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My subject is “Canada in the World: The Challenges Ahead”

Canadians are in a struggle today to re-invent our country—to maintain our unity at home while projecting influence abroad. But we need to step back for a moment and think again about our history. We can’t understand how Canada might shape the world in the future unless we first understand how the world has shaped Canada in the past. Before we can re-invent ourselves tomorrow, we need to understand how this country was founded yesterday. We need to understand how deeply the Canadian nation has been shaped by the force and the ideology of empire.

I can detect three stages in this story:

- from Confederation until 1945 when Canadian identity was shaped by imperial Britain
- from 1945 till 1989—the epoch of the Cold War—when our identity was defined by our relation with imperial America
- the present when the imperial order is dying, but a multilateral order has yet to take its place and Canada struggles to find its way in the world.

I will have most to say about the present and future but first we need to reckon with our past.

Let me begin with Confederation and the National Policy of Sir John A. MacDonald.

MacDonald famously said that he was born a British subject and a British subject he would die. For MacDonald, Canada’s role abroad and identity at home were both defined by its partnership in the most powerful force of globalization of its time—the British Empire. MacDonald’s master stroke of nation-building—the Canadian Pacific Railway—was also an empire-building project designed to link Britain to its possessions in India and Australia. The railway would draw to Canada’s shores the excess population of Britain, and Canada would be peopled by Anglo-Saxon stock. Canada would become the communications highway of empire, its granary—and in wars to come—its armory.

MacDonald’s vision of Canada tied us together from ocean to ocean, settled the prairies and assured our survival—no means certain—next door to the US. But it also left painful scars that endure to the present.

The West was settled as a colony of Canada, its lands and its resources administered by the Department of the Interior in Ottawa, the freight rates Western farmers paid set in board rooms in Montreal. Western alienation is not new.

It was there from the beginning, a consequence of the failure to allow full self-government in the 50 years after Confederation.

A vision of Canada in the world—which saw it as a white Anglo-Saxon bastion of empire—had no place in it for the Métis and the aboriginal peoples of Canada. The MacDonal who built the railway was also the Prime Minister who ordered the execution of Riel. French Canada never forgave him.

L'image impériale du Canada n'avait pas sa place dans la réalité française. C'est dans l'Ouest, avec l'exécution de Riel suivie par les actes du Manitoba, de la Saskatchewan et de l'Alberta, qui limitaient le droit à l'instruction publique en langue française, que la désillusion des Québécois face à la fédération canadienne a commencé. C'est aussi pourquoi l'expression « le rêve national » employée par Pierre Berton sonne faux pour tant de Québécois.

For the aboriginal people of the plains the national dream meant the cession of land through treaty, the reserves and a school system designed to turn aboriginal peoples into Canadians.

Residential schools inflicted scars that should teach us all that you cannot build nations by forced assimilation. Residential schools didn't just harm those who attended. They depleted the reservoirs of trust between first nations and those who came after. They were a nation-building exercise that damaged our nation.

A third group of people—the 15,000 Chinese laborers who hacked their way through the Rockies—laid the steel that tied us together. They might have expected the gratitude of the new nation. Instead, they were barred from citizenship and Chinese immigration was subjected to a punitive head-tax.

These three exclusions—of First Nations, Métis and Chinese—were mandated by imperial ideologies that restricted citizenship to those of British and white stock and defined national unity in terms of ethnic majority dominance.

These were bad ideas but none was original to Canada. South of the border, anti-Chinese sentiment was, if anything, worse; railway agents and the US Cavalry waged a war of extermination against Plains peoples. The idea that the nation must be one—under a dominant majority—was a commonplace of the nation-building ideologies of Bismarck's Germany and the France of the Third Republic.

These ideas of nation-building were the Procrustean bed on which Canadian reality was tied.

C'est le Québec qui a affranchi le Canada.

Le Canada anglais croit depuis toujours que le Québec constitue le principal obstacle au rêve national. Mais nous devons comprendre que le Canada d'aujourd'hui doit beaucoup au rejet par les Canadiens-français de l'idée impériale du Canada.

Laurier a été le premier des premiers ministres à comprendre que le lien impérial pouvait avoir une signification pour le Canada anglais, mais qu'il aliénait profondément le Québec.

C'est lors de la crise de la conscription de 1917 que l'heure de vérité a sonné pour l'idéologie impériale. Un Canada anglais qui trouvait sa raison d'être patriotique dans l'expression « pour le Roi et la patrie » rencontrait avec stupeur des Québécois qui se demandaient pourquoi ils devaient mourir dans les tranchées de la Somme.

