





Executive Summary

After 3 decades of unprecedented security and prosperity, Canada is grappling with a shift in economic and political power away from its traditional allies and partners, a return of great power competition, increasing vulnerability to transnational threats like climate change and cyber attacks, and rapid technological change. At the same time, the fabric of Canada has evolved: Canadians are much more connected to the world than in the past, and they have higher expectations for how their government will promote and protect their interests overseas.

operations. It has a proud history but now faces the challenge of adapting to this rapidly

partners are re-investing in their diplomatic capacities. Canada must do so now, or risk losing ground to partners and competitors alike.

A revitalized Global Affairs Canada would be:

strategic and influential where it matters: in key countries and at multilateral

open and connected to Canadians and the world: upping collaboration with partner departments, diaspora populations, academia and others, w6(u)-and o0-3()8((a)-3(rtn)-2(e



invest in its people: revamped recruitment, training, career management; increased diversity through lateral entry and new recruitment; strengthened official and foreign-language competencies; better conditions and support for locally engaged staff (LES); greater recognition that entire families (not just employees) are sent abroad and greater support in times of crisis.

invest in tools, processes and departmental culture: information technology; digital fundamentals; data expertise; grants and contributions modernization; knowledge management; incentives to take smart risks and increase innovation and efficiency.

A Chief Transformation Officer, Antoine Chevrier (Assistant Deputy Minister), has been appointed to create a team and drive the transformation process for an initial period of 3 years (2023-26). He will report directly to the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and with matrixed reporting responsibilities to the Deputy Ministers of International Trade and International Development. The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs will report on progress every 6 months to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and be held accountable for implementation.

Successful implementation will require reallocation of existing financial resources. It will also require new investments to enable Global Affairs Canada to adapt to the challenges of the coming decades.



1. Introduction

Global Affairs Canada stands at the forefront of Canadian foreign policy. Its staff in



The last major study of the department and, in particular, its foreign service, took place in 1981 – a Royal Commission led by Pamela A. McDougall, then Deputy Minister of National Health and Welfare.³ Recognizing that the department needed to adapt to new and emerging global realities, on December 16, 2021, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau



2. Drivers of Change

The end of the Cold War in 1989 ushered in a period of unprecedented globalization and interconnectedness, centred around the pre-eminence of the United States and a widely accepted web of international rules, founded on democratic principles. Canada,

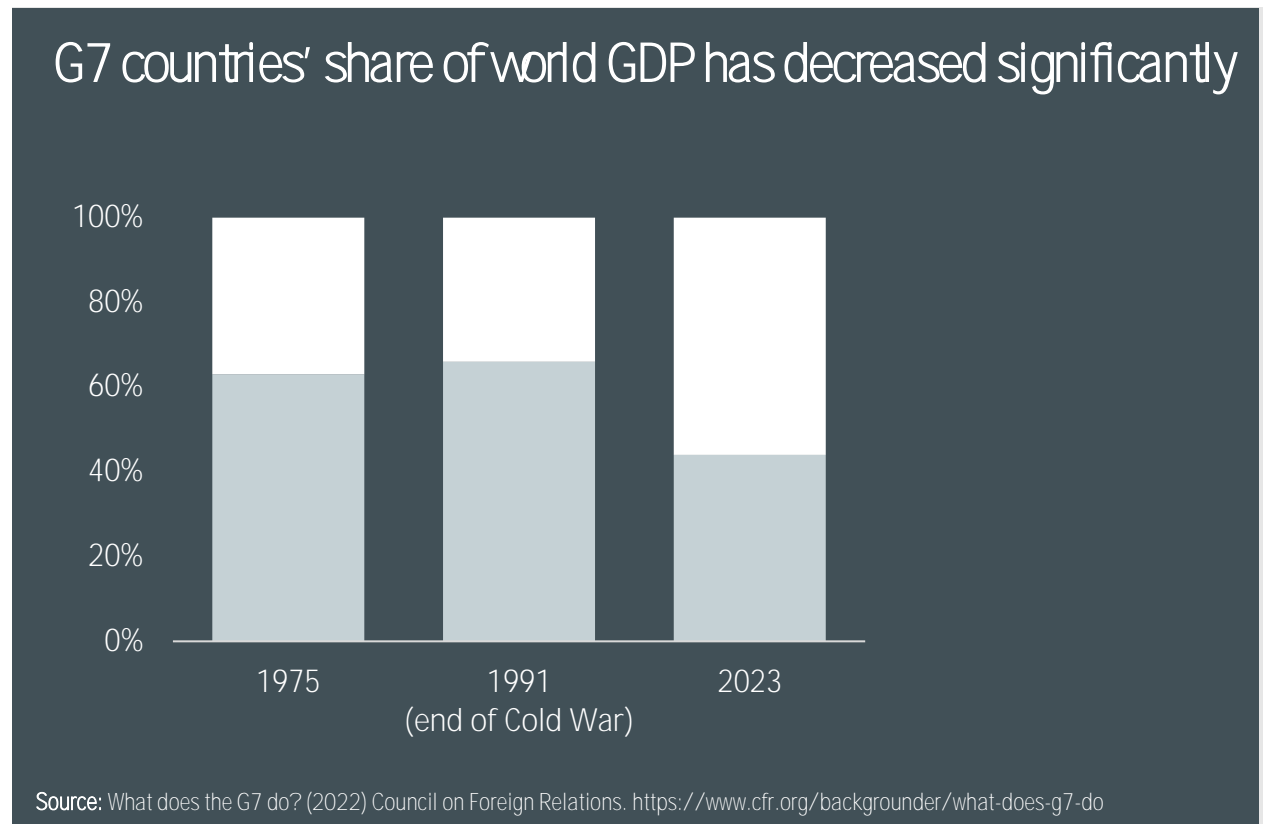
market, thrived. Its multilateral diplomats were active in disarmament talks and the decommissioning of Soviet-era weapons and ammunition stockpiles. The 1997 Ottawa Convention (also known as the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty) showed global Canadian leadership.

