

The Canadian contribution to international security under Jean Chrétien: The good, the bad, and the ugly

During Jean Chrétien's tenure as prime minister the international security environment was more complex, ambiguous, and multidimensional than those experienced by his predecessors. Over the Chrétien years, Canada faced the Rwandan genocide, ethnic cleansing in the Balkans, warlordism in Africa, crises in the Middle East, massive human rights violations, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, NATO's expansion and new role, regional famines, the Asian financial crisis, mounting environmental degradation, Russia's ongoing transition and Cold War weapons legacy, the global AIDS epidemic, resurgent irredentism, transnational crime, growing tensions in South Asia, the rise of "rogue" states, massive migration and refugee flows, terrorism, renewed American unilateralism, and Gulf War II. While this list is by no means comprehensive, it does give an indication of the range of dynamics that shaped the international security environment and provides a compelling backdrop for determining and analyzing Chrétien's security policy legacy. Moreover, it speaks to the global recognition of an expanded notion of security beyond the military affairs of state actors, a redefinition in which Canada played an integral role.

Although there were significant accomplishments under Chrétien's leadership, Canada's overall record in confronting the challenges of an international security environment composed by a vast array of vulnerabilities and opportunities was often fraught with internal contradictions and the lack of a comprehensible unifying vision. Thus borrowing from the title of Sergio Leone's epic spaghetti western, Canada's international security policy during the Chrétien years was a mix of the good, the bad, and the ugly.

BY KYLE GRAYSON
AND DAVID DEWITT

Kyle Grayson is the associate director and David Dewitt is the director of the Centre for International and Security Studies, York University.

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THE GOOD

By far, the greatest Canadian contribution to international security has been in its promotion of a human security agenda under Jean Chrétien's leadership. Although the concept was initially put forward by the United Nations Development Programme, Canada's championing of human security has both broadened and deepened global understandings of what it means to be secure in two interrelated ways. First, human security has expanded the focus of se-

curity policy beyond states toward a new referent object, the individual human being. Second, "freedom from fear" issues missed by traditional national security doctrines including human rights, the targeting of civilians, child soldiers, good governance, and transnational crime have been granted a priority status. Thus, the Ottawa process to ban landmines, the International Court of Justice, the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, and the Kimberley Process to ban conflict diamonds are evidence not only of significant Canadian diplomatic accomplishments in the area of international human security but of Canada's continuing commitment under the Chrétien government to multilateralism and the strengthening of international norms and laws.

The prime minister's G8 Kananaskis commitment of one billion dollars in support of the global partnership efforts to address the security and environmental challenges posed by the deteriorating former Soviet nuclear stockpile is a significant indicator of Canada's continued involvement in longer-term global security problems. With Canada's military and police force contributions to Kosovo, East Timor, and Afghanistan, in spite of a severely constrained force capacity, and in a few other circumstances, the government chose to act responsibly and in the best traditions of Canadian liberal internationalism.

THE BAD

Although the public rhetoric of the Chrétien government claimed that Canadian security policy was being guided by the human security agenda, in practice, there were several competing sources providing security policy frameworks, some of which were demarcated

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along institutional lines and interests. In particular, the Canadian military establishment remained extremely reticent to revise national security doctrines and abandon preparations for advanced state-to-state warfare, even in the absence of any foreseeable credible state-based threat to Canada or its allies, while Foreign Affairs itself remained highly divided. Thus, inter (and intra) departmental divisions on security issues often led to three kinds of problematics.

The first was the tendency for Canada to hold incongruent positions across the spectrum of security policy. For example, the rhetoric of Canada's proclaimed security policy was often secondary to the desire to expand international trade agreements, which meant that ensuring the presence in these agreements of key human security protections including human rights provisions was neither a priority nor pursued.

The second was the emergence of credibility gaps between what Canada claimed needed to be done to promote international security and what it would actually contribute. For example, Canada's UN peacekeeping commitments fell steadily throughout the Chrétien years to the point where, currently, Canada ranks 8th in the world in terms of resources donated to UN peacekeeping missions and 33rd in the level of actual peacekeepers contributed to these missions. Furthermore, Canada's inability to catalyze a more substantial UN mission to the People's Democratic Republic of the Congo after assuming the lead was also indicative of this credibility gap.

The third was the growth of Canadian "policy paralysis," which reached fruition in the aftermath of 9/11, due to a lack of a comprehensive direction and vision to guide its international security policy in a dramatically transformed political environment. In particular, important questions about the future structure of the Canadian Armed Forces and defence procurement were left unaddressed.

All three of these problematics could have been avoided with the development of a comprehensive security policy document that outlined Canadian positions on key security issues. Unfortunately, the 1994 defence white paper and *Canada and the World* (1995) were quickly dated and unsuitable for providing guidance in the new security environment. Thus, the need for such a policy document was highlighted in the aftermath of 9/11, when Canada had neither a clearly articulated view of changing international security dynamics nor a reasoned strategy for managing relations with a highly reactionary American administration.

THE UGLY

Given that human security emphasizes that prevention is both the preferred and most effective method of responding to security concerns, economic development and good governance become central aspects of security policy. This "freedom from want" is the other aspect of the human security equation, intimately linked to the dynamics of creating the conditions for "freedom from fear." Thus, the marked degeneration of Canadian Official Development Assistance (ODA) under Chrétien was both disturbing and extremely counterproductive to constructing a safer international security environment. Canada ranked 6th out of 22 industrialized countries in terms of the level of ODA donated as a percentage of GDP when the Liberal government took office in 1993. Canada currently ranks 16th out of 22 and below the majority of G8 countries (save for Italy and the United States). Over this time period, the total amount spent on ODA annually has fallen from \$3.1 billion to \$2.3 billion. Although recent Canadian federal budgets have attempted to resurrect ODA programs even with the latest \$400 million increase, this total expenditure represents only 0.25 percent of total GDP. Moreover, an overwhelming majority (75 percent) of Canadian bilateral aid continues to be tied, one of the highest percentages in the industrialized world.

