

**“LEADING FROM BESIDE:
OPPORTUNITIES FOR CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL POLICY”**

Notes for remarks to the Group of 78, Ottawa, Ontario

Tuesday, October 30, 2012

Rt. Hon. Joe Clark

On the topic of anniversaries, I spoke at an anniversary dinner of a public policy forum in Toronto in May, on this topic of “leading from beside”. I want today to elaborate on that theme, and then ask for audience participation to improve or trash my argument.

That phrase – “leading from beside” –was inspired by a recent controversy in the United States, about whether foreign military assistance in Libya would be led by France and Britain, rather than by the U.S.A. A “White House advisor” supported that very sensible proposition, but was careless enough to describe it as “leading from behind”. American hawks went wild, and that description was disowned.

But, as power disperses in the world, so does the capacity to lead – and, in almost every case, the most effective leadership will have to be shared, not only among states, but with other entities and, often, with citizens. So I argue that the model now should be “leadership from beside”, which is what Canada and Canadians have often done.

Before exploring that high ground, let me digress into two comments about Canada.

First, Canadian conversations. You will remember that, after we had all been exhausted by Meech Lake and Charlottetown and free trade, wily Jean Chretien made a single promise about the Canadian constitution. He promised not to talk about it, and Canadians responded enthusiastically.

In fact, we have stopped talking about much at all, as a country. Yet, more than most lucky countries, Canada needs national conversations. We have to keep proving our worth to our parts, and national conversations have played a major role in the initiatives and experiences which have defined us. They often occurred in federal-provincial conferences, where elected leaders of our different jurisdictions agreed on common Canadian purposes. Often, those conversations have been generated by royal commissions – the Massey royal commission which spawned the Canada Council and other cultural institutions; the Hall royal commission on health care; the Laurendau-Dunton royal commission on

bilingualism and biculturalism; the MacDonalD royal commission which led to free trade. What those various discussions provided was informed foresight about major public policy issues, which were looming over the horizon. They were discussions about tomorrow.

The last meeting of first ministers in Canada was November 10, 2008 – four years ago. The last royal commission in Canada was the Romanow commission into the future of health care, which concluded a decade ago. There have been a few judicial commissions of inquiry into particular issues, like the sponsorship scandal, or the Air India tragedy. But those were investigations, not conversations.

We need to begin national conversations again – and I suggest that Canada’s constructive role in a changing world is one good place to begin. In fact, there is more public discussion of international affairs than in years past, through active organizations like your own, the Canadian international council; the Canadian defence and foreign affairs institute; the Canadian Council on Africa; and the active schools of international and development affairs at an increasing array of Canadian universities. When you look at non-governmental organizations, or people working in international organizations, there is a large scale involvement of Canadians as individuals.

But it is not having much effect on public policy – and it has not expanded much beyond those citizens who are already interested in international affairs.

Second digression -- international issues have rarely played a major role in Canadian elections. There are small groups of citizens who are passionate about international issues, but they do not decide the result in many constituencies. (“better off if he were the minister of public works”) (“Preston Manning – a wonderful member of parliament – but not for here”). In part, that is because we are not a superpower. Our actions can make a significant difference where we apply ourselves, but rarely the difference between peace and war as, for example, American policy can -- and British and French policy like to think they can. And we know that we deal in influence, not power.

That may be changing for two different reasons – first, the combination of a generation that is more connected to the world, and a population which, more and more, reflects the world. Those should be candidates for this kind of conversation.

End of digression. Let me speak about how we might think and act internationally in the future.

- Alatas – “his royal highness has never been on a bus before”.

