

If Black lives matter, put some white skin in the game

Erica Iffill p. 9



THE HILL TIMES

THIRTY-FIRST YEAR, NO. 1733

CANADA'S POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3, 2020 \$5.00

News Anti-Black racism

'We're past talk': MPs call on feds to re-examine policies underpinning systemic racial inequities

'Breaking a Starbucks window is vandalism; getting tear gas in the face is violence. We must never confuse the two,' says NDP MP Matthew Green.



Demonstrators participate in the 'Justice for Regis—Not Another Black Life' rally and march in Toronto on May 30. Canadians have joined protests against anti-Black racism and police brutality across the country as politicians acknowledge a need for further action. Flickr photograph by Jason Hargrove

BY BEATRICE PAEZ

The civil unrest unfolding in the U.S. has touched a nerve in Canada, prompting a wave of largely peaceful protests in nu-

merous cities that underscore the need for a broader re-examination of systemic inequities before racial tensions reach the level seen across the border, say some MPs.

"We're past talk. The prime minister has the leadership ability to direct a course of action

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News Government spending

House suspension deal offers 'insufficient' scrutiny of feds' spending amid COVID, say politicians

BY SAMANTHA WRIGHT ALLEN

The Liberal-NDP agreement to extend Parliament's suspension of regular sittings and limit

debate over an \$87-billion spending bill is skirting scrutiny and "completely insufficient," argue politicians, with at least one Grit MP frustrated by the move.

The suspension will remain until Sept. 21, with four formal sittings through the summer.

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News Reconciliation

Pandemic makes delayed MMIWG action plan more urgent, say Senators, advocates

BY SAMANTHA WRIGHT ALLEN

Indigenous politicians and organizations say rather than justify the government's delay, the COVID-19 pandemic has created more urgency for it to finish the action plan on missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

An action plan was the first among 231 calls for justice in the final report of the National In-

quiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), and after promising to have it ready by June, coinciding with the report's one-year anniversary, Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister Carolyn Bennett (Toronto-St. Paul's, Ont.) said last month it would be delayed.

It's become clear that violence against women, especially

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News Canada-China relations

Parliamentary association chair defends Canada-China group as critics call for its suspension

BY NEIL MOSS

As Beijing's behaviour grows increasingly strong-willed and the Canada-China relationship continues to flounder, some are calling for the suspension of a parliamentary association between the two countries, while one of the co-chairs says the group facilitates dialogue.

The 50-member Canadian-side of the Canada-China Legislative Association, which was founded in 1998, is composed of MPs and Senators who work to "promote better understanding" in the bilateral relationship on both common interests and differences.

"There's so much to be gained from maintaining that discussion," Independent Senator Paul Massicotte (De Lanaudière, Que.) told *The Hill Times*. "We have an immense interest in this relationship—[from a] human rights point of view, economically, future growth, climate change. There's so much to gain from our relationship, in spite of the fact that we have serious disagreements about some key issues."

Sen. Massicotte is one of two co-chairs of the Canada-China Legislative Association. Liberal MP Han Dong (Don Valley North, Ont.), the group's other co-chair, didn't respond to an interview request.

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Torstar under new ownership. Now what?

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Leslyn Lewis: the team behind the underdog p. 4

Mr. Rajotte goes to Washington with a massive to-do list



Monique Smith p. 6



HEARD ON THE HILL

by Neil Moss

‘Sharp and relentless’: Julie Van Dusen retires from Hill reporting after more than 30 years

Longtime CBC parliamentary reporter Julie Van Dusen, pictured in the West Block at a press conference on the COVID-19 pandemic on April 16, says in her post-Hill life she will be working on a book with her 94-year-old mother. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



A staple among the halls of Parliament Hill for decades, **Julie Van Dusen** could always be seen chasing down politicians asking about the latest scandal. In a surprise CBC personal essay, Ms. Van Dusen announced her retirement on May 29.

“I consider myself one of the luckiest reporters in Canada. I have had a career on Parliament Hill—an exhilarating career, in a place I truly love,” she wrote.

After news broke of her departure, praise of her work quickly followed from reporters and politicians alike.

“No one works harder. No one has more fun. No one scares the bejesus out of politicians like her,” tweeted **Chris Hall**, the host of CBC’s *The House*.

NDP MP **Charlie Angus** tweeted that Ms. Van Dusen is “the master of the ‘perp run,’” when she chases down politicians who refuse to answer questions.

“I can’t tell you how many mornings I walked up the stairs to the House of Commons and [Julie Van Dusen] appeared out of nowhere with a camera,” tweeted former Harper-era cabinet minister **Lisa Raitt**. “Sharp and relentless. But equally warm and genuine.”

NDP Leader **Jagmeet Singh** also chimed in with praise for Ms. Van Dusen, as did Infrastructure Minister **Catherine McKenna** and Innovation Minister **Navdeep Bains**.

“I’ve loved covering Canadian politics for so many reasons—but especially for our method of buttonholing politicians,” Ms. Van Dusen wrote. “Thanks to the wizardry and agility of our amazing cameramen, I’ve been in walking-backward scruns, running scruns, elevator scruns, escalator scruns, and one flinging-myself-onto-the-hood-of-a-moving-car scrum. (My kids call me ‘scrummy mummy.’)”

In retirement, she will be working on a book about her 94-year-old mother.

“I’m going to scrum my mom,” she said in an interview last week on CBC.

Liberal MP calls for public inquiry into N.S. shooting

An independent public inquiry into the recent mass shooting in Nova Scotia is needed, says Liberal MP **Lenore Zann** in a letter penned to the federal government on behalf of “concerned citizens” she represents in Cumberland-Colchester, N.S., where the massacre took place in April.



Liberal MP Lenore Zann says ‘people are feeling extremely frustrated’ and ‘want to see an inquiry’ into the Nova Scotia mass murder. *Photograph courtesy of Lenore Zann’s office*

On May 29, Ms. Zann sent a letter to Public Safety Minister **Bill Blair**, and while she hasn’t yet heard back, she said she also spoke about her plan in a personal

Zoom call last week with Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau**, and told *The Hill Times* that she felt positive about his response. In her letter, she asked Mr. Blair to work with Nova Scotia Premier **Stephen McNeil** to launch a public inquiry, and added “red flag laws” and other gun control measures are needed “more than ever” to protect society from femicide and mass murderers.

Six weeks have now passed since 22 were killed, and Ms. Zann said there’s a growing consensus in the province that such an inquiry is necessary.

“People are feeling extremely frustrated now and they want an inquiry,” she said of her call for action, with media unearthing disturbing information about the killer’s past behaviour being reported to the police without action.

“There were a number of red flags there that should have [been] paid attention to,” she said, and she wants an inquiry to do so with a feminist analysis, given the shooter had a history of assault against his partner and started the rampage with yet another assault. “Feminists and others are saying it’s time. We are tired of domestic violence being swept under the carpet. Statistics show a connection between private violence and public violence.”

In her letter, she said she has “deep concern” as MP for the region, that no major public alert was issued to warn her constituents during the 13-hour rampage, especially given the COVID-19 alert blasted across the province the weekend before.

There was some back-and-forth between the premier and prime minister about jurisdiction, but she said there’s place for both to be involved so it doesn’t happen again.

—Samantha Wright Allen

Former BQ opposition leader Michel Gauthier dies at 70

A prominent voice in opposition during the **Jean Chrétien** Liberal government years, former Bloc Québécois leader **Michel Gauthier** died on May 30. He was 70.

Mr. Gauthier served more than 13 years in the House of Commons from 1993 to 2007, following a seven-year stint in Quebec’s National Assembly.

He was a longtime House leader of the Bloc, being appointed to the position in 1993 as one of the few members of the then 54-member Bloc Québécois caucus with parliamentary experience. He kept the post until 1996, when he became the leader of the party—and leader of the official opposition with it—but served in his new role for just 13 months. Afterwards, he returned to the House leader’s office from 1997 until 2007.

“I was thrilled to meet him, my all-time favourite MP, 2 years ago,” Conservative



Michel Gauthier, pictured in 2005, was a Bloc Québécois MP from 1993 to 2007. *The Hill Times* file photograph

Senator **Denise Batters** tweeted. “He was King of Question Period, throttling the Liberal govt every day on [the sponsorship scandal].”

Over the past couple of years, Mr. Gauthier joined the Conservative Party and helped its efforts to gain ground in Quebec, campaigning alongside now-MP **Richard Martel** in his 2018 byelection victory, but stepped aside months before the federal election due to health difficulties.

Conservative MP **Alain Rayes** honoured Mr. Gauthier in the House on June 1. Tory Leader **Andrew Scheer** also offered his tribute, tweeting in French that it was “real pleasure” to work with Mr. Gauthier in the last couple of years.

In a Facebook post, Bloc Québécois MP **Stéphane Bergeron** wrote in French that his former caucus colleague was a “friendly, jovial and good-natured man.”

Awards season: *Globe and Mail* collects more hardware for SNC-Lavalin scoop

The accolades continue to pour in for *The Globe and Mail* team behind the reporting that **Justin Trudeau**’s Prime Minister’s Office applied pressure on then-justice minister **Jody Wilson-Raybould** to grant SNC-Lavalin a deferred prosecution agreement.



The Globe’s Robert Fife, pictured, won a CAJ Scoop award with Steven Chase and Sean Fine for their SNC-Lavalin reporting. *The Hill Times* file photograph

The team composed of parliamentary bureau chief **Robert Fife**, Hill reporter **Steven Chase**, and Toronto-based justice reporter **Sean Fine** won the Canadian Association of Journalists (CAJ) Scoop award for their reporting.

As a result of COVID-19, this year’s CAJ award recipients were announced virtually via Zoom.

The team (with the addition of reporter **Daniel Leblanc**) also earlier won a National Newspaper Award for political reporting for the story.

“This is a story about abuse of power and our biggest fear was that if we didn’t uncover stories like this we would’ve seen a situation where powerful corporations would have hired lobbyists and been able to go directly to the Prime Minister’s Office to avoid having criminal prosecution,” Mr. Fife said in an acceptance speech.

Other winners of CAJ awards this year included a team from *The Ottawa Citizen* for its coverage of the Westboro bus crash, as well as **Emma McIntosh** and **Mike De Souza** for a joint *National Observer* and *Toronto Star* story on the environmental fallout from the Fort McMurray, Alta., wildfire that is affecting the Fort McKay First Nation, among others.

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News Conservative leadership

Team Lewis 'punching above' its weight in race for CPC leadership

'Dr. Lewis has surprised many by getting this far,' says campaign manager Steve Outhouse. 'We're looking to continue to surprise people right up to the end.'

BY LAURA RYCKEWAERT

Toronto lawyer Leslyn Lewis is an underdog in the Conservative Party's race for a new leader, and as her team works to punch above its weight, the forced shift to virtual-only campaigning has in ways been a boon, having "levelled the playing field" when it comes to certain aspects of campaigning, says campaign manager Steve Outhouse.

"You can never replace in-person meetings and having a room full of people who are listening to a speech ... but in terms of the actual connecting with members, with people, and getting into ridings that are off the beaten track and are very difficult for leadership candidates to get into, a series of Zoom meetings and online meetings and teleconferences and things have actually opened the door to connecting with, I think, even more people that would have been done normally," said Mr. Outhouse.

"[It's] certainly more cost effective for campaigns, so ... it levels the playing field in certain ways."

Ms. Lewis managed to get out to Alberta and B.C.—on top of events in Ontario—before the COVID-19 pandemic shut down physical touring, and between the beginning of April and mid-May, Mr. Outhouse estimated the team held roughly 80 virtual events and meetings across the country. Echoing comments from other 2020 leadership campaign heads, he said he expects this race will have "politicos thinking in the long-run about what is the best way to campaign, what's the mixture of in-person and virtual meetings."

Unlike her leadership competitors—Conservative MP Erin O'Toole (Durham, Ont.), Conservative MP Derek Sloan (Hastings-Lennox and Addington, Ont.), and former Conservative minister Peter MacKay—Ms. Lewis is a political rookie, having never before held elected office. In turn, the work of introducing her to party members, now the No. 1 focus of her campaign as it works to identify supporters, is all the more

important, said Mr. Outhouse.

"Certainly, Mr. MacKay and Mr. O'Toole, they've been around for a lengthy period of time, so ... they would undoubtedly have networks in place that they can draw upon, so yes, it is important that she connects with individual members, because it's the individual members who are going to vote and they will make up their own mind in how they will cast their ballot," he said.

While seen as a disadvantage to some observers, others perceive Ms. Lewis' lack of political experience as an advantage, said Mr. Outhouse. Her ability to bring a fresh perspective is something her team is touting.

"If we want to get different results, I don't think there's anything wrong with trying something different," said Mr. Outhouse. "One of the things that people like about her not being a current Member of Parliament, or having been part of the political machine before, is they want someone fresh, they want someone from the outside to come in who understands the party."

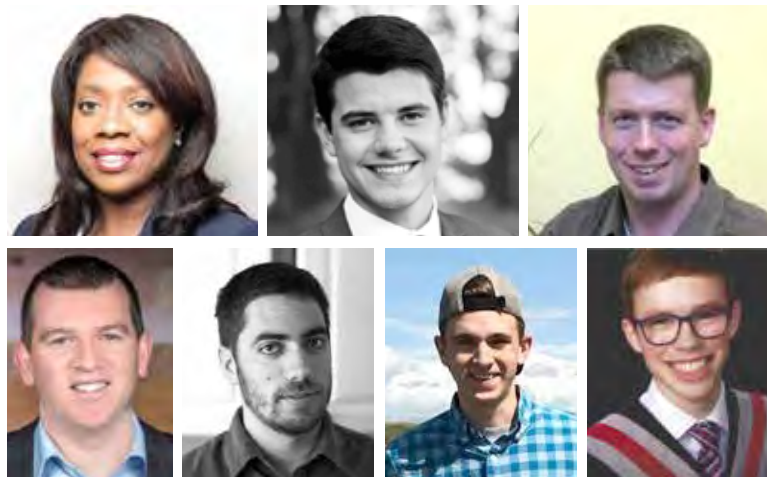
Ms. Lewis has a juris doctorate and PhD in law from York University's Osgoode Hall Law School, where she later taught, and has been a managing partner at her Toronto-based firm, Lewis Law, for the last almost two decades. She's also a former litigation associate with Thomson Rogers and Lerner LLP, among other things, and has a master's degrees in business and environmental studies from York University.

While she's never held elected office, Ms. Lewis ran as the federal Conservative candidate in Scarborough Rouge Park, Ont., in 2015, having stepped in last minute after the party's original nominee (Jerry Bance, of peeing-in-a-mug-in-a-stranger's-kitchen infamy) was forced to drop out. Ultimately, she came second to Liberal MP Gary Anandasangaree with 27.4 per cent of the vote. Ms. Lewis has otherwise been active with the party for years, including as a former vice-president of the Markham-Stouffville Conservative riding association.

Along with being the only women and person of colour in

the race to replace Conservative Leader Andrew Scheer (Regina-Qu'Appelle, Sask.), Ms. Lewis brings the perspective of a new Canadian to the table, having immigrated to Canada from Jamaica when she was just five years old.

