



POLICY SERIES

No. 243 / MARCH 2024

CANADA 2024 **A CONFIDENT RESILIENT NATION** **OR A FEARFUL FRACTURED COUNTRY?**

BY DAVID REDMAN



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Policy Series No. 243 • Date of First Issue: March 2024.

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ISSN 1491-78

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A teenager in 1967, Canada's Centenary, could look at their country with both hope for the future and pride in the past. Hosting Expo 67 at the time of Canada's centenary, the future of Canada as a middle power looked bright; socially, economically, in the Arts, on the fields of sports, and even in showcasing its military with a coast to-coast Military Tattoo.¹ Canada had truly come of age and the world took note.

A teenager in 2024, now looks at Canada's future much differently than their grandparents did, at the same age, in 1967. They look at a future full of fear; fear they can never own their own home, fear they cannot make ends meet at the end of each month, fear that taxes alone will continue to rise faster than any possible income increases, the fear that servicing our national debt will cause economic instability like in the 1990's, more inflation, and collapse of our social safety nets including health care, fear of being cancelled due to a misspoken word or post, fear of violence in the streets where they live, fear of just living.

Canadian teenagers are told not to be proud of their country, which seems strange as many people of the world still want desperately to become Canadian. The current government relishes apologizing for actions from long ago, by people in completely different circumstances, and in a much different international context. Universities seem entranced by an agenda that destroys democratic values, rights, and freedoms. Diaspora march routinely in the streets of our cities, supporting illegal terrorist organizations, demanding the death of both citizens here and abroad. Our police and courts take no action, or, in fact, support these illegal acts. Teenagers rightly question who will be next to be called out, shamed, or attacked.

Our current federal government, many of our provincial/territorial governments, and our municipal governments stand silently by, or in some cases support the destruction of our values, laws, and national interests. Confidence has been turned into fear and shame. Canada has become irrelevant on the world stage.

The ultimate question is, "What do Canadians want Canada to be?"

CANADA TODAY

In simplest terms, a country is defined when a group of people share a common culture and live in an area with defined, secure borders. The corollary is, that to destroy a country, you simply need to destroy the common shared culture and make the borders dissolve.

A vision for the future of Canada involves citizens who are optimistic about the future, have self-respect to follow through on their ideas, and have courage to stand up for their culture and ideals. In ancient Greece, Thucydides is quoted as saying, "Self-control is the chief element in self-respect, and self-respect is the chief element in courage."

For two decades, children in Canada were raised by helicopter parents, who removed them from situations where they would be challenged or feel slightly threatened. Participation became more important than achievement.

These children, in turn, turned into bulldozer parents. For the next two decades these parents removed "people" (teachers, coaches, professors, police, elected officials, media personalities, even judges) who they felt might challenge their children or just make their children feel bad.

The result is now we have two generations of Canadians who feel that they are entitled to a risk-free world, where without their parents to save them, the role of guardian has been transferred to governments. This generation lashes out, with little or no self-control, when anything appears to go against their personal feelings. They have lost their self-respect, feeling they are powerless, and, in fact, they need the government to save them. They have no courage to stand up for their culture, rights, freedoms, history, or even, in some cases, for their own body autonomy.

It took two generations to come to this point. It will probably take a conscious effort to slowly change this mind set if Canadians wish to exist as an independent democracy.

Canadians do not have pride in their Country. They march in the streets, supporting other countries, but do not march for Canada. Canadians must decide what the vision of their country will be. In twenty-five years will Canada be a democracy? Or will it become a country led by an authoritarian government who uses fear and threat to remove imaginary risks from the daily lives of Canadians? Canadians who have lost their self-respect and courage.

As said in the very first line of the last Canadian White Paper on Defence, written in 1994, nearly 30 years ago: In the final analysis, a nation not worth defending is a nation not worth preserving.

Will Canada devolve into independent states, based on provincial boundaries, as envisioned for decades by some citizens in Quebec, and now some citizens in the western provinces? Will our neighbour to the south permit this to occur? Or will the USA see this as too great a threat to its national security? The USA may be forced to become the guardian of Canada, who's citizens are too afraid of daily risks. Canadians who do not appear to have the self-respect and courage to manage risk on their own.

NATIONAL INTERESTS

Without pride and respect for the traditional ethics, values, and history of Canada, Canadians have given up even trying to define and defend their national interests.

National interests are not short term, current issues based, divisive, politically correct, or political party based. National interests are the core defining vision for a country, long term (20–25 years), based on the ethics and values of its citizens. In simple terms, national interests define what the citizens of a country want their country to be, long term, and act as a check list to confirm the correctness of short-term policies and actions.

