



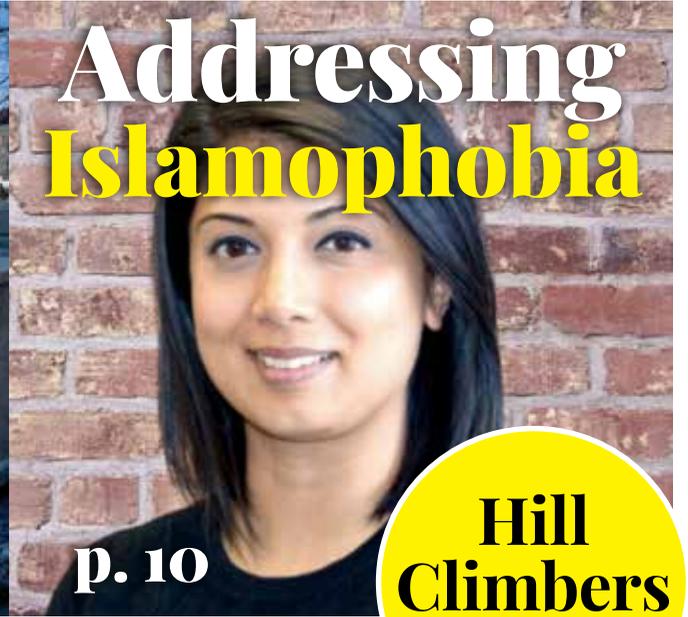
The 'Russian Crimea' myth

Anastasiya Ringis p. 6



Waiting for Wellington

p. 4



Addressing Islamophobia

p. 10

Hill Climbers

p. 22

Tim Powers p. 9



THE HILL TIMES

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CANADA'S POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER

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Foreign power

Who are the top voices influencing foreign policy in government? pp. 12-15

NEWS

Canada should focus on fixes, not fights, during Biden visit: Tory MP

BY NEIL MOSS

Ottawa will soon see its first United States presidential visit in seven years, and Conservative MP Randy Hoback says the focus should be on how Canada can

offer solutions to its southern neighbour, and not a venue to raise its gripes.

On March 23-24, U.S. President Joe Biden is making his first visit to Canada

Continued on page 20

NEWS

Conservative rhetoric on safe consumption sites plays dangerous game with toxic drug crisis: NDP critic

BY STUART BENSON

Following a recent announcement that a Conservative-led government would sue pharmaceutical companies over their role in contributing to Canada's opioid overdose epidemic as a way to fund recovery treatment, NDP MP Gord Johns says the misinformation being spread by the Con-

servative leader and his party won't help keep Canadians struggling with addiction alive long enough to seek treatment.

Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) made the announcement during a March 14 press conference in New Westminster, B.C., a province whose

Continued on page 21

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Mike Lapointe

Heard On The Hill

Green Party leader to explore alternate reality if government heeded climate warnings in March 30 lecture



Green Party Leader Elizabeth May will deliver Carleton University's 2023 Bell Lecture on March 30. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Green Party Leader **Elizabeth May** will take the stage at Carleton University at the end of the month to deliver the 2023 Bell Lecture, exploring the theme of "The time for action is now: a time capsule from 1999."

"What if Canada's governments had listened to the National Forum on Climate Change and its warning?" the event's description asks. "What if we had mobilized to stop the growth in emissions when Kyoto was ratified in 2003? Could we have avoided the level of climate change emergency we are now experiencing? The time for action is now."

The annual Dick, Ruth, and Judy Bell lecture honours the contributions of individuals to the political and public life of Canada, and is hosted by Carleton's Arthur Kroeger College of Public Affairs.

Previous speakers have included former Alberta premier and provincial NDP Leader **Rachel Notley**, ISG Senator **Kim Pate**, former Quebec premier and Conservative Party leadership contender **Jean Charest**, and CBC journalist **Rosemary Barton**. The free event kicks off at 7 p.m. on March 30 in the Nicol Building at Carleton.

A long-time MP representing Saanich-Gulf Islands in British Columbia, May first led the Green Party from 2006-2019. **Annamie Paul** was elected to replace her in October 2020, but stepped down in November 2021 following her second-place finish in Toronto Centre in that year's federal election, and a tumultuous year

within the party. May campaigned for and won the party's leadership once again in 2022 on a joint ticket with **Jonathan Pedneault**, who serves as the party's deputy leader.

Anna Maria Tremonti tapped as World Press Freedom Day keynote speaker

Veteran journalist **Anna Maria Tremonti** is set to be the keynote speaker at World Press Freedom Day luncheon in Ottawa on May 3.



Anna Maria Tremonti, receiving an honorary degree from Royal Roads University in 2018, will be the keynote speaker at the annual World Press Freedom Day event on May 3. *Photograph courtesy of Twitter*

The founding host of CBC Radio's current affairs program *The Current*, which she helmed for 17 years, Tremonti has also worked as a senior reporter for *The National* and as host for *The Fifth Estate*.

Tremonti will be joined for an armchair discussion by Torstar vice-president for inclusion and strategic partnerships **Irene Gentle**.

"Women and marginalized journalists are increasingly on the receiving end of online harassment and attacks for reporting inconvenient truths," World Press Freedom Day president **Heather Bakken** said in a press release. "Online hate is not only an issue for the journalists themselves; it is a clear attempt to suppress their reporting and diminish the media."

Tremonti's latest podcast, *Welcome to Paradise*, explores her own story of intimate-partner violence and the long-term consequences of abuse.

Describing her first job interview at CBC in 1981 in a February 2022 article, Tremonti wrote that she spent an unusual amount of time making sure she had the right outfit.

"It wasn't just a fashion choice. I needed to hide the bruises. There was a purple ring of them around my neck with my husband's fingerprints left there after he tried to choke me a few days earlier," Tremonti wrote.

"Forty years after getting out of that abusive marriage, I have finally chosen to talk publicly about my own experience in a podcast about the long tail of intimate partner violence," wrote Tremonti.

Arielle Kayabaga named Young Global Leader in North America

Liberal MP **Arielle Kayabaga** has been named one of 22 Young Global Leaders in North America, which is aligned with the



Liberal MP Arielle Kayabaga says she is 'honoured to be part of the 2023 cohort' of WEF's Young Global Leaders. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

World Economic Forum's mission to "drive public-private co-operation in the global public interest." "From courageous journalists uncovering the most critical political and human rights issues of our time to savvy entrepreneurs transforming the

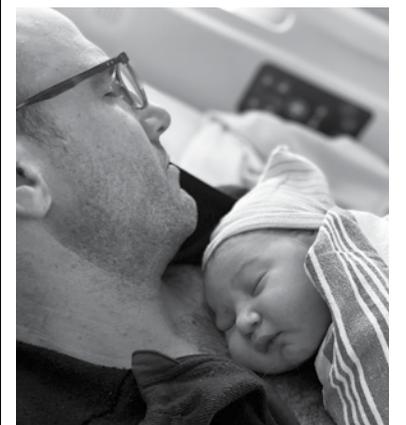
way we work with technology, this year's class is packed with brilliant minds and passionate leaders from business, civil society, academia, and government," according to the Young Global Leaders' website.

The forum recognizes individuals from 11 regions and now includes more than 1,400 members and alumni of 120 nationalities, including civic and business innovators, entrepreneurs, technology pioneers, educators, activists, artists, journalists, and more.

"Congratulations to the [Young Global Leader class of 2023]," Kayabaga tweeted on March 14. "Honoured to be part of the 2023 cohort! Looking forward to connecting with these amazing young leaders!"

Kayabaga has represented London West, Ont., since the 2021 election, when she defeated Conservative candidate **Rob Black** in the contest to replace outgoing Liberal MP **Kate Young**. Kayabaga is the first Black woman to be elected as an MP in the city. Previously, Kayabaga served on London City Council following her election at the age of 27 in 2018.

Former Liberal MPs Maryam Monsef, Matt DeCoursey welcome baby boy



Former Liberal MPs Maryam Monsef and Matt DeCoursey welcomed Samad Monsef DeCoursey into the world. *Photograph courtesy of Twitter*

Former Liberal MPs **Maryam Monsef** and **Matt DeCoursey** have a new addition to their family, recently welcoming **Samad Monsef DeCoursey** into the world.

"An International Women's Day unlike any other," tweeted Monsef on March 14, who said she was cared for by the "smart and strong women in the labour and delivery unit at the Peterborough Regional Health Centre, and the team at Partners in Pregnancy Clinic."

"We are fortunate to have such caring professionals in our community. Our family will never forget their kindness and professionalism," said Monsef. "Baby Samad is healthy, determined, and living a life full of cuddles and naps. We are grateful, sleep deprived, and overjoyed."

Monsef was elected to represent Peterborough-Kawartha, Ont., in 2015 and again in 2019, but lost in the 2021 election to Conservative MP **Michelle Ferreri**. DeCoursey was elected in Fredericton, N.B., by more than 9,700 votes over Conservative candidate **Keith Ashfield** in 2015, but finished third in a tight 2019 election race to then-Green Party candidate **Jenica Awtin**, who later crossed the floor to the Liberals, and Conservative candidate **Andrew Johnson**, who finished a close second.

mlapointe@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



BUDGET 2023:

Canada Must Act Now to Remain Competitive

As the world rapidly moves towards a net zero economy, Canada has a generational opportunity to position itself for success in the 21st-century sustainable economy. Canada has the tools and assets to lead: A highly educated and highly skilled workforce, innovative companies, an abundance of natural resources, and extensive infrastructure.

Canada's major trading partners have already moved aggressively and swiftly, notably with America's *Inflation Reduction Act* and the EU's equally ambitious Green Deal Industrial Plan.

Canada must meet these global initiatives head-on, with a response that sets the country up for economic success across existing and new industrial sectors alike, while ensuring our country can export clean energy, green materials, and technology that will contribute to global decarbonization.

We encourage the federal government to take bold steps in Budget 2023 to support the Canadian businesses that are innovating and shifting to compete in a low carbon world.

This must include:

Supporting clean and affordable electricity production and infrastructure - in partnership with Indigenous Nations - to grow new industries and help existing industries decarbonize.

Providing an appropriate fiscal response to the IRA, including tax credits, contracts for difference, and 'Buy Clean' actions to decarbonize and scale up industries where we have competitive advantages.

Accelerating regulatory processes to get projects built more quickly so Canada does not fall behind.

Supporting skills training for workers so they can find good-paying jobs in the low-carbon economy.

Supporting the development of new industries, including critical minerals, clean hydrogen, clean fuels, and clean technologies.

The world's major economies are building cleaner futures, and they are looking for trade partners with like-minded visions. Canada must be unequivocal that it shares this commitment - while taking the steps to prove it - before we lose our existing advantages and miss the boat on the biggest shift in global trade relations in a generation.

Accelerate: Canada's ZEV Supply Chain Alliance
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 Aluminium Association of Canada
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 International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
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 The Transition Accelerator
 Trottier Family Foundation

News



Concrete barricades and planters remain in place along Wellington Street at the intersection with Bank Street on March 20. In the background to the left is the West Block, which includes the temporary House of Commons Chamber, with the Wellington Building to the right. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

Wellington Street reopening date still up in the air

Planning to reopen the street and install temporary bike lanes 'is nearing completion and staff are now in the process of developing an implementation plan,' says the city's traffic services director.

BY LAURA RYCKEWAERT

Almost two months after Ottawa City Council passed a motion to reopen Wellington Street to vehicles as early as March 1, there's still no official date for its reopening—but MPs reached by *The Hill Times* aren't eager for the return of regular traffic.

"It's been wonderful having traffic off of Wellington Street. This is a national capital, it's in a Parliamentary Precinct, and to the extent that that street has become pedestrianized and quieted from traffic over the last year has

been a significant advancement for the liveability and beauty of downtown Ottawa," said Liberal MP Andy Fillmore (Halifax, N.S.), a former city planner who's in favour of keeping vehicles off the street permanently.

The stretch of Wellington that borders Parliament Hill between Bank and Elgin streets has been closed to regular vehicular traffic since late January 2022 as a result of the so-called Freedom Convoy occupation that saw trucks and all manner of structures—including a kids' play area, a hot tub, and a crane hoisting a Canadian flag—set up along the four-lane roadway.

After convoy protesters were cleared out in February 2022, Ottawa City Council passed a motion to keep the three-block stretch of Wellington Street closed to vehicles for the rest of the year and not reopen it until a report on the cost and feasibility of its closure was brought to the city's transportation committee. Parliamentary shuttle buses and Parliamentary Protective Services (PPS), City of Ottawa, National Capital Commission maintenance, and emergency services vehicles were exempted from this ban.

The Centre Block, West Block, and East Block buildings sit on the north side of Wellington (as

do the Confederation and Justice buildings where MPs have offices, though both are just outside the affected three-block stretch), while the Wellington Building and Valour Building—which house MP offices and committee rooms—the Prime Minister's Office, and the Victoria Building (which has Senate offices) are located on the south side of the street.

To keep vehicles off of Wellington, concrete barricades and planters were set up on either end of the closed stretch, and traffic lights along the street were removed in early May of last year as a temporary measure, with the city's director of traffic services, Phil Landry, indicating that the poles would be "inventoried and used at different intersections across the city, as needed," in an emailed response to questions last June.

The motion to temporarily close Wellington also directed the city to begin discussions about the possibility of transferring ownership of the street to the federal government. In March 2022, the Procedure and House Affairs Committee launched a similar study looking into the possibility of expanding the Parliamentary Precinct to include Wellington and Sparks streets, among other things. The resulting report,

tabled last December, included recommendations to permanently close the street to vehicular traffic between Kent Street and the War Memorial on Elgin, and to transfer land ownership of Wellington and Sparks streets from the city to Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC).

Following the election of a new city council last October, on Jan. 26, the city's transportation committee returned to the question of Wellington Street's future, ultimately passing a motion to reopen the street to traffic as soon as it is operationally feasible, and no sooner than March 1. The final version of this motion approved by city council on Feb. 8 set out that temporary bike lanes protected by flex posts would be installed on Wellington, with two lanes—one in each direction—left open to cars. It called on city staff to explore options for further temporary closures of the street during the summer for special events.

The motion also directed the city to consult with Ottawa police, fire, and paramedic services on the reopening, and to continue discussions with the federal government about the potential expansion of the Parliamentary Precinct.

In an emailed response to questions on March 16, Landry indicated the city is "still finalizing its plans and determining all of the work that needs to be completed to reopen Wellington Street," with no date yet set.

"Staff will update council on the date for reopening the road after consulting our partners and as soon as Traffic Services determines it is operationally feasible," reads the response. "Some of the work that is currently anticipated to take place includes the removal of barricades and planters, installation of traffic signals, painting bike lane[s], and installing flex posts."

Part of the city's assessment of operational requirements is ensuring that all new measures "follow current standards and guidelines," said Landry.

"This work includes a detailed review, consultation, and design of a cycling facility to ensure that all stakeholder needs are met and that the design meets all standards and guidelines," he explained.

"This planning stage is nearing completion and staff are now in the process of developing an implementation plan which includes detailed on-site review to confirm sign locations, ordering materials, scheduling work, and implementing the design. Staff will be able to inform Council of timelines for the reopening of the road once the implementation plan has been developed."

Landry noted that the city's emergency services are also currently reviewing their plans vis-a-vis Wellington's reopening as a two-lane road and "will provide comments to Traffic Services staff, if applicable."

While the decision to reopen Wellington has been welcomed by some, including Ottawa Tourism and the Ottawa Coalition of Business Improvement Areas as reported by *The Ottawa Business Journal*, others, including Ecology

Ottawa, have expressed disappointment and concern that the so-called short-term reopening of the street could permanently end discussions about its potential transformation.

In response to questions from *The Hill Times*, Amélie Crosson, director of communications to the House Speaker, said the House of Commons has consulted with PPS and "other partners" on Wellington Street's reopening, and that MPs, staff, and "parliamentary partners will be informed of any impacts in relation to the reopening."

In a March 20 email, PPS said it could not comment on timing for the street's reopening, but it is working "in close collaboration" with Hill and law enforcement "partners to stay informed of any changes which could impact our daily operations."

Liberal MP Yasir Naqvi (Ottawa Centre, Ont.), whose riding includes the area in question, has been vocal about his desire to see Wellington Street transformed, permanently closed to vehicular traffic, and opened only to pedestrians, cyclists and other active transport, and a potential public tramway.

Reached by *The Hill Times* last week, Naqvi reiterated those hopes and said he remains "focused on the future," but in the meantime he's "grateful" the city's plan includes the installation of bike lanes, even for the short term.

"I'm always walking in the area ... you see that among Members, staff who are going back and forth on both sides of Wellington to the Chamber, or to various committee rooms or their offices," said Naqvi. "I believe that it is a far better use of Wellington Street—given its national importance, that it's right in front of Parliament—that it be a more people-friendly place; a place where Canadians and our visitors could gather ... in a manner that is safe for everyone."

"My focus is to make sure we get to a point where there is a robust understanding between the federal government and the municipal government as to what the future of Wellington Street looks like," said Naqvi.

Fillmore said he thinks downtown Ottawa would "really benefit" from a transformed, car-free Wellington Street, which could be beautified and enlivened to include features such as interpretative information panels and seating areas.

"We're seeing in other capitals around the world, mostly in the post-9/11 era, security has become a significant concern. And while, at first, that arrived in the form of concrete barriers like it did in Ottawa, as those concepts mature, we're seeing really beautiful and delightful public spaces evolve. ... Secure public spaces for shared use—limited vehicle traffic, bicycles, pedestrians—work extremely well," he said, adding that such a transformation of Wellington Street would fit in well with PSPC's Long Term Vision and Plan for the Parliamentary Precinct's renovation.