Ms. Lewis is also a social conservative, with commitments to ban sex-selective abortions and end international funding related to abortions among her policy pledges to date, and has gotten the Campaign for Life Coalition's stamp of approval, along with endorsements from five current Conservative MPs, and others. Those MPs are: Richard Braddon (Tobique-Mactaquac, N.B.), Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords-Lloy-



From left to right, top to bottom: Leadership candidate Leslyn Lewis, operations manager Bas Sluijmers, campaign chair Derek Maat, campaign director Steve Outhouse, communications director Josh Gilman, communications aide Josh Senneker, and correspondence aide Jeremy Crowe. Photographs courtesy of LinkedIn and Twitter

dminster, Sask.), Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale-Langley City, B.C.), Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton-Melville, Sask.), and Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hilles-Grasslands, Sask.).

It's something that Mr. Outhouse, a former pastor at the Greenbelt Baptist Church who also identifies as a social conservative, said drew him to her candidacy.

"What I liked about her is that, yes, she has clear beliefs, but she articulates them very well and is very respectful of everyone else who has different views and would have absolutely no problems or difficulty working with people who hold completely opposite views to her on any number of topics, and I think that's what our party needs going into the next election," he said.

"We need the full party united, we need that base intact, which I think she can do ... but then I also believe that she can grow the party" as someone who comes from Toronto and who can speak to new Canadians from experience in a "very natural way."

"Those are the areas we [the Conservative Party] need to win in, we need to start winning in

the GTA, the 905 [area code] in particular," said Mr. Outhouse. "I believe she has the greatest capacity to grow out party going into the next campaign."

Mr. Outhouse ran former Glengarry-Prescott-Russell, Ont., Conservative MP Pierre Lemieux's leadership campaign during the 2017 race. Mr. Lemieux ultimately came seventh out of the 13 candidates who ran in that contest, having been dropped off after the eighth ballot—making it one round further than former Conservative MP Lisa Raitt.

Now president of Intercede Communication, Mr. Outhouse is a former Harper-era cabinet staffer, including having been director of communications to then-health minister Leona Aglukkaq, and chief of staff to then-fisheries minister Gail Shea and then-employment minister Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.).

Though the shift to virtual has helped ease campaign costs, Mr. Outhouse described the team's fundraising efforts as a success to date. In the first quarter of the year, Team Lewis reported a total of \$447,646 raised, putting her third in that numbers game

behind Mr. O'Toole and Mr. MacKay. But Mr. Outhouse said the vast majority of that—all but around \$50,000—was raised within a three-week span in the first digital fundraising push after he was brought on as campaign manager at the end of February.

"Dr. Lewis has surprised many by getting this far," said Mr. Outhouse. "We're looking to

continue to surprise people right up to the end."

"We're up against some formidable opponents here. ... I believe we're punching above our weight, and Leslyn is an exciting candidate and we're really pleased that the more people she gets to meet, the more people that get on board."

A glimpse at Team Lewis

Ms. Lewis' core campaign team is roughly 15-strong, with an estimated 100 volunteers at the ready across the country, according to Mr. Outhouse.

The Hill Times was able to obtain the names of a number of those team members, including that of Derek Maat, who is Ms. Lewis' campaign chair.

While he's worked on riding-level Conservative campaigns in the past, Mr. Maat is a civil engineer by trade, and has been chief executive officer and owner of Maat Environmental Engineering Corp. for almost 25 years, having studied civil and environmental engineering at Waterloo University.

Bas Sluijmers is operations manager for the campaign. Mr. Sluijmers is a former assistant

to Alberta Conservative MP Arnold Viersen (Peace River-Westlock, Alta.) on the Hill and current customer sales representative with Scotiabank in St. Catharines, Ont. A graduate of Brock University, where he studied for a bachelor's degree in business economics, he's also previously volunteered on campaigns for Conservative MP Racheal Harder (Lethbridge, Alta.), Alberta Premier Jason Kenney, and Alberta MLA Dan Williams.

Josh Gilman is serving as the campaign's director of communications, having recently taken leave from his post as manager of written production in the Opposition Leader's Office to do so.

Mr. Gilman previously worked with Mr. Outhouse as a media liaison on Mr. Lemieux's 2017 leadership campaign. He first joined Mr. Scheer's OLO in early 2019 as a speechwriter and before then spent time as a special assistant to then-immigration minister Chris Alexander. He's also been director of Strength to Fight, an organization "dedicated to a porn-free Canada," since 2015 and is a former anchor and editor with 1310 News.

Josh Senneker is on board as a communications and correspondence officer. Mr. Senneker is also a former assistant to Mr. Viersen on the Hill.

Working alongside him as a correspondence officer for the campaign is Jeremy Crowe. Mr. Crowe currently spends his days as a Member's assistant to Mr. Patzer on the Hill.

In 2019, along with graduating from high school, he spent two months working part time in Conservative MP Garnett Genuis' (Sherwood Park-Fort Saskatchewan, Alta.) office and, come the federal election, canvassed for four different Conservative campaigns in Ontario, specifically in Kanata-Carleton; Glengarry-Prescott-Russell; Hamilton West-Ancaster-Dundas; and Flamborough-Glanbrook.

In the Greater Toronto Area, Costas Manios is a senior field organizer for the campaign. A former Liberal staffer and campaigner, Mr. Manios joined the federal Conservative Party and the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party in 2015, and went on to work for the PC caucus at Queen's Park. In 2017, he joined PC party headquarters under then-leader Patrick Brown as a regional co-ordinator for GTA ridings, and oversaw Toronto ridings for the party's central campaign during the 2018 provincial election. Since then, he's been engaged in Toronto municipal politics.

Also focused on the GTA as senior regional outreach co-ordinator is David Hwang.

Mr. Hwang worked on Conservative MP Michael Chong's (Wellington-Halton Hills, Ont.) leadership campaign during the 2017 race as a regional and outreach co-ordinator for Ontario. In 2018, he was a senior outreach and stakeholder relations aide for Doug Ford's successful PC leadership campaign.

In Quebec, Arpad Nagy is a regional organizer for Ms. Lewis.

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Observers lament ‘sobering’ Torstar sale as new owners pledge to uphold ‘progressive nature’ of Canada’s largest newspaper

MPs, former *Star* journalists, and Torstar’s soon-to-be new owners weigh in on the sale of Canada’s largest daily newspaper, and what it says about progressive journalism in Canada.

BY MIKE LAPOINTE

Amid ongoing turmoil within the Canadian news media landscape—problems more acute now with drastically declining advertising revenues caused by COVID-19—the impending sale of Canada’s largest daily newspaper to private owners is a “sobering moment,” says Liberal MP and former journalist Adam Vaughan.

Some former journalists and MPs who spoke to *The Hill Times* said the deal is just another sign of journalism’s ongoing decline in viability. And while some have raised concern over their conservative connections, Torstar’s new owners say they will continue to uphold the philosophical principles by which the paper operates.

Torstar Corporation, whose businesses include Canada’s largest daily newspaper, *The Toronto Star*, as well as a number of regional daily newspapers and weekly community newspapers in Ontario, announced it had entered into an agreement with newly established company NordStar Capital LP, owned by Toronto Raptors founder Jordan Bitove and Paul Rivett, to acquire the corporation on May 26. The deal still needs to be approved by some shareholders before it’s final.

As chair of Torstar’s board and former *Toronto Star* publisher John Honderich wrote that day: “While it was far from easy, the time has come to pass the torch.”

Mr. Bitove told *The Hill Times* that he started paying more attention to the paper’s fiscal situation

when John Boynton took over as Torstar CEO just over a year and a half ago. Talks on the recently announced deal began in early February, he said.

“I had read about the early [fiscal] results, in particular that the dividend wasn’t being paid out, and knew that that was going to be a catalyst for a major change within the organization because of the way it was structured,” said Mr. Bitove, whose family has a long history with Toronto, and the country, including involvement with the Raptors and with the initial development of the SkyDome, now known as the Rogers Centre.

“I did a friendly reach out to John Honderich and John Boynton, and started a bit of a conversation with them early in February, pre-COVID, and they then opened the door for me to speak face-to-face with the trust, and I had a wonderful meeting with the [original team] that was there.”

Mr. Bitove, who, along with Mr. Rivett, has contributed to Conservative causes, said the resulting offer came with a pledge to uphold the paper’s progressive foundations.

“Perhaps they realized there was a good opportunity to have someone be the custodian and take it forward, and I made a pledge to them at that point in time that the Atkinson Principles and the progressive nature of the paper were very important to me and to the future of our city and our country as the largest circulated paper, and that I would commit to them to honour that and the legacy of Atkinson,” said Mr. Bitove, referring to the progressive editorial principles former *Star* publisher Joseph E. Atkinson championed.

A progressive newspaper should contribute to the advance-

ment of society through pursuit of social, economic and political reform, according to Mr. Atkinson’s principles, including for a strong, united, and independent Canada; social justice; individual and civil liberties; community and civic engagement; the rights of working people; and the necessary role of government.

That commitment, in part, was what prompted them to request former Ontario Liberal Premier David Peterson be brought in, Mr. Rivett told *The Hill Times*.

“That was part of the ask of David being part of the ownership group here, is to make sure of that, and to make sure that we stay true to that, because it is, from a business perspective, is core to the opportunity, but also just wanting to do the right thing, because it is such an important legacy for the country,” he said said Mr. Rivett.

Mr. Peterson, now the incoming vice-chair of *The Toronto Star*, told *The Hill Times* that when Mr. Bitove and Mr. Rivett approached him and asked him to be involved, he was “delighted” to say yes.

“I’ve known Jordan’s family and have worked with them very, very closely for a long time, and I know Paul, and these are two guys that I enormously respect and like,” said Mr. Peterson. “They told me what they are doing, and of course, how can you not, as



From left to right: Jordan Bitove, NordStar Capital; Paul Rivett, NordStar Capital; and former Ontario premier David Peterson, incoming vice-chair of *The Toronto Star*. Photographs courtesy of NordStar

a former Liberal premier, have a very long history with *The Toronto Star*?”

“It wasn’t exactly my house of origin, and I wasn’t exactly the poster boy for *The Toronto Star*, but I did very much politically and personally share the values that they espouse—the Atkinson Principles,” said Mr. Peterson. “So I was delighted to be involved in a project with these two guys and potentially doing something very, very good at the same time.”

Mr. Rivett, former CEO of Fairfax Financial who stepped down in February, said they wouldn’t be making an offer—one that has to be approved by shareholders—if they didn’t believe in the progressive content of the paper.

“It’s one of the largest subscriber bases in the country, and they’ve had a very difficult time bringing it into the modern age,” said Mr. Rivett, who grew up in Pickering, just east of Toronto. “But that progressive, investigative content that’s built around the Atkinson Principles—that is the foundation of the business, and we will do nothing to jeopardize that.”

As first reported by *Canada* on May 27, Mr. Bitove and Mr. Rivett have made extensive political donations to provincial and federal Conservatives over the years, including to Ontario Premier Doug Ford’s 2018 leadership campaign as well as to former Conservative MP Maxime Bernier’s 2017 run to lead the federal Conservatives.

“They are donations, they are not political affiliations, at least from my perspective,” said Mr. Rivett. “I’ve never been active in politics, but I have made some donations.”

Conservative MP and former journalist Peter Kent (Thornhill, Ont.) told *The Hill Times* that he thought the purchase was “pennies on the dollar” in terms of the value of the largest hard-copy print newspaper in the country.

“They’re entrepreneurs, they are free enterprisers for sure,” said Mr. Kent, a former CTV bureau chief, CBC correspondent and anchor of *The National* and *The Journal*, senior NBC correspondent, and Global News anchor.

“I think that they probably see a business model that could rescue *The Star* and still be loyal, as they’ve said, to the Atkinson Principles, but make money,” said Mr. Kent. “I’m sure they’re not doing this because they’ve all of a sudden had a conversion on the road to Damascus and they buy into the Atkinson Principles

journalism is getting smaller year by year, month by month,” he said.

It’s not uncommon in Toronto for people with that sort of money to play “both sides of the fence” in terms of the Liberal-Conservative divide, said Mr. Vaughan, but added he thinks the liberalism of *The Toronto Star* “is probably overplayed in the same way that the conservatism of the new owners is perhaps overplayed.”

“I don’t think we’re getting a Canadian version of Fox News. I think that group of journalists already exists and is already well funded in this country,” said Mr. Vaughan. “But I think that the risk is—and I think *The Star* stood out from other newspapers in this regard—but *The Toronto Star*, for all its faults, strengths, and weaknesses, at least celebrated that some of the things that have changed in Toronto in my lifetime in profound ways that still need work, whether it’s a more diverse readership, a more diverse newsroom, a more diverse set of political opinions in their paper.”

“I’m not going to pretend that they’re any more perfect than any other organization, but they recognized that their editorial position wasn’t always right, and maybe by default that made them left,” said Mr. Vaughan.

David Crane, a former economics editor at *The Star* who writes a weekly column for *The Hill Times*, said of the deal: “What was clear to me was that *The Star* itself had run out of money, and it couldn’t afford to keep operating in any serious way. I don’t think it was the kind of place that would have an easy time raising capital.”

Mr. Crane said the deal isn’t something that’s happened overnight, and the economics of the industry suggest options were running out fast, and Torstar faced the added problem of potentially being delisted from the TSX.

“They were right up against the wall, whether it should have been 63 cents or 72 cents, I don’t know, who knows, it’s what they were able to get,” said Mr. Crane. “The price is what you can get, it’s like selling a house. Did you get the right price? You got the highest price anyone was willing to offer, so that becomes the right price.”

“The five families’ shares were worth, in February 2004, \$270-million. Today, they are worth \$5.7-million,” said Mr. Crane, referring to the five families that have led Torstar for 70 years. “That’s a hit they’ve taken.”

Les Whittington, a former *Toronto Star* reporter who also writes a weekly column for *The Hill Times*, said he wasn’t totally surprised when he heard of the sale, but thought it was unfortunate.

“The number of factors, particularly the economic factors have been lining up against *The Toronto Star* for years, and I guess this was the best arrangement that John Honderich could come up with to try and keep the paper going,” said Mr. Whittington. “It’s unfortunate, but it’s the culmination of a long series of events, and obviously the changing journalism landscape and the changing advertising situation.”

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The Hill Times

themselves, but I think they see a valuable legacy, old journalism business which can be reinvigorated, and adapted, and developed with a digital business plan that it will need to survive.”

Mr. Vaughan (Spadina-Fort York, Ont.), who’s previously written for *The Star* and worked for Citytv and the CBC, said he thinks “the fear for a lot of us” is that the paper’s takeover is “just one more sign that traditional journalism is evaporating across the country.”

