

Implementing the Reform Party agenda:

The roots of Stephen Harper's foreign policy

By

Duane Bratt, Ph.D

Department of Economics, Justice, and Policy Studies

Mount Royal University

Calgary, Alberta

dbratt@mtroyal.ca

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Abstract

This paper examines the role of the Reform Party in the foreign policy of the Stephen Harper government. Through a comprehensive analysis of various Reform party documents, called, “Blue Books” from the 1980s and 1990s, this paper assesses the degree to which the Harper government has implemented these policy proposals in its foreign policy (foreign affairs, international trade, defence, foreign aid, and immigration). It shows that, to a surprising degree, many of these Reform Party foreign policy proposals have been implemented. An evaluation of the ten year record of the Harper government showed that of the 32 priorities identified in the Blue Books, 16 were achieved, two were attempted, 14 were avoided, and two were not applicable. It also shows that the Reform Party had a greater degree of influence over foreign policy than it did over domestic policy during the ten year period of the Harper government.

Introduction

Stephen Harper was Prime Minister from January 2006 to October 2015. In that time, his government altered, or attempted to alter, many traditional aspects of Canadian foreign policy. Some of the key foreign policy changes initiated by the Harper government included a retreat on multilateralism,¹ abandoning diplomacy by severing relations with Iran and expelling Russian diplomats, changing the structure of delivery of foreign assistance, disengaging from international environmental concerns by withdrawing from the Kyoto Protocol and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, pursuing a much more strident pro-Israel stance, participating in a non-UN sanctioned war against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and attempting to reverse (and then re-reverse) the course of bilateral relations with China². The purpose of this paper is not to judge the wisdom of these changes, but to try and explain them.

It is possible to explain these changes to Canada's foreign policy through each of the traditional levels of analysis: the changing international environment, the changing resources and power of the Canadian state, or even Harper's individual background. This paper tries to explain these foreign policy changes by focusing on the state level of analysis and adding a bit of the individual level. The state level aspect is the principles and priorities articulated by the old Reform Party of Canada (1987-2000) and the individual level aspect is Harper's role as a founding member and leading figure within the Reform Party. In addition to this primary

¹ Tom Keating, "The Twilight of Multilateralism in Canadian Foreign Policy?" in Duane Bratt and Christopher J. Kukucha, eds., *Readings in Canadian Foreign Policy: Classic Debates and New Ideas*, 3rd Edition (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2014), 55-67.

² Kim Richard Nossal and Leah Sarson, "About Face: Explaining Changes in Canada's China Policy, 2006-2012," *Journal of Canadian Foreign Policy* 20/2 (2014), 146-162.

argument, this paper makes a secondary argument. The Reform Party influence on the Harper government was much stronger on foreign policy than it was on domestic policy.

Reform Party

The roots of the Harper government, especially Stephen Harper himself, go back to the formation of the Reform Party, which broke away from the Progressive Conservatives (PCs) in the late 1980s. Many Western Canadians had supported the Progressive Conservatives for years when they were in opposition to the Liberal Party of Pierre Trudeau. There was great optimism when Brian Mulroney led the Progressive Conservatives to a smashing majority government in 1984. But that optimism quickly became disappointment as Mulroney continued an agenda that seemed to favour central Canada and liberal ideology. This can be seen through continued deficit spending, the fixation on Quebec through the Meech Lake Accord, and other policies. But the straw that broke the camel's back was the 1986 decision to award a multi-million dollar maintenance contract for Canada's new CF-18 fleet to Montreal-based Canadair even though Winnipeg-based Bristol Aerospace had the lower bid. The Reform Party had its founding assembly in May 1987 in Vancouver with the slogan "The West Wants In!"

The Reform Party contested its first election in 1988, but it did not win a seat. Even though there was growing unease with the Mulroney government, the 1988 election was largely fought on the issue of free trade with the United States; a policy idea that Reformers also strongly supported. Therefore, Western Canadians, as they had done for decades, continued to elect Progressive Conservatives in large numbers to ensure that the free trade agreement was achieved.

The Reform Party won its first seat in Parliament through a by-election in Alberta in 1989. Then they had their big breakthrough in the 1993 election by winning 52 seats. This made them the third largest party in Parliament behind the governing Liberal Party and the new official opposition, the separatist Bloc Québécois. More significantly, it became the dominant party in Western Canada holding 46/56 seats in British Columbia and Alberta alone. The PCs had won back to back majority governments under Brian Mulroney in the 1980s that was built upon a base of western conservatives and soft Quebec nationalists. But the PCs were splintered into three different parties (Reform Party, BQ, and a rump PC Party) and were decimated in the 1993 election, winning only two seats. The PCs would recover, slightly, in the elections of 1997 and 2000, but would never win more than 20 seats. For its part, the Reform Party became the official opposition in the 1997 election after winning additional seats in the remaining two western provinces of Saskatchewan and Manitoba, but it did not win any seats in the rest of Canada. It tried to broaden its western base by changing the party name from Reform to Canadian Alliance and changing leaders from founder Preston Manning to a younger, bilingual, and charismatic Stockwell Day. But in the 2000 election, the Canadian Alliance remained the official opposition to the governing Liberals and were still a largely western party, holding only 2 seats in Ontario and shut out of Quebec and Atlantic Canada. Finally, in 2003, after years of vote splitting that saw the Liberals win three straight majority governments, the Canadian Alliance merged with the Progressive Conservatives to form a renewed Conservative Party of Canada. It was under this new party that Stephen Harper, who had been one of the founding members of the Reform Party and was one of its most prominent MPs from 1993-1997, came back into electoral politics and became leader of the CPC. In the 2004 election, the CPC was able to bring the Liberals, now led

