



CANADIAN GLOBAL AFFAIRS INSTITUTE
INSTITUT CANADIEN DES AFFAIRES MONDIALES

formerly **Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute (CDFAI)**

A Canadian Agenda for the USA: Obama and Beyond

by **Colin Robertson**
March, 2016



A Canadian Agenda for the USA: Obama and Beyond

by Colin Robertson

Canadian Global Affairs Institute Fellow
March, 2016



CANADIAN GLOBAL AFFAIRS INSTITUTE
INSTITUT CANADIEN DES AFFAIRES MONDIALES

formerly Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute (CDFAI)

Prepared for the Canadian Global Affairs
Institute 1600, 530 – 8th Avenue S.W., Calgary,
AB T2P 3S8 www.cgi.ca

©2016 Canadian Global Affairs
Institute ISBN: 978-1-927573-58-7



▶ **Executive Summary**

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau can use this week's Washington Summit to advance Canadian interests with the Obama Administration. Successful outcomes in Washington will also help to set both the agenda and right mood for the upcoming North American Leaders Summit and, next January, for opening discussions with the next U.S. Administration.

A Canadian action agenda is outlined below followed by background and historical analysis. Specific initiatives are grouped in four baskets: Security; Trade and Economic; Climate and the North; and Getting It Done.



A Canadian Action Agenda

I - Security

Reaffirm our international security partnership and alliance:

1. Expand NORAD's mandate to include cyber-threats and changing conditions in our Arctic region.
2. Join ballistic missile defence to give Canadian coverage.
3. Upgrade the Canadian Armed Forces and move toward 2% GDP spending to demonstrate Canada's continuing commitment to continental defence and collective security.
4. Create a framework, with appropriate protocols on privacy and confidentiality, for a reciprocal sharing of data to include cross-border travel, including no-fly lists as another step towards the implementation of Entry-Exit.

II – Trade and Economic

Reaffirm our economic collaboration through the Regulatory Cooperation Council and border action:

1. Expand Canada's representation into every state by 2018 through use of honorary consuls and new diplomacy.
2. Develop a North American Competitiveness Strategy by December 2016 and address intellectual property and investor-state relations.
3. Take advantage of our continental labour pool:
 - Renew the Tri-lateral NAFTA working group to modernize the list of TN Professions and permit easier short-term cross-border movement of professionals.
 - Establish a Known Employer program building on the Trusted Traveller program to permit employers to more easily move servicing and training personnel across the borders.
4. Renew regulatory cooperation:
 - Harmonize cross-border regulations and policies on items like truck size and weight.
 - Harmonize industry certification standards for skilled professionals
 - Continue the regulatory partnership between Canada and the U.S. on the trade of agriculture and agri-food products.
 - Situate the Canada-USA Regulatory Cooperation Council in the Privy



Council Office and the White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs to ensure executive oversight.

5. Renew the border action plan:
 - Legislate pre-clearance in both countries.
 - Pilot technology to improve cross-border freight flow.
 - Establish pre-inspection at manufacturing facilities.
 - Expand “cargo strategy” and inspect goods at their first point of Canada/U.S. entry.
 - Establish a ‘single window’ for business reporting to streamline processing of goods and services.
 - Establish point-of-entry inspection for in-transit goods and counterfeit cargo.
6. Create better infrastructure collaboration:
 - Improve permit process for cross-border infrastructure projects including bridges and tunnels, hydro-transmission, pipelines, road and rail access.
 - Create a Joint Border Infrastructure Commission. Provide annual recommendations on joint infrastructure priorities and identify opportunities.
7. Work with regional organizations, notably the Pacific Northwest Economic Region, the Council of the Great Lakes Region and the Cali-Baja Region, to develop best practises in border management, clean energy, and cross-border infrastructure and labour efficiencies.
8. Expand the 2010 state and province agreement on procurement.
9. Appoint point persons to report by June 2016 on resolving softwood lumber dispute.
10. Travel North America: Use tourism – ‘the two (and three)-nation vacation’ – to foster closer people-to-people engagement and boost economic development.