Without defined national interests, policy decisions are random, based on shifting priorities, and are often politically motivated as opposed to citizen/nation motivated.

A statement made by the Canadian Prime Minister in 2015, “There is no core identity, no mainstream in Canada,”² clearly shows that national interests have been overlooked or intentionally ignored. This allows short term, politically motivated, policy to be implemented, with no concern to be considered.

Certainly, Canadians, just two years earlier, felt differently to this destructive statement by the PM. The *Macleans Magazine* published a detailed article on, “99 Reasons Why It’s Better to be Canadian.”³ The article compared life in Canada to the USA and the countries in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).⁴ In comparison, Canadians expressed more optimism, confidence, and pride in their country than the citizens of the OECD.

In the Canadian Military Colleges, in the early 1970’s, future officers took a compulsory course on the national interests of Canada, followed by a course on Canada’s White Paper on National Defence. Officers were expected to understand what they were defending and what they were standing for when they served Canada. One should ask if there are any similar courses in the Royal Military College today. What do they teach?

Other major democracies still fully define their national interests. These nations have certain political, social, and economic interests to achieve development, prosperity, progress, and international recognition. To reach such goals, national interests are pre-requisites, essentials like sovereignty, unity, and security.

After defining their national interests, other democracies have defined their national objectives. These are solid, long-term goals, with measurable performance indicators for the future. The political leaders of these democracies have thought them through, with the involvement and support of their citizens. It is time for Canada to do a self-evaluation. Canadian leaders in the past have defined their long-term vision for Canada. They have led discussions with Canadians where they defined Canada, their

dreams for Canada as an independent nation, not a post national state,⁵ its place in the world, and their goal was to have a Canada that is strong and free.

A framework for Canada's national interests must include, as a minimum:

- Unity;
- National/Canadian security;
- Good governance;
- Protection of Rights and Freedoms;
- Economic prosperity and growth; and,
- Personal and community well-being.

These need to be clearly defined, not filled with side issues, but with issues of the decade. These issues need to be defined based on cohesion not division.

They need to be built with involvement of Canadians; academia, public and private sector organizations, unions, non-union groups, religious groups, non-religious groups (I believe in both freedom of, and from, religion), non-profit agencies, and, of course, individual Canadians.

WHY UNITY?

Unity is the core value for a country. A cultural unity is based on common shared ethics, values, and beliefs. People wishing to become citizens of a country must understand these principles of belief and join the country because they wish for the same to be the foundation of their daily lives. Many who come to a country, not wishing to join the cultural unity of that country, are enemies, intentional or otherwise, who work to erode or destroy this unity.

Diversity has been said by our Prime Minister to be a strength.

He is wrong. Diversity in values is never a strength.

Countries made up of disparate cultural groups with different values often become embroiled in civil wars which occasionally lead to "ethnic (cultural) cleansing," and terrible violations of human rights. In rare cases differences in values are used to strengthen the existing culture and values by showing why they are worth preserving and defending.

Leaders must define the cultural unity they believe in. They must define the democracy-based process that they believe will enhance and protect the country's unity, while still allowing a peaceful and secure evolution of the country's values and norms.

Unity actions must respect and learn from the past, live with cohesion and strength in the present, while building a vibrant and solid cultural community for the future.

CANADIAN SECURITY

Defended Borders

Without defined borders, which are respected and defended, a country does not exist. That is why in the long past white papers on national defence, the mission for the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) always listed the sovereignty of Canada as the first and most important objective.⁶ It must be clear that the CAF is not the only agency responsible for securing the borders and maintaining the sovereignty of Canada. This task falls to every Canadian and many agencies.

First line border service agencies like the Canadian Border Service Agency (CBSA) and the Canadian Coast Guard are vital. In the past eight years, these agencies have seen their mandates and objectives modified, contorted, and in some cases destroyed.

Our airports, land crossings, and seaports have become increasingly porous, not entirely because these groups are underfunded and under equipped, which they are. It is more significant that they have been ordered not to do their originally intended functions. Rather than turning away illegal entrants to our country, these agencies have been ordered by the government to become official greeters to people who arrive illegally. No wonder many Canadians employed in these agencies have become disillusioned, afraid to do their jobs, or have simply resigned.

