such as Brazil, India, Germany, Japan and South Africa. (This is similar to the proposal to create a permanent Group of 20 to supersede the current G-8, adding Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, India, Indonesia, China, Australia, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea and the EU to the United States, Britain, Japan, France, Germany, Italy Russia and Canada.) Other reforms to the international infrastructure involve merging the World Bank and International Monetary Fund to more effectively address global financial issues including development, and to ensure that critical decision-making authority better corresponds to the actual global distribution of power.³⁷

We also need to put the focus back on the very serious nuclear threat and the goal of the abolition of nuclear weapons. The nuclear non-proliferation regime is on the verge of collapse. The United States is mumbling about “usable nuclear bombs” (bunker busters, mini-nukes, reliable replacement warheads (RRWs)) and continues steps that are leading to the weaponization of space,³⁸ while abstaining from the UN Resolution to prevent an arms race in space, which passed with a vote of 151 in favour, none opposed. In addition, terminating the Antiballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty and refusing to sign on to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention are hardly constructive U.S. initiatives.

The five original signatories to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1970 – the U.S., Russia, France, Britain and China – are still committed to giving up nuclear weapons. But now there is India, Pakistan, Israel, North Korea and possibly Iran. Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Morocco and Algeria have all told the International Atomic Energy Agency that they now intend to develop nuclear power programs. And as recent events in Britain regarding the poisoning of a former Russian KGB agent demonstrate, much more controls are required on radioactive fissile materials.

Suggestions have been made that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) should oversee an international bank of uranium to ensure “safe enrichment for nuclear energy” for any country desiring nuclear energy. Another valuable initiative is the Fissile Materials Cutoff Treaty (FMCT) which was signed in May 2005 to try to create a fissile materials control regime.

The growing dangers of our nuclear world must force us to recognize how little the international community has accomplished in more than half a century in terms of the abolition of nuclear weapons and the threat of nuclear Armageddon. It is clear that we must redouble our efforts in this area especially as the pressure increases to greatly expand nuclear energy as a way to reduce global warming and too much reliance on fossil fuels.

We must also redouble our efforts to resolve some of the most serious sources of instability in world affairs. The conflict in the Middle East, essentially now encompassing three civil wars, is a prime example; another is religious fascism or extremism.

The road to lasting peace in the Middle East and a fair settlement for Palestinians lies through Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria, with the active involvement of Jordan, Russia and China. These Muslim states must step up to the plate and discharge their responsibility by contributing to greater peace and security.³⁹ Syria, in particular, is currently much more part of the problem, not part of the solution. Arab

³⁷ Decision-making power within the IMF, in particular, is unrealistic. For example, China, the world’s economic powerhouse, currently holds only 3.72 percent of the voting power, even after an adjustment upward from 2.98 percent at the fall 2006 annual meeting.

³⁸ See the Chinese destruction of one of their own satellites in outer space in January 2007, revealing China’s capacity to engage in the weaponization of space.

³⁹ Saudi Arabia’s recent efforts to forge the Mecca Declaration aimed at bringing together the rival Hamas and Fatah factions to build a new Palestinian unity government, could be a good step forward. However, the U.S., Russia, the E.U. and the U.N. continue to refuse to deal with the new government until it accepts the three conditions: to recognize Israel, to renounce violence, and to accept

states must be persuaded to make political space for liberal, secular and leftist nationalists. The transition to democracy will take time and will create vulnerabilities that must be overcome.

As we move forward toward a durable equitable Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement with the creation of a viable state of Palestine, with the capacity to maintain public order and safety and the capacity to genuinely provide services, goods and jobs to people, we must ensure that Israel is accorded the proper respect in international fora. Israel is a legitimate democratic nation that should not have to face calls for its destruction, and that is entitled under international law to defend itself against international terrorism. It is not acceptable that it live under a perpetual threat of attack.