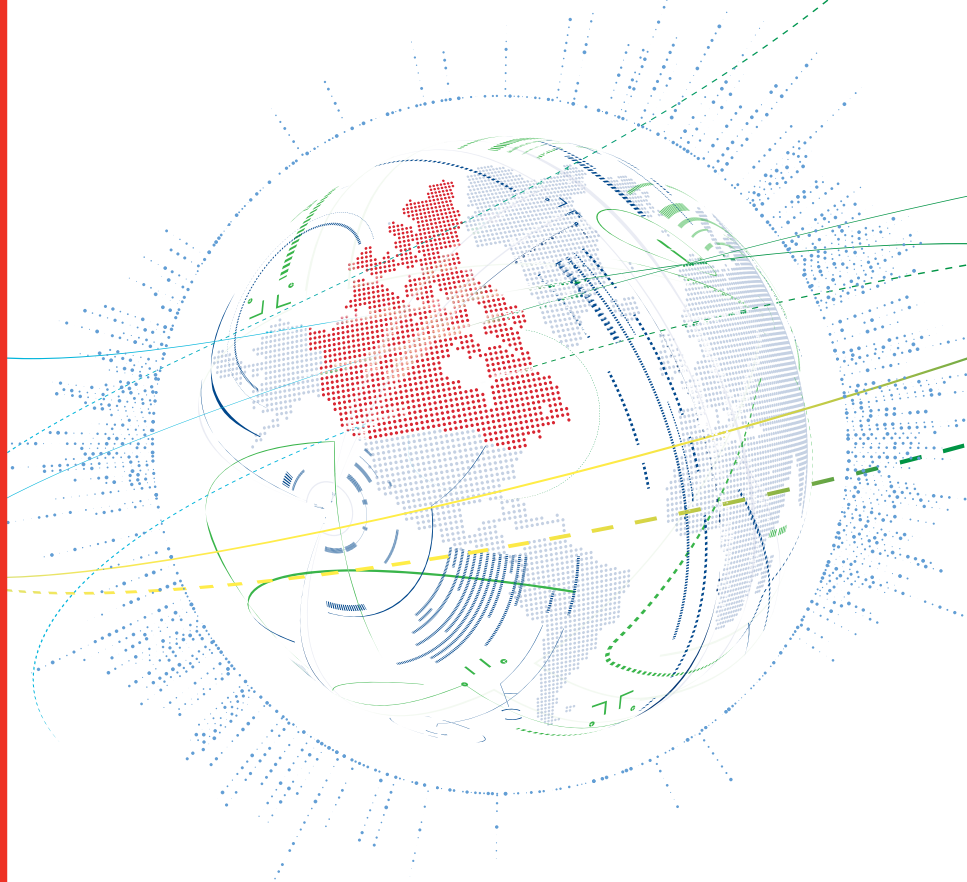
“If you’ve been a journalist in Toronto, *The Star* has been a significant part of your experience; it’s such a prominent part of the media and political landscape of the city,” said Mr. Vaughan.

“You can feel it getting smaller every time you pick the paper up, it physically feels smaller, but as it starts to fade from a storied past, it just feels like everything is disappearing around you and it’s just one more example of a shrinking voice for mainstream media in the city, and it’s hard not to feel a loss.”

Mr. Vaughan called it a “sobering moment.”

“It’s hard not to feel a loss. Even though, for the time being, it’s got new ownership and some new energy, *The Star* is getting a little dimmer day by day, and

AIAC Aerospace Industries Association of Canada L'Association des industries aérospatiales du Canada
VISION 2025



On behalf of the Aerospace Industries Association of Canada, we would like to extend our appreciation to all political leaders and government officials for the work being done to protect the health and safety of Canadians during the ongoing COVID-19 global pandemic.

Our industry recommends **immediate action** on the following six points:

1. Develop a pragmatic and proportional plan to allow people to begin flying again.
2. Adapt Canada's job retention program and liquidity measures to support employees in industries that will take longer to recover.
3. Rapidly expand government support for green technologies to enable the decarbonization of key sectors, particularly transportation and aviation.
4. Establish a new long-term investment bank to support and foster essential manufacturing supply chains through the market transformation ahead.
5. Advance public procurement projects, particularly in defence and space projects, to help stimulate and sustain high-tech supply chains through the difficult months ahead.
6. Establish a Canadian sector strategy for aerospace that includes civil, defence and space.

Canada has a strong reputation in aerospace to protect and a longstanding position of strength to build on. Our industry and jobs are at risk: unless we act now.

We call on the Federal Government to enact a long-term sectoral strategy.

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Comment

Mr. Rajotte goes to Washington

James Rajotte will have to quickly engage American stakeholders at a time when both countries are still grappling with an unprecedented public health crisis and social distancing guidelines are still in effect.



Monique Smith

Comment

It seems fitting, before discussing the intricate and somewhat frayed bilateral relationship between Canada and the United States, to first acknowledge the recent passing of Allan Gotlieb, an esteemed public servant, a visionary diplomat, and Canada's longest-serving ambassador to the United States (1981-1989). And while the geopolitical tensions of the Cold War have long passed, today's Canadian representatives in D.C. face an equally enormous task of promoting and defending the interests of Canada in a country that is very much divided politically, grappling with the fallout of COVID-19, and only six short months away from a presidential election.

One of the newest members of that diplomatic corps is, of course, James Rajotte, who was recently named by Premier Jason Kenney to be Alberta's senior representative in Washington, a role he officially began on May 1. A seasoned Parliamentarian in his own right, having served 15 years as the Member of Parliament from Edmonton-Leduc, Rajotte will need to quickly rally his diplomatic skills to engage with a Donald Trump administration whose handling of the COVID-19 crisis has created a veritable political crisis.

President Trump's national favourability rating, which has been notably stable throughout his presidency, has taken a hit, with a Gallup poll reporting a 49 per cent approval rating. The state-by-state picture is even more alarming to the Republican Party, with signs of weakness not only in the key midwestern swing states of Wisconsin, Michigan, and Pennsylvania, but traditional Republican strongholds, like Georgia and Texas, as well. In an effort to animate his base, President Trump has taken on governors across the country, picking fights with Governor Gretchen Whitmer (D-Michigan) for being too cautious, Governor Brian Kemp (R-Georgia) for being too cavalier, and Governor Andrew Cuomo (D-New York) for simply taking charge in the epicentre of the crisis. How the next six months play out is anyone's guess, but without the tailwind of a strong economy and the likelihood of job growth in the face of an enormous economic recovery, President

Trump's political team has cause for concern. Needless to say, Rajotte will have a challenge on his hands finding his footing with an administration preoccupied with the politics of survival.

The ascendancy of Joe Biden as the Democratic nominee is another challenge that the new Alberta representative and Premier Kenney will have to navigate. As Biden consolidates his base and works tactfully with the left-leaning Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren, and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez contingent of the party to develop his national platform, look for more progressive energy and environmental policies to emerge. Throughout the primary season, both Biden and Sanders agreed on imposing new restrictions on oil and gas development and regulating the industry more forcefully. But as Biden's path to net-zero emissions by 2050 becomes clearer, Alberta's representative will have to grapple with what this means for a province that still sends the vast majority of its energy exports south of the border. Perhaps this is why, in announcing Rajotte's appointment and the importance of developing an integrated North American energy strategy, Premier Kenney emphasized the significance of sub-national relationships and highlighted the value in working collaboratively with energy-producing states like Texas, North Dakota, and others to develop an energy strategy that effectively promotes Alberta's interests.

Rajotte faces equally complex sequential and administrative challenges in the next term. He will have to quickly engage American stakeholders at a time when both countries are still grappling with an unprecedented public health crisis and social distancing guidelines are still in effect. Building relationships is central to the success of the job. He will have to turn his attention to preserving the critical trade relationship between Alberta and the U.S. While essential services and cross-border commercial trade have largely been protected, the significance of the border closure to the tourism and hospitality industry will become all the more apparent as we roll into the summer months. Supply chain management and product inspection issues will surely be on his radar screen, especially in the agricultural sector, as processing plants and facilities on both sides of the border struggle to contain workplace COVID-19 outbreaks.

The challenges are real, but it is important to reflect on the fact that Alberta has the longest-standing official U.S. presence of any province in Canada, and has invested wisely in the development and cultivation of relationships throughout the United States. Advancing the interests of Alberta while navigating the administrative and policy challenges of COVID-19 and the political upheaval characteristic of a presidential election year is a tall order. Rajotte has a good base to start from, the experience to do well, and certainly Premier Kenney's confidence as he enters these uncharted waters. Perhaps he need only add the ingenuity and innovation in the practice of public diplomacy for which Gotlieb was so famously known.

Monique Smith is a senior associate with Global Public Affairs, with a focus on Canada-U.S. relations. Smith was Ontario's first Representative to Washington and has previously served as Ontario's minister of intergovernmental affairs, government House leader, minister of tourism, and minister of revenue.

The Hill Times

As the task gets more dangerous, Canada's UN peacekeeping contributions continue to fall

UN peacekeeping missions today are more akin to combat than anything else and can cause comparable casualties. That doesn't mean we should never go, but putting on a blue beret has never been risk-free.



Chris Kilford

Comment

For some time now, Canadians have been asking why the gov-

ernment hasn't followed through on several pledges to increase our troop commitments to United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions. Their call is often based on our notable historical record as peacekeepers and a strong desire to see Canada playing a larger role supporting global security. Certainly, few countries have the capabilities and wherewithal that our armed forces possess.

Back in 2015, the Liberal Party promised that, if elected, they would increase Canada's UN peacekeeping troop contributions, which had fallen off quite dramatically after the Conservatives came to power in 2006. Once in office, they then announced, on several occasions, that up to 600 military personnel and 150 civilian police officers would be made available for future UN missions, including a quick reaction force of approximately 200 soldiers, plus tactical transport airlift and an aviation task force.

From August 2018 to August 2019, the government partly followed through, by contributing 250 personnel to the UN who provided aeromedical evacuation and transport in Mali. But since then, the number of deployed Canadian peacekeepers has plunged again. At the end of April, just 10 civilian police officers and 25 military personnel were left on UN opera-



Members of Operation Presence-Mali conduct an aeromedical evacuation mission, treating two civilian contractors involved in an IED attack before transferring the casualties to a hospital in Gao, Mali, near Camp Castor on Aug. 16, 2019. DND photograph by Cpl. Richard Lessard

tions. It's a far cry from the 3,285 Canadian peacekeepers overseas in 1992, and the lowest number since 1956. It's also reflective of changing priorities and, no doubt, COVID-19 has also prevented some UN-related postings. Nevertheless, NATO has been Ottawa's main focus for quite some time now, with hundreds of Canadian Armed Forces personnel spread out along a line stretching from Riga, Latvia, to Baghdad, Iraq.

Peacekeeping is also far more dangerous today than during the Cold War era of state-on-state conflict. Back then, the UN usually arrived only after everyone had agreed to stop fighting. Even so, numerous misfortunes still took their toll. Between 1948 and 1990, 851 UN peacekeepers lost their

lives, an average of 20 per year. And over the course of Canada's peacekeeping history, approximately 130 Canadians have been killed. In August 1974, for example, a Buffalo transport aircraft belonging to 116 Air Transport Unit was mistakenly shot down by a Syrian air defence unit while hauling UN supplies between Beirut and Damascus. All nine Canadian military personnel on board died. Major Paeta Hess-von Kruedener, the last Canadian UN peacekeeper to perish, was killed in July 2006 when his observation post was bombed by the Israeli military.

With the Cold War over, so too went the world of multipolar checks and balances. In its place, unrestrained intra-state conflict soon became the norm and new

UN peacekeeping missions were used to fill the security void. During this period, the number of UN peacekeepers grew from just more than 10,000 in 1990 to some 83,000 in 2019. More often than not, these new missions were also less about peacekeeping and more about peace-making. In fact, peacekeepers frequently found themselves, as they still do, directly targeted. As a result, between 1991 and 2019, 3,055 UN peacekeepers were killed, an average of 105 per year. So far, in 2020, another 25 have perished.

Compared to our time in Afghanistan, it's true that fewer Canadian military personnel have been killed on peacekeeping operations. However, UN peacekeeping missions today, especially in Africa, are more akin to combat than anything else and can cause comparable casualties. That doesn't mean we should never go, but putting on a blue beret has never been risk-free and certainly isn't any longer. That's probably why the Canadian government has chosen to remain largely on the peacekeeping sidelines even as they campaigned for a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

Dr. Chris Kilford is a fellow with the Queen's Centre for International and Defence Policy.
The Hill Times

Creating a better world for future generations means speaking out on racism now

If George Floyd or all the other Black people who have been brutally killed have children, I would want the same for their kids—safe places and spaces to live free of the horrors their daily lives often resemble now.



Tim Powers

Plain Speak

OTTAWA—It will shock nobody who reads this column to learn that I am a slow learner. Specifically, I always thought it quaint, but attached no real meaning to it, when friends who were parents used to say you see the world differently when you have a child. As someone who became a dad just shy of five years ago, I now fully get it.

This week, while the United States was in meltdown because of the murder of George Floyd in Minnesota, I had some time at an outdoor bike park. While following all the appropriate public health protocols, children of a variety of race and ethnic backgrounds were laughing and smiling as they whizzed around on their bikes. The air was filled with giggles and innocence. No tear gas, rubber bullets, or broken hearts on this day. For that moment, my son was living in a place where normal was not cleaved by racial division, ignorance, and hatred. It was a bit of bliss in troubled times.

That evening, though, I came home and every news channel had

the terrible, sobering footage of the United States on edge. I thought of my son and how to explain how this was all so different from the time he had a few hours earlier. Fortunately, like many toddlers of his age, bedtime stories and games of hide and seek were more appealing than an inquisition of the news. But the time will come to explain. Why was what he lived so different than what was on TV?

To say what is happening in the United States is soul destroying is an understatement. I remember a time though when, as a younger man, without context, with ignorance, who grew up in a very homogenous white community on an island in the North Atlantic, the Rodney King story happened. King, of course, was brutally beaten by police officers in Los Angeles in 1991. Fortunately, King's heinous assault was captured on film for all the world to see.

The King story captured worldwide attention. It reminded the world that Black people and others of colour in America are subject to treatment that those of use with



A demonstrator participates in an anti-racism rally at the Vancouver Art Gallery in B.C. on May 31. As noted, Canada is not free of racism, anti-Black or otherwise, writes Tim Powers. Flickr photograph by GoToVan

white skin could never conceive of receiving. But at the time, I remember thinking what happened to King was bad but maybe the police were antagonized, and excessive force was maybe too much, but somehow excusable. It was not, but having no real lens other than the TV to look through and a different lived experience, I left it at that. Shame on me for doing so.

Even when I lived in Nova Scotia and there were periods of intense anti-Black racial turmoil, I was removed from it, so again, it seemed less important because it was not about me or my family. Upon reflection, my self-interested ignorance was a poor excuse.

As noted, Canada is not free of racism, anti-Black or otherwise. Thankfully, much has been exposed on the abuses Indigenous people were subject to, but we still must keep learning and fighting against all forms of discrimination. But now, for me this is not some

esoteric or academic concept.

I do want my son to grow up and live in a world where everyday is a bit like the one in the bike park. Where limitations and interactions are colour blind. Where innocent laughter is more common than the tears of grief.

If Floyd or all the other Black people who have been brutally killed have children, I would want the same for their kids—safe places and spaces to live free of the horrors that their daily lives often resemble now.

I like to think my son is making me a better person. For him, I need to do my part to make a better world, which in part means speaking out against the murder of George Floyd.

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

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THE HILL TIMES

PUBLISHED EVERY MONDAY AND WEDNESDAY BY
 HILL TIMES PUBLISHING INC.
 246 Queen Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5E4

PUBLISHERS Anne Marie Creskey,
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 GENERAL MANAGER, CFO Andrew Morrow

Editorial

'We' aren't the world: specificity is key in beating back anti-Black racism

On May 29, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau first addressed the ongoing protests against anti-Black racism and police brutality that erupted after what is only the most recent string of deaths of Black Americans at the hands of law enforcement—or any white person with a gun who happened to cross their path.

At the end of his daily press conference, he said he wanted “to make a quick point” about what was happening in the U.S.