III – Climate and the North

Reaffirm Environmental and Clean Energy Cooperation:

1. Expand the mandate of the International Joint Commission to include climate-related issues.
2. Develop a North American pricing carbon strategy recognizing that one-approach-does-not-fit-all and embrace regional and state/provincial experimentation.
3. Host a North American Climate Jamboree as part of our sesquicentennial celebrations.



4. Develop an Arctic strategy including shared plans for search and rescue, cooperation on icebreaker capacity, safety for northern communities, climate adaptation, telecommunication infrastructure and joint stewardship of the Beaufort Sea.

IV – Getting it Done

1. Reinvigorate legislator-to-legislator relationships, including continuous outreach to Congress by Canadian ministers.
2. Improve collaboration by tasking:
 - Foreign Ministers to resume the practice of quarterly meetings on Canada-US issues and shared international agenda, with specific attention to shared issues of environment, safety, and security in the North American Arctic.
 - Environment Ministers to meet annually in stock-taking session as we fulfill our Paris COP21 commitments and to complement the regular North American energy ministers forum.
 - High Level Economic Dialogue, modeled on the US-Mexico dialogue, bringing the lead economic ministers together to look at Canada-US (and North American) competitiveness.
 - Chiefs of Staff to work with our ambassadors and ministers to keep leaders personally informed of progress on Canada-US issues.

Background and Analysis

This week's visit by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to Washington is a big deal.

Canada does not get a lot of attention in the USA (not a bad thing as problems are sometimes treated with a hammer). This is the most sustained attention that the White House has given to Canadian issues since President Obama visited Canada in February, 2009 and the auspices are good: Barack Obama likes Justin Trudeau and a prime minister can have no better friend than the occupant of the White House.

The next administration, Democrat or Republican, will be susceptible to protectionist and nativist impulses around trade and security. When the US sneezes, Canada catches a cold. The more that we can do in the remaining months of the Obama Administration to inoculate ourselves, the better.

Mr. Trudeau has taken to heart Brian Mulroney's dictum that a prime minister's [most important relationship](#) is that with the US president.



The State Dinner - the first since 1997 when the Clintons hosted the Chrétien - is tangible evidence of Mr. Trudeau's ability to quickly develop a good relationship with the US President. It also underlines Mr. Trudeau's appreciation that in a social media world, statecraft requires stagecraft – the public in public diplomacy. The profile and cachet is important for a new leader. It also accords with Canadians desire to have their prime minister do good at home and do them proud internationally. Nor will face time with President Obama be lost on other international leaders.

The Leaders' deliberations will set an agenda for the remaining ten months of the Obama Administration. It will prime the upcoming North American Leaders Summit. It will also become the reference point for the next Administration when it takes office on January 20, 2017.

Be Bold

There is sometimes a Canadian tendency to start from a position of what we think the other side is prepared to give, rather than what our side really wants. This makes Canadians good diplomats in multilateral negotiations, but when negotiating with the USA, we need to play by their rules and go for broke. Going into their meetings with the US side, the Canadians should take inspiration from Chicago architect Daniel Burnham:

Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work..."

The Oval Office Discussion

The White House discussions will likely begin with a tour d'horizon of global tensions – the Middle East and ISIL, Iran, Russian aggressiveness in Ukraine, North Korea, and a rising China. Mr. Trudeau will likely speak to Canada's experience in processing the 25,000 Syrian refugees.

President Obama will likely speak to the Nuclear Security Summit that he will host at the end of March, the forthcoming North American Leaders' summit. They will probably speak about other issues in the Americas, notably developments in Brazil and Venezuela and President Obama's visit this month to Cuba.

The President will be interested in the implications of Mr. Trudeau's re-commitment to UN peace operations. Doubtless, he will press Canada to spend more on defence.

There is no quibble with the quality of the Canadian Forces but the Americans want Canada and the rest of the Alliance to pick up more of the load. Canadian defence spending is just [one percent](#), the least of any member of the Arctic Council, and significantly less than Australia (1.8 per cent), Britain (2.07 per cent) and the United States (3.07 per cent). Without greater commitment, former Defense Secretary Robert Gates told NATO member, the Alliance faces "a dim if not [dismal future](#)."