Les nationalistes québécois comme Henri Bourassa — qui s'opposait à la conscription — ont forcé le pays entier à confronter le fait que la définition impériale et anglaise du Canada n'avait pas sa place dans la réalité et l'identité québécoises.

C'est ironique mais vrai : ce sont les nationalistes québécois qui ont aidé à comprendre que le Canada ne pouvait pas survivre comme colonie; pour survivre, il devait devenir un état indépendant.

Canada could not survive as a colony. It would have to become a nation.

We need to remember how long it took—until the Westminster Statute of 1931—for Canada to secure the right to a foreign policy of its own. Even in 1939, Britain declared war believing its Dominions would automatically follow suit.

Prime Minister King insisted that the Canadian Parliament decide the matter.

When we honour our veterans every year, we should honour them as nation-builders, our greatest ones. Canada won its independence in the world through the sacrifice of our soldiers at Monte Cassino, the Normandy beaches and the liberation of Holland. We won our independence because of the work of our women at home in the munitions factories. At war's end, we could demand a prominent place in the creation of the UN and NATO. We had created the sinews of independent national power: an army, a navy, an air-force. To this day, a credible military capability remains the sine qua non of international influence.

The Second War was a nation-building experience in another—still darker—sense. We had interned Ukrainians and other nationals from the belligerent powers in World War I,

and in World War II, we repeated the same mistake, deporting thousands of Japanese to the interior of British Columbia.

Canada was not alone in interning enemy aliens but let us remember that Canada interned the Japanese before Roosevelt did, and Roosevelt cited Canadian actions as a justifying precedent.

As the internment of the Japanese—and of Ukrainians in the first war—shows, when we build Canada by *exclusion*, we lay a heavy charge on the generations that come after us.

Let me turn now to the second phase—the Cold War history of Canadian nation building from 1945 until 1989.

The British Empire was gone. Canada was an independent state. But our economic and political destiny was now linked to the new empire to the south. American global leadership gave Canada its place in the post war world. The purpose of our foreign policy was to help America build a new multilateral order, standing on three pillars: military deterrence of the Soviets and Chinese; a defensive alliance of liberal democracies; and a rule-based, law-based international order structured around the United Nations.

When America provided clear leadership, Canada knew its way in the world. We were present at the creation of the UN and NATO. We fought with the Americans in Korea. We invented peace-keeping and downsized our armed forces to fit that mission, believing that we were moving towards a world of stable states where cross-border disputes would be policed by UN peace-keepers.

In the Cold War, Canada also found a way to assert its independence. We recognized Cuba. We recognized China. We disagreed over Vietnam.

We've learned that the price of disagreeing with the Americans was not as high as we thought. Our problem is not that we can't muster the courage to disagree: our problem is to get them to listen when we do.

Getting them to listen means reminding them that it doesn't pay to take us for granted: they need our oil, our electricity and our water; they need safe borders. The *quid pro quo* is that they play by the rules. Lumber and beef are not side-shows to us: failure to solve these problems makes their best friends wonder whether Americans can be trusted.

Straight talking on these issues would help. But we also need to convey the message that Canada pays its own way. Our relationship with the Americans works so long as we do not behave like free riders. If we shoulder our proper share of the defense of North America, if we defend our sovereignty, we can agree to disagree on ballistic missile defense. If we fail to do our full share—but reserve the right to give them lectures—we will be dismissed as boy scouts. I have nothing against the scouts, but we live in a world of adults. In a world of adults, strength comes from capabilities not sermons.

In a world where the key public policy issue for every nation on earth is—how to handle the Americans—anti-Americanism is the form of patriotism we can least afford.

We have an inferiority complex about the Americans that too many of us turn into a superiority complex. A superiority complex is as bad for us as an inferiority complex. We need to build an identity beyond complexes.

We need to remember too that if the 20th century belonged to America, there is no guarantee that the 21st century will. Proving your patriotism by being anti-American is going to look pretty parochial in a world where global dominance shifts eastwards to China and India.

While we were learning to live beside the most powerful nation in the world, we were also undergoing the most profound internal change in our national identity since Confederation.

There were three distinct aspects of this story:

- the decision to open our doors to multicultural immigration;
- the decision to do justice to aboriginal claims;
- the Quiet Revolution in Quebec.

These stories belong together in the master narrative of our country's history. The 1960's marked the moment when Canada decided—without really understanding what it was doing—to change the way we were building the nation. All three transformations enriched our country.

From the suppression of difference, to the recognition of difference, from majority rule to minority rights. We are still in the throes of this revolution. We can call it the revolution of inclusion.

