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# Reconsidering Canada's Strategic Geography:

Lessons from history and the Australian experience for Canada's strategic outlook

APRIL 2018



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Canadian public policy



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# Executive Summary

**W**ith domestic political stagnation in the US and persistent doubts around Washington's resolve, it is time to reconsider the role of geography on Canada's foreign and defence policy. A better understanding of Canada's geographic position and physical features would provide greater clarity on the threats that the country faces and what policies it should pursue to safeguard Canadian territory, population, and interests. This refers specifically to Canada's *strategic geography*, meaning the relationship between a country's physical geography and geographic position and the strategic competition between states.

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*Pragmatism and interests are a key driver of priorities and external relations.*

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Long before Confederation, geography defined a story of settlement, conflict, and climate change in Canada's pre-history and early history. Only once relations with the United States went from adversarial to neighbourly did Canada finally benefit from relatively benign geo-strategic environment. Yet assuming that such circumstances are permanent would only leave Canada vulnerable to what commentators have called the revenge of geography – as great powers once again compete for power and influence.

An emphasis on strategic geography does not mean a complete overhaul of Canadian alliance structures. But geographic changes to the Arctic will mean greater competition in that region by both Arctic and non-Arctic powers. Canada's history of free-riding on the US security guarantee will prove ever more difficult. And, perhaps most

importantly, the Indo-Pacific will increasingly become the focal point of international concerns. Canada might not need to alter its alliances, but it will certainly require reframing key security questions.

After a consideration of Canada's strategic interests and lessons from Australia's experience, this paper discusses the future security challenges facing Canada, and what lessons Canada could learn from history. Here are the highlights:

- **Climate change has local impacts:** Before European control of North America, an earlier climate shift radically reduced food production and had a major impact on population movement and conflict. Current climate change models suggest agricultural production in the Canadian prairies may be boosted, but fisheries in the east could be diminished.
- **Polar regions are not immune from geopolitics:** During an earlier period of geopolitical expansion into the Antarctic, Australia became a colonist and created a large territory under its name. This helped block others from making similar claims and establishing a foothold in the region.
- **The northern regions of Canada are permanently “in play”:** Should there be a period of global disruption and mass movement of people, the Canadian North could again be in play. Control is only tenuous.

- **External threats drove consolidation:** French exploration in the western and southern coasts, German activity to the northeast, and the Dutch presence in the northwest accelerated the formation of Australia. Canada experienced similar competitive processes within the country before Canada and the US became “good neighbours.”
- **Military assets are repositioned to geopolitical threats:** As part of a comprehensive defence review, Australia repositioned its military assets to the west to project power into both the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Australia shifted its geostrategic outlook in response to changes in the external environment. Canada should do likewise.
- **Decolonization created new challenges:** Independence of former European colonies across Asia and the Southwest Pacific meant Australia remained a European interloper within Asia, with few natural allies. To deal with its small population and status as an outsider, it was necessary for Australia to maintain a military-technology advantage to deter potential hostile nations.
- **No permanent friends or allies, only permanent interests:** The Australian experience of the Second World War saw a switch of alignment to the US from Britain. This was driven by necessity and the perceived imminence of a Japanese invasion. Only a short time after the war Australia entered a trading relationship with Japan, which since the 2000s has been shifting towards a closer military alignment and relationship. Pragmatism and interests are a key driver of priorities and external relations.
- **European and Atlantic primacy is a passing moment:** European global influence and economic strength is in structural decline with developments on the continent becoming less relevant for both Canada and Australia. Developments in Europe may be important in terms of cultural legacy, but it is no longer a dynamic economic region and is home to declining powers.
- **Political relations influence economic relations:** When Britain looked to the emerging common market on the European continent, Australia lost its traditional export destination. This forced a pragmatic approach to political and economic relations, which required flexibility and greater responsiveness to economic forces. Australia opened its economy and embarked on a major period of economic reform between 1983–2000. It has also worked to establish direct economic relationships with a range of nations.
- **Humanitarian interventions are driven by strategic interests:** When allocating limited resources for humanitarian interventions and investments, there should be an alignment with core strategic interests. Responding to global crises without any form of prioritization or consideration of national interest not only results in a diffuse effort, but limited impact.
- **Saying no to participation in US-led “coalitions of the willing” is a luxury of the past:** Because of Australia’s geopolitical position, a bi-partisan consensus has existed on the need for that country to do what it could to ensure that British (until 1967), and then US security guarantees are assured. This has meant participating in military operations in Malaysia, Borneo, Vietnam, and Iraq. Canada had used the flexibility of its geopolitical position to say no to such operations. But Canadians may find themselves spending more on defence and contributing more military operations than in the past.

To address future challenges, it is worthwhile to consider the historical, geographic and Australian experiences, especially the role of strategic geography in influencing Canada’s foreign, defence,

and economic strategies. Geo-strategic developments will continue to have an impact on Canada's security environment and its strategic interests abroad. Australia's experience in dealing with its own geography provides an informative lesson in that regard. Canada's own strategic choices would benefit from a better understanding of such factors.

## Sommaire

**C**ompte tenu du marasme politique intérieur aux États-Unis et des doutes persistants quant aux solutions de Washington, il est temps de reconsidérer le rôle de la géographie sur la politique canadienne en matière d'affaires étrangères et de défense. Mieux comprendre sa position géographique et ses particularités physiques permettrait de clarifier les menaces qui pèsent sur le Canada ainsi que les politiques à suivre pour protéger le territoire, la population et les intérêts canadiens. Plus précisément, on se reporte ici à la géographie stratégique du Canada, c'est-à-dire au rapport entre la position géographique et les particularités physiques du Canada d'une part et la concurrence stratégique entre les États d'autre part.

Bien avant la Confédération, la géographie a défini l'histoire du développement des établissements humains, des conflits et des changements climatiques survenus durant la préhistoire et l'histoire des débuts du pays. Ce n'est que lorsque se sont substitués aux rapports de confrontation les rapports de bon voisinage avec les États-Unis que le Canada a enfin pu tirer profit d'un environnement géostratégique relativement bénin. Pourtant, à supposer qu'un tel environnement devienne permanent, il ne pourrait que rendre le Canada vulnérable à ce que les commentateurs ont appelé la revanche de la géographie – tandis que les grandes puissances se font de nouveau la lutte pour le pouvoir et l'influence.

Mettre l'accent sur la géographie stratégique ne veut pas dire que le Canada devra procéder à une refonte complète du cadre de ses alliances. Toutefois, les changements géographiques dans l'Arctique donneront lieu à une concurrence accrue dans cette région entre les puissances arctiques et non arctiques. Il s'avérera encore plus difficile pour le Canada de continuer de compter sur la garantie de sécurité des États-Unis sans offrir de contrepartie, comme il l'a fait historiquement. Et, peut-être plus important, l'Asie-Pacifique deviendra de façon croissante le point central des préoccupations internationales. Le Canada pourrait ne pas avoir à repenser les structures de ses alliances, mais il devra certainement recadrer les principales questions de sécurité.