Cybersecurity is the [greatest threat](#) to the USA according to National Security Intelligence Director James Clapper and, given the integration of our grids and pipelines, it should be added to NORAD's mandate.



Innovation, especially when it comes to climate and following through on the Paris COP21 commitments, is an area where both leaders share equal enthusiasm and a willingness to be bold. The President's Alaska trip last summer put climate on the forefront and greater collaboration in our shared Arctic waters would make sense.

Mr. Trudeau will want President Obama's assessment of congressional approval of the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), an early Obama initiative. The TPP effectively updated the NAFTA. Do we have a plan B if it does not succeed?

Improving North American competitiveness is a shared objective. This should lead to a discussion on how we can bring some convergence to the anticipated trans-European agreements that Canada (through CETA), the USA (through TTIP) and Mexico (through updating their existing agreement) are negotiating with the European Union.

Bilateral issues, including energy and the environment, the border and regulatory issues, softwood lumber, will be discussed, but essentially for the leaders' sign-off, as they will have already been either considered or negotiated by cabinet officers and senior officials. Congress is [moving](#) on preclearance while the Department of Homeland Security [is moving](#) on a Known Employer program. Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale says the [record-sharing](#) challenges that would enable Entry-Exit are close to resolution and there is progress on enabling pre-inspection at manufacturing plants.

Complex and Complicated but Mutually-Beneficial Relationship

Ours is a very complex relationship built, as John F. Kennedy [remarked](#), on ties of history, geography, economics, security and deep people-to-people relationships.

The broad contours of the modern Canada-US relationship were established by Mackenzie King and Franklin Roosevelt. The bargain was straightforward and served the interests of both nations. Canada got access to the US market, now the biggest in the world, and the USA got a reliable security partner (notwithstanding John Diefenbaker's tepid response during the Cuban Missile Crisis or Pierre Trudeau's partial withdrawal of Canadian troops from NATO).

Former Ambassador Allan Gotlieb [observed](#) correctly that our overriding national preoccupation has been about deriving maximum advantage from our geographical proximity while limiting U.S. power over our national destiny. We do that through developing counterweight relationships, pursuing multilateralism and creating institutions that level the playing field.

The relationship is mutually-rewarding: over [\\$2.4 billion](#) in trade crossing the border daily. But it is asymmetrical: over [75 percent](#) of Canada's trade is with the USA while only [19 percent](#) of US exports are destined to Canada.

About a [third](#) of Canada-US trade is intra-firm through big manufacturing enterprises like GE or GM and now digital economy firms like Microsoft and Google. North America (and this now includes Mexico) is fast becoming one big supply chain, such that it is less about classical 'trade' than making things together – notably trains, planes and automobiles but also everything from soup to computers.



What counts is the assurance of on-time delivery of the pieces that go into the final product and, increasingly, assured passage for the people who service this process, through training, repair, maintenance, sales and planning. Our trade in services – engineering, banking and insurance – now accounts for [70 percent](#) of Canada's GDP. The USA accounts for [over half](#) of our services export trade.

Yet our border has [thickened](#): in 2000, 90 million cars and 7.1 million trucks transited the border; in 2014 the numbers were 59.6 million cars and 5.8 million trucks.

When borders become chokepoints because of security concerns or poor infrastructure, the supply chain breaks down. We lose the competitive advantages of North America: a big market; abundant capital for investment; an educated, competent workforce; and secure and abundant resources, especially energy.

Even though it is asymmetrical – the USA matters more to Canada than Canada matters to the USA, it continues to be the biggest bilateral trade relationship in the world. This brings irritants, especially on the trade side.

These generate headlines that often obscure the realities of our relationship. Canadian trade sustains over [9 million](#) US jobs. Trade in goods and services are worth over \$US760 billion (2014), accounting for almost $\frac{1}{4}$ of Canada's GDP. There is a constant, mutually-beneficial flow of people - [400,000](#) criss-cross the border daily.

Institutions

Our relationship is reinforced by institutions.

The USA can be an awkward Gulliver. While we are not Lilliputians, finding ways to tie the US to bilateral institutional mechanisms levels the playing field. Institutions create rules for coordination, networks of collaboration and establish norms for the conduct of good neighbourly relations.

