

THE POLITICS OF TRAVEL ADVISORIES: FOREIGN POLICY AND ERROR IN CANADA'S TRAVELLER INFORMATION PROGRAM

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Abstract

Are Canadian travel advisories driven by a benign concern for the safety of Canadians, or are they driven by political motivations? To what extent are travel advisories administered by Canada linked to or guided by Canadian foreign policy? This paper comparatively assesses Canada's willingness to impose travel advisories on states with which it has strong political relationships and those with which it has poor or weak political relationships. It surveys all Canadian advisories that deem there to be a "threat of terrorism," representing a relatively constant risk variable in each state as measured by the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) (Institute for Economics & Peace [IEP] 2018). This study finds that Canada's travel advisories fall into three categories: commensurate, incommensurate-erroneous, and incommensurate-politically motivated. Both types of incommensurate advisories are illustrated with the examples of Mauritania and the United States. Ultimately, Canada's traveller information program lacks rigorous guidelines and creates opportunities for error or foreign policy influence. This results in inconsistent travel advisories that run the risk of misinforming Canadian travellers, deterring their travel or putting them at risk unwittingly.

The Politics of Travel Advisories: Foreign Policy and Error in Canada's Traveller Information Program

In late-January 2018, the Government of Canada issued a travel advisory warning its citizens to "exercise a high degree of caution" when travelling to the Bahamas. Canada's stated motivation for the advisory was an increased crime rate in the areas of Nassau and Freeport (Canada, 2018a). Indeed, the Inter-American Development Bank found violent crime rates in the Caribbean to be the highest in the world, with the Bahamas having the worst in the region (2017). In an apparent attempt to downplay concerns, the Bahamas government was quick to release a statement regarding the Canadian advisory, reassuring the Canadian

government that it takes crime seriously and stressing the stability of the bilateral relationship (Bahamas, 2018). Within the Bahamas government, however, the response was far less tempered. Bahamas Tourism Minister, Dionisio D'Aguilar, defended the Bahamas as a safe destination for tourists, regardless of the reality that they have been targeted by violent crime (Adderley, 2018). He enthusiastically compared the safety of the Bahamas to that of London, Paris, and New York, adding, "But you know what we don't have here? ... I don't have to worry about a terrorist! (Nobody is going to) come here and blow us up!" (ibid.).

Impassioned responses to travel advisories are not without basis and are common among target states (states to which others have advised against travelling) (i.e., Luib, 2003; APAnews, 2016). Travel advisories have negative economic, political, and social effects on target states, which rationally seek to avoid their imposition. Political considerations are thus central to travel advisories. The question remains, however, to what extent the negative effects of advisories are regrettable or unintended by-products rather than intended outcomes of a state's foreign policy. Aman Deep and Charles Samuel Johnston (2017) examine the range of political motivations that have the potential to drive the administration of travel advisories. For example, political expediency or bias may be operative when an administering state, met with equal risk in two countries, does not place advisories on friendly states in the interest of good international relations but does place advisories on unfriendly or unallied states (Deep and Johnston, 2017, p. 87; Sharpley et al., 1996, p. 5). There is also potential for ideological hostility, where a travel advisory is motivated by ideological opposition to a target state's government or leadership. Ultimately, if driven by foreign policy interests rather than a benign desire to secure the safety of citizens abroad, travel advisories can act as "tools of political coercion" (Deep and Johnston, 2017, p. 84) or "unofficial trade [embargoes]" (Sharpley et al., 1996, p. 4) meant to disrupt a target state's economy, image, and international relations.

The Government of Canada states that the primary goal of its travel advisories is to provide information to ensure the protection of Canadian citizens who are (planning to go) abroad (2018f). Canada's implicit claim is that the negative ramifications of a travel advisory are justified by the risk present in the target state (Paquin, 2007, p. 210). Since Canada's 2012 departure from the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), prompted by the Organization's recognition of Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe as a "global leader" for tourism (Davies, 2012), there has been no accountability or assessment of whether Canada's travel advisories are justified by risk. Even before that, the reports of the international committee dedicated to the implementation and monitoring of

UNWTO's ethics code indicate that it pays no attention to the legitimacy of travel advisories issued by states (UNWTO, 2017). This leaves Canadian travel advice open to covert influence by the state's foreign policy interests and provides the potential for them to be used as politically coercive foreign policy tools (Deep and Johnston, 2017, p. 84).