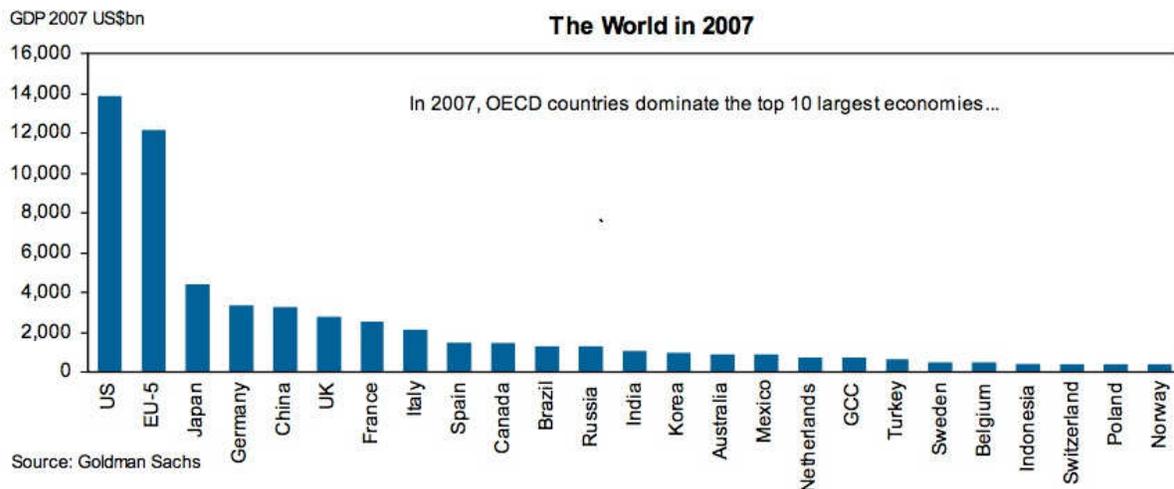
All of us have buses we've not been on before. We see the world from our own perspective – sometimes a perspective of privilege, sometimes of anger or despair, sometimes of indifference: we take things for granted ... too often our views reflect the past more than the present, and do not equip us very well for grave challenges we can not avoid.

That matters less when life proceeds smoothly, and is not much threatened. But that's not how most of the world lives now. And it is not the case for Canada, despite our resource wealth, despite our banking regulations, despite our relative success as a diverse society. We lack – and we need – informed foresight as much as anyone.

How many of you are younger than 24?

Ten days from now is the 24th anniversary of the fall of a wall --the Berlin wall – which has now been down almost as long as it was up. On November 9, - that Berlin wall will have been down 24 years. That will also be, roughly, the 25th anniversary of the widespread use of the Internet. Those two developments changed profoundly the way the world works. I want to review quickly some of those changes.

Slide one: the largest economies in 2007.



2007. Sixty months ago. The U.S. way ahead. Look at China, despite its huge population, only fifth in growth. Look at Canada, chugging along at tenth, ahead of India. It helps to think of these changes not just in terms of countries, but of cultures.

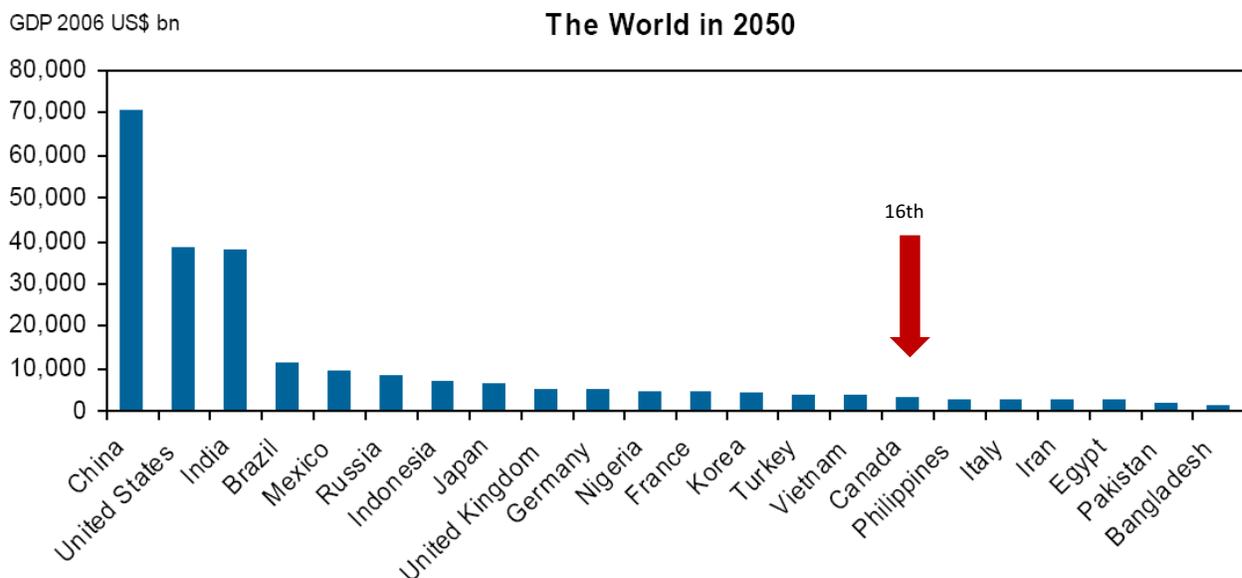
For a long time, this has been a world in which the nations of the west were in control – not just as an economic driver, but in other ways as well.