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The Hill Times



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Opinion

'Russian Crimea' is as much a myth as the world's invincible second army

The argument purporting that every Russian-speaking Ukrainian is a separatist who wants to be a part of the Russian nation is just another Kremlin propaganda cliché.

Anastasiya Ringis

Opinion



The debate about the role of Crimea in Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine continues to make headlines in the opinion sections of many news outlets. *The Hill Times* is no exception. As a Ukrainian born in Crimea and raised in a Russian-speaking environment, I couldn't stand by as erroneous arguments take the centre stage.

Pro-Russian majority?

Crimea is often referred to as "pro-Russian" on the basis that the majority of the population is considered to be Russian-speaking. The same can be said about other Ukrainian regions: Odesa, Kharkiv, Sumy. However, it is impossible to trace any separatist intentions there. The separatism in Ukraine exists only where the Russian army invades.

And Crimea is no different from any other region of Ukraine. In a 1991 referendum, the residents of the peninsula voted for Ukrainian independence. In 1996, Crimea was granted the privileged status of an autonomous republic within Ukraine. In 2003, Crimeans condemned Russia's attempt to occupy the island of Tuzla in the Kerch Strait, which was Russia's first attempt to grab Ukrainian territory.

The separatist agenda had no significant support in Crimea. In the 2012 local elections, the only pro-Russian party, "Russian Unity," managed to win only three seats out of 100 in the Crimean parliament.

Despite this fact, on March 16, 2014, the Kremlin announced that more than 90 per cent of Crimeans voted to join Russia in a sham referendum that was not recognized by the international community. Similar referendums under the muzzles of Russian guns were held in September 2022 in the Kherson and Zaporizhzhya regions of Ukraine—with inflated numbers, just like in Crimea in 2014. In reality, citizens of Kherson tried to stop Russian tanks during the invasion with their bare hands. And when Kherson was retaken by Ukraine, the people rushed on the streets and greeted its army as liberators.

So the argument purporting that every Russian-speaking Ukrainian is a separatist who wants to be a part of the Russian

nation has nothing to do with reality and is just another Kremlin propaganda cliché.

The actual fact: ethnic cleansing of Crimean Tatars

Russians justify their war against Ukraine by the fallacy of natural right: "it has always been Russian, so it must remain Russian." Despite the obvious unacceptance of such an argument for the 21st century, it ignores the fact that before the Russian Empire occupied the Crimea in 1783, it had already been an independent state, the Crimean Khanate. Crimea had its own authorities, army and ethnic nucleus: Crimean Tatars, or *Qırımlılar*.

Under imperial rule, the Crimean Tatars experienced several ethnic cleansings, with the first taking place in 1783 when indigenous people were forcefully expelled from Crimea. Then in 1918, the Bolsheviks demolished the independent Crimean Democratic Republic. The third wave of extermination took place by Joseph Stalin's May 18, 1944, decree. Overnight, the Russians deported hundreds of thousands of Crimean Tatars to Uzbekistan with no right for repatriation.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, since 2014, Crimean Tatars have been under severe pressure from Vladimir Putin's Russia. Hundreds of *Qırımlılar* have been jailed on far-fetched and fabricated pretexts, mainly for expressing pro-Ukrainian views or advocating for human rights.

Ukraine, on the other hand, has no track record of anything that could be defined as ethnic cleansing. There has not been the slightest attempt to oppress on national, linguistic, or religious grounds.

Ukrainian Crimea is the only way to peace

If the possession of Crimea is the realization of Putin's imperial ambitions, for Ukrainians, the de-occupation of Crimea is a core security issue and the only option on the table. The Ukrainian people will not accept any compromises about Crimea for very obvious reasons.

Russia will not stop its imperial land grabs and ethnic cleansings until defeated on the battlefield. Moscow broke all the international treaties and accords that recognized Ukraine's borders as they were in 1991, and for this reason cannot be trusted anymore.

Another reason is the demand to provide justice to the millions of Ukrainians who have suffered from the war crimes committed by the Russian forces since 2014.

And finally, the only one true desire of any person in Russian-occupied Ukrainian territory is to bring life back to normal, as it was before 2014. Crimeans are no exception; they are the Kremlin's hostages who want to make their way back home.

Anastasiya Ringis is a Ukrainian journalist who has been based in Ottawa since April 2022.

The Hill Times

Comment

It's populism or bust as Poilievre vies to bring Canada its own Trumpian moment

Is it really necessary to use the foreign interference issue to preemptively label the prime minister a traitor acting in the interests of a foreign dictatorship?

Les Whittington

Need to Know



OTTAWA—If there's a conspiracy theory more beguiling than an allegedly crooked election, it escapes notice.

Donald Trump succeeded in mounting a national movement, including a violent assault on the United States Congress, based on his claim that the 2020 presidential election was stolen from him. Despite this lie being thrown out of numerous American courts, it's still a motivational myth for U.S. Republicans.

This is surely not lost on Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre and his inner circle, who are daily adding new pages to a Trump-style populist playbook with a Canadian twist. Poilievre made it clear last week that he is more than willing to entertain a stolen-election conspiracy theory to reap advantage from the election interference issue.

In response to a media question on whether he was concerned about Conservatives viewing the electoral system as unfair, Poilievre said Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has "inspired a lot of suspicion" by declining to answer questions about "his knowledge of Beijing's interference to help him in two successful successive elections."

Poilievre's repeated drive-by smears accusing Trudeau of colluding with China are an obvious attempt to whip up conspiracy thinking about the legitimacy of the 2019 and 2021 federal elections that saw the Trudeau Liberals returned to office with minorities.

And it's already a powerful issue among right-wingers. In a Leger poll of some 1,544 Canadians, 36 per cent of Conservative voters said they do not generally trust the results of elections in Canada, a rate six times higher than among Liberals, and three times higher than among NDP voters.

"It is those who tend to be right-leaning voters who tend to show a greater distrust for traditional institutions in our democracy, like elections," said Leger's Christian Bourque. And he made the connection between Trump-inspired distrust of the democratic system and attitudes here, telling the Canadian Press he would be surprised if there was that much doubt in election results before the rise of Trump.

Leger also noted that, while a majority believe the past two elections were fair, many Canadians see the issue of foreign interference as very important and want to get to the bottom of it.

For Poilievre, this explosive issue must seem like gravy, given that he already appears to be capitalizing on Canadians' post-COVID economic and health-care shocks, and their weariness with Trudeau.

Among other things, Poilievre appears to have scored big in his criticism of the government on the affordability issue. And he seems to be consolidating one of the greatest modern innovations of politicians on the right wing: convincing unionized workers that the Conservatives are on their side. That this incongruity is about anti-progressivism and the culture wars, rather than economics and better paycheques, may provide some insight into Poilievre's fondness for the populist, machismo rhetoric that made him a favourite with the angry, anti-everything trucker crowd.

What's curious, given all that, is the way Poilievre, who represents what is (was?) a mainstream political party, has veered off into the hinterlands of extreme populist rage farming, scapegoating, and post-truth reality shifting.

Is it really necessary, for instance, for the leader of the official opposition to use the foreign interference issue to preemptively label Trudeau a traitor acting in the interests of a foreign dictatorship? (This turn of events seems to have dismayed even the CSIS leaker behind it all, who said in their now-famous op-ed that they regret that the issue has become "marked by ugliness and division.")

Is it really necessary for Poilievre to blame all of Canada's problems personally on Trudeau, such as his repeated suggestion on March 19 that the prime minister is responsible for the deterioration of the health-care system despite it being provincial jurisdiction? Or misleading Canadians by suggesting there is an easy Ottawa-led fix to the problem of accreditation for foreign doctors and nurses (another provincial matter)?

And was it really necessary to say Liberal and NDP governments were "deliberately" flooding "our streets with easy access to these poisons"—part of Poilievre's backward-looking attack on safe drug-consumption sites created in harm-reduction programs meant to reduce overdoses and deaths?

Plus, the Conservative leader attracted a lot of negative attention recently for failing to do anything serious in response to a meeting of three Conservative MPs with extreme right-wing German politician Christine Anderson, whose nationalist party is infamous for its Islamophobic and anti-immigrant views.

Despite the Conservatives' overall lead nationally in recent polls, the party under Poilievre has not made much ground in populated places where any federal election is likely to be decided such as the Greater Toronto Area and Metro Vancouver. Poilievre is strikingly unpopular in Quebec, and women as a whole are decidedly not on side with Skippy.

None of that may make much difference, of course, when people head to the polls in a hyper-partisan, divisive atmosphere fed by disinformation, demagoguery, and social media wrath.

Les Whittington is a regular columnist for *The Hill Times*.

The Hill Times

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POP!

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Editorial

It's past time for the Kool-Aid taps to run dry

There must come a moment when politicians have to ask themselves: is this worth it?

The vast majority of people who put their names forward to serve in public office do so because they hold very strong ideals with respect to service of community and country. They want to make a difference, be useful, be the change they want to see in the world, etc.

And then, by virtue of facing the reality of first-past-the-post and Canada's parliamentary system, they get swept up in the party mechanics. Once elected, those good-intention-having MPs find themselves on the road to partisanship hell, where it's easier to go along for the ride if they want even a sniff at accomplishing any of the virtuous goals they set out with.

It would come as no surprise if the Liberal MPs who were given marching orders over the past few weeks to obstruct the Procedure and House Affairs Committee in the face of opposition attempts to have the prime minister's chief of staff Katie Telford come and testify about election interference were feeling a little sore this week.

Liberals talked themselves hoarse for hours, covering all avenues of nonsense in the PROC room, opening themselves up to public ridicule, only for the PMO to turn around and, in the face of a March 21 House vote to stop the shenan-

igans, give Telford the OK to come to committee after all.

Government House Leader Mark Holland—who found himself on the wrong side of the truth this week when he told the Chamber the Conservative leader had been offered a briefing on electoral interference—continued to stretch the bounds of belief when asked whether the Liberals should have just agreed to this weeks ago.

"This is evidence of my opinion of Parliament working, that we try to work with the opposition to hear what their requests are," he told reporters on March 21. "To get to final outcomes, there's disagreements along the way, but I think that's a natural part of this process."

There's nothing natural about this, and politicians of all stripes (at least those who haven't gone hog-wild on the Ottawa Bubble-flavoured Kool-Aid) know this. But there must be some light at the end of the tunnel that makes it worth it to publicly pretend the opposite.

So, Telford will appear. She will likely be unable to publicly answer the questions she'll be asked, the opposition will get their clips to rage-farm on social media, and the public will have no further answers about an incredibly important aspect of our democracy.

If this is worth it, who is benefiting?
The Hill Times

Letters to the Editor

Hiding the truth impedes two-state peace framework: CIJA director

Re: "Canada must stop supporting Israel in illegal settlement of Palestinian land," (*The Hill Times*, March 13, p. 10). An opinion piece in *The Hill Times* calling for Canada to alter the Canada-Israel relationship included factual errors that leave a false impression that only Israel is to blame for the situation in the West Bank.

The author ignores the shootings and car-rammings that have claimed the lives of 13 innocent Jewish civilians since early 2023, including two boys, just six and eight years old, murdered when a Palestinian terrorist drove his car into them while they stood at a bus stop. The piece excludes the murder of Elan Ganeles—a 27-year-old American-Israeli Columbia University graduate on his way to a wedding when a Palestinian terrorist shot him. Seven others were gunned down outside a Jerusalem synagogue on the Sabbath. And more.

As does any country, Israel and its citizens have the undisputed right to defend themselves against armed attacks. However, passing over the terror attacks, including those noted above, and

the corresponding counter-terror raids meant to prevent future violence serves to demonize Israel and shift all blame. The author falsely identifies an Israel Defense Forces counter-terror raid in Nablus as an "Israeli settler attack." He makes no distinction between armed militants killed in counter-terror raids (accounting for most of the deaths) and the tragic civilian casualties that unfortunately sometimes occur—despite Israel's valiant efforts to prevent them.

To be clear, the fringe extremist Israelis who rioted in Huwara should be—and have been—condemned, including by Israeli leadership. But calling on Canada not to "tolerate human rights abuses," while hiding the truth from readers, impedes prospects of genuine peace and a two-state framework, something successive Canadian governments have historically backed and, we hope, will always support.

Becca Wertman-Traub
 Director of research
 Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs
 Ottawa, Ont.

Scant evidence for government-caused inflation, says Vancouver reader

Re: "The politics of budget-making as Canadians brace for stagflation," (*The Hill Times*, March 15, p. 10).

A government that owns a central bank that issues a floating, non-convertible fiat currency can run deficits of whatever size indefinitely, and so a Canadian federal deficit position neither worsens nor improves; it simply is. The way to value a deficit is by its effect on the economy. If funds are used to put people to productive use either by creating jobs or training for those that exist, the result is beneficial.

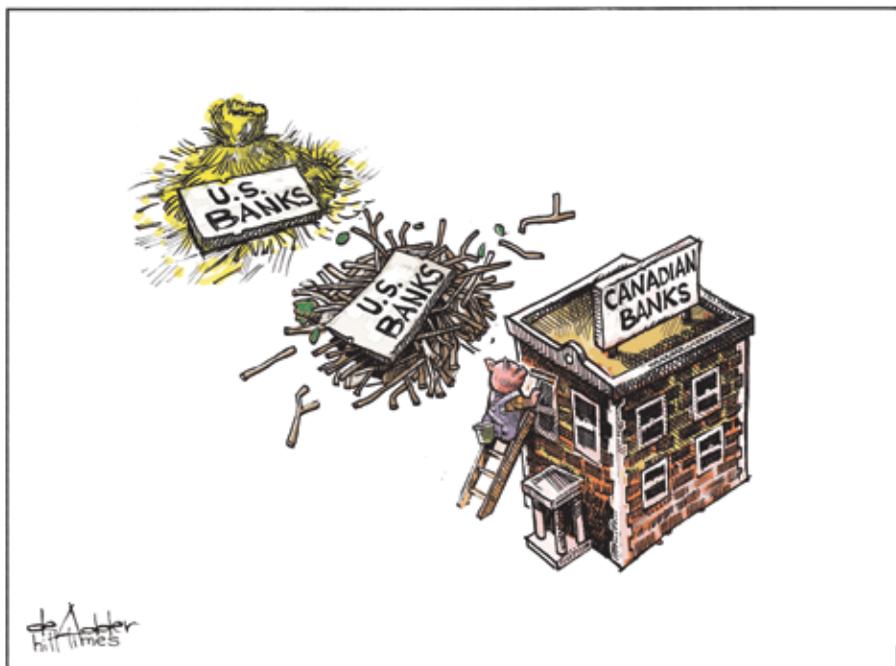
Overspending can be inflationary, but current inflation drivers are mainly global (energy prices, climate change,

war in Ukraine) and domestic corporate profiteering. The evidence for government-caused inflation is scant.

Our monetarily sovereign government that sustained six years of high military spending during the Second World War, that bailed out banks and creditors after the 2008 financial crisis, and that created new and expensive multi-billion dollar programs during the pandemic always has robust fiscal options.

Stagflation can be prevented by targeted stimulus, which mobilizes unused economic resources and increases supply to help alleviate rising prices.

Larry Kazdan
 Vancouver, B.C.



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The anglicization of the world is here

Rather than embracing the facility Montrealers have in English as an asset to business, Quebec nationalists' hatred for everything English blinds them to a global trend.

Andrew Caddell

With All Due Respect



Quebec Premier François Legault is the new King Canute, demanding the tide of English stop rolling in from the outside, writes Andrew Caddell. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

in business meant the dominance of McDonald's, Coca-Cola, and other U.S. brands, what has really happened is the "anglicization" of the world.

This point came through last week while in Europe. In Geneva, Switzerland, signs were in French and English. In Porto, Portugal, almost every sign was in Portuguese and English. And not just tourist information: street signs, advertising, and train schedules.

When my wife and I decided to take a walking tour of Porto, our guide was from the Azores, a Portuguese dependency, but spoke fluent English. Of the 20 people who took the tour, there were only four native English speakers. The others were from Hong Kong, Germany, France, Croatia, Brazil, South Africa, and Israel.

One night, we went to a restaurant to listen to *fado*, the sorrowful Portuguese singing tradition. The hostess explained *fado* in Portuguese, Spanish, English, and French. All our guides in a wine tour of the Douro Valley region spoke English. Wherever we went, virtually everyone spoke English as a second language.

The spread of English as the international language is not a recent phenomenon; despite Brexit, English continues to have a presence in the European Union. The importance of the United States, and the presence of 65 million anglophones off the coast is one reason for the dominance of English in the EU.

But there are other, more practical reasons: first of all, English is easy to learn. It has no

genders and few complex tenses in its basic form. Someone with a thousand-word vocabulary and an understanding of the present and past tenses can function in English. Few other languages can boast that capacity.

Far more sophisticated analysts than I would attribute the growth of the language to the recent cultural colonialization of the world by American culture and business, or harken back to the British Empire in the 19th and 20th centuries. But I think it comes down to practicality.

While Esperanto, a mix of Romance languages, was once promoted as the way to connect everyone to a common language, it never caught on. English, which emerged as a fusion of French and Anglo-Saxon after the French invasion of England in 1066, has easily integrated thousands of words from dozens of languages.