“Anti-Black racism, racism is real. It's in the United States, but it's also in Canada. And we know people are facing systemic discrimination, unconscious bias, and anti-Black racism every single day,” he said. “We need as a society to stand together, stand up against discrimination. Be there for each other and respect. But also understand that we have work to do as well in Canada in our systems that we need to work forward on.”

On June 1, after a weekend that saw protests spread worldwide in honour of George Floyd and the myriad of other Black lives cruelly cut down by racism, Mr. Trudeau flipped his focus, and started his daily media briefing by talking about the issue.

“As a country, we can't pretend that racism doesn't exist here,” he said.

But, a question for the prime minister: who exactly is the “we” you're talking about? That word is doing a lot.

Over the weekend, politicians flocked to social media to express their outrage and broken hearts.

“We need to acknowledge that racism and discrimination are a part of our reality here in Canada and around the world and we all need to call it out,” wrote Infrastructure Minister Catherine McKenna. “We have to do better.”

Toronto Mayor John Tory made sure to make an “honest acknowledgement” that

anti-Black racism exists. “I am proud of the way we, as Torontonians, expressed our solidarity and determination to do better,” he said.

“We must fight anti-Black racism, and all forms of brutality or injustice, in Canada and everywhere,” Conservative Leader Andrew Scheer wrote.

If all of these people, the “leaders and allies” that Mr. Trudeau singled out, are serious about fixing a deeply broken system, it's going to take more than some tooth-achingly sincere tweets calling for vague, collective action.

If it's such a problem that keeps these people up at night, why aren't these statements being made on a regular basis? There's plenty going on in their own backyard. Where was the concern when a review of the Peel District School Board found the system rife with anti-Black discrimination? Where were the platitudes when Abdirahman Abdi died amid an arrest by Ottawa Police in 2016? Where was the “quick note” when Dafonte Miller lost his eye after an assault by a white off-duty Toronto police officer and his brother? Why not immediate calls for action after Regis Korchinski-Paquet fell to her death after interacting with Toronto police?

It's a tall order for most who don't realize they're engaging in anti-Black racism or benefiting from it, or are just better at keeping it hidden, let alone someone like the prime minister who has his own publicly racist actions to atone for.

Be specific about who has to put in the work to eradicate anti-Black racism—and what that work is. Black Canadians have enough on their plates just trying to survive.

The Hill Times

Letters to the Editor

Dyer column misleads readers about situation in Hungary, says embassy

Re: “Hungary: the first casualty?” (*The Hill Times*, April 6, p. 13). In response to the threat posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, governments across Europe have assumed special powers, and Hungary has been no exception: its parliament passed an act describing a “state of danger,” empowering the government to issue decrees aimed at containing the pandemic and mitigating its effects. Yet Hungary's parliament has retained the power to revoke measures or suspend the state of danger at any time, and the constitution rules that such a special legal order “shall be terminated if the conditions for its declaration no longer exist.”

In light of the current situation in Hungary, the government considers that those conditions indeed no longer exist. Therefore, it will soon ask parliament to vote on suspension of this special legal order. In Hungary, the first battle in the war against the coronavirus is coming to an end. Across Europe there has been a variety of approaches to combatting the pandemic. Tragic though it is to have lost hundreds of our compatriots, in a European context the actions jointly taken by the Hungarian people and its government can be seen to have been both effective and proportionate.

Despite this, the government of Hungary has been subjected to a barrage of attacks unparalleled elsewhere in Europe. One such

example is your April 6, 2020, opinion piece “Hungary: the first casualty?” penned by Mr. Gwynne Dyer in which he states, among other allegations, that Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and “governments in other democracies whose leaders have dictatorial ambitions use the coronavirus crisis as an excuse to give themselves absolute powers,” or that “Hungary was already a dictatorship in practice. Now it's also one in theory.”

I assume that your misrepresentation of the situation in Hungary was not intentional, but was based on unsubstantiated information received in good faith from other sources—who were either themselves uncritically passing on misinformation received from others, or offering a maliciously distorted account. Either way, since the above allegations can now be seen to be baseless, I would like to offer you the opportunity to apologize for publishing them.

Such an apology is due not only to Hungary's elected government, but also to the vast majority of Hungarians as a whole, who—regardless of party affiliation—have expressed support for the government's measures in recent months, and who have shown exemplary unity and fortitude in complying with them. Last but not least, I feel you owe an apology to your readers for being instrumental in misleading them in relation to the actions of the Hungarian government.

Márk Horváth
 Chargé d'affaires, Embassy of Hungary

Include people with autism in decisions about national autism strategy, says petitioner

I hope this letter will raise awareness regarding a shocking statistic: only 18 per cent of autistic adults are employed. It seems there are ample programs and services to assist autistic children and teens, but here is the question many are asking: what happens after they reach 18 years of age? How will they manage when support suddenly stops? How will they find and maintain meaningful employment and live happy, productive lives?

It is clear to me that Canada desperately needs what other countries have already put into action: a national autism strategy that includes programs to help autistic adults find and maintain work, with autistic people at the helm. Too often, we are

left out of the decision-making process.

As an autistic adult, who is currently looking for work, I am trying to help with this petition. I know these are challenging times with the global pandemic, but I hope your readers can find some time to quickly sign it.

Let's help ensure a bright future for autistic youth and ensure autistic adults can use their unique abilities, skills and interests to help others in an accepting workplace. Thank you for taking the time to read my letter.

You may find my petition at: <https://petitions.ourcommons.ca/en/Petition/Details?Petition=e-2399>

Cameron A. Straughan
 Goderich, Ont.

Boosting health system helps us all in the long run, says reader

The World Health Organization designated 2020 as the International Year of the Nurse. And how they've been earning the recognition!

The best way for Canada to support a global and equitable response to COVID-19

is by investing in the strengthening of health systems in low-income countries, and in Canada, too, and ensuring that treatment and a vaccine is made available to all.

Randy Rudolph
 Calgary, Alta.



EDITORIAL

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circulation@hilltimes.com
 613-288-1146

THE HILL TIMES

Published every Monday and Wednesday by Hill Times Publishing Inc.

246 Queen Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5E4

(613) 232-5952

Fax (613) 232-9055

Canadian Publications Mail Agreement No. 40068926
www.hilltimes.com

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Don't piss on our shoes and tell us Black lives matter

Unless Trudeau plans to be out on these streets, fighting against police brutality or in cabinet drafting legislation to curb police powers, his, and all the other white voices of his ilk, have no merit here.



Erica Ifill

Bad+Bitchy

Protesters gather in Des Moines, Iowa, on May 29. Though Prime Minister Justin Trudeau characterized the demonstrations as being against anti-Black racism, Erica Ifill writes that she has been seeing protests of police murders of unarmed Black people, and for the justice denied, for generations. Flickr photograph by Phil Roeder

OTTAWA—Burn. It. All. Down. We've marched. We've bent the knee. We've attended your diversity and inclusion workshops that don't include us and are run by some random privileged white woman. We've been on your mostly white diversity panels and working groups. We've reported racism. We've spoken nicely to the police. We've gotten an education (and to be honest, so what if we didn't?). We've played the game of respectability politics. We've done everything white supremacy tells us we have to do to avoid being targeted and killed by the police. We're still being murdered, politicians are turning a blind eye, media and authorities call us "thugs"—a euphemism for the n-word—and the only hope for justice that is afforded to the white masses, but not afforded to us, is Twitter.

White supremacy is a helluva drug.

The year 2020 features a significant increase in protesting against police brutality—this follows riots in 1965, 1992, 2014, and 2015. The time lapse between each successive incidence is shrinking. And that's because white society refuses to face the fact that the police—no matter which department, or which jurisdiction—are intent on violently ending Black lives.

Martin Luther King said: "Riots are the language of the unheard."

In the month of May alone, there were multiple Black people killed for existing. Their names include: Ahmaud Arbery, Dreajon "Sean" Reed, McHale Rose, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and Regis Korchinski-Paquet (her family accuses the police of pushing her off a building and given the lack of veracity we've seen from the police over the years, I find this believable. If you don't, you must be white). On June 1, another unarmed Black man, David McAtee, was killed by police in Louisville, Ky. The only case that did not include the police at

point of death is Arbery, however the police initially declined to arrest his killers because his great crime was making a white man feel "threatened," allegedly. All of these victims were unarmed.

Police forces look like terrorist organizations intent on the destruction and elimination of Black lives. To deny this is to deny that water is wet. Their history has gone from slave patrols in the U.S. and violently moving Indigenous people off the land in Canada, to carrying out state-sanctioned violence today.



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's repeated appointment of former Toronto Police chief Bill Blair to cabinet demonstrates he either doesn't understand one of the primary causes of Black disenfranchisement and anti-Black racism or he doesn't care, writes Erica Ifill. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

What Floyd's death showed was how a lynching is performed in modern day; one that was caught on video and shown all over the world. The response? The Hennepin County attorney and the U.S. Attorney for the District of Minnesota held a press conference to gaslight the global viewership into believing there wasn't enough evidence to convict (they later charged officer Derek Chauvin with third-degree murder). The video shows that Chauvin knelt on Floyd's neck, constricted his breathing for eight minutes until he was dead with three other cops watching him. That's murder. That's a conspiracy.

Third-degree murder isn't a charge, it's a bad report card.

With each police murder of innocent Black lives, they are emboldened to continue killing, given they're supported by fat police budgets, militarized weaponry, an apathetic white public, powerful police unions that make it hard to fire them, "tough on crime" politicians, a media that acts as their public relations arm, and a civic culture of political correctness that renders one an anarchist if you ever dare question them. In addition, especially in Canada,

which protests he was watching, but the ones I was tuned into were protesting police murders of unarmed Black people; they were protesting for the justice denied our people for generations.

At least get that right, PM Blackface.

The fact that the prime minister of Canada couldn't even be bothered to accurately tell the Canadian public why the protests are happening shows a blatant disregard of the root of the issue: the police. His appointment of Bill Blair to cabinet, repeatedly, demonstrates that: a) he doesn't understand one of the primary causes of Black disenfranchisement and anti-Black racism, and/or, b) he doesn't actually care. As the former Toronto Police chief, Bill Blair is notorious for his love affair with carding and the violence against the G20 protesters in 2010. His militarized police violated civil rights, illegally detained protesters, and used excessive force in one of Canada's most disturbing displays of police overreach and power. What many white people who were there experienced—the brutal terrorism of a state-backed hit squad—is what many Black communities in many first-world countries experience every day. In other words, Blair presided over the "largest mass arrest in Canadian history" and didn't think he did anything wrong.

Blair's other legacy was his insistence on the efficacy of carding, or "stop and frisk" as it's known in the U.S. and "stop and search" in the U.K. All three countries use law enforcement tactics of white supremacy to undermine the liberty of Black people, so it should be no surprise that in each of these countries, Black men are many times more likely to be stopped and searched without probable cause compared to white men. This is a form of racial profiling and Blair was its top salesman. In fact, according to the *Toronto Star's* landmark investigation of carding in To-

ronto, under Blair, racial profiling in the form of carding by Toronto's police rose steadily. And he was handsomely rewarded for it by the Trudeau government, but before ascending to his political career, he tried to reform his image with an "oops." And reformed it was by a mostly white Canadian press, even though the practice continues and the police database of carded Black people further threatens the lives and livelihood of Black people.

I wouldn't believe the police if they told me it snowed in winter.

It was within this context that Trudeau had the gall to say "Together, we will keep taking meaningful action to fight racism and discrimination in every form. The status quo—where people face violence because of the colour of their skin—is unacceptable."

Newsflash: you are the status quo.

And that's not changed while saying some kind words to a community in mourning in the front, while backstabbing the Black community with a repeat cabinet pick like Blair, as well as creating a marijuana industry where Julian Fantino, who once claimed, "there is no racism" in the police force and who is responsible for the mass imprisonment of Black people for weed "crimes," can now profit off of Black pain and imprisonment. (He has since resigned from the board of Aleafia Health Inc, a medical cannabis company. However, unless he gave up his financial stake, he still profits.) He is another one who rode for racial profiling of Black people, which is riding for racism.

So unless Trudeau plans to be out on these streets, fighting against police brutality or in cabinet drafting legislation to curb police powers, his, and all the other white voices of his ilk, have no merit here. That time has passed. We should know, we were the ones waiting.

Erica Ifill is a co-host of the *Bad+Bitchy* podcast. *The Hill Times*

Comment

'I have a nightmare': Donald Trump's racist whirlwind

The reality show president is playing ringmaster to the exploitation of Black outrage in a pre-election chaos narrative only he could front.



Lisa Van Dusen

What Fresh Hell

As Donald Trump tweeted from his Pennsylvania Avenue lair last Saturday night about setting "vicious dogs" on protesters outraged over George Floyd's murder, it became clear that the man whose racism was so absurdly dramatized by his 2017 turn as an apologist for the tiki-torch Central Casting Nazis of Charlottesville would be getting the band back together just in time for campaign season.

By Sunday night, it looked like a totalitarian coup, with



Protesters participate in a Black Lives Matter rally in Seattle, Wash., on May 30. The asymmetry of the power, disproportion of the force, and shamelessness of the racism on display during George Floyd's murder explain the outrage being expressed across America, writes Lisa Van Dusen. Flickr photograph by Kelly Kline

the despot occupying the White House predictably deflecting from his role in the chaos. "The Lamestream Media is doing everything within their power to foment hatred and anarchy," Trump tweeted in a torrent of projectile projection. "As long as everybody understands what they are doing, that they are FAKE NEWS and truly bad people with a sick agenda, we can easily work through them to GREATNESS!" By the following day, June 1, he was ordering governors to round up the usual suspects in an unhinged conference call.

In normal times of un-hijacked reality and un-weaponized narratives—say, that bygone era of 1,500 days ago when a Black man Americans had elected with the first back-to-back majorities in five decades was in the White

House—it would seem insane for an American president to incite violence, encourage abuse of power, and propagate racism as an electoral strategy.

But since Trump's consequence-firewalled presidency was designed, apparently, to make America seem like a basket case and democracy seem terrifying on behalf of his authoritarian cohorts, this pre-election crisis wasn't so much a matter of if as of "based on which catalyzing flash point?"

That flash point was provided on May 25 when Floyd, 46, was murdered after passing a \$20 bill identified as counterfeit in a store in the Powderhorn neighbourhood of Minneapolis.

There is such a lack of nuance and ambiguity, such a vacuum of humanity in the video of the final

eight minutes and 46 seconds of George Floyd's life that it feels more like ghoulish Orwellian propaganda than involuntary incrimination. Why eight minutes and 46 seconds? Evidently, that's how long it takes for a man to die when your left knee is on his neck, crushing his jugular vein and carotid artery while your right knee is on his back, making your full body weight a lethal weapon. Actually, that's how long it takes for a man to die with a two-minute 53 second margin of error. Floyd was unresponsive by minute six.

The asymmetry of the power, disproportion of the force, and shamelessness of the racism on display during Floyd's murder explain the outrage being expressed across America. The exploitation of that outrage—including the

apparent deployment of rent-a-rioters to generate violence—for destabilizing political and, apparently, geopolitical purposes, even in an age defined by seemingly infinite new lows, is reprehensible.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, the crime rate in America has declined precipitously in the past quarter century—by 71 per cent between 1993 and 2018—presumably, at least in part, due to the evidentiary disincantations of DNA identification and ubiquitous CCTV surveillance. Yet, the relationship between Black men (one in every 1,000 of whom can expect to be killed by a police officer—2.5 times higher than white men) and police in America has become so tragically tense that African-American children are instructed in how to avoid being shot to death in routine encounters with people paid to protect them, most of whom are conscientious, courageous public servants.

