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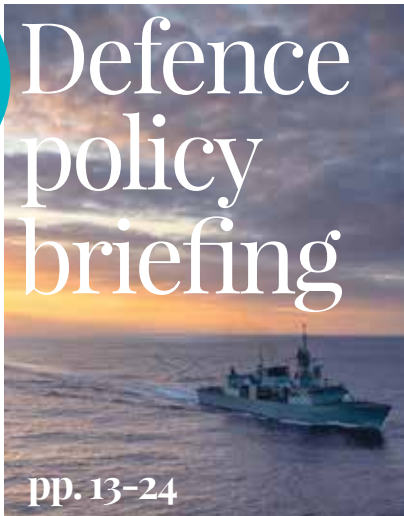
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THE HILL TIMES

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News

'Inevitable' return to testy federal-provincial relations will showcase discord with differing priorities, say politicians and experts

'We are seeing the inevitable conversation about crucial policy decisions on resources come to the fore with [where] inevitably you'll see differences,' says former Liberal strategist John Delacourt.



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has urged provincial premiers, like, clockwise from top left, Doug Ford, François Legault, Scott Moe, Brian Pallister, and Jason Kenney, and to 'do the right thing' to combat the surging second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

BY NEIL MOSS

As the collaborative approach between federal and provincial political leaders is collapsing,

politicos and experts say it is an "inevitable" return to normal as policy priorities diverge. Gone are the days of cordial co-operation between Prime

Minister Justin Trudeau and the premiers, as the prime minister urges the provinces to contain the spiralling second wave and the premiers hope for more federal

dollars to save failing businesses. Mr. Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) urged the provinces to contain

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News

MPs, Senators look to fill Centre Block's courtyards in recent reno recommendations

BY LAURA RYCKEWAERT

Centre Block's previously unused courtyards are likely to see new construction to provide more office space for Senators and larger House of Commons lobbies, following recent recommendations from the MP working group and Senate subcommittee charged with weighing in on renovation plans.

The most recent recommendation from MPs still has to be approved and endorsed by the

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News

What can Canadian pollsters learn from mistakes in American presidential polling?

BY NEIL MOSS

As questions mount about the performance of U.S. polling in successive presidential elections, some Canadian pollsters say there is an opportunity to learn from the mistakes of American firms, while others defend

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News

'Historic' effort to run two hybrid Chambers a balancing act

BY SAMANTHA WRIGHT ALLEN

After a months-long effort, Canada's two parliamentary Chambers have now moved to a

hybrid model, allowing Parliamentarians to participate both in Ottawa and at home, sharing resources along the way to reach that "historic" first, according to

the office of the Senator overseeing that work for the Upper Chamber.

The Senate's first full week joining the House of Commons

in hybrid sittings was a balance of health and safety precautions while focusing on the continuity

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HEARD ON THE HILL

by Neil Moss

Chinese ambassador turns down invite to appear at Canada-China Relations Committee



MPs on the Canada-China Relations Special Committee said they were 'disappointed' that Chinese Ambassador Cong Peiwu, pictured on March 12, chose not to appear. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

As the Special House Committee on Canada-China Relations continues studying the maimed relationship between Ottawa and Beijing, Chinese Ambassador Cong Peiwu declined an offer to showcase the Chinese government's perspective, the committee announced.

The committee noted in a Nov. 13 press release that it was "disappointed" that Mr. Cong declined the invitation.

"The Special Committee believes that a meeting, preferably an official meeting on the public record, is the most appropriate means by which the Ambassador can clarify past remarks and share his government's perspective regarding Canada-China relations generally, and the situation in Hong Kong particularly," the press release noted.

The committee is currently conducting a study on the situation in Hong Kong.

The committee is still open to meeting with Mr. Cong "at a mutually agreed time," according to the release. He was invited to appear before the committee in its Oct. 26 meeting.

Mr. Cong told *The Hill Times* in March that committee members have "no right" to ask him to appear.

"I think if they invite me to take part in a roundtable discussion, that's good. But if it's just like a hearing, simply they have no right to just ask me to be there like a business," he said at the time, noting that it wasn't the norm for foreign diplomats to appear before parliamentary committees.

Mr. Cong's fiery comments about Canada-China relations have generated Canadian attention. After a remark allegedly threatening the safety of Canadians in Hong Kong by Mr. Cong, Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland said his comments weren't "in any way in keeping with the spirit of appropriate diplomatic relations between two countries."

In the 42nd Parliament, the ambassadors for Latvia, Finland, and Moldova appeared before various committees. It is not customary for Canadian ambassadors to appear in front of a foreign country's legislative committees, but there are exceptions.

Mr. Cong cannot be compelled to appear before the committee given his diplomatic immunity status.

Canada's Ambassador to China **Dominic Barton** appeared before the committee in the last parliamentary session.

'We can't turn away': Trudeau champions press freedom at international conference

Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** warned about the dangers of the ongoing decline in press freedoms at an international conference devoted to world press freedom.

"A crackdown on the media puts democracy in danger," Mr. Trudeau said on Nov. 16. "It puts lives in danger."



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau says the world can't 'turn away' when it sees a crackdown on the freedom of the press. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Canada co-hosted the Global Press Freedom conference with Botswana. Canada ranks 16th on the Reporters Without Borders press freedom index and Botswana ranks 39th.

The first Press Freedom Conference was co-hosted by Canada and the United Kingdom in 2019.

"When we see [a crackdown on the media] happen we can't turn away. We can't wait for someone else to act," Mr. Trudeau said, noting that press freedom is "vital" to the world's "shared future."

"Today, we see citizens calling for change, from Hong Kong to Belarus, only to have the authorities attack the freedom of the press," Mr. Trudeau said. "We see journalists casting light on human

rights abuses and on this pandemic—people like Kyaw Soe Oo, Wa Lone, and Maria Ressa—only to face repression and violence."

Kyaw Soe Oo and Wa Lone are Reuters reporters who were jailed for their coverage of the Myanmar military's repression of the Rohingya people. Maria Ressa is a Philippine journalist who co-founded Rappler and was sentenced to six years in prison for cyberlibel, which was seen as retribution for her reporting on Philippine President **Rodrigo Duterte**.

"It is never acceptable for a journalist to be attacked for doing their job," Mr. Trudeau said. "It is never acceptable for a reporter to be thrown in jail for interviewing a peaceful protestor. And it is never acceptable for anyone anywhere to have their freedom of expression denied."

Canada and the United Kingdom unveiled the inaugural winner of the Canada-United Kingdom Media Freedom Award, which was awarded to the Belarusian Association of Journalists for their reporting in the face of increased crackdowns after the fraudulent election win of Belarusian President **Alexander Lukashenko**.

Mr. Trudeau's comments come after Canada's commitment to press freedom has been questioned after reporter **Karl Dockstader** was charged with mischief and disobeying a court order while covering an Indigenous protest in Caledonia, Ont. Foreign Affairs Minister **François-Philippe Champagne** told reporters that he wasn't aware of the case.

MPs congratulate Biden and Harris on election win, extend invitation for parliamentary address

As U.S. President **Donald Trump** refuses to concede the Nov. 3 presidential election, MPs unanimously supported an NDP motion to congratulate president-elect **Joe Biden** and vice-president-elect **Kamala Harris** on their victory.



MPs have invited U.S. president-elect Joe Biden to address Parliament. It would be the first parliamentary address since U.S. president Barack Obama's speech in 2016. *Photograph courtesy of Twitter/Joe Biden*

They also called on the Canadian government to invite the pair to visit Parliament and have Mr. Biden address the Lower Chamber.

Mr. Biden last was in Ottawa in an official capacity when Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** hosted him for a state dinner in December 2016.

Mr. Trump never visited Ottawa as president, but he did visit Canada when he travelled to Quebec for the 2018 G7 Summit in Charlevoix. Vice-President **Mike Pence** visited Ottawa in 2019.

Past U.S. president **Barack Obama's** first international trip was to Ottawa in 2009. He also gave an address to a joint sitting of Parliament in 2016.

The last joint sitting address was given by Dutch Prime Minister **Mark Rutte** in 2018.

Many past American presidents have addressed Parliament, including **Bill Clinton** in 1995, **Ronald Reagan** in 1981 and in 1987, **Richard Nixon** in 1971, **John F. Kennedy** in 1961, **Dwight D. Eisenhower** in 1953 and in 1958, and **Harry S. Truman** in 1947.

Mr. Trudeau was one of the first world leaders to congratulate Mr. Biden on his election victory and he was the first leader

to have a phone call with the president-elect, according to the PMO.

Bill Morneau gets Ivy League gig

If past finance minister **Bill Morneau's** bid to lead the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) falls short, he'll have a backup plan.



Former finance minister Bill Morneau will join past U.S. secretary of state John Kerry at Yale University's Jackson Institute for Global Affairs. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Mr. Morneau was named a senior fellow at Yale University's Jackson Institute for Global Affairs. He will teach a course on global economic policymaking in the spring. Past U.S. secretary of state **John Kerry** is also a fellow at the institute, as is Clinton White House chief of staff **John Podesta**.

Canada's finance minister from 2015 to 2020, Mr. Morneau resigned from cabinet and Parliament in August in the midst of the WE Charity controversy.

When he announced his resignation, Mr. Morneau said he was putting his name forward to be the next secretary general at the OECD. The leader of the 37-member multilateral forum is picked by consensus for a five-year term and will be selected by June 1, 2021.

O'Toole's pooch Wexford joins social media

Conservative Leader **Erin O'Toole's** dog has taken to social media.

Wexford O'Toole debuted his new Twitter and Instagram accounts last week, with a picture from the Official Opposition Leader's residence.



While not having the tradition of an American presidential pet, there have been many notable Canadian political canines.

Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** adopted a Portuguese water dog in 2016. But the most famous Canadian terriers belonged to past prime minister **William Lyon Mackenzie King** who had three Irish terriers—all three were named **Pat**. Mr. King was known to have Pat present when interviewing prospective cabinet ministers and staffers. Past Conservative leader **Andrew Scheer** also had a dog roam the halls of Stornoway.

Wexford's profile lists Mr. O'Toole as his best friend in his profile and it notes that he is a fetch enthusiast.

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The Hill Times



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have signed a letter urging the federal government to halt a planned tax hike amid the pandemic.



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Hon. Chrystia Freeland, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Finance
90 Elgin St. Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0G5

Dear Minister:

On behalf of the hundreds of thousands of businesses of all sizes across the country affected by the COVID-19 health and economic crisis, thank you for your continued engagement with and responsiveness as we continue to try to mitigate the devastating impacts of the pandemic on businesses and their employees.

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Thousands of Canadians are having their say at
www.change.org/freezeitforthem



Mexico calls on Canada to maintain new measures protecting migrant workers

Inspections, national housing standards, and continuing a binational contact group are among key commitments Mexico would like from Canada, says its consular head in Ottawa.

BY SAMANTHA WRIGHT ALLEN

The continuation and evolution of measures brought in to improve safety for Mexican workers in Canada after three deaths and multiple COVID-19 outbreaks is the top priority for this week's talks between the two countries, says a Mexican diplomat in Canada.