Which brings us to our own national linguistic conundrum. March 20 was the international day of La Francophonie, a day to celebrate French in Canada and abroad. The good news is French is growing around the world. But while francophone Africa alone is projected to hit 250 million of the total projected 800 million French-speakers in 2050, French will never surpass the influence of English.

In Quebec, the struggle against English has led to Bill 96, which declares the province a French-speaking "nation." Legal

documents, contracts, communication with the Quebec government—all must be done only in French. If you are a recent immigrant from India or Ireland, Hong Kong or Kathmandu, you will have six months to learn French, and then you will cease to be served by Quebec in what could be your mother tongue.

At the same time, the Trudeau government is integrating the Charter of the French Language into Bill C-13, which means Quebec anglophones will have their rights to jobs or services circumscribed. For someone who works and lives in French as I do, this is not a problem. But for many Quebec anglophones and foreign businesses, it will be.

Rather than embracing the facility Montrealers have in English as an asset to business, Quebec nationalists' hatred for everything English blinds them to a global trend. Quebec Premier François Legault is the new King Canute, demanding the tide of English stop rolling in from the outside. Instead, it will continue to rise, and trying to erase it makes Quebec and Canada look like irrational outliers.

Andrew Caddell is retired from Global Affairs Canada, where he was a senior policy adviser. He previously worked as an adviser to Liberal governments. He is a town councillor in Kamouraska, Que. He can be reached at pipson52@hotmail.com.

The Hill Times

In a bid to serve his country, Johnston has entered a political cage match

Given the moment we are in, David Johnston should have avoided putting his hand up to serve. But he also doesn't deserve some of the harsh criticism he is receiving.

Tim Powers

Plain Speak



matter, dismissing the weight of concerns, and not striking the right tone, down to a steadfast apparent clumsy resistance to a public inquiry, it has looked chaotically incoherent.

The Liberals have been bitten by the dogged reporting of *Global News* and the *Globe and Mail*, which have generated story after story that suggest electoral interference in our democratic processes has been a significant concern for our security officials for a while. The government has been mauled by leaks from people in the security establishment clearly supremely dissatisfied with their lack of response.

The prime minister, hoping to quell the storm, announced at a hastily staged late afternoon press conference that he was going to appoint a special rapporteur to report to his government and the public on the best next steps. He suggested if the then-unnamed rapporteur recommended a public inquiry, he would heed that advice. He said in his casting call for the lead role of special rapporteur he was looking

for an imminent Canadian, skilled, respected, and beyond reproach. Days later, he got a Canadian like that in former governor general David Johnston. But if he hoped that would subdue the political masses, he got that wrong.

Johnston's appointment was immediately criticized by current Conservative Party leadership, the Bloc Québécois, and many respected commentators because they felt Johnston was in a conflict himself. Johnston had served on the board of the Trudeau Foundation and was a self-described friend of the prime minister, though it should be mentioned he was appointed GG by Stephen Harper and had done some work for the Conservative government on setting up the terms of the Airbus inquiry. Apparently, the only history that matters were the asterisks on Johnston's bio next to the Trudeau Foundation and the friendship.

I don't know Johnston very well at all. And no, I am not a family friend or a Laurentian elite. I did get to spend some time at the 2016 Rio Olympics with

him and his wife Sharon when he was in Brazil representing Canada and cheering on our eventual historic bronze medal-winning women's rugby 7s team (I was chair of Rugby Canada at the time). What I saw in him and his wife were two passionate, down-to-earth, easy-to-deal-with, decent souls. I was left with the feeling public service was a priority for him—not a box he was ticking. Certainly, he demonstrated that during his tenure as Canada's vice-regal representative.

Johnston no doubt put his hand up for this job because of the belief he has in public service. Perhaps he wishes he didn't, knowing that in this political climate, it is a high crime and misdemeanour to have a previous well-known relationship with someone else. It is, in many well-argued accounts, disqualifying. However, my experience is friendship wouldn't blind someone like Johnston to his duty. Because for a person like him, duty comes first.

A final comment: it has been disappointing and all too predictable to see certain Conservative

Party leaders fire so quickly and forcefully at Johnston's character. Many of them had not a public word of anything but praise to offer when he served as GG.

Watching former party head and past House Speaker Andrew Scheer be a leader of that charge has been off-putting. Scheer is a political lifer. He was on the public teat long before Johnston, and remains so now. He is a former resident of two parliamentary properties. Scheer's criticism of Johnston being an "insider" just screams hypocrisy. Scheer has himself lived nowhere but inside the federal political system for his entire adult life.

Given the moment we are in, Johnston should have avoided putting his hand up to serve. But he also doesn't deserve some of the harsh criticism he is receiving. Judge him on how he performs his role.

Tim Powers is chairman of Summa Strategies and managing director of Abacus Data. He is a former adviser to Conservative political leaders.

The Hill Times

News

Civil liberties groups call for immediate moratorium on 'prejudiced audits' of Muslim charities pending NSIRA review

The Finance Department's national risk assessment on money laundering and terrorist financing also singles out Muslim-led organizations and needs an overhaul, say advocates.

BY STUART BENSON

Nearly two years after raising concerns that the Canada Revenue Agency is unfairly targeting Muslim charities, civil liberties advocates say the formal review into the agency's auditing process should not be an excuse for the federal government to ignore "ample evidence of systemic discrimination" in its approach to countering terrorist financing in the philanthropic sector.

On March 8, the National Security and Intelligence Review Agency (NSIRA) notified the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) it had started a review that would focus on the CRA's Review and Analysis Division (RAD), primarily its "national security activities and decision-making relating to registered Canadian charities, to assess their reasonableness, necessity, and compliance with the law."

In a March 14 statement, the National Council of Canadian



The National Council of Canadian Muslims' Nadia Hasan says it would be unfair to continue to subject Muslim charities to 'targeted audits' while they wait for another review of the Canada Revenue Agency. Photograph courtesy of the National Council of Canadian Muslims



National Revenue Minister Diane Lebouthillier says she welcomes the National Security and Intelligence Review Agency's investigation into the Canada Revenue Agency, after years of concern Muslim charities were being unfairly audited and having their status revoked. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

Muslims (NCCM) said the review is not enough, and called for the immediate suspension of RAD's auditing activities, a measure it has been asking for since 2021, following the publication of its report, *Under Layered Suspicion*.

The study, co-authored by the University of Toronto Institute of Islamic Studies, suggests that there is evidence for the concerns Muslim-led charities have expressed over the "selection, frequency and reasoning" behind the CRA's audits, drawing specific attention to the federal government's anti-terrorism financing and anti-radicalization policies.

"When these policies are operationalized by the CRA's Charities Directorate and [RAD], they create the conditions for potential structural bias against Muslim-led charities," reads the study. "[I]n the cross-hairs of these policies, Muslim-led charities are uniquely vulnerable to penalties or even deregistration at the hands of the CRA."

Nadia Hasan, chief operating officer of the NCCM and co-author of the report, told *The Hill Times* that when the study's findings were initially raised with the federal government, there had been hope for progress, with an initial agreement that there would be a systemic review of those policies.

"But it's been two years waiting on the results of that review, and in the interim, Muslim charities continue to be subjected to those unfair practices," Hasan said. "I think it's just simply not fair for the government to start another review while letting these practices continue, so we're asking that [RAD] be suspended until the review is complete."

A similar study by the International Civil Liberties Monitoring

Group (ICLMG), published the same month as the NCCM's 2021 report, also called for an assessment of the CRA's processes and called for National Revenue Minister Diane Lebouthillier (Gaspésie–Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Que.) to declare an immediate moratorium on the "targeted audits" of Muslim charities until the review is completed.

According to the ICLMG report, the terrorist attacks in the United States on Sept. 11, 2001, provided the impetus for creating "broad anti-terrorism policies" within the Canadian government, which granted several departments and security agencies "sweeping new powers," including the establishment of RAD. Set up in 2003, the division is tasked with investigating terrorist financing in the charitable sector as part of the CRA's role in the government's anti-money laundering and anti-terrorist



Tim McSorley, national co-ordinator of International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group, says 2021 reports already provide 'ample evidence of systemic discrimination.' Photograph courtesy of the International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group

financing regime following the passage of the Anti-Terrorism Act in 2001.

The report says that between 2003 and 2015, the CRA audited between 600 and 800 charities per year, resulting in 335 charities having their status revoked. In total, eight Muslim charities in that period had their status removed, including six since 2008. Despite these charities making up only 0.47 per cent of all charitable organizations in Canada in 2015, they account for 2.4 per cent of organizations to have their status revoked during that timeframe.

Between 2008 and 2014, RAD completed 16 audits on the basis of national security concerns, with eight charities having their status revoked. Of those, ICLMG "ascertained" six were Muslim charities, with the remaining two organizations benefiting racialized communities.

Since 2016, ICLMG identified four more Muslim charities that have had their status revoked by RAD, with an additional six currently under audit. While the report noted that statistics on revocations by RAD were unknown for the latter time period, it called the number of audits a "significant increase," which it attributed to the national risk assessments on money laundering and terrorist financing, published by the Department of Finance in 2015.

The assessment concluded that 11 entities, composed of 10 terrorist groups and the broad category of "foreign fighters," had a nexus to Canada and posed a terrorist financing threat. Nine were linked to extremist or militant Islamist groups and foreign fighters in Muslim countries, and all 11 were identified as being

linked to racialized communities in Canada.

Lebouthillier said in a March 14 statement that she welcomes the NSIRA review and views it as "an important next step" that will complement ongoing work by Taxpayers' Ombudsperson François Boileau.

In 2021, Lebouthillier asked Boileau to look into the complaints against the RAD's audits of Muslim charities, but in November 2022, the ombudsperson told the Senate Human Rights Committee that his office was barred from accessing key information and documents needed to carry out its review for national security reasons, among other issues.

"NSIRA will be able to examine documents and specific charity files unavailable to the Ombudsperson for review due to the restrictions of the Income Tax Act and other Acts that govern national security matters," she said.

In response to a request for comment from *The Hill Times* on the calls for a moratorium, Lebouthillier's office said that the government "stands with and supports Muslim communities across Canada and reaffirms its commitment to take action to denounce and tackle Islamophobia, hate-fueled violence, and systemic discrimination whenever and wherever it occurs," but said the minister would not interfere with the CRA's auditing processes.

"The Canada Revenue Agency is an independent, arms-length agency, and as such, the Minister of National Revenue does not intervene in the audit operations of the Agency," wrote Gabriel Bourget, Lebouthillier's director of communications.

Tim McSorley, the national co-ordinator of ICLMG, told *The Hill Times* that while he welcomes the NSIRA review, it shouldn't be used by the government to delay action, as the reports by his organization and NCCM already provide "ample evidence of systemic discrimination" within RAD's processes.

He said the division's reliance on the National Risk Assessment in its approach to countering terrorist financing is "deeply problematic."

Hasan said the risk assessment-informed model, based on a list of terrorist entities only consisting of groups associated with Muslim and other racialized communities, is at the root of the systemic issues within both the CRA's and the entire government's approach to anti-terrorism financing.

"It's obviously not possible that the only risk of terrorism financing comes from people of colour; it's factually incorrect and certainly does not align with what we're seeing around us today," she said.

If the government wants to ensure it has a strong counter-terrorism financing regime that is fair, just, and "not racist," Hasan said it needs to start from scratch.

In response to a request for comment, the office of Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland (Uni-

Continued on page 11

News

Continued from page 10

versity-Rosedale, Ont.) said it welcomes the feedback on the risk assessments.

"Islamophobia, and all forms of racism and discrimination have no place in Canada," wrote Adrienne Vaupshas, Freeland's press secretary. "[We] are reviewing the document to ensure the safety and security of all Canadians while ensuring all charities are treated equally and fairly during the risk assessment process ... we will have more to say soon."

Canadians' negative view of Islam will require 'political courage' to overcome: Hasan

While Hasan said she isn't making any assumptions about the motivations of individual CRA employees, she said recent polling on Canadians' view of Islam shows that creating a fair counter-terrorism financing system will be an "uphill battle."

On March 13, Angus Reid released a study on Islamophobia in Canada which found that 39 per cent of Canadians outside of Quebec hold an unfavourable view of Islam, with that number reaching 56 per cent within Quebec.

Asked whether Canada has a problem with Islamophobia more broadly, Canadians are evenly divided, with 50 per cent saying it does and 50 per cent saying it does not. The survey suggests 44 per cent of Canadians say it is unnecessary to have a Special Representative on Combatting Islamophobia, which is the majority opinion (82 per cent) of those with a very negative view of Islam.

On Jan. 26, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) appointed Amira Elghawaby to the role, which the prime minister called an "important step" in the fight against hatred in all its forms.

However, Elghawaby quickly faced backlash for allegedly portraying Quebecers as "anti-Muslim" in a 2019 column she co-authored with Bernie Farber, president of the Canadian Anti-Hate Network and former director of the Canadian Jewish Congress.

"Unfortunately, the majority of Quebecers seem influenced not by the rule of law, but by anti-Muslim sentiment," reads the article written in response to the author's opposition to the province's Secularism Act, Bill 21, which prohibits the wearing of religious symbols by public employees including police officers, lawyers, and teachers. Elghawaby and Farber were commenting on a May 2019 Leger poll for the Association for Canadian Studies, which found 88 per cent of Quebecers who had a negative perception of Islam supported Bill 21.

After the column resurfaced following Elghawaby's appointment, Heritage Minister Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Que.) said he was "profoundly insulted," while Trudeau called on her to explain her comments. Leaders of the Bloc Québécois and the Quebec provincial government also demanded her resignation.

Hasan said that the latest polling provides further evidence that Elghawaby is correct in her observation of anti-Muslim bias in Quebec and will hopefully close the chapter on the debate about whether Islamophobia is a problem in Canada. But while she said she hopes the discussion can now focus on solutions rather than debates over its existence, addressing Islamophobia is still an unpopular opinion.

"Many Canadians have these views, so it's not going to be popular for the government to act against Islamophobia, but we need courage," Hasan explained. "We need people to have the political will and the political courage to do the right thing."

sbenson@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

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The Top 50 Influencing Foreign Policy

The Top 50 Influencing Foreign Policy

A 'more challenging and volatile' world: Russia, China, U.S. top of mind for top 50 foreign policy influencers

The Hill Times spoke with more than a dozen current and former government officials, analysts, and insiders. They weigh in on who has influence on Canada's foreign policy.

BY NEIL MOSS & CHELSEA NASH

Canada's place in a world of increased great-power competition is preoccupying the top 50 foreign policy decision-makers. More than a year after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the federal government's top foreign policy influencers remain focused on responding to the illiberal threat, with its far-reaching influence on Ottawa's external affairs machinery.

Combating Beijing's aggression continues to be a focus more than three months after Canada released its long-awaited Indo-Pacific strategy that designated China an "increasingly disruptive global power," most recently in the headlines for its government's attempts to interfere in the 2019 and 2021 Canadian elections.

But the ever-important relationship with the United States will always be the most important foreign policy file, as Ottawa continues to adapt to an increasingly protectionist Washington and the prospects of the 2024 presidential election don't bring much hope for tranquility across the 49th parallel.

To compile the list, The Hill Times conducted interviews with around 15 senior government officials, former government officials, past diplomats, insiders, policy analysts, and stakeholders. Most of the interviews were conducted on background to ensure frankness as the majority of the sources The Hill Times spoke with work in government or closely with it.

With many nations looking to replace their energy supply from Russia, a handful of world leaders have turned to Ottawa, hoping Canada can play a prominent role in the solution. Critical minerals and liquefied natural gas have dominated those conversations, which has put a spotlight on Natural Resource Minister Jonathan Wilkinson, a newcomer to the list.

Central to those who have influence on Canada's foreign policy—a list which includes bureaucrats David Morrison and John Han-

aford, as well as ambassadors Kirsten Hillman and Ian McKay—is the trust they've built with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his leading adviser and chief of staff, Katie Telford.

The disordered world the top 50 must navigate is outlined in a June 2022 briefing note to then-Foreign Affairs deputy minister Marta Morgan, which notes that "Canada's operating environment has become more challenging and volatile in recent years due to a challenging and less predictable international environment," posing increased challenges for Canada as a middle power. Morrison, Morgan's successor, is one of the top foreign policy minds the centre relies on to address those challenges.

The most noteworthy exclusion from the list this year is International Development Minister Harjit Sajjan. His influence is questioned, despite holding the biggest purse of all three of the Global Affairs cabinet ministers, because he isn't engaged in consequential foreign policy conversations with the government outside of his files.

"He has a big important portfolio, but I don't see the influence," said one senior government official. But one former official said Sajjan is still able to hold high-profile meetings around the world, beyond what a typical international development minister would have, because of the prestige of being a former defence minister.

Others who narrowly missed the list include Elise Wagner, policy director to International Trade Minister Mary Ng; University of Ottawa professor Thomas Juneau, an expert on the Middle East and national security; NDP foreign affairs critic Heather McPherson, one of the few non-cabinet Members of Parliament to travel to Ukraine since the Russian invasion; executive director of the Canadian Trade Office in Taipei Jim Nickel, Canada's top diplomat in Taiwan; Canadian Global Affairs Institute president David Perry, an expert on defence procurement who leads one of Canada's few think tanks; deputy minister of finance Michael Sabia; Communications Security Establishment chief Caroline Xavier; and Conservative MP Randy Hobbak, who serves as Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre's adviser on Canada-U.S. relations. The Saskatchewan MP has deep links on Capitol Hill, which he built as a previous member of the executive on the Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group, whose current co-chairs—Liberal MP John McKay and Conservative Senator Michael MacDonald—were also conspicuously absent as suggestions from government sources.