Yet instead of encouraging Israel's full participation on the world stage, Israel has been excluded from all key United Nations human rights committees,⁴⁰ while Libya, hardly a standard bearer for respect for human rights, has been elected in the past to the Human Rights Commission. Similarly Egypt, hardly a human-rights respecting democracy, has at various times been on all six of the U.N. human rights treaty bodies.

The new U.N. Human Rights Council, recently created to replace the discredited Human Rights Commission, is no better than its predecessor. In fact, it may be worse because it is wrongly touted as being better. The Council still has a disproportionate number of members with dubious records, and the majority of the 44 resolutions passed during its first session failed to come to grips with the most appalling human rights abuses on the planet. Instead there were the usual condemnations of Israel, a very weak resolution dealing with Darfur, and a resolution passed by a group of African countries backed by Russia and Cuba, which would effectively ban independent UN human rights missions from investigating alleged violations of human rights, torture or human trafficking, except in Israel, an initiative that has even been criticized by Human Rights Watch. This is hardly an auspicious beginning for U.N. reform. We simply have to do better.

Around the world, the vast majority of Muslims, Christians, Jews, Hindus and others, all believe in religious tolerance, openness to others, the fundamental values of democracy, liberty, and equality. But there are religious extremists of all backgrounds who pose an ongoing serious threat to world peace.

We must make it perfectly clear that all persons must respect the universal principle of the sanctity of human life, whatever our religious, ethnic or national background. We must go beyond the condemnation of violators of human sanctity, to action. We must especially appeal to the moderate members of all religions.

For example, as Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka of Nigeria suggests, all Muslim leaders all over the world must pronounce a fatwa against those who kill in the name of their faith. As Soyinka argues, "who is responsible for bringing disrepute to the religion of Islam – those who butcher in the name of the Prophet, or a cartoonist or atheist?"⁴¹ How can Muslims be so silent in the face of massacres of innocent people in Iraq, in Darfur, in Lebanon, in Israel? Yet there is little or no communal reaction, compared to the rage whipped up by the Danish cartoons, or comments in a Papal speech. Too often it then appears that Islamic clerics sanction or at least tolerate violence and murder in the name of religion. And Christians in Muslim countries certainly do not have the same religious freedom enjoyed by most Muslims in the west.

previous Israeli-Palestinian accords. (Note that there is some speculation that Saudi Arabia may also try to build on the result of the Arab League Summit of February 2002 which advocated the normalization of relations between Israel and Arab countries in exchange for Israel returning to its pre-1967 borders).

⁴⁰ For example, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (August 2002), the Racial Discrimination Committee (January 2002), the Committee on the Rights of the Child (February 2003), the Human Rights Commission (September 2002).

⁴¹ Wole Soyinka, "Psychopaths of Faith vs. The Muse of Irreverence", *New Perspectives Quarterly*, Spring 2006.

In many parts of the globe, civil societies must evolve to displace the tribal mentalities that still rule today. In Afghanistan, for example, this means effectively asking people to give up their tribal identity. This will be difficult. But until civil societies are firmly established, clan loyalties and tribal identities are often strengthened by extreme religious sentiment which fuels conflicts.

The day that author Salman Rushdie can freely lecture in Tehran, will be a milestone in our progress towards greater peace and humanity.

The key to the emergence of civil society and the reduction of extremism is the rising influence of women and the promotion of the rights of women. Shirin Ebadi, the activist Iranian attorney who won the 2003 Nobel Peace Prize, insists that the expansion of women's role will itself be a force for democratization.

For example, within the Muslim faith, it seems that tolerance of women in mosques is still rare. Generally, women are not even represented on mosque committees. Signs of change, however small, are encouraging. In April 2006, Morocco's Islamic Affairs Ministry awarded diplomas to 50 women imams. This followed some legislative changes in 2003 whereby King Mohammed VI reinterpreted the Sharia in an egalitarian direction.