by Paul Martin, down to a minority government. Finally, in January 2006, the CPC won an election and formed a minority government led by the new Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

Most accounts of the role of political parties in Canadian foreign policy see the CPC as being part of the tradition of previous PC governments such as those led by Brian Mulroney and John Diefenbaker.³ While there are indeed linkages in policies and personnel between the CPC and previous party incarnations, the Reform/Canadian Alliance Party was much more of a conscious break from that PC past and its legacy continues to impact current CPC policy. The Reform Party emerged as political outsiders. Not just geographically with their slogan “the West wants in,” but also ideologically against the “Laurentian Consensus,”⁴ the liberal elites from the Toronto-Ottawa-Montreal triangle that they believed ran both the Liberal and PC parties.

When the CPC first won power in 2006 there was a noticeable lack of expertise, or even interest, in Canadian foreign policy. Harper’s focus, while as MP and later as head of the National Citizens Coalition interest group, had been on domestic issues: Constitutional issues, cutting taxes, and reducing the size of the government’s debt/deficit. In his time as opposition leader, the only foreign policy issue that really galvanized Harper and the rest of the Canadian Alliance (successor to the Reform Party) was their open support of the 2003 war in Iraq which was at odds with the decision of Jean Chrétien to not participate. The 2005-6 campaign, like most Canadian elections, was dominated by domestic concerns. In fact, the CPC ran on five key priorities (accountability, cutting the GST, imposing mandatory minimum sentencing for gun-

³ See Brian Bow and David Black, “Does politics stop at the water’s edge in Canada? Party and partisanship in Canadian foreign policy,” *International Journal* 59/1 (Winter 2008-9), 10 (n6).

⁴ Darrell Bricker and John Ibbitson, *The Big Shift: The Seismic Change in Canadian Politics, Business, and Culture and What it Means for Our Future* (Toronto: Harper Collins, 2013). For a foreign policy application of the Conservative challenge to the Laurentian Consensus see John Ibbitson, “The Big Break: The Conservative Transformation of Canada’s Foreign Policy,” *CIGI Papers* 29 (April 2014).

related crime, child care tax credit, and reducing health care wait times) none of which said anything about foreign policy. In addition, there was little foreign policy experience, knowledge, or even interest within the CPC caucus. This inexperience was compounded by the fact that the new Harper government mistrusted a foreign service that they believed had helped perpetuate the foreign policies of the Liberals and PC governments. There was, accordingly, a strong desire for the CPC to differentiate themselves from its predecessors in all respects including foreign policy. One basis for that foreign policy differentiation would come from the policy recommendations that the old Reform Party had made in its Blue Books in the 1980s and 1990s.

Methodology

To determine the impact of the Reform Party on the Harper government's foreign policy a two-step process was used. The first step was a content analysis of the Reform Party Blue Books from 1988-1999.⁵ It identified all of the Canadian foreign policy priorities. These priorities were divided into the following categories: Foreign Affairs, International Trade, Defence, Foreign Aid, and Immigration. In total, there were 32 priorities identified in this analysis of the Reform Party Blue Books. The results of this survey are summarized in Table 1.

⁵ Here is the list of documents: Reform Party of Canada, *Platform and Statement of Principles of the Reform Party of Canada* (1988); Reform Party of Canada, *Principles and Policies* (1990); Reform Party of Canada, *Principles and Policies* (1991), Reform Party of Canada, *Principles, Policies & Election Platform* (1993); Reform Party of Canada, *Principles and Policies: The Blue Book 1995* (1995); Reform Party of Canada, *1996-97 Principles and Policies of the Reform Party of Canada* (1996-97); Reform Party of Canada, *Principles and Policies of the Reform Party of Canada – 1999 – as authorized by Reform Party members: Assembly '98* (1999). All of these documents can be accessed at <http://contentdm.ucalgary.ca/cdm4/document.php?CISOROOT=/reform&CISOPTR=2156&REC=7>

TABLE 1**List of Reform Party priorities for Canadian Foreign Policy (1988-1999)**