This paper addresses this issue by asking the following interrelated questions: Are Canadian travel advisories driven by a benign concern for the safety of Canadians, or are they driven by political motivations? To what extent are travel advisories administered by Canada linked to or guided by Canadian foreign policy? To answer these questions, this paper will comparatively assess Canada's willingness to impose travel advisories on states with which it has strong political relationships and those with which it has poor or weak political relationships. These relationships will be defined by the presence of mutual membership in key alliances which are directly related to vital foreign policy interests, namely military security and economic wellbeing. Additionally, this paper will focus only on states in which a Canadian advisory deems there to be a "threat of terrorism," representing a relatively constant risk variable in each state, as measured by the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) (Institute for Economics & Peace [IEP], 2018). This study finds that Canada's travel advisories fall into three categories: commensurate, incommensurate-erroneous, and incommensurate-politically motivated. Both types of incommensurate advisories will be illustrated with the examples of Mauritania and the United States. Ultimately, Canada's traveller information program lacks rigorous guidelines and creates opportunities for error or foreign policy influence, resulting in inconsistent travel advisories that run the risk of misinforming Canadian travellers, deterring their travel or putting them at risk unwittingly.

The Impacts of Travel Advisories

Travel advisories have the potential to trigger adverse outcomes for target states. Thus, the administration of an advisory carries with its political considerations. Understanding these ramifications is necessary to understanding how travel advisories have the potential to become "tools of political coercion" (Deep and Johnston, 2017, p. 84) that can further an administering state's foreign policy interests.

The foremost adverse outcome of travel advisories is economic harm, especially through the disruption of tourist flows and the industries which depend on them. These industries include air travel, travel service providers, hospitality,

insurance, and a wide variety of local businesses that depend on tourist flows such as restaurants, marketplaces, and venues. Conflict, instability, disease, and the like are all in themselves deterrents to tourism, sometimes exaggerated by dramatic media coverage (Deep and Johnston, 2017, p. 90; Henderson, 2004, p. 19). Travel advisories compound and entrench these deterrents. Because official advice from the state is considered “authoritative,” it tends to further deter travel and investment abroad (Henderson, 2004, p. 19) and exacerbate existing problems in the target state through economic disruption (Mylonopolous et al., 2016, p. 2). Together, these elements have a lasting negative impact on the target state’s image and ability to attract international tourist flows and economic activity (Deep and Johnston, 2017, p. 93).

In their seminal 1996 study, Richard Sharpley, Julia Sharpley, and John Adams implored administering states to be conscious of the negative effects of travel advisories, focusing on British and Scandinavian travel advisories regarding The Gambia. The Gambian economy was partially dependent on its tourism industry, which accounted for a tenth of national GDP and nearly 15 per cent of the state’s total employment (Sharpley et al., 1996, p. 2). A coup had startled policy-makers in Britain and Scandinavia, the group of countries that provided the lion’s share of tourists to The Gambia (ibid., p. 5), spurring them to administer travel advisories. They did this although the country remained, for the most part, politically stable. The advisories, however, made The Gambia much more susceptible to political, economic, and social instability by debilitating the economy rapidly (ibid., p. 3-4). Not only was the national tourism industry hollowed out, but every industry connected to or reliant on tourism, such as marketplace trade or transportation, was adversely affected (ibid., p. 3).

Economic disruption can lead to domestic political instability, especially in more fragile states or states with economies that are partially dependent on tourism. Lower tax revenue from industries directly and indirectly benefitting from tourist flows reduces a government’s budgetary stability (Deep and Johnston, 2017, p. 93). International politics are also affected by travel advisories. Internationally, advisories can disturb diplomatic stability between states, influencing both the target and administering state’s international relations (Henderson, 2004, p. 28). Beyond harming the bilateral diplomatic relationship between target and administering states, the administering state may face pressure from its allies to place or not place an advisory in response to an event. Targeted states may seek to differentiate themselves and maintain a positive image in response to an advisory, affecting international relationships within a region.