Linked to border control is, of course, immigration. It is claimed that Canada needs massive immigration, with no respect given to the unity of the country, just as many people as possible, with no concern for cultural cohesion. There appears to be no concern for the ability of the country to absorb this torrent of people. There is no clear expectation for language facility, democratic beliefs, employment “vacancies” or housing and economic opportunities.

Immigration, not linked to the national interest leads to a breakdown of unity.

Uncontrolled immigration means borders simply become irrelevant.

Education and public discussion about the necessity for security of Canada’s borders must be implemented. Performance objectives to ensure that our borders are defended must be clearly articulated by our leaders and supported by Canadians.

External Threats

External threats come in many forms. The threats may come from other nations, foreign terrorist organizations, foreign individuals (e.g. hackers with no aim other than to disrupt), or internal groups not aligned with Canada’s national interests.

Canada is a large country in terms of geography with a small population density. That means that many of the external threats to Canada need our country to work

cooperatively with other nations. Treaties, alliances, partnerships, and mutual aid agreements are needed to ensure national security.

Agencies to counter external threats once again come in many forms. Canadian Military Forces, Canadian Intelligence Services, Canadian policing services, Canadian Emergency Management Organizations, Border Services, and political Foreign Affairs Services must be designed and equipped to work individually and cooperatively, with each other and our allies. Global organizations, whose policies and actions demonstratively align with Canada's national interests, also play a role. It makes no sense to have agreements for management of external threats with a nation, group, or individual who are or may become an adversary, or worse an enemy.

Again, education and public discussion about external threats must be implemented. Performance objectives to ensure management of these external threats must be clearly articulated by leaders and supported by Canadians.

Public fear is not the aim. Public confidence that these threats can be managed must be achieved.

Canada's Role in Global Affairs

Until recently, Canadians have quite correctly come to understand that Canada has an important role to play in the world. People often note that while Canada has never started a war, our nation has played a significant role in bringing wars to an end, in support of democratic principles and our national interests.

Canada has the potential to be a confident and effective middle power in the world. In recent years, this confidence, and our effectiveness, has greatly diminished. We see that now our allies do not include us in talks and agreements, because we are seen as not taking our national security seriously.

Political leaders must show that they understand the relationship between their own national security and their ability to act with others as a trusted partner in global affairs. Equally importantly, of course, is Canada's national interest. The actions must be sustainable, in depth and breadth of objectives.

International aid has been under scrutiny recently. Some foreign aid appears to be counter to our aims, interests, and national security. Sending funds to foreign wars is not in the best interests of Canada if these wars do not directly align to our national interests. While Canadians are challenged to put food on the table and to have a house, they watch as the federal government sends hundreds of millions of dollars to international organizations and specific countries that do not share our democratic aims or our national interests.

Canada needs to rebuild its place on the international stage with allies and other like-minded nations. Our political leaders must set up defined and measurable objectives, aligned with our national interests, to establish Canada once again as a serious country determined to positively support international stability.

Domestic Threats

Domestic threats, once again, come in many forms. They are normally broken into two groups, natural hazards and human-induced hazards. National security is greatly affected by the successful management of both types of hazards.

Natural Hazards are events in the physical environment that are destructive to human life and property. These phenomena are found in or created by naturally occurring events such as meteorological, hydrological, geological, and biological events.

Human-induced Hazards are categorized as those disasters or emergency situations where the direct cause(s) are identifiable human actions, deliberate or otherwise. The hazards are therefore further classified as either non-intentional or intentional:

- Non-Intentional are related to human-error and system failures. It covers the full range of technological failures that may affect industry and manufacturing. It also covers unintentional fires and wildfires;
- Intentional. are deliberate acts that are planned, prepared, and executed with conscious design or purpose, such as employee strikes and unrest, civil unrest, arson, terrorism, criminal acts, and war.

Many of the agencies involved in managing external threats have an important role in managing internal threats. In addition, Emergency Management Organizations (EMOs) exist in all provinces and territories with the aim of protecting people, property, resources, and the environment.

Without a clear and high-level definition of national security for domestic threats, the hazards/threats, given time, can evolve into a breakdown in public welfare or public order. Emphasis on protection of critical infrastructure and its operators for the essentials of life is paramount. The risk management of the economy must be ensured.

Education and public discussion about internal threats to our national interests must be implemented. Performance objectives for ensuring that these internal threats are contained must be clearly articulated by leaders and supported by Canadians.

As always, public fear is not the aim. Public confidence that these threats can be managed must be achieved.