Après avoir passé en revue les intérêts stratégiques du Canada et les leçons tirées de l'expérience australienne, ce document traite des défis à venir posés pour le Canada en matière de sécurité et des enseignements que le pays devra tirer de l'histoire. En voici les points saillants :

- **Les changements climatiques ont des répercussions locales** : Avant la domination européenne de l'Amérique du Nord, une dérive climatique a radicalement réduit la production alimentaire et a eu un impact majeur sur les mouvements de population et les conflits. Les modèles de changements climatiques actuels prévoient une hausse de la production agricole dans les prairies canadiennes, mais les pêches dans l'est du pays pourraient diminuer.
- **Les régions polaires ne sont pas à l'abri de la géopolitique** : Au cours d'une période antérieure d'expansion géopolitique dans l'Antarctique, l'Australie est devenue

colonialiste, créant un grand territoire à son nom. Cette initiative a empêché plusieurs pays de faire valoir de telles revendications et d'établir une emprise sur la région.

- **Les régions nordiques du Canada sont « en scène » de façon durable :** Dans l'éventualité d'une période de perturbations mondiales et de déplacements massifs de population, le Nord canadien pourrait de nouveau être mis à contribution. Or, le contrôle est plutôt précaire.

- **Les menaces externes sont à l'origine des consolidations :** L'exploration française sur les côtes ouest et sud, l'activité allemande au nord-est et la présence néerlandaise au nord-ouest ont accéléré la formation de l'Australie. Le Canada a vu son territoire soumis à un processus de concurrence similaire avant que le Canada et les États-Unis ne deviennent de « bons voisins ».

- **Les ressources militaires se repositionnent en fonction des menaces géopolitiques :** Dans le cadre d'une refonte complète de sa politique de défense, l'Australie a repositionné ses ressources militaires à l'ouest pour projeter sa puissance à la fois dans les océans Indien et Pacifique. L'Australie a révisé sa vision géostratégique de manière à répondre aux changements dans l'environnement externe. Le Canada devrait faire de même.

- **La décolonisation a engendré de nouvelles difficultés :** L'indépendance des anciennes colonies européennes en Asie et dans le sud-ouest du Pacifique a fait en sorte que l'Australie est demeurée un intrus européen au sein de l'Asie, avec peu d'alliés naturels. Dotée d'une faible population et de son statut d'étranger, l'Australie a dû demeurer concurrentielle sur le plan de la technologie militaire afin de dissuader les nations potentiellement hostiles.

- **Aucun ami ou allié durable ou très peu, seulement des intérêts permanents :** L'Australie a fait l'expérience d'une transition au cours de la Seconde Guerre mondiale, lorsqu'elle s'est rangée du côté des États-Unis, délaissant ainsi la Grande-Bretagne. Ce choix était poussé par la nécessité et par l'apparente imminence d'une invasion japonaise. Peu de temps seulement après la guerre, l'Australie a entamé des relations commerciales avec le Japon, relations qui, depuis les années 2000, ont été marquées par un changement de cap allant dans le sens d'un rapprochement plus étroit sur le plan de la défense et des rapports entre les deux pays. Ainsi en va-t-il des priorités et des relations extérieures : pragmatisme et intérêts en sont un des moteurs essentiels.

- **La primauté européenne et atlantique est en train de passer :** L'influence mondiale de l'Europe et sa force économique sont en déclin structurel, l'évolution sur

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*Ainsi en va-t-il des priorités et des relations extérieures : pragmatisme et intérêts en sont un des moteurs essentiels.*

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ce continent devenant moins pertinente tant pour le Canada que pour l'Australie. Les développements européens demeurent peut-être importants en matière de patrimoine culturel, mais l'Europe n'est plus une région dynamique sur le plan économique, et son pouvoir recule.

- **Les relations politiques influencent les relations économiques** : Lorsque la Grande-Bretagne s'est tournée vers le marché commun émergent sur le continent européen, l'Australie a été privée de ses destinations traditionnelles d'exportation. Cette orientation a forcé l'adoption d'une approche pragmatique sur le plan des relations politiques et économiques, laquelle exigeait de la souplesse et une plus grande sensibilité aux forces économiques. L'Australie a donc ouvert son économie et s'est lancée dans une grande période de réforme économique qui a duré de 1983 à 2000. Elle a également travaillé à établir des relations économiques directes avec de nombreuses nations.

- **Les interventions humanitaires sont motivées par des intérêts stratégiques** : On doit pouvoir observer une certaine concordance entre les intérêts stratégiques de base et l'allocation de ressources limitées aux interventions humanitaires et aux investissements. Répondre aux crises mondiales sans établir de priorités ou sans procéder à l'examen des intérêts nationaux n'entraîne pas seulement une dispersion des efforts déployés, cela risque aussi de réaliser bien peu de choses.

- **Dire non aux « coalitions de volontaires » initiées par les États-Unis est un luxe du passé** : En raison de la position géopolitique de l'Australie, un consensus bipartite a été établi quant à la nécessité pour le pays de faire tout ce qu'il pouvait pour garantir la sécurité, d'abord par l'entremise des Britanniques (jusqu'en 1967), puis des États-Unis. Il lui a donc fallu participer à des opérations militaires en Malaisie, à Bornéo, au Vietnam et en Irak. Le Canada a alors invoqué la flexibilité de sa position géopolitique pour dire non à ces opérations. Les Canadiens pourraient devoir contribuer davantage aux budgets de défense et aux opérations militaires que par le passé.

Pour relever les défis futurs, il est utile d'examiner l'histoire, la géographie ainsi que l'expérience de l'Australie et, tout particulièrement, de mettre en relief le rôle d'influence de la géographie stratégique sur les stratégies du Canada en matière d'affaires étrangères, de défense et d'économie. L'évolution géostratégique continuera d'avoir une incidence sur l'environnement de la sécurité au Canada et les intérêts stratégiques du pays à l'étranger. Les rapports de l'Australie avec sa propre géographie au cours des années fournissent une leçon instructive à cet égard. Les choix stratégiques du Canada pourraient tirer parti d'une meilleure compréhension de ces facteurs.

# Introduction

Canada's security has traditionally been defined by Atlantic issues, as well as its role as a junior partner first to the UK, and now the US. The realities of its geography have more impact on its identity than its strategic outlook. During the post-Cold War period, involvement in peacekeeping and humanitarian missions was a central consideration for policy-makers. This attitude was enabled by the emergence of a relatively benign security environment for both the US and its allies in the western hemisphere. As power shifts from the Atlantic to the Pacific, however, and Canada faces the real prospect of competition on its northern flank, the priorities that have defined Canadian defence and foreign policy since the end of the Cold War are becoming less relevant.

With domestic political stagnation in the US and persistent doubts around Washington's resolve on trade and security commitments towards allies, it is time to reconsider the role of geography. Canada's geography and physical features need to be reconsidered as major strategic assets. By understanding Canada's geography, its natural features, landmass, mountains, rivers, and surrounding oceans, it is possible to shed light on its *strategic geography*.

Strategic geography refers to the relationship between physical geography and the strategic competition between states. It may not necessarily entail a radical revision of Canadian alliance structures. Rather, such a concept should reframe the way security questions are asked as the focal point of international concerns shifts to the Asia-Pacific. Canada's Commonwealth cousin, Australia, has dealt with this issue, even before it became a nation. Lessons can be learnt from history, as well as the Australian experience on the other side of the world and Canada's own evolving security and defence debates.