This story began with the transformation of our immigration policy. In the 30's we had actually turned away desperate Jewish refugees, seeking a port in the storm of fascism. After the war, we reversed course: becoming, for the first time, a place of refuge for the displaced and disinherited of a Europe in ruins.

Even more significant, after nearly 75 years of building a white only Canada, we decided to embrace a multicultural Canada. Between 1947 and 1949, the BC legislature enfranchised Chinese, Japanese, East Asian and aboriginal Canadians for the first time. In the late 1950's and 1960's the barriers against Asian, East Asian and black immigration began to come down. We quietly dismantled a century's old assumption that Canada could only hold together if the common stock of the people was Anglo-Saxon. We had embarked on a radical new vision of the nation: based not on common origins, but on common citizenship.

The revolution in immigration policy brought down the walls that separated Canada from the world. Immigration collapsed the Canadian illusion that we were a safe haven from the troubles of the world. The refugees of a tormented world found themselves on our doorstep. Immigration also widened the issues that now mattered to Canadians.

From 1867 to 1967, the central question in Canadian foreign policy was Canada's role in European security. No longer: now the stability of Haiti, or Somalia, Sri Lanka or Nigeria, the fate of the Palestinians now matter just as much as the future of Europe to millions of Canadians.

The arrival of a multicultural Canada coincided with the aboriginal revival: the return of cultural and spiritual pride, the demand that treaties be honored, that rights be respected, the insistence that the aboriginal presence be honored as central to our identity as a people.

From nation-building as forced assimilation, we have embarked on nation building as inclusion. The results have been impressive: more aboriginal peoples in positions of Canadian leadership, more in higher education, more land and territory restored to aboriginal self-government, and most important of all, breaking the silence over the history of exclusion that built our country, and the return of aboriginal peoples to their rightful role in our shared narrative of how our nation was built.

Here too what we did at home was profoundly influenced by what was happening overseas: the aboriginal revival was global, not just Canadian; the multicultural revolution did not just transform Toronto and Vancouver; it transformed the face of London and Paris.

The multicultural revolution and the aboriginal revival coincided with the Quiet Revolution in Quebec.

The Quiet Revolution was a challenge to the English narrative of nation-building. We discovered that our national dream was not theirs; that our history was not theirs; that they had bitter—and very real—memories of exclusion—from economic and political power.

Instead of thinking of Quebec nationalism as a threat, we need to understand how profoundly positive the Quebec challenge to Canada proved to be.

Quebecers took the lead in the re-invention of Canada in the 1960's: the entrenchment of bilingualism, equal rights and social programs like Medicare—items of common citizenship that all Canadians think of as their birthright were essentially invented by the brilliant Quebec generation that went to Ottawa in 1965.

We also forget that key icons of the nationalist achievement in Quebec—taking Hydro into public ownership—were profoundly in the Canadian grain. What Levesque did in the 1960's Adam Beck had done in Ontario generations before.

Les nationalistes québécois étaient, autrement dit, plus profondément Canadiens dans leur vision progressiste du gouvernement et leur engagement envers l'égalité des droits qu'ils n'ont jamais voulu admettre.

The challenges Quebec faces as a society are essentially the same as those confronting the rest of Canada: how to sustain the fiscal basis of the social programs that make us distinctive; how to invest in people; how to manage the arrival of a multicultural society; how to respond justly to the aboriginal challenge.

Pour les séparatistes du Québec, la réalité multiculturelle de Montréal a exposé le côté réactionnaire et périmé d'un discours nationaliste basé sur la fiction que la nation québécoise est composée d'un monolithe pure laine et de vieille souche. Le nationalisme québécois serait multiculturel ou ne survivrait pas. En fait, la fracture de la nation québécoise—ou plus exactement—la découverte que la nation québécoise n'englobait pas toute la population québécoise explique, je crois, la double défaite du projet séparatiste. Pourvu que ça dure.

As our new governor general has said, it was the arrival of a multicultural Canada that sounded the death knell of the two solitudes.

Pour les patriotes canadiens, partisans d'un Canada uni, la réalité multiculturelle a aussi bouleversé leurs discours sur un Canada anglais, anglo-saxon, protestant et attaché aux traditions anglaises. Au lieu de deux solitudes ancrées dans leur identité, les Canadiens-anglais et français ont dû créer une nouvelle identité qui correspondait à la réalité visible dans les rues de Toronto et Montréal. De part et d'autre, les gens du Québec et les gens du Canada sont à la recherche d'une idée civique du Canada, basée sur un attachement commun à des valeurs de tolérance et de respect pour la diversité et les droits de la personne.