Held every year in person, this year's week-long virtual binational Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) meeting will culminate in an updated contract that Mexico hopes will include the continuation of a contact group to oversee the program, a Canadian liaison officer who works directly with Mexican consulates and employers across the country, progress on national housing standards, and a new model for inspections, said Juan Gabriel Morales, who heads the embassy's consular section and oversees the thousands of seasonal workers coming to Canada every year.

The program is "priority No. 1," said Mr. Morales, though discussions will need to go "deeper into the evaluation" of guidelines and the response to COVID-19, especially the "long-standing" issue of national housing standards.

"It was magnified by COVID, social distancing, and the conditions to protect the workers," said Mr. Morales, who said better support and access to grievance mechanisms is also called for and will be a topic during the virtual meetings, which will run from Nov. 17 to Nov. 20.

"We're trying to incorporate all the elements that were not only [learned] from COVID, but are related to enhancing the operation of the program," he said, with the pandemic highlighting the "essential" nature of their work in Canada's food supply chain.

Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), which administers the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP), said both the contact group and liaison position will carry on. "The dedicated liaison officer established for consulates and migrant network groups to address employer non-compliance, as well as regular reports on challenges and actions taken to address concerns, have been created on

a permanent basis," department spokesperson Samuelle Carbonneau said in an email.

A similar set of talks will be held with Caribbean nations from Nov. 23-27.

This season, Mr. Morales said about 22,154 Mexican workers came to Canada, far more than the 10,000 to 15,000 officials were expecting, given the tough start to the season. That accounts for one-third of all work permits issued through the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, with 66,000 handed out between January and August 2020, according to quarterly statistics from by Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

Following Canada's mid-March lockdown on the border, the first group from Mexico under the SAWP crossed on April 9 after being deemed essential to food supply in Canada and the countries reached an agreement to safeguard migrant workers' health and safety. Farmers had been ramping up pressure about their dire circumstances with limited staff to work crops close to harvest and the added strain from the required two-week quarantine period. But after three deaths of Mexican workers on Canadian farms, in June Mexico paused—and then a week later resumed—sending temporary farm workers to Canada, coming to an agreement on improved safety protections for labourers. That's when Canada established the contact group with Mexico and appointed a liaison officer to work with consulates and migrant-support organizations.

Asked if Canada has addressed the risks, Mr. Morales called the deaths "unfortunate," and proof the system needs to take better preventative measures.

"It was very sad for us and it was a hard decision that led to a pause in terms of reviewing and evaluating the risk," he said. But following the agreements and a "proactive approach," out of the nearly 22,000 workers who came to Canada, about 700 people were ultimately infected with the virus. Some of the existing protocols are still under review and there are ongoing investigations into the deaths, which he said Mexico plans to follow up on in all three cases.

In late October, Canada announced it would begin consulta-

tions, running until Dec. 22, on a proposal to establish minimum requirements for employer-provided accommodations for temporary foreign workers across Canada.

The health and safety of temporary foreign workers is a key priority and unsafe working or living conditions are "completely unacceptable," Employment Minister Carla Qualtrough (Delta, B.C.) previously said in a statement. The Liberal government also announced \$58.6-million in July for direct support to workers (\$7.4-million), strengthening the employer inspection regime (\$16.2-million), and improving health and safety on farms and in employee living quarters (\$35-million).

The contact group has been a place to air important issues and respond, Mr. Morales said.

"It is a forum for dialogue but also for rapid response to cases and oversight of outbreaks and other measures," he said, adding that it creates conditions for "a very fluid dialogue."



Employment Minister Carla Qualtrough said late last month the government will consult about establishing minimum requirements for employer-provided accommodations under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. The Mexican Embassy says national standards for housing has been a 'longstanding issue' and one that should be addressed before next season. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Ms. Qualtrough isn't expected to attend, and already spoke with her counterpart in the lead-up to the annual meetings, Mr. Morales said, with this week less a political than technical engagement.

"We're really looking forward to having a stronger and better program for the coming years, that it's always centred on protecting workers, the workers' rights, but also making sure that it's something that employers can abide by," he said.

Most inspections still virtual

Heading into the discussions around inspections of workplaces staffed by temporary foreign workers, updated numbers suggest the government has increased its pace in recent weeks. Between April 24 and Oct. 23, 3,120 cases were referred for inspection and 1,740—68 per cent—were completed—with the department posting better results than early in the pandemic, with

about half reported cases inspected as of late August. A further 565 were screened out due to cases of duplication or an employer never received workers this year due to COVID-19, according to ESDC's Oct. 30 update to *The Hill Times* on its inspection numbers.

There have been only 57 on-site inspections during that five-month period, 46 of which the department says are at various stages

of completion. Eleven have been completed, finding no evidence of employer non-compliance.

During that same timeframe, about 12 per cent of employers, or 206, of the completed cases had what ESDC described as minor issues that were corrected during the inspection to be brought into compliance. That's up slightly from the 10 per cent recorded between April and August. ESDC previously described wage problems and spacing of bunk beds as among that category of minor issues, which immigration critics took issue with.

"What that tells me is social distancing is not being honoured ... and people don't have proper housing and, consequently, workers are put at risk," NDP MP Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, B.C.) previously told *The Hill Times*, calling for a need to "fundamentally change" the Temporary Foreign Worker Program.

ESDC said it's possible an issue is considered minor if immediately corrected when "brought to their attention," said spokesperson Isabelle Maheu.

"For example, an employer may have misunderstood the requirement related to the use of bunk beds during quarantine," said Ms. Maheu in the emailed response. "Since COVID-19-related measures are new for employers, education on the immediate appropriate actions is the first approach prior to sanctioning the employer."

In the Migrant Workers Alliance for Change's June report, *Unheeded Warnings*, it pointed to repeat problems with social distancing including one where 50 workers from different states in Mexico were placed on one bus from the airport to the local farm hours. In another instance, nine workers, also from different states, were cramped in one house despite being in quarantine.

Inspections will be a focus this week, too, said Mr. Morales. Canada has said there will be a new model of inspections, said Mr. Morales, though he couldn't comment "very deeply" with more information expected to be presented this week.

"The ongoing consultations on proposed accommodations requirements will be part of the discussions. Mexico and other sources countries are invited to provide input on the process, as have employers, employer industry associations, workers and worker advocacy groups," Ms. Carbonneau said.

"We are looking forward to also engaging in the discussions of how inspections can be addressed in a more proactive way, preventing problems from happening," he said.

Ms. Kwan and others previously expressed concern that a virtual approach to inspections isn't as thorough, with employers given advance notice of upcoming inspections. ESDC said when inspections resumed on April 24, they were conducted with an introductory call to the employers, with workers interviewed by telephone or video chat.

Previously, ESDC said it launched four early on-site inspections in situations that were considered "egregious." The department said it couldn't offer an update on those cases due to privacy concerns, but it defines egregious instances as when the employer is facing allegations "with elements of abuse, reports that there has been an outbreak of the COVID-19 virus or reported allegations that show a blatant disregard for the regulations in place to protect workers and the Canadian public" from the virus.

ESDC said it does not comment on its investigations and cannot provide further details.

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Don't put yourselves in knots over all political family ties

My hope is this Ratansi mess does not lead to a politically motivated ill-thought-out reaction. A desire to erase all form of familial-related employment in federal politics would be dumb.



Tim Powers

Plain Speak

OTTAWA—Time for a true confession. My first job on Parliament Hill was given to me by my cousin, John Crosbie. He gave me an opportunity because my parents were family and they had always been supportive of him. In fact, he was the master of ceremonies at their wedding and he grew up with my mother. That was more than 25 years ago.

Fun additional fact: another cousin of mine was Crosbie the elder's last chief of staff, Bill Crosbie. Bill went on to become Canada's ambassador to Afghanistan, appointed by Stephen Harper, and head of counsellor affairs at Global Affairs Canada, where he had a stellar career. Whether either of us would have had the chances we did without a helping family hand—who knows? Times were different then and the family compact in federal politics was much more open.

Our entry into federal politics was not unusual then, and likely, despite some changes, is still not all that radicalized now. There are many people who were helped by the family tree in beginning their political careers. They can be found in all parties. Some names may sound familiar—Chrétien, Tobin, LeBlanc, Blaikie, etc.

So, as I watch the Yasmin Ratansi mess unfold, I'm cognizant of not being hypocritical. However, in the case of Ratansi, Member of Parliament for Don Valley East, Ont., she clearly broke parliamentary by-laws established in 2012, which prohibited the use of House of Commons resources to hire siblings.

First working for the MP from 2005 to 2011 (when Ratansi lost her seat), Ratansi's sister was rehired as her constituency assistant in 2017—a clear violation of the 2012 rule. According to reporting done by the CBC, Ratansi's sister went by a different name, assumedly to conceal her identity. CBC reported that, "Former staffers also said they saw Ratansi's sister hide in an office or under the desk when people came into the office who might recognize her ... they were instructed not to take photos of her work at events." If the coverup was worse than the crime in Watergate, that was also the case here.

While I can't recall Parliament Hill turning into a family farm in 2012 and don't know why that rule was made, it was, and Ratansi can't claim ignorance as her rehiring of her sister came five years after the regulation was established. She rightly was ushered out of the Liberal caucus—by her choosing or theirs, we will never know—and now is subject to different parliamentary investigations as well as a good dose of public shame. It is also a tad embarrassing for the prime minister, who took extensive criticism during the WE Charity scandal for favouring an organization that



MP Yasmin Ratansi's sister was rehired to work as her constituency assistant in 2017—a clear violation of the 2012 rule, and she should be called out, writes Tim Powers, but an overdone course correction is not needed. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

had provided economic opportunity to his family.

In matters of family employment, when legally allowed, it is better to be transparent while going above and beyond to make sure you are adhering to all regulations. Ratansi's approach is not the model anyone should follow. Her sister may have been imminently qualified, she just should have put

those skills to work in another Member of Parliament's office.

My hope is this Ratansi mess does not lead to a politically motivated ill-thought-out reaction. A desire to erase all form of familial-related employment in federal politics would be dumb. Canada is far too small to start excluding people from certain types of employment because of who they are related to. Checks and balances, yes. Transparency, most certainly. Proper reporting, a must, but an overdone course correction is not needed.

Politics, by its very nature, is so all-consuming that it's unsurprising to see people of the same bloodline enter into it. But family runs through just

about all lines of endeavour in this country and elsewhere. So, while Ratansi should be called out, let us not lose the plot entirely.

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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Opinion

The stakes are high, the window for constructive Canadian leadership won't be open for long, and failure to achieve institutional reforms could, ultimately, resuscitate populist, nationalist, grievance-driven policies that so damaged the international order under Donald Trump, writes Roy Norton. Flickr photograph by Gage Skidmore



Trump lost, so let's try to inoculate multilateralism from any revival of Trumpism

The Nov. 3 U.S. election outcome creates new opportunity for Canada to seek alignment of goals and policies with those of a more 'internationalist' U.S.



Roy Norton

Opinion

Trumpism dealt serious blows to the multilateral system put in place by the U.S. and its allies

beginning 75 years ago. While U.S. President Donald Trump will soon be gone, Trumpism could easily be revived if major institutional reforms acceptable to the U.S. aren't achieved. Canada and other U.S. friends have a responsibility to push for such reforms. Failure will trigger more of what we've seen—and do grave damage to the interests of democratic, free-market countries around the world.