This paper begins with an examination of how geography has had an impact on Canada's early history and how the more recent strategic context has affected Canada's defence policy. The revenge of geography, as coined by Robert Kaplan (2012), is the subject of the next section, as we need to understand how Canada's recent (relatively benign) geo-strategic circumstances are far from permanent. We then look at Canada's strategic interests, especially how the interplay between old colonial ties, more recent alliance relationships, and Canadian geography have helped to shape those interests. At this point, we turn to Australia to see what our strategic cousin can teach us about Canada's strategic situation. The paper concludes by taking into account the future security challenges facing Canada.

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*Canada's geography and physical features need to be reconsidered as major strategic assets.*

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# Canada's Strategic Context

**F**or most of the 20th century, the common Canadian narrative was about shaping the natural landscape and building up population and industry to cope with a challenging environment. The minutia of wilderness survival, be it from heating with wood fires in winter or resisting attacks from a hostile force, was largely consigned to historical memory. Harsh winters are now mainly experienced in centrally heated homes in large urban centres close to the US border. Consequently, as living conditions have become better and more consistent, the relationship of Canadians with their environment has changed.

Concerns about conflict and survival were largely limited to the developing world. This state of affairs is a relatively recent phenomenon – as shown by a cursory look at the history of what took place on the landmass before Confederation. Yet, as the global security dynamic begins to shift, Canada faces a greater range of potential threats and needs to consider strategies to ensure its own survival. It is necessary to understand Canada's evolving strategic context – first of European, then Canadian, responses to changing conditions.

Geography has been shaping the contours of Canadian defence policy since before Confederation in 1867. The union among the colonies of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and the Province of Canada were in large part driven by anxiety over the threat of US invasion. That possibility was especially acute following that country's civil war two years previously, due not least to the massive expansion and operational experience of the now victorious Union army, and by border raids carried out by US-based Irish nationalists (Fenians) in 1866. Under the security umbrella of the Royal Navy, Confederation allowed for the building of railways between provinces, new territories, and a marshalling of resources to resist any possible US incursions. As the colonies had been subject to southern incursions during the War of Independence and the War of 1812, to say nothing about long-standing uncertainty on whether Washington accepted the 49th parallel as a boundary (finally settled in 1908), such concerns were not abstract speculation.

## CANADA AND GEOGRAPHY

Two key geographical features influenced the early human geography in the geographic landmass that later became Canada: the oceanic barrier, narrowest at the Bering Strait, and the movement of large ice sheets.

After successive climatic transitions, the Medieval Warm Period, which lasted from around 800–1200 AD, saw groups in North America respond to favourable climatic conditions to boost food production and population. In the north, the Thule people—the predecessors of the modern Inuit—migrated out of Siberia, displacing a group known as the Dorset. In the south, new technologies and a combination of corn, bean, and squash horticultural production and expanding bison herds allowed small, often temporary population centres and trade to flourish.

Local responses varied per the food source and geographical features, but the mild climate and a more reliable calorific intake resulted in successful adaption to the bountiful conditions and the proliferation of new civilizations. The end of the Medieval Warm Period around 1200–1250 AD resulted in reduced agricultural output among the few small farming settlements. This forced the various groups to compete for scarce resources. A mass migration into the

Canadian plains took place, driven by pressure in the south.

When Europeans arrived, they imported both conflicts from their continent and technologies, the latter eventually collapsing space and increasing the distance over which one group could impact another. Natural features such as rivers, mountains, and plains – as well as changing seasons and weather – determined the contours of European trade, competition, and conflict. The driver of subsequent economic developments, historian Harold Innis argued, were the original routes and systems of the fur trade. As he concludes, “The present Dominion emerged not in spite of geography, but because of it.”

Competition between early European groups within Canada were also influenced by geography. For example, the outcomes of the three sieges of Quebec were partially determined by the features of this natural fortress and the surrounding St Lawrence River. However, victories and defeats in this small key, strategic location reverberated through the St Lawrence Valley and southwards into the interior of the North American continent along the Mississippi river system.

Over time, military conflict and competition in the northern sector of North America gradually declined. This trend accelerated during the 19th century, so that by 1900, the modern-nation state of Canada controlled the land between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans north of the 49th parallel. For the first time, a unified political entity, controlling 9.9 million square kilometres of land and its resources, emerged.

Sources: Daschuk 2013; Innis 1962; Raghavan 2014, Manning 2009.

This combination of historical experiences and geography has continued to influence defence policy to this day. With the *British North America Act* of 1867 (now *Constitution Act*, 1867), Canada’s defence and foreign affairs remained the purview of London until 1931. By being part of the British Empire, Canadian decision-makers benefited from the security guarantee of a great power, allowing domestic defence expenses to be kept low. At times, however, the country found its interests sidelined in favour of the larger geopolitical concerns of Great Britain. This was made particularly evident during the Alaskan Boundary Dispute in 1903, when the British representative sided with his American counterparts and not the young Dominion’s, thereby denying a tidewater outlet for the Yukon’s gold reserves.

Canada’s achievement of constitutional independence in foreign and defence affairs through the Statute of Westminster in 1931 gave its decision-makers room to act in the country’s own national interest. But geography represents a mixed blessing. On the one hand, sitting atop the North American continent and sharing the world’s longest undefended border with a great power gave Ottawa a security guarantee unrivalled by most other states. Noted Canadian strategist R. J. Sutherland (1962, 223) refers to this as the “involuntary American security guarantee.”

In short, following the resolution of tensions with its southern neighbour, Canada no longer faced a conventional (as opposed to nuclear) existential threat. The US-Canadian defence alliance, anchored through a series of agreements and exchanges of letters that began in 1940 with the Ogdensburg Declaration, and cemented in 1958 with the establishment of the North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD), allowed Canadian governments since Mackenzie King to perpetuate the pre-1931 policy of relying on a great power security guarantee to keep defence costs low, the economy healthy, and the quality of life for its citizens relatively high. In this context, geography has allowed Ottawa the freedom to decide “how much is enough?” when it comes to defence policy.

# The Revenge of Geography

The geopolitical order and geographic circumstances that have been so favourable for Canada are not permanent. But Canadian policy makers, who have a lot invested in the status quo, are ill-inclined to prepare for a geopolitical order that is far less benign. This is evident not just in the limited funds allocated to defence by successive governments, but also how defence is often not prioritized in official publications. The chapter “Canada in the World” found in the 2016 Federal Budget is a case in point. As a subsection of “Canada in the World,” “Defending Canada” comes after “Restoring and Renewing International Assistance,” “Expanding Immigration,” and “Improving Export Verifications” (Morneau 2016, 201). While imperfect indicators of priorities, the order of international items is deliberate. It implies that defence and national security are second-order issues.

After the Cold War, a consensus emerged from the peaceful North American continent that the rest of the world would gradually shift to become more “like us.” Prior to the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States, this had been expressed as the “End of History,” spending the “peace dividend,” or the “globalization” of the Thomas Friedman model. A minor change on this outlook emerged in the 2010s. It is now conveyed in publications such as Steven Pinker’s (2011)

*The Better Angels of Our Nature*, in which it is argued that human nature has caused a dramatic reduction in violence during the past few millennia.