The list is presented by category in no specific order.

Politicians

Justin Trudeau, prime minister
Having the final say will always mean Justin Trudeau's influence dominates Canada's foreign policy as long as he is prime minister.

While the international shine of his early years in power has long faded away, he has continued to be increasingly involved on the world stage, with trips to Europe, Africa, and Asia over the last 12 months, including an on-the-ground visit to war-torn Ukraine last May. Thirteen months into Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the conflict is front and centre for Trudeau as well as Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland, according to a senior government official. Trudeau is the longest-serving leader on the G7, but it is yet to be seen whether the extended tenure will lead to a greater clout.

Chrystia Freeland, deputy prime minister and finance minister
As minister of finance, Chrystia Freeland may not be directly involved in foreign policy, but her role as deputy prime minister allows her to exercise her influence on that file behind the scenes, sources say. One source said they would rank Freeland above Foreign Minister Melanie Joly, given her influence on key files, and her experience as a former foreign minister. Freeland maintains influence over the government's cross-border relationships, given her work on the Canada-U.S.-Mexico Agreement. She has also been an influential advocate and ally for Ukraine as it battles Russia's invasion. Freeland has delivered two of the "most significant foreign policy speeches that this government has given," one source said, including one as finance minister at the Brookings Institute in Washington, D.C., in October 2022.

"They are the classic substantive speeches that you would expect of a prime minister or foreign minister," the source said. "It's certainly a harder-line speech than what I think Mr. Trudeau has ever given."

Mélanie Joly, foreign affairs minister
Minister of Foreign Affairs Mélanie Joly is an obviously sensible inclusion on this list given her role.

The top 50 influencing Canadian foreign policy

Politicians

- Justin Trudeau, prime minister
- Chrystia Freeland, deputy prime minister and finance minister
- Mélanie Joly, foreign affairs minister
- Anita Anand, defence minister
- Mary Ng, international trade minister
- François-Philippe Champagne, innovation, science, and industry minister
- Jonathan Wilkinson, natural resources minister
- Robert Oliphant, parliamentary secretary to the foreign affairs minister
- Michael Chong, Conservative foreign affairs critic
- James Bezan, Conservative defence critic
- Peter Boehm, Independent Senator

Political staffers

- Katie Telford, PMO chief of staff
- Brian Clow, PMO deputy chief of staff
- Patrick Travers, PMO senior global affairs adviser
- Oz Jungic, PMO senior policy adviser
- Ben Chin, PMO senior adviser
- Peter Wilkinson, chief of staff to the foreign affairs minister
- Chantal Gagnon, deputy chief of staff to the foreign affairs minister
- Taras Zalusky, chief of staff to the defence minister
- Jason Easton, chief of staff to the international trade minister

Civil servants

- David Morrison, deputy minister for foreign affairs and G7 sherpa
- Jody Thomas, national security and intelligence adviser to the prime minister
- John Hannaford, deputy minister for natural resources
- Bill Matthews, deputy minister for national defence
- Wayne Eyre, chief of the defence staff
- Rob Stewart, deputy minister for international trade
- Janice Charette, clerk of the Privy Council and secretary to the cabinet
- David Vigneault, CSIS director
- Cindy Termorshuizen, associate deputy minister for foreign affairs
- Jordan Zed, interim foreign and defence policy adviser to the prime minister
- Heidi Hulan, assistant deputy minister and political director for international security

Diplomats

- Kirsten Hillman, ambassador to the United States
- Bob Rae, ambassador and permanent representative to the United Nations
- Larisa Galadza, ambassador to Ukraine
- Ian McKay, ambassador to Japan
- Ailish Campbell, ambassador to the European Union
- Jennifer May, ambassador to China
- Jacqueline O'Neill, ambassador for Women, Peace, and Security
- David Cohen, U.S. ambassador to Canada
- Sabine Sparwasser, German ambassador to Canada
- Susannah Goshko, U.K. high commissioner to Canada
- Yulia Kovaliv, Ukrainian ambassador to Canada
- Kanji Yamanouchi, Japanese ambassador to Canada

Civil society and others

- Alexandra Chyczij/Ihor Michalchyshyn, president and CEO of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress
- Maryscott Greenwood, CEO of Canadian American Business Council
- Flavio Volpe, president of Automotive Parts Manufacturers Association
- Goldy Hyder, president of the Business Council of Canada
- Laurence Deschamps-Laporte, academic
- Robert Fife/Steven Chase, Globe and Mail reporters
- Murray Brewster, CBC reporter

But she is also described as one of three "iron ladies" in the Liberal cabinet, alongside Freeland and Defence Minister Anita Anand. The three are engaged in a "dance" that has them collectively directing the course of Canada's foreign policy.

One source said the dynamic between the three tends to be friendly and supportive. The source said things get tricky when there's so much overlap, as it can be unclear who is driving which discussion,

but tensions between them don't appear to be too high.

Anita Anand, defence minister
Defence Minister Anita Anand has had two major roles in the government this year: navigating the military's sexual misconduct allegations, and, in conjunction with Freeland, leading the charge

its foreign policy, sources agree. That's how Natural Resources Minister Jonathan Wilkinson finds himself

with a higher-than-normal degree of influence on global affairs. The development of Canada's critical minerals industry is fast becoming a cornerstone of Canada's trade and diplomacy talks, particularly with the U.S., as leaders look for alternatives to oil and gas—and specifically that coming from Russia. The latter was a driving factor in German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's August 2022 visit to Canada.

Mary Ng, international trade minister

A senior voice in cabinet who has the ear of Trudeau, Mary Ng's schedule remains dominated by the Canada-U.S. relationship, as trade irritants continue to pop up. Ng has built close relationships with U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai and U.S. Trade Secretary Gina Raimondo, according to a senior government official. Flavio Volpe, the Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association president, called Ng "an honest broker" who can articulate the value of the Canada-U.S. partnership in a world of Beijing's increased trade influence.

At the same time, Ng has been increasingly focused on the Indo-Pacific since the launch of Canada's Asian strategy in late 2022. With Joly focused on Europe and the Ukrainian conflict, Ng has played a "complementary role" by being proactive and focusing on the Indo-Pacific, according to the senior source. Ng is trying to push forward trade talks with Indonesia, India, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. She is also working on the accession of the United Kingdom to Canada's Pacific Rim trade deal, which the official said is "inches away" from being completed, as well as working on a bilateral trade deal with London.

François-Philippe Champagne, innovation, science, and industry minister
Often called Canada's "salesman," François-Philippe Champagne has been globe-trotting to attract investment to Canada. "He is focused on attracting foreign direct investment into those areas that the rest of the world is highly valuing right now," a senior government source remarked, noting the minister's work on electric vehicles, battery supply chain, and semiconductors. Most recently, Champagne worked on securing a Volkswagen battery plant in St. Thomas, Ont.

"On the foreign front he's very comfortable in that space," said a former government official. "He's all over North Asia, Korea, and Japan." The high-energy Champagne was previously foreign affairs and international trade minister, and he has private sector experience at multinational firms, which gives him a Rolodex that few can match.

Jonathan Wilkinson, natural resources minister
Canada's environmental policy is driving its natural resources policy, which in turn is influencing

its foreign policy, sources agree. That's how Natural Resources Minister Jonathan Wilkinson finds himself

with a higher-than-normal degree of influence on global affairs.

The development of Canada's critical minerals industry is fast becoming a cornerstone of Canada's trade and diplomacy talks, particularly with the U.S., as leaders look for alternatives to oil and gas—and specifically that coming from Russia. The latter was a driving factor in German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's August 2022 visit to Canada.

Energy has "been a big component of Canadian international affairs in the last year," said one expert source. "Whether or not we're going to make commitments to allies to help out, like after the crisis in Ukraine, as well as where some of the country's investment decisions are going, and a lot of them are into future energy supply."

Robert Oliphant, parliamentary secretary to the foreign affairs minister

Serving as a parliamentary secretary for the last four foreign affairs ministers since 2019, Robert Oliphant has brought stability as Trudeau has frequently cycled top diplomats. He was sworn into the Privy Council in 2021, and was tasked by Joly to work on an African strategy, which he has more recently started calling an African foreign policy framework. That work has taken him on a number of trips across Africa and Europe over the last couple of years.

A hard worker behind the scenes who isn't afraid to ruffle feathers, Oliphant has open channels with the PMO, as well as with Freeland, who value his view of the global stage. One source called him "cabinet material."

Michael Chong, Conservative foreign affairs critic

When it comes to foreign policy, the influence of the Official Opposition is not found within its leader, Pierre Poilievre, sources agreed. Instead, certain Conservative MPs who have long demonstrated an interest and an understanding of Canada's foreign policy, as MP Michael Chong has, are better situated to exert influence—particularly when it comes to certain issues they are particularly invested in. For Chong, his party's foreign affairs critic, that area of expertise has been Asia and China.

"What he brings is his experience. He's been doing this now, both as a cabinet minister in the Harper government, and as an MP, and he's shown real interest in the file," one source said.

James Bezan, Conservative defence critic
Conservative MP James Bezan was tapped to be on this list for his role as the Conservatives' defence critic and

vice-chair of the House Defence Committee. He is someone who is passionate about Canada's support of Ukraine as well former Afghan interpreters, and he has been pushing the government behind the scenes to take action on both fronts. If there were to be a change in government anytime soon, one source said Bezan would very likely be the person tapped as defence minister.

Peter Boehm, Independent Senator

A former ambassador who has been a member of the Red Chamber since 2018, Peter Boehm chairs the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs. The committee is in the middle of a review, initiated by Boehm, to determine whether Global Affairs is fit for service, which the department has indicated it will "actively participate" in. He served as ambassador to Germany from 2008 to 2012 and was active during Scholz's August trip to Canada. He also was deputy minister for international development prior to joining the Senate, as well as Trudeau's past G7 sherpa, including during the chaotic 2018 G7 summit in Charlevoix, Que.

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Political staffers

Katie Telford, PMO chief of staff
Trudeau's long-time most-trusted aide, Katie Telford has been glued on foreign policy issues from foreign visits to hot-button topics like Ukraine and Russia, according to a senior government source. The PMO chief of staff since the Liberals took power in 2015 has her eyes on all files that reach the prime minister's desk. Former PMO staffer Simon Beauchemin said Telford, as well as her deputy Brian Clow, bring "institutional memory" to the foreign file. "They've been on the international circuit for years now. ... It's not their first rodeo," he said.

Telford continues to be a crucial tool for stickhandling Canada-U.S. relations as she has the highest-level connections with the Biden administration, which includes the ability to call up National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan and White House Deputy Chief of Staff Jen O'Malley Dillon when needed.

Brian Clow, PMO deputy chief of staff

One of the most important foreign policy voices in the centre, Brian Clow has a deep understanding of the Canada-U.S. relationship, having been tasked with the file during the rocky NAFTA renegotiations. "He is always very involved on Canada-U.S. given his work on NAFTA and his deep connections," said a senior government source. Fostering the Ottawa-Washington link, Clow works very closely with Canada's Ambassador Kirsten Hillman. He has long had

looked to for valuable insights into the region," according to a senior government source, as he has deep connections in South Korea and tagged alongside Joly on a trip to Japan and Korea. Chin has been a senior adviser in the PMO since 2019 and was previously chief of staff to then-finance minister Bill Morneau.

Trudeau's ear on foreign affairs and that has only grown as his tenure has continued in the PMO. He also has a close relationship with Freeland as her former chief of staff when she was international trade minister.

"Brian Clow is the guy," said Volpe, noting that he plays a crucial role on all things North American. "He was the most important person for us for the Three Amigos Summit with Mexico and the U.S. He noted that Clow is also the point-person for large and small victories with the Biden administration, including on the fight to include Canada for an electric vehicle tax-credit in the U.S. Inflation Reduction Act."

Patrick Travers, senior global affairs adviser

A veteran presence in the PMO, Patrick Travers is frequently spotted alongside Trudeau on international trips as the most senior staffer who is devoted to foreign affairs. "Patrick remains the single most influential voice on foreign policy in the Prime Minister's Office," said a senior government source. "He is the person the prime minister will turn to, he's the person Katie [Telford] and Brian [Clow] will turn to." Holding a PhD in international relations, Travers has past experience at the United Nations.

Like Telford and Clow, one academic said he brings "institutional memory and corporate knowledge," which can "be really useful" for any government as he has been focused on foreign policy in the PMO since 2016.

Oz Jungic, PMO senior policy adviser
The No. 2 most senior staffer focused on foreign policy in the PMO, Oz Jungic was recently promoted, adding "senior" to his "policy adviser" title. Like Travers, Jungic holds a PhD from Oxford University. He is involved in all foreign policy discussions, but may have diminished influence because he lacks connections with Freeland. "He is not in Freeland's circle and because he's not in Freeland's circle, Freeland's people are somewhat dismissive of his influence. But I think that is incorrect," a former official said, who called Jungic "quite effective." One government source said Jungic is still figuring out how to be influential with his role.

Ben Chin, PMO senior adviser
A member of Trudeau's inner circle, Ben Chin was actively involved in the Indo-Pacific strategy. "He was someone the PMO looked to for valuable insights into the region," according to a senior government source, as he has deep connections in South Korea and tagged alongside Joly on a trip to Japan and Korea. Chin has been a senior adviser in the PMO since 2019 and was previously chief of staff to then-finance minister Bill Morneau.

Trudeau's ear on foreign affairs and that has only grown as his tenure has continued in the PMO. He also has a close relationship with Freeland as her former chief of staff when she was international trade minister.

Taras Zalusky, chief of staff to the defence minister

Taras Zalusky only recently succeeded Mike Power as the chief of staff to Defence Minister Anita Anand when top staffers were shuffled around in February, and Power decided to take a step back from politics.

According to one source familiar with the defence file, Zalusky was tapped for the role because he is Ukrainian-Canadian, speaks Ukrainian, and used to run the Ukrainian Canadian Congress as

Peter Wilkinson, chief of staff to the foreign affairs minister

An experienced hand brought to shore up Joly's ministerial office in January, Peter Wilkinson brings private sector

experience on the world stage to the Pearson Building. While new to diplomacy, Wilkinson brings oversized experience compared to a typical political staffer. He also has more real-world experience compared to what some Global Affairs officials bring to the table, according to a senior government source. Another senior official said he brings "instant credibility" given his resumé. "He is already instantly turned to for advice even though he is finding his way through Global Affairs," the official added. Wilkinson was a former chief of staff to then-Ontario premier Dalton McGuinty and has since worked for Manulife Financial before rejoining the political world.

A former senior government official remarked that Wilkinson will have to tackle the political dimensions that overshadow responding to the Russian invasion, especially on sanctions. "[Joly's] office has had major challenges. It's on a better footing with Peter Wilkinson, but they have become so politically scared of the Ukraine issues and the sanctions issue," the former official said. "They're just running a bit scared of the UCC [Ukrainian Canadian Congress]."

Chantal Gagnon, deputy chief of staff to the foreign affairs minister

One of the most widely praised foreign policy voices by current and former government officials alike, Chantal Gagnon has past links to the PMO as well as the foreign affairs world. She has four years of experience in the PMO's communications department, and as a former press secretary to then-foreign affairs minister Stéphane Dion, prior to joining Joly's office as deputy chief in late 2021.

"She is helping to bring [Peter] Wilkinson up the learning curve [and] provide the link into the minister and the minister's personality," a former government official said. Another former official called her an "unmissable pillar" who is a "reliable" and "well-versed" reference for foreign policy in Joly's office.

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The Top 50 Influencing Foreign Policy

Continued from page 13

its executive director, demonstrating the defence minister's commitment to maintaining Ukraine as a front-of-mind issue.

Jason Easton, chief of staff to the international trade minister

A long-time partner with Ng, Jason Easton is the most senior chief of staff among the three Global Affairs ministers and

brings to the role private sector experience in the auto industry. Easton has been Ng's chief of staff since 2018 and ran her successful Markham-Thornhill, Ont., byelection campaign back in 2017. He is credited for approaching issues in a creative way and is someone that isn't wary of clashing with the PMO.

"He's probably the person among political staffers at Global Affairs who has the best stakeholder understanding as it relates to business, but also the interaction between business and civil society," a former senior government official said. Volpe called Easton a "wise counsel" for Ng, who plays a useful role in the office with experience in the auto industry, an issue that has dominated Canada-U.S. trade over the last few years.

Civil servants

David Morrison, deputy minister for foreign affairs and G7 sherpa

"David Morrison is highly regarded by practitioners inside the department," a former diplomat said. Morrison is the first deputy minister of foreign affairs since 2010 to arrive at the Pearson Building with diplomatic experience. He also has strong connections with Trudeau and Telford as he is in the room for all conversations involving G7 matters as the sherpa.

"He continues to be one of the most trusted voices for the prime minister and for Katie Telford on matters that are international," said a senior government source, who remarked that Morrison has a "fantastic relationship" with everyone in the PMO's senior staff. Morrison was previously the prime minister's foreign and defence policy adviser from 2019 and 2022, and was the deputy minister for international trade prior to taking up his current post last October. He is also playing an important role pushing along the department's foreign service review.

Jody Thomas, national security and intelligence adviser to the prime minister

As national security and intelligence adviser to the prime minister, Jody Thomas is one of the top civil servants in the country. And, according to sources, "she's the real deal."

"The more experience you have in these jobs, usually the

more weight you have," one source said, and Thomas has that experience. "I think, anything on foreign policy, the prime minister looks to her," the source, a former Canadian diplomat, said. That source also said Thomas is well-regarded in the international community.