Any "interests-based" Canadian foreign policy should always focus on two things. First, a mutually respectful relationship with the U.S. that minimizes bilateral

irritants, maximizes possibilities for overcoming difficulties between the two countries, and grows opportunities for constructive partnership, in North America and beyond.

Second, an effectively operating multilateral system capable of adapting to changing global power relationships while minimizing challenges to Canadian security (including climate change and public health); Canadian prosperity (we are among the most trade-dependent countries in the world); and Canadian values (including our belief in universal human rights).

While not powerless to defend ourselves, we've repeatedly been reminded since January 2017 how vulnerable our interests can be. The Nov. 3 U.S. election outcome creates new opportunity for Canada to seek alignment of goals and policies with those of a more "internationalist" U.S. As the Biden administration starts taking shape, we should prioritize reviving roles that Canada has successfully played in the past: interpreter (of the U.S. to the world and vice-versa) and partner (in helping the U.S. move toward achievable policies that strengthen the global rules-based order).

This doesn't mean becoming the U.S.' handmaiden. Historically, we've proven capable of nudging parts of the world toward a better appreciation of American needs while generating constructive ideas for American policy-makers to consider. When we have strong and friendly relations with the U.S., no country has more credibility than Canada in interpreting U.S. objectives to foreign interlocutors. No other country combines a sophisticated U.S. advocacy network with sky-high levels of trust among Americans. Generally, we've applied

our credibility and connections to influencing U.S. decisions on important bilateral issues. It's time to turn our standing in the U.S. to the goal of building and channeling U.S. support for realistic multilateral renewal that serves both their interests and ours.

Canada is already leading an effort at the World Trade Organization (WTO) to rehabilitate the dispute system (that U.S. actions caused to collapse). That's important. But if Americans have soured on the WTO, it's because they widely share the view, enunciated by the Trump administration, that advanced developing countries (particularly China) are cut too much slack. The U.S. isn't alone in that belief. Maybe we should become more ambitious, trying to build a coalition in support of more fundamental reforms, including reining in export subsidies.

The global climate crisis becomes more palpably grave every year. Canadians are properly upset that Trump withdrew the U.S. from the 2015 Paris Accord on Climate Change; we know that collective action cannot succeed without U.S. leadership. Trump played to a sentiment shared by many Americans: why should the U.S. risk sacrificing jobs when China's share of global greenhouse gas emissions is twice that of the U.S. (28 per cent versus 14 per cent), and China, via its Belt and Road and other programs, is constructing hundreds of coal plants worldwide whose emissions, for decades into the future, will worsen the global commons (but won't count against China's reduction commitments)? Unless greater fairness in burden-sharing is achieved, any American rejoining of the Paris agreement is vulnerable to Trumpian backlash.

The World Health Organization must be central to any co-

ordinated threats to global public health. But its centrality doesn't excuse serious lapses as COVID-19 became a pandemic. U.S. president-elect Joe Biden has said the U.S. will rejoin. That's good. The U.S. likely will want reforms that maximize WHO transparency and position it better to anticipate and control the next outbreak. We should share that goal—and work alongside the U.S. to achieve it.

These are but three examples. There are many, many more (NATO's future being a particularly important one to us). The key points are: the stakes are high; the window for constructive Canadian leadership won't be open for long; and failure to achieve institutional reforms in ways that reasonable Americans can embrace could, ultimately, resuscitate populist, nationalist, grievance-driven policies that so damaged the international order under Trump.

In choosing to prioritize successful multilateral reform, we should be starkly alert to the perils of failure: Canada's global interests stand little chance if large, much more powerful countries feel totally unconstrained by global rules, standards, and norms. If we choose to unleash it, energetic Canadian diplomacy—in the U.S. and elsewhere—could consequently contribute both to reviving multilateralism and to minimizing chances of renewed Trumpism.

Roy Norton is a fellow of the Canadian Global Affairs Institute; adjunct assistant professor of political science and public service at the University of Waterloo and resident fellow, Balsillie School of International Affairs; a global fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars' Canada Institute; and a former Canadian diplomat with four postings to the U.S.

The Hill Times

The civilizing effect (touch wood) of lockdown on social media

At the risk of jinxing it, it seems like the virtual spaces our lives have migrated to in lockdown have become more humane.



Lisa Van Dusen
What Fresh Hell

For all the incalculable personal tragedy and economic disruption the COVID-19 pandemic has produced, there have been, if not entirely countervailing positives, at least unintended consequences of the rare, uplifting variety. One of them is that social media seems to have become less toxic in lockdown.

I have nothing beyond anecdotal evidence for this assertion, but since I spend all week immersed in international political news and cultural content so I can compile *The Week in Policy*, *Policy* magazine's weekly global brief (and, not infrequently these days, parade of lunacies), I get the sense social media has become more humane even in a world otherwise led, at least until Jan. 20, 2021, by its most toxic practitioner.

There doesn't seem to be any research on this yet, but casual consumption indicates that New Zealand actor Sam Neill isn't the only one using his Twitter feed as a pandemic palliative. Neill tweets charming, frequently hilarious content from his Two Paddocks vineyard and farm. "If I do cheer up two or three distressed souls, that's a good thing," he told the *Guardian* recently. "It's quite good for someone to say: 'Listen, we'll get through this, it'll be all right.'"

That sense of collective empathy was evident in the way Remembrance Day was celebrated last week. For an occasion traditionally marked by the gathering of veterans—and the people whose rights and freedoms they fought for—in public spaces including, in Canada every year, the War Memorial in Ottawa, the prospect of a Nov. 11 in isolation was dispiriting.

As it turned out, thanks largely to the adaptive efforts of the Royal Canadian Legion and its digitalized Remembrance Day campaign—including touchless donation boxes, virtual poppies, and a new focus on the glorious poppy drops projected on landmarks—Remembrance Day 2020 felt more significant than ever. So many Canadians shared stories on social media about family members whose lives were overtaken by, or sacrificed to, war that it became a collective outpouring of gratitude from a society with a renewed appreciation of both freedom and sacrifice. The juxtaposition of that outpouring against the spectacle of an American president continuing to insult democracy was especially meaningful.

With most of us inside and online, other rituals have taken on new dimensions. The cross-border online mourning for Sudbury-born Alex Trebek on the late *Jeopardy!* host's passing Nov. 8 again displayed how social media has transformed the public grieving process. The posthumous deluge of affection for Trebek was a reminder of how, for the first time in history, we have the capacity to express gratitude and admiration for our



Casual consumption indicates that New Zealand actor Sam Neill isn't the only one using his Twitter feed as a pandemic palliative, writes Lisa Van Dusen. *Photograph courtesy of Twitter/TwoPaddocks*

cultural, political, athletic, and other icons collectively and instantaneously—the outpouring following the death of civil rights icon John Lewis was another recent example—in the form of virtual vigils and elegies.

Among other indications that social media is becoming a saner, more balanced reflection of society is the fact that some of the most corrupt early exploiters of its propaganda and disinformation uses are now off-ramping their activities to specialized platforms. The same civic-minded actors who brought us Cambridge Analytica's democracy-hijacking operations, have set up Parler, which advertises itself as a platform on which users can "Speak freely and express yourself openly, without fear of being 'deplatformed' for your views." Or, as Cambridge Analytica whistleblower Christopher Wylie tweeted on Saturday, "They always wanted to create a new social network to collect data and disseminate propaganda. And now they have."

Which is not to say that established social media platforms won't still be used to collect data and disseminate propaganda. It's just that, as democracy has roared back at toxic disinformation and relentless corruption in other contexts lately, authentic humanity may just prevail in our online shared spaces, too.

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



Stronger Together



We are very honoured to be celebrating the Republic of Latvia's 102nd birthday in Canada alongside our friends: Canadians.

Latvia, located in northern Europe by the Baltic Sea, was born on 18 November 1918. It is a modern country, but blanketed in forests and a cultural heritage dating back thousands of years. We have an innovative spirit, with 2 million outstanding personalities.

Latvia has warmly welcomed Canada's contribution to global peace and stability. Canada has led all NATO troops in Latvia during deterrence exercises for more than three years and is very welcome to continue.

We also value Canada's commemoration of the victims of totalitarian regimes: the monument "Tribute to Liberty" in the Garden of the Provinces and Territories in Ottawa. Positively, this monument also serves to remember those who were fortunate enough to find their liberties again: by escaping to Canada.

Today, let us be reminded that the issues we see on other continents are not just in someone else's backyard — they are global problems.

We are celebrating an independence for which a dear price was paid, and we thank you for supporting us on this occasion.

Kārlis Eihenbaums, Ambassador of the Republic of Latvia in Canada

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Editorial

Commitment to media freedom should start at home

On Nov. 16, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau extolled the virtues of freedom of the press in remarks given as part of the Global Conference for Media Freedom that Canada co-hosted with Botswana.

The second such conference—the first was co-hosted with the United Kingdom last year—provided the prime minister an opportunity to grandstand about how important it is that journalists be allowed to do their work free from political and extrajudicial interference.

“Today, we see citizens calling for change—from Hong Kong to Belarus—only to have the authorities attack the freedom of the press. We see journalists casting light on human rights abuses and on this pandemic—people like Kyaw Soe Oo, Wa Lone, and Maria Ressa—only to face repression and violence,” Mr. Trudeau said in an address livestreamed for the virtual conference from his Ottawa office.

“It is never acceptable for a journalist to be attacked for doing their job. It is never acceptable for a reporter to be thrown in jail for interviewing a peaceful protester. And it is never acceptable for anyone, anywhere, to have their freedom of expression denied. A crackdown on the media puts democracy in danger. It puts lives in danger,” Mr. Trudeau continued.

He talked about Canada having “taken the lead” by investing in local journalism here at home, and initiatives to boost media freedom internationally, such as the 2018 commitment from the G7 Summit in Charlevoix, Que., that included sharing lessons and best practices on projects that “promote free, independent and pluralistic media; fact-based information; and freedom of expression,” as well as the Media Freedom Coalition, born out of last year’s conference.

“When living in times of change, it is up to us to seize the opportunity and decide what to do next,” Mr. Trudeau said. “It’s up to us to fight for a fairer and healthier society where everyone, everywhere, is free to make their voice heard.”

What wasn’t heard in Mr. Trudeau’s remarks was an acknowledgement of where Canada is falling down in these respects. It’s all well and good, necessary even, to commend journalists in other countries, like Belarus, where going out and doing their jobs can have incredibly dire consequences.

But it doesn’t excuse the omission that Canada isn’t the bastion of media freedom those in government might like to pretend it is. Not when journalists like Karl Dockstader are charged for reporting on protests, like those staged by Six Nations members at the 1492 Land Back Lane site in Caledonia, Ont.

“I am more motivated than ever to be a storyteller after having been arrested,” Mr. Dockstader told the CBC. “It highlights why we need journalism and why we need journalists who are educated [in Indigenous issues].”

Karyn Pugliese noted in *The Globe and Mail* on Nov. 16 that the conference entirely left Indigenous people off its agenda.

“If Canada is too embarrassed to admit its own record is flawed—and instead allow politicians and bureaucrats to sanitize debate with safe, feel-good topics—it will never be able to champion real global issues of press freedom,” Ms. Pugliese wrote.