Following a 2002 terrorist attack in Bali, the governments of the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia imposed regional travel advisories across Southeast Asia (Henderson, 2004, p. 22). Canada joined them, raising its own advisory not long after (*ibid.*). Although they were in reaction to an event that occurred in a particular state, they were broad advisories that impacted all surrounding states, including Singapore, which was “renowned” for its relative stability (*ibid.*, p. 21). These advisories harmed the diplomatic ties between Singapore and its Western trading partners, causing outcry from the Singaporean government and from regional international organizations (Henderson, 2004, p. 25). Furthermore, the states that raised advisories, especially Australia, were important sources of tourism for Singapore (*ibid.*). The advisories not only hurt Singapore’s international relations but destabilized its tourism industry and caused economic harm. The Singaporean government was compelled to allocate resources to convince tourists and the tourism sector that it was stable (*ibid.*, p. 24), although Singapore was a safe state that had not experienced incidents or circumstances threatening the security of foreigners.

Canada has also experienced the ramifications of travel advisories administered against it. In 2007, the World Health Organization placed a travel advisory on the Toronto area with the goal to control the spread of SARS (Paquin, 2007). The advisory was challenged by critics, who claimed that it had been based on misinformation, and that the “benefits and burdens” of the advisory were not balanced (*ibid.*, p. 210). Indeed, the burdens were high. The advisory caused a loss to the economy of CAD\$1.13 billion over the six days that it was imposed, while having questionable results as to the containment of SARS (*ibid.*).

The ramifications of travel advisories span economics and politics and have the potential to be significantly impactful on certain states or areas. This creates the opportunity for travel advisories to be used as instruments of foreign policy. States looking to punish others could target them with a travel advisory in order to cause economic harm or tarnish their international image without directly breaking any international laws. Because travel advisories are widely perceived by the international community as benign extensions of a state’s right to secure its citizen’s safety, their uses are not often scrutinized. In this way, a travel advisory can act as an “unofficial trade embargo,” effectively being a stealth sanction on a target state’s tourism industry (Sharpley et al., 1996, p. 4). States may also omit travel advisories in fear of retaliation from a more powerful or allied state. Regardless, political considerations are operative in the administration of any travel advisory, and even those which are justly

administered to protect the safety of citizens have the potential to negatively affect the states which they target.

Inconsistencies in Canada's Traveller Information Program

Canada has four travel advisory risk levels, which increase in severity (Canada, 2016). The first and lowest risk level is "Exercise normal security precautions," which means that the target state has a comparable security situation to Canada, and that it is safe. The second risk level is "Exercise a high degree of caution," which means that there are imminent security concerns, and that the situation in the target state could deteriorate suddenly. The third risk level is "Avoid nonessential travel," which means that a specific threat exists, and that Canadians should only travel to the destination if they are familiar with the situation and need to be in the country. This risk level warns that security conditions could deteriorate and urges Canadians to "consider leaving while it is still safe to do so" (Canada, 2016). The fourth and highest risk level is "Avoid all travel," which means that there is an extreme and existing threat to security. Any of these advisory levels can be joined by a regional advisory which applies to a specific location or region within a target state.

The methodology of this section is as follows. First, all target states of Canadian travel advisories that cite "terrorism" as a risk were recorded and categorised based on the level of the advisory.¹

Second, the GTI's ranking of each state was recorded. The GTI scores most states on the globe based on "the relative impact of [terrorist] incidents" annually, ranking them in relation to each other (IEP, 2018, p. 83). The ranking and scoring of states are based on four relatively weighted factors: "total number of terrorist incidents in a given year; total number of fatalities caused by terrorists in a given year; total number of injuries caused by terrorists in a given year; [and] a measure of the total property damage from terrorist incidents in a given year" (ibid.). The greatest weight is given to fatalities (ibid.). These factors are further subjected to a weighted average over five years to "reflect the latent psychological effect of terrorist acts over time" (ibid.). The terrorism impact scores given to states by the GTI have been strongly correlated with a variety of other indicators, including internal and external conflict, displaced peoples, "overall level of peace," political terror, public group grievances, religious violence, and "the risk of humanitarian crises" (IEP, 2017, p. 111). The GTI's ranking and scoring system

¹ Travel advisories were surveyed and recorded on 16 January 2019 (Canada, 2018e).

allows this study to measure the legitimacy of the claimed terrorism risk and the general safety risk in each travel advisory.