Those on the security side include the bilateral Permanent Joint Board of Defence (1940) and Defence Production Sharing Agreement (1956), the binational North American Aerospace Defence Command (1958) and the multilateral North Atlantic Treaty Organization (1949).

Trade and investment ties were strengthened by the Autopact (1965), the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement (1989) and the North American Free Trade Agreement with its labour and environmental accords (1993-4).

Infrastructure projects were also addressed beginning with the US construction of the Alaska Highway (1942-3) and the joint collaboration through the St. Lawrence Seaway Agreement (1954).

Canada and the USA also pioneered international environmental cooperation through the Boundary Waters Treaty and the International Joint Commission (1909) regulating the waterways that make up close to one third of our shared border. Environmental cooperation has been strengthened by a series of agreements including the Columbia River Treaty (1964) that is once again up for renewal, Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (1978) and its subsequent



iterations, the Air Quality (Acid Rain) Agreement (1991) as well as cooperation on various international environmental agreements including the Montreal Ozone Protocol (1991) and the Paris Climate Change Agreement (2015).

Tending the Garden

Former Secretary of State George Shultz, who understands statecraft thought effective diplomacy started with the neighbourhood because if you couldn't get the neighbourhood right how could you manage the rest of the world?

Shultz likened diplomacy to [gardening](#), believing that “the way to keep weeds from overwhelming you is to deal with them constantly and in their early stages.” Shultz began the practice of quarterly meetings with his Canadian counterpart Allan J. MacEachen and then Joe Clark, a practice worth renewing.

We are different from the Americans, but no other nation comes as close to understanding the American temperament. When we are on our game, our interpretation of the world to the U.S. and of the U.S. (especially during Republican administrations) to the rest of the world is appreciated and gives us some leverage.

Astute Canadian leaders, from Mackenzie King through Jean Chrétien, appreciated that this interpretative capacity gives Canada international leverage. It also underlines why a first-class diplomatic service is a very good Canadian investment — and why vigorously embracing multilateralism gives Canada additional place and standing.

Being there also underlines why we should have representation in every American state to promote trade but also to push back on protectionism that, unchecked, finds a ready ear in Congress.

The main market for [35 US states](#) is Canada (we are number 2 for another 10 states). Canadians are major investors in the USA. This supports US jobs. But to make our case and check the protectionist instinct we need to be there.

We should be creative. For a fraction of what it costs to establish a classic diplomat we should engage expatriate Canadians as our honorary consuls acting as our eyes, ears and voice. State representation would be our early warning system on the drift (or push!) to protectionism that will come no matter who gets elected this fall.

Look to the work of Canada's Honorary Consul in Arizona and the work of the [Canada-Arizona Business Council](#). Their efforts have contributed significantly to increasing Canadian trade and investment with the Grand Canyon state.

We should develop within our foreign service a US-oriented career stream. We need to expose a new generation of Canadian diplomats to the relationship, harnessing 'millennial' energy to bring change to how we manage the relationship especially given the bilateral trade potential of the clean energy economy



It's all about the Border

During the past fifteen years much has taken place to further integrate the relationship around border access:

- Chrétien-Clinton Canada-US Shared Border Accord (1995);
- Chrétien-Clinton Canada-US Partnership (CUSP 1999) with its focus on bottoms-up input from the border communities;
- Manley-Ridge Smart Border Accord after 9-11 (2001);
- Bush-Martin-Fox trilateral Security and Prosperity Partnership (2005);
- Harper-Obama Beyond-the-Border and Regulatory Cooperation Council initiatives (2011);

Of the various previous plans, the 'Smart Border' approach worked best and it should be the model for the Trudeau-Obama initiatives.

The Smart Board Accord was transparent, specific and the list of deliverables (30+) was accomplished in just over a year. There was serious and continuous oversight from by political heavyweights Deputy Prime Minister John Manley and Homeland Security Advisor (and later Secretary) Tom Ridge with executive coordination through the Pricy Council Office and National Security Council to ensure inter-agency coordination and compliance. Updates were regularly posted on the web.

By contrast the Security and Prosperity Partnership lumbered along and eventually sank under the weight of its 300+ initiatives and because there was no clear mechanism to operationalize what was on the table.