The Trudeau government loves to trot out its supposed commitment to transparency and accountability. This would be yet another place to start in making that a reality.

The Hill Times

Letters to the Editor

Canadian Transportation Agency lacks will, not power, to order refunds to passengers: advocate

Re: “Air passenger protection during and beyond the pandemic,” (*The Hill Times*, Nov. 12, online). In a recent opinion piece, Scott Streiner, the chairperson of the Canadian Transportation Agency (CTA), vehemently argued that the CTA’s hands were tied by Parliament. While the Transportation Modernization Act leaves a lot to be desired, that blame is misplaced.

For the past two decades, the CTA has been entrusted with sweeping powers to regulate airlines. The CTA mandate has been not only to ensure that air passengers are subjected to just and reasonable terms and conditions, but also to grant remedies if an airline has imposed unjust or unreasonable terms and conditions.

In 2004, the CTA had no difficulty concluding, based on the laws in force at that time, that Air Transat was required to refund airfares for flights that were cancelled by the airline, regardless of the reason for the cancellation. In a 2013 decision, the CTA recognized “the fundamental right of passengers to be refunded.” In two additional decisions from the same fiscal year, the CTA reaffirmed the principle that it is unreasonable for an airline to refuse to refund the fare paid by a passenger because of the airline’s cancellation of a flight, even if the cause is an event beyond the airline’s control.

In 2017, the CTA held that when an airline’s terms and conditions are

inconsistent with the law, the CTA may draw on its sweeping powers to order the airline to compensate the passenger on terms and conditions that should have been in place to begin with.

The laws that were the foundation for these decisions are still in force today. The Air Transportation Regulations still require every airline to have terms and conditions for refunds of services purchased but not used “as a result of [...] the air carrier’s inability to provide the services for any reason.” The requirement that these terms and conditions be just and reasonable has not changed either. The Transportation Modernization Act and the Air Passenger Protection Regulations (APPR) did not repeal any of the aforementioned consumer protection provisions. Nor did they alter the fundamental right of passengers to be refunded.

In short, the law did not change. The CTA has all the powers necessary to order airlines to refund passengers for cancelled flights, regardless of the reason for the cancellation, and regardless of the wording of the airline’s terms and conditions.

It is the CTA’s willingness to enforce the law that has changed.

The reason for this change might warrant an independent federal inquiry.

Dr. Gábor Lukács
President, Air Passenger Rights
Halifax, N.S.

No one is protected from COVID-19 until everyone is protected, says letter writer

Dr. Theresa Tam, Canada’s chief public health officer, recently announced that “this pandemic has demonstrated that inequities in our society place some populations—and ultimately, all Canadians—at risk. No one is protected from the risk of COVID-19 until everyone is protected.”

This doesn’t mean only within Canada: as long as the virus circulates, it can return as quickly as it first arrived, and so those nations that cannot afford to battle the virus on their own need help.

The World Health Organization has suggested rich countries provide just one per cent of their total COVID-19 expenditures to defeat COVID-19 everywhere.

The most recent studies suggest that COVID-19 immunity lasts less than six months; unless Canada steps up with our one per cent share of funding, COVID-19 will return again and again, an outcome costing far more than the current one per cent request.

Tracy Koebel
Victoria, B.C.



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When the military dares to deceive, no one wins

The last time I checked, the role of the Canadian military was to protect Canada and Canadian values, not to alter the mental state of Canadian citizens.



Scott Taylor

Inside Defence

OTTAWA—Late last week, it was reported in the media that the Department of National Defence had ordered a halt to its controversial program of “weaponizing” its public affairs branch.

This move comes in the wake of a series of news stories by *Ottawa Citizen* defence reporter David Pugliese, which outlined how the DND intended to use propaganda to change the attitude and behaviour of Canadian citizens.

It was revealed in Pugliese’s reports that the Canadian Forces planned to create “Joint Targeting and Information Operations” capability along with a Defence Strategic Communications team for the purpose of using “defence activities as a means of communication to influence the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours of the audiences.”

Now, the last time I checked, the role of the Canadian military was to protect Canada and Canadian values, not to alter the mental state of Canadian citizens.

What was most shocking about these damaging media revelations was the fact that this program had moved beyond the theoretical and was already being employed here in Canada.

To date, the Canadian Armed Forces have spent more than \$1-million to train public affairs officers on behaviour-modification techniques.

At the beginning of the pandemic, when the Canadian military was poised to deploy personnel to assist in civilian long-term care facilities, the CAF established what it called a Precision Information Team (PIT). This PIT used military personnel to collect and analyze information gleaned from civilian social media accounts.

This information was subsequently passed along to Ontario Premier Doug Ford to inform him that his electorate was not happy with his failure to protect the elderly during the COVID-19 crisis.

It was also reported that the Canadian Forces had a plan to counter potential pandemic-related civil disobedience by using various information warfare techniques, including broadcasting propaganda from vehicle-mounted loudspeakers.

The architect behind the “enhancement” plan for the public affairs branch was Brigadier-General Jay Janzen, who is quoted in one of the Canadian Forces strategy documents as stating, “The motto ‘who dares, wins’ is as applicable to strategic communication as it is to warfare.”

Those familiar with military affairs will note that “who dares wins” is the operational motto of the British Special Air Service (SAS), which is one of the most elite commando units in the world.

It is one hell of a stretch to compare elite special forces combat soldiers to a handful of public affair officers monitoring civilian Facebook posts, but hey, you’ve gotta give Janzen credit for his imagination.

Perhaps one of the most disturbing revelations was that of a planned campaign to counter allegations of white supremacists in the ranks of the CAF. In advance of this PR initiative, DND had compiled dossiers on several Canadian journalists and planned to assemble a gaggle of military-friendly academics and historians to push the narrative that no such problem exists.

However, before that plan could be initiated, there was a series of much-publicized incidents involving CAF members with alleged ties to white supremacy. The propaganda plan was shelved and now it has been exposed.

Once the activities were made public in the press, the senior military leadership realized that these attempts to “weaponize” the public affairs branch had, in fact, backfired.

Instead of protecting the CAF’s image with Canadians, Janzen’s public affairs enhancement strategy, as well as the other missteps related to the pandemic propaganda schemes, actually damaged the military’s reputation and credibility.

In shutting down this initiative, Laurie-Anne Kempton, the assistant deputy minister of public affairs at National Defence—and Janzen’s immediate superior—wrote an email to her staff. “Canadians must have absolute confidence in knowing that we completely understand our role in informing the public space of our initiatives and activities,” she said, adding, “they must know they are not targets.”

Amen to that.

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

The Hill Times

Canada and credit bureaus can do more to help struggling Canadians

Canada has an opportunity with the credit crisis to go farther by finally implementing a comprehensive set of measures to protect Canadian consumers.



Daniel Tsai

Opinion

As Canadians struggle to deal with the pandemic and its negative impact on their finances, the challenge of making payments becomes more difficult as the pandemic continues and impacts struggling households.

As of the end of September, the Canadian Bankers Association reported almost 760,000 Canadian homeowners have taken a mortgage deferral, with one million existing loans being deferred.

Equifax has recently reported since the pandemic started, three million Canadians have taken at least one deferred payment.

Canada’s unregulated credit reporting agencies, Equifax and TransUnion, have offered consumers negatively impacted by COVID-19 the opportunity to treat deferred revolving loan (e.g., mortgage) payments as regular payments paid within 30 days so long as they have a deferral agreement with the creditor.

However, many mortgage deferrals were time limited to six months and are now becoming due. So, the potential for more missed payments, or more loans taken to keep households afloat, will negatively impact Canadians’ finances further.

Ordinary Canadians, and in particular, those who are younger and in the lower- and middle-class face a vicious cycle of lower credit scores and more difficulty getting loans to financially survive in a pandemic.

TransUnion’s research showed at the end of March that 57 per cent of respondents reported they were financially impacted by COVID-19, with younger generations impacted the most: generation Z at 82 per cent and millennials at 67 per cent.

TransUnion found 70 per cent of respondents are concerned about their ability to pay their bills and loans but millennials were at 78 per cent and generation Z at 74 per cent.

Poor credit scores tend to have a disproportionately negative impact on racialized and disadvantaged communities and low-income workers who are more unlikely to qualify for mortgages, lines of credit, or car loans.

The U.S. National Consumer Law Center released a report in 2019 that showed

credit bureaus and the information that companies supplied them “still have serious problems in ensuring the accuracy of credit reports.”

Moreover, an inaccurate credit reporting system increases the financial discrimination faced by disadvantaged groups with the economic disparities being made worse by erroneous and harmful financial information.

Research from the Law Commission of Ontario and various U.S. studies have also shown that systemic racism or bias can also be built into algorithms by the data gatherers since these reflect the skewed data or bias of the programmers that designed them.

As these data gatherers collect, analyze, and report the extensive credit and financial history of consumers, credit bureaus serve as the unregulated gatekeepers of Canadians’ sensitive financial information.

In such an important role, this oligopoly of Canada’s two credit bureaus can be doing more to help Canadians.

Canada’s credit reporting agencies can entirely eliminate the negative impact on credit scores of new or additional loans such as lines of credit, car loans, and refinancing of mortgages taken out due to COVID-19.

Importantly, Canada can appoint a regulator for Equifax and TransUnion, which would make their reporting system accountable, transparent, understandable, and fair for all Canadians instead of being privately determined by banks and the credit bureaus without transparency, accountability, or a set of national standards.

U.S. president-elect Joe Biden has stated his interest in creating a government-led reporting agency in the U.S. to compete with the reporting agencies, in recognition of the need for accurate information, and the credit bureaus’ power to cut consumers off from essential financing, such as mortgages and car loans.

As many Canadians have experienced, correcting inaccurate credit reports is a challenging and frustrating process, and without recourse to appeal to a regulatory authority.

Canada has an opportunity with the credit crisis to go farther by finally implementing a comprehensive set of measures to protect Canadian consumers.

Canada should impose customer service standards on credit bureaus so they must acknowledge and promptly respond to consumer complaints, and impose penalties if credit bureaus fail to deal with consumer complaints.

Canada can also protect consumers by suspending any reporting of negative COVID-19 by the credit bureaus (such as taking out new loans or maxing out existing ones to stay afloat) as U.S. Democratic lawmakers have already proposed.

Through formal regulation of credit bureaus and imposing much needed standards, Canadians can finally get a better credit reporting system that puts consumers first and that Canadians deserve.

Daniel Tsai is a lecturer in law and business at Ryerson University’s Ted Rogers School of Management, a former senior policy adviser in the federal government, and editor of *ConsumerRights.ca*. Twitter: @dtsailawyermba

The Hill Times

Comment

Resist the MAGA-lite theatrics and make premiers accountable again



Erica Ifill

Bad+Bitchy

CALGARY—Canadian conservatism is showing itself to be a whiny bastion of imperious, incompetent, and now flailing mostly white men—and their co-conspirator women—who blame everyone else for their problems and shortcomings. It's beginning to look like a lighter version of our MAGA-obsessed southern neighbours.

What the pandemic has shown is that the so-called "Resistance"—as defined by a dubious December 2018 *Maclean's* cover consisting of Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe, United Conservative Party (UCP) leader and now Alberta Premier Jason Kenney, then-federal Conservative Party leader Andrew Scheer, Manitoba Premier Brian Pallister, and Ontario Premier Doug Ford—aged

like spoiled milk left out in the hot sun. These same premiers are failing hard at their ability to control the spread of COVID-19.