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*Geography has shaped the contours of Canadian defence policy since before Confederation in 1867.*

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For many people in Ottawa forming Canadian foreign policy, Pinker’s thesis is seductive. It conforms to the experience of their national history and it enables the pursuit of humanitarian activities that they sincerely believe make a positive contribution to humanity. Living in the world’s first so-called “post-national state,” to use Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s words, gives the impression that national security and sovereignty are issues of the past.

This presumes the existing world order will continue indefinitely. Yet, geographic factors appear set to challenge this notion.

Security could once again be influenced by the natural environment, topography, and the placement of landmasses. Changes to boundaries and maps, such as in what was formerly Yugoslavia, may accelerate as national identities and dormant yearnings for greater localization re-emerge. Consider the previously unthinkable exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union, the separatist tendencies of Scotland, and the fragile political peace in Northern Ireland. Extrapolate this trend across the developed and developing world and, by itself, the redrawing of boundaries and resurgent nationalism may return us to a Hobbesian world.

Traditionally, inter-societal competition has ensured a state of affairs that is fluid and dynamic (Davies 2013). States and societies rise, fall, and often disappear from memory. The Cold War

and the establishment of the United Nations froze many conflicts, temporarily halting the natural evolution of stronger societies and groups subsuming weaker ones. The rise of air power and intercontinental nuclear weapons shifted the metaphorical high ground to the air – with space soon to be weaponized too. However, while the utility of nuclear weapons has declined, they have also become democratized. The nuclear strategist Paul Bracken (2012) refers to a “second nuclear age.” He suggests that we have entered a new period of “multipolar nuclear order.” This expansion of nuclear competition to the Middle East, South Asia, and East Asia will prompt new flashpoints that will follow new rules.

In addition to the dissemination of nuclear weapons, we can expect the development of new military technologies and tactics, which continuously redefine the realms of defensive and offensive capability. While counter measures for ballistic and nuclear weapons have improved, cyber- and space-based assets will change the nature of future conflicts. Climate change may alter sea levels and alter shipping routes as well as maritime access points, re-emphasising the importance of a coherent navy.

Another change coming is demographic shifts. Several emerging megatrends, including rapid population growth, increasing littoralization, and accelerated urbanization, are likely to trigger the mass movement of people across continents (Kilcullen 2013, 342). This has occurred at the continental level in the past when expanding Eurasian Steppe peoples put pressure on Germanic tribes, which themselves pushed into the Roman Empire. The subsequent collapse of civilization and movement of people, unrestricted by governments or armies, may be viewed as an extreme example, but examples of the potential for such scenarios are evident in many parts of the world today.

The movement of people and boundaries are processes that will preoccupy intelligence analysts in Washington, Beijing, and New Delhi for many decades to come. Robert Kaplan’s (2012) *The Revenge of Geography: What the map tells us about coming conflicts and the battle against fate* describes some of this expected phenomenon. This classical realist perspective on the base drivers of human nature is in stark contrast to Pinker’s expectations that we will become more peaceful over time. Instead, the competitive and untamed characteristics of states could lead to a “world of incessant conflict and coercion” (25). This, Kaplan contends, requires decision-makers to address “the most blunt, uncomfortable, and deterministic of truths: those of geography” (28).

Many of the dynamics that Kaplan identifies are drawn from the insights of British geographer Halford Mackinder, who espoused an image of Eurasia as the “Heartland” of geopolitics, with competing empires seeking to control this space and exert global influence. This competition over what was referred to as the Northern Tier – an east-west corridor encompassing Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan – can be seen in the current ferocious battle for control of Syria by various proxies. On the broader Eurasian landmass, competing ambitions can be seen with China’s Belt and Road Initiative and Russia’s southward push. Similar maritime friction points have been identified in the South China Sea, as well as the Red Sea region and broader Indian Ocean.

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*The geopolitical order and geographic circumstances favourable to Canada are not permanent.*

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Irrespective of the outcomes of these various manoeuvres, conflict will not immediately reach Canada. What appears likely, however, is a shrinking of Canada's ability to project power internationally, as well as a depreciation of the efficacy of the soft power assets it has traditionally favoured. In these circumstances, geographic realities will preside over Canada's strategic interests, raising questions about military deployments and Canada's role in the international community. Has Canada been naïve to presume that this brief period of relative peace will continue?

## Canada's Contemporary Strategic Interests

Canada's contemporary strategic interests are still informed by the colonial and alliance relationships of its past rather than its geographic location. This is still partly due to the US security umbrella noted earlier, but also because of a strategic culture still infused with old colonial sentiment to Europe. Canadian leaders and diplomats have long viewed their country as a North Atlantic society, serving as a bridge between North America and Europe (Tremblay and Bentley 2015, 5). Distance, to be sure, also plays a role. Ottawa, after all, is only roughly 5600 kilometres from either Brussels or Paris, and just 5300 kilometres from London. In contrast, Tokyo and Beijing are double this, at 10,000 kilometres.

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*Canada's contemporary strategic interests are still informed by the colonial and alliance relationships of its past.*

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Little innovation can even be seen in connecting Canada' to neighbouring regions in the Americas. A clear example of this is with the Organization of American States (OAS), where Canada's multi-decade involvement – first as an OAS Observer since 1972 and later as a Member beginning in 1990 – has not been reinforced by any real diplomatic, economic, and military resources; that is, beyond piecemeal peacekeeping forces or military trainers to the Caribbean and Central America.

In this context, the country's perceived strategic interests are still grounded in economic and security relations with Europe – chiefly through CETA (Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement) and NATO, respectively – and the United States,

through the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the tight military connections epitomized by NORAD. Canadian air force assets routinely deploy on NATO missions throughout Europe while the majority of the Royal Canadian Navy remains based in Halifax, and active on missions in service of the transatlantic alliance's interests.

Outside of these two pillars, Canadian strategic interests are disjointed. The Trudeau government is intent on getting Canada back into the United Nations peacekeeping arena again, with a 2016 commitment of \$450 million, 600 troops, and 150 police to an unnamed African country. This mission was placed on hold after the election of Donald Trump and has since been reconfigured to provide niche technical, transport, and training support (Brewster 2016; Office of the Prime

Minister 2017). It was only in 2018 that the government finally announced a small helicopter contingent would be sent to Mali – a modest deployment coming two years after the initial promise, and only after numerous visits to African nations were made and a possible deployment to Columbia in late 2016 was called off (Brewster 2018).

The peacekeeping promise itself is a part of the Trudeau government’s attempt to win one of two rotating, non-permanent seats allocated to the Western European and Others Group (WEOG) regional grouping of states at the UN Security Council. The next openings for the WEOG’s seats are in 2020 with the rotation to begin in 2021. Canada is currently facing competition from Ireland and Norway.

While ostensibly representing a partisan opportunity to score points against their Conservative opponents, who failed in their 2010 Security Council bid, no clear strategic rationale has yet been put forward as to how a two-year, non-veto membership advances the country’s interests – this despite the cost of non-permanent seat campaigns frequently running into the millions of dollars (for example, Australia spent \$25 million in gifts, receptions, and staff salaries in its successful 2012 bid) (Kent 2017).