Prior to this role, Thomas was Canada's commissioner of the Coast Guard and served as deputy minister of national defence.

John Hannaford, deputy minister for natural resources

John Hannaford brings previous foreign policy experience to his current post, having been the past deputy minister of trade, and the former foreign and defence policy adviser to the prime minister. He has the "trust and respect" of both Trudeau and his chief of staff Telford, according to two senior government officials. "As critical minerals have become so important to the international conversation, John Hannaford's knowledge of foreign affairs and international trade are just the perfect match for the [Natural Resources Canada] portfolio that is increasingly prioritized," one official said.

Bill Matthews, deputy minister for national defence

Partnering with Anand since the two were the top bureaucrat and minister at Public Services and Procurement Canada in 2019, Bill Matthews has developed a close relationship with his political boss. His experience is beneficial as the Canadian military is in the midst of a number of crucial procurements that will serve as the backbone for the Armed Forces for years to come. His influence may be diminished as defence has taken a backseat among the government's foreign policy priorities recently, remarked an academic, who noted that Matthews is a solid manager without too much flair.

Wayne Eyre, chief of the defence staff

Canada's top soldier since 2021, General Wayne Eyre has attempted to provide stability among the leadership of the Armed Forces amid a sexual misconduct crisis. A former commander of the Canadian Army, Eyre has raised a warning flag regarding recruiting and preparedness concerns for the Armed Forces operating in an increasingly precarious world. He is somebody who the U.S. turns to as those in the Pentagon feel more comfortable working with soldiers than civilians.

Rob Stewart, deputy minister for international trade

A new arrival to Global Affairs, Rob Stewart was previously the

deputy minister of public safety. He has trade experience, as well as a G7 background, at Finance Canada where he spent most of his civil-service career. A senior government source pointed to Stewart's "hugely valuable" resumé as having great benefit in his new role given the added trade focus on national security considerations, as well as Ng's broader portfolio that includes economic development. He's noted as being knowledgeable and hard working, but also someone who can be abrasive to deal with, which doesn't always win him friends.

Janice Charette, clerk of the Privy Council and secretary to the cabinet

Janice Charette was officially appointed by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to be the Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to the Cabinet in May 2022, but she's not new to the role, having originally been appointed by former prime minister Stephen Harper in 2014. She spent the intervening years as Canada's high commissioner to the United Kingdom in 2016. Now, she brings that diplomatic experience to her role co-ordinating foreign policy responses in Canada's bureaucracy.

David Vigneault, CSIS director

Even without speculation in media reports about CSIS intelligence on China's interference in Canadian elections, David Vigneault would still hold a place on the list, given the foreign intelligence his agency is responsible for collecting, and the potential that intel has to sway foreign policy. But reports of CSIS providing briefings to senior staff in the PMO, and potential leaks from within the agency, have put Vigneault at the forefront of a secret agency with a public problem on its hands.

Cindy Termorshuizen, associate deputy minister for foreign affairs

Following Marta Morgan's retirement, Cindy Termorshuizen was tasked with filling in as the top bureaucrat in the Pearson Building before Morrison took the full-time job. She has an extensive background dealing with China, as well as most recently serving as the assistant deputy minister for consular, security, and emergency management. "She's a real Sinologist who has worked in China and gets China. There's not enough of that in the department," said a former government official. She was the deputy head of mission at Canada's embassy in Beijing from 2015 to 2018, and before that was an executive director for the Greater China Division in the foreign service.

A former diplomat noted that Termorshuizen is "well respected" and someone that is "very

knowledgeable." Another former government official called her "a force" and "very strategic and very intelligent" working on "some of the toughest files."

Jordan Zed, interim foreign and defence policy adviser to the prime minister

Although having diminished influence compared to full-time foreign and defence policy advisers to the prime minister, Jordan Zed retains clout as he is always by Trudeau's side for foreign policy conversations, according to a senior government source. At the Privy Council Office, he reports to Jody Thomas. Zed, who has a legal background at Global Affairs, briefs Trudeau on all international files. Another senior official called Zed more of a "convener" than someone that holds influence at the moment. "While he's in the room, I don't see him influencing the room," the source said.

Heidi Hulan, assistant deputy minister for international security and political director

With Jody holding an unprecedented number of meetings with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken—12 last year, when usually the cabinet officials get together once or twice a year—Heidi Hulan is in weekly talks with her U.S. counterpart to help co-ordinate those meetings. Political directors among all G7 foreign ministries, with whom Hulan often interacts, are amongst the most senior and influential diplomats. Her other role as assistant deputy minister for international security means that Hulan is involved in discussions on Russia and Ukraine, Haiti, Iran, North Korea, and Taiwan. One academic noted that the role has greater influence as security issues have taken on a greater prominence on foreign policy. Hulan previously served as ambassador to Austria and representative to international organizations in Vienna.

Diplomats

Kirsten Hillman, ambassador to the United States

"Ambassador Hillman is absolutely our best head of mission around the world," said a senior government source. No matter who is in Washington, they will be influential due to the nature of the posting, but Kirsten Hillman has added clout due to the trust placed in her by Trudeau and Telford. She has been posted in D.C. for nearly six years—first as a deputy ambassador before leading the mission in 2019. She is the first woman to hold the post and the first career diplomat since 2005. "Ambassador Hillman remains the most trusted voice amongst our heads of mission for senior PMO staff. She is very close with Katie Telford. She is very close with Brian Clow. And they

are mere phone calls and text messages away at all times. It's a very close alignment," the senior source said.

"She's got her finger on the pulse in Washington," Volpe said, noting that Hillman understands "how and when" to play Canada's hand in a city of many competing interests. She is noted for having deep connections at the executive level, on Capitol Hill, and in the U.S. military, including with influential Democratic Senator Amy Klobuchar.

Bob Rae, ambassador and permanent representative to the United Nations

Canada's most outspoken ambassador, Bob Rae has brought fiery rhetoric to the floor of the UN General Assembly as he chastises the global authoritarian turn. "He is doing more in terms of public diplomacy than probably any ambassador," said an academic, highlighting Rae's public speeches and his Twitter presence. "He's setting a template of what can work in terms of public diplomacy."

Rae took up the reins at the UN shortly after Canada lost its push to win a temporary seat on the Security Council. While he lacks the tight-knit relationship that his predecessor Marc-André Blanchard had with Trudeau, he still is "highly respected," according to a former diplomat. Rae is willing to push the agenda further than the government at times, but he is given that freedom due to his persona.

Ian McKay, ambassador to Japan

A former Liberal Party national director, Ian McKay was essential in the development of Canada's Indo-Pacific strategy. He is an envoy that the government looks to for advice, according to a senior official. A former Hill staffer in the early 2000s, McKay has been posted to Tokyo since April 2021.

"Ian is [an ambassador] you're going to see more and more of over this next year," said another senior official, with the focus on the strategy and with Japan's increasing interest in critical ministers. "He's one we're turning to more and more," the source added.

Larisa Galadza, ambassador to Ukraine

Managing a mission in war-torn Ukraine forces Larisa Galadza not only to respond to the situation on the ground, but also ensure her staff's safety. "Can you imagine the people management in the embassy in Ukraine? Just keeping your people safe. The kind of responsibility that involves. This woman deserves a medal," said a former senior government official. Galadza, a past director general of the Peace and Stabilization Operations program at

Continued on page 15

The Top 50 Influencing Foreign Policy

Continued from page 14

Global Affairs, started her Kyiv posting in 2019. She has helped organize a series of cabinet visits to Ukraine, including Trudeau's, while remaining one of more public-facing ambassadors in Canada's foreign service.

Ailish Campbell, ambassador to the European Union



Holding office in Brussels since 2020, Campbell heads a diplomatic mission with crucial geo-political and

international trade implications for Canada. A former chief trade commissioner, she has built links throughout the government and the Canadian private sector. Campbell was by Trudeau's side as EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen visited Ottawa earlier this month. In Brussels, behind-the-scenes conversations have led to uniformity in the West's approach to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Jennifer May, ambassador to China

While Canada's current Ambassador to China Jennifer May is a pro, sources say they're not sure how much influence she has in China at the moment. "I'm not sure how many meetings they're getting," one source said. That said, the government's relationship with China does have an outsized influence on its foreign policy direction, certainly as far as it tends to like to stay in lock-step with the United States in that region. The government's latest appointment to the post is a career public servant, and while she doesn't bring a flashy name or big reputation to the role, she does bring a heck of a lot of expertise, which some sources say is exactly what's needed.



Others say it is too early to assess her influence. "She has a difficult task of following a couple of political appointees," a senior official said. "She could be very influential by the nature of the role, but she's very new and I've seen shakiness in terms of the advice—a little bit of insecurity in terms of the position."

Jacqueline O'Neill, ambassador for Women, Peace, and Security



Spearheading Canada's feminist foreign policy, Jacqueline O'Neill has entrenched her sway as her post was extended

for another term until 2025. She first took up the newly created position in 2019. "She's very authoritative," said a former senior government official. "She has a lot of credibility with experts and civil society." The former official remarked that the renewed mandate was a demand from feminist civil society to keep her there. "It's not just a government decision." O'Neill is also in the process of rewriting the update to Canada's next women, peace, and security plan, which puts her in the middle

of a "really big and ambitious planning cycle," the past official noted.

David Cohen, U.S. ambassador to Canada



The American ambassador is the most important foreign diplomat in Canada, according to a senior govern-

ment official, and businessman David Cohen has held that role in Ottawa since 2021. Sources who know Cohen said he had a "bit of a learning curve" when he first arrived in Ottawa, but having been in the position for a little while now, seems like he's up to speed. He's not necessarily considered the strongest ambassador in town, and some officials wish he were a more "activist" ambassador who put up more of a fight to prevent the U.S. from neglecting Canada's interests in areas like trade. But his proximity to U.S. President Joe Biden and other key American ministers means he is an essential player on both sides of the border.

Sabine Sparwasser, German ambassador to Canada



Germany's Ambassador to Canada Sabine Sparwasser is well-known in the diplomatic community, having first come to Ottawa in 2002 as an exchange officer, before becoming the *chargé d'affaires* in 2003-2006. She went back to Berlin, before returning to Canada as the consul general in Toronto from 2009-2013. Finally, in 2017, she became Germany's ambassador to Canada and has been here ever since. One source said "Germany is the most important country in Europe," and Sparwasser embodies that role as "the best of the foreign diplomats in terms of her skill, and expertise, and competence," and also the best network.

Susannah Goshko, U.K. high commissioner to Canada



Having links to senior members of the U.K. government, Susannah Goshko has made fans in Canada since she

started her post in 2021. She was the principal private secretary to then-foreign secretary Dominic Raab, now the British deputy prime minister. "She has just a very good radar of when to insert herself, when to be helpful, when to be candid," a senior government source said. Throughout her diplomatic career, she has focused on national security and the Americas, among other policy areas. One academic called her "extremely smart," and someone who is "really effective at messaging and networking."

Yulia Kovaliv, Ukrainian ambassador to Canada



Ukrainian Ambassador to Canada Yulia Kovaliv is a very influential head of mission in

Ottawa given her country's great need for aid from Canada.

"Ukraine has such an outsized influence" on Canadian foreign policy, defence policy, and even Canadian immigration policy at the moment, expert observers noted.

Kovaliv, who previously served in various positions in the Ukrainian government, including as deputy head of the office of the president of Ukraine, was appointed ambassador to Canada in 2022.

One former minister said they had spoken at length with Kovaliv. "She's very bright, very knowledgeable, and I think has a good political sense as well. She's in a very tough position being an ambassador for a country that's at war, and ... frankly, I think she's done a pretty spectacular job," they said.

Kanji Yamanouchi, Japanese ambassador to Canada



Lacking the tenure in Ottawa of some of the other influential envoys, Kanji Yamanouchi brings a cultural diplomacy to his work through music.

The former Japanese consul general in New York has played the Canadian and U.S. national anthem on his guitar at a local baseball game. After starting his post last June, Yamanouchi has made a remarkably quick impact as he builds links to a number of cabinet ministers, including orchestrating Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's visit to Canada with one week's notice at the beginning of 2023. As Japan holds the G7 presidency, his influence will continue to be felt as his stay in Ottawa extends.

Civil society and others

Alexandra Chyczij/Ihor Michalchyshyn, president and CEO of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress

The leadership at the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, including its president Alexandra Chyczij and CEO Ihor Michalchyshyn, have been vocal advocates for Canada to contribute more assistance to Ukraine.



"They've been front and centre," one insider said. "I would say they've definitely had an impact" when

it comes to the Canadian government's response to the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine.

Since January 2022, Canada has committed \$320-million in humanitarian assistance to Ukraine via the United Nations, Red Cross, and other non-governmental partners.

Maryscott Greenwood, CEO of Canadian American Business Council

"She's at the centre of everything," said a former diplo-



mat about Maryscott Greenwood. The head of a business advocacy group representing major companies on both sides of the border is a former U.S. diplomat, who served as chief of staff to Clinton-era U.S. ambassador to Canada Gordon Giffin. Greenwood has advised Canada on how to better lobby powerbrokers on Capitol Hill, and has close ties with U.S. ambassadors past and present.

"Scotty is go-to whenever we need a different perspective on what's going on in D.C.," a senior official said, noting her work during the Nexus troubles and the Prince Edward Island potato dispute. While she is a lobbyist and advocate for her council's members, the official called her a "trusted" and "reasoned" adviser.

Flavio Volpe, president of the Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association



Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association president Flavio Volpe is still perceived to be an effective and influential

person in government circles, says one senior official, who noted he is a trusted adviser in the auto sector. Given that, he works closely with International Trade Minister Mary Ng, Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne, and the PMO on trade and investment promotion. Sources pointed to Volkswagen's recent investment in a new electric vehicle battery plant in southwestern Ontario as evidence that this sector remains important and influential, and Volpe is always one to remind Canadians of that whenever he is speaking to the media—which is often.

Goldy Hyder, president of the Business Council of Canada

While business groups and the current Liberal government don't always see eye to eye, senior government officials noted that Goldy Hyder is someone whom the feds increasingly seek out. "Goldy is a statesman amongst the business advocates in Ottawa, but not one that plays the middle," said one senior official. "He has opinions, they are thoughtful, they are listened to, they're constructive, they are not always what the government wants to hear, but they're usually on the right track."



Sources spotlighted Hyder for organizing a U.S., Mexico, and Canada business summit as part of the Three Amigos meeting in January. He is frequently in the U.S. lobbying on Capitol Hill, as well as a travel companion with Ng on foreign trips in Washington and in the Indo-Pacific.

Laurence Deschamps-Laporte, academic



A former chief of staff to then-foreign affairs minister François-Philippe Champagne, Laurence

Deschamps-Laporte is uniquely situated as an academic with high-level foreign policy experience on the political stage, now serving as the scientific director at l'Université de Montréal's CÉRIUM. She is on the advisory council for the foreign service review at Global Affairs, and is an active contributor in French-language media. When U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken was in Canada last October, Deschamps-Laporte hosted the French-speaking top American diplomat at CÉRIUM with Joly.

Robert Fife/Steven Chase, Globe and Mail reporters

The duo, which boasts decades of experience, often drive Canada's foreign policy coverage, most recently



with their reporting on China's attempts to interfere in the 2019 and 2021 federal elections. They broke the news of two scientists fired from Winnipeg's National Microbiology Laboratory, the work on Canada's eventual Indo-Pacific strategy, and the ongoing saga that resulted in Huawei's ban. Sometimes criticized for being overly focused on Beijing, Fife and Chase remain must-reads for top foreign policy minds. Chase also spotted a Global Affairs official appearing at the national day celebrations at the Russian Embassy last June, resulting in a ministerial apology.

Murray Brewster, CBC reporter

Murray Brewster, a senior defence writer for the CBC, was suggested by multiple expert sources in the defence and foreign policy sector, particularly given his reporting in Ukraine on the conflict there. "Defence really does matter," said one source. "He's been a journalist for a long time, and you read him because you know he's got the competence and experience. It's like being an ambassador, you have to put in the years," they said.



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Honourable mentions

- Randy Hoback, Conservative MP and adviser to the Conservative leader for Canada-U.S. relations
- Thomas Juneau, academic
- Heather McPherson, NDP foreign affairs critic
- Jim Nickel, executive director of the Canadian Trade Office in Taipei, Taiwan
- David Perry, president of the Canadian Global Affairs Institute
- Michael Sabia, deputy minister of finance
- Elise Wagner, policy director to the international trade minister
- Caroline Xavier, chief of the Communications Security Establishment

Opinion

Will governments or markets drive Canada's energy transition?



Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault and the Canadian government should focus on improving its pricing and regulatory foundation, and only turn to subsidies and tax credits to address those areas where carbon pricing is ineffective, write Christopher Ragan and Rachel Samson. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Governments should resist the siren song of being too hands-on in the direction of specific sectors or technologies, and focus instead on addressing the market failures that are obstacles for low-emissions investment.

Christopher Ragan & Rachel Samson

Opinion



As the federal government prepares to unveil its 2023 budget—and especially its response to the hundreds of billions of dollars the American government has committed to addressing climate change—it should remember that Canada's best chance of economic and emission-reduction success rests with the private sector.

The government has, without doubt, an important enabling role to play in driving low-carbon investment, but that role is to address market failures. It is not to supplant the role of businesses in choosing which sectors and technologies to invest in.

"Industrial strategy" is once again a term heard in corridors of power, although it is now preceded with the adjective "green."