The failure is provincial. The failure is male and hard to distinguish from Donald Trump's "Make America Great Again" influence.

Fast forward two years later, and a global pandemic rages on, infecting people at an alarming, exponential rate. These provinces failed to take public and workplace health seriously. Alberta saw significant outbreaks at the Cargill meat plant, the JBS meat plant, and long-term care facilities. In December of last year, the UCP cut the requirement for occupational health and safety committees that the previous NDP government put in place as an attempt to eliminate red tape (every time you hear a Conservative say they're eliminating red tape, a billionaire hears the ch-ching of a cash register). And the UCP has been particularly aggressive with undermining workplace standards, so much so "the Alberta government has not reprimanded, fined, or shut down a single workplace in the province for violations of public health guidance," according to *The Tyee*. Furthermore, Kenney's response in May downplayed the deadly virus as akin to the flu, saying in all his MAGA majesty:

"We cannot continue indefinitely to impair the social and economic—as well as the mental health and physiological health of the broader population—for potentially a year for an influenza that does not generally threaten life apart from the elderly and the immunocompromised." And that was before he continued with his attack on public health with \$600-million in cuts and a loss of about 9,700 jobs.

Seems like relying on science is optional. Sounds familiar.

Ontario's long-term care disaster is well-documented. The bloviating Premier Ford has a pattern of blaming others for his COVID-19 response failure and moving the goalposts of success when he can't do that. Remember when he pledged to increase testing back in March? The goal was nearly 20,000 tests per day by April 17, even though the province was only at 2,500 per day. When they couldn't reach their goal, they just revised downward to 12,500. When they didn't build the capacity they needed over the summer, resulting in endless hours in long lines, they restricted testing, even though the federal government gave them billions of dollars to help with testing. One would think a robust testing regime would be in

place before Phase 2 opening or a well-foreseen second wave, but who needs a reliance on science when Ford is in charge? Perhaps Ford shouldn't have cut public health during a pandemic. *The National Post* reported that after being elected in 2018 the "Ford government quickly froze PHO's [Public Health Ontario] budget and signalled that deeper cuts, to PHO and local health units, were on the way. The new administration also proved uninterested in some core public health missions, things like basic science."

In Saskatchewan, Premier Moe didn't equip the province with proper ventilation equipment, ICU beds, or even hospital beds until after the virus hit. A Saskatchewan-based medical anthropologist commented that "it seems the politicians allowed political considerations to cloud their vision." Some identity politics are more acceptable than others. And some ideologies have more power to create policies that impose those ideologies on others.

Premier Pallister, who wanted to cancel funding for charities and non-profits who deliver services to the most vulnerable during a pandemic, resorted to verbally beating people into COVID-19 restriction submission. His first grand idea to combat

the pandemic was COVID cops in every neighbourhood. And with a Winnipeg police force that has a trigger finger for Indigenous people, nothing could go wrong there.

Instead of admitting that their pandemic messaging has been a flaming pile of garbage, each of these premiers began to blame the public for their failures. "In other words, our political and bureaucratic leadership, aided by the media, has pushed a narrative that individuals have the responsibility to defeat the pandemic, and any outbreaks—past, present, and future—are the fault of people who break unclear and largely unenforced rules," Pouyan Tabasinejad wrote in *Passage*. Indeed.

What were these guys doing during the lockdown? They should've been building testing and tracing capacity, providing PPE, quarantining those travelling from inside and outside of the province, stepping up spending for the small businesses they claim to love in the form of financial support for inflated operating costs due to increased safety requirements, and prolonging their re-opening until those conditions were met.

Instead, we get a lot of finger-waving, personal responsibility crap, which has always been a strawman argument to ignore the systemic and systematic failures in response to a global pandemic. Now their ineptitudes, based on flawed MAGA ideology, will be instrumental in bringing this country to its knees.

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

The Hill Times

While Trump spews lies next door, countries join forces here for global media freedom

The pandemic, coupled with the rise in illiberal political movements, has made the future of free-flowing information and facts more in doubt than ever.



Les Whittington

Need to Know

OTTAWA—It's hard to imagine a more pressing context for a conference on media freedom than a moment when the president of the United States is engaged in a full-scale campaign to reverse the truth about an election he lost.

On Nov. 15, nearly two weeks after Donald Trump was defeated at the polls, he stuck to his unprecedented, democracy-destroying refusal to concede to Joe Biden and claimed instead that he, Trump, had actually won.

The election was rigged and the Democrats' victory was only "in the eyes of the fake news media," Trump tweeted. This coup-like strategy, aided by Congressional Republicans and the far-right news media, has succeeded in convincing a large number of Americans that the election was indeed fraudulent, despite zero proof.

It seems unlikely that Trump can overthrow the U.S. government in denial of the will of voters. But the fact that the so-called leader of the free world is in a position to even try to flip the reality of the Nov. 3 outcome through lies and disinformation is ample demonstration of the damage his systematic attacks on truth have done to U.S. politics. And, beyond the U.S., Trump's approach will be welcome news to dictators everywhere with no interest in freedom of expression or inconvenient facts.

The U.S. situation, along with those in Hong Kong and Belarus, hung over the second Global

Conference for Media Freedom hosted online by Canada and Botswana on Monday.

Leading off the speakers, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said that, at the first conference in London 18 months ago, no one could have imagined the challenges 2020 would bring. Without specifying which country he was referring to, Trudeau said, "In the last few months, we've seen how free and open debate, based on facts, is the only way forward. When journalists can do their jobs, when citizens can get good reliable information, everyone does better."

Trudeau said press freedom is a fundamental building block of democracy and stressed the need to push back against disinformation.

Former attorney general Irwin Cotler told the conference: "We meet today on the occasion not only of a global COVID pandemic but a global political pandemic, characterized by a resurgent global authoritarianism, the backsliding of democracies and global assaults on media freedom, where journalists are increasingly under threat and under assault."

Cotler was part of a group of international lawyers who released a report at the conference urging the creation of a new global charter to protect the rights of

imprisoned journalists at a time when they are more endangered than ever on the global stage.

The pandemic, coupled with the rise in illiberal political movements, has made the future of free-flowing information and facts more in doubt than ever.

Reporters Without Borders (RSF), which prepares an annual World Press Freedom Index, says COVID-19 has highlighted and amplified ongoing threats to "the right to freely reported, independent, diverse and reliable information."

The organization says this year's data shows the next decade will be pivotal for press freedom because of converging crises affecting the future of journalism. These are "a geopolitical crisis (due to the aggressiveness of authoritarian regimes); a technological crisis (due to a lack of democratic guarantees); a democratic crisis (due to polarization and repressive policies); a crisis of trust (due to suspicion and even hatred of the media); and an economic crisis (impoverishing quality journalism)."

In 2020, 42 journalists and media assistants have been killed globally, while nearly 400 journalists, citizen journalists, and media assistants have been imprisoned (counting only those where it can

be established that their killing or imprisonment was directly related to their work), according to RSF.

On Nov. 16, Canada and the United Kingdom announced the Belarusian Association of Journalists is being awarded the first Canada-U.K. Media Freedom Award, which is meant to recognize groups that work to protect press rights. Speaking for media in Belarus, who have been subject to a brutal police crackdown while covering protests calling for the resignation of President Aleksandr Lukashenko, Andrei Bastunets, chairperson of the Belarusian Association of Journalists, welcomed the recognition.

"Today, journalists in Belarus have to work under gunfire, literally, in a peaceful country," he said. "They are victims of police violence and are sentenced to long-term arrests for their work. We thank every voice in the world that speaks out for Belarusian journalists today."

Minsk is a long way from Washington, D.C., but the principle that free political systems and peoples' rights ultimately cannot be guaranteed without reliable, factual information is the same no matter.

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

In Quebec, a wilful blindness to racism against Indigenous people

And Quebec is not alone in this, as events in Thunder Bay, Ont., Winnipeg, Saskatoon, rural Nova Scotia and elsewhere have shown. Racism against First Nations peoples spans the country.



Andrew Caddell

With All Due Respect

KAMOURASKA, QUE.—The death of Joyce Echaquan on Sept. 28 in the Joliette, Que., hospital, northeast of Montreal, drew national headlines for the way she died: Facebook Live streaming nursing staff as they hurled racist insults at her in a hospital bed.

When the 37-year-old Atikamekw woman received morphine for stomach pains, she complained to the nurses she was allergic. Instead of responding to her concerns, the staff asked if she was “done acting stupid.” They told the mother of seven she “made some bad choices” and she was only “good for sex.” It was the second time in a month Echaquan was abused at the Centre hospitalier de Lanaudière.

The abuse of an aboriginal woman should have come as no surprise to officials familiar with the Joliette hospital: it had a reputation for disgraceful behaviour that earned it a mention in the 488-page Viens Report. The 2019 report targeted “violence, discriminatory practices, and differential treatment in the delivery of public services to Indigenous people.” It listed 142 calls for action, in social services, policing, corrections, justice, and health services, as well as youth protection.

One person who knows the Joliette hospital all too well is a high school friend of mine who lives in nearby Rawdon. Her late husband was Mohawk, and thus eligible for certain benefits as a status Indian. “Every time we went to that hospital, they would make comments about how he got free drugs and didn’t pay taxes,” she told me. “They never failed to be insulting and abusive.” And to compound the insult, his first language was English, and staff insisted on speaking to him in French.

When he became ill with cancer seven years ago, his bad experiences made him re-

luctant to be treated in Joliette, so he went to Hôpital Saint-Luc in Montreal instead. There, his Indian status and English language were a target for one orderly, who would insist he speak to him *en Français* when he needed help at 4 a.m., as he writhed in post-operative pain. Sadly, he died in 2017.

My friend is still angry at the treatment her husband received as an Indigenous person from health professionals whose objective is supposed to be care for their patients. When I asked her if she had complained to her local Members of the National Assembly or Parliament, she pointed out her provincial and federal ridings have traditionally been represented by either the Bloc Québécois or the Parti Québécois. My friend says her current representative in Quebec City, CAQ MNA Nadine Girault, seems indifferent to the plight of anglophones or Indigenous people in her riding.

The revelations in Joliette come on the heels of a recent statement by the Quebec Human Rights Commission, which reminded Premier François Legault of their report nine years ago describing systemic racism in Quebec. In its update, the Commission recommended two immediate steps: a government-wide policy against racism and a ban on street checks by police.

Yet Premier Legault refuses to recognize systemic racism in Quebec. Instead, he fired his Indigenous affairs minister and brought in former policeman Ian Lafrenière. Lafrenière immediately met with the leaders of the Atikamekw First Nation and promised

\$3-million to build a better Indigenous welcome centre near the Joliette hospital. And \$15-million in liaison and navigator positions in the province’s hospitals, along with cultural sensitivity training for managers. Money is nice, but I am not convinced it will solve the root of the problem: racism.

And Quebec is not alone in this, as events in Thunder Bay, Ont., Winnipeg, Saskatoon, rural Nova Scotia and elsewhere have shown. Racism against First Nations peoples spans the country.