It's a terrible irony that, as Americans have become more law-abiding, police forces are becoming more militarized, empowered, and feared. That that irony coincides with unprecedented corruption, racism, and contempt for democracy emanating from the presidency itself isn't just sad. History tells us it's ominous.

Lisa Van Dusen is associate editor of Policy Magazine and was a Washington and New York-based editor at UPI, AP, and ABC. She writes a weekly column for The Hill Times.

The Hill Times

Tibet 70 years later is a reminder of China's true face

As it moves aggressively into the South China Sea, prepares to quash democracy in Hong Kong, and cow Taiwan into irrelevance, the continuing occupation of Tibet is a reminder of the hollowness of China's claims.



Andrew Caddell

With All Due Respect

KAMOURASKA, QUE.—Long before the tensions in Hong Kong, long before Taiwan or Tiananmen Square, there was China's invasion of Tibet. But what was once a major *cause célèbre* around the world seems to have been forgotten as China flexes its muscles in other parts of Asia. It shouldn't be.

Here is a refresher. Tibet's struggle for independence has long been personified by its head of state, the 14th Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhists and the recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989. Now 84, he lives in exile in India.

Although China claims Tibet was part of its ancient dynasties for 800 years, the "mountain kingdom" in the Himalayas had its own culture, language, and customs for centuries, and in 1912, the 13th Dalai Lama declared Tibet's independence. For decades, it had a national flag, currency, and an army, and maintained diplomatic relations with neighbouring countries. During the Second World War, it rebuffed American entreaties to build a road into China to assist in the fight against Japan.

Then, in 1950, the new Communist regime in China invaded Tibet. Although it likes to claim it "liberated" Tibet from the "backward influence" of the Buddhist monks, China coveted Tibet for its natural resources and its border with India. In 1959, the Chinese declared "Serf Emancipation Day" and declared the Tibetan government illegal. The resistance to the Chinese occupation boiled over in a demonstration of 300,000 people outside the residence of the Dalai Lama, the Potala Palace. This was followed by a failed armed uprising and the escape of the Dalai Lama.

In the years since, many Tibetans have died under Chinese rule, and Tibet has been sliced up into the "Tibetan Autonomous Region," which is led by a Beijing apparatchik, and neighbouring provinces, in which many Tibetans live.

Surprisingly, the Dalai Lama has consistently sought a middle ground with China, looking to establish Tibet as a "zone of peace" with India, and has advocated Tibetan autonomy, not separation from China, under certain condi-

tions, like freedom of religion and genuine self-rule.

For Canada, Tibet has proven to be a conundrum. Even though the Dalai Lama is one of the most respected political leaders in the world, China considers him a "separatist" and has threatened to punish any politician who dares meet with him. Nonetheless, then-prime minister Paul Martin met with the Dalai Lama in 2004, and Stephen Harper invited him to his office in 2007 and 2012. In 2006, he was made an honorary citizen by Parliament.

While Canada's Tibetan community numbers 12,000 people, it has punched above its weight. The Canada Tibet Committee, its official lobby group, is chaired by a former Canadian UNICEF colleague of mine, Samphe Lhalungpa. Samphe has worked in humanitarian causes around the world, and is now supporting his community here at home. As an indication of Canada's stance towards China, a senior Canadian foreign officer once told him: "Tibetans should be more grateful for all that China has done for Tibet."

His group has links with other Canadian opponents of the Chinese Communist Party: the Uighur Muslims, Hong Kong diplomacy movement, Taiwan, and groups concerned about Tibet's fragile environment.

China holds two levers on the Trudeau government when it comes to Tibet: the threat of

economic sanctions, and support for Quebec separatists. China reasons that if Canada can support a "separatist" like the Dalai Lama, it can interfere in our affairs. It is the kind of obtuse, brutish strategy Chinese leader Xi Jinping likes to apply with less powerful countries. We should resist it.

Meanwhile, at 84 years old, the Dalai Lama, while a spiritual icon, is not immortal. Anticipating his demise, China is determined to control the choice of his successor. This is a contradiction in terms, with the atheistic Communist Party seeking to choose a religious leader who is traditionally the reincarnation of his predecessor.

Tibet's story is a cautionary tale for those who seek to collaborate with China. While it has long claimed to take only a defensive military stance outside its own borders, the facts are very different. As it moves aggressively into the South China Sea, prepares to quash democracy in Hong Kong, and cow Taiwan into irrelevance, the continuing occupation of Tibet is a reminder of the hollowness of China's claims.

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 fellow with the Canadian Global Affairs Institute and a principal of QIT Canada. He can be reached at pipson52@hotmail.com.

The Hill Times

Snowbird tragedy highlights need for deep dive into fleet's future

With this most recent crash putting the Snowbirds back in the spotlight, and the COVID-19 crisis, it may be difficult for the government to justify the needed spending to replace the aging Tutor aircraft.



Scott Taylor

Inside Defence

OTTAWA—On Thursday, May 27, 431 Squadron of the RCAF held a celebration of life ceremony inside an aircraft hangar at CFB Moose Jaw in Saskatchewan. This sad tribute was to honour Captain Jennifer Casey, who lost her life on May 17 in a Tutor aircraft crash outside Kamloops, B.C.

To meet the challenge of social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic, the ceremony involved only a few well-spaced guests and speakers. To allow Casey's family, friends, and comrades to share the moment, 431 Squadron arranged to have the event live streamed on video.

This ceremony in Saskatchewan followed a homecoming funeral procession in Casey's hometown of Halifax the previous Sunday. The plane carrying her casket was met by Gov. Gen. Julie Payette and Minister of National Defence Harjit Sajjan. Hundreds of mourners turned out on the streets of Halifax to pay their final respects to Capt. Casey.

On a personal note, it was only when the obituaries were published that I realized I had known her as "Jenn from the Rick Howe Show," which she produced during her former career in journalism. She would call to book me as a guest on the show and I had met her on several occasions when I was in the News 95.7 studios. Her death shocked and saddened Canadians from coast to coast.

To date, there has been no exact cause given for the crash of the Snowbird Tutor, which killed Casey and left pilot Captain Richard MacDougall injured.

There is abundant amateur video, which was broadcast by the media showing the Tutor aircraft make a sudden climb shortly after the takeoff. Both MacDougall and Casey ejected, but the parachutes did not fully deploy.

I rest assured that the RCAF will conduct a full and thorough investigation into the cause of the accident. At the time of the crash, the Snowbird Squadron was transiting from Kamloops, B.C., to Vancouver Island to complete the final leg of a cross-country morale-boosting tour to lift Canadians' spirits during the COVID-19 lockdown.

This tragedy has given voice to aviation experts who point to the advanced age of the Tutor aircraft, which first entered service with the RCAF in 1963. However, since the 431 Air Demonstration

Squadron was first stood up in 1971, they have experienced a total of 24 accidents or mishaps, eight of which proved fatal, resulting in a total of nine dead military personnel.

Of those incidents, only eight were deemed mechanical failures and only two of those eight resulted in fatalities. The Snowbird Squadron prides itself on meticulous maintenance of their admittedly aging aircraft. The majority of the accidents have been the result of mid-air collisions, wing tip collisions, or bird strikes. The initial report from RCAF investigators into this latest tragedy indicates that a bird strike was again the most likely cause of the sudden engine failure.

For those who question why the RCAF would endanger its personnel by having them perform aerobatic formation flying, the fact is there is an inherent risk to such aerial demonstrations. That is what creates the "wow" factor when the Snowbirds perform at air shows. People don't pay to watch Formula One cars drive around the track at the public speed limit.

As to the future of the RCAF maintaining the Snowbirds, the hard truth is that the Tutors will need to be replaced. The current timeline sees a possible procurement of new jets sometime between 2026 and 2035, with a budgeted cost of between \$500-million and \$1.5-billion.

With this most recent crash putting the Squadron back in the spotlight, and depending on the full extent of the economic havoc to yet be caused by the COVID-19 crisis, it may be difficult for the government to justify the expenditure of such sums of money to a fiscally struggling public.

It may require the RCAF to investigate avenues which would involve some form of corporate sponsorship to offload the costs. The Canadian Army has been very



As to the future of the RCAF maintaining the Snowbirds, the hard truth is that the Tutors, which first entered service in 1963, will need to be replaced, writes Scott Taylor. *DND photograph by Sgt. Halina Folfas*

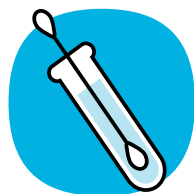
successful in relying upon corporate partners to stage their annual Army Run, so it would not be unprecedented.

RIP Casey and I wish a full and speedy recovery to MacDougall.

Scott Taylor is the editor and publisher of Esprit de Corps magazine.
The Hill Times

You're making a difference to keep people safe from COVID-19

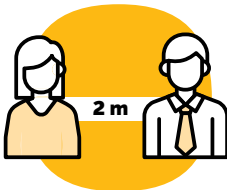
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Opinion

Stuck with Trump in a nation-defining moment, there's no turning back for the U.S

Donald Trump, who has been enabling white racists throughout his tenure, appears almost thrilled at the chance to play the law-and-order card now.



Les Whittington

Need to Know

OTTAWA—In 1989, as five young teens (four Black, one Latino) were going to trial in New York for allegedly beating and raping a woman who was jogging through Central Park, Donald Trump took out full-page ads in New York city newspapers suggesting they should be executed.

"BRING BACK THE DEATH PENALTY. BRING BACK OUR POLICE!" the ads declared. In the text below, then-real estate developer Trump wrote: "I want to hate these murderers and I always will. I am not looking to psychoanalyze or understand them, I am looking to punish them ... I no longer want to understand their anger. I want them to understand our anger. I want them to be afraid."

The ads helped whip up the race-based anger toward the teens, known at the time as the Central Park Five, that may have contributed to their wrongful conviction. They had given the police a coerced confession after being violently interrogated. But in 2002, after spending years in jail, the five men in were exonerated as a result of DNA evidence and the confession of a serial rapist. The five eventually agreed to a \$41-million settlement with the city of New York in 2014.

In an opinion piece at the time, Trump called this "a disgrace" and said a settlement doesn't equal innocence. And he

has, in fact, never apologized for taking out the ads in New York in 1989 nor acknowledged the five teens were wrongly convicted. Asked about it at the White House last year, he said, "You have people on both sides of that. They admitted their guilt."

The remark was a reprise of the president's infamous comment in 2017 after a white nationalist rally in Charlottesville, Va., where a woman was killed when a driver rammed his vehicle into counter-protesters. At the time, the president said, "There was blame on both sides."

Trump of course ginned up his political career with a blatant appeal to white racist Americans by advocating the "birther" conspiracy, falsely claiming then-president Barack Obama had not been born in the U.S. and was therefore ineligible to be president.

This is the man who has wound up in charge in the U.S. at a time when the latest brutal police killing of a Black man has led to a public explosion of deep-seated and longstanding anger over state brutality against people of colour—an uprising unlike anything seen in decades.

Trump, who has been enabling white racists throughout his tenure and lately making common cause with those transforming COVID-19 social distancing issues into a divisive, violence-framed culture clash, appeared almost thrilled at the chance to play the law-and-order card now.

As protest demonstrations over the killing of George Floyd erupted around the world, Trump labelled those protesting in the U.S. as "thugs," evoked images of savage violence against civil rights activists, and revelled in the possibility of protesters near the White House being subjected, if things got out of hand, to "the most vicious dogs, and most ominous weapons I have ever seen" by the Secret Service.

If police have responded to the riots with unrestrained force, no one should be surprised. The Trump administration has consistently signalled armed public servants who abuse their positions that it's open season in America. In a 2017 speech, the president came out in favour of tougher handling of arrestees, saying "please don't be too nice." Trump's first attorney general, Jeff Sessions, who had once been denied a federal judgeship because of his racist attitudes, put an end to the federal government's oversight of police through lawsuits meant to force local police forces to comply with civil rights laws. And Trump opened the way for police departments to buy and employ surplus military equipment despite the fact that such militarization is considered inflammatory in situations of public unrest.

Of course, the protests and riots in the U.S. may ultimately work to Trump's advantage, distracting attention from his mishandling of COVID-19 and invigorating the law-and-order vote. In the past few days, the president was milking those angles for all they were worth.

"It's ANTIFA and the Radical Left. Don't lay the blame on others!" he tweeted, placing responsibility for the riots—without proof—on the loosely knit anti-fascist group, which he also claimed would soon be subject to an unconstitutional designation as domestic terrorists.

Acting crazier by the hour, Trump on June 1 criticized state governors for being weak. "You've got to arrest people, you have to track people, you have to put them in jail for 10 years and you'll never see this stuff again," Trump angrily told the governors in a phone conference.

Events of the past week have made it clearer than ever that the U.S. has reached a turning point, with the very future of its democracy at stake as the country readies for the presidential election Nov. 3.

Les Whittington is a regular columnist for The Hill Times.

The Hill Times

Air Canada could learn from other resilient airlines before claiming bankruptcy

The resilience of tiny Qatar in managing its economy, while stepping forward to help internationally, should make it an important global ally.



Yasser M. Dhoub

Opinion

This is a defining moment. The world is in the midst of a real transition. Post pandemic, everything, from lifestyle to economy, will be totally different. Yet, one thing is certain; some sectors will see exponential growth, while others may find it difficult to sustain themselves.

The airline industry is one such sector, passing through an unprecedented crisis. If the pandemic continues for several more months, the World Travel and Tourism Council projects a global loss of US\$2.1-trillion in revenue.

With commercial flights at a standstill, Air Canada could be faced with bankruptcy. It is seeking to cut its workforce by at least half. Effective June 7, "approximately 50 to 60 per cent" of the company's 38,000 employees will be laid off," the company said in a memo sent to staff.

Other major global airlines, including American Airlines, United Airlines, and Delta, all are in the midst of massive restructuring. Latin America's second-biggest airline, Avianca, has claimed bankruptcy. El Al Israel Airlines has also called on the Israeli government to rescue it, rejecting "impossible conditions for state-backed loans."

The Middle East is no exception. As per reports, airlines in the region could register a negative 37 per cent revenue this year, as compared to 2019. This is tantamount to a loss of US \$19-billion in revenues. About 85 per cent of the world's airlines could face financial distress by the end of the year without government aid, Emirates president and Etihad CEO recently told a video conference.

Yet, in the midst of a number of crises, the small Gulf Arab state of Qatar has proven to be resilient. When its Gulf Arab neighbours, led by Saudi Arabia, opted to sever diplomatic and commercial relations and sealed their borders to all Qatari planes and ships, some three years ago, the tiny Gulf-Arab state opted to carve out a niche for itself in the global arena.

In the process, the city-nation of Qatar emerged as a key global player. Qatar is

now the region's largest, open platform for global dialogue on critical challenges facing our world. Signifying its emerging stature, it recently hosted the 19th Doha Forum, in partnership with Chatham House, the International Crisis Group, the European Council on Foreign Relations, and the Munich Security Council.

Qatar Airways—the Qatari national carrier—is also emerging stronger from the pandemic crisis. It optimized its operations by co-ordinating with global capitals, helping bring in their stranded nationals from various countries. Since mid-February, Qatar Airways has repatriated more than one million stranded travellers to their home countries from across the globe.