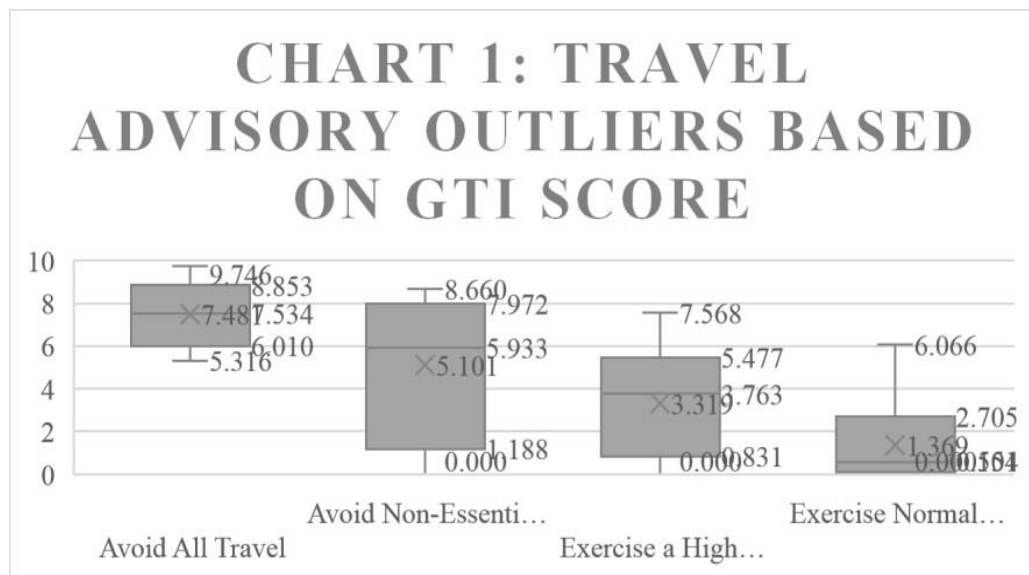
Third, states that appear as logical anomalies (i.e., have a low terrorism impact score but a high travel advisory level) were individually assessed for other legitimizing factors. These could include aspects not captured by or correlated with the GTI score, such as environmental disaster, disease, or crime. Logical anomalies are often explained by these legitimizing factors and are otherwise commensurate.

Fourth, target states whose advisories cannot be legitimized by some other factors were investigated based on Canada's political relationship to determine the extent to which they are driven by foreign policy.

This study finds that each of Canada's travel advisories generally falls into one of three categories. The first is 'commensurate,' in those countries which are advised against have an ongoing and recent safety risk to Canadian citizens, and that the advisory is achieving its goal to inform Canadian travellers and is commensurate to the risk level. The second is 'incommensurate-politically motivated.' These are not justified by the present safety risk and their application or nonapplication is apparently driven by Canada's foreign policy interests. The third advisory type is 'incommensurate-erroneous,' where the advisory is not justified by the present safety risk and there does not appear to be a discernable foreign policy interest that could influence the administration or withholding of an advisory.