When the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report issued its 94 calls to action in 2015, I thought it was a mistake to go beyond its mandate examining abuses at residential schools and repeat many of the recommendations in the 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

Now I understand the strategy of the chair, Senator Murray Sinclair: hit Canadians on the side of the head with a metaphorical two-by-four to get a response. Judging from the death of Joyce Echaquan, and the refusal of governments like Quebec’s to acknowledge systemic racism towards Indigenous peoples, we haven’t done near enough.

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

WHAT HAVE TOILETS GOT TO DO WITH CLIMATE CHANGE?

Flood, drought & rising sea levels threaten sanitation, from toilets to septic tanks to treatment plants. Extreme weather can damage toilets and spread human waste into water supplies, food crops and people’s homes. These incidents, becoming more frequent as climate change intensifies, cause public health emergencies and degrade the environment. Strong water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) systems are climate resilient systems.

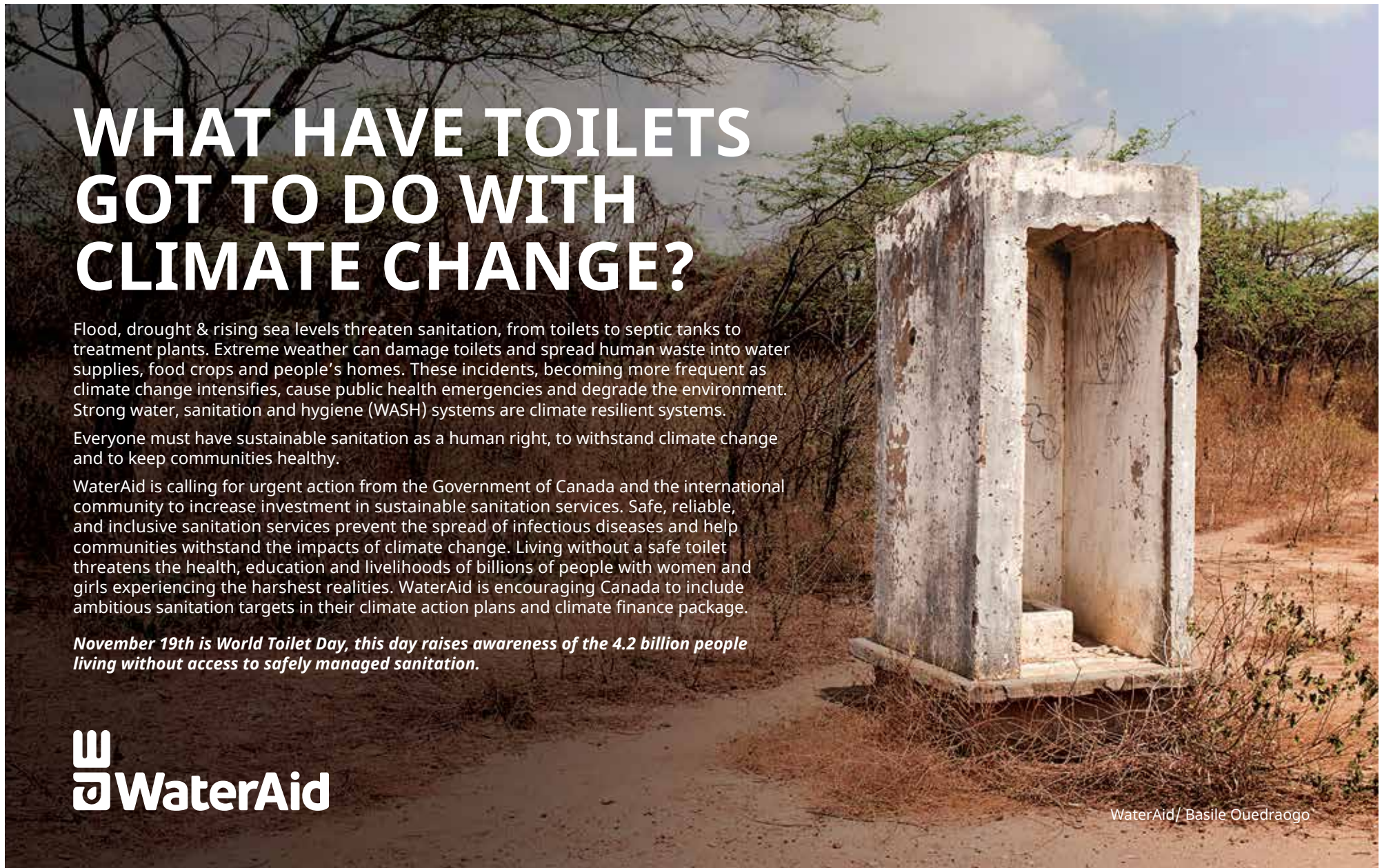
Everyone must have sustainable sanitation as a human right, to withstand climate change and to keep communities healthy.

WaterAid is calling for urgent action from the Government of Canada and the international community to increase investment in sustainable sanitation services. Safe, reliable, and inclusive sanitation services prevent the spread of infectious diseases and help communities withstand the impacts of climate change. Living without a safe toilet threatens the health, education and livelihoods of billions of people with women and girls experiencing the harshest realities. WaterAid is encouraging Canada to include ambitious sanitation targets in their climate action plans and climate finance package.

November 19th is World Toilet Day, this day raises awareness of the 4.2 billion people living without access to safely managed sanitation.



WaterAid/ Basile Ouedraogo



‘Inevitable’ return to testy federal-provincial relations will showcase discord with differing priorities, say politicians and experts

‘We are seeing the inevitable conversation about crucial policy decisions on resources come to the fore with [where] inevitably you’ll see differences,’ says former Liberal strategist John Delacourt.

Continued on page 12

the spread of COVID-19 in their jurisdictions during a press conference last week.

“I would hope that no leader in our country is easing public health vigilance because they feel pressure not to shut down businesses or slow down our economy,” he said on Nov. 10. “I urge premiers and mayors to do the right thing. Act now to protect public health.”

Mr. Trudeau said the federal government can offer support to make the provincial decisions “slightly less difficult.” But later in the week on Nov. 13, Mr. Trudeau said the federal government support to the provinces would not be “infinite,” adding that there could be a time when the government has to make “really difficult choices” over where to allocate its “limited resources.”

Some premiers didn’t receive Mr. Trudeau’s warnings well. Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe called it “extremely unhelpful” to conceive the COVID-19 response as a binary choice between protecting public health and safeguarding the beleaguered economy.

Although the pandemic has put a spotlight on the re-emergence of intergovernmental co-operation, or lack thereof, there have been flare-ups of discord throughout. Premiers criticized the Throne Speech for intruding on provincial jurisdiction. Premiers have also been pushing for an increase in health fund transfers to provinces. The transfers will be a subject of the first ministers meeting in December.

Former Liberal staffer John Delacourt, vice-president of public affairs at Hill and Knowl-

ton Strategies, said the change in messaging from Mr. Trudeau and the premiers is an “inevitability.”

In the early stages of the pandemic, there were easier conversations between the federal and provincial governments where policy priorities aligned, he said.

“All of sudden, you start to look at program design and resource funding and you start to have more difficult conversations,” he said. “We are seeing the inevitable conversation about crucial policy decisions on resources come to the fore with [where] inevitably you’ll see differences.”

“It’s in the nature of how health care is funded and it’s in the nature of crisis response,” he said. “In that sense, it should surprise no one.”

He added that it isn’t a coarsening of intergovernmental relations, but a next phase. It’s a return to normal under unusual circumstances, he said.

Dalhousie University political science professor Katherine Fierlbeck, an expert on health policy, said given the size and diversity of Canada, that, at times, leads to a fractious political relationship.

“If the regions always got along, despite their diversity, then probably some provincial leaders wouldn’t be doing their jobs,” she said. “Different regions have different interests.”

Prof. Fierlbeck said in the case of the pandemic, political actors put aside most of their contentious interests to address the most urgent issues facing them.

“That’s how a proper federal system should work,” she said. “But, of course, it’s not sustainable in the long run because the underlying political tensions simply don’t go away when new problems arise.”

“For a short period of time, all the other political issues just dropped off the agenda,” she said. “You can’t ignore things like energy policy indefinitely. These things do creep back on and regional governments are properly politically charged with representing their constituents’ interests and sometimes these interests will be conflicting with the interests of other Canadians.”

Former Ontario Progressive Conservative MPP Rob Leone, a principal at Earncliffe Strategy Group, said the levels of government are defining the goals and the problems differently, which

has created a challenge. He said in the second wave, the parameters for success have changed.

There is a “classical federalism issue” unfolding, he said, as levers of power are in the hands of the provincial government, while the economic might is controlled by the federal government.

“I don’t think a collaborative approach can happen until all the governments and all the leaders come together,” he said, noting there need to be agreed-upon, shared objectives.

“There was that cohesiveness at the beginning, I don’t think there is that cohesiveness now,” Mr. Leone said. “Until we can get over that hump, which doesn’t look likely right now, we’re going to be faced with a polemic circumstance.”

While Mr. Delacourt said provinces are most under threat for their handling of the pandemic, Mr. Leone said the federal Liberals’ grip on power could be at threat.

Every incumbent provincial government has won re-election in every election held since the pandemic, but Mr. Leone said that may not hold.

“I think there’s a lot of concern out there that until we get [COVID-19] under control, I think governments are going to suffer no matter where they are,” he said.

McMaster University political science professor Peter Graefe, an expert on intergovernmental relations and social policy, said the second wave has brought more blame than the original outbreak in March, which has led governments to position themselves to avoid being blamed for the current situation.

“In the spring, there wasn’t a lot of blame to avoid. Canadians’ confidence in their governments was pretty strong across the board. I think we’re seeing with this recent upsurge that citizens are more unhappy and asking questions about what their governments were doing over the summer to head this off,” he said. “When there’s blame, there will be blame avoidance—passing the buck—in Canadian federalism.”

He added that the increased awareness of the costs associated with the pandemic and a provincial concern over having the funds to pay for another shut-

down has hampered co-operation.

At the operational level, Prof. Graefe said there is no reason to believe there is friction, but the damage is at the political level.

He said premiers who are facing re-election are in a more precarious position.

“The premiers in the provinces that haven’t gone to elections are worrying that they’re going to be blamed for a potential second shutdown,” he said. “I suspect for the second wave, the blame is going to be much more on the premiers than the federal government.”

He said with a vaccine on the horizon, Mr. Trudeau and the premiers will want to position themselves for a post-pandemic world.

“While obviously the next three or four months may be pretty terrible in terms of the health-care systems ... I think the actors are of the view that we’re in for a tough slog, but we can see the light at the end of the tunnel and so they’re already positioning and jockeying for what comes at the end of this,” said Prof. Graefe, noting that could change if the public health situation becomes more dire.

He said the testiness is perhaps a result of a “false sense” of confidence that as bad things are, that the end is near and they want to begin positioning for that.

Some have called for greater intergovernmental co-operation, such as Green Party Leader Annamie Paul, who wants to see a national COVID-19 task force.

Prof. Fierlbeck said such ideas fail to take into account Canada’s political nature.

She said if a federal authority was to override provincial jurisdiction, it would have to show that the provinces have been ill-informed or reckless.

“With so much conflicting and changing data, it’s just not possible to make such a black-and-white case,” she said.