-crossed the world during this period, such that by 2020

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democratic and authoritarian regimes. All of this means that the map of world power has been gradually tilting to the south and east, while Canada and its closest partners remain largely in the north and west.



2.2. Return of Great Power competition and rules-based order challenged

After 40 years of relative peace and prosperity, great-power rivalries have re-emerged.

challenge to the rules-based international order. Russia has dropped all pretense of respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity and has reverted to military aggression, launching the most brutal war in Europe since WWII. There is increasing cooperation between China and Russia, including in the Arctic, where Canada, the United States and Nordic partners are facing a new geopolitical reality. In parallel with the dawning of a new multipolar era, there has been a clear weakening of agreed international rules. Conflicts between states are on the rise, with 56 recorded in 2020,⁸ the highest number since the early 1990s. These crises are longer, more protracted and less responsive to traditional forms of resolution. Further, democracies are facing significant challenges,

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Research Institute Oslo, PRIO Paper 2022, [Conflict Trends: A Global Overview, 1946-2021 - World | ReliefWeb](#)



including the rise of malign populism, which in some countries has further undercut the rules-based international order.

2.3. Increased impact of transnational forces

Canada is also facing complex challenges that are transcending international borders and lie beyond the control of single states. Hostile state and non-state actors, cyber threats, organized crime, weak international governance and waning rule of law are just some examples. Migratory pressures are increasing, as millions of people around the world flee conflict and other threats. The COVID-19 pandemic showed all Canadians their vulnerability to threats coming from beyond their borders. It also brought home the importance of reliable and resilient supply chains. More recently, the spillover effects of Russia's invasion of Ukraine have underscored how millions of people around the world remain vulnerable to food insecurity. And, of course, the entire planet is facing the existential threat of climate change which, among other impacts, has led to a fivefold increase in natural disasters over the past 50 years, which in turn has resulted in a sevenfold increase in economic losses from the 1970s to the 2010s.⁹ Tackling climate change and related issues such as biodiversity loss and mass migration requires extensive international collaboration, but also major investments, including by Canada.

2.4. New technologies and new domains of competition

Everywhere they look, Canadians see their world changing and the pace of change accelerating. New technologies are transforming production and labour demands in unprecedented ways. Canadians have already felt these dynamics in their professional and personal lives, yet even bigger changes may be on the horizon. Newer technologies such as artificial





Indo-Pacific Strategy (2022).

-billion Indo-



will report in December 2023.

3. What kind of global affairs department does Canada need?

To serve Canada and Canadians effectively, Global Affairs Canada must be able to:

mobilize, convince or dissuade foreign governments and international organizations on issues that affect the security and prosperity of Canadians.

help to create prosperity in Canada by leading trade negotiations and providing services and advice to Canadian businesses to help them succeed abroad, and by attracting foreign investment into Canada.

manage poverty and contribute to a more peaceful, prosperous and inclusive world.

deliver world-class services and information to Canadians to help keep them safe overseas.