Special Qatar Airways flights have also helped bring in stranded Canadians to their homeland. Canadian citizens were picked up from all across Asia. In order to facilitate the stranded Canadians, the airline also introduced Toronto as a new destination.

Canada's friendly relationship with Qatar has helped Canadian nationals in these times of need. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau contacted the emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim, thanking him for the support. Other foreign dignitaries have also expressed their gratitude to Qatar for the timely help, including the U.S. Secretary of State, who praised Qatar Airlines efforts in bringing Americans home.

Qatar Airways also flew British, German, and other nationals to their respective home countries. The governments of Germany, the U.K., France, Pakistan, and Oman have expressed their gratitude to Qatar for its efforts.

To plug the revenue gap, Qatar Airways also strategized to focus on cargo operations. In the wake of the need for more capacity to certain destinations, Qatar Airways introduced additional cargo capacity to Shanghai, Guangzhou, Paris, Amsterdam, Muscat, Kuwait, Delhi, Beijing, and Melbourne. Qatar Airways has offered 100,000 free bookings to frontline health-care professionals worldwide. Most recently, the airline announced a new booking policy letting customers book 2020 travel to nearly anywhere in the world with unlimited free changes.

Air Canada needs to look closely at its current business model. Instead of seeking a government bailout, it can learn from Qatar Airways in some ways.

The resilience of tiny Qatar in managing its economy, while stepping forward to help internationally, should make it an important global ally. Ottawa cannot continue overlooking Qatar for long. It needs to further consolidate bilateral ties with Doha.

Yasser M. Dhoub is a political and human rights activist. He advocates on issues of civil liberties in Canada to international human rights, and professionally consults in Canadian foreign trade in the Gulf region and facilitates opportunities for Canadian businesses in progressive and growing economies. He serves as a volunteer vice-president of the CQFA-AACQ Canadian Qatari Friendship Association.

The Hill Times



HILL CLIMBERS

by Laura Ryckewaert

Minister Blair has new eyes on Ontario regional affairs



Public Safety Minister Bill Blair, pictured arriving at the West Block on May 25. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

Meanwhile, Associate Finance Minister Mona Fortier recently shook up her office, with a number of staff getting new titles, including Blue Knox taking on oversight of communications.

Public Safety Minister **Bill Blair** recently added a new member to his ministerial team, with **Kevin Den Heijer** taking over the role of special assistant for Ontario regional affairs.



Kevin Den Heijer is now working in the public safety minister's office. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

Mr. Den Heijer joined Mr. Blair's team last month straight from the Liberal research bureau, also known as the LRB. He'd been covering Ontario regional affairs for the office, which supports all 157 members of the Liberal caucus, for a little more than a year and a half.

During the election last fall, Mr. Den Heijer offered up his time as a community management strategist as part of the national Liberal campaign.

Before joining the LRB in 2018, and prior to the June 2018 provincial election that saw **Doug Ford's** Progressive Conservatives unseat the Ontario Liberals to form government, he was working as a Liberal staffer at Queen's Park, last as a legislative adviser and issues manager to then-energy minister **Glen Thibeault**.

A former assistant to Liberal MP **Hedy Fry**, Mr. Den Heijer has also previously spent time (less than a year each) as a communications consultant for the Canadian Global Affairs Institute, as a communications officer for National Research Council Canada and later for the Canada Revenue Agency, and as an analyst with the Department of Innovation, Science, and Economic Development.

Now in Mr. Blair's office, Mr. Den Heijer joins fellow regional advisers **Emily Horowitz**, who covers Quebec for the minister, and **Annie Cullinan**, who covers the Atlantic.

Zita Astravas is chief of staff to Mr. Blair, and currently also oversees: **Dan Linden**, director of policy; **Sacha Atherly**, senior policy adviser; **Manel Menouar**, senior policy adviser; **Mehalan Garoonandhi**, senior policy adviser; **Jordan Crosby**, director of parliamentary affairs; **Radey**



Associate Finance Minister Mona Fortier is pictured in the House of Commons ahead of a meeting of the special committee on COVID-19 on May 6. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

Barrack, director of operations; **Brittany Perreault**, director of communications; **Mary-Liz Power**, press secretary; **Craig MacBride**, senior communications adviser; **Ellen Kuschnik**, issues management and parliamentary affairs adviser; **Loïc Paré**, issues management and parliamentary affairs assistant; **Danielle Boyle**, office manager and executive assistant to Mr. Blair; and **Hilary Hendricks**, executive assistant to Ms. Astravas.

Staff shuffle in Minister Fortier's office

Associate Finance and Middle Class Prosperity Minister **Mona Fortier** shook up her staff team last month, with a number of aides getting new titles, including director of communications **Émilie Gagnon**, who is now director of special projects to the minister.



Émilie Gagnon is now Ms. Fortier's director of special projects. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

Ms. Gagnon first joined Ms. Fortier's office in January, before which she'd spent the last almost year and a half as press secretary to National Revenue Minister **Diane Lebouthillier**. As special projects director, she'll be serving as a point person on priority projects being undertaken by the office, like supporting international elements of Ms. Fortier's mandate.

As per the minister's mandate letter, her marching orders include engaging the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development on its "Inclusive Growth" project, and building on the G7's 2019 Charlevoix commitment on equality and economic growth.

In turn, director of operations **Blue Knox** is now wearing two hats, having also taken on the added title of communications director.

A graduate of the University of Alberta, Ms. Knox is a former field organizer for the Liberal Party and was an early hire to Ms. Fortier's office after the minister was sworn into cabinet on Nov. 20, 2019.

Daniele Medlej continues as press secretary to the associate finance minister, but has now added on the title of senior adviser for communications, meaning she'll be doing more long-term communications planning and other projects on top of tackling media requests coming into the office.



Press secretary Daniele Medlej has added on the title of senior communications adviser. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

Ms. Medlej has been working for Ms. Fortier since the beginning of January, and was previously press secretary to then-science and sport minister **Kirsty Duncan**, and did the same for then-government House leader **Bardish Chagger** before that.

Venecia Laylor, who had been in place as executive assistant to Ms. Fortier's chief of staff, **Lucy Hargreaves**, is now a special assistant for policy.

Before joining Ms. Fortier's team at the beginning of the year, Ms. Laylor was working in Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau's** office as an assistant under its administration and special projects branch.

With her promotion, **Michelle Kapadia**, who'd already been serving as executive assistant to Ms. Fortier, is now also doing the same for her chief of staff, Ms. Hargreaves. Ms. Kapadia previously worked on the Hill as an assistant to Ms. Fortier as the Liberal MP for Ottawa-Vanier, Ont., and was part of her successful 2019 re-election campaign team.

Aside from those already mentioned, Ms. Fortier's political staff team also currently includes: **Graham Milner**, director of parliamentary affairs; **John Hearn**, policy adviser; **Kyle Fox**, operations assistant; and **Serge Laramée**, ministerial driver.

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News Government spending



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau agreed to work with provinces to mandate 10 days sick leave in exchange for NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh's support to suspend regular parliamentary sittings. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

House suspension deal offers 'insufficient' scrutiny of feds' spending amid COVID, say politicians

Four hours to study \$87-billion in government spending is inadequate, says Liberal MP John McKay, calling it 'short-term gain for a long-term pain.'

Continued from page 1

Meanwhile, the Special Committee on COVID-19, which sees a small number of MPs in the House and others attending remotely, will continue meeting four days a week until June 18, as will the reduced number of committees. In exchange for the NDP's support, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) said he'd work with provinces to mandate 10 days of paid sick leave.

Both the former and current parliamentary budget officers have raised concerns about an aspect of the plan that sets aside, at most, four hours for a committee of the whole meeting on June 17 to examine and pass a spending bill, "without amendment," that earmarks the majority of the \$87-billion for COVID-19 relief programs through statutory and new voted spending. That represents more than half of the \$150-billion the government has announced in measures to address the pandemic.

Spending measures from these supplementary spending estimates are usually examined by various committees, with the relevant ministers and departments called before MPs to explain the plans.

Liberal MP John McKay (Scarborough-Guildwood, Ont.) said the current approach isn't satisfactory, and he's frustrated by the limited involvement for backbench MPs.

"The core role of any Parliament is to hold the Crown to account, and four hours is clearly an inadequate opportunity to do so in the context of massive amounts of money to be spent, so I think this is maybe a short-term gain for a long-term pain," said Mr. McKay. "No, I don't think this works."

The more Canadians know about the government spending process, the better, he said, given the "direct and significant consequence" of these choices.

"It does circumvent, really, all committees' opportunity to look at what budget is being presented," he said, and as a member of the House Public Safety Committee, he'd like to ask questions about the \$11-billion set aside for that work.

"I'm a little frustrated because there's not really any meaningful role in this configuration for government backbenchers," he said, who are blocked from introducing motions or private member's bills, which typically have a long and unlikely path making it into law and are also on pause. "Essentially it's 90 minutes of everyone else asking

questions of various ministers and the rest of us get to watch."

It's "completely insufficient," said Stéphanie Chouinard, an assistant professor at Royal Military College, and especially concerning to see the loss of opposition days, and MPs' ability to regularly put forward Order Paper questions, which the government is required to answer.

"It is concerning in a time of pandemic, when the public coffers are already depleted and it is unclear what we're facing in the

next few months, that the opposition will not be able to do its work and the government's job will not be questioned in Parliament."

Typically the supplementary estimates are "the annoying little brother

or sister," and a fraction of the \$300-billion in spending set out in the main estimates, said Semhar Tekeste, a former Conservative staffer who worked in the whip's office from 2010 to 2013. This year, they're perhaps even more important, she said, "because of the substantial amount of money, lack of scrutiny, and how quickly it's being doled out."

"The government, with the help of the NDP, has sold out our democracy for a promise with a conversation with premiers on sick leave pay," she said, crippling Parliament's ability to do its job.

It's important to work smart in a crisis, countered John Delacourt, a consultant and former Liberal research bureau communications director, who said the spirit of the motion passed on May 26 provided a balance between accountability and the need to focus on economic recovery.

"The biggest challenge that a minority government faces is what it can provide by way of a plan for economic recovery," he said, and though there's a limit on the spending debate, it's "very hard to see where there would be significant opposition" to the measures put forward.

The decision to come back in September was "wisely made," he added, especially because the current committees, including finance and health, are driving substantive conversations, and the government has been offering daily updates about what's going on.

"Most Canadians are focused on the bigger picture of the challenges ahead here. That is in no way to suggest that Parliament does not play a crucial role, but it does mean the government is doing the larger economic landscape as its point of focus and that makes eminent sense."

Suspension reveals executive dominance

While the suspension couldn't have happened without the "acquiescence" of the NDP, the situation "lays bare" the reality that the Canadian parliamentary system is a "completely executive dominant system," said Philippe Lagassé, who is Barton Chair of International Affairs at Carleton University.

"We tend to think in a minority setting, we get a reprieve and there's a greater equilibrium between Parliament and the executive, but as we see, it only takes one opposition party to fold and we get the full brunt of executive dominance again," he said.

It seemed like House administration was a lot closer to supporting a hybrid Parliament than the government suggested, said Samara Centre for Democracy's Mike Morden, but that butted up against entrenched positions from the parties early on.

"I think there was a false choice being presented, both by the government and the official opposition, between having a Parliament and excluding most MPs," he said, noting Canada doesn't compare very well to similar Parliaments, given the choice to keep the House Chamber empty for as long as it has.

"There was a compromise sitting there."

The Liberals will have to "wear" this choice, said Prof. Chouinard, another "power grab" that she likened to Finance Minister Bill Morneau's (Toronto Centre, Ont.) March COVID-19 bill, which would have granted extended spending without parliamentary approval. Facing opposition outrage, the Liberals retreated on that effort for what she called "essentially a get-of-jail card" for Mr. Morneau on spending until 2021.

"This seems to fall in line with a minority government that refused to behave like a minority government."

Ms. Tekeste agreed, saying the

move is likely to hurt the Liberals politically in the long run.

As the rest of the country starts opening up and Canadians go back to work, they'll "realize during a pandemic the Liberals have essentially given themselves a vacation from scrutiny," she said. "They will care."

NDP 'weak compromise' likely not remembered

As for the NDP selling this as a political win, Ms. Tekeste said she doubted Canadians will remember it that way.

"I think the NDP made a very poor calculation in giving up this scrutiny on the [supplementary estimates] for what is essentially a promise for a conversation. It's going to bite them."

NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, B.C.) said the arrangement brings more opportunity for MP questions, while his finance critic Peter Julian (New Westminster-Burnaby, B.C.) argued on Twitter that the party helped bring more scrutiny of government, because the other parties were pushing for no summer sittings after June 21, and their agreement secured four.

It wasn't a "huge compromise" for the Liberals, Prof. Chouinard said, falling comfortably in line with policies they would have tried to put in place, and one they'll be happy to "flaunt" as their own.

"It seemed to me like quite a weak compromise in order for the giving up, essentially, of the role of the opposition—especially in a minority government," said Prof. Chouinard, noting Mr. Singh had been struggling to get more air time with the Bloc leader in the picture. "I'm not sure the NDP played their cards right."

And that's supposing the plan pans out, which several doubted given questions around funding for sick leave, and provinces, like Quebec, preferring the federal government stay out of the discussion. Nova Scotia Premier Stephen McNeil seemed uninterested in the idea, saying it was best left for the bargaining table while B.C. Premier John Horgan said the federal government should take the lead, and if not B.C. could develop its own program.

"It's going to be really hard for the government to institute this because they'll need support from provinces that are cash-strapped," Ms. Tekeste said.

It's natural for a government to want to operate primarily on its own, without bothering with procedures, sittings, and questions, especially when it's not planning to bring through a large-scale legislative agenda, said Prof. Lagassé, but it shouldn't be up to them.

The surprise, in this case, is having a party choosing to work "so closely with the government that they effectively abandon their role as opposition."

The political effect that likely worries some partisans, he noted, is Mr. Trudeau will continue to communicate directly through Canadians' screens and radios, rather than through Parliament.

"Right now there's going to be one political voice and it's going to be the government's."

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Liberal MP John McKay says he's frustrated the approach limits backbench involvement. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Parliamentary association chair defends Canada-China group as critics call for its suspension

'I think we do need to review the activities of the legislative association,' says Conservative MP and vice-chair Michael Cooper.

Continued from page 1

"Its [purpose is] to be frank and chat with each other and maintain as good relations as we can, in spite of possible differences—in this case, serious differences between our approach as a country and our value system and their thought pattern," Sen. Massicotte said about the association. "But just because you disagree with somebody doesn't mean you put an end to it."



Chinese Ambassador Cong Peiwu hosted Independent Senator Paul Massicotte and Liberal MP Han Dong at the Chinese Embassy in Ottawa on Feb. 26. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

He said if the association is suspended, the dialogue between the two countries would be damaged.

Macdonald-Laurier Institute fellow Shuvaloy Majumdar called for the association's suspension in a *National Post* op-ed last week, citing China's National Party Congress' imposition of a national security law on Hong Kong which threatens the "one country, two systems" foundation of the region.

"Canadian Parliament has no business legitimizing the masquerade of Beijing's National Party Congress as it institutionally represses Hong Kong's Legislative Council and constitutional rights," wrote Mr. Majumdar, a former policy director to multiple foreign affairs ministers in the government of then-prime minister Stephen Harper.