GOVERNANCE

To some degree, Canadians have lost interest in their governments. Voter turnout in municipal, provincial/territorial, and federal elections has dropped to about 65 percent or less of eligible voters.⁷ In fact, the average in the last 10 federal elections has been 64.1 percent.⁸ An even worse turnout is much lower in municipal and school board elections.

When asked, Canadians most commonly say that they believe politicians are the same, and that no matter who is elected, nothing seems to get better. They also say that the government does not care about the issues that are important to them. This concern has become more pronounced as governments have focused on gender and racial issues, diaspora-based issues, and climate activism rather than inflation, housing, and food supply and cost.

Canadians and Canadian politicians must change how they conduct themselves and the issues they champion, based on long term national interests, that reflect the will of the majority of Canadians.

Good governance includes at least the following:

- A well-managed election system with a transparent election process that is independently monitored and using methodologies that are agreed to by the Canadian Public;
- Open and transparent process for choosing elected officials;
- A parliamentary process that is respectful, both internally and externally;
- Respectful discussion of issues by politicians and other citizens, not personal attacks;
- An open and transparent process for proposing, drafting, consulting on, debating, and passing of legislation;
- Open, fulsome, and transparent public engagement on issues, particularly those defined as areas pertaining to the defined national interest;
- A professional and independent news media, not funded by governments;
- The news media must be fair in its coverage of Canadian and international issues;
- The media must encourage debate representing a variety of points of views in the national interest;
- An independent and transparent efficiently sized civil service;
- The civil service must demonstrate transparency, efficiency, and effectiveness in the programs they provide by each order of government;

- An independent judicial system. Judges must be selected openly and transparently, demonstrating that they are not politically aligned;
- Judges should have fixed term limits of not greater than 12 years;
- Courts need to enforce the laws passed by elected officials;
- Where there is an absence of law, the Courts must refer the issue back to the appropriate legislature.

Education and public discussion about the entire issue of good governance must be defined, updated, and constantly implemented. Performance objectives to ensure the proper management of these systems must be clearly articulated by leaders and supported by a clear majority of the Canadian Public.

RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

The Covid-19 pandemic showed how quickly Canadian rights and freedoms enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms,^{9/10} can be trampled on, eviscerated and dismissed. The rights and freedoms in the Charter must be upheld by all levels of government.

Likewise, medical institutions, legal systems, and our mainstream media institutions failed Canadians. Strangely and dangerously, the media that is critical in holding governments and other institutions accountable, supported the suppression of the rights and freedoms of Canadians.

Democracy is built on individual and property rights and freedoms. Yet, these rights were violated during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹¹ Some citizens turned on their fellow citizens who demanded that the Charter be upheld. The failure of our police and courts was extremely problematic because they often deferred to Medical Officers of Health (MoH) rather than to elected politicians. Democracy broke down. There was no attempt to measure legal “correctness” of the directives; the directives were accepted by the Courts based on legal reasonableness.

The use of 15 Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions¹² (e.g. masks, the isolation of exposed individuals, workplace closures, school closures, etc.) had been studied for decades and in almost all circumstances, the decisions were found to do more harm than good. Therefore, the MoH directives did not meet the “Oakes Test”, before Charter Rights and Freedoms were breached.¹³

Of course, all citizens must demand adherence to the Charter Rights and Freedoms.

Breaches of the national interest must result in severe consequences. Performance objectives with measurable performance indicators to ensure that these rights and freedoms are upheld must be clearly articulated by leaders. Without this, Canada will cease to be a democracy.

PROSPERITY AND GROWTH

This national interest must be described by leaders in such a manner to illuminate how they wish Canada to thrive or survive. The ability of Canadians to earn a good living, have private property, and to provide for themselves and their families is the basis of a country that can meet its other national interests. Lack of financial stability leads to the destruction of unity, security, governance, and rights and freedoms.

Without a strong economic capacity, our ability to be a worthy partner or ally is circumspect at best. Investment in our country is dependent on a vision and measurable performance indicators, such as those used by the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development. Just a decade ago, Canada was ranked very high, as a role model for other countries, now it is ranked last and is considered irrelevant.¹⁴

Self-sufficiency for essentials of life (e.g. water, food, shelter) is a major part of economic prosperity.

Canada has always been a trusted provider of resources (e.g. minerals, ore, energy, wood, crops, livestock). This has now become problematic for both our citizens and our international partners. The resources still exist in Canada, but our ability to extract and produce them is failing. Other countries still need these resources. In fact, in the past several years, several major countries have turned to Canada for increased energy resources, only to be turned away by our government.¹⁵

Canada seems out of step with the world's leaders in energy production and use. While the rest of the world continues to use coal in record amounts, Canada has rapidly reduced its production and use of this cheap and reliable energy source, putting our electrical grids in jeopardy.^{16/17}

Value added also needs to be increased to support Canada's prosperity. Sending resources to other countries for refining, and then re-importing the value-added products, costs Canadian jobs and reduces Canadian prosperity.¹⁸ Canadian leaders need to produce the products in our country.

