

Western University

Scholarship@Western

---

Political Science Publications

Political Science Department

---

3-16-2022

## Canada must strongly support Marshall Plan 2.0

Erika Simpson

University of Western Ontario (Western University), simpson@uwo.ca

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/politicalsciencepub>



Part of the [International Relations Commons](#)

---

### Citation of this paper:

Simpson, Erika, "Canada must strongly support Marshall Plan 2.0" (2022). *Political Science Publications*. 204.

<https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/politicalsciencepub/204>

Mar. 16, 2022

canada-must-strongly-support-marshall-plan-2-0

**GLOBAL**

# Canada must strongly support Marshall Plan 2.0

By [ERIKA SIMPSON AND MIKE SIMPSON](#) MARCH 16, 2022

The promise of peace must be backed by credible action, determination, and –dare we say– money. Canada needs to be bold and is well positioned to lead an international effort.

Canadians are contemplating a dramatic increase in military spending and preparing to enter another huge-scale European war. The prospect of chemical and biological warfare that could escalate to nuclear war is conflagrating decision-making that will affect future generations. Wise restraint by the 30 North Atlantic Treaty Organization allies comes at a moral cost as Ukraine is being pummelled and smashed by a foreign dictator from another age.

Poland's transfer of Soviet-era fighter planes to Ukraine could be perceived as provocative by Russian President Vladimir Putin. Based on harsh lessons of Chechnya and Syria, especially Grozny and Aleppo, Putin may raise the stakes through a "false flag" military manoeuvre in which Russians use sarin gas and chlorine on Ukrainian volunteer militia. China is [drawing attention](#) to Russia's claim that factories in Ukraine could use illegal chemical and biological weapons. Adding to [Russia's false narrative](#) of the Nazification of Ukraine, and while Putin's forces become more demoralized on the ground, there is the prospect of chemical or biological use escalating to possible tactical nuclear use.

Russia has [already used](#) vacuum bombs, targeted civilians and hospitals, and shelled escaping refugees. In such escalating conditions, the United States, Canada, and NATO allies must continue to show restraint and patience, despite the onerous difficulties of doing so; in the long-run, stronger sanctions and a cultural war against Russia could work without possibly escalating to World War III.

In the bloody wake of the Second World War, at Bretton Woods, allied nations made solid agreements to prevent future wars. [The Marshall Plan](#) rebuilt Europe by investing in human development instead of guns. In the ensuing decades, Canada earned a reputation as a [liberal internationalist middle power](#) that invested billions in peacekeeping and development aid. Actively pursuing peace proved to be simply [less expensive](#) than war.

Once the Berlin Wall collapsed in 1989 and the Cold War's ominous threat of nuclear war subsided, Canada invested less in bombs and more in wheat. Travellers were proud to sport Canadian flags on their backpacks. However, Canadian financial contributions toward making the world a better place plummeted along with the country's international reputation. Despite two attempts, Canada did not garner sufficient votes to [earn a coveted seat](#) at the UN Security Council in 2010 or 2020.

Fostering peace through an enhanced Marshall Plan for the 21st century is an international endeavour and an investment that will cost billions. However, true redemption is achieved by taking action, not wringing hands. Canada is well positioned to help lead an international effort that must begin immediately. For every brick that falls, let us promise Ukrainians that five will rise. For every tree shattered, or hospital levelled, let us prepare to regrow and rebuild Ukraine. Let Canada do what Canadians do best.

The vision of Marshall Plan 2.0 should reflect the UN's "[build-back better concept](#)" in that solar panels and decentralized energy should replace the dangers of nuclear power; electric cars and energy-efficient buildings should nullify Europe's reliance on Russian fossil fuels; and nations should plan a sustainable future for Ukraine with true energy and food security based on the UN's [Sustainable Development Goals](#).

A Marshall Plan 2.0 that focuses on rebuilding Ukraine would send a message to the entire planet that war is obsolete. Sadly, there is the prospect that if Ukraine is taken over by Russia, there will be little left for the West to develop; but Ukrainians and peoples in the democratic West need a beacon of light in their darkest hours. Supporting and donating to the newly-conceived Marshall Plan 2.0, already endorsed by the United Kingdom's [Prime Minister Boris Johnson](#), will empower and energize.

The international solidarity which the world has exhibited thus far—in which the powerful private sector (Apple, Mastercard, Macdonald's, Netflix, Starbucks, Visa, and more) and governments (Australia, Finland, Germany, Poland, Switzerland) including powerful military forces (Austria, Canada, Lithuania, Moldova, United States, etc.) quickly co-operated to sanction Russia and halt trade—presents a vision of an alternative to war. But that vision will be insufficient through the coming weeks of anarchy and mayhem.

A broadened, distinctly non-Western Marshall Plan 2.0 that encompasses all nations would send a strong message to [young Russians](#) leading internal resistance and protests, who hope they will be heard above the cacophony of war. Winning the hearts of Russians, who will eventually turn on Putin's inner oligarchy, could take a long time—months and even years—that will be forebodingly painful for Ukraine and world observers.

Therefore, the promise of peace must be backed up by credible action, determination, and—dare we say—money. Canada is credibly positioned and sufficiently financially secure to convene the willing and help facilitate Marshall Plan 2.0. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the [Minister of International Development Harjit Sajjan](#) are well positioned in human history and Canada's history to help turn back the dogs of war and invest in peace.

Canada must stand up to this moment in world history and be bold. A shared vision of peace will prove stronger than war. The Marshall Plan came after the Second World War and the destruction of Europe. But Marshall Plan 2.0 must come before World War III and the destruction of the world. We are humans. We can and will learn.

*Erika Simpson is a professor of international politics at Western University, the president of the Canadian Peace Research Association, and the author of NATO and the Bomb. Her brother Mike Simpson is the former director of the British Columbia Council for International Cooperation, an experienced UN facilitator of the Sustainable Development Goals, and a former filmmaker who worked in war-torn conflict zones.*