That period of western dominance – indeed, of market dominance – has had an enormous positive impact. A Yale study last year found that – in the five years between 2005 and 2011 --half a billion people in the developing world lifted themselves above the poverty line. Previously, it took 25 years for so many people to rise above the poverty line.

But the locus of leadership now is changing.

The most talked-about changes are economic, because they drive so much else. So let's look at the economic future. Goldman Sachs began preparing these projections of growth about a decade ago. They are only projections, but they are proving true.

Slide two: Canada 16th by 2050



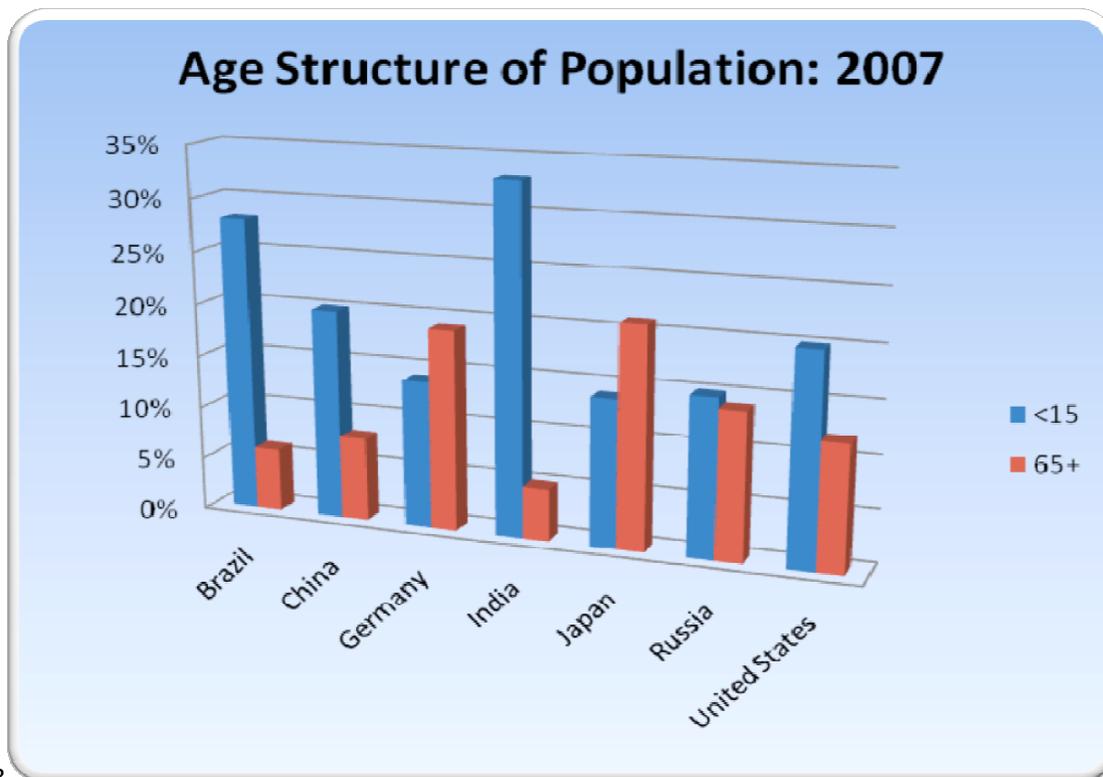
Goldman Sachs, *The N-11: More Than an Acronym*; March 2007

<http://www2.goldmansachs.com/ideas/brics/book/BRICs-Chapter11.pdf>

Look at China, India, Brazil, Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria, Turkey. So power among nations is shifting dramatically. By 2050, the seven largest economies in the world will contain only one western nation – the U.S.A, which will rank second in economic power, well behind China. Next in order would be India, Brazil, Mexico, Russia, Indonesia. Canada would rank 16th, a little behind Vietnam, a little ahead of the Phillipines.

