WHAT WE ARE

The Canadian International Council (CIC) is Canada’s premier forum for global affairs.

MISSION

To provide Canadian citizens, business and government with a better understanding of issues facing them in an increasingly complex and interconnected world, thereby enhancing Canada’s global influence and competitiveness.

ABOUT

The CIC is an independent, non-partisan membership organization and think tank dedicated to strengthening Canada’s engagement with global affairs. It advances broad public understanding and debate on global issues across academic disciplines, policy areas, and economic sectors. The CIC convenes Canadians from academia, business, civil society, government and the media to inform and develop the country’s next generation of foreign policy leaders. One of Canada’s oldest and most respected think tanks, the CIC is not only dedicated to nurturing dialogue on Canadian foreign policy domestically, but also in projecting a Canadian perspective on the international stage. In an increasingly complex and dangerous world, this effort to promote greater understanding and foster meaningful debate on critical challenges is more important than ever.

“The CIC has a rich and distinguished history as a focal point for debate and discussion on Canada’s role in the world. With the international community gripped in a period of turbulence, and the government in Ottawa eager to reassert its clout and influence on the world stage, the organization has never been more important.”

Dr. Mark Sedra
President & Research Director, CIC
Valuable knowledge and understanding gained through empirical research, wide ranging studies and topical events that bring together experts on international issues and geopolitical developments provide Canadians—notably the business community, civil society and government—with the tools to make good choices, and decisions that lead to progress, prosperity and leadership on the global stage. In this vein, it is vital for Canadians to support the work of the country’s premier, independent, nonpartisan council on international affairs, the Canadian International Council (CIC). The CIC has been advancing Canadian debate on international issues since the establishment of its predecessor, the Canadian Institute of International Affairs (CIIA), in 1928. The former CIIA was created as part of a network of international affairs institutes throughout the British Commonwealth. Since then, it has evolved with the times to become the most interactive and engaging think tank in the Canadian research landscape, linked to other foreign policy research councils around the world.

Today the notion of “international affairs” extends far beyond traditional concepts of diplomacy between governments, to issues that affect the lives and prosperity of every Canadian. The study and analysis of the benefits and consequences of new trade relationships; the development of natural resource strategies; the emergence of ground-breaking digital technologies; the consideration of the future of the military and the evolution of international aid policy are just a few topics of vital importance. The better Canadians understand the world, whether as business leaders or policy-makers, NGO workers or media commentators, students or consumers, the better decisions they will make in the course of their work and their lives.

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The research, events, and digital content that the CIC produces are both substantive and accessible. CIC branches host over 100 public events every year; the CIC produces Canada’s top academic journal on international affairs, International Journal; and the CIC’s interactive website presents a constant stream of informative content and analysis of international developments, making cutting edge research and ideas more engaging and accessible for our rapidly expanding audience. Furthermore, and of direct interest to our donors, partners and supporters, this research has been of direct value to Canadian businesses, civil society groups and government agencies engaged in international issues.

I urge you to support the CIC. The activities and products of the council are described in these pages. Your support will help our businesses, policy-makers, and citizens better understand the increasingly complex and fluid international context in which we are operating, striving to succeed, and endeavouring to lead.

Hon. William C. Graham
HISTORY

Canada’s Window on the World Since 1928

The Canadian Institute of International Affairs (CIIA), predecessor of the Canadian International Council, was founded in 1928 by a number of prominent Canadians, among them Sir Robert Borden (Canada’s eighth prime minister) and Sir Arthur Currie (commander of the Canadian Corps in World War I). The mission of the organization, as laid out by the CIIA’s inaugural constitution, was: “To promote a broader and deeper understanding of international affairs and of Canada’s role in a changing world by providing interested Canadians with a non-partisan, nation-wide forum for informed discussion, debate and analysis.” Almost nine decades later that original purpose remains steadfast.

The founding of the CIIA was motivated by the experience of World War I and growing Canadian assertiveness and independence on foreign affairs. What distinguished the CIIA from other emerging think tanks of the time, and still sets it apart, was that it was a genuinely national organization with a branch structure that allowed regional differentiation in programming.

With the CIIA expanding its research program over the years, it began producing publications, launching the Behind the Headlines magazine series in 1940 and the academic journal, International Journal, in 1946. Both continue to be published today, with International Journal widely recognized to be Canada’s premier journal focused on international affairs.

The CIIA went through a process of renewal in 2007, emerging as the Canadian International Council (CIC). The new CIC was the result of an agreement between the CIIA and the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) of Waterloo, Ontario, designed to harness the natural synergies of the two non-partisan organizations. Perhaps the most distinctive characteristic of the CIC has been its ability to embrace the digital era, recognizing the ways in which new technologies have impacted both how international relations are conducted and how a public affairs organization should operate.
OUR REACH

The CIC’s Extensive Portfolio and Audience

An inclusive and innovative policy council model that makes research more accessible, foreign policy more immediate, and advances Canadian engagement with global issues.