Category	Item	References	Total
Foreign Affairs			
	Values of Political Democracy, Economic Freedom, and Human Rights	1988, 1990, 1991, 1993, 1995, 1996-97, 1999	7
	Review participation in international organizations	1996-97, 1999	2
	Identity and proposed position of all officials, NGOs, individuals speaking for Canada at international or UN conferences be fully disclosed.	1999	1
	All agreements and declarations from international or UN conferences must be ratified by Parliament.	1999	1
International Trade			
	Support CUSFTA	1988, 1990, 1991, 1993	4
	Pursue Free Trade Agreements	1993, 1995, 1996-97, 1999	4
	Remove Interprovincial Trade Barriers	1988, 1990, 1991, 1993, 1995, 1996-97, 1999	7
	Amend CUSFTA/NAFTA to include Water Protection	1993, 1995, 1996-97	3
	Promote Trade with Pacific Rim Countries	1988, 1990, 1991, 1993, 1995, 1996-97, 1999	7
	Foreign investment policy that has 9 principles	1999	1
	Privatize EDC	1999	1
Defence			
	Well-Equipped Army, Navy, Air Force	1991, 1993, 1995, 1996-97, 1999	5
	Continue with NORAD/NATO	1988, 1990, 1991, 1993, 1995, 1996-97, 1999	7
	Participate in International Peacekeeping	1991, 1993, 1995, 1996-97	4

	Participation in International Stabilization efforts with conditions (required capabilities/resources, mission parameters approved in advance, approved by Parliament)	1999	1
	Search and Rescue Capability	1991, 1993, 1995, 1996-97, 1999	5
	Natural Disaster Response	1991, 1993, 1995, 1996-97	4
	Reserves = Regular Forces	1991, 1993, 1995, 1996-97, 1999	5
	Create an Inspector General who reports to Chief of Defence Staff and/or Minister of Defence	1999	1
	Create a Commissioner of Veterans' Affairs (who must be a veteran) at the Deputy Minister level to work with Ministers of Defence and Veteran's Affairs on behalf of veterans.	1999	1
Foreign Aid			
	Reduction of Foreign Aid	1995, 1996-97, 1999	3
	Encourage Individuals and Private Organizations to supply foreign aid	1995, 1999	2
	Ban foreign aid to countries that suppress human rights	1996-97, 1999	2
	Tied Aid	1995	1
	Create an aid effectiveness unit within CIDA	1999	1
	Restructure CIDA	1996-97, 1999	2
Immigration			
	Immigration should be economic-based	1988, 1990, 1991, 1993, 1995, 1996-97, 1999	7
	Genuine refugees should be welcomed; bogus claimants immediately deported	1988, 1990, 1991, 1993, 1995, 1996-97, 1999	7
	Restrictions on family class sponsorships to the immediate family	1988, 1990, 1991, 1993, 1995, 1996-97, 1999	7
	Immigration should not be used to solve an aging population	1988, 1990, 1991, 1993, 1995, 1996-97, 1999	7
	Changes to immigration should require a referendum	1988, 1990, 1991, 1993, 1995, 1996-97, 1999	7
	Immigration should not be based on race or creed	1988, 1990, 1991, 1993, 1995, 1996-97, 1999	7

	Immigration should be 150, 000 a year when unemployment is above 10%. Increases in immigration when below 10%.	1995, 1996-97, 1999	3
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What can be said about this survey of the Reform Party's interest and ideas on Canadian foreign policy? First, there was little on foreign policy in the very first blue book in 1988. In a 28 page booklet, there were only two short paragraphs on external affairs.⁶ The first was a values statement:

Reformers affirm that Canada's conduct in foreign as well as domestic affairs should be guided by the values and principles of Canadians as embodied in a system of dynamic and constructive change – political democracy and economic freedom. We should uphold and promote this legacy of human rights and dignity for all mankind.

The second paragraph was a brief critique of the Mulroney and Trudeau governments:

We are concerned that, under the present Mulroney-Clark Government, Canada's role in international bodies is simply adjusting and fitting into the views of foreign governments rather than vigorously promoting Canadian values and Canadian interests. During the Trudeau era, Westerners became alarmed at the degree to which Canada had become distrusted by our natural allies and a hero to those governments with which Canadian values have little in common. In our view, the present Government has perpetuated this situation.

⁶ Reform Party, *Platform and Statement of Principles* (1988), 25.

There were some precise recommendations on trade, defence, and immigration in the 1988 Blue Book, but nothing on foreign aid. In total, there were only 11 foreign policy priorities established in the very first Reform Party Blue Book, and over half of them dealt solely with immigration. This was due to the fixation of the Reform Party on domestic matters as opposed to foreign policy. As a populist party they wanted more direct democracy (Parliamentary free votes, referendums, citizen initiatives, recall of MPs, etc). As a western based party, they wanted changes to the Senate upper house to make it elected, equal, and effective (Triple E Senate). Constitutionally, they were firmly opposed to granting special status for the province of Quebec, which had been a central piece of the Mulroney government's efforts at constitutional change through the Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords. Fiscally, they wanted to eliminate the government's deficit and start paying down the debt. They also wanted to reduce the size and scope of government largely through cuts to social welfare policies and cultural support policies by ending official bilingualism and multiculturalism. The Reform Party also pledged to cut taxes and campaigned against the goods and services sales tax (GST) that was introduced in 1991. As a social conservative party, Reform wanted to end affirmative action programs, protect the nuclear family, prevent same-sex marriage, and have MPs vote their conscience on moral issues such as abortion. The Reform Party also pledged to be tough on crime through assisting victims of crime, establishing mandatory minimum sentencing requirements, toughening parole eligibility, reducing the age for young offenders to those between 10 and 15, protecting the rights of law abiding firearms users, and holding a referendum on capital punishment.