Governments do need to think strategically about ensuring that Canada maintains economic growth and competitiveness through the global energy transition. In doing so, governments may be tempted to develop detailed plans for economic activity where they see opportunities, such as the production of green hydrogen or sustainable aviation fuels, or batteries for electric vehicles.

But businesses, when risking their own money and jobs, are much better placed to make these risky bets.

At the same time, we need to recognize that markets do not always produce optimal outcomes from a societal perspective, and government policy needs to address those market failures. Doing so will reduce obstacles for the massive investments we need to achieve a prosperous low-carbon future. We see three main sources of market failure for the energy transition: insufficient pricing of the societal costs associated with energy production and use; global and domestic policy and market uncertainty; and risks associated with the development of beneficial new technologies.

Left to their own devices, markets do not account for the climate or environmental damages that result from economic activities. Government policy, through carbon pricing and regulations, can correct this. The United States is relying on tax credits and expensive subsidies to drive low-emissions investment. In contrast, Canada has adopted carbon pricing across the country, and the federal benchmark carbon price is scheduled to rise significantly over the next decade. This will increase economic incentives

to reduce emissions and develop low-emissions technologies. Canada should focus on improving its pricing and regulatory foundation, and only turn to subsidies and tax credits to address those areas where carbon pricing is ineffective.

The second type of market failure comes from the enormous amount of policy and market uncertainty facing companies and investors. Policy reversals can be very costly for business, and few governments are able to provide credible long-term trajectories for their policies.

Of course, markets can also be fickle: shifts in technologies and consumer demand or the entrance of new competitors can wipe out returns. These uncertainties act as a barrier to investment. Governments can reduce this uncertainty through measures such as "contracts for difference" that compensate companies if policies or carbon price trajectories change. If the federal government's proposed \$15-billion Canada Growth Fund focuses on addressing these kinds of investment risks, it will be a worthy policy experiment.

The third kind of market failure stems from the technology risk associated with the commercial-scale deployment of many early-stage emissions-reducing technologies, which require huge up-front capital investments and then many years to realize an investment return. However, many of these projects will generate societal benefits by reducing technology risk for similar future projects. Governments can play a role in overcoming barriers to investment in early-stage projects by sharing some of the risk with

investors, and potentially some of the financial benefits, too. The U.S. has taken the approach of generous production tax credits for emerging products such as green hydrogen and sustainable aviation fuels, which could pull investment away from Canadian projects. Maintaining a competitive edge without breaking the bank will be one of the defining challenges of Canada's upcoming budget.

In implementing these policies, governments should see their role as an enabler of private-sector success. If they take an overly top-down or government-knows-best approach, public spending could crowd out private investment and Canada could be left with costly white elephants or an endless demand for subsidies to prop up unsuccessful ventures. There has been insufficient research on enabling policy tools to date, and governments could benefit from a more rigorous external analysis of various approaches.

The coming energy transition will be complicated and full of uncertainty. Governments should resist the siren song of being too hands-on in the direction of specific sectors or technologies, and focus instead on addressing the market failures that are obstacles for low-emissions investment. Once those broad direction-setting policies are in place, the private sector will have all the market signals it needs to get us to the cleaner future we all want.

Christopher Ragan is an economist and director of the Max Bell School of Public Policy at McGill University. Rachel Samson is vice-president of research at the Institute for Research on Public Policy.

The Hill Times

Canada built world-leading research institutes—now it's letting them collapse

Finding solutions for humanity's most-pressing issues, such as mitigating the effects of climate change or preventing future pandemics, will require decades of concerted effort.

Alannah Hallas

Opinion



Over the past decade, Canada has invested more than a \$1-billion to create world-renowned research institutes. Now, with their funding set to expire and with no long-term strategy in place, these institutes are poised to slip off the global stage.

The institutes in question were formed through Canada's flagship funding initiative: the Canada First Research Excellence Fund (CFREF). This program, which was unveiled in Budget 2014, is designed to help Canadian universities leverage their existing strengths to form world-leading research centres, with the ultimate goal of creating long-term economic benefits. Two inaugural rounds of funding in 2015 and 2016 allocated \$1.35-billion over seven years to form 18 CFREF centres, including the Stewart Blusson Quantum Matter Institute in Vancouver, where I'm a principal investigator.

In the intervening years, many of these centres have flourished, accomplishing their goal of propelling Canadian universities and researchers to the global fore in fields ranging from environmental science to medicine to quantum technologies. My own institute has met or exceeded every metric of success identified in its original proposal. The government, too, appears to regard CFREF as a success with its first formal evaluation concluding that the program is delivering on its objectives. It's also doubled down

Continued on page 19

The U.S. is besting Canada on investing in research and it will have consequences

U.S. President Joe Biden's historic investments in research will also make it increasingly difficult for Canada to attract top talent and keep those we already have here.

Paul Davidson

Opinion



The health of Canada's research ecosystem is central to fostering the innovation and shaping the talent which will drive long-term prosperity and help tackle many of the big issues facing humanity. Yet, at a time when many of our peers are making significant new investments in research funding, Canada is falling behind.

This week's visit to Ottawa by United States President Joe Biden represents an important moment for the Government of Canada to reflect on how it can renew support for researchers in an increasingly competitive world. Biden's administration has made significant new commitments for research through the CHIPS and Sciences Act, which amount to more than US\$200-billion in funding for discovery research. Prior to this, the Americans blew Canada's research investments out of the water: Canada spent only 1.84 per cent of GDP on research in 2020, while the U.S. nearly doubled that amount at 3.45 per cent.

In the U.S. and across the world, Canada's peers are stepping up because they see the economic opportunities of providing long-term and stable funding for discovery research. By fostering innovation and developing skilled talent, these investments will provide long-term returns as economies look to tackle sluggish productivity. Biden's visit must be a reality check for the Canadian government; without similar ambition, we will miss out on opportunities to bolster our economy.

Biden's historic investments in research will also make it increasingly difficult for Canada to attract top talent and keep those we already have here. The U.S. estimates needing a million new professionals in STEM fields by 2031. How many of those will be Canadian?

Canada's universities develop exceptionally talented researchers and innovators who we need to address Canada's long-term labour needs in the highly skilled sectors of the future economy. Losing that talent because of stagnant federal funding will cause long-term damage to Canada's future prosperity.

The upcoming federal budget, therefore, is a crucial moment to learn from Biden's ambitious strategy by renewing federal support for research.

A good place to start is the level of new support provided to Canada's federal granting agencies—the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research—which are the

bedrock of Canada's research ecosystem. They support research in all disciplines. Yet it has been more than five years since the last significant commitment of new resources. In addition, it has been 20 years since the government increased the number and value of Canada's flagship graduate scholarship programs; they haven't even been adjusted for inflation. Needless to say, these scholarships have failed to keep pace with evolving research needs.

Another piece to look for in the upcoming budget is action on the government's own promises from the 2021 federal election. The Liberal Party committed to creating an additional 1,000 Canada Research Chairs,

which will help advance equity, diversity and inclusion. However, adding more seats around the table without increasing research funding and the necessary infrastructure support for labs and research facilities will not significantly improve Canada's competitive position or meaningfully advance those goals.

On the international stage, Canada has made commitments to join Horizon Europe, the largest international research partnership program in the world, but negotiations remain ongoing. We hope to see progress in those talks soon.

In an increasingly competitive and uncertain world, now is the time for Canada to step up its ambition in research. Biden

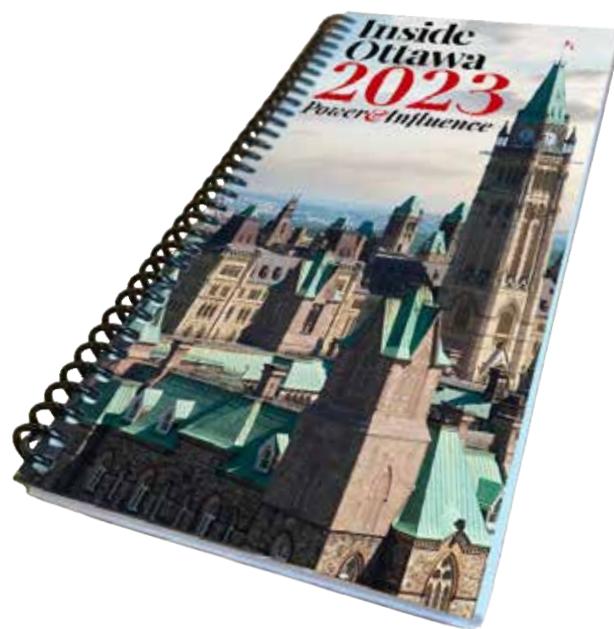
has correctly identified the critical importance of timely investments in research to support a strong economy, now and into the future. We would be wise to follow suit.

Canada's universities have been pioneering innovation and research for decades and are ready to lead Canada through this next era of change. But universities need the support of the Government of Canada to do so. The upcoming federal budget will be the ultimate test of where the government's priorities lie and the future of Canadian innovation and economic prosperity.

*Paul Davidson is the president of Universities Canada.
The Hill Times*

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Comment

Canada should call foul on dodgy drone narrative

It is difficult to fathom why Canadian media outlets unquestionably parrot the U.S. narrative that a recent drone interception was an unprovoked act of aggression by the Russian air force.

Scott Taylor

Inside Defence



OTTAWA—On March 14, Russian fighter jets intercepted a United States military drone over the Black Sea, off the coast of Crimea. According to U.S. officials and the video footage released by the Pentagon, the Russian pilots aggressively buzzed the drone and twice doused it with aviation fuel.

The U.S. claims that during one of the close encounters, the Russians actually made contact with the drone, damaging the propeller.

After determining that the drone was no longer “flyable,” the American military remotely scrubbed any sensitive data from the drone’s software and then deliberately crashed the aircraft into the sea.

The Russian Ministry of Defence has denied the allegation that its pilots deliberately damaged the U.S. drone but have also vowed to recover the wreckage.

The U.S. talking points on this are that it was an unprovoked act of aggression by the Russian air force against an American observation drone, operating in international airspace.

Naturally, such an incident of martial provocation by Russia against the U.S. has sent military analysts spinning on the fear of a nuclear conflagration.

While one can understand that the Americans would try to cover their embarrassment with the claim that they are the innocent victims of another crazy Russian provocation, it is difficult to fathom why Canadian media outlets

unquestionably parrot the same U.S. narrative.

To begin with, it has been widely reported that the downed drone was a General Atomics MQ-9 Reaper. While it can indeed collect intelligence, the Reaper—as in “Grim Reaper”—is designated as a “hunter-killer” unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV). In describing the newly acquired MQ-9 Reapers in 2006, then-U.S. air force chief of staff General T. Michael Moseley said, “We’ve moved from using UAVs primarily in the intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance roles before Operation Iraqi Freedom, to a true hunter-killer role with the Reaper.”

Hunting and killing are what the Reaper does best, with a lethal payload of Hellfire missiles. According to the sales brochure, the Reaper is capable of “automatic detection of threats and can track 12 moving targets at once, and has the ability to ‘super ripple’ fire missiles within 0.32 seconds of each other.”

The U.S. military has never hidden the fact that the Reaper is an airborne execution machine.

On July 12, 2022, the Pentagon trumpeted the death of one Maher al-Agal in Syria. According to CIA sources, al-Agal was one of the top five leaders of the fanatical Daesh (also known as ISIS or ISIL) movement. This extrajudicial killing came about thanks to

rather than an explosion. But I digress.

Suffice it to say that the Reaper is far more lethal than a simple observation drone.

Which brings us to the location of Russia’s alleged provocation off the coast of Crimea in the Black Sea. Tensions have been heightened in this region since Russian President Vladimir Putin annexed Crimea in 2014.

Following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022, the U.S. turned up the heat with an increase in surveillance flights in the vicinity of Crimea. According to the U.S. Department of Defense, the surveillance patrols along the conflict zone are used to gather information which helps improve security for Europe and supports “allied partners.”

Included in that support to “allied partners” would be the provision of the intelligence that allowed the Ukrainian armed forces to sink the Russian navy flagship Moskva.

On the flip side of this equation, we had the almost-farcical incident involving an alleged Chinese spy balloon that flew over Canada and the U.S. at the end of January.

It took a week to cross America, and when it was safely off the Atlantic coast, but still in U.S. airspace, the Pentagon exercised its legal right to blow it out of the sky.

The U.S. navy has since recovered the wreckage, but to date has not offered any proof that this was anything but what China claimed it to be: a high-altitude weather balloon that was blown off course.

However, in the days following this incident, the U.S. scrambled fighter jets to blow at least three more unidentified aircraft from North American airspace.

This, we are told, is the inherent legal right of any follower of the rules-based international order.

As such, America cannot cry victim if China floats an empty balloon through their airspace and then be surprised when the Russian air force engages a hunter-killer Reaper drone on the edge of an active conflict zone.

Given that we all share the same planet, as Canadians, we can chastise our American allies for dangerously provoking a nuclear-armed Russia on their own doorstep.

Scott Taylor is the editor and publisher of *Esprit de Corps* magazine.

The Hill Times



It has been widely reported that the American drone downed over the Black Sea was a General Atomics MQ-9 Reaper, an airborne execution machine, writes Scott Taylor. Photograph by Chris Hunkeler/Flickr

a pair of Hellfire missiles fired by a U.S. air force Reaper.

Just a couple of weeks later, on July 31, 2022, Ayman al-Zawahiri bit the dust in Kabul, Afghanistan.

As a senior leader of the notorious al-Qaida terrorist organization, al-Zawahiri was alleged to be the mastermind of the 9/11 attacks against the U.S.

Fittingly, then, it was a made-in-America hunter-killer Reaper drone that ended al-Zawahiri’s life with a couple of Hellfires.

To reduce any collateral damage, the Americans reportedly used Hellfire R9Xs, which kill the target on impact with blades

News

Translation Bureau to hire new interpreter well-being director

The new director is part of the bureau’s response to a Feb. 1 ruling by the federal Labour Program that it failed to protect its workforce amid a hybrid Parliament.

BY LAURA RYCKEWAERT

The federal Translation Bureau will add a new director of parliamentary affairs and interpreter well-being to its ranks as part of its response to a February ruling by Employment and Social Development Canada’s Labour Program that the bureau failed in its responsibility to protect the health and safety of interpreters.

The new director, who is set to be hired this spring, “will oversee all matters of occupational health and safety, protocols and parliamentary relations, and provide interpreters with on-site support,” said Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC), the department under which the Translation Bureau falls, in an emailed response to *The Hill Times*.

The Labour Program’s Feb. 1 ruling followed a complaint filed by the Canadian Association of Professional Employees (CAPE), which represents the bureau’s staff interpreters, in February 2022. In its complaint, CAPE alleged that the bureau had violated its Labour Code health and safety obligations by failing to take appropriate steps to protect interpreters from the poor sound quality experienced during remote interpretation work.

The hybrid work environment that has become the norm on the Hill since 2020 as a result of COVID-19 has led to increased reports of interpreter injuries—including headaches, acoustic shock, and tinnitus—affecting an already-limited workforce. In response, Parliament and the Translation Bureau have taken steps to try to protect people, including by reducing shift hours and making Parliamentarians aware of the need to use hard-wired internet connections and House- or Senate-issued ISO-compliant microphone headsets.

But problems have persisted. As recently as October 2022, a parliamentary interpreter who had

been covering a Senate committee meeting, during which the chair did not enforce rules requiring remote participants to wear approved headsets, was sent to hospital after experiencing acoustic shock.

The February ruling found the Translation Bureau had contravened the Labour Code by failing to ensure interpretation work was done only when virtual participants were using ISO-compliant microphones, and ordered the bureau to take steps to ensure proper equipment was being used and to conduct random testing of audio-visual systems—and implement any resulting recommendations—to ensure their safety.

Along with its plans to hire a new director, the bureau has “put in place a protocol and requirements to be followed by meeting participants and technicians” to ensure proper equipment is used, and, as of Feb. 6, interpreters have been “instructed not to interpret participants who do not use an appropriate microphone.” Together with Parliament’s multimedia services, the bureau has also established a new “protocol for random sound tests in committee rooms, to be conducted with help of the National Research Council of Canada,” which has been “accepted” by the Labour Program.

“Regular co-operation between the Translation Bureau and its parliamentary partners continues on a near daily basis at this time in efforts to ensure service to Parliament and the health and safety of interpreters,” reads the email from PSPC.

On March 7, House of Commons Speaker Anthony Rota (Nipissing-Timiskaming, Ont.) issued a ruling in the Chamber that highlighted the Translation Bureau’s directive that its interpreters would no longer offer interpretation if virtual participants weren’t using proper microphone headsets and signalled the House’s support for its “ongoing efforts.” On Feb. 17, each MP’s office received an “official communiqué” to that effect, which included a list of other ISO-compliant device options, he noted.

“Over the past year, the House has supplied Members with new ISO-compliant equipment,” said Rota.

“In cases where the Chair is made aware of compliant equipment not being used, a Member participating remotely will be interrupted and/or not recognized for debate,” he said.

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The Hill Times

Feds should use upcoming budget to defend, not defund, the CBC

Alongside sustainable funding, we need legislation to guard against a quiet, uncontested end to the CBC with the mere stroke of Prime Minister Poilievre's pen or a reversal of budgetary priorities.

Marla Boltman

Opinion



The CBC faces an institutional threat through both right-wing objection and the neglect displayed by the current Liberal government, writes Marla Boltman.