Moreover, given the poor security situation encountered in such UN missions like those in Mali, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, concerns regarding what a potential contribution in blood and treasure means for complementing any strategic issue has yet to be addressed. Instead, Canada’s return to UN peacekeeping has all of the hallmarks of past missions in the 1990s when governments, both Liberal and Progressive Conservative, dispatched poorly resourced CAF personnel at will to disparate regions of the world for little or no value beyond being able to state to a domestic audience that Canada is a “good, global citizen”; a position that was eventually dropped in favour of more robust NATO-led missions beginning with the 1996 Stabilization Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## Australia’s Experience

**A**s a similarly sized Westminster democracy, the Australian experience is informative for Canada. Without proximity to a close ally and superpower, Australian strategic choices have been informed by the reality of its geography. Musings of a post-national era and discussions about exporting “Australian values” are largely absent from discussions about international engagement. Instead, the Australian strategic narrative is characterized by the careful consideration of emerging and potentially hostile powers, and how best to respond to their rise.

Like Canada, Australia has relied on a series of powerful allies to complement its security needs. Unlike the Canadian experience, however, the security envelope provided first by the British, and now the US, has been impeded by great distance. This played out dramatically with the fall of Singapore, and has been a factor consciously taken into consideration since the first establishment of European settlements.

Over the past few decades, Australia has moved its military centre of gravity to its western and northern flanks in an attempt to align strategic security policy with the evolving strategic realities in the Indo-Pacific. With the experience of direct bombing by Japan in 1942 and a reappraisal of the UK and then US presence in the region, it has had to consider the best options for protecting its large land base and small population.

## AUSTRALIA IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

While “Asia-Pacific” is the preferred geographical framework of analysts in North America, the strategic reality of Australia is different. It sits between two main ocean basins, the Indian and Pacific, natural barriers informing Australia’s interests and its defence. While traditional security drivers were in East Asia, the emergence of South-East Asia and the sub-continent has altered priority areas. This also reflects the growing economic importance of Western Australia’s resource industry on the Indian Ocean, which includes a large export industry focused on liquefied natural gas and iron ore. Vital oil imports from the Persian Gulf must also transit the Indian Ocean. The importance of this changing strategic environment emerged in the mid-2000s in think tanks and became a central component of Australia’s outlook in both the 2013 and 2016 versions of the Australian Defence White paper. Hence Australian strategists refer to the “Indo-Pacific” rather than the Asia-Pacific in their analysis.

Source: Dobell 2015

with interactions between successive Australian prime ministers and US presidents commonly viewed as a litmus test of the strength and durability of the Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty (ANZUS Treaty).

A key concern for Australia is the stability and coherence of an arc of states stricken by the convulsions of rapid economic and demographic change to its north. Indonesia looms large in these calculations. Aside from the short-term issues with stability, Australia faces the long-term issue of a strong nation emerging on its doorstep, potentially challenging its mostly uncontested role as a regional leader.

First, it has worked hard to ensure that its military enjoys a military-technology advantage over potentially hostile nations in the region. Second, it has forged a strong alliance partnership with the United States based on a combination of intelligence-sharing, basing arrangements, and a willingness to undertake expeditionary operations alongside US forces. In this context, it opted for joint basing operations with the United States in Darwin, and examined ways to project power utilizing its external territories and previous protectorates, including a consideration for a forward air force base in Papua New Guinea during the 1960s.

Australia’s security discussions always entail a clear recognition of its security alliance with the US. This alliance is central to its national security priorities. In the absence of material US support, Australia would have to drastically expand its military assets and capabilities, amounting to a potential tripling of its annual defence budget.

Accordingly, Australia actively invests a lot more in the US alliance than Canada. In blunt terms, the US must ensure that Canada is secure and integrated into hemispheric defence to protect its northern approaches. This issue periodically arises, with the latest iteration being concern over a potential terrorist entering Canada and then slipping into the US homeland through the large and relatively open border. Conversely, from a US perspective, Australia represents a useful basing point for the pre-positioning of US assets, but is not part of its core security interests.

The challenge for Australia has always been that the interests of its successive security guarantors and Canberra are not always consistent. This has manifested in fears of abandonment,

Looking to the east, with East Timor, Papua New Guinea, and the Solomon Islands, the issues are different. For different reasons, these three countries have never been truly viable states and have required active involvement and support from Australia. In the case of the Solomon Islands, the early 2000s state-building effort was triggered when the government and associated structures were collapsing. While the intervention had a marketable humanitarian component, it was predominantly driven by the security implications of having a failed state on Australia's doorstep.

Having failed states close to Australia is a security problem for two main reasons. Failed states create an authority vacuum, drawing in criminal and extremist groups, and prompting irregular emigration of populations. The Syrian (and East African) refugee exodus to Europe is an example of this phenomenon.

While the Solomon Islands is a small country, the prospect of Papua New Guinea descending into civil war and dislocating some of its nearly eight million citizens is a major cause of concern for Australia, particularly given the impetus its cherished leadership role would place on it to accommodate those fleeing such a scenario.

The other challenge of failing states is that they often attract external powers who seek to protect their citizens and interests. Such interventions inevitably incorporate a military dimension, and could result in an external power creating a semi-permanent footprint within striking distance of the Australian mainland.

In addition to the potential fragmentation of Melanesian states on Australia's doorstep, there is the perennial concern of an expanding Asian power isolating Australia from its markets and security partners. This happened with the Japanese expansion in the 1920s and 1930s culminating in its military push southwards in the early 1940s. Parallels of a similar economic, then military, expansion have been drawn to the rise of China. As China's economy expanded after the 1978 reforms and economic interests led it abroad, comparisons with Japan of the 1930s have followed. This is reinforced by its aggressive expansion in the South China Sea involving brinkmanship, the creation of artificial islands, and the discussion of an "air defence zone" (Wroe 2015).

The long-term implications of a China-dominated region have been considered by Australian strategic analyst Hugh White, who posits that Australia will need to make a "China Choice" Australia may continue to side with its long-standing security partner, the United States, in spite of the geographic factors retarding their relationship, or shift to a position that accepts China as

MAP: AUSTRALIA IN ASIA



the pre-eminent regional power. This “China Choice” thesis is disputed by analysts on both the political left and right (Hamilton 2017). Importantly, consideration of the implications of a global power emerging in the same region as Australia has sharpened and reenergized security discussions, sidelining many of the abstract security debates that were made possible in an otherwise benign and peaceful region.

Australia has been a willing participant in first British, and then US expeditionary missions. While the motivations and justifications of some of these actions have been at times questioned, such as Vietnam and Iraq, the calculations of Australian leaders have always placed a higher priority

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*Contemporary Australian debates about national outlook and priorities are driven by the reality that Australia is an island.*

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on alliance support as opposed to other factors. Simply put, US requests for Australian military support are viewed through a realist and hard-headed security prism. While involvement in the 2003 US-led efforts in Iraq was subject to significant controversy, Australia committed troops and political support. In that regard, Australia is significantly different from Canada, which has often used the flexibility of its geopolitical position to say no to such operations with little in the way of consequence to the US security guarantee (although whether that continues to remain so is much more debatable).