Second, there was an evolution over time on foreign policy matters as more items were added. For example, the 1988 Blue Book had 11 foreign policy priorities, but the 1999 version

had 28. In part, this was due to the increasing size of the Blue Books. While the 1988 Blue Book was 28 pages in length, the 1999 edition was 49 pages.

Third, not all priorities were listed in every Blue Book. Some priorities - such as identifying the values of Canadian foreign policy as political democracy, economic freedom, and human rights - were mentioned in all seven documents. But others – such as the support for the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement (CUSFTA) – only occur at the beginning of the time period. This is because these priorities were implemented by the Chretien government and it would be redundant to keep endorsing it. Other priorities – such as calling for the privatization of Export Development Canada (EDC) - were only identified at the later stages of the time period. This occurred as the Reform Party's foreign policy thinking became more sophisticated and more components (such as investment policy) started to appear.

Why look at the Blue Books? First, these Blue Books represent a clear articulation of the Reform Party principles. Second, as a grassroots populist party it could be expected that many of these priorities would be implemented into policy once the Reform Party, or its successor party the Conservative Party of Canada, formed government.⁷ Third, many of the people who were involved in the Reform Party took on key roles within Stephen Harper's government. This included cabinet ministers (Jason Kenney, Stockwell Day, Chuck Strahl, etc) and advisors (Ian Brodie, Tom Flanagan, etc). Finally, Stephen Harper held the position of chief policy officer in the early days of the Reform Party which meant that he helped take the policy proposals that emerged out of Reform Party conventions and place them in the Blue Books. As John Ibbitson

⁷ For an excellent examination of the populist and conservative elements of the Reform Party see Tom Flanagan, *Waiting for the Wave: The Reform Party and the Conservative Movement* 2nd Edition (McGill-Queen's University Press: Montreal and Kingston, 2009).

noted, “Harper became the only person apart from [Reform Party leader Preston] Manning authorized to speak on behalf of the party.”⁸

The second step was to measure the extent to which each of these foreign policy priorities were implemented. Four categories were constructed: achieved, attempted, avoided, and not applicable. A priority was judged “achieved” if the Harper government had implemented it. For example, the recommendation to restructure CIDA occurred in 2013 when the Harper government absorbed the agency within the new super department of Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Development (DFATD). A priority was scored as “attempted” if the Harper government had tried, but failed, to make the required change. For example, the Harper government did increase military funding to ensure a “well-equipped army, navy, air force” in the early years of its mandate. In 2005, the last year of Martin government, defence spending was \$16 billion. In Conservative Finance Minister Jim Flaherty’s first budget in 2006, the CPC added another \$1.1 billion. But the financial crisis of 2008 led the Harper government, like previous Liberal and PC governments, to reduce defence spending. This meant that by 2015, the Harper government was only spending \$20 billion on the military. So there was an increase in military spending in raw terms, but when inflation is factored in, military spending remained roughly at the same level as it was under the Liberals.⁹ The fiasco over replacing the aging CF-18 fighter jets with the F-35s also illustrated the Harper government’s “attempt,” but its inability to “achieve” this priority. A priority was scored as “avoided” if the priority was still relevant, but that the Harper government ignored trying to implement it. For example, the Blue Books called for the removal of interprovincial trade barriers, but the Harper government did not take any steps on this file.

⁸ John Ibbitson, *Stephen Harper* (McClelland and Stewart: Toronto, 2015), 64.

⁹ David Perry, Defence Budget 2015: A Long-Term Funding Increase....Maybe, *Canadian Global Affairs Institute* (1 May 2015). Accessed at http://www.cgai.ca/defence_budget_2015

Instead, it stood back and watched the provinces negotiate their own agreements like the one on Ontario-Quebec construction mobility¹⁰ or the Western provinces partnership trade agreement.¹¹ A priority was judged “not applicable” because events had intervened. For example, the Reform Party Blue Books had endorsed the CUSFTA. But by the time that the Harper government took power in 2006, it was almost twenty years since the ratification of CUSFTA and, in fact, CUSFTA had been superseded by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) which came into force in 1994. The scoring was based on government documents, important secondary sources, and the author’s own knowledge of the Harper government’s foreign policy record.¹² It is important to mention that I do not provide any explanation for why a specific recommendation was achieved, attempted, or avoided by the Harper government, instead I simply provide a scorecard on the rate of implementation. The results of this assessment are summarized in Table 2.