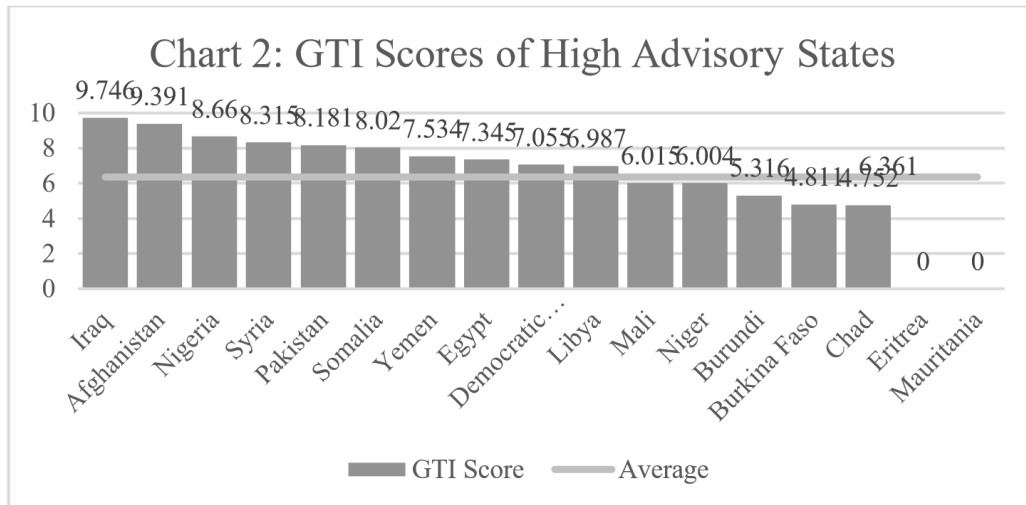
The following is an overview of how Canadian travel advisories correlate to the GTI. Extreme outliers have been noted where the advisory level does not appear to be commensurate to the terrorism impact score. Two of these outliers, Mauritania and the United States, are more closely examined below to illustrate the two different types of incommensurate travel advisories. States which have been targeted by "Avoid all travel" advisories with a claimed risk of terrorism all appear to be commensurate. There are no outliers among the group, as all are ranked highly in the GTI. States which have been targeted by "Avoid non-essential travel" advisories also appear to be commensurate and justified by the risk of terrorism, except for Eritrea and Mauritania. While all other states rank among the top 40 in terms of terrorism impact, both rank at the very bottom of the GTI. States which have been targeted by "Exercise a high degree of caution" advisories present outliers on both sides. For example, France, China, the United Kingdom share quite similar terrorism impact scores to those with the lowest

scores in the “Avoid all travel” category. This section also includes states which rank at the very bottom of the GTI with virtually no terrorism impact, including Guinea, Ghana, Trinidad and Tobago, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Cambodia, and Togo. The lowest level of advisory, “Exercise normal security precautions,” is meant to state that the traveller should expect the security situation to be similar to that of Canada’s (Canada, 2016). Canada sits at number 57 on the GTI, with a score of 3.527. This is notably lower than some countries at this advisory level and much higher than others. For example, despite being at this advisory level the United States (20th), Germany (39th), and Greece (45th) have scores similar to those states which Canada explicitly warns citizens not to travel.



Source: IEP, 2018, p. 79-80; Canada, 2018e.

These findings present two main groups of outliers. On one end, high advisories group Eritrea and Mauritania, which have no incidence of terrorism (and thus low correlates to terrorism), with states that top the GTI: Nigeria, Pakistan, and Egypt. On the other end, low advisories seem to underestimate the impact of terrorism in the United States, Germany, and Greece. The impact scores of these states are like those of Mali, Chad, and Burkina Faso, all of which are the targets of “Avoid all travel” and “Avoid non-essential travel” advisories. There are thus two extremes which can be examined in the scope of this paper: high-level advisories that are administered against states with low GTI scores and low-level advisories that target states with relatively higher GTI scores.



Source: IEP, 2018, p. 79-80; Canada, 2018e.

In Eritrea’s case, the reasoning for the advisory appears to be commensurate. After being deemed the “region’s trouble-maker” in 2003 (BBC News), border tensions with neighbouring states Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Sudan appear to have continued, with flare-ups in late 2017 (Shaban, 2017). Although the advisory levels of Eritrea can be deemed commensurate, it remains true that terrorism has virtually no impact, and that it is misleading to include a portion of the advisory dedicated to the threat of terrorism. The advisory against Mauritania is a different story. While the GTI found virtually no impact of terrorism in the state, Canada’s travel advisory warns, “Avoid non-essential travel to Mauritania *due to the threat of terrorism*, particularly against Western interests” (Canada, 2018b, emphasis added).