She said a top-down imposition of public health guidelines would be “politically disastrous,” as provinces elect governments that represent their values and there are questions of how overriding provincial jurisdiction would be received, especially in places that are opposed to the federal Liberal government.

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The Hill Times



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has taken a tougher approach of late with premiers than was seen in the early days of the pandemic. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

The Hill Times | Nov. 18, 2020

DEFENCE

POLICY BRIEFING

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Defence Policy Briefing



Members of the CH-147 Chinook medical team drill during Operation Presence in Mali on July 28, 2018. The defence committee is studying into the mental health impact Operation Laser had on members of the Canadian Armed Forces. *Canadian Armed Forces photograph courtesy of Major Corporal Jennifer Kusche*

Access to mental health services for Armed Forces in House Defence committee's sights amid rising suicide numbers

In 2019, 17 regular force members and three reservists died by suicide, which was the highest number since 2014.

BY AIDAN CHAMANDY

The House Defence Committee will soon begin studying access to mental health services for members of the Canadian Armed Forces with the aim of addressing suicide, after 2019 saw the highest number in five years.

As part of the study, the committee will also specifically consider the merits of removing a provision of the National Defence Act that renders self-harm an indictable offence, which is the goal of private members' Bill C-203 put forward by NDP MP Randall Garrison (Esquimalt-Saanich-Sooke, B.C.), his party's defence critic and a Defence Committee member.

But before the mental health study gets started, the committee will wrap up its current one looking into the effect COVID-19 has had on the Armed Forces, which it began on Nov. 16.

The COVID-19 study has a broad scope and mental health has already come up as a topic

of interest, specifically looking at how Operation Laser, which saw members of the military go into long-term care homes in Ontario and Quebec, affected soldiers' mental health. Conservative MP James Bezan (Selkirk-Interlake-Eastman, Man.), his party's defence critic, said he will continue to ask questions related to mental health and Operation Laser in this study.

"Within the COVID-19 study, we will be asking questions as it relates to the mental health status of those members of the Canadian Armed Forces who participated in Operation Laser, based upon the testimony that has already come out of Ontario's Long-Term Care Commission," he said. "The impact on their mental health is something I want to drill down on."

Mr. Bezan said he hopes the committee will finish both the COVID-19 study and the mental health study by the December recess in order to table the reports in the new year.

The COVID-19 study has at least three more meetings planned after committee members agreed on Nov. 16 to hear from more witnesses, according to Mr. Garrison, and the mental health study will involve a minimum of three meetings, according to the Oct. 24 committee motion.

Conservative MP Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, Ont.), a longtime member of the Defence Committee, left open the possibility of having

more than the three meetings required by the motion.

"We've allowed for the flexibility for more meetings because sometimes it's in listening to witnesses that we learned that there should be more people we're hearing from," she said.

Defence Committee chair and Liberal MP Karen McCrimmon



Chief of the Defence Staff Jonathan Vance, left, Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan, and former Veterans Affairs Minister Seamus O'Regan unveil the joint suicide prevention strategy in 2017. *The Hill Times file photograph*

(Kanata-Carleton, Ont.) was not available for an interview on the topic.

The committee has studied access to physical and mental health services in the Armed Forces in the recent past, including in 2009 and 2014. A number of reports have been issued both on mental health generally and suicide

specifically, but "what is important now" Ms. Gallant said, "is to look back over the recommendations of the committee to see what has been implemented and gauge how effective we're being."

"Has it truly been addressed thoroughly in the three years since 2017?" she said, referring to the 2017 suicide prevention strategy jointly released by the Department of National Defence and Veterans Affairs Canada.

In 2017, 13 regular force members and three reservists died by suicide, the lowest total since 2013, when the numbers were 11 and three, respectively.

In 2019, the most recent annual data, 17 regular force members and three reservists died by suicide, the highest total since 2014, the year Canada left Afghanistan. In 2014, 19 regular force members and four reservists died by suicide.

Mr. Bezan agreed with Ms. Gallant.

"There's been the ongoing discussion, going back over a

"Not that we expect the Armed Forces to provide those services in every community where we have reserve units. It's about making sure that there are those services available throughout the public health-care system and that there is some level of commitment by the provinces to provide those services in a timely matter," Mr. Bezan continued.

Improving access to mental health services for Armed Forces members, regardless of where they serve, was a key plank of the Liberals' 2017 defence policy document, Strong, Secure, Engaged. It promised to grow the Medical Services Branch, which consists of enlisted members who serve in a medical role, by 200 personnel.

Another key mental health-related promise in Strong, Secure, Engaged was to reduce the stigma around mental health issues.

Mr. Bezan said Mr. Garrison's private members' bill will help do exactly that.

"It's an indictable offence within the Canadian Armed Forces to try



Conservative MP James Bezan says committee members have a good working relationship, which will help keep partisanship out of its work. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

number of Parliaments, on access to mental health services. We want to make sure that we have a fulsome discussion on how things have evolved over the past number of years, and making sure the services that are available are adequate," Mr. Bezan said.

Mr. Bezan said one of his main concerns going into the study is to figure out how effective and available mental health services

to [die by] suicide. We believe that is not helping reduce the stigma around mental health, or allowing those that are struggling to go get the help they need," he said.

Mr. Garrison's bill, titled An Act to amend the National Defence act (maiming or injuring self or another), would amend Section 98(c) to make it so that attempting to harm oneself no longer renders an individual unfit for service. Currently, if someone is found guilty they can face penalties ranging from five years in a military prison to life imprisonment if the act was committed on active duty.

"Mental health services are closely linked to the issue of death by suicide in the Canadian military. It's the most acute symptom of the problem, because we're still losing one member of the Canadian Forces every month to death by suicide. And part of that, I think, can be dealt with by taking self harm out of the military Code of Conduct as a disciplinary offence, because it's a powerful disincentive for people not to seek help," he said.

According to previous committee testimony by Judge Advocate General Geneviève Bernatchez on Oct. 23, 2018, court martial charges have only been laid four times since January 2000 under Section 98, and all were withdrawn when the court martial proceeded. Thirteen summary trial charges were laid in the same time period, and no one was convicted.

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Policy Briefing Defence

Success in defence comes with across-the-board co-operation



Green Party Leader Annamie Paul

Opinion

Security is a fundamental responsibility of any state, but Canada cannot do it alone. The COVID-19 pandemic has only served to underline that we live in an interconnected world of intersecting threats. From cybersecurity to climate change to transnational crime, the modern threats we face can only be defended against through co-ordinated international action.

It is in our interest, for example, to ensure that Canada's Armed Forces can function as a general-purpose force, able to build and support complex peace operations. Our Forces must be able to provide realistic options to the government in domestic security emergencies and international operations alike—no one will ever forget the images of our Canadian Armed Forces being deployed to reinforce staff in long-term care facilities across Canada—and to be available for important global deployments.

The Green Party platform recognizes the global reputation of our Canadian Armed Forces for training, leadership, and co-operation in international operations, and we are committed to expanding Canada's peace-support role and working to strengthen post-conflict democratic institutions and civil society groups.

As a middle power, we have learned that Canada has more impact within alliances than outside of them. Alliances are not only military in nature, but also have political components in which we can be influential. That said, our role in military alliances should be periodically reviewed to ensure that it aligns with our values and priorities. In this respect, existing defence alliances will surely need to evolve to help us to defend against the new threats that we face.

This year, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, in consultation with 13 Nobel laureates, moved the Doomsday Clock to 100 seconds to midnight to underscore the need for action on climate change, among other threats. Climate change is a major contributor to increased global instability and is a threat to our national security. There have already been deadly conflicts directly attributable to the warming climate, and it has been identified by security analysts as a major threat multiplier. The Green Party was the first to recognize the impact of climate change as the source of more frequent and dangerous natural disasters, as well as the cause of increasing conflict over resources around the world.

There will be more frequent deployments of our Armed Forces to protect civilians and communities from extreme weather events, wildfires, and flooding. The rapid pace at which the Arctic ice is melting also means that our northern borders will be more vulnerable. As such, our Forces will have to adapt and be prepared to serve in both traditional and new capacities, and our procurement must adapt to reflect these new realities as well. The Green Party supports the acquisition of icebreakers, coastal vessels for surveillance, and more fire bombers to protect communities at risk. We oppose purchasing F-18 fighter jets as the case has yet to be made, particularly when we consider our government's underinvestment in cyberdefence and disaster response.

Regarding other modern threats, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists also highlighted the threat of nuclear war as the second existential threat. The government has, however, shown no leadership on nuclear disarmament, and has failed to ratify the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, set to enter into force Jan. 22, 2021. The treaty has 84 signatory states and will promote the effective deployment of multilateral mechanisms aimed at eliminating all nuclear stockpiles and preventing the rebuilding of nuclear arsenals. The case for the continued existence of nuclear weapons is irrational. It is time that we reclaim our country's traditional leadership role on disarmament.

In the case of supporting efforts to end deadly conflict, Canada's approach must be civilian-centred. For those of us who have worked in conflict-affected states, we know that civilians want the violence to end as quickly as possible, even if it involves compromise. They expect the international community, including Canada, to support that outcome.

An end to deadly conflict is rarely produced by overwhelming use of military force, and is more typically the product of compromise and negotiation. The best role that Canada can play to support an end to deadly conflict will often be to support international efforts to get the parties engaged in confidence-building and dialogue. This is an area in which Canada has excelled in the past and in which we should once again seek to lead as a means of contributing to global security.

Finally, in order to provide for the best security and defence of people in Canada, we must work to regain the international stature we have seen erode over the past years. We do this by returning to what has proven most effective in amplifying Canada's impact: reinforcing multilateral institutions that allow us to build consensus; empowering our diplomats; and identifying those policy areas where we can have true influence and then building coalitions of the like-minded.

Annamie Paul is the leader of the Green Party of Canada.

The Hill Times



Royal Canadian Air Force CF-18 Hornet pilot call sign 'Slam'r' gives Corporal Benedicte Moke a tour of the cockpit during Operation at Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base, Romania, on Oct. 9, 2020. The Green Party platform recognizes the global reputation of our Canadian Armed Forces for training, leadership, and co-operation in international operations, and the party is committed to expanding Canada's peace-support role and working to strengthen post-conflict democratic institutions and civil society groups, writes Annamie Paul. Air Task Force Romania photograph courtesy of S1 Zach Barr

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Defence Policy Briefing

Canada's security is languishing under the Trudeau government

If the Liberals remain in power, Canada's security and sovereignty will be increasingly vulnerable and compromised, especially when forced to confront the next global crisis.



Conservative MP James Bezan

Opinion

As the COVID-19 pandemic ravages the Canadian economy, it also lays bare Canada's vulnerability to increasingly hostile foreign actors. The Liberal defence plan, Strong, Secure, Engaged, left Canada ill-prepared for the real world. The new reality of COVID-19, the return of great-power rivalry, and interrupted supply chains for critical equipment, is causing Canadians to doubt whether this Liberal government is capable of protecting Canada's security and sovereignty.