¹⁰ Ontario Ministry of Labour, Ontario-Quebec construction mobility (11 January 2016). Accessed at <http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/jpo/index.php>

¹¹ Canada’s New West Partnership Trade Agreement (2010). Accessed at <http://www.newwestpartnershiptrade.ca/>

¹² Important secondary sources that have evaluated the Harper government’s foreign policy include *International Journal* and the *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* as well as the following books: Bratt and Kukucha, eds., *Readings in Canadian Foreign Policy*; Heather A. Smith and Clair Turenne Sjolander, eds., *Canada in the World: Internationalism in Canadian Foreign Policy* (Oxford University Press: Toronto, 2013); Kim Richard Nossal, Stéphane Roussel, and Stéphane Paquin, *International Policy and Politics in Canada* (Pearson: Toronto, 2011); and Adam Chapnick and Christopher J. Kukucha, eds., *Canadian International Policy, 2006-15: Continuity and Change under Conservative Minority and Majority Governments* (University of British Columbia Press: Vancouver, forthcoming).

TABLE 2

Implementation of Reform Party Foreign Policy Priorities by Harper Government

Category	Item	Achieved	Attempted	Avoided	Not Applicable
Foreign Affairs					
	Values of Political Democracy, Economic Freedom, and Human Rights	X			
	Review participation in international organizations	X			
	Identity and proposed position of all officials, NGOs, individuals speaking for Canada at international or UN conferences be fully disclosed.			X	
	All agreements and declarations from international or UN conferences must be ratified by Parliament.			X	
International Trade					
	Pursue Free Trade Agreements	X			
	Support CUSFTA				X
	Remove Interprovincial Trade Barriers			X	
	Amend CUSFTA/NAFTA to include Water Protection			X	
	Promote Trade with Pacific Rim Countries	X			
	Foreign investment policy that has 9 principles.	X			
	Privatize EDC			X	
Defence					
	Well-Equipped Army, Navy, Air Force		X		

	Continue with NORAD/NATO	X			
	Participate in International Peacekeeping			X	
	Participation in International Stabilization efforts with conditions (required capabilities/resources, mission parameters approved in advance, approved by Parliament)	X			
	Search and Rescue Capability	X			
	Natural Disaster Response	X			
	Reserves = Regular Forces			X	
	Create an Inspector General who reports to Chief of Defence Staff and/or Minister of Defence			X	
	Create a Commissioner of Veterans' Affairs (who must be a veteran) at the Deputy Minister level to work with Ministers of Defence and Veteran's Affairs on behalf of veterans.			X	
Foreign Aid					
	Reduction of Foreign Aid	X			
	Encourage Individuals and Private Organizations to supply foreign aid	X			
	Ban foreign aid to countries that suppress human rights		X		
	Create an aid effectiveness unit within CIDA	X			
	Restructure CIDA	X			
	Tied Aid			X	
Immigration					
	Immigration should be economic-based	X			

	Genuine refugees should be welcomed	X			
	Immigration should not be used to solve an aging population				X
	Changes to immigration should require a referendum			X	
	Immigration should not be based on race or creed	X			
	Immigration should be 150,000 a year when unemployment is above 10%. Increases in immigration when below 10%.			X	

Results

Foreign Affairs

There were four priorities identified in the general category of foreign affairs. The first was an expression that Canadian foreign policy should be based on the following values: political democracy, economic freedom, and human rights. This was achieved by the Harper government. In a wide-ranging interview with Maclean’s in 2011, Harper provided great insight into the values that he saw as underpinning Canadian foreign policy. Harper asserted that he saw international relations as “a struggle between good and bad” whereby “the real defining moments for the country and for the world are those big conflicts where everything’s at stake and where you take a side and show that you can contribute to the right side.” These “big conflicts” – where Canada has historically been on the right side of history such as World Wars I & II and the Cold

War – have been “the real defining moments for the country and for the world.”¹³ Ian Brodie a political scientist who was also Harper’s first of Chief of Staff (2006-2008) similarly argues that the Harper government has applied a principled approach to foreign policy by supporting Canada’s democratic allies and opposing dictatorships and terrorist organizations. This could be seen in the diplomatic isolation of Iran, Russia, Hamas, and Hezbollah.¹⁴

The other foreign affairs priority that was achieved was a review of participation in international organizations. While there was no public review process, it is clear from examining the foreign policy record of the Harper government that an informal process occurred. In the case of NATO and the G7 there was strong support from the Harper government, but for the United Nations, Commonwealth, and La Francophonie there was less support and in many cases open hostility.¹⁵ For example, Stephen Harper personally scolded the Commonwealth and La Francophonie for not sanctioning non-democratic members, and even reduced funding to the Commonwealth secretariat. The blatant disregard for the United Nations was best illustrated by Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird’s speech at the General Assembly where he maintained that “Canada does not just ‘go along’ in order to ‘get along.’” Canada respects “state sovereignty, but [it] will not ‘go along’ or look the other way when a minority is denied its human rights or fundamental freedoms.”¹⁶

¹³ Quoted in Kenneth Whyte, “In Conversation: Stephen Harper,” *Maclean’s* (5 July 2011).

