

Canada needs to flex its international muscles—Ignatieff

The academic-turned-politician stresses that there will be no easy roles for Canada's military forces throughout the 21st century

IGNATIEFF • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

But the border is not just on the 49th parallel, Ignatieff pointed out, stressing the emerging salience of the arctic frontier. Ignatieff said that climate change is literally changing Canada's geographic dimensions and stressed the need to work out a stable, long-term legal framework for the development of the north before turning his attention once again to our neighbours to the south.

86 per cent of Canada's economy is integrated with the Americans, he said, but what that means for the national Canadian economy remains unclear. Ignatieff credits NAFTA for spurring economic growth, but also blames it for contributing to increasingly regionalized economies.

"The north-south linkages in our economic system now, I think, are stronger than our east-west ones," he said, adding that in order to maintain a strong national economy, Canada needs to diversify its markets.

"I would hope in the next generation [that] we start putting our eggs in a bunch of baskets; my instinct tells me that builds a stronger, safer economic foundation for your future."

However, he says that foreign policy can't be fully examined without considering the role of Canada's military

in the international arena. Canadians are struggling, and that to accept that the Pearsonian model of peacekeeping that has become so much a part of our national identity often isn't enough to protect civilians in danger.

"Canada is unaccustomed to banging the table. [But] we have to be much tougher in the international arena."

MICHAEL IGNATIEFF
DEPUTY LIBERAL LEADER

"One thing I've learned from 15 years out there in the killing zones of Africa and the Balkans was that you can't protect human beings with blue berets and a side arm," he said, pointing to what happened in Rwanda as a prime example of this reality.

According to Ignatieff, human indivisibility has to be the driving force of the sense of international obligation and international citizenship.

"But it can't just be talk," he said. "When we make a promise to protect civilians in danger, we do it properly,

or we don't go at all."

In regards to the current situation in Afghanistan, he acknowledges the ambiguity that surrounds how to measure success in the region, but that from his own experience of being in Kabul in 1997 when the Taliban took over the city, he has a sense of what losing would be.

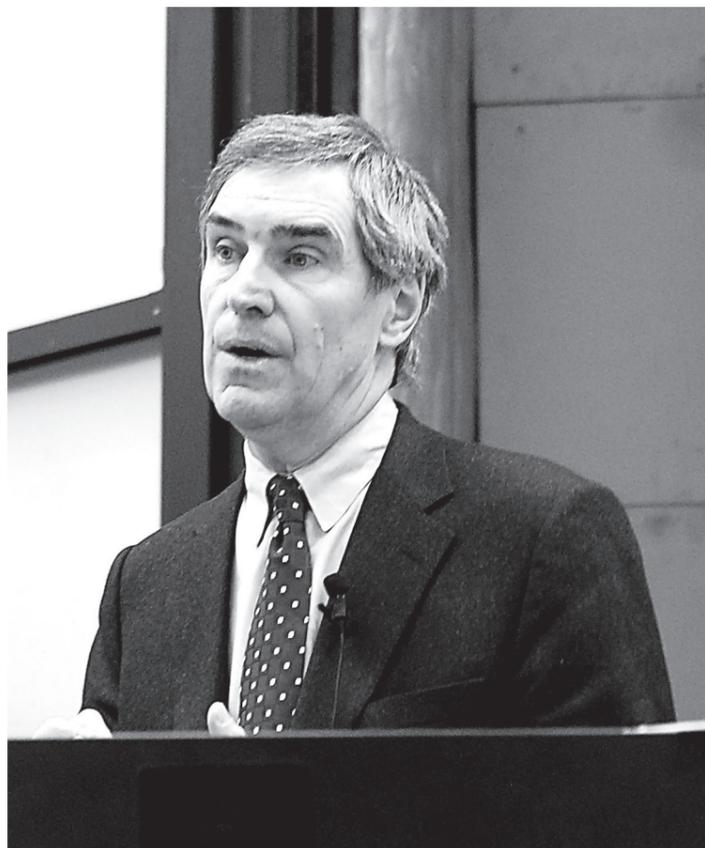
"We don't know what success looks like in Afghanistan, but we sure know what failure looks like: the Taliban take over, civil war restarts, the girls who are going to school don't go to school, the women who get health care as they deliver their children don't get health care, [and] we slide back," he said. "Victory is not clear, but losing this is pretty clear to me, and I don't think we want to lose."

"Of all the places in the world right now where Canada matters, Canada matters most in Afghanistan."

"We have made promises to the Afghans, [and] Canada has to decide what those promises are worth."

The problem, he said, is that Canada is an active participant in almost every multilateral institution, but not used to using its own leverage.

"Canada is unaccustomed to banging the table," he said. "[But] we have to be much tougher in the international arena."



CYRIL BALITBIT

IGNITING IGNATIEFF The Deputy Leader of the federal Liberals discussed the importance having a Canadian presence on the stage of global politics.

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