The Issues: Security

Security cooperation has several dimensions: military, intelligence, policing and border.

Our military collaboration dates back to the famous World War II Devil's Brigade and now through NATO and NORAD as well as Canadian officers serving with or alongside the US Forces. Our interoperability brings us many benefits, not least of which are the personal relationships between our senior commanders.

Our intelligence, police and border services also work closely together. We are both part of the Five Eyes intelligence alliance (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, UK, USA) and our policing agencies and border services work well together.

The long shadow of 9-11 and terrorist threats means that, from the US perspective, security is the priority in expediting all cross-border movement, whether people or goods.

CSIS acknowledgement that it is tracking [180 Canadians](#) engaged with terrorist organizations overseas, including 50 who have returned to Canada. It exacerbates US security concerns. It also plays to the mythology that some of the 9-11 terrorists came from Canada.

Giving sanctuary to the 25,000 Syrian refugees was the right thing to do but it sparked hearings by the U.S. Senate Homeland Security Committee.



Any incident involving Canada would be catastrophic for cross-border travel and trade. Cross-border security sharing of data makes sense. Privacy concerns can be addressed with appropriate protocols for transmission and distribution of data, looking for example to the recent EU-US [Privacy Shield](#). Security can be abused and we need to ensure it is not abused as a protectionist device under the guise of 'health and safety'.

The US wants our no-fly list and for Canada to implement the 'Entry-Exit' system originally promised in the 'Smart Border' accord. We should do both because it will also enhance our own security.

*The Issues: Climate - 'Science the Sh*t out of it'*

The leaders share common cause on climate and they agree on carbon pricing, recognizing the vital role that states and provinces play and that what counts is outcomes rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.

But carbon pricing alone will not reach our Paris targets. We need big technology breakthroughs beyond, for example, engineering improvements creating more efficient solar panels.

We need to address biology, for example, through more efficient enzymes to convert forestry and agricultural waste into biofuels or changes in animal feed that will reduce methane emanations from cows, or a boreal forest that can capture more carbon.

This means continues investments and the kind of industry collaboration leading to [practical innovation](#) that we witness through the Canada Oil Sands Innovation Alliance.

All of this is aspirational but it is achievable and binational collaboration can establish a benchmark for global progress. We are, as the Matt Damon character in *The Martian* put it, going to have the "science the shit out of it".

Canada should host under the patronage of Governor General David Johnston, who understands innovation, a North American Climate Jamboree as part of our sesquicentennial celebrations.

Building on our joint participation in [Mission Innovation](#) launched at COP21 in Paris, it would link research and development centers of excellence between our countries including joint sharing of information and 'best practices' in innovation, mitigation, conservation, and regulatory oversight.

The goal would be to collaborate and advance new clean technologies and 'green' solutions to energy and environmental issues. Outcomes would include creating North American standards on fracking, water use and methane emissions.

The Issues: Border Trade and Regulatory Cooperation

There is work still to be done especially on border access and regulatory cooperation. Both were initiatives of the Harper government but they suffered from the chilly relationship between Stephen Harper and Barack Obama over climate change policy and the Keystone XL pipeline.



We need to make the border more efficient through pilot projects using optimization algorithms on drayage, storage, congestion, accidents and the like.

We need flexibility in accepting worker accreditation and ensuring we can get skilled workers where we need them but regulations have replaced tariffs as the main impediment to trade.

The Regulatory Cooperation Council needs to be a permanent institution. Our focus should be on generating consumer and industry benefits in areas where access already exists – the unsexy but vital worlds of medical devices, pharmaceuticals, food, vehicles, shampoos, cosmetics, marine, animals, plants, et al.

Our two regulatory systems seek to achieve similar goals but with differing requirements. We need to look at the integrated nature of our production and manufacturing, acknowledging common consumer preferences and a common approach to risk tolerance.

The Canada-US relationship has always been subject to regional and sectoral protectionist interests, especially around trade in agricultural products (dairy, grains, pork, beef, sugar), and steel (on which we now need a joint approach given Chinese competition).