¹⁴ Ian Brodie, “Canada disengaging from NATO, the UN and multilateralism? Not a change. Harper is an internationalist, albeit of a different kind” (25 September 2014). Accessed at <http://opencanada.org>

¹⁵ I develop this argument in more detail in “Stephen Harper and Multilateralism: A Rebuttal to Keating’s Twilight of Canadian Multilateralism,” in Robert W. Murray ed., *Multilateralism as State Strategy: Seeking Order in an Anarchic Society* (University of Alberta Press: Edmonton, AB, forthcoming).

¹⁶ John Baird, “Address to the United Nations General Assembly,” New York (26 September 2011). Accessed at August 2014, <http://www.international.gc.ca/media/aff/speeches-discours/2011/2011-030.aspx?lang=eng>

The Harper government did not attempt to implement the remaining two foreign policy priorities: identify and proposed position of all officials, NGOs, individuals speaking for Canada at international or UN conferences be fully disclosed and all agreements and declarations from international or UN conferences must be ratified by Parliament. The Harper government, like all previous Canadian governments, maintained executive privilege on the ratification of international agreements.

International Trade

The Harper government achieved several of the Reform Party priorities in the area of international trade. In particular, it pursued free trade agreements and promoted trade with Pacific Rim countries through the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) with the European Union, the bilateral trade agreement with South Korea, and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) which included Japan and other Asian countries.

The 1999 Blue Book added a recommendation to adopt a foreign investment policy that contained nine principles. These principles included:

- transparency in multilateral negotiations [avoided];
- national treatment of investment [achieved];
- investment protection [achieved];
- effective dispute settlement mechanism [attempted];
- elimination of performance requirements [avoided];
- freedom to transfer payments and after-tax profits [avoided];
- free movement of key personnel [achieved];
- minimal sectoral exemptions [attempted];

- Retain Canadian sovereignty over social programs, health care, conservation of natural resources, and protection of the environment [achieved].¹⁷

On balance, this Reform Party recommendation was scored as achieved because of the four achieved principles, as compared to two attempts, and three avoidances.

The Harper government, as mentioned earlier in this paper, avoided the recommendation to remove interprovincial trade barriers. In addition, it also avoided the Reform Party's recommendation to privatize the Export Development Corporation and to amend CUSFTA/NAFTA to include the protection of Canadian water. There was one international trade recommendation which was scored as non-applicable, the support of CUSFTA.

Defence

The Harper government continued to be a member of the North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In fact, the Harper government was very active in working closely with its NATO allies in the wars in Afghanistan and Libya. Thus, this recommendation was easily achieved.

The Harper government also put additional resources into the Canadian Forces that has enhanced both its search and rescue capability and its natural disaster response. In particular, purchasing the massive Globemaster cargo planes greatly increased Canada's strategic airlift capability. This meant that Canada's Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) was

¹⁷ Reform, *Principles and Policies of the Reform Party of Canada – 1999*, 27. For an analysis of Canadian investment policy see Elizabeth Smythe, "Canada and the Negotiation of Investment Rules: Open for Whose Business?" in Bratt and Kukucha, eds., *Readings in Canadian Foreign Policy*, 415-433.

substantially more effective in responding to the 2010 Haitian earthquake than it had been to the 2004 Tsunami in South Asia. Therefore, these Reform Party priorities were achieved too.

The Harper government achieved the implementation of the Reform Party recommendation about participating in international stabilization efforts. The key aspects to this recommendation was that it would require appropriate capabilities and resources, the mission parameters approved in advance, and approved by Parliament. The Harper government did have Parliamentary votes on the deployment of the Canadian Forces to the international missions in Afghanistan, Libya, and ISIS.

As mentioned earlier in the paper, the Harper government did attempt to ensure that Canada had a well-equipped army, navy, air force, but this commitment waned over time. By 2015, the defence budget looked very similar to the one in 2005 and there remained hard questions about the state of its military procurement.