Foreign Affairs Minister François-Philippe Champagne (Saint-Maurice-Champlain, Que.) released a joint statement last week with his counterparts in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, calling the imposition of the national security law "a deep concern" and "in direct conflict with its international obligations under the principles of the legally-binding, UN-registered Sino-British Joint Declaration."

Mr. Majumdar told *The Hill Times* that the parliamentary association gives the

Chinese Communist Party "unrivalled access to lobby Canadian Parliamentarians."

"If you were interested in the spirit of dialogue with the Chinese people, then why not also pursue similar arrangements with Hong Kong's Legislative Council or with Taiwan's Parliament in conjunction with the National Party Congress?" he noted. "That's not happened. So this is not about dialogue."

Mr. Majumdar added that China's National Congress has "broken faith" with the spirit of "honest dialogue" with the imposition of the national security law on Hong Kong and that they are "subverting and distorting" an understanding of China in Canada that is coming at the cost of Canadian interests.

"It ought not to be tolerated."

Sen. Massicotte, who met with Chinese Ambassador Cong Peiwu alongside Mr. Dong on Feb. 26, said he raises the issues of disagreement in all the meetings the association has with Chinese officials.

"You can do it politely," he said. "You can raise up issues that you don't agree on, but you don't have to be disagreeable."

"Usually we'll say we agree to disagree because we don't have the same starting point or same culture. We don't brush over our differences," said Sen. Massicotte, calling discussions with the Chinese ambassador "very cordial."

Conservative MP Michael Cooper (St. Albert-Edmonton, Alta.), vice-chair of the Canada-China Legislative Association, said there should be a consideration to the association's role going forward.

"I think we do need to review the activities of the legislative association," he said. "Does that mean suspending the association? Perhaps. But we need to have those discussions in light of what needs to be and what will be a different relationship between Canada and China, at least in the short and intermediate term, as a result of the fallout of COVID-19 and the unlawful actions the Chinese Communist regime has taken against Hong Kong."



Conservative MP Michael Cooper says amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the parliamentary group has been 'inactive.' *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Mr. Cooper said that there needs to be an overall evaluation of Canada's bilateral relationship with China stemming from how Beijing handled the COVID-19 pandemic, including the use of Magnitsky sanctions on Chinese officials who were



Independent Senator Paul Massicotte, co-chair of the Canada-China Legislative Association, says that without the parliamentary dialogue between the two countries would be damaged. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

involved in "silencing and jailing whistleblowers" in the early days of the virus' outbreak and officials "involved in the cover-up" of the pandemic.

He said the parliamentary association has not met as an executive since the start of the year.

"So at this point, the association, speaking as an executive, has been inactive," Mr. Cooper said.

Debate over parliamentary group comes at tipping point for Canada-China relations

It was feared that a B.C. court judge ruling against Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou last week on a "double criminality" principle, which continued her extradition trial, would further inflame tensions between Canada and China.

The Chinese Communist Party-supported *Global Times* stated that the decision would bring about the "worst-ever" period in the bilateral relationship. So far, retaliation has been muted, as reported by *The Globe and Mail*, with a Chinese government spokesperson commenting on the 50th anniversary of Canada-China relations.

Ms. Meng was arrested in December 2018 at the behest of the United States. The arrest of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor in China soon followed in apparent retaliation. The two Canadians have been detained by Chinese authorities ever since.

The parliamentary association took a trip to China in January 2019 shortly after the arrests of Mr. Kovrig and Mr. Spavor, during which then-co-chair and now-retired senator Joseph Day said the detained Canadians were not on the agenda. Mr. Cooper, who was also on the trip, brought the cases up and said raising the issues didn't help "in the sense that they are still in China," but added at the same time that discussing the issue "did not hurt."

Former Canadian ambassador to China Guy Saint-Jacques, who served in the post from 2012 to 2016, said the Canada-China Legislative Association "can be useful."

He added that it takes "a bit of guts" for Canadian Parliamentarians to raise contentious issues with Chinese authorities, noting that he has experienced foreign affairs ministers that were reticent to raise contentious issues with China.

"If it's properly managed, we should proceed," he said. "But, on the other hand, if something dramatic were to occur in Hong Kong, I think we will have to think about sanctions against China and then maybe the suspension of those [association] visits would be required."

"The key is preparation," said Mr. Saint-Jacques of when Canadian Parliamentarians in the association travel to China.

He said that when he was ambassador he would "regularly" meet with the members of the association when he returned to Ottawa to give briefings on important issues and prepare them for upcoming trips.

When the group arrived in China, the visit would start with a breakfast at the embassy to give the MPs and Senators the latest information that Canadian diplomats

in China have collected before they met with Chinese officials, he said.

With Parliamentarians from many different parties and political ideologies, Mr. Saint-Jacques said it gives the Chinese officials an insight into the Canadian system where politicians don't speak with one voice, unlike in the Chinese system.

While he said that the association can serve to legitimize the National Congress, it is better than the alternative of no contact.

"If you have no contacts, then you leave them to think that things work the same way here than over there," he said.

Brock University professor Charles Burton, a former counsellor at the Canadian Embassy in Beijing, said he has long been calling for the suspension of the association.

"I feel that we are being played by the Communist Party in this association," said Prof. Burton, a Macdonald-Laurier Institute fellow.

He said the parliamentary association serves as a way for the Chinese government to establish "moral equivalency" between Canada's Parliament and China's non-democratic National Congress.

"The Members of Parliament who go have a very pleasant time in China with delicious banquets and interesting tourism ... but I don't see it as furthering the interest of Canada in any way," he said.

Prof. Burton said Parliamentarians can engage with Chinese diplomats in Canada through other forums such as the Special House Committee on Canada-China Relations.

"Typically, Parliamentarians don't have the expertise to represent Canada's position effectively and tend to be put into photo-ops and make joint statements that support the Chinese Communist Party's agenda in Canada," he said.

Since the creation of the association, there has been no adoption of democratic reform in the National Congress, Prof. Burton said, adding that the group hasn't had "any positive impact" on fostering the development of parliamentary democracy in China.

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News Reconciliation

Pandemic makes delayed MMIWG action plan more urgent, say Senators, advocates

Consultations are 'dragging on,' say some who argue COVID-19 shouldn't be used as an excuse for slow work and bad communication from the Liberals.

Continued from page 1

domestic violence, has increased because of the COVID-19 crisis, said Progressive Senator Lillian Dyck, making it all the more reason to implement the calls for justice soon.

"In fact, we need to double down and really look at it, because it's made it worse," said the Saskatchewan Senator, calling it "depressing" and "disappointing" to arrive at the report's June 3 anniversary without a plan in place.

There's been "very poor communication" from the government to prepare communities and families awaiting the announcement and give a sense of what work had been done on the calls to justice in the eight or nine months before COVID-19 hit, she said.

The pandemic has likely "exacerbated" the danger many women face, agreed Independent Senator Margaret Dawn Anderson (Northwest Territories).

"We need an action plan now, more urgently than ever. A failure by the federal government to implement the plan in a timely manner is complacency and continues to risk the lives of Indigenous women and girls leaving families without support and recourse," said Sen. Anderson by email, and it must dismantle a system "that continues to place Indigenous women and girls throughout Canada at a disproportionate risk of injustice, violence, disappearance, and murder."

While some women's organizations that are consulting with the government said the delay was understandable and had pushed off their own work and feedback on the plan, most questioned why the work hadn't already been done by the time pandemic was declared in March.

The consultation "is dragging on," said Algonquin Anishinabeg Grand Chief Verna Polson.

"It took [years] to even have an inquiry take place and still today we're still waiting on the action plan and not much has been done," she said, adding it's not fair to the families to have to wait again.

NDP MP Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, Man.) said she's "outraged" by the government's delay, and sees COVID-19 as an excuse when it had many months before the mid-March lockdown saw all of the government's attention focused on the pandemic.

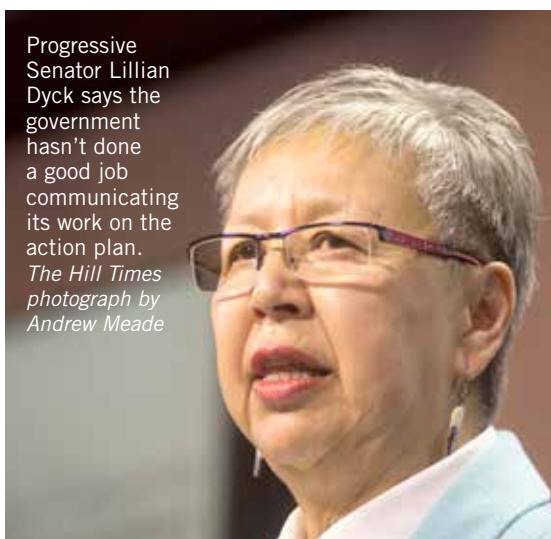


Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister Carolyn Bennett says the government is still working on the action plan for missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls after missing a June deadline, but didn't say when it will be ready. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

"There is no excuse when looking at a life-and-death matter to stall a response to it. Families and our community have been waiting long enough and families and people who have suffered violence deserve justice," said Ms. Gazan. "There is no reconciliation in the absence of justice."

Bennett promises 'concrete measures'

The government is working to put in place "concrete measures" with Indigenous, provincial, and territorial partners to prepare a plan that is "distinctions-based, regionally relevant and accountable," said Ms. Bennett, who was not available for an interview, in an emailed statement.



Progressive Senator Lillian Dyck says the government hasn't done a good job communicating its work on the action plan. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented "unique engagement challenges for everyone involved in this process," she said, and so there is still work to do. She did not say what the government's new timeline is.

"[We] recognize the work that remains ahead, and are ensuring we get this right for survivors, families, and communities across the country. We will not let them down."

Her office highlighted work to address systemic issues highlighted throughout the report, including major reforms to the

Indigenous child welfare system through Bill C-92, addressing the loss of language and culture through Bill C-91 to preserve and protect Indigenous languages, and making changes to the Criminal Code in Bill C-75 that set tougher sentences in cases of domestic assault.

Sen. Dyck said she was proud to have helped make amendments to the Liberal criminal justice bill, marking the first time Indigenous women are mentioned in the code that now calls for stronger sentences against people who hurt Indigenous women.

"We don't take violence against Indigenous women seriously in our Criminal Code," said Sen. Dyck, who last Parliament was among those who successfully pushed the government to remove sex discrimination in the Indian Act.

"They say justice is blind," she said. "It is blind. It's blind to the sexism. It's blind to the racism."

On May 29, the Liberals announced \$44.8-million over five years to build 12 new shelters, including 10 on-reserve and two in the territories. In March, the government set

aside \$50-million for women's shelters and sexual assault centres, including for facilities in Indigenous communities.

Funding for shelters is welcome, but the announcement seems to have come following pressure from groups upset by the delay, said Lorraine Whitman, president of the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC). Even before the delay, Ms. Whitman said she was frustrated with Ms. Bennett's office, which she said didn't acknowledge receipt of recommendations when sent.

And while Ms. Bennett has said consultation is ongoing, including through recent Zoom calls with more than 200 people on the line, Ms. Whitman said there's "no room for discussion."

"That's not what my definition of consultation is," said Ms. Whitman, who stressed that any action plan needs to have secure funding that goes to Indigenous organizations. She said she'd like to see more funding to NWAC, given it was at the forefront of much of this work, launching in 2005 the Sisters in Spirit research project creating a database of missing women and girls to track the extent of the problem.

Liberal MP Lenore Zann (Cumberland-Colchester, N.S.), who is a member of the House Indigenous and Northern Affairs Committee, said that the shelter announcement shows direct investment on important measures touched on in the inquiry is happening even as the action plan is being worked on. Though she said the pandemic "knocked our plan sideways" with the government, "the determination is there, the compassion is there, and the solidarity."

"We're frustrated, too. There's nothing more wanted than to move ahead than with an action plan that is created together with all of the various Indigenous leaders and survivors," but the focus needs to be on protect people's health, said Ms. Zann.

'It's all of us that need to take action'

Some said the delay is understandable, as it's difficult to proceed on a co-developed approach if some organizations haven't yet submitted their recommendations to the government.

Dawn Lavell-Harvard, president of the Ontario Native Women's Association, said they're disappointed the action plan isn't ready, but sympathetic, as the pandemic meant they're also delayed in giving feedback.

The needs for ONWA's services have "skyrocketed" during the pandemic. Amidst a rise of violence, many women they sup-

port have had their safety plans out the window. They can no longer rely on a friend's place, for example, while some question going to a shelter given the threat of catching a deadly disease.

When the action plan comes, it needs mechanisms to make sure that it's more than just another document.

"There needs to be clear, transparent, built-in accountability to ensure it has outcomes that we're expecting."

Melanie Omeniho, president of the Women of the Métis Nation, said she's been satisfied with the consultations and the "dramatic" events of COVID-19 have necessarily slowed progress as organizations, like hers, work "flat-out" to address the pandemic.

"I am not waiting for Minister Bennett to come walking off of a mountain with a stone rock with all the answers and the magic wand that's going to fix this, anytime, whether it's June 3 or past that. It's all of us that need to take action," she said, and it's important that provinces and territories and invested partners "stand up" and say what they'll do to affect change.

In its feedback, the Women of the Métis Nation has urged for a "distinctions-based" process, so that Métis needs are considered on their own, and not lumped in with the term Indigenous.

Inuit needs are also distinct and should be treated as such in the plan, agreed Rebecca Kudloo of the Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada.

Inuk women are more isolated, and living in fly-in communities makes trying to escape more difficult and expensive. Lack of housing is an issue, and while it's not clear where in the North those two shelters will go, it won't be enough, said Ms. Kudloo. Some of the highest rates of violence in Canada are experienced by Inuk women, and while she's spoken about the "glaring gap" in funding to shelters, there also needs to be more resources for healing.

Ms. Kudloo said when she spoke to Ms. Bennett last week, she asked that the plan be ready by the end of the year.

Ms. Omeniho also worries about retraumatizing families who put their "hearts and souls" in the process and said she thinks the government is taking the matter seriously and their stories are being respected.

Independent Senator Mary Coyle (Antigonish, N.S.) also said she thinks the government is listening and trying to sincerely address complex issues, but that means accountability—especially given the MMIWG report calls for regular reporting.

"We can't delay it much longer," said Sen. Coyle, a member of the Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples. "Summer is upon us, but to me there has to be a commitment now. ... Let's not leave it open ended."

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‘We’re past talk’: MPs call on feds to re-examine policies underpinning systemic racial inequities

‘Breaking a Starbucks window is vandalism; getting tear gas in the face is violence. We must never confuse the two,’ says NDP MP Matthew Green.

Continued from page 1

that dismantles white racism. Whether or not he chooses that course of action is indicative of his [position],” said NDP MP Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, Ont.).

Demonstrations have erupted in recent days amid the COVID-19 pandemic, drawing out tens of thousands after the death of a Black Minnesota man, George Floyd, whose final moments were captured in a widely seen video showing him being pinned down for eight minutes with a police officer’s knee pressed to his neck. His death has since been ruled a homicide by an official post-mortem; one of the four police officers at the scene is facing charges.

Mr. Floyd’s death followed an incident closer to home in Toronto, where 29-year-old Regis Korchinski-Paquet fell 24 storeys to her death while in the presence of police officers who were called to her home by her family. Ms. Korchinski-Paquet’s relatives had enlisted their help to take her to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health for treatment. The family initially claimed the police had pushed her to her death, but didn’t include that allegation in their official statement. An investigation by Ontario’s civilian police watchdog, the Special Investigations Unit, is being conducted.