Trade and Agriculture Ministers should begin to chart a new way forward of reforms of international institutions critical to agricultural trade, including Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex), OIE (World Organization for Animal Health) and the International Plant Protection Convention.

Agriculture Ministers should be specifically tasked to jointly advance the promotion of science-based standards and commitment to work together on SPS Committees to harmonize sanitary and phytosanitary measures on as wide a basis as possible.

Softwood lumber, the Freddy Krueger of Canada-US irritants (dating back to George Washington's administration), has returned. It underlines that managing the relationship involves active care by all orders of government – national, provincial, regional and municipal.

American lawmakers would like Canada to raise the [de minimus](#) level at which small packages entering Canada are exempt from duty. The United States de minimis level was recently raised to \$800 in the recently signed customs bill. By comparison, Canada's de minimis is \$20 for online purchases, \$200 for goods bought for trips under 48 hours and \$800 for longer trips. We should align our de minimis standards to the higher level. It will make customs clearance easier and benefit consumers.

Getting it Done: Congress

Follow-through on the agenda will be crucial.

While it will require oversight from the leaders, their cabinets and their civil service, successful management of the relationship also depends on the 'hidden wiring' involving premiers and governors and legislators.

Canadian legislators need to devote time and cultivate relations with US legislators through reinvigoration of our participation in the Canada-US Inter-Parliamentary Group and the



regional meetings of the Conference of State Governments. Prime ministers and ministers are also our lead legislators. We need to cultivate closer relations with congressional leadership – the Senate Majority and Minority Leaders and the Speaker and Minority Leader of the House of Representatives. This should also include the chairs of congressional committees as demonstrated by the [work](#) of Trade Minister Chrystia Freeland and Senate Agriculture Chair Pat Roberts in the successful repeal of Country-of-Origin-Labeling.

Getting it Done: Provinces and States

The transactions of our 63 states, provinces and territories are important if unseen. Constitutional responsibilities mean this is the order of government where the rubber literally hits the road on issues like permitting and procurement of our roads, railways, pipelines, and electrical grids. We need to broaden the [2010 agreement](#).

Beginning with the Atlantic premiers and New England governors, then in the West and now the Great Lakes, premiers and governors meet regularly to discuss and resolve shared problems, such as sharing the Superscooper airplanes to fight fires or figuring out the 'smart' driver's license to expedite Americans visiting the 2010 Vancouver Olympics.

The national leaders may set the framework and agenda but much of the follow-through takes place at the provincial, state and territorial level of government working with the regional organizations like the Pacific Northwest Economic Region and the Council of the Great Lakes Region. We need to invest more in these regional associations.

Getting it Done: Business

The Leaders should resurrect the North American Competitiveness Council (NACC), an innovation of the Security and Prosperity Initiative. But it must be more than an ornamental photo opportunity with Leaders. It should be given the mandate to help forge a North American competitiveness strategy.

Getting it Done: Social License

The next iteration of continental integration must also include a parallel advisory group from civil society, including labour, environmental groups and indigenous peoples. Global markets means more demand for the stuff on our beneath aboriginal land. The impetus for a renewed relationship with aboriginal people is also tied to our bilateral and global prosperity.

Social license is a reality of doing business and, while time-consuming, it makes for better public policy. But while consultation is vital to achieve desirable ends but it cannot endless. To govern is also to choose and to legislate.

And include Mexico

It is in Canada's strategic interest to work more closely with Mexico. With over [35 million](#) Americans claiming Mexican heritage (the equivalent of the Canadian population), their political heft in the USA grows daily.



With a middle class bigger than all of Canada, Mexico is a serious market and we are now each other's [third largest](#) trading partner.

The trilateral relationship created by NAFTA was once essentially a series of dual, sometimes duelling, bilaterals with the Canada-Mexico relationship a distant third. But this has changed, especially with growing Canadian trade and investment in Mexico and the [over two million](#) Canadians who annually travel to Mexico for sun, sand and tequila.

Making common cause with Mexico makes sense especially when dealing with US protectionism. By working together we resolved the decade-long Country-of-Origin-Labeling dispute that curbed our meat and pork export trade.

In the longer term, we should explore how NORAD could be extended to embrace Mexico and help address the drug and people-smuggling challenges in Central America that afflict its southern border.