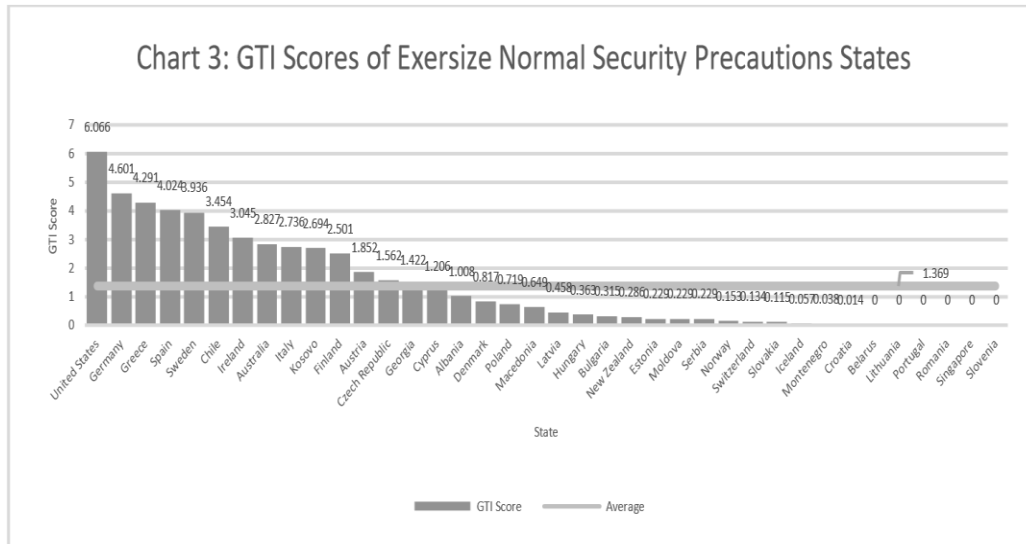
Although reports regarding the potential for destabilization in Mauritania have expressed concern about the “growing radicalisation of Mauritanian youth,” they concurrently cite academic work stating the inactivity of terrorist organizations, the resistance to Islamist movements, and the lack of threat from Mauritanian Islamism (Rao, 2014, p. 8). Although alQaeda in the Islamic Maghreb appeared to be a rising threat in the mid-2000s, it has been concluded that its disorganization in Mauritania renders its capabilities “extremely limited” (ibid., p. 9). It has also been concluded that the government has effectively combatted radicalization and terrorism (ibid., p. 15-6). These realities are reflected by the GTI’s terrorism impact score for Mauritania, which is near zero.

The question remains as to why Canada has an “Avoid non-essential travel” advisory targeting Mauritania that is explicitly about a high terrorism risk when no such risk is apparent. Canada’s political relationship to Mauritania is weak.

According to the Embassy of Canada to Morocco and Mauritania, the bilateral political relationship is “limited but growing” (2018). This limited involvement includes cooperation in NATO’s Science for Peace and Security Program, through which Canada has helped fund and build a national crisis management centre meant to monitor for natural disasters and aid in their response (Pryce, 2016). It also includes limited financial support for counter-terrorism initiatives, and very limited support for human rights initiatives (Embassy of Canada to Morocco and Mauritania, 2018). The crux of Canada’s relationship with Mauritania is commercial, especially in the mining sector, with trade totaling only CAD\$14.9 million in 2016 (Embassy of Canada to Morocco and Mauritania, 2018). This is a miniscule figure compared to Canada’s other trading partners (Statistics Canada, 2018b).

Due to the weak bilateral relationship, it does not appear that Canada has a significant enough foreign policy interest in Mauritania to warrant the nefarious use of a travel advisory. Mauritania is not a significant international partner in security, trade, or any other major aspect of foreign policy. This advisory is incommensurate and erroneously applied, based on a non-existent terrorism threat and unmotivated by foreign policy. The most likely conclusion that can be surmised from Canada’s incommensurate advisory targeting Mauritania is that its administration is indicative of a traveller information program without sufficient guidelines or institutional frameworks, resulting in faulty advisories.