Canada's dismal ODA record under Chrétien represents a serious dereliction of duty in terms of failing to meet our international stated commitment of earmarking 0.7 percent of GDP to these human security investments. More important, even though increased ODA might not have prevented any of the current security problems facing the international community, it may have reduced their intensity and scope; in the very least it would have contributed to increasing the global capacity to manage them in an effective and responsible manner. Furthermore, at a time when economic development has been relegated in global discussions to an anticipated (but elusive) side effect of trade agreements, a robust ODA program would have provided tangible evidence that Canada is concerned with the entire spectrum of human security vulnerabilities including poverty and destitution.


THE LEGACY

The strengths of Canada's international security policy during the Chrétien years can be located as continuations of the Canadian foreign policy tradition, which has promoted liberal internationalism, multilateralism, humanitarian intervention, functionalism, and middle-power politics. Weaknesses arose primarily from failing to rapidly adapt this tradition to transformations in the international security environment, particularly in response to post-9/11 security dynamics both in terms of new vulnerabilities and the reactions of our key allies. This was further compounded by a growing gap between rhetoric and resources. Thus, while Jean Chrétien may be remembered by the public as the man who said "no" to the United States, his legacy could be best described as one that failed to domestically institutionalize its own prescriptions for a safer international security environment.

With the transference of leadership to Paul Martin, we will likely see both a foreign policy and defence policy review,

potentially very good news for creating a more unified Canadian security policy. However, it is quite probable that the results will be less than satisfactory from a human security perspective with Canada becoming more inward looking, drawing into a closer security relationship with the United States, stressing defence of Canadian territory over humanitarian intervention, and continuing to neglect ODA as a crucial aspect of Canadian security policy.

The touchstone for a Martin foreign policy is likely to be the need both to better manage Canada's complex relationship with the United States and to be better able to protect those Canadian interests at home and abroad that may be compromised in the wake of American policies and actions. Challenges to international peace and security, whether from state or non-state actors or structural inequalities, will continue to require responsible Canadian action.

How Canada responds will determine not only our place multilaterally but especially our signature relationship with the United States. Martin will have to juggle both the growing intrusiveness of an American administration fixated on Homeland Security and peripheral defence and a global community crying out for effective multilateral institutions capable of addressing the most basic problems of human development and human security. 

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Environmental Protection Act, 1999 was watered down after the committee stage following a coordinated assault from the business community. Meanwhile, the cuts to Environment Canada had greatly weakened its capacity for scientific research and policy development. Not surprisingly, the overall impact has been negative. As David Runnalls and Françoise Bregha concluded in "The Canadian Record Since Rio":

Biodiversity is still declining; the number of threatened species is growing, wetlands continue to be drained, and the freshwater habitats of the Fraser River, St Lawrence River and the Great Lakes are still negatively affected by commercial fishing, toxic wastes, agricultural run-off and municipal sewage.

On the positive side of the ledger, many new national parks were created and large tracts of land were set aside as protected areas. Though some observers have condemned Canada's environmental performance, others have been much more positive. For example, a 2001 Columbia and Yale universities study of 122 countries ranked Canada third overall behind Finland and Norway. The rankings were based on the Environmental Sustainability Index (ESI), which identifies 22 major factors that contribute to environmental sustainability, including air quality, overall public health, and environmental regulation. In contrast,

David Boyd's study "Canada vs the OECD: An Environmental Comparison" puts Canada near the bottom of the list, 28th out of 29. Only the United States scored lower on the series of environmental indicators (which include waste, pollution, air quality, transportation, climate change, agriculture, etc.).

CLIMATE CHANGE

Responding to climate change is arguably the most significant environmental governance challenge of this century. Canada signed the Kyoto Accord in 1997 (against the strong objections of several provincial premiers, particularly Ralph Klein), but then gave ambivalent signals about whether it would ultimately ratify the agreement. The next five years involved a series of discussions and negotiations but little action to reduce emissions, which on the contrary continued to increase. To his great credit, Prime Minister Chrétien pledged Canada to the Kyoto convention at the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in August 2002. Formal ratification by the Canadian Parliament followed a few months later.

In November 2002, the federal government unveiled Canada's "Climate Change Plan," which proposed a "national goal—for Canadians to become the most sophisticated and efficient consumers and producers of energy in the world and leaders in the development of new, cleaner technologies." Five key instruments are proposed to achieve the goal:

1. Emissions reduction targets for large industrial emitters established through covenants with a regulatory or financial backstop that would create an incentive for shifting to lower-emissions technologies and energy sources, while providing flexibility for these emitters through emissions trading and access to domestic offsets and international permits;
2. A partnership fund that will cost-share emissions reductions in collaboration with provincial and territorial governments, as well as municipalities, aboriginal communities, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector to increase energy efficiency and reduce emissions in the most effective way;
3. Strategic infrastructure investments in innovative climate change proposals such as urban transit projects, intermodal transportation facilities, and a CO₂ pipeline;
4. A coordinated innovation strategy that allows Canada to benefit fully from the innovation possibilities of our climate change agenda and builds on programs such as Technology Partnerships Canada, the Industrial Research Assistance Program (IRAP), Sustainable Development Technology Canada, and the Technology Early Action Measures (TEAM); and

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