In January 2006, women led an Eid prayer in Boston. In March 2006, women led Eid prayers in Canada before a grand mufti. In May 2006, Salam Yaqoob, the national vice-chair of the far-left "Respect Party" in England, was elected as Birmingham's first female Muslim councilor with over 50% of the vote. However, she was attacked by extremists and a fatwa was issued against her.

Women are critically important to the strengthening of civil society, not just as workers, but as consumers, entrepreneurs, managers and investors. Women deliver economic growth, and women in power are more likely to spend money on improving health, education, infrastructure and poverty. Investment in the education of women in the developing world could deliver huge economic and social returns. Often this would involve initially simply getting more girls into school.

Canada and Canadians can and should play a respectable and meaningful role in our global village in the pursuit of greater peace and humanity, a narrowing of inequalities across developed and developing nations, and greater respect for our fragile ecosystems and planetary survival. With bold and visionary leadership, our increasingly diverse society can reach out to the forces of moderation in other countries and help strengthen nascent civil societies in many ways and through many networks.

Conclusion

Yet where is the bold and visionary national leadership to ensure that we realize our potential?

The crisis in national leadership today arises from the mediocrity and irresponsibility of so many persons in power. It also reflects our tendency to view leaders as media celebrities, and to be diverted into superficial issues like "Puppygate" – the MacKay-Stronach exchange in the House of Commons. Meanwhile, our leaders seem frozen in the complexity confronting them.

Jack Layton's demand to end Canada's involvement in Afghanistan perfectly illustrates this superficiality in politics – denying reality in favour of wishful thinking about the world. Layton's approach ignores unrealistically the tough reality that war or conflict may be a necessary precondition to peace and security.⁴² As Robin Sears, a respected former director of the New Democratic Party, recently observed:

⁴² Robert Evans, *Moral Leadership: Facing Canada's Leadership Crisis*, quoted in Robert Sibley, "On Leadership", *Ottawa Citizen*, November 21, 2006.

“I think the [NDP] position on Afghanistan is ludicrous and embarrassing to the ghosts of David Lewis and Tommy Douglas.”⁴³

Real leadership means doing the right thing which is often difficult. Real leadership must be about a search for truth and knowledge, for civic courage, for creative thinking and free thought to help find answers to the dilemmas and complexity that confront us.

We have to grasp the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. We must call on all Canadians to pull together in the national interest, and promote a new wave of political activism by ordinary citizens. We must demand that our national leadership boldly develop a blueprint to make us the greenest country on the planet, to ensure we have a respected voice in global affairs – whether concerning the environment, peace and security, global poverty – and to ensure that we build a coherent sustainable social economy that is the most diverse and cosmopolitan in human history.

There are certain core Canadian values that do not change and that need to be defended even more vigorously in our rapidly changing world. These are the values of justice, equality and diversity – values that have underpinned a progressive, dynamic Canada since World War Two.

We must find and elect national politicians able and willing to defend these values, to move beyond petty politics, power plays, seducing voters with ill-conceived tax cuts, outdated ideologies. We must find and elect national leaders who will focus on good government and good citizenship, our rights and our responsibilities of citizenship, and who are sincerely committed to public service.

It is time for Canadian politicians to follow the example of the many Canadians who are taking effective action on their own, from environmental protection and climate change to poverty and unemployment. When Canadians could have found many reasons not to make a difference to the environment or society, because it was expensive or time consuming, they instead chose to act, to do the right thing. It is time our politicians did the same!

⁴³ *The Agenda* with Steve Paikin, TVO Ontario, January 16, 2007. The entire comment is as follows: “The two things that I think social democratic parties always struggle with is voters’ judgment of their ability to manage the world and voters’ judgment of their ability to manage the economy. The NDP does not have a very good record of convincing Canadians of either of those things. I think the position on Afghanistan is ludicrous and embarrassing to the ghosts of David Lewis and Tommy Douglas. I think the party’s position on the economy, at least so far, is unpersuasive.”