CYBER SECURITY ACROSS BORDERS

State of Play in Cyberspace Governance & Protection in Canada, the United States and the World

Mardi 22 janvier 2019
9h à 18h

Salle Chaufferie, CO-R700
Université du Québec à Montréal
175, av. du Président-Kennedy
Montréal (Métro Place-des-Arts)

Québec | UQÀM | IEIM Institut d'études internationales de Montréal 15 ans | CONSULAT GÉNÉRAL DES ÉTATS-UNIS Montréal, Canada | GROUPE DE RECHERCHE EN CYBERDIPLOMATIE ET CYBERSÉCURITÉ | Banque Scotia

Closing Remarks

L'IEIM a eu le plaisir d'organiser une conférence, le 22 janvier dernier à l'UQAM, portant sur les enjeux et les défis auxquels les décideurs politiques canadiens et américains sont confrontés en ce qui a trait à la cybersécurité et la cyberdiplomatie.

L'événement a rassemblé plusieurs spécialistes canadiens et américains travaillant, entre autres, sur la cybersécurité, la coopération bilatérale, les alliances militaires et l'intelligence artificielle.

Voici le mot de clôture de l'événement de **Karine Pontbriand**, chercheure au Groupe de recherche en cyberdiplomatie et cybersécurité (GCC) et étudiante au doctorat à l'Université de New South Wales à Canberra.

Cyberspace Protection, Governance and Stability : Challenges and Opportunities

I would like to thank our speakers, travelling from the United States, Toronto and Ottawa, as well as Luc Dandurand, research fellow at the Montreal Institute of International Studies (IEIM), who joined us from in Estonia via video conference, for their very interesting presentations today. I would also like to thank the United States Consulate General in Montreal for its generous contribution to this event.
I believe that the conference was really successful, to the credit of our speakers for their valuable contributions.

Today's discussions were thought provoking, also because of the great participation of the audience, your comments and your insightful questions. Thank you all for attending the conference. And of course, thank you to the Montreal Institute of International Studies (IEIM) for putting together this great event. Kim, Valériane, Catherine and Christina, you've done an amazing job with the organization.

We started the day with a key question : how do the evolution of cyber strategies in the US and Canada impact cyberspace protection, North American collaboration and the International debate on Cyberspace stability ? I think that our speakers answered it very well.

As discussed by our speakers today, most of the essential services of our developed societies and economies, such as energy, transport, finance and health, now depend on Information and Communication technologies (ICTs). And we are only at the dawn of the information revolution, as new technologies and their unknown implications keep making their way into the very basics of human life.

The future is full of uncertainty, except for one guarantee : innovation will continue to happen at a fast pace, bringing new opportunities for development and growth, but also new challenges for societies worldwide. Ensuring security and stability in this fast changing environment is no easy task. It seems that current structures and approaches will not be effective to tackle the challenges of the future. The international community will have to ground its new strategies on bases that not yet exist.

While the frontiers between the 'virtual' and the 'physical' have become increasingly blurred, interdependencies between countries also deepen and span across sectors. Canada and the United States already share a long tradition of economic and security cooperation, and cyberspace has only increased their integration.

The two countries share many critical infrastructures, like power grids and transportation networks, which now rely on digital technologies. As the second panel reminded us, these infrastructures are increasingly vulnerable. Therefore, despite strategic differences and a paradigm shift in the approach of our southern neighbour towards 'active defense' and persistent engagement, Canada and the United States have no choice but to cooperate in cyber security. Indeed, a cyberattack targeting either of their infrastructures would represent a major threat on both sides of the border. "Common challenges require common answers", as mentioned by BGen (Ret'd) Robert G. Mazzolin. Canada and the United States already collaborate greatly, but there is always room for improvement.

In its 2018 National Cyber Strategy, Canada keeps a defensive posture, focusing on resilience, diplomacy and cooperation. Canada also put the promotion and protection of human rights and freedoms into its strategy. But our speakers on the third panel were somehow sceptical. They reminded us of one of the greatest challenges of the digital age : ensuring the security of the individuals, and the protection of our fundamental freedoms, such as privacy. National security cannot be pursed at the expanse of individual security. Policies worldwide should therefore be rearticulated towards a citizen-centric security.

The fourth discussion also introduced another core topic of the cyber security debate : the importance of vulnerability disclosure, and of cooperation between governments, companies and security or 'bug' researchers. White hat hackers can be great contributors to the protection of private and public systems, yet more could be done in order to recognize their work.

Finally, our keynote speaker, Caroline Leprince, director of Women in International Security Canada, put at the fore front the importance of diversity and inclusion in cyber security, not only to address the workforce shortage in the industry, but also to ensure that different perspectives are considered in the very development of new technologies in order to avoid biases.

In conclusion, current transnational issues, such as cyberspace protection, governance and stability, cannot be resolved by one country alone, to a point where cooperation is the only way forward. I would like to invite my colleagues from academia, governments, industry and civil society to continue the conversation and to foster research and exchanges.