The second group are low-advisory/high GTI states. The United States, Germany, and Greece are among these countries, all of which have “Exercise normal security precautions” advisories. This paper will focus on the United States, as it ranks highest on the GTI out of the identified outliers and has arguably the closest relationship to Canada.



Source: IEP, 2018, p. 79-80; Canada, 2018e.

There are several statements within the United States travel advisory that seem to betray the low level of the advisory and deflate the reality of the risk. The advisory includes a generic terrorism warning found in many other advisories, which does not reflect the actual impact of terrorism in the country. The United States ranks 20th on the GTI, above states where terrorism is perceived to be a major threat, including Mali (“Avoid all travel” at 22nd) and Niger (“Avoid all travel” at 23rd), both of which have advisories due to an explicit terrorism risk (Canada, 2018d; Canada, 2018f; IEP, 2018, p. 79).

This is not the only factor, however, that renders Canada’s travel advisory to the United States incommensurate. For example, the government of Canada claims that “the possession of firearms and the frequency of violent crime are generally more prevalent in the United States than in Canada” (Canada, 2019). The possession of firearms in the United States is *far* more prevalent than in Canada. In the United States, 89 per cent of citizens own a firearm, while in Canada that number is 31 per cent (Karp, 2011, p. 2).

The United States has the largest number of firearms per citizen in the world, the runner-up having only 55 per cent ownership (*ibid.*). That country is Yemen (“Avoid all travel”) (*ibid.*). The United States homicide rate is more than double that of Canada’s (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2015). This is higher than Burundi (“Avoid all travel”) and about the same as Kazakhstan, which has an “Exercise a high degree of caution” advisory *due to crime* (Canada, 2018c; UNODC, 2015). Furthermore, while Canada placed “Avoid all travel” and “Avoid non-essential travel” advisories on several

Caribbean states due to Hurricane Irma in September 2017 (Canada, 2017b), it did not place a regional advisory against the southern United States, which was impacted heavily by the same storm (Pulver, 2018). Two regional advisories were placed against the United States in late August and early September 2018, one “Avoid all travel” advisory to Hawaii due to the danger posed by Hurricane Lane, and one “Avoid non-essential travel” to the Gulf Coast area due to Tropical Storm Gordon. Both advisories were removed the day after they were posted, while reports did not indicate that the risk had decreased (Martin *et al.*, 2018; Orjoux *et al.*, 2018).

Canada’s travel advisory to the United States is incommensurate. It does not accurately reflect the safety risk presented by relatively high firearm possession, violent crime rates, terrorism impact, and natural disaster. This can be explained by Canada’s strong political relationship with the United States. The two “enjoy the largest trading relationship in the world” (Canada, 2017a), institutionalized by one of the global economy’s most significant trade agreements, NAFTA (and its successor, the USMCA). Security relations between both countries are “longstanding and well entrenched” (*ibid.*) as partners in global and regional security organizations, such as NATO and NORAD. Furthermore, the United States is the highest recipient of Canadian overnight travellers by a large margin (Statistics Canada, 2017), and Canada the highest recipient of Americans (Statistics Canada, 2018a). Due to Canada’s close ties to the United States, as well as its security and economic dependence, it is counter the interests of foreign policy to administer an advisory against the United States. This would be the cause of diplomatic tension, economic harm, and destabilization in the various institutions upon which Canada depends. Canada’s restraint in administering a travel advisory against the United States is the result of foreign policy interests and political motivations.

The United States and Mauritania were both identified as ‘outliers’ to the pattern of otherwise commensurate travel advisories. Their GTI scores contradict their advisory level, which is not justified by other factors. Mauritania has a very low terrorism impact score, and a high travel advisory due to a falsely perceived terrorism risk. Its travel advisory is incommensurate and erroneously applied. The United States has a high terrorism impact score and no active advisory, and other factors appear to warrant a higher advisory level. Other countries with a similar crime rate, for example, have travel advisories due to crime, and other states with similar GTI scores (even closely allied ones such as the United Kingdom, which has an “Exercise a high degree of caution” advisory due to the risk of terrorism) have advisories due to an outstanding terrorism risk. Canada’s

travel advisory to the United States is incommensurate and is kept low in the interest of foreign policy and the maintenance of political and economic relations.