The Reform Party put a lot of emphasis on the role of reservists in the Canadian Forces. It wanted numerical equivalency with the regular forces as well as being issued similar equipment. On both of these criteria, the Harper government avoided implementing this recommendation. By the end of the Harper government, the reservists target number was 27, 000, but, according to the Auditor-General, only 13, 944 reservists were ready for duty. In contrast, there are 68, 000 regular forces; a far cry from equal. The Auditor-General report also found that reserve units lacked appropriate equipment and training.¹⁸

¹⁸ Murray Brewster, "Canada's army reserve lacking soldiers, equipment, training, audit finds," *CBC News* (3 May 2016). Accessed at <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/auditor-general-report-army-reserves-1.3563990>

When it comes to participation in international peacekeeping, the Harper government avoided this recommendation. They perpetuated the trend that had started under the Chrétien and Martin Liberals with the decreasing Canadian participation in UN peacekeeping operations. In the early 1990s, Canada had between 4, 000 – 5, 000 troops deployed on UN peacekeeping operations, but by 2005 it had dropped to 312.¹⁹ During the years of the Harper government, that figure got even lower. By December 2015, Canada had only 84 police, 9 military experts, and 20 troops on UN peacekeeping operations.²⁰

The Harper government also avoided other Reform Party recommendations. It never created an Inspector General who reports to Chief of Defence Staff and/or Minister of Defence nor did it create a Commissioner of Veterans' Affairs (who must be a veteran) at the Deputy Minister level to work with Ministers of Defence and Veteran's Affairs on behalf of veterans.

Foreign Aid

The majority of the Reform Party priorities regarding foreign aid were achieved by the Harper government. As mentioned above, CIDA was restructured. In addition, there was a reduction in overall foreign aid. In 2005, Canada spent \$4.3 billion on foreign aid, but the Harper government gradually increased it over the length of its mandate. By 2011, it had peaked at \$5.9 billion. But then, with a majority government, the Harper government was able to start to reduce its foreign aid commitment. By 2014, Canada only gave \$4.9 billion,²¹ and in the 2015 budget,

¹⁹ Duane Bratt, "Warriors or Boy Scouts? Canada and Peace Support Operations," in Duane Bratt and Christopher J. Kukucha, eds., *Readings in Canadian Foreign Policy: Classic Debates and New Ideas* (Oxford University Press: Toronto, 2007), 238-248.

²⁰ United Nations, "United Nations Peacekeeping," (2015). Accessed at <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/contributors.shtml>

²¹ Canadian International Development Platform, "Canada's foreign aid" (2015). Accessed at <http://cidpnsi.ca/canadas-foreign-aid-2012-2/>

Finance Minister Joe Oliver imposed a five year freeze on foreign aid.²² Establishing an aid effectiveness office in CIDA was scored as achieved even though no specific office was created. This is because the Harper government emphasized the importance of aid effectiveness as a governing principle of its foreign aid policy.²³ The Harper government has also achieved the goal of encouraging individuals and private organizations to supply foreign aid.²⁴

In the case of the Reform Party recommendation to ban foreign aid to countries that suppress human rights, this is scored as attempted. This is because the record is mixed. On the one hand, a private member's bill entitled the Official Development Assistance Accountability Act, which included references to international human rights standards, was passed in 2008. On the other hand, the Harper government actually added several of the countries of focus for disbursements of Canadian aid who were major violators of human rights, ie., Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Myanmar/Burma.

There was only one Reform Party foreign aid priority which the Harper government avoided; tied aid. Not only did the Harper government avoid the Reform Party recommendation of tied aid, but they continued the process of abolishing all tied aid that had been started by the previous Liberal government.²⁵

²² Mike Blanchfield, "Canada slides in foreign aid rankings," *Toronto Star* (8 April 2015).

²³ See Stephen Brown, "Aid Effectiveness and the Framing of New Canadian Aid Initiatives," in Bratt and Kukucha, eds., *Readings in Canadian Foreign Policy*, 467-481.

²⁴ Global Affairs Canada, "Private sector as partners in development," (5 April 2016). Accessed at <http://www.international.gc.ca/development-developpement/partners-partenaires/ps-sp.aspx?lang=eng>

²⁵ Global Affairs Canada, "Canada Fully Unties its Development Aid," (5 September 2008). Accessed at <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/acdi-cida.nsf/eng/NAT-9583229-GQC>

Immigration

According to John Ibbitson, the most contentious aspect of the Reform Party Blue Books, foreign or domestic policy, was the 1988 recommendation that “immigration should not be based on race or creed, as it was in the past, nor should it be explicitly designed to radically alter the ethnic makeup of Canada, as it increasingly seems to be.”²⁶ Ibbitson writes that “it is hard not to conclude from that paragraph that Reform wanted to keep Canada white by limiting immigration from developing countries.”²⁷ This recommendation was modified in subsequent Blue Books to state simply that “the Reform Party opposes any immigration policy based on race or creed.” The Harper government achieved this later version of the recommendation. Other parts of the Blue Book recommendations on immigration were also achieved by the Harper government. These included that immigration should be economic-based and that genuine refugees should be welcomed. While the issue of Syrian refugees was an election issue in 2015, the debate between the Conservatives, Liberals, and New Democrats was about the number of refugees and the speed with which they should be accepted, not whether they were genuine refugees.

One Blue Book recommendation which was judged to be not applicable was that immigration should not be used to solve an aging population. While there has been plenty of discussion about the link between immigration and an aging population in Atlantic Canada, there was no evidence that this was ever raised as an issue during the tenure of the Harper government.