Photograph courtesy of Ken Lund/Flickr

independent, editorially rigorous journalism. Why? Because independent media—such as the CBC—ask uncomfortable questions. They hold our leaders to account. In a post-truth society, where technology permits leaders to communicate directly with people on a scale never before seen, it is even more important that we have media who can serve as an editorial check on those with power. It is vital to a healthy and informed democracy.

The right-wing objection to the CBC operates within this wider context. Efforts to discredit the CBC fit alongside Poilievre's aversion to the national press gallery and his habit of ducking interviews with objective journalists and focusing instead on so-called alternative media, who often eschew traditional standards of editorial objectivity and responsible practices.

The CBC is far from perfect. But it is essential, and it plays an essential role in our democratic life. The CBC remains a national institution that gathers us as a national community, connecting us from place to place and providing a platform to voices who are uniquely Canadian, uniquely local, and uniquely ours. Voices that would not otherwise be heard.

If the threat to the CBC was limited solely to Poilievre, the answer would be simple: vote him down. Unfortunately, the explicit existential challenge he represents is matched by a broader institutional threat, typified by governments that won't properly fund the CBC and a new right-

wing orthodoxy committed to ending it.

In response, we need to fortify the CBC's position. We must make it harder for those who would tear it down. We must match this institutional threat with institutional protections. The first line of defence is the Liberals making good on their promise to provide the CBC with better funding—sustainable and steadily rising funding over a 10-year term in Budget 2023. This would give the CBC the resources needed to fulfill its mandate and the certainty that arises from stable finances.

We must bolster this funding with legislation to guard against a quiet, uncontested end to the CBC with the mere stroke of Prime Minister Poilievre's pen or a reversal of budgetary priorities. Specifically, we propose *An Act to Defend the CBC* that could be enshrined into law. It would contain a legislated obligation to conduct a formal mandate review every seven years to guarantee our national broadcaster evolves in concert with changing times and shifting demands. More fundamentally, it would include a requirement that any attempt to eliminate or fundamentally alter the CBC could only proceed after a dedicated national consultation and a majority vote in both Houses of Parliament.

Resistance to this approach will be profound. Governments hate to have their discretion limited. Bureaucracies loathe the structured financing obligations. And today's right-wing seethes at the notion of a credible, flourishing, and editorially independent CBC. In response to calls to defund the CBC, we must stand up. We must defend the CBC.

Marla Boltman is the executive director for FRIENDS (formerly Friends of Canadian Broadcasting).

The Hill Times

to hammer the CBC out of existence.

There is, therefore, exactly zero reason to believe those who assure us that he won't possibly go through with it, that he will soften his stance and eventually backtrack. Even a casual glance of Poilievre's record demonstrates his distaste for retreat.

Clearly, Poilievre represents an existential threat to the CBC.

That's the bad news.

The worse news is that the CBC also faces an institutional threat. One that is even more persistent and troubling.

Evidence of this institutional threat is first seen in the neglect displayed by the current Liberal

government. Slowed by insufficient funding, the CBC has been made more vulnerable to those who would seek to hunt it down. Similarly, the need to renew and revitalize the CBC to keep pace with technological, audience, and national imperatives has been hampered by a failure to refresh its mandate and redefine its role in our national life.

This neglect, in turn, has assisted an even greater institutional threat at the political level. Defunding the CBC is not just a personal preoccupation of Poilievre's. It has become a totem of the right wing. In fact, across western democracies, the right has elevated their attacks on

laboratories and instrumentation. However, by far the single largest line item, nearly 60 per cent of the total spending, is compensation. In other words, people: research scientists, technical staff, administrative support, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate students.

In Canada, there is no funding route for fundamental research that can fill the gap left by CFREF. For example, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada Discovery Grants provide on average just \$28,000 per year to early-career faculty, such as myself, and \$43,000 per year to established faculty—not enough to pay the annual salary of even one technical staff let alone an entire team. Seven years in, the existing

CFREF centres have recruited thousands of highly qualified personnel from across the globe. Without ongoing funding, many of these talented researchers will be forced to leave Canada for greener pastures.

Creating national centres of excellence is not a uniquely Canadian strategy—the absence of a long-term vision, however, might be. For example, the Max Planck Society in Germany, which comprises more than 80 institutes, has an annual publicly funded operating budget of 1.97 billion euros (CAD\$2.7-billion). The benefits are clear: Max Planck centres are peerless in their international reputation and, over their 100-year lifespan, they have produced 38 Nobel laureates. South Korea has

also seen the promise of investing in fundamental research; they have created 30 Institutes for Basic Science, each with an average annual operating budget of 5 billion won (CAD\$5-million) with no fixed end date, but comprehensive reviews every eight years. While there is no single overarching institute-based funding scheme in the United States, the Energy Frontier Research Centers program has many parallels with CFREF and it, too, provides a pathway to renewal after the successful completion of a four-year term.

The problems that CFREF centres seek to address cannot be solved on a seven-year timeline. Finding solutions for humanity's most-pressing issues, such as mitigating the effects of climate change or preventing future pandemics, will require decades of concerted effort. An institute-based approach is sensible, but institutes need time to develop capacity. While the CFREF award to my institute came in 2015, I wasn't hired until 2019, and my lab renovation wasn't completed until 2021. Only as of this year have I successfully hired the key personnel to drive

my lab's effort of finding materials that can enable new quantum technologies. Within a matter of months, we will be forced to scale back our operations after only just hitting our stride. The laboratories and equipment will remain, but we will be dramatically understaffed and under-resourced.

Now, as we look ahead to the announcement of the third round of CFREF centres later this winter, many new institutes will get their chance to emerge on the global stage. As they rise, the existing CFREF centres will fall and their long-term economic and societal impact will never be fully realized. Existing CFREF centres should be fiercely evaluated and, if they meet the mark, they should be given a second act. For Canada to truly achieve research excellence, we must not just build, we must sustain.

Alannah Hallas is an assistant professor of physics at the University of British Columbia, a principal investigator at the Stewart Blusson Quantum Matter Institute, a CIFAR Azrieli Global Scholar, and a Sloan research fellow.

The Hill Times

Canada built world-leading research institutes—now it's letting them collapse

Continued from page 16

on the approach, initiating a third round of CFREF funding in 2021. This time, \$1.4-billion is on the table, with competition results expected imminently.

There is, however, one major caveat. None of the original 18 CFREF centres are eligible to compete for a continuation of their funding. Simply put, in a matter of months, the funding for these existing world-class institutes will disappear without any contingency in place.

One might justifiably wonder, after an investment of this magnitude, why is ongoing funding needed? Where did the money go? Some fraction of the funding went towards building up

News

Canada should focus on fixes, not fights, during Biden visit: Tory MP

President Joe Biden will be the first American president to visit Ottawa since 2016.

Continued from page 1

since taking office in 2021—the first visit of a U.S. leader to the national capital since president Barack Obama came as part of the Three Amigos summit in 2016.

“We should never be going to the U.S. cap in hand, saying, ‘We’ve got a problem here, we’ve got a problem there,’” said Hoback (Prince Albert, Sask.), who’s an adviser to Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) on Canada-U.S. relations. “We should be saying, ‘We’ve got a solution here, we’ve got a solution there’ with things that we can work on together, and those are the things that will bring our countries together and those are the things that will create the ties that are harder to split, no matter who’s in the administration.”

Hoback said there are leverage points that Canada has in the relationship, such as on critical minerals, but it first has prove it can get the minerals out of the ground.

“There’s some lack of confidence in our ability to get things done,” he told *The Hill Times* during an interview in his Valour Building office.

The Saskatchewan MP said another point of leverage is the military, with the U.S. is putting pressure on Canada to lead an international force to quell the instability in Haiti.

“[We should] be stepping up and being a good member in our military, making sure our military can maybe serve that role in Haiti or at least look at what we can do for options to bring some stability, which the U.S. has asked us to do,” he said. “We should consider that—I’m not saying we should do it, that’s up to smarter people than me—but we should have a serious discussion on what we can and can’t do, and [about] what type of group of countries can come in and help in that situation.”

Biden is scheduled to fly into Ottawa on the evening of March 23, with the substantial program of the visit happening on March 24, including an address to Parliament. He will be the ninth U.S. president to address the Canadian Parliament, and the first since Obama’s address in 2016.



U.S. President Joe Biden, centre, was last in Ottawa when he was vice-president at the tail end of the Obama administration on Dec. 8, 2016. *The Hill Times* file photograph

Canada will be the 18th country Biden has visited since coming to power in 2021. Since the start of his administration, Canada and the U.S. have held a virtual bilateral meeting in February 2021; Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) travelled to Washington in November 2021 to meet with Biden as part of the Three Amigos summit; and the pair met in Los Angeles in June 2022 during the Organization of American States summit. Trudeau and Biden have also met at a number of international meetings.

At times, Canada has been criticized for focusing on its complaints and irritants during meetings with the U.S. “Here come the Canadians with their condominium issues,” past U.S. secretary of state Condoleezza Rice is believed to have said.

Former U.S. ambassador to Canada Gordon Giffin, who cited Rice’s comments, said he doesn’t think complaints will be a key factor during Biden’s visit. “I think it will be more thematic. It will be broader. It will be visionary in the sense of forward-looking about how Canada and the United States collaborate with each other,” said the Clinton-era envoy, who served in Ottawa from 1997 to 2001.

Giffin said there will be work on day-to-day issues, such as migration and trade, but he remarked the spotlight will be on areas of convergence, and not divergence.

During Biden’s address to Parliament, Giffin said he expects the message to be one of “binational harmony.”

“It’s an important component of the dynamic in the relationship. It will be thematic and I think it will be unifying—unifying

in the sense of North America’s unification [of purpose in global challenges],” he said.

In a March 20 tweet, Poilievre pointed to three areas to he wants to see addressed: the softwood lumber dispute, U.S. protectionist government procurement policies, and stopping irregular border crossings at Roxham Road in Quebec.

Hoback said the visit needs to come with results.

“It has to be a venue to get something done,” he said. “The fact that they haven’t had a president back in Canada for quite a while and a lot of these grievances have been going on for such a long time, there needs to be a completion to these grievances and there needs to be a resolution.”

Hoback said the Liberal government should be including all

parties in meetings when foreign leaders visit.

“If you want continuity in Canadian foreign policy beyond elections, you have to include members of the opposition in those meetings,” he said.

Liberal MP John McKay (Scarborough-Guildwood, Ont.), co-chair of the Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group, said there should be better co-ordination between the executive and the legislative branches in outreach to the Americans.

“There could be a far more effective way in managing these relationships,” he said, but applauded the work of the embassy in Washington.

“I do tend to think the ministers go and do whatever they do independent of anything to do with the Canada-U.S. association,” he said, noting that parliamentary diplomacy has an “underappreciated utility.”

He recalled an example from earlier this year, when U.S. Republican members of Congress were complaining about migrants crossing the border from Canada to the U.S. The issue, he said, was being hyped despite being “a little light on numbers and facts.”

In turn, McKay said he picked up the phone and called a Republican counterpart on the Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group to explain the facts of the situation, which helped to downplay the concerns.

During Biden’s visit to Ottawa, McKay said he expects the Americans’ focus will be on defence.

“I think they are looking for a serious commitment for two per cent of GDP for military spending,” said the chair of the House Defence Committee, adding that

he expects NORAD modernization will also be raised.

“Their perception of the threat analysis for North America is more heightened than it’s been before, and they are far more cognizant [of] and responsive to the threat that China poses to, frankly, the North American way of life,” McKay said. “They want their partners in North America to see the world that way, as a heightened threat.”

He noted that the U.S. has a “very open and stated view” that Canada should be doing more for its own defence, adding that he expects the U.S. to continue to put pressure on Canada to increasingly respond to Haiti.

Christopher Sands, director of the D.C.-based Wilson Center’s Canada Institute, said he expects security concerns to headline the visit, including North American defence, as well as Haiti and Ukraine.

One of the easiest deliverables, Sands said, could be a U.S. commitment to welcome Canada in the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF). A wish to join the IPEF was outlined in Canada’s Indo-Pacific strategy released late last year.

“It’s the easier one because Canada has economic interests in the region,” he said, compared to Canada joining the pact the U.S. has with the United Kingdom and Australia.

Sands said Biden’s visit needed to happen because it kept on being pushed down the road, and the fact it hadn’t happened yet was starting to become an issue.

“I don’t think it is a signal necessarily that Canada isn’t high in their affections, but it’s just bigger, scarier problems took priority,” he said.

Former Canadian diplomat Deanna Horton, who was posted to Canada’s embassy in Washington between 2010 and 2013, said convincing the U.S. of Canada’s importance is a “decades-long challenge.”

“This will continue to be top of the agenda for the future,” she said. “There is no doubt, however, that the relationship between the leaders is a decisive factor.”

Past Canadian diplomat Roy Norton, a former consul general in Detroit and Chicago, said he expects the visit will be “nice” and “upbeat,” without many substantive announcements.

“The visit will have a very warm ‘optic,’” the former chief protocol officer said in an email.

“Quite clearly, the two leaders like one another. Each probably would like to ‘help’ the other, to the extent possible. And neither would find it very attractive to deal with probable successors in the other country.”

Norton said he doesn’t expect much action on issues Canada wants, including Buy American exemptions, nor does he expect Canada can accede to American requests for greater defence spending or to lead a mission in Haiti.

“Still, the visit—at least to me—has the aura of ‘formality’ to it. Meaning it’s happening because both sides felt it needed (finally) to happen,” he said. “The fact that it’s happening is likely to be its biggest outcome.”

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Conservative MP Randy Hoback says Canada can’t expect to go to the U.S. ‘cap in hand.’ *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Conservative rhetoric on safe consumption sites plays dangerous game with toxic drug crisis: NDP critic

Poilievre's plan to sue pharmaceutical companies is 'no silver bullet' to a 'complex issue that requires a multifaceted response' to keep Canadians alive until they can seek treatment, says NDP MP Gord Johns.



NDP mental health and harm reduction critic Gord Johns says that the Liberals' incremental approach to fixing the toxic drug crisis has created doubt, which the Conservatives are using to spread misinformation about safe supply and supervised injection sites. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Continued from page 1

response to the toxic drug overdose crisis he has said had made living in the city's downtown feel like "hell on earth."

Since the opioid crisis was declared in 2016, the rate of opioid toxicity deaths per 100,000 people in Canada has more than doubled, going from 7.8 (2,830 total deaths), to 19 (3,556 total deaths) in 2022, which Poilievre attributed to the "broken NDP-Liberal policies that flood our streets with easy drugs," and "a lack of treatment and recovery programs that could be saving lives."

Poilievre said recovery programs should be funded by large pharmaceutical companies like Purdue Pharma, which began manufacturing and promoting OxyContin in the 1990s.

The proposed lawsuit, he said, would look to recover federal health-care costs associated with the drug crisis, including "border security, courts, the criminal justice system, Indigenous programs, lost federal tax revenue, and massively expanded treatment programs."

The Conservatives would also join the B.C.-led class-action lawsuit, filed in 2018, against more than 40 pharmaceutical manufacturers, distributors, and their consultants, alleging they engaged in "deceptive marketing practices" to increase drug sales, resulting in a wave of addictions and overdose deaths. In October 2022, the B.C. government announced it was making legislative amendments that would give the federal government the ability to join the lawsuit and for more defendants to be named, including

directors and officers of pharmaceutical companies.

Together, the two lawsuits would claim a total of \$44-billion, according to Poilievre. That money would cover the federal share of estimated health-care costs, including money spent on the opioid crisis, federal criminal justice system costs, and lost tax revenue.

Johns (Courtenay-Alberni, B.C.), his party's mental health and harm reduction critic, told *The Hill Times* that while the NDP is used to the Liberals stealing their ideas, it is a new experience to have the Conservatives do the same.

"This is something that [NDP MP Don Davies] has been calling for, for a long time, to ensure that we hold Big Pharma to account for their role in the toxic drug crisis and the marketing of opioids," Johns said, adding that it is the provincial NDP government in B.C. that's led the charge in the lawsuit Poilievre now says his government would join.

However, Johns said that while holding pharmaceutical companies accountable for their role in creating the toxic drug crisis is a good step, it isn't a solution on its own, and criticized Poilievre's attempt to place Canada's need for safe supply in conflict with its need for more addiction-recovery services.

"He's trying to create hype by pretending that treatment and recovery are at odds with harm reduction and safe supply, and it's not true," Johns said, noting that Poilievre's claims about safe supply and supervised injection sites run counter to the recommendations made by the federal

government's Expert Taskforce on Substance Use and the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police.

"They were unequivocally clear that criminalizing people who use substances is causing more harm and that we need to provide a safer supply, but Poilievre clearly didn't read their reports," Johns said, adding that while Poilievre may want to focus only on treatment and recovery, that would still require keeping people alive long enough to seek treatment.

"We'll never overcome this crisis if we don't use all the evidence-based tools," Johns said. "This is a complex issue that requires a multifaceted response ... there's no silver bullet."

Of the total 3,556 opioid toxicity deaths reported from January to June 2022, 1,121 occurred in B.C., which is more than the total number of deaths caused by motor vehicle accidents, homicide, and death by suicide in the province combined.

During that six-month period, 90 per cent of Canada's opioid toxicity deaths occurred in B.C., Ontario, and Alberta. Those three provinces also saw an additional 33,493 opioid-related poisonings requiring hospitalization.

"There's no contest, there's no divide. There's only the urgency to get this done," Johns said, adding that it is alarming to see Poilievre blaming efforts at harm reduction and decriminalization when those initiatives have only just gotten off the ground and remain inaccessible to the majority of Canadians seeking relief from their dependency to street drugs.

