

## RICHARD FADDEN VIMY AWARD ACCEPTANCE SPEECH: "2020 AND BEYOND: WHERE DOES CANADA FIT?"

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Individuals are often told that self-awareness is an important part of being a balanced and successful person. Old fashioned expressions like "Know Thyself" and "To thine own self be true" come to mind. Implied but not expressly stated is the underlying truth that to know oneself requires a knowledge and understanding of one's environment. This because, to use another old expression, "No person is an island".

My argument is that the above principle applies as much to countries as it does to individuals. And, it applies especially to Canada, because I do not believe we are being very honest with ourselves about ourselves. I want to stress that I am not criticizing any particular government or political party. Rather, I hope my remarks will contribute to the ongoing debate involving academics, politicians, public servants, members of the media and pundits generally about Canada's national security, which must include our foreign, defence, security, and international financial and trade interests. In fact, we need far more public discussion of these issues.

There are, I think, two main elements in how we should think of ourselves as a country, First, the international environment and then Canada itself.

Describing the international environment is – to state the obvious – not easy. In our entirely interconnected world, the description can consist of a long list of issues from nuclear proliferation to climate change to migration and everything in between. I suggest another way of looking at the world of which Canada is a part. Instead, I suggest there are four main "meta-issues" that need to be taken into account as we and other countries try to deal with the topics on that long list I mentioned. By meta issues, I mean issues that affect all others.

The four meta-issues are:

- THE RISE OF REVISIONIST STATES
- A DYSFUNCTIONAL WEST
- THE GROWTH OF RADICALIZATION TO VIOLENCE
- CYBER IN ALL ITS MANIFESTATIONS

Revisionist states are countries profoundly unhappy with the international order and their place in it. Unhappiness that is accompanied by a compelling desire to change that order and their place or role in it. All countries are to some degree revisionist in the sense that all desire some changes or improvements. But, the revisionist states I am referring to are those which are prepared to use virtually any means – short of war – to attain their objectives.

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There are, I think, two main revisionist states and a number of smaller, perhaps more regionally based ones. The two "biggies" are, of course, China and Russia. Iran and North Korea are examples of two smaller ones. When I say that these states are prepared to use virtually any means to attain their goals, let me give you a couple examples: Russian's invasion and annexation of Crimea and its ongoing efforts to destabilize Ukraine, China's massive world-wide intelligence gathering program or its activities in the South China Sea or its "diaspora" management program.

The risks posed by these two countries are certainly different, but they are generally based on advancing all their interests to the detriment of the West. Their activities span the political, military and economic spheres.

Coming back to my meta-issue point, I suggest that virtually no national security issue of importance – and many others – can be dealt with without taking into account the fact that these countries are not just aggressive competitors, they are our strategic adversaries.

My second meta descriptor is "A dysfunctional West". The West is described as including those democratic states with a basic respect for human rights and international law generally. For example, it should include all our NATO allies plus Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan – along with a number of others. The West is dysfunctional for a couple of basic reasons.

First, there is a turning away by some from the democratic ideals that should characterize us, towards right-wing authoritarianism with its frequent partners: excessive nationalism and a turning inward. Second, a significant lack of global leadership on the part of the United States and an equal lack of ability or willingness on the part of the West's traditional second tier countries – the United Kingdom and France and perhaps Germany – to fill the gap left by the United States. And, third, in part because of the first two reasons, a significant loss of coordination on the part of the West in dealing with the first meta-issue of Chinese and Russian revisionism, as well as with any number of other issues. This is not meant to be a rant against the current incumbent of the White House. The US' retreat from global leadership started before 2016 and while Trump's style is acting as an amplifier, we have to conclude that in the future the West will have to adapt to at least a much restrained US approach to leadership. Again, my point is that very few of the specific issues we must deal with today can ignore the fact that the West does not have its act together as much as it could and should.

My third meta point is the growth of radicalization to violence, most notably Islamist and right-wing extremism. At one level, the West has won the so-called "War on Terror" – there have been no 9/11 level attacks in the West for some years now. But we should not forget Nice, Brussels, and London to name a few other serious attacks. And, we always tend to forget the appalling level of terrorist or insurgency violence that is a daily occurrence in large parts of the developing world.

At another level, we have definitely not won the war on terror in the larger sense. We have spent billions and billions on anti-terror measures, we've modified our laws (ineffectively or too much in the minds of some and too little in the minds of others) and we have changed many aspects of our lives – travel being a good example. Yet, we have not managed to deal with the root causes of why many groups around the world continue to use terror as a means of advancing their agenda. My point is that terrorism is alive and well and is not going away soon. The risk of massive attacks may be less than it was, but the risk of attacks is still there virtually everywhere on the planet and terrorism continues to succeed in one respect – it scares the living daylights out of people – it terrorizes – and is absolutely impossible for governments to ignore.

Right wing terrorism is growing and like its cousin jihadist terrorism, it is a globalized threat. We will ignore it at our peril. My meta-issue point here again is that non-state violence will have an impact on many of the issues we will have to deal with – by some countries more than others. (think of Central America as an example), but in the absence of somehow dealing with its root causes it cannot be ignored as we deal with other issues. So, attention and resources will be allocated to deal with this issue... attention and resources that could be used elsewhere. At a minimum, we must recognize that no one country alone can deal with this issue – another example of where coordination among Western countries is necessary.

My last meta-issue is "all things cyber". In fact, I am using cyber for shorthand to encompass all aspects of the brave new world of technological leaps forward – AI, quantum everything, space and so on. The scope of the changes we have to deal with – good and bad – are easy to see in the world of cyber.