As with all of the Reform Party’s direct democracy ideas, the Harper government avoided having a referendum on any changes to immigration policy including sponsorship requirements

²⁶ Reform, *Platform and Statement of Principles of the Reform Party of Canada* (1988), 23.

²⁷ Ibbitson, *Stephen Harper*, 64.

or amnesties. They also avoided the immigration numerical targets set by the Reform Party of 150, 000 a year when unemployment is above 10%. Increases in immigration when below 10%. During the Harper years, Canada accepted over 250, 000 new immigrants a year.

The above analysis shows that the Harper Government implemented half of the Reform Party Blue Book recommendations on Canadian foreign policy. Of the remaining 16 recommendations, 2 were attempted, 12 were avoided, and 2 were judged to be not applicable. Table 3 summarizes this information.

Table 3
Summary of Harper Government’s Implementation of
Reform Party Foreign Policy Priorities

Reform Party Priorities	Achieved	Attempted	Avoided	Not Applicable
32	16	2	12	2

Foreign vs Domestic Policy

In contrast to the Harper government’s implementation of the Reform Party’s recommendations on foreign policy, they were not nearly as successful in implementing many of the Reform Party domestic policy proposals. Space limitations prevent a comprehensive content analysis of the domestic policy recommendations contained within the Blue Books (whose number greatly exceed the foreign policy priorities), but a cursory survey shows that many of the most important ones were not implemented by the Harper government. For example, they completely avoided introducing any elements of direct democracy that the Reformers had advocated. No recall of MPs. No referendums. The Harper government also strenuously avoided

any of the social policies such as a free vote by MPs on abortion. They also avoided some of the more contentious items on multiculturalism such as preserving “the distinctive heritage and tradition of the RCMP by retaining the uniformity of dress code. Changes should not be made for religious or ethnic reasons.”²⁸ This was a clear reference to the controversy over allowing Sikh RCMP officers to wear their turban as part of the RCMP uniform. There were also attempts, but no achievements, on Senate reform. Finally, the Harper government did achieve a few of the Blue Book recommendations. For example, many of the recommendations around criminal justice, ie., abolishing the firearms registry, legislating mandatory minimum sentences, and establishing a victims bill of rights.

Why did the Harper government implement the Reform Party’s foreign policy agenda to a much greater degree than its domestic agenda? There may be a number of reasons that explain this discrepancy, but one likely factor was that all Canadian governments have a much greater freedom of action in the international arena than they do over domestic policy. The constraints of provinces, public opinion, and the courts are much lower in foreign policy. In domestic policy, many spheres are in provincial jurisdiction or shared jurisdiction between the federal and provincial governments. But in foreign policy, the federal government is preeminent. Canadian public opinion has always been more concerned with domestic policy than foreign policy. This can best be seen during elections, where there have only been a few elections where foreign policy played a significant role: 1944 and the issue of conscription, 1963 and the issue of American nuclear weapons on Canadian soil, and 1988 and the CUSFTA debate. This trend continued during the elections that Harper fought in 2004, 2005-6, 2008, and 2011. Foreign

²⁸ Reform, *Platform and Statement of Principles of the Reform Party of Canada* (1991), 31.

policy, particularly over the issue of Syrian refugees, was an election issue in 2015, but it still had a smaller impact than domestic policy, the comparative personalities of Harper vs Justin Trudeau, or the old “time for a change” refrain. The Canadian Supreme Court, and other lower courts, have ruled against several of the Harper government’s domestic initiatives, ie., minimum sentencing guidelines, Senate reform, etc. However, the courts often deferred in the foreign policy realm.

The fewer constraints in foreign policy gave the Harper government the opportunity to make more substantive change, including responding to its electoral base that was associated with the Reform Party. What it could not implement on the domestic side (ie., Triple E Senate) it could implement on the foreign policy side (ie., negotiate free trade agreements). One good example of this was on the issue of abortion. Despite the demands of the Reform Party, the Harper government never held a free vote on abortion. But when it launched its landmark maternal, newborn, and child health initiative at the G8 summit in Muskoka, Ontario in June 2010 – committing \$2.5 billion – it made sure that access or funding of abortion would not be included.

Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated that the Reform Party, through the articulation of its foreign policy priorities listed in its Blue Books, had a clear influence on the foreign policy of the Harper government. The content analysis of the Blue Books identified 32 priorities in the areas of foreign affairs, international trade, defence, foreign aid, and immigration. An evaluation of the

ten year record of the Harper government showed that 16 of these priorities were achieved, two were attempted, 14 were avoided, and two were not applicable.

The paper also had a secondary objective, which was to compare the Reform Party's influence on the Harper government in both foreign and domestic policy. This showed that the Reform Party had a much greater influence on the Harper government's foreign policy than it did on its domestic policy. This discrepancy was due to a variety of factors, but the most important one is that all Canadian governments have a much greater freedom of action in the international arena than they do over domestic policy. The constraints of provinces, public opinion, and the courts are much lower in foreign policy.