Global Affairs Canada must play a consequential role on priority international issues, be able to help Canadians navigate challenges, and support the development of integrated, whole-of-government strategies. Federal government partners look to Global Affairs Canada to chart the overarching direction for Canadian foreign policy, gather stakeholders, lead Canada's global engagement on a myriad of issues, and support their own important mandates and international engagements. Likewise, provinces, territories, the private sector, civil society and academia expect Global Affairs Canada to frame the agenda on crosscutting global issues that intersect with their own responsibilities and interests. Finally, the department must maximize the advantages of having all the major elements of modern international engagement—foreign affairs, international trade, international development, and consular policies and programs under a single roof. To be truly effective, Global Affairs Canada must be much greater than the sum of its parts.

Canada needs a department that is:

Strategic and influential where and when it matters. Canada needs a department that can effectively articulate, coordinate and deliver a full global agenda and strategically communicate and engage with Canadians and the world. Global Affairs Canada must be able to do this at the heart of multilateral organizations where rules are written that will shape the international context for decades to come, and where existing norms are being challenged and new ones developed. The department must



maintaining the flexibility to pivot in keeping with Canadian interests. And Global



Canada needs a highly skilled, multilingual, diverse, respected and respectful



1. Build new **policy** expertise and capacity to manage prolonged crises.
2. Increase **presence** abroad.
3. Invest in the **people** of Global Affairs Canada.
4. **processes**, and culture.

The action areas should not be seen as discrete or siloed but rather as a mutually reinforcing package to prepare the department for the challenges of today and tomorrow.

4.1. Build new expertise on international issues key to Canada's future, and increase capacity to anticipate and manage prolonged crises

a) Why?

Canada faces a wider range of complex and layered issues than ever before, as explained above. Given the current pace of change, Global Affairs Canada should increase its ability to anticipate and analyze global trends that matter for Canada and prepare policy prescriptions to address them and protect Canadian interests.

At the same time, recent experiences in Afghanistan, Ukraine, Sudan and Haiti have shown that crises initially perceived as domestic policy dimensions (e.g. sudden influxes of refugees) or continue for a

Affairs Canada must continue to provide a robust whole-of-government platform to
-term and protracted crises in
an increasingly complex world.

b) How?

Increase capacity in key policy areas. The evolving global landscape demands a deepened understanding and engagement with issues such as climate change, energy, global health, global finance, cyber security and emerging technologies, geo-economics, and multilateral diplomacy.

While all these policy areas demand greater attention from Global Affairs Canada,
immediate priority should be to increase its policy capacity on **climate change**, including in relation to the energy security and critical mineral nexus. This is needed given the significance of these issues to Canada's future, their growing importance to Canada's bilateral and multilateral engagements, and for Canada's leadership in global climate financing. Working closely with partner departments, including Environment and Climate Change Canada, Natural Resources Canada and Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, and further leveraging the role of Canada's Climate Change Ambassador, Global Affairs Canada should help increase understanding throughout government on a range of issues. They include how geopolitical competition intersects with Canada's economic security, supply-chain resilience



and emerging industrial policies, and how the interplay between climate change, the green transition and Canada's critical minerals will be key to the country's future positioning internationally.

Priority should also be given to expanding capacities and mandates within



Recent experience with the COVID pandemic, Afghanistan, Haiti, Sudan and the Russian invasion of Ukraine shows that crises are also becoming more complex and protracted, often requiring simultaneous humanitarian, political, security and consular interventions that last for months and sometimes longer. Better foresight and trend analysis capacity would help Global Affairs Canada and its partners anticipate and prepare for the inevitable crises of the future. But Global Affairs Canada should also have a more robust and integrated approach to managing international crises through their various phases.

Building



and provide common services for mission operations for a br



The number and composition of Global Affairs Canada staff posted abroad have fluctuated over time, mainly because of various rounds of expenditure reviews (positions abroad are much more expensive than at headquarters) and technological progress (several functions once performed by employees overseas are now automated, require much less human intervention or can be performed by headquarters). The high point was at the end of the Cold War in 1990, when there were 2,993 Canada-based staff (CBS) overseas. The number had declined to 2,014 by 1998. In 2022 there were 2,777 CBS²⁰ posted abroad.