Toutefois, pour avoir une idée de la tolérance, il faut avoir aussi une idée de l'intolérance; la tolérance n'équivaut pas au laisser-aller; la tolérance n'est une valeur que si elle est ancrée dans un projet civique commun basé sur le respect et l'égalité. Sinon, elle n'est qu'un autre mot pour désigner l'indifférence et le mépris caché.

Pour maintenir une société tolérante, il faut faire des choix publics difficiles : choisir entre le respect de la liberté de croyance des musulmans attachés à la sharia, et la liberté des femmes musulmanes, leur droit à l'éducation, au divorce, à l'égalité des biens, et à la protection contre toute forme de violence. La tolérance s'arrête là où la violation des droits de la personne commence.

La question centrale pour le Canada et pour le Québec est la même : quel est le contrat de citoyenneté et de valeurs communes qui lie les Canadiens de diverses origines à un projet commun?

Les droits individuels ne suffisent pas. On peut libérer le citoyen mais appauvrir la communauté. Il faut aussi un dialogue basé sur un attachement civique. Nous avons besoin d'un dialogue démocratique dans les deux langues; le défi politique est de mener un dialogue sur la citoyenneté et sur les moyens pratiques de garantir l'égalité et le respect, tout en évitant la tyrannie de la majorité.

Canadians are struggling to adapt to a citizenship where majorities may prevail in elections but they cannot dictate the policy agenda, where all communities are equal, and all are at the table, no longer sharing the same myths, the same stories, the same origins. This is the central challenge we face: maintaining democratic civility—plus the capacity to make decisions together—when we no longer share the same myths of origin.

We have had our revolution of inclusion, and now the question becomes: when everyone wants inclusion, how do we hold our country together?

The chief risk to our national experiment is social inequality. When disadvantages of race and class combine, we don't have a multicultural community. We just have ghettos. We betray the promise of Canadian life when we do.

Inclusion is not enough in itself. There must be rules. Who makes the rules? What are they to be?

The rules of the game are the Charter. We have managed inclusion through rights: by entrenching individual rights—but also aboriginal rights and language rights. And we have left the judges to adjudicate the conflicts that inevitably arise between individual and collective rights.

But the Charter is not enough. The constitutional rules of the game are up for grabs. At Meech Lake, at Charlottetown, political elites sought to entrench new rules based on recognition of Quebec as a distinct society, rights of aboriginal self-government and the rights of all provinces to constitutional vetoes. Both English and French Canada balked at the price.

We know we need new rules; we also know we cannot agree on what they are. At least we know what we do not need: another Meech, another Charlottetown. We do not want to roll those dice again. At least both Quebec and Canada are agreed on that.

While the stalemate continues, the strains on our federation grow. Beneath the current talk about “fiscal imbalances” is something more serious: a questioning of the logic of equalization between regions and provinces, a questioning of whether we are a community of fate that shares our wealth and seeks to minimize our common threats.

How long we can manage the politics of inclusion without new rules is anybody's guess. We are testing—to the limits—the politics of surviving by agreeing to disagree.

A few simple rules would help us get by until the political will for something better begins to emerge. Levels of government in Canada—municipal, provincial, aboriginal, federal-- should be equal. Equality means they should stay out of each other's jurisdictions. National unity is not another synonym for federal power. This country is too complex, too diverse to be run from Ottawa or from Toronto for that matter. Canadians want strong provincial, municipal and aboriginal governments that represent their interests, but clear majorities also want to live in *one* country, not ten balkanized principalities.

Nous sommes un pays, pas dix féodalités rivales.

To avoid balkanization, we need a federalism based on respect and recognition: respect for the jurisdiction of others, recognition that not all provinces are the same.

But respect is a two-way street.

Le Québec ne peut pas exiger que le pouvoir fédéral respecte les pouvoirs du gouvernement du Québec si, en même temps, ses ministres insistent pour que le Québec mène sa propre politique internationale.

Le Québec peut toujours promouvoir ses intérêts dans le domaine économique—pas de problème avec la visite de M. Charest à Pékin—mais c'est le gouvernement canadien—avec l'appui des autres paliers de gouvernement, municipal, autochtone et provincial--qui doit parler pour le Canada.

We cannot speak to the world, if we cannot speak with one voice. Of course when we do, those who speak in our name can include delegates and delegations from all the provinces and orders of government who need to be at the table, but we need to speak with a single voice. Quebec admits we should speak with a united voice, but contests the idea that it should be a single voice. Nations that cannot speak with one voice cannot protect their interests. Nations that cannot project a basic unity abroad quickly become a laughing stock.

Maintaining a coherent national voice is hard. We have been living through a revolution of inclusion at home, but also a deep transformation in our relation to the external world.

