



United Nations Association in Canada
Association canadienne pour les Nations Unies

**Campaign for Election to the Security Council:
How to Read the Results from Tuesday's Vote**

Whatever the outcome of Tuesday's election of new Security Council members at the United Nations General Assembly, for most Canadians the glass of the UN's importance and work will remain at least half full. Canada is vying with Germany and Portugal for two non-permanent seats on the Council. Canada has a long, proud history of supporting countries working together to find global solutions to intractable challenges and of bringing our "best game" to the UN. Nothing that happens on Tuesday morning, in the cavernous and familiar General Assembly hall, should change that.

A win will affirm a continued global perception of Canada as a net contributor – and a source of wit and imagination over the long haul. We must be prepared to live up to this view. The quiet diplomacy of the current Permanent Representative to the UN, John McNee, along with a stellar team of diplomats, will have earned us golden spurs. Working for the Government of Canada from a privileged vantage point in New York, they have earned Canada the Security Council seat every day – some would say every day since we last stepped off the Council. Our Government must now articulate a few key messages and issues on which we believe we can deliver over the two-year tenure of the seat.

Much in the same way that former Council terms became the global launch for Canadian peace and security initiatives like the human security concept of *Responsibility to Protect*, this Government had shown leadership on issues around gender and peace – needs now bifurcated by largely Muslim-dominated countries wanting to frame gender as the 'protection' of women – not their full participation. Another area of very heightened attention in the world, where Canada has some hard-earned expertise, is global migration – especially migration linked to conflict. These are both areas where this Government could build real global and domestic credibility.

But should our past and current international efforts fail to bring enough votes to secure us a seat that has been reliably ours every decade since we worked to found the UN in 1945, what then? and what does it mean?

Firstly, it will be a significant loss and disappointment. It should call us to reflect on why it happened. Why countries who saw Canada as a 'helpful fixer' – a thoughtful leader

who, through geography and nature as a joiner could bring intimate knowledge of those countries with more power and clout to agile, intelligent solution seeking - may no longer view us in this way.

Canadians, across political and religious affiliation, are visceral supporters of the UN. They are caring, but not unconditional supporters. Older Canadians carry the memories of the aspirations of the institution after the brutalities of a global war.. The next generation has memories of the development and evolution of UN peacekeeping – to peacebuilding operations. Younger Canadians know about those contributions, and the current work on the maternal, newborn and child health and the full engagement of the UN Secretary General in the made-in-Canada G20 under Canada's leadership. The pledge to 'save successive generations from the scourge of war' may not resonate with the same clarity to a young Canadian but the big, global and noble principles of the UN and its work in the development trenches bring them to our door at UNA-Canada every day – often to offer help in making the implementation of those principles more disciplined, accountable and transparent.

It is important to remember that this is a CANADIAN seat on the Security Council, not a Conservative seat. It is a place where all of us, our aspirations and desires for security and prosperity and the underpinning fairness and justice, are present. For the government of the day it is an opportunity to showcase a view that Canada matters - that our Prime Minister and Foreign Minister have stature outside our borders.

Much commentary has focused on the international policies and presence of the Government of Stephen Harper and whether that had a negative impact on our campaign. This deserves consideration. This is an election that mattered – to any country that aspires to play a role of leadership in world affairs. It matters to Canada. A renewed term will provide a renewed opportunity to promote key Canadian priorities and values.

For the government of Stephen Harper, which has staked much on a shift on Middle East policy from 'balance' to singular Israel supporter, the Security Council is truly where rubber hits the road on global dialogue and decision-making on that region. The loss of a seat on the Council will be a blow to the Government's supporters of current Middle East policy – especially given Foreign Minister Cannon's recent comment that 'Canada considers settlements contrary to international law and settlement expansion unhelpful to peace efforts'. This Government – as we hope all Canadian governments – has seen that in the Byzantine world of Middle East politics all parties must be encouraged to take real steps to peace.

A newer challenge to Canada's candidacy was the real, deserved power of the 'small states'(under 10 million people) which have initiated important endeavours and made outsized contributions to the UN and to global governance. Their 'horse' in the race was Portugal: in the world of Statecraft, it would certainly be expected to showcase and represent the small states in the Council.. But our campaign acknowledged the contributions of small states, while bringing Canada's 'bridging' strength and reputation to the dialogue.

Many saw Germany as a shoe-in: a recognition of the leadership and careful power a united Germany has exercised in the world , and in the UN. Indeed many countries recognize the legitimate aspirations of Germany to a permanent seat on the Council and this election may be a confirmation of that opinion.

A Security Council term gives a country a voice in the principal security organ of the United Nations, a uniquely influential body in the structure of the international order. It is the body where one can argue that the stakes are the highest, the opportunities the greatest, the consequences of success and failure the most far-reaching. Skilled Canadian leaders and diplomats have played critical roles in helping to achieve international solutions during our previous six terms on the Council.. Win or lose, this is a moment to recognize these great and sometimes invisible Canadian diplomats.

We are anticipating a Canadian “win” on Tuesday. But a loss would represent a wake up call to broaden our understanding of any shift away from support of Canada - not a reason to turn our backs on the United Nations. We have a proud record of leadership in all aspects of the work of the UN system. Our focus now has to be on continuing to craft a salient foreign policy to push forward a Canadian contribution to peace and prosperity for all from the Security Council horseshoe table – or from the other podiums and capitals. The UN will remain a key part of Canadian identity and aspirations and Canada must continue to make it a better and stronger institution.

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