There are several other factors which also decide power.

Slide three: age structure of population: 2007



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Look at the age structures in these seven countries. The proportion of India's population that is under age fifteen is more than double the proportion in Germany. In these emerging powers – India, Brazil, China -- the young populations – the potential generators of growth and innovation – are dramatically larger than the older populations – who will need services and support.

This is not to say that western nations will suddenly become a backwater now. The west, and the U.S.A. in particular, will remain a defining force in the world we recently shaped. But the era of automatic

dominance is over now, and our influence will have to be earned. That will put a premium on innovation, on reputation, on resource wealth and management, on respect for differences, and other areas where Canada's assets are unusually strong.

That shift of power is not about anyone's decline, but rather about the rise and assertion of new strengths. The shift is not just economic, but also political, military, diplomatic – and, most significant, it is cultural – what languages, which values, what sense of community will characterize the future?

Please focus on two dimensions of the changes in the 24 years since the Berlin wall came down and the Internet went up.

First, where does conflict come from in the modern world? -- not much now from ideology, as in the cold war, -- and not simply from poverty and inequality -- but instead, so often, from culture and identity and faith.

How might we respond? The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan demonstrate clearly that these conflicts cannot be resolved by mere military power, or simply by "the magic of the market."

Many of these deadly, growing conflicts are rooted in the fear that vital values or identities are under siege. Such fears are as old as humankind, but they are more easily inflamed in an age when information travels so fast and so far, challenging sacred assumptions, creating new aspirations, stimulating anger or envy or extremism.

The critical talents, in such a world, are the ability to respect and bridge conflicting identities -- and different values -- and patiently seek enough common ground to build trust and respect and, then, collaboration. No country in the world is better at that than Canada. And our capacity increases as our population diversifies, making us more like the world. That can be a significant Canadian asset.

The second change is that the shift in power is not only between nation-states, but from nation-states to non-state actors – such as the environmental movement, non-governmental organizations, multi-national corporations, foundations.... And organized crime, and terrorists.

A growing array of "non-state actors" are powers unto themselves and on the front lines of change – a doctor with Médecins Sans Frontières, able to help immediately a child maimed by a land mine; the

volunteer “shebikas”, or “barefoot lawyers” of the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), the largest paralegal program in the world, who teach village women about their basic legal rights; the Carter center, able to mobilize and focus resources to virtually eliminate river blindness and guinea worm disease.

From mediators patiently resolving land disputes, to citizen boycotts of commercial products. To Bono’s romancing of the world’s political leaders, to the activists of the “Arab spring”, organizations and individuals exert an unprecedented impact on international opinion and policy.

They can often act where governments cannot, or will not. They can transform angry crowds to agents of change. They create revolutionary new financial instruments, like micro-credit, and new standards of transparency and accountability. They save natural habitats, and human dignity, and lives.

Yet there is still a tendency to treat these non-state actors as relatively peripheral factors, unwise to ignore but distinctly a second tier, not deciders. They are dismissed as having nowhere near the weight of the established institutions of policy-making.

That is a serious misjudgement. The best of the non-state actors are more innovative than the traditional institutions, more trusted both by publics and by protagonists, and much freer of the constraints of convention and bureaucracy.

Their strength is content, innovation and public legitimacy, not just process and protest. As cynicism and failure corrode the authority of traditional institutions, their influence is growing.

Today, Greenpeace has more influence on public policy than most national governments. The Gates foundation is more innovative. BRAC, spawned in Bangladesh, is the largest NGO in the world. World Vision is in 97 countries, with over 40,000 staff, and more than 100,000 volunteers. Amnesty International has offices in eighty countries—more national offices than most countries have embassies.

The Edelman organization publishes an annual “trust barometer”, based upon international polling of 35,000 “opinion leaders” in 25 countries, ranging from Ireland to India to Indonesia to Argentina to the United Arab Emirates. In 2012ⁱ “for the fifth year in a row, NGOs are the most trusted institution in the world”, ranking ahead of, in order, business, media, and government. Globescanⁱⁱ has conducted similar studies across a wider range of countries and concludes “compared to global and national businesses,

governments, and the media, trust in NGOs is significantly higher and continues to rise slowly". So, in addition to activist members and the priceless capacity to innovate, these non-state actors enjoy public trust and respect.