The Cold War ended with a victory for the steadfastness of purpose that had marked American policies of containment, but once victory had been achieved, American leadership was lost, and with it was lost the guiding star of Canadian foreign policy. America has been drifting and we have been drifting ever since.

Middle powers leverage influence by securing power within multilateral institutions. Canadian influence since the end of the Cold War has waned because the institutions—the UN and NATO—that gave us leverage have languished from lack of leadership by the US.

Canada believes in building the International Criminal Court. We have discovered that if it's going to be built, we will have to build it in the face of US opposition. Canada believes in international agreements to control climate change: we now know we will have to build an international consensus to save the environment without the US. Canada believes in multilateral trade agreements to manage and grow international trade—but we will have to fight for these good things with a trading partner who won't play ball on softwood lumber. We should not be surprised if we are finding it tough to make our mark in the new world around us.

If we feel rudderless in our foreign policy, in our projection of power and influence abroad, it is because we have always, since the very beginning, found our way in the world by using, manipulating and exploiting imperial relations to our own advantage. We did so with the British. We did so with the Americans. And now the Americans don't know what they are doing, and neither do we.

The fact that America no longer leads in a direction we can follow essentially explains our disarray. Nothing in Canadian foreign policy seems absolutely essential or necessary. We have no coherent system of triage: we do not have a way to distinguish the vital and essential from the merely important or fashionable. We do a little development—not enough--; we do a little governance promotion, not enough to be a serious competitor of the Scandinavians; we promote UN reform, half-heartedly, knowing that we cannot hope for much, since we are not on the Security Council and the Americans don't much care for reform in any event.

So what is the way forward?

We need to decide that if the Americans will not lead, we will have to create alliances with other countries to do so. The crucial fact is that the price of saying no to the Americans is going down not up. This is not an invitation to provoke them, to ignore them or to defy them. It is an invitation for us to decide we will not wait for them to lead. We must take advantage of this fact to build—in concert with others—a rule-bound multilateral order that seeks to reduce the inequalities in the global order, between those who are zones of danger, and those who are in zones of safety, between those who have energy and those who have none, between those who are well fed and those who are hungry. These inequalities are a challenge to our national security.

We cannot be all things to all people, so we need to focus. How ?

Il faut cultiver notre jardin, Voltaire said. This is not a recipe for quietism and complacent withdrawal. It means we have to set our house in order at home. It means that Canada matters to the world, less for its specific policies—though they matter—than for our example. If every democracy in the world is wondering how to create a new contract that will turn multicultural ghettos into communities of citizens, if that is the central political task of our age, then what matters most is that we do this right. This is what we must show to the world.

We must survive: we are a blessed country—rich, prosperous and free. If we cannot make a multicultural community composed of two national language groups, three founding peoples, and constituent communities from every nation in the world—no one can. No one will.

So how do we do it? I do not know all the answers. But I do know one thing. The foundation of the task is truth. We must tell the truth to each other. We must tell the truth about our past. We cannot build a national culture out of difference on the basis of political correctness and embarrassed silence.

Pour un Canadien-anglais comme moi, le principal devoir à l'égard de la citoyenneté aujourd'hui en est un de vérité. Envers l'histoire. Envers la réalité autochtone et la réalité québécoise. La reconnaissance—qui est nécessaire pour la construction d'un projet de vie commune—doit passer par la vérité d'abord et l'instauration de nouvelles règles dépend de la construction d'une vérité partagée.

C'est pourquoi j'ai mis tant d'accent sur les passages pénibles dans notre histoire. J'aime mon pays, mais notre pays a besoin, pas seulement de l'amour patriotique, mais de la vérité patriotique.

We need to be clear. We cannot mean anything to the world unless we stay united. National unity is the precondition for any influence in the world. Our unity matters not just to us, but to the world. We need to show that a politics of inclusion is not a politics of chaos that a respect for difference can go hand in hand with rules of civility and boundaries for tolerance. We need to show that we can maintain national unity without giving away the store; that the politics of inclusion—including the West, including aboriginal peoples, including Quebec, including the Maritimes, including central Canada—does not have to mean giving in to every regional interest, but rather creating and sustaining the vision that Canadians do want something more than regions. They want a country. They deserve nothing less.

We need to remember simple things: why we need a country, why in all the loose talk about a globalized, borderless world, national identity matters so much. Because nations are what keep us free, what keep us safe, what give us purposes larger than ourselves. Individualism is not enough. The good life is not enough. We need the bigger frame, the larger meaning, the purpose that gives a sense to our lives. The name of that purpose, that bigger frame, that larger meaning is Canada, our beloved home.