Canada's representation at the UN today is one of the lowest among G7 and G20 partners and competitors alike, despite Canada's rank as the seventh largest financial contributor. The UN system is at the centre of norm setting and rule



competitors alike. Recognizing that Canada's 2 official languages contribute to defining the image Canada projects on the international scene, the department should also take greater advantage of bilingualism in its relations and



greater clarity of objectives and better streamlining of resources will help to build trust, strengthen legitimacy and sustain widespread



of functions at headquarters to manage information technology systems, ensure security of staff abroad, manage the global network of missions (including the growing presence of other government departments and provinces/territories) and growing consular demands further contributed to the growth of positions in Canada outside of the foreign service.

These structural factors have led to frustration within parts of the workforce. While it is not true that Global Affairs Canada does not value expertise – for instance, the department has nurtured and developed some of the best trade policy and gender-based analysis expertise in the world – some employees working in a number of areas of the department, including younger employees, have felt disadvantaged compared to foreign service employees. Employees in certain categories have raised concerns with having less access to specialized training, fewer career advancement possibilities and lower priority for postings abroad. While the average attrition rate



done, and confidence in leadership, must be central to the Global Affairs Canada of today and the future.

b) How?

Recruitment

Global Affairs must improve recruitment and staffing to ensure the department has



professional group, and must increase the linguistic profile of supervisory positions
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April 2024.

Increase foreign language capacity.



Heads of mission (HOM) develop deep expert knowledge of their countries of accreditation, establish wide and impactful networks, and provide advice and guidance on pressing matters of bilateral and international concern. They are responsible for Canada's whole-of-government engagement in their countries of accreditation and for the administrative supervision of all federal programs present at mission. To maximize the effectiveness of heads of mission, the department should:

Work to confirm HOM postings earlier. This would allow for better continuity of operations at missions abroad, but also ensure more predictability and allow for accompanying families to plan ahead (and therefore minimize disruptions for school-aged children and maximize spousal employment opportunities).

Strengthen the role of the HOM as chief executive officer at mission. This would allow HOMs to better coordinate and maximize output of all programs and create greater integration of priorities. Mandate letters from the deputy ministers at the beginning of assignments could add to this clarity of priorities and accountability. HOMs should also have more discretion over the re-allocation of resources to match evolving priorities. During major crises affecting mission operations, heads of mission must continue to play a strong leadership role, including in providing advice to the Deputy Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, to inform critical decisions regarding personnel evacuation or mission closure.

Ensure HOM voices are heard



Department of State, which focuses on classical diplomatic functions, Global Affairs Canada encompasses the trade policy function and the Trade Commissioner Service as well as all policy and program responsibilities of the former Canadian International Development Agency.²⁸ The result is a highly heterogeneous workforce, with several different occupational groups serving under different collective agreements and conditions of employment. While it can be argued that life in the rotational foreign service is unique, it must be noted that only 26% of current Global Affairs Canada-based employees occupy foreign service positions. Even if that figure were to rise, it is likely that the foreign service component will remain a minority within the department's Canada-based workforce.

If “separate employer” status is not advisable or cannot be achieved, work within existing frameworks to ensure Global Affairs Canada can optimally manage its workforce. Flexibilities within current administrative human resources, financial and other frameworks do exist and if separate employer status is not appropriate for Global Affairs Canada, it should make maximum use of these flexibilities.

4.4. Ensure Global Affairs Canada has the tools, processes and culture to thrive into the future

a) Why?

Whether at home or abroad, the Global Affairs Canada workforce must be empowered to provide the highest levels of service and advice anytime, anywhere in a way that is informed, capable and secure. Modernized processes and tools are an important part of an efficient, effective and people-centred organizational culture. Enabler functions, like the IT backbone of the department, and business processes should be aligned with the ambitious vision and objectives of the organization, including when the objectives evolve to accommodate new developments in the international context.

The department's information management and information technology (IM/IT) and digital systems are rapidly aging. This is felt every day by Global Affairs Canada employees, while the real threat of cyber attacks by states and their sponsored actors continues to rise. Although investments have been made in recent years to better serve Canadians, such as the Consular Case Management System and the Export and Import ContF1 12 0 0 1 , tartment



burdensome policies and business processes that stymie efficiency and innovation. While it is easy to point fingers elsewhere, the truth is that many of the constraints that hobble Global Affairs Canada are self-imposed. The department needs to rethink how it



should serve to reinvigorate data usage and literacy across the organization. Employees throughout the department should have the capacity to understand, visualize and communicate data for anticipatory policy-making, intelligence/information gathering, public diplomacy, trade and other negotiations, consular services, humanitarian response, tracking of development results and other core areas.

Enhance knowledge management. Streamlined knowledge-sharing infrastructure and practices are key to improving employees





Chevrier,