Similarly, but without the same level of public discourse, has been the joint long-term intelligence and information gathering efforts. Much of this occurs under the “Five Eyes” intelligence sharing agreement between Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. However, this also includes the Australian-US Joint Defence Facility Pine Gap lo-

cated in the centre of Australia, which serves as an important listening and monitoring station for satellites and communications into Asia.

Contemporary Australian debates about national outlook and priorities are driven by the reality that Australia is an island and requires access to markets and secure maritime trade routes to prosper. Britain’s shift from the Commonwealth to European markets forced Australia to consider new and emerging markets. Many of these were in Asia, a notable driver behind the rapid shift of Japan from foe to major trade partner. This has also expanded into deeper defence and strategic relations that have accelerated since the early 2000s.

Signifying the closer defence relationship are prospects, during 2018, of an Australia-Japan Visiting Forces Agreement. The lack of proximity to a closely aligned superpower and the need to access markets has forced a pragmatism in Australia’s approach to international engagement. While Australia has very clear and strongly held values, it has limited luxury to navel gaze and expect other nations to have similar priorities.

In the Australian strategic studies community, a key debate has been over the tension between international interests and geography. Unlike Canada, in Australia, the stark consideration of national survival underpins most security discussions. The result has been a clearer security focus, which has required a greater allocation of resources.

In these discussions, the influence of Paul Dobb looms large over Australian defence policy and his understanding of strategic geography (Rimmer and Ward 2016). In a 2016 article Dobb notes: “Australia’s 2016 Defence White Paper marks the return of geography to defence planning.” The 2016 Defence White Paper resulted in an additional AUD\$29.9 billion being allocated to the forward defence budget (over a number of years), which in 2021 will equate to 2 percent of Australia’s GDP (BBC News 2016). Central to future defence planning are 12 new submarines and an expanded navy.

## Conclusion: Canada’s future challenges

Canada’s future security challenges are not the mere object of speculation. In fact, the elements of many challenges are already in place. Starting closer to home, Canada is seeing increased contestation in its Arctic north. Warming temperatures and receding summer ice have prompted growing great power interest in what remains one of the world’s most formidable regions. A depreciated cost in the price of oil and the recent prohibition on drilling in the region by the Trudeau government and the outgoing Obama administration may have delayed resource development for the time being, but China and Russia have kept their attentions fixated northwards. Russia has shown little inclination to halt its military expansion in the region, nor has Moscow reigned in its aspirations for territorial claims (Gramer 2017).

Both the Arctic Council and a regional international legal framework developed over the past 30 years have done much to lessen tensions between the eight circumpolar states (Collins 2017). Still, that no other foreign government, friend or foe, has recognized Ottawa’s longstanding claims over the fabled Northwest Passage waterways should give pause to anyone thinking that Canada’s neighbourhood is completely devoid of future conflict, be it diplomatic or otherwise.

Turning southwards, the inauguration of the Donald Trump presidency has raised doubt over the United States’ nearly eight-decade guarantee to secure Canada in the absence of more defence spending on the part of Ottawa (Connolly 2017). Talk of tariffs, walls on the Mexican border, and the dismantling of the NAFTA trade and regulatory regime pose a significant challenge to Canadian economic security that as of writing remains riddled with uncertainty. While past US administrations, including the Obama White House, have called on Canada to spend more on defence – up from the current 0.9 percent of GDP – it is quite possible that the Trump administration will adhere to its campaign promises of demanding that its allies increase their share of contributions towards the alliance lest they lose Washington’s security guarantees.

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*No foreign government recognizes Ottawa’s claims to the Northwest Passage waterways, a hint of future conflict, be it diplomatic or otherwise.*

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It was even alleged in the press that one reason why the Trudeau government's plan to deploy 600 CAF personnel in 2017 to a UN peacekeeping mission in Africa was placed on hold after being announced in August 2016 was the uncertainty surrounding the strategic priorities of the Trump administration. In fact, Canada had refused offers to replace the Dutch contingent and, separately, the UN commander in Mali, leading to Germany and Belgium stepping into these roles in order to prevent problems on the ground. Canada had also refused to provide senior military officers for UN missions in Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Brewster 2017a; 2017b). Only in 2018 did Canada finally announce the deployment of a small number of lightly armed helicopters and support troops to Mali.

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*It was necessary for Australia to maintain a military-technology advantage to deter potential hostile nations.*

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Further south, in Latin America and the Caribbean, Canada has been involved in maritime interdiction operations against drug cartels and human smugglers. Special Forces and regular force military personnel have engaged in frequent training missions with local forces in countries like Jamaica and Belize. Still, the combination of the near-failed state status of Venezuela and the precarious security situations in Haiti (a country Canada has found itself repeatedly intervening in over the last three decades) and El Salvador, highlight the possibility of instabilities spilling across the region and, eventually, to Canadian shores (especially if barriers from Mexico into the US are implemented).

Looking eastwards at the North Atlantic, Canada encounters an area of relative calm. However, Ottawa still faces challenges on asserting control over the east coast fisheries.

An aging Canadian Coast Guard fleet prevents Ottawa from ensuring that international fishing fleets are abiding by the North Atlantic Fisheries Organization framework. Events like the 1995 standoff with Spain over the latter's overfishing of turbot saw Canadian fisheries enforcement personnel shoot at and seize a Spanish fishing vessel, the *Estai*, on the high seas. The so-called "Turbot War" highlighted the importance of submarines, patrol aircraft, and vessels, military and civilian, in monitoring the harvesting of this still important economic resource for Canada's Atlantic provinces.

Finally, the Indo-Pacific. This vast region encompassing the world's most populous states and rising economic powers has historically only attracted infrequent attention from Ottawa. But this will have to change. Tensions between China, the United States (especially in the Trump era), and those countries comprising Southeast Asia (chiefly, Vietnam, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines) and East Asia (South Korea and Japan) have the potential to disrupt global economic trade. China's maritime power aspirations in the South China Sea and simmering tensions with Taiwan in particular could see the blockage of one of the world's most important trade routes, through the Strait of Malacca (Hirst 2014).

To address future challenges, it is worthwhile considering the historical and Australian experiences, especially the role of geography influencing its foreign, defence, and economic strategies.

