

Notes for a Presentation on the Early Performance of the New Government on Foreign Policy

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Check Against Delivery

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Interim Report Card

Overall Assessment,

A **very inexperienced** government that is, nevertheless, **very confident** in its judgments, staking out far-reaching positions on major issues.

It is departing from some of the positions taken by its predecessors, but whether it is doing so out of principled conviction, or political expediency or some Machiavellian or Straussian combination of the two-- or out of sheer inexperience--is not yet clear.

It is **running very dangerous domestic and foreign risks** in making foreign policy issues “wedge issues” in electoral politics

Gets along well with other Anglos

Clearly needs a lot more work and time

I. What I Like

1. **Attitude**—“[The] objective is to make Canada a leader on the international stage. We want to ensure that we can preserve our identity and our sovereignty, protect our key interests and defend those values we hold most dear on the international scene.”
2. **Commitment**—Funding the rebuilding of the Armed Forces’ capability to underwrite that more significant role.
3. **US Declaratory Policy (so far)**

1. **Rhetorically puts relations with Washington on a business-like but self-respecting basis**

1. “So let us continue to embrace our different national identities, even as we share common ties and common convictions.

And may the border which defines our countries never divide our peoples.”

- Arctic Sovereignty

4. Attitude towards the UN (so far)

2. **Seems to embrace centrality of the UN, albeit needing reform, especially as regards Afghanistan**

“In this endeavour, as with the others I have outlined, Canada will be there with you at every step along the way.”

we will back our sovereignty over “Our Land” with all the tools at our disposal, including the men and women of our Armed Forces”

5. Quality of the Prime Minister’s speeches

6. Capacity to learn

**Iraq
WMD
(But not Lebanon)**

What I Am Not sure About Yet

1. **How much religion is influencing policy decisions**
2. **Whether they will drink the cool-aide on the “War on Terrorism”**
3. **What will happen with CIDA funding**
4. **What the attitude is to Human Security**
 - **Protection of civilians in armed conflict**

- **Responsibility to Protect**
 - **Darfur—good rhetoric, no boots on the ground**
- **Place of women's issues**
- **What the attitude is towards China**

What I Do Not Like

- 1. Playing politics with foreign policy issues**
- 2. The Middle East**
 - **Damage to our reputation abroad (cf. Amre Moussa)**
 - **Risk to the civil peace at home (UK survey)**
 - **Selective apportion of blame and lack of balance**
 - **Following the American lead on Lebanon**
 - **But independent on Sri Lanka**
- 3. Forcing a quick vote in Parliament on Afghanistan**
- 4. Pandering to the provinces**
Quebec, UNESCO and all that
Alberta and Washington
- 5. Spending cuts to diplomacy, especially public diplomacy**
Communications a weak point—no foreign bureaux
in Canada
- 6. The Armenian issue—no proper debate**
- 7. The absence of consequences in the Arar case**
- 8. Kyoto**
- 9. Softwood lumber**