"This myth, that safe supply has created this problem when

decriminalization is just a pilot project in B.C., is ludicrous," Johns said. "I know that the Conservatives like to play games, but we can't when it comes to a crisis like this. People are dying."

During a March 6 meeting of the House Government Operations and Estimates Committee, Johns also questioned Public Safety Minister Marco Mendicino (Eglinton-Lawrence, Ont.) about whether the government will hold McKinsey and Company accountable for its role in the opioid epidemic.

"We learned that McKinsey and Company received millions of dollars from your government ... a company that settled on an \$800-million lawsuit for their role in the opioid epidemic in the United States," Johns said, asking Mendicino about the government's threshold for holding the company to account.

Johns said that the Liberal government's "incremental approach" shares the blame with McKinsey and the pharmaceutical industry by ignoring the recommendations of the expert task force when Liberal MPs voted against his private member's bill, C-216. The bill, which failed at second reading in June 2022, aimed for a national strategy to ensure a safe supply of drugs and to allow for the expunging of criminal records associated with drug possession convictions.

"Incrementalism kills" in a health crisis like the opioid epidemic, said Johns, also laying blame at the feet of the official opposition.

"The Conservatives are spreading misinformation, and in a health crisis, that can be deadly,"

he said. "The game that the Conservatives are playing, Poilievre in particular, is really dangerous."

In particular, Johns takes issue with Poilievre's claim about drug users removing the labels from government-supplied hydromorphone and selling it to children to then purchase fentanyl on the illicit market.

"The problem with this approach is that the government-provided drugs lead people to move to more and more dangerous drugs that ultimately lead to higher overdose rates," Poilievre said during his March 14 press conference, claiming that the approach has contributed to a "massive increase" in overdoses.

"I believe there are medications that we should provide to help reduce the pain of withdrawal and reverse the effects of an overdose, but I don't believe in flooding our communities with more and more taxpayer-funded drugs," Poilievre said. "Rather, we should use the resources to provide recovery and treatment, which is the only proven way to deliver life-saving help to people and to bring home drug-free lives."

"It doesn't make any sense," Johns said, noting that drug users can access street drugs like fentanyl far easier and in less time than it would take to receive a prescription of hydromorphone.

While the expert task force had identified the diversion of safe-supply medications as a challenge, Johns said there have been few verifiable reports and accused Poilievre of "cherry picking" the ones that fit the Conservative's narrative.

Since 2017, the federal government has invested more than \$800-million in a number of prevention, harm reduction, enforcement, and treatment initiatives, including expanding the number of supervised consumption sites across Canada to 40. According to statistics from Health Canada, those sites have since received more than four million visits, reversing approximately 44,000 overdoses and making more than 229,000 referrals to health and social services.

In a written response to *The Hill Times'* request for comment on Poilievre's announcement, the office of Mental Health and Addictions Minister Carolyn Bennett (Toronto-St. Paul's, Ont.) said that "there is significant co-operation in this litigation between all Canadian governments as we work together to address the overdose crisis."

The B.C. government's changes to its Opioid Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Act were made at the federal government's request, "to reinforce the federal government's participation in the class action," wrote Maja Staka, Bennett's senior communications adviser. "We want all governments to recover healthcare costs from any companies that acted inappropriately in the marketing and distribution of opioids."

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Laura Ryckewaert Hill Climbers

Minister Petitpas Taylor promotes new parliamentary affairs director

Plus, Labour Minister Seamus O'Regan has seen a couple of staff moves of late, including the exit of senior communications adviser Dakota Burgin.

Official Languages Minister **Ginette Petitpas Taylor**, who is also the minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, has a new director of parliamentary affairs in her office following **Matthew Pollesel's** departure from the post in early February.

Pollesel had been running Petitpas Taylor's parliamentary affairs shop since she was named to the official languages portfolio after the 2021 federal election, having previously done the same for then-economic development and official languages minister **Mélanie Joly**.



Matthew Pollesel has left the official languages minister's office. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

A former digital engagement specialist with the U.S. Embassy in Ottawa, Pollesel began working for the Trudeau government in June 2017, starting as a special assistant for social media to then-families, children, and social development minister **Jean-Yves Duclos**. He was later promoted by Duclos to senior special assistant for parliamentary affairs and issues management. After the 2019 federal election, Pollesel landed the role of director of parliamentary affairs to then-women and gender equality and rural economic development minister **Marysamyk Monsef**. He joined Joly's office almost a year later in the early fall of 2020.

A longtime staffer, Pollesel's history on the Hill goes back to the late 1990s, when he worked as an assistant to then-Progressive Conservative MP **Scott Brison**. Stay tuned to **Hill Climbers** for any updates on where he's landed.

With Pollesel's exit, Petitpas Taylor has promoted **Nathaniel Mullin** to director of parliamentary affairs.

A former House of Commons page, Mullin has roughly six-and-a-half years of experience working on the Hill overall. A former assistant to then-Ottawa city

councillor **Mathieu Fleury**, Mullin was first hired as assistant to new Sackville-Preston-Chezzetcook, N.S., Liberal MP **Darrell Samson** after the 2015 election.

Mullin joined the ministerial staff ranks in the spring of 2017 as a policy adviser and assistant to the parliamentary secretary to Joly as then-heritage minister. He later became an issues manager and Atlantic regional adviser in the office, where he worked until the fall of 2018. He



Nathaniel Mullin is now in charge of Petitpas Taylor's parliamentary affairs team. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

spent the next year and a half working off the Hill as a communications and media specialist for the Ottawa Community Housing Corporation. Mullin returned at a busy time—March 2020—as a senior adviser for Atlantic regional affairs to then-families minister **Ahmed Hussen**. By year's end, he was once again working for Joly, this time as a policy adviser for official languages in her office as then-economic development and official languages minister. He was promoted to senior adviser in late 2021 after Petitpas Taylor took over the portfolio.

In his new role, Mullin oversees parliamentary affairs assistant **Annie Berger** and **Audrey Lévesque-Aubut**, parliamentary affairs adviser and assistant to the minister's parliamentary secretary, Liberal MP **Marc Serré**.

Guy Gallant is chief of staff to Petitpas Taylor.

Staff changes for ministers O'Regan, Freeland

There are a pair of staff changes to report in Labour Minister **Seamus O'Regan's** office, including senior communications adviser for digital and strategy **Dakota Burgin's** departure on March 10.

Burgin had been working for O'Regan since the 2021 federal election, which he'd spent as a digital creative designer with the national Liberal campaign. Starting as a digital communications adviser in O'Regan's office, he was promoted to his most recent title last September.

Burgin wrote about his decision to leave the Hill in a recent LinkedIn post, sharing that last December, while passing time in a hospital waiting room, he "scrolled past tweet after tweet from indie game developers posting their passion projects online," and "thought, 'All I want is to play these games and celebrate these games.'"



Official Languages Minister Ginette Petitpas Taylor speaks with media during a French-language program funding announcement at the University of Ottawa on Feb. 15. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

"So I'm leaving politics for a new journey with an old passion," wrote Burgin, announcing that in April he'll be starting a job with Evolve PR, a video game marketing agency.

"This country needs to hear better stories about itself. I know that. But I need to put my pen down for awhile," he continued. "Thank you & 'Godspeed' to those who remain in it. I'll be here when you need me."



Dakota Burgin recently bade farewell to the labour minister's office. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Burgin's career as a ministerial staffer began in 2017, when he was hired as a special assistant for communications to then-democratic institutions minister **Karina Gould**. He went on to work as an assistant to Ontario Liberal MP **Bryan May** and in Indigenous Services Minister **Patty Hajdu's** office as the Liberal MP for Thunder Bay-Superior North, Ont., before joining O'Regan's team.

Jane Deeks is director of communications to O'Regan, while **Hartley Witten** is press secretary.

Senior policy adviser **Patricia Sibal** has also left O'Regan's office, marking her last day on the job on Feb. 24.

A former government relations consultant with Crestview Strategy, Sibal first joined O'Regan's office as a policy and Ontario regional affairs adviser at the beginning of 2022. She was promoted to "senior" status last fall.

Julia Van Drie is director of policy and stakeholder relations to O'Regan, overseeing senior policy adviser **Alexander Craney**. **Paul Moen** is chief of staff to the labour minister.

Meanwhile in Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister **Chrystia Freeland's** office, there's a communications staff change to catch up on: senior communications adviser and writer **Cameron McNeill** is now deputy director of communications to Freeland, having been promoted in January.

McNeill has been working for Freeland since early 2022. Before then, he'd spent a little more than three years in all working in the Veterans Affairs minister's office, starting in late 2018 as a special assistant for Ontario regional affairs to then-minister O'Regan. After **Lawrence MacAulay** took over the portfolio in early 2019, McNeill was made a parliamentary affairs and issues management adviser. That summer, he was promoted again, this time to press secretary to the minister—a role he held until he exited to join Freeland's team. McNeill is also a former assistant to Toronto Liberal MP **Julie Dzerowicz**.

Alex Lawrence is director of communications to Freeland, and his team also currently includes press secretary **Adrienne Vaupshas**, senior communications adviser **Jessica Eritou**, communications adviser and speechwriter **Ani Dergalstianian**, and communications advisers **Isabella Orozco-Madison** and **Jesse Bartsoff**.

Leslie Church is chief of staff. lryckewaert@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland, centre, arrives for a cabinet meeting in the West Block in November 2022 alongside Trade Minister Mary Ng, right, Natural Resources Minister Jonathan Wilkinson, left, and their staff. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Conservative Party Leader Pierre Poilievre is among the speakers taking part in the Canada Strong and Free's Networking Conference, running from March 22-24 at the Westin Hotel. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Canada Strong and Free opens three-day annual conference on March 22

**TUESDAY, MARCH 21—
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22**

National Indigenous Citizenship Forum—The First Nations University of Canada, in partnership with the National Indigenous University Senior Leaders' Association, will host the second annual National Indigenous Citizenship Forum: Moving Beyond Indigenous Self-identification at Canadian Post-secondaries. This event will be held at Hotel Saskatchewan, 2125 Victoria Ave., Regina. Register at nicforum.ca.

**TUESDAY, MARCH 21—
THURSDAY, MARCH 23**

National Forum on Income Assistance—The Assembly of First Nations hosts the fourth annual hybrid National Forum on Income Assistance from Tuesday, March 21-Thursday, March 23, at the Enoch Cree Nation, Alta. Details: afn.ca.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22

House Sitting—The House returned on Monday, March 20, and will sit for two weeks until March 31. It will break again for two weeks and will return on Monday, April 17, and will sit for five consecutive weeks (April 17-May 19). It will adjourn on Friday, May 19, for one week and will return again on Monday, May 29, and will sit for four consecutive weeks (May 29-June 23). It's scheduled to adjourn for the summer on June 23, 2023. It will break for 12 weeks (June 23-Sept. 18) and will resume sitting on Monday, Sept. 18. It will sit for three weeks (Sept. 18-Oct. 6), and will adjourn on Friday, Oct. 6, for a week. It will resume sitting on Monday, Oct. 16, and will sit for four consecutive weeks (Oct. 16-Nov. 10). It will break for one week (Nov. 13-Nov. 17) and will resume sitting on Monday, Nov. 20, and will sit for four weeks (Nov. 20-Dec. 15).

Webinar: 'Competition in Canadian Food Retailing'—The Canadian Association of Business Economics hosts a webinar, "The State of Competition in Canadian Food Retailing – Adequate or More Needed?" How much competition is there in Canada's food retailing business? Did it become less competitive as inflation picked up? Does our competition law framework and policy tool kit ensure adequate competition? Wednesday, March 22, at 1 p.m. ET. This event will take place online: cabc.ca.

Climate Change: Workplace Impacts—The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety hosts a free webinar, "Climate Change: Workplace Impacts to explore how climate change affects both our physical and mental health and safety in the workplace." Participants include Katharina van Bronswijk, cognitive behavioural therapist, Psychologists for Future; Joanna Eyquem, managing director on Climate-Resilient Infrastructure, Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation, University of Waterloo; and Anne Tennier, president and CEO, Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. Wednesday, March 22, 2:30 p.m. Register online.

Lecture: 'Disability Justice in Canada'—McGill University hosts a lecture: "Absent Citizens No More: Advancing Disability Justice in Canada". University of Ottawa political science professor Michael Orsini will discuss what it means to centre disability justice in Canadian politics. Wednesday, March 22, in the Billiards Room, Faculty Club, 3450 rue McTavish, Montreal. 4 p.m. ET. Details: mcgill.ca.

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22—
THURSDAY, MARCH 23**

Arctic Energy and Resource Symposium—The Canadian Institute hosts the 22nd annual Arctic Energy

and Resource Symposium with programming geared to government and industry professionals involved in Northern infrastructure and resource development. Explor president Allan Chatenay is conference co-chair. Learn more about the future of sustainable resource development in the North and Canada's role in global energy markets. Get the latest on infrastructure advancements, regulatory issues and what's required to move forward with new projects. Meet the decision makers and key Northern stakeholders. March 22-23 at the Hotel Arts, Calgary. Agenda: bit.ly/3hpiwDC. Details: customerservice@canadianinstitute.com or call 1-877-927-7936. Save 10 per cent with *The Hill Times*' promo code: D10-999-HILLTIMES.

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22—
FRIDAY, MARCH 24**

Canada Strong and Free Networking Conference 2023—Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre is among the speakers taking part in the Canada Strong and Free's Networking Conference 2023 from March 22-24. Other speakers include Conservative MP Garnett Genuis, Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, former premier minister Stephen Harper, and Canadian Medical Association president Dr. Alika Lafontaine, among others. Wednesday, March 22-Friday, March 24, at the Westin Hotel, 11 Colonel By Dr. Details: canadastrongandfree.network.

**THURSDAY, MARCH 23—
FRIDAY, MARCH 24**

U.S. President Joe Biden to Visit Canada—U.S. President Joe Biden will visit Ottawa from March 23-24. This will be Biden's first in-person visit to Canada since becoming president. He will be accompanied by First Lady Jill Biden and will address Parliament on Friday, March 24.

MONDAY, MARCH 27

Auditor General to table four reports—Auditor General Karen Hogan will deliver four performance audit reports to the House of Commons: *Accessible Transportation for Persons With Disabilities, Connectivity in Rural and Remote Areas, Rehabilitation of Parliament's Centre Block—Public Services and Procurement Canada, and International Assistance in Support of Gender Equality—Global Affairs Canada*. A press conference will follow at 12:45 p.m., Monday, March 27, in Room 200, 144 Wellington St.

Inaugural Bill Graham Lecture Series—The Canadian International Council will recognize the late Bill Graham's contributions to Canada, its international policies, and the CIC itself with the creation of an annual Bill Graham Lecture on International Affairs. Two of his friends, Canada's ambassador to the UN Bob Rae and history professor Margaret MacMillan, will deliver the inaugural lecture. Thursday, March 27, 6p.m. ET., at Arcadian Court, Simpson Tower, 401 Bay Street 8th Floor, Toronto. Tickets via eventbrite.com.

Canadian Organization for Rare Disorders Event—The (CORD's) upcoming Action Day on Parliament Hill: The Canadian Organization for Rare Disorders (CORD) is calling on the federal government to implement a national rare disease strategy that is essential to address care gaps and delays for the three million Canadians living with a rare disorder. CORD delegates will be in Ottawa on March 27, 2023, and will be meeting with political leaders and policy-makers to discuss how the federal government can improve access to better care and treatments #Canada4Rare

National Public Safety Awards—The Union of Safety and Justice Employees will host Canada's inaugural National Public Safety Awards on Parliament Hill. The event will include a catered

reception featuring BBQ mini burgers, red-wine braised short ribs, seasoned AAA striploin, craft beer, and more, followed by an awards ceremony celebrating the outstanding work undertaken by Canada's federal public safety and justice employees. Monday, March 27, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Valour Building, Room 228, 151 Sparks St., Ottawa. Please RSVP directly to kristina@kitpr.ca.

TUESDAY, MARCH 28

Freeland Tables Budget—Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland will table the 2023 federal budget in the House of Commons at 4 p.m. on Tuesday, March 28.

2023 Kesterton Lecture—Carleton University presents the 2023 Kesterton Lecture featuring Jordan Bitove, publisher of the *Toronto Star* and owner of Torstar Corporation, who will speak on "Truth We Need for the World We Want." He will discuss the critical role of journalism in supporting our democracy, the importance of supporting Canadian-owned and -operated media, and what we can expect for media in Canada in the years to come. Tuesday, March 28, at Carleton Dominion-Chalmers Centre, 355 Cooper St. 6 p.m. Details: events.carleton.ca.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29

Conference on Trade and Protectionism—The Canadian Global Affairs Institute hosts a conference: "Navigating Canada's Interests Through Resurging Protectionism" featuring international trade experts discussing issues including "Resurging Industrial Policy and Friendshoring" and "Critical Minerals and Battery Supply Chains." Wednesday, March 29, at KPMG, 150 Elgin St., #1800. 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m. ET. Details: cgai.ca.

Conference: Deconstructing the Rouleau Report—The University of Ottawa hosts a one-day conference on "Deconstructing the Public Response to the Convoy." Experts in the fields of law, politics, public administration, economics, criminology, sociology, communications, tech, and health will deconstruct the Rouleau Commission's findings and recommendations. Wednesday, March 29, 9 a.m. ET at the University of Ottawa, Faculty of Social Sciences, Room 4007, 120 University Priv. Tickets via eventbrite.ca.

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