- **Climate change has local impacts:** Climate change is often discussed in aggregate terms. This includes sea level rises and increased global temperature. However, climate change and responses have a very local impact and implications, which Canada would do well to consider. The notion that there may be winners and losers to climate change is a recent one, which could produce new tensions. Agricultural production in the prairies may be boosted, but fisheries in the east could be diminished.
- **The northern regions of Canada are permanently “in play”:** Long before the arrival of Europeans, the Thule people – with superior technology – were able to quickly gain control and establish a presence in the northern climes of Canada. Today, while these areas are ostensibly under the control and protection of Canada, the very limited population presence and limited defence capabilities make it difficult to defend. Should there be a period of global disruption and mass movement of people, the north could again be in play. Control is only very tenuous.
- **External threats drove consolidation:** With French exploration in the western and southern coasts, German activity to the northeast, and a Dutch presence in the northwest, six independent Antipodean British colonies were vulnerable and lacked a coherent defence outlook. This accelerated the formation of Australia. Canada experienced similar competitive processes within the country. But, when the United States went from primary potential threat to benign neighbour and close ally in the late 1800s, there were no existential threats.
- **Decolonization created new challenges:** Independence of former European colonies across Asia and the Southwest Pacific created a new challenge for Australia in that it remained a European interloper within Asia, with few natural allies. To deal with its small population and status as an outsider, it was necessary for Australia to maintain a military-technology advantage to deter potential hostile nations. Due to Canada’s own position in North America, it does not face such an immediate problem. But, given its history of expeditionary operations abroad and need to ensure interoperability with the US, Canada also needs to maintain a military-technology for its own reasons.
- **No permanent friends or allies, only permanent interests:** The Australian experience of the Second World War saw a switch of alignment from Britain to the US. This was driven by necessity and the perceived imminence of a Japanese invasion. Only a short time after the war Australia entered a trading relationship with Japan, which since the 2000s has been shifting towards a closer military alignment and relationship. Canadian policy-makers in Ottawa need to recognize that pragmatism and interests are a key driver of priorities and external relations.
- **European and Atlantic primacy is a passing moment:** Australia and Canada are both products of European expansion and competition. However, this is a feature of a period in history and not a permanent state of affairs. European global influence and economic strength is in structural decline with developments on the continent becoming less relevant for both Canada and Australia. Developments in Europe may be important in terms of cultural legacy, but it is no longer a dynamic economic region and is home to declining powers. The same cannot be said of the Indo-Pacific.
- **Political relations influence economic relations:** When Britain looked to the emerging common market on the European continent, Australia lost its traditional export destination. This forced a pragmatic approach to political and economic relations, which

required flexibility and greater responsiveness to economic forces. Australia opened its economy and embarked on a major period of economic reform between 1983–2000. It has also worked to establish direct economic relationships with a range of nations. As Canada continues to negotiate NAFTA, it should recognize the influence of political relations in any future economic relations with other countries.

- **Military assets are repositioned to geopolitical threats:** As part of a comprehensive defence review, Australia repositioned its military assets to the west to project power into both the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Australia shifted its geostrategic outlook in response to changes in the external environment, informed by a perspective that viewed the world as it was, not as an idealized, normative version. As Canada shifts its own outlook to the Pacific, it needs to ensure that military assets are repositioned and available to back such a shift – and that its view of the Indo-Pacific and the region’s key players is equally realistic.
- **Polar regions are not immune from geopolitics:** During an earlier period of geopolitical expansion into the Antarctic, Australia became a colonist and created a large territory under its name. This helped block others from making similar claims and establishing a foothold in the region. Science might be the current focus, but this may change rapidly. The same can be said of the Arctic.
- **Humanitarian interventions are driven by strategic interests:** When Australia embarked on a stabilization mission in the Solomon Islands, there were hard strategic interests driving the decision. The deployment of peacekeepers is expensive, as is state-building. In this context, when allocating limited resources for humanitarian interventions and investments, there should be an alignment with core strategic interests. Responding to global crises without any form of prioritization or consideration of national interest not only results in a diffuse effort, but limited impact.
- **Saying no to participation in US-led “coalitions of the willing” is a luxury of the past:** Because of Australia’s geopolitical position, a bi-partisan consensus has existed on the need for that country to do what it could to ensure that British (until 1967), and then US security guarantees are assured. This has meant participating in military operations in Malaysia, Borneo, Vietnam, and Iraq. In contrast, Canada has in the past used the flexibility of its geopolitical position to say no to such operations. The combination of the Trump administration and the relative decline of US power now casts all such guarantees in doubt. Canadian leaders may find themselves spending more on defence and contributing to military operations that in the past they might have otherwise deferred on.

Canada would do well to consider the role of strategic geography in its foreign, defence, and economic strategies. Recent geo-strategic developments will have an impact on both Canada’s immediate security environment and its strategic interests abroad. Australia’s experience in dealing with its own geography provides an informative lesson in that regard. Canada’s own strategic choices would benefit from being informed by the country’s history, its geography, and the experience of allies like Australia.

## About the Authors



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## Endnotes

- 1 Notably, the Trudeau government is dispatching 10 UN police observers to Colombia.
- 2 The Western European and Others Group includes Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Israel, and 24 European members, of which two are a part of the Security Council's Permanent Five, France and the United Kingdom. For more information see: United Nations, 2014, "United Nations Regional Groups of Member States."

## Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Michael Wieteska for his research and editing assistance as well as David McDonough for his comments and input at various stages of the project.

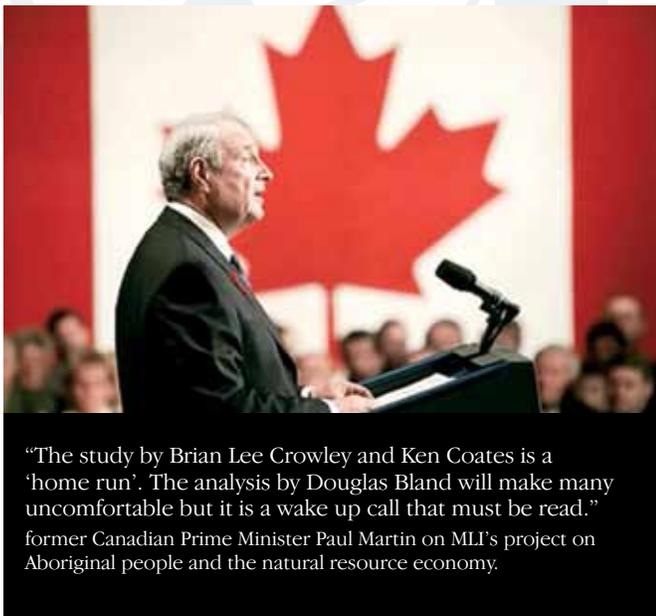


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- Cited by five present and former Canadian Prime Ministers, as well as by David Cameron, the British Prime Minister.
- First book, *The Canadian Century: Moving out of America's Shadow*, won the Sir Antony Fisher International Memorial Award in 2011.
- *Hill Times* says Brian Lee Crowley is one of the 100 most influential people in Ottawa.
- The *Wall Street Journal*, the *Economist*, the *Globe and Mail*, the *National Post* and many other leading national and international publications have quoted the Institute's work.



"The study by Brian Lee Crowley and Ken Coates is a 'home run'. The analysis by Douglas Bland will make many uncomfortable but it is a wake up call that must be read." former Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin on MLI's project on Aboriginal people and the natural resource economy.

## Ideas Change the World

Independent and non-partisan, the Macdonald-Laurier Institute is increasingly recognized as the thought leader on national issues in Canada, prodding governments, opinion leaders and the general public to accept nothing but the very best public policy solutions for the challenges Canada faces.

## Where You've Seen Us



# About the Macdonald-Laurier Institute

## What Do We Do?

**When you change how people think, you change what they want and how they act.** That is why thought leadership is essential in every field. At MLI, we strip away the complexity that makes policy issues unintelligible and present them in a way that leads to action, to better quality policy decisions, to more effective government, and to a more focused pursuit of the national interest of all Canadians. MLI is the only non-partisan, independent national public policy think tank based in Ottawa that focuses on the full range of issues that fall under the jurisdiction of the federal government.