Conclusion

Travel advisories have a negative impact on target states. These negative impacts should be justified by the safety risk to citizens from the administering state, but a lack of international oversight creates the possibility for states to use travel advisories to pursue foreign policy interests. This paper has investigated the extent to which Canada's traveller information program is linked to or guided by foreign policy, finding that there are, broadly, three types of advisories administered by Canada. The first is commensurate. Most of Canada's travel advisories fall into this category.

However, there are two kinds of incommensurate Canadian travel advisories, reflecting inconsistency in Canada's traveller information program: those which are erroneous, and those which are politically motivated and linked to foreign policy interests. Canada's advisories to Mauritania and the United States are examples of these advisory types. These cases are not the only examples of incommensurate advisories that highlight inconsistency in Canada's traveller information program. The travel advisories towards Mexico and Israel are patchworks of separate regional "Avoid all travel" and "Avoid non-essential travel" advisories, rather than blanket advisories applying to the entirety of each state. Both states have close political relationships with Canada – Mexico as a member of NAFTA and the USMCA and the second-highest recipient of Canadian travellers (Statistics Canada, 2017), and Israel as a state with which Canada has long-standing diplomatic ties. The lack of consistency in their advisories appears to be a hesitancy to apply blanket advisories due to foreign policy interests. There are also countries which rank highly on the GTI but lack any mention of terrorism in their travel advisory, including South Sudan (14th), the Central African Republic (15th), and Myanmar (24th) (Canada, 2018e; IEP, 2018, p. 79).

Both incommensurate advisory types, erroneous and politically motivated, are the result of a lack of due process in the Canadian traveller information program that renders them unjustified by existing risk. Former Global Affairs Canada spokesperson Jessica Séguin has admitted that there is no formula used to determine threat level (Dangerfield, 2017), and this ad-hoc process of gathering information on safety risks and posting or removing travel advisories creates opportunities for inconsistency and illegitimacy. Ultimately, the lack of

institutionalization, formulae, guidelines, and rigour in Canada's traveller information program either erroneously restricts the human right of Canadians to have the freedom of movement enshrined in both the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 13, 1948) and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (s.6, 1982), or puts Canadian citizens abroad at risk in the service of foreign policy.

The Government of Canada should pursue and institute a rigorous traveller information program, where advisories are posted and reduced/removed based on thorough, evidence-based risk assessment guidelines. To ensure a fully commensurate and just program, Canada should also rejoin the UNWTO and adopt its recommended practices, especially in regards to Article 6.5 of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, which while stressing the right of states to inform their citizens and ensure citizen safety, stipulates that such information should be unprejudiced, discussed with target states and relevant experts, "strictly proportionate" to the risk level, geographically confined to areas where risk is present, and "qualified or cancelled as soon as a return to normality permits" (UNWTO, 1999, p. 6). These actions would minimize the existing inconsistency in Canada's traveller information program and lower or extinguish the number of incommensurate travel advisories. Such is the best route to reduce any unnecessary harm to target states, and to meet the primary goal of Canada's travel advisories: providing accurate information to ensure the protection of Canadian citizens abroad.

The findings of this paper, while significant in their identification of a gap of oversight in an element of Canadian foreign policy, are ultimately limited by their breadth. As such, this paper can be understood as an element or introduction to a broader research agenda. To fully capture the extent of inconsistency in Canada's traveller information program, further research would mirror the methodology herein with a wider range of traveller risk indicators, such as crime statistics, political stability indicators, natural disaster impacts, et cetera. Subsequent research would then assess the validity of a greater number of travel advisories, providing a fuller range of examples than are included here. This would allow for more definite conclusions, provide a fuller picture of Canada's traveller information program and its inconsistencies, and solidify the recommendations given.

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