We have cyber-war. Russia's action in Ukraine/Crimea was effectively made possible by the former's massive use of cyber tools to attack communications, command and control and other systems. If the disabling of communications systems had been accomplished by kinetic means it would have entirely changed the Russian operation and the West's reaction to it. International law has yet to come to grips with this issue of significant damage being accomplished without physical damage – when does it reach the level of war as defined in international law??? Cyber war becomes an easily useable tool to anyone wanted to make a point short of traditional armed conflict.

And then we have cyber-espionage in which I would include IP (intellectual property) theft. It is estimated that IP theft – largely by states but not exclusively – amounts to a trillion dollars a year, which is to a considerable degree directed against advanced Western countries. This a major threat to both our national security and our economies. And, then there is traditional espionage directed at state or strategic secrets but now conducted using cyber tools. Just think for a moment of the efforts and resources that have been poured into cyber defences, both by governments and the private sector. And yet, full success at cyber defence continues to elude us.

The third cyber challenge is cyber-crime generally. This includes identity theft, ransomware, blackmail, denial of service, old-fashioned theft using cyber tools but includes many other possibilities. These tools are used by states, organized criminal groups, individuals and many other kinds of organizations. Some of these crimes cost a great deal

of money while in other cases they enable the perpetrators to gain control of individuals. This area of cyber activity will be a truly significant challenge for us to deal with in the years ahead. It will affect governments, the private sector, civil society, and individuals.

The last cyber challenge is what I call “cyber-propaganda or cyber prop”, or basically, using the Internet or social media in one or other of its forms to spread an ideology or false information meant to recruit individuals to violence or to disrupt institutions. It is used by some states, radical groups, and likely others. If the real advantage of the World Wide Web is its free access and use, then dealing with cyber prop is not going to be easy. Cyber prop threatens the integrity of our institutions and the ability of governments to act as misinformation narrows the range of actions the population will support or tolerate. Here again, my meta point is that many of the world’s issues and challenges cannot be dealt with without dealing with cyber!

I appreciate that my four meta points have been selected somewhat arbitrarily – perhaps because of a certain professional malformation on my part – and could have included others. For example, to ignore the economy is always difficult – especially if our comfortable circumstances cause us to forget that all is not so rosy by a long shot in other parts of the world. Others, might have included climate change – I would have if my discussion timeframe was long-term as opposed to short to medium.

This description of the world with which Canada must deal brings us to Canada itself. I start from the premise that we are blessed almost beyond description. While we have our problems we are, compared to virtually every other country, rich, peaceful, and safe. Yet, I suggest we are resting on our laurels rather more than we are entitled to. We emerged as one of the main economic and military contributors to victory in the Second World War and as large parts of the world rebuilt themselves this carried us well into the Cold War as the quintessential “Middle power”. With the fall of the Soviet Union this became less important. But, today, where does this leave Canada?

I am not certain the concept of a middle power works today, for two reasons. The first is that to be in the middle, we need some countries “below” us and one or more above us. There are certainly countries below us but many which were there a few years ago are now vying for what is left of middle power status – a field possibly so numerous as to be quite meaningless. The other requirement is for a “Top” power.

It is to state the obvious to say that the world is undergoing fundamental change. China is and will be more of a world power that was the Soviet Union, the United States is no longer the G-1 power it was when the USSR fell, many Western countries are pre-occupied with their internal issues rather working together to deal with the issues I mentioned earlier. And, some NATO countries, of course, are falling to the blandishments of China. Perhaps one of the greatest issues faced by the West is the lack of a common “threat assessment” and in democracies this cannot just mean governments but must include some measure of public acceptance. This issue is especially visible in Canada – we are surrounded by three oceans and the US so we don’t really feel threatened when, in a totally globalized world that is unrealistic.

In concluding, I have to ask where all this leaves Canada and, in particular, what can we do to deal effectively with these meta issues and with their impact on all the issues that have to deal with day by day. More than anything, we need to shed the blinders of the past and see the world and our place in it as it is. This is not a G-1 world so we need to stand on our own with values and ideas more than we have in the past. And, to do this we must bring to bear patience and consistency along with the resources to match.

I suggest that in the world I have described (or some variation of it), our place is as one among any number of Western countries without the special position we enjoyed as a traditional “Middle Power”. This means we have to stop assuming other countries will eventually see issues as we do. I know I am generalizing but we need to work harder and consistently with other countries on an issue by issue basis – sometime leading sometime not. And, not assuming the US will be able to or want to lead.

In practical terms, we need to:

- Recognize our adversaries for what they are, recognize we have to deal with them but draw clear limits to what we will accept.
- Accept that the G-1 world with comprehensive US leadership is gone and is not coming back in the form we knew.
- Appreciate we are one among many Western countries adjusting to this world.
- Accept that my meta-issues and most others require a multinational approach – with less US leadership this is vital.
- Work to develop a common Western world-view – we have always done this but it now becomes critical.
- Prioritize, because such issues require much effort and resources. We cannot just join any grouping or organization – we must focus where our national interests are greatest.

More than anything, we need a clear-eyed view of the world and of our place in it. I have not mentioned defence or military matters not because they are unimportant but because they are an integral part of the changes that this new world view requires. If Vimy represented a seismic change for the Canadian Corps and the nation, then the no-less fundamental changes that are upon us represent the same mix of challenge and opportunity – as a country we need to see the world as it is and make the changes in our approach that will allow us to remain one of the most fortunate countries on the planet.

*Note: This article is a slightly modified version of remarks made by Mr. Fadden upon his receipt of the Conference of Defence Associations Institute’s Vimy Award, a lifetime achievement award in the fields of national security and defence.*

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