The great majority of these non-state actors are forces for positive change - but a minority of these new players are malign and dangerous – terrorist organizations to whom no target is sacred, criminal enterprises smuggling people and drugs and other commodities, and other organizations ranging from pirates to corrupt businesses. They operate deliberately and dangerously as outlaws.

These outlaws pose a real threat to modern society, and pre-occupy the attention of governments, policy analysts, commentators and, significantly, the military and security establishments, which have enormous influence on the budgets and priority-setting of most western nation-states.

An ironic consequence is that western governments and publics pay more attention to the world's "new threats" than to the world's "new solutions". The pre-occupation with terrorists and criminal gangs and other malign international forces has overshadowed our use and appreciation of the much broader range of international organizations, whose motives and activities are highly positive.

Such a process creates its own spiral. As societies become more fearful, governments focus – and lead public discourse to focus – on the threats in the world, especially terrorism. As one result, the disproportion is enormous between the money and attention which western governments spend on defence and "homeland" security compared to their investment in the growing capacity to achieve co-operation, understanding and tangible improvements in the conditions which give rise to violence and crime and terrorism.

Yet that is precisely the capacity where the constructive non-state actors, with their roots in the ground, already make a huge difference. They could be even more effective if the issues they address, and the forward-looking perspectives they acquire, were treated as seriously as military and terrorist issues are treated.

There is one other central fact. What these positive non-state actors don't have is the authority to change the rules. Non-state organizations often have the imagination the world needs. But only states have the mandate and the power to change laws and regulations and obligations.

We need to marry mandate and imagination. Again, Canada is one of a handful of countries which, in the past, has been able, willing and trusted enough to establish strong purpose-specific partnerships with non-state organizations -- witness the international treaty to ban landmines, the campaign against apartheid, the agreement on blood diamonds, and several other initiatives pursued by liberal and progressive conservative governments of Canada.

A marriage of mandate and imagination. How difficult a marriage would that be? And if marriage is too permanent a concept, what kind of working relationship could be designed, for specific purposes? How much of that is happening now, and what could make that number grow. NGOs prize their independence – of government and sometimes of each other? But on what critical issue might Oxfam or Amnesty International or other power advocacy and justice organizations work with interested governments? What exactly is unthinkable?

In 2003, Amnesty Great Britain and Amnesty The Netherlands, on one side, and Unilever Indonesia on the other – classic bitter adversaries –opened their books absolutely to each other and discovered a wide range of ways to work together in what they called “the drive towards sustainable poverty reduction”. In the 1980s, at a time when we were not otherwise speaking with one another, the Canadian Labour Congress worked extremely closely with the Mulroney government in the campaign against apartheid. You know the case of landmines. What could be done to make this more commonplace?

And beyond alliances with non-state actors, what other countries might Canada find as partners in this broad project of “leading from beside”?

The government has recently announced a new cohabitation policy with the United Kingdom in some of our missions involved. If this is to become a more deliberate Canadian policy, why limit it to the United Kingdom? I fully recognize the value of Canada’s historic and current relations with the U.K. and joked the other night that my own arrival in the Pearson building was so long ago that the portrait in the lobby had been of Queen Victoria.

The government’s general tendency has been towards proven allies of the past more than potential allies of the future, and towards developed or emerging economies, rather than the developing world. If Canada is to contemplate cohabitation abroad with other countries – or indeed closer general co-

operation with countries where that alliance might make a significant difference – should we not also consider other countries where we would want to build a history, rather than simply celebrate one.

Given present dynamics in the world, and issues of conflict or opportunity which are emerging, why not a privileged relation with Indonesia, or Turkey, or Qatar, or South Korea, or a burgeoning federation like Nigeria? The specific countries would need to be carefully considered, but the principle is important of enlarging the range and scope of Canada's de facto alliances. I would welcome some discussion today, both of whether we should do that and, if so with whom?

Of course, these capacities to manage diversity and build partnerships are not a whole foreign policy. We have vital economic and trade and environmental and security interests to pursue. But these are all in jeopardy if conflict thrives. Our skill at building partnerships and respect could be a distinguishing Canadian credential. They speak to the most challenging issues of the future. And they are capacities where we are not sixteenth in the world. Our place is among the leaders.