Of course, manufacturing is critical for both self-sufficiency and for external prosperity and growth. Canada has, in fact, exported much of its manufacturing capacity making us dependent on other countries, including those who do not have Canada's national interest in mind. Leaders must decide what is to be the direction for manufacturing in the future.¹⁹

Canada has become increasingly a service-based economy. While this contributes to well-being and creates some jobs, a country cannot build a viable economy by only providing services to its citizens. Canada needs to balance its wealth creation and wealth redistribution to ensure growth and prosperity.

Public discussion about economic prosperity and growth must be initiated. Canada has not done this for at least a decade, and the results, in forecasts showing Canada's last in ranking growth rates have been severe.

PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

Growing up in a country that has a bright future and knows its place in the world gives its citizens both personal and community well-being. A country that is shaming its past, that acts with conflicting political actions both internally and externally, and resorts to dividing its citizens with wedge issues destroys its citizens sense of well-being.

The quality of life of citizens is based on many factors, some of which have been identified above, such as economic prosperity and physical safety. Obviously, Canadian citizens need a sense of purpose and inclusion so they can thrive not merely survive.

Personal health, both mental and physical, is a basic need for Canadians. Mental health is, of course, strengthened when people have positive interaction with other Canadians. Canadians mental health has been adversely affected by the recent actions of our federal government in apologizing for our country historical actions when, in fact, working together for the future is far more important.

Personal health is predominantly the responsibility of individual Canadians, such as maintaining a healthy diet, exercise, a healthy body weight, and scheduling routine medical assessments.^{20/21} Corrective health involves access to medical diagnosis, treatment, emergency medical services, and specialist medical services.

Unfortunately, Canada's medical health services have been in decline. The COVID Pandemic showed to Canadians that our health systems need improvement. Canada ranks 32 in the world, well behind almost all major democracies.^{22/23} Pouring more money into Canada's health care system as we have done for the past twenty years has not fixed the problem, the system has only gotten worse. Leaders must have a plan, not rhetoric, on how these medical systems will be improved to the level of the best in the world. Other OECD countries have much better systems and measures. It's time to learn from our peers.

Canadians personal attitude in the past forty years has shifted from self-discipline and self-responsibility to an attitude where the government is assumed to be responsible and citizens have little, if any responsibilities for their lives. The government seems to have embraced this role, particularly over the past eight years.²⁴

Education and public discussion about this important issue must be held and better policies must be implemented.

CONCLUSION

A nation is successful when a group of people live in one country with defended borders and share common values, even if they vary in cultures and languages. People living in successful nations recognize that they can achieve more together than separately, are responsible for obeying the laws of the nation, and then work with equal discipline together for agreed upon shared national interests.

Until Canadians and their elected leaders agree upon the national interests of Canada, the country will not have national unity, wandering from crisis to crisis. Politicians will continue to turn small issues into major problems, obscuring the many real issues that will make or break our country.

Countries must be nations before they can effectively participate on the world stage. The concept of a “post-national state,” as proclaimed by the Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, is both dangerous and misleading. It implies that democratically elected national governments are no longer relevant. But to deal with emergencies the emergency management quip “that all emergencies are local” still carries considerable weight. Nations will still need to deal with most of their crisis and not rely on other nations. The concept of a “post national” nation flies in the face of logic.

The identification of Canadian national interests is just the first step. These national interests need to be broken into clear and achievable Objectives, with measurable performance indicators. This is then followed by the drafting of policies which then need public debate before finalizing them for implementation as actual plans with firm timelines, resources required and allocated, and feedback procedures in place.

Canada is at a crossroads. Eight years of “post-national” and “socialist” ideals has changed Canada from a country of confident citizens, who believed in a better future and a thriving economy into a country full of apologies, a fractured nation, with many interest groups and tribes looking to break the country up. Today, many people seem to be more interested in their country of origin than Canada, often focusing on wedge issues rather than Canada’s national interests. This needs to change if Canada is to survive for the next quarter century and, hopefully, longer.

Canadian teenagers should be proud of Canada and be motivated to work for a future where our nation will thrive and fulfill the promise of 1967.

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