## What Is in a Name?

**The Macdonald-Laurier Institute exists not merely to burnish the splendid legacy of two towering figures in Canadian history – Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir Wilfrid Laurier – but to renew that legacy.** A Tory and a Grit, an English speaker and a French speaker – these two men represent the very best of Canada's fine political tradition. As prime minister, each championed the values that led to Canada assuming her place as one of the world's leading democracies. We will continue to vigorously uphold these values, the cornerstones of our nation.



## Working for a Better Canada

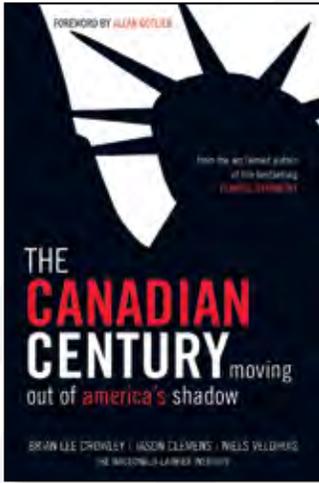
**Good policy doesn't just happen; it requires good ideas, hard work, and being in the right place at the right time.** In other words, it requires MLI. We pride ourselves on independence, and accept no funding from the government for our research. If you value our work and if you believe in the possibility of a better Canada, consider making a tax-deductible donation. The Macdonald-Laurier Institute is a registered charity.

## Our Issues

**The Institute undertakes an impressive program of thought leadership on public policy. Some of the issues we have tackled recently include:**

- Aboriginal people and the management of our natural resources;
- Making Canada's justice system more fair and efficient;
- Defending Canada's innovators and creators;
- Controlling government debt at all levels;
- Advancing Canada's interests abroad;
- Ottawa's regulation of foreign investment; and
- How to fix Canadian health care.

# Macdonald-Laurier Institute Publications



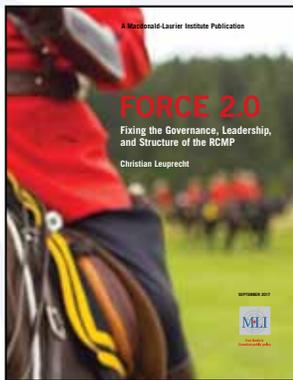
Winner of the Sir Antony Fisher International Memorial Award BEST THINK TANK BOOK IN 2011, as awarded by the Atlas Economic Research Foundation.

**The Canadian Century**  
By Brian Lee Crowley,  
Jason Clemens, and Niels Veldhuis

Do you want to be first to hear about new policy initiatives? Get the inside scoop on upcoming events?

Visit our website  
[www.MacdonaldLaurier.ca](http://www.MacdonaldLaurier.ca) and sign up for our newsletter.

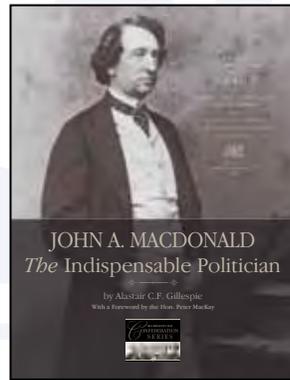
## RESEARCH PAPERS



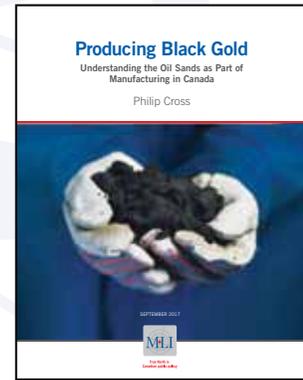
**Force 2.0**  
Christian Leuprecht



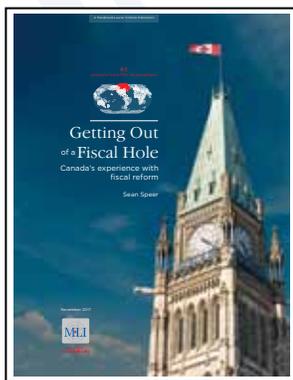
**The Unkindest Cut**  
Wayne Critchley and  
Richard C. Owens



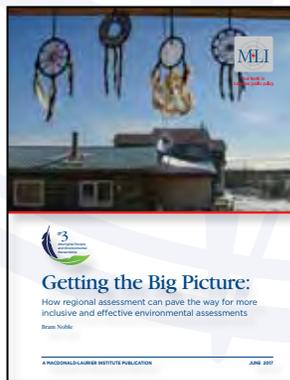
**John A. Macdonald:  
The Indispensable  
Politician**  
Alastair C.F. Gillespie



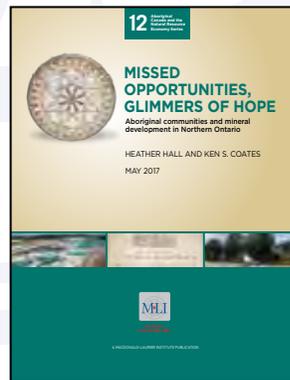
**Producing Black Gold**  
Philip Cross



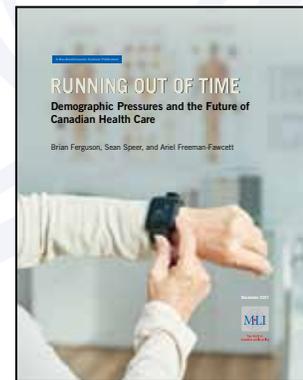
**Getting Out of a Fiscal  
Hole**  
Sean Speer



**Getting the Big Picture**  
Bram Noble



**Missed Opportunities,  
Glimmers of Hope**  
Heather Hall and  
Ken S. Coates



**Running Out of Time**  
Brian Ferguson, Sean Speer,  
and Ariel Freeman-Fawcett



True North in  
Canadian public policy

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## What people are saying about the Macdonald-Laurier Institute

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*In five short years, the institute has established itself as a steady source of high-quality research and thoughtful policy analysis here in our nation's capital. Inspired by Canada's deep-rooted intellectual tradition of ordered liberty – as exemplified by Macdonald and Laurier – the institute is making unique contributions to federal public policy and discourse. Please accept my best wishes for a memorable anniversary celebration and continued success.*

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE STEPHEN HARPER

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*The Macdonald-Laurier Institute is an important source of fact and opinion for so many, including me. Everything they tackle is accomplished in great depth and furthers the public policy debate in Canada. Happy Anniversary, this is but the beginning.*

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE PAUL MARTIN

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*In its mere five years of existence, the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, under the erudite Brian Lee Crowley's vibrant leadership, has, through its various publications and public events, forged a reputation for brilliance and originality in areas of vital concern to Canadians: from all aspects of the economy to health care reform, aboriginal affairs, justice, and national security.*

BARBARA KAY, NATIONAL POST COLUMNIST

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*Intelligent and informed debate contributes to a stronger, healthier and more competitive Canadian society. In five short years the Macdonald-Laurier Institute has emerged as a significant and respected voice in the shaping of public policy. On a wide range of issues important to our country's future, Brian Lee Crowley and his team are making a difference.*

JOHN MANLEY, CEO COUNCIL

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