The CIC’s audience is constantly expanding. Our portfolio of projects and programs and our mix of eminent and newer voices attract an audience of policy-makers, subject experts, media, and public and private sector leaders from around the world.

PROGRAMS

THE CIC’S DYNAMIC PROGRAMMING COMPRISSES:
Research Streams
Fellowship Program
Branch Network
Corporate Engagement
Youth Outreach

PLATFORMS

COMMUNICATING WITH ENGAGED CanADIANS VIA:
Interactive Website
Publications
Social Media
Newsletters
Events

AUDIENCE

LEADERS AND INFLUENCERS IN CANADA AND ABROAD INCLUDING:
Business Community
Government
Academia
Media
NGOs
BRANCHES

Engaging Canadians from Coast to Coast

The CIC operates a network of 15 branches from coast-to-coast, comprising over 1,000 individual and corporate members. They are part of a national network of globally minded Canadians committed to promoting, improving and advancing Canada’s foreign policy. CIC branches produce and host over 100 events annually, including conferences, lectures, workshops, pub-nights, and dinners.

While the CIC has developed a highly sophisticated virtual presence, it continues to value the importance of personal connection. The CIC is fueled by a grassroots branch network which stretches across the country.

Halifax · Ottawa · Montreal · Nipissing · Thunder Bay
Toronto · Hamilton · Waterloo · Winnipeg · Saskatoon
Regina · Edmonton · Calgary · Vancouver · Victoria
RESEARCH

World-Class Research Tackling Complex Problems

The CIC produces rigorous and policy-relevant research on critical international issues. CIC research is independent: we owe no allegiance to any government or to any political body. The council does not take institutional positions on policy issues. We aim to foster critical thinking on global challenges from a Canadian perspective, identifying new insights, ideas and opportunities. Each of our research programs takes an interdisciplinary approach to inform and innovate Canadian foreign policy.

Global Populism, Protectionism and Polarization: Risks and Opportunities for Canada

Whether it is Brexit or the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States, the rise of populism has threatened to undercut the post-World War II liberal international order. This research program examines this wave, paying special attention to the threats and opportunities it poses for Canada and its allies.

Real and Imagined Security Threats in an Uncertain World

Western publics are flooded with images of global threats from the mass media, whether it is terrorism, transnational organized crime, mass migration, pandemic disease, cyber war or climate change. This research program cuts through the politics of fear, deconstructing existing threat narratives to assess which are genuine and which are inflated or imagined.
PUBLICATIONS
In-Depth Analysis of Today’s Foreign Policy Challenges

Our publications offer fresh insights and provide a forum for valuable debate on foreign policy issues facing Canada and the broader international community. They target a wide audience from academics and policy specialists to journalists and interested citizens.

International Journal
Founded in 1946, International Journal (IJ) is Canada’s leading academic forum for discussion of foreign policy and international affairs. Published in conjunction with the Bill Graham Centre for Contemporary International History, it combines brief, policy-relevant articles with longer, peer-reviewed, scholarly assessments of interest to foreign policy makers, analysts and academics in Canada and around the world. IJ is cross-disciplinary, combining the insights of political science and history with economics and other fields to advance research and dialogue on issues of global significance.

Behind the Headlines
Behind the Headlines is the CIC’s signature policy paper series. First published in 1940, it breaks down major issues in the news, providing Canadians with rigorous analysis and innovative policy options. Behind the Headlines offers a critical Canadian perspective on international affairs and Canada’s place in the world that is accessible to a wide audience.
ON THE WEB

The CIC’s Online International Affairs Hub

The Signal Board Blog
The Signal Board features a diverse array of content, from op-eds written by CIC and external experts to summaries of influential CIC events. It informs readers on key international affairs issues, spurs public debate on those issues and highlights the work of the CIC.

Virtual Resources
The CIC website is the hub for Canadians passionate about international affairs. It lets Canadians know what the CIC is doing nationally and across its 15 branches. There you will find vibrant debate on Canadian and international foreign policy in the form of articles, research papers and other digital content. The site features an array of resources for Canadians interested in international affairs, including: an archive of multimedia content, weekly online polls of Canadians’ views on the most pressing foreign policy issues, an international job board and an events calendar. It is the place to be seen as a CIC sponsor and influencer of foreign policy.

“The Canadian International Council provides a non-partisan and informed vehicle for study and debate, providing better understanding of the constantly evolving challenges facing us in our search for security, world peace and sustainable prosperity. Canada needs the Canadian International Council.”

The Hon. Roy MacLaren, PC

www.thecic.org
The cornerstone of the CIC’s work is our events program. The CIC brings together the best speakers on foreign policy from around the world: academics, politicians, practitioners, journalists, business people, and people from the world of arts and culture who influence the way we think about the world and Canada’s place in it. At the more than 100 events that the CIC organizes across Canada each year, Canadians are able to engage, question and debate the dominant international issues and ideas of the day. CIC events are the place to gain understanding of the world and where it is headed.

Photographed: Christine Lagarde
Managing Director
International Monetary Fund
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