The imposition of a visa requirement in 2009 has significantly curtailed the appetite of Mexicans to visit Canada. This has cost Canada in terms of investment, trade and the people-to-people relationships created by tourism and study. The Trudeau Government has promised [to lift the visa](#) and it needs to happen before President Enrique Pena will come to Canada.

Looking Forward

The outcomes of the Washington summit will set the road map for Canada-US relations during the final ten months of the Obama Administration. They should also inspire the agenda for the upcoming North American Leaders Forum. Inevitably, the work in Washington will also become the reference point for the incoming Administration.

While meaningful progress on the issues is essential to show outcomes, as important are the relationships that will be formed and further developed at the State Dinner and the accompanying events. These endure but like a garden they need constant cultivation.

On the bigger scale, closer collaboration on security, trade, climate and in our shared Arctic is entirely compatible with the 'liberal internationalism' espoused by Justin Trudeau. Good neighbourly relations, as practiced by Mackenzie King, Louis St. Laurent, Lester Pearson, Pierre Trudeau, Brian Mulroney and Jean Chretien are a condition of maximizing Canadian influence in Washington on the main issues of our increasingly turbulent global landscape. It also means, as a good neighbour and friend, that we can tell Uncle Sam when his [breath](#) is bad. Given the current dyspeptic American [mood](#), this responsibility may become more necessary after the US election.



This paper draws from personal experience – postings in New York, Los Angeles and Washington - and participation as a member of the Canada-US Free Trade and NAFTA negotiating teams. It is informed by discussions with Canadian Global Affairs Institute fellows, and federal, provincial and state officials of Canada, the USA and Mexico. It draws on the work of associations and institutions including: Business Council of Canada, Canadian Chamber of Commerce, Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance, Pacific North West Economic Region, North American Strategy for Competitiveness, Canadian American Business Council, Canada Arizona Business Council, Canadian American Border Trade Alliance, Council of State Governments, North American Forum, Wilson Center, Norman Paterson School of International Affairs (Carleton University), Center for International Governance Innovation, School of Public Policy (University of Calgary), Conference of Defence Associations Institute, Borders in Globalization, North American Research Partnership, Observatoire sur les États-Unis de la Chaire Raoul-Dandurand, Belfer Center, Council on Foreign Relations, Environmental Defence Fund, Tides Canada, and Genome Canada.

► **About the Author**

A former Canadian diplomat, Colin Robertson is Vice President and Fellow of the Canadian Global Affairs Institute and an Advisor to Dentons (USA) LLP.

► **Canadian Global Affairs Institute**

The Canadian Global Affairs Institute focuses on the entire range of Canada's international relations in all its forms including (in partnership with the University of Calgary's School of Public Policy), trade investment and international capacity building. Successor to the Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute (CDFAI, which was established in 2001), the Institute works to educate Canadians about the importance of having a respected and influential voice in those parts of the globe where Canada has significant interests due to trade and investment, origins of Canada's population, geographic security (and especially security of North America in conjunction with the United States) or the peace and freedom of allied nations. The Institute aims to demonstrate to Canadians the importance of comprehensive foreign, defence and trade policies which both express our values and represent our interests.

The Institute was created to bridge the gap between what Canadians need to know about Canadian international activities and what they do know. Historically Canadians have tended to look abroad out of a search for markets because Canada depends heavily on foreign trade. In the modern post-Cold War world, however, global security and stability have become the bedrocks of global commerce and the free movement of people, goods and ideas across international boundaries. Canada has striven to open the world since the 1930s and was a driving factor behind the adoption of the main structures which underpin globalization such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the International Trade Organization and emerging free trade networks connecting dozens of international economies. The Canadian Global Affairs Institute recognizes Canada's contribution to a globalized world and aims to educate Canadians about Canada's role in that process and the connection between globalization and security.

In all its activities the Institute is a charitable, non-partisan, non-advocacy organization that provides a platform for a variety of viewpoints. It is supported financially by the contributions of individuals, foundations, and corporations. Conclusions or opinions expressed in Institute publications and programs are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of Institute staff, fellows, directors, advisors or any individuals or organizations that provide financial support to the Institute.