The circumstances surrounding Ms. Korchinski-Paquet’s death, along with long-standing grievances over decades of police misconduct in Canada and events south of the border, sparked a series of peaceful protests in the country.

Liberal MP Adam Vaughan (Spadina-Fort York, Ont.) echoed Mr. Green’s sentiment implicating government leaders and legislators, including himself, for not responding with the urgency needed to make sweeping reforms federally to Canada’s social and criminal justice system, whether by putting an end to mandatory-minimum sentencing or providing adequate funding to address economic inequities.

“I think it’s time to really seriously think about how we do anti-Black racism policy at all levels of government,” Mr. Vaughan, parliamentary secretary to the social development minister and a former Toronto city councillor, said. “It’s not good enough to say we see anti-Black racism if we’re not prepared to follow through on change.”

Mr. Vaughan pointed to Ms. Korchinski-Paquet’s death, noting that, while an investigation is still underway, it might have been avoided had the federal government taken steps—long called for by communities—to mandate health-care providers be called in when admitting a person to a mental-health facility, rather than requiring the police step in.

“The longer you ignore this, the more violent the protest becomes,” Mr. Vaughan said when asked if he’s concerned protests here could ever reach the same crisis point as in the U.S. “The day of reckoning is coming, and if we don’t listen, and act on what’s heard, seen, and known to be

from the “very real issues” around racism the country faces.

“The framing of protests as vandalism, which is the destruction of private property versus the extrajudicial killing of Black people [over decades], further demonstrates that this government prioritizes private property over the lives of humans in this country,” Mr. Green said. “Breaking a Starbucks window is vandalism; getting tear gas in the face is violence. We must never confuse the two.”

Montreal police responded to the escalation in the protests on May 31 by throwing tear gas and using pepper spray to quell those incidents.

“Until we have a system in place of enforcement of the law that doesn’t preclude [labelling] domestic residents as enemies of the state, we will continue to have state violence,” said Mr. Green. “Given the economic uncertainty, there’s going to be increasing civic unrest, which will precipitate increased violence.”

He referenced the former government’s anti-terrorism bill,



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on June 2 acknowledged that many in Canada still don’t recognize that systemic racism exists within their own borders. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

well-being of our community, we don’t have much of a choice but to attend [the demonstration],” she said. “I was at the protest in the 1990s for Rodney King. The fact that I have to now drive my teenage children to protest ... it’s hurtful, it’s frustrating.”

‘Our community is hurting’

The Hill Times attempted to reach several MPs who represent ridings with a high proportion of people who either identify as white or Black, several of whom did not respond by deadline.

Liberal MP Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver-Sunshine Coast-Sea to Sky Country, B.C.), who represents a riding that is predominantly white at 75 per cent, said that it “sometimes” takes an event to galvanize people’s attention in pushing for progress faster, rather than waiting for incremental change.

“There’s been a shift over time to more gender policymaking, but we have to go a step further and think about race-responsive policy,” Mr. Weiler said.

“Unless we actually start to address and take a serious look at the institutions we have in place ... [those tensions] will continue to flare up,” she added.

In an emailed statement, Conservative MP Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia-Lambton, Ont.), who represents a riding where 91 per cent of people identify as white, said: “There is no place in Canada for racism. I was disheartened to see protests in our country disobeying the social distancing protocols for COVID-19 and turning violent. Violence is never a solution.”

Ms. Gladu wasn’t the only one who expressed concern over the large gatherings.

Liberal MP John McKay (Scarborough-Guildwood, Ont.) said the protests are in response to “clear instances of racism in larger society,” adding that racial inequities are evidenced in the lower rates of students who enrol in post-secondary education among certain racialized communities relative to the broader population.

But he also expressed concern that the demonstrations, which brought thousands in close contact, may have set back months of progress in curbing the COVID-19 infection rate.

“Did people know what they were actually doing? Did the people on the streets say, ‘to hell with COVID’? I suspect that there wasn’t a lot of thought into that,” he said. “My guess is this was largely a reaction of anger, frustration at systemic concerns and abuses, and it just blew up. People just had to get out,” he said.

Many protesters wore masks, but with the size of the crowds, physical distancing was near impossible.

Asked what she would say to those who expressed concern that several thousands took to the streets this past weekend to register their collective frustration over police misconduct while the threat of the pandemic hasn’t fully receded, Ms. Caesar-Chavannes said: “Too bad. Our community is hurting.”

She noted that racialized communities, many of whom occupy public-facing jobs, are disproportionately being affected by the pandemic and are dying at higher rates, as seen in the U.S. In Canada, race-based data is scarce, making it hard to comprehend the full extent to which it is impacting certain demographics.

“If that’s your biggest concern, if your biggest concern is in the midst of [the pandemic] is we are protesting, maybe you don’t have enough empathy,” she said.

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A memorial for George Floyd, the Minnesota man who died of asphyxiation while a police officer pinned him down with a knee to his neck. *Photograph courtesy of Unsplash*

true, the civil unrest is on us, and not on the protesters.”

While federal politicians in Canada have refrained from denouncing demonstrators marching peacefully through the streets during the pandemic, Mr. Green said the move to condemn the actions of a few in Montreal who resorted to vandalism “completely misses the point.”

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) on June 2 acknowledged that many in Canada don’t recognize systemic racism exists within their own borders, echoing earlier statements he made in recent days in support of the right to peaceful protest. He also denounced, on June 1, the actions of some protesters in Montreal who vandalized businesses the day before, saying it detracts

C-51, legislation introduced by the Harper government that was later reformed by the Trudeau Liberals. The changes that were made fell short of what critics argue is needed to protect civil liberties, preserving the powers of police to detain someone who they suspect will commit a terrorism offence as a preventative measure. Black Lives Matter organizers, among others, have called for it to be repealed.

Former Liberal MP Celina Caesar-Chavannes said she participated in the Toronto demonstration on May 31, bringing her teenage children along in a show of solidarity with Mr. Floyd and Ms. Korchinski-Paquet.

“There’s so much going on in the Black community right now, and as conscious individuals who are concerned about the

As an MP who represents a riding where many ticked off the Caucasian box on census forms, NDP MP Lindsay Mathysen (London-Fanshawe, Ont.) said she feels an obligation to try to bridge gaps within her community through, for example, hosting events that bring different communities together.

“The demographics are changing significantly. There’s a growing Muslim and Arabic population,” she said. “It is changing, but those old social norms, they still do hang on. I think it’s interesting, this undercurrent of something we always know is there.”

She agreed with Mr. Weiler that there’s a need to constantly apply an “equity lens” when it comes to assessing a policy’s impact on certain populations.

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Parties of the past

The Hill Times photographs by Sam Garcia

With COVID-19 putting a pause on diplomatic gatherings in Ottawa, *The Hill Times* is offering a look back with (some never-before-seen) images of celebrations and special events that have occurred at this time in years past.

John McCain pops in



Then-U.S. Senator and presumptive Republican presidential candidate John McCain swept through Ottawa on June 20, 2008, to give a speech at the Château Laurier for the Economic Club of Canada.

Georgia has party on its mind



Ketevan Markozia, second secretary of the embassy of Georgia, and Ketevan Fraser, assistant to the ambassador, at the May 28, 2012, Georgia national day party at the National Arts Centre.



Then-Georgian Ambassador Levan Metreveli, then-Lithuanian Ambassador Ginte Damusis, and then-Angolan Ambassador Agostinho Da Silva Neto.

Château centennial



Then-general manager Claude Sauvé, his wife, Deborah, Julie Jacobson, wife of the then-U.S. ambassador, then-U.S. Ambassador David Jacobson, and Estrellita Karsh celebrate the Château Laurier's 100th anniversary on May 31, 2012.



Ms. Karsh and Mr. Sauvé.



Mr. Sauvé and former deputy prime minister Herb Gray.

Swedish envoy has house party



Stéphane Dion, then-Liberal leader, and Ingrid Iremark, then-ambassador of Sweden, at a national day party at the Swedish envoy's official residence on June 6, 2008.



Ms. Iremark and then-Swiss Ambassador Werner Baumann.



Then-Macedonian Ambassador Sasko Nasev and then-Malaysian High Commissioner Dennis Ignatius.

Parliamentary Calendar



Finance Minister Morneau to chat about COVID-19 impact on urban economy in June 5 virtual roundtable

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3

House Not Sitting—The House is suspended until Wednesday, June 17. However, during this adjournment time, a Special COVID-19 Pandemic Committee has been established, composed of all members of the House, and will meet on an expanded schedule of Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays until June 18. As per a government motion tabled May 25, the House will sit Wednesday, June 17, to consider supplementary spending estimates, and again on July 8, July 22, Aug. 12, Aug. 26. The House is then scheduled to return in the fall on Monday, Sept. 21, for three straight weeks, as per the original sitting calendar. It was scheduled to adjourn for one week and to sit again from Oct. 19 until Nov. 6. It was scheduled to break again for one week and to sit again from Nov. 16 to Dec. 11. And that would be it for 2020. We'll update you once the House calendar has been confirmed.

Senate Not Sitting—The Senate has extended its suspension due to the COVID-19 virus until June 16. The Senate was scheduled to sit June 2-4; June 9-11; June 16-18; and June 22, 23, it was scheduled to break on June 24 for St. Jean Baptiste Day; and it was scheduled to sit June 25 and June 26. The Senate was scheduled to break from June 29 until Sept. 22. The Senate's possible September sitting days are Sept. 21, 25, 28. It's scheduled to sit Sept. 22-24 and Sept. 29-Oct. 1, with a possible sitting day on Friday, Oct. 2. The possible Senate sitting days are Oct. 5, 9, 19, 23, 26, and 30. It's scheduled to sit Oct. 6-8; it takes a break from Oct. 12-16; it will sit Oct. 20-22; and Oct. 27-29. The November possible Senate days are: Nov. 2, 6, 16, 20, 23, 27, 30. It's scheduled to sit Nov. 3-5; it will take a break from Nov. 9-13; it will sit Nov. 17-19; and Nov. 24-26. The possible December Senate sitting days are: Dec. 4, 7, and 11. The Senate is scheduled to sit Dec. 1-3; Dec. 8-10 and it will sit Dec. 14-18. We'll also update you once the Senate calendar has been confirmed.

Women in Leadership Online Discussion—ISG Senator Nancy Hartling will take part in a virtual panel discussion on "Women in Leadership" hosted by BPW Greater Moncton. She will be joined by Cindy Comeau of C3 Leadership and Nadine Duguay-Lemay, CEO of Dialogue NB. Wednesday, June 3, from 6:30-8 p.m. ADT. Register online via Eventbrite.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3—SATURDAY, JUNE 6

Hot Docs Festival Online—Hot Docs will be presented online this year because of the pandemic, from May 28 to June 6. Introduced at the 2017 Hot Docs Festival, the \$50,000 award and cash prize have traditionally been given to the Canadian feature documentary screened at the Hot Docs Festival that receives the highest average rating as determined by audience poll. This year, the award will honour the top five Canadian documentaries in the audience poll and will present each director with a cash prize of \$10,000. The Hot Docs Festival Online will offer more than 135 official selections for at-home audiences to stream directly from www.hotdocs.ca on its recently launched Hot Docs at Home TVOD platform. Although the festival wraps on June 6, a majority of films will be available for extended post-festival viewing until June 24. The film lineup is available at www.hotdocs.ca/festivalonline.

THURSDAY, JUNE 4

Ottawa International Writers Festival Virtual Book Launch: On Pandemics: Deadly Diseases from Bubonic Plague to Coronavirus—Dr. David Waltner-Toews, author of *On Pandemics*, and a leading epidemiologist, will talk about what attracts animal diseases that jump to humans—zoonoses—why they've become more common in recent history and how we can keep them at

bay. This is an online event happening on June 4, at 1 p.m. (ET), hosted by CBC's Lucy van Oldenbarneveld. Contact Ottawa International Writers Festival at 613-562-1243 or infor@writersfestival.org.

FRIDAY, JUNE 5

Impacts of COVID-19 on Canadian Urban Economy—Finance Minister Bill Morneau will take part in a virtual meeting analyzing "Impacts of COVID-19 on Canadian Urban Economy," hosted by the Urban Economy Forum, UN-Habitat, and the Government of Canada. Mr. Morneau will be joined by Dr. Eduardo Lopez Moreno, head of Knowledge and Innovation at UN-Habitat. Canadian mayors, councillors, and city leaders are invited to attend this virtual roundtable and preparatory meeting of the Urban Economy Forum 2020. Friday, June 5, at 11 a.m. EDT. Register online via Eventbrite.

MONDAY, JUNE 8

All Five Eyes on 5G—The Conference of Defence Associations Institute Expert Series will present this webinar in collaboration with the Center for a New American Security on June 8 at 3 p.m. EDT and on June 9 at 5 a.m. AEST. This webinar will bring together experts from the U.S., U.K., Australia, and New Zealand to present a policy briefing and to debate controversial questions like, which providers can be trusted, how do we build trustworthy networks, and what does the future intelligence sharing arrangements look like in the context of 5G? Moderated by former CSIS director Richard Fadden, the speakers will be from the Rand Corporation; CNAS; Oxford University; Waikato University in New Zealand; and Charles Sturt University in Australia. Follow this link to register: <https://cdainstitute.ca/all-five-eyes-on-5g/>

THURSDAY, JUNE 11

Getting Trolled on the Campaign Trail—Ryerson University's Institute for Future Legislators hosts a webinar on "Getting Trolled on the Campaign Trail: How Candidates Address Online Harassment and Incivility," featuring Grace Lore, lecturer at the University of Victoria and expert in women's political representation and best practices in gender-based policy. Thursday, June 11, from 1-2:30 p.m. Register online.

SATURDAY, JUNE 13 & SATURDAY, JUNE 27

Canada Summit for National Progress 2020—The Canada Summit for National Progress is a groundbreaking gathering of established leaders, emerging leaders, dreamers and doers who are committed to building a strong Canada for future generations. If you are a business person, non-profit organization leader, elected official, community leader, community volunteer, student, senior or anyone with a heart for Canada and a desire to work for tangible change, then this event is for you. Presenters include Stockwell Day, former opposition leader; Niels Veldhuis, Fraser Institute president; Tony Clement, former federal health minister; and Joy Smith, former Conservative MP. Event participants will hear from prominent national voices on key issues and have the option of participating in think tank sessions. The summit is a free, two-day event, taking place on Saturday June 13 and Saturday, June 27. Register at canadasummit.ca.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17 & THURSDAY, JUNE 18

Conservative Party Leadership Debates—The Conservative Party will host leadership debates on June 17 (French) and June 18 (English) in Toronto. Both debates will be livestreamed at conservative.ca starting at 7 p.m., and Canadians will have the opportunity to submit questions for the candidates in advance. The debates will be moderated by the Leadership Election Organizing Committee co-chairs Dan Nowlan and Lisa Raitt. The debates will exclusively feature questions from the public, and Canadians are asked to submit their video recorded questions to our Conservative Leadership website www.cpc-leadership2020.ca by June 10.

The Parliamentary Calendar is a free events listing. Send in your political, cultural, diplomatic, or governmental event in a paragraph with all the relevant details under the subject line 'Parliamentary Calendar' to news@hilltimes.com by Wednesday at noon before the Monday paper or by Friday at noon for the Wednesday paper. We can't guarantee inclusion of every event, but we will definitely do our best. Events can be updated daily online, too.

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