Before the pandemic, the Liberal government failed to deliver the critical equipment our Canadian Armed Forces need to protect us on the land, sea, and in the air, and is compromising our ability to continue to contribute meaningfully to our NORAD and NATO alliances in the future. Now, amassing record amounts of pandemic debt, the Liberals risk pushing already delayed defence procurements even further into the future, jeopardizing projects like the fighter-jet replacement program, the Canadian Surface Combatant frigates, and derailing the Arctic and offshore patrol ships. Critical projects long-ignored by the Liberals risk never seeing the light of day under this government, such as upgrading our North Warning System and replacing our Chrétien-era submarines.

This equipment is not a luxury in today's world, but is essential to protecting our sovereignty as a country. The American military has been clear and is on the record; it is not the policy of the United States of America to defend Canada against a long-range missile strike by the likes of North Korea. Unfortunately, beginning negotiations to join the American Ballistic Missile Defence program has never been on the Liberal agenda. And under the Trudeau government, Canada has only contributed token support to our allies and allowed our participation on UN missions to slide to the lowest levels on record.

So what is their plan to protect our Arctic sovereignty, defend our airspace, and patrol our three coasts? We have no modern fighter jets to defend our airspace. We have no heavy ice-breakers or subma-

rines with under-ice capabilities to patrol our Arctic. And, our frigates project is grossly over-budget even before the steel is cut, leading some experts to muse we may never afford them.

COVID-19 should have served as a wake-up call. Instead, the Liberals carry on with their failing defence plan as though nothing has changed. In a world of pandemics and fragile supply chains, it is a matter of national security that Canada cut the red tape on defence procurement, and foster domestic defence capabilities we can rely on in times of crisis. We saw the evidence during the pandemic as countries scrambled to buy up stocks of personal protective equipment and ventilators to keep their citizens alive. It was quickly understood that domestic production of these critical materials was essential, a matter of national security, and so the re-tooling began by Canadian companies to meet that need. Sadly, it was a lesson learned too late. The Liberals are failing to apply this lesson to national defence. We must identify what our core defence competencies are, and make sure we are putting Canadian technology into Canadian ships, jets, and vehicles. The ability to build and maintain our own defence equipment capability inside our own country at times of crisis, along with our Five Eyes partners, is critical to maintaining our sovereignty.

Justin Trudeau's weak leadership in the face of an increasingly aggressive Communist Chinese regime in Beijing should worry Canadians. The Liberal foreign policy of appeasing China has failed to ban Huawei from our 5G network, failed our farmers, failed the unjust detention of Canadians Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig, and failed our entire population fighting COVID-19. A reset of foreign policy doesn't seem likely under this Trudeau government. Despite the global crisis, it is no closer to identifying its foreign policy objectives and aligning our defence objectives accordingly. So, it should come as no surprise the Liberals fumbled the ball throughout the pandemic in securing critical medical equipment, handing sole-sourced contracts to Liberal friends and questionably classifying COVID contracts as "secret" under national security exemptions.

While Trudeau was busy trying to shovel record amounts of money out the door to his friends at WE, Vladimir Putin was busy conducting complex Arctic military exercises right on our Arctic doorstep. Despite warnings from defence experts to take note of Russia's newly demonstrated ability to seize Arctic islands, even in bad weather, Trudeau kept his head firmly planted in the snow. The Liberals are unwilling to do the hard work necessary to equip Canada to face these emerging threats to our Arctic sovereignty.

Trudeau has failed the test of leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic due to his arrogance and entitlement. If the Liberals remain in power, Canada's security and sovereignty will be increasingly vulnerable and compromised, especially when forced to confront the next global crisis. It's all just a matter of time.

James Bezan is the MP for Selkirk-Interlake-Eastman, Man., and the Conservative Party critic for defence.

The Hill Times

Pandemic response showcasing resiliency, reliability of Canadian Forces

The world has changed significantly since this time last year, as a result of the global pandemic, and the Canadian Armed Forces have adapted and responded accordingly.



Liberal MP Anita Vandenberg

Opinion

As Canada took pause on Nov. 11 to remember the brave Canadians who served and sacrificed so that we can live in freedom and democracy, we did so in a very different way than ever before, mainly through our television and computer screens.

In private reflection, we mourned the loss of Corporal James Choi who died in a training incident at Wainwright, Alta., on Oct. 31; Captain Jenn Casey who was killed in a Snowbirds accident in May; and six members of the crew of the HMCS Fredericton who were lost in a Cyclone helicopter crash in April. In small and intimate gatherings, we honoured and remembered those brave Canadians who gave their lives in the First and Second World War, the Korean War, and more recently in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and other operations.

Through social media, we thank those who continue to serve today, carrying on the proud legacy of those who came before.

The world has changed significantly since this time last year, as a result of the global pandemic, and the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) have adapted and responded accordingly. Canada's defence policy, Strong, Secure, Engaged, was designed to ensure that Canada's military is prepared for decades to come, to keep Canadians safe in a world where new and unanticipated threats emerge. We live in a rapidly evolving global and technological environment, where the expectations and requirements of our women and men in uniform are constantly changing.

Nowhere is this more apparent than throughout the COVID-19 crisis. As much of the country is gripped in a second wave, the readiness and agility of the CAF to respond to the crisis has proved vital. Through Operation Globe, the CAF repatriated more than 650 Canadians, and delivered more than 82,500 kilograms of humanitarian and medical supplies for the World Food Program in Central America.

In our domestic response, Operation Laser, more than 1,700 CAF personnel were deployed to 54 long-term care facilities in Ontario and Quebec to support our seniors. The CAF also assisted the Public Health Agency of Canada and Public Health Ontario with management of personal protective equipment (PPE) and with contact tracing.

The Canadian Rangers have been deployed in northern and remote communities across the country to assist with tasks such as delivering food and transporting emergency supplies, wellness checks, and assisting at emergency operations centres.

The Rangers who responded are residents of the communities in which they serve, providing vital local knowledge and familiarity. Their presence in remote communities is a backbone of strength in the North and their contributions in not only responding to, but also prevention of, the spread of COVID-19 in their communities is a source of pride.

At the same time that CAF has shown flexibility and adapted its operations to respond to the domestic health crisis, COVID-19 has exacerbated geopolitical tensions and emboldened malicious foreign actors, particularly through increased cyberthreats. The Canadian Security Establishment has worked with government, businesses, and health-care institutions to swiftly secure our networks and cyber infrastructure as millions of Canadians shifted to working remotely.

While there have been adjustments to Canadian Armed Forces international deployments because of COVID-19, the CAF has remained agile and continues to conduct successful international operations.

At a time when the international rules-based order is being challenged, and with rising global trends toward authoritarianism and isolationism, Canada's commitment to working with our allies and multilateral partners to promote peace, democracy, and global security is even more important. Canada continues to play a leadership role in NATO, remains committed to modernizing NORAD, and contributes to UN Peace Operations.

Strong, Secure, Engaged provides a strong foundation to ensure that the CAF has the capabilities, tools, and supports to keep Canadians safe and respond to evolving global challenges, while contributing to economic recovery at home. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen the flexibility and responsiveness of the CAF to unanticipated demands.

They have supported the delivery of PPE to communities from the Yukon to as far away as Honduras. They have mobilized Reservists and are ready to respond to pandemic-related and other emergencies at home as they did in our long-term care facilities. They set up a quarantine centre on the base in Trenton on short notice so that Canadians could return home safely.

And they stand ready to help with whatever is asked of them as Canada combats the second wave and builds toward recovery.

Anita Vandenberg is the Liberal MP for Ottawa West-Nepean, Ont., and the parliamentary secretary to the minister of national defence.

The Hill Times

Canada’s adaptation to evolving NORAD and NATO roles

As peer competitors and other adversaries continue to violate international norms and rules, alliances like NATO and NORAD provide a means to promote and enforce the boundaries of acceptable conduct.



Nancy Teeple

Opinion

On Nov. 9, in a call to Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, U.S. president-elect Joe Biden reaffirmed the close bonds between Canada and the U.S., citing the North American partnership and deepening collaboration to address regional and global challenges—including strengthening NATO. Indeed, not only do NATO and NORAD remain viable and workable alliances today, they are imperative; and Canada’s role has been and should continue to be engaged, but Canada needs to strengthen and adapt its defence to the realities of emerging threats and security challenges to effectively meet its alliance commitments.

Canadians should remain confident in the sustained historical record of the ef-

ficacy of our alliances as collective bodies intended to preserve and promote peace and stability through defence and deterrence. They comprise a North Atlantic community reflecting the universal norms and values of liberty, democracy, rule of law, human rights, and freedoms. Canada was one of the eight founding members of NATO in 1949 and remains a valued binational partner in NORAD.

Born out of the post-Second World War and early Cold War strategic context, NATO and NORAD provide the foundation for defence co-operation and security that we continue to enjoy today. These institutions adapted and demonstrated their enduring relevance as the global security environment shifted from bipolar, to unipolar, to multipolar with the rise of peer competitors. Today’s threats are more complex; adversaries are varied and operate in non-traditional ways and domains.

The world today is experiencing unprecedented challenges—a global pandemic with severe economic effects, a divided America following an isolationist president, the ending of stability-enhancing arms control regimes, and strategic competition with adversaries that deploy aggression below the threshold of conflict. International relations returned to great power competitions, characterized by a resurgent Russia and a revisionist China seeking to project power globally and regionally manipulating or outright ignoring international norms and legal regimes. Despite this renewed focus for defence and security institutions, the risk posed by rogue nations, such as North Korea and potentially Iran, wielding nuclear weapons threatens regional allies and, possibly, the North American homeland. The threat of international terrorism has not disappeared, and the threat of religious extremism has been augmented by the rise of far-right groups. The international security environment is less predictable and more volatile than we could have anticipated.



NATO’s former headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, are pictured in 2012. Canada needs to strengthen and adapt its defence to the realities of emerging threats and security challenges to effectively meet its alliance commitments, writes Nancy Teeple. Flickr photograph by UD/Frode Overland Andersen

The U.S. continues to lead our alliances as one of the world’s strongest economies and the most powerful military. Canada remains a key player in both alliances, providing geographical advantage for NORAD and niche capabilities for NATO. NATO and NORAD evolved and adapted to changes in the global threat environment from the Cold War to the present. From its creation in 1949, NATO began as a consensus-based collective defence body focused on deterring military aggression in the Euro-Atlantic region, with an emphasis on Article 5 of the Treaty that an attack against one or more of its members is considered an attack against all members. After the Cold War, NATO evolved and its core tasks expanded to include co-operative security and crisis management, and broadened its scope for intervention from regional to global. Canada played a significant role in these NATO missions, from the Balkans in the 1990s, it expanded its contribution to NATO-ISAF in Afghanistan from Kabul to Kandahar province, it led the 2011 air campaign NATO intervention in Libya, and now leads a battlegroup as part of NATO’s Enhanced Forward Presence in Latvia.

NORAD was established in 1958 as a Canada-U.S. binational continental air defence command, in which Canada provided an early warning and defence role as part of deterrence. NORAD evolved through renewals that expanded its mission, most notably in 1981 to include aerospace warning, and in 2006, it added a maritime warning role. In response to peer strategic competitors’ innovation in offensive weapons to strike the continent (no defences exist against hypersonic vehicles, advanced cruise missiles, and unmanned aerial systems), North American defence is undergoing modernization, primarily through NORAD and USNORTHCOM, with new deterrence and integrated defence concepts, which has implications for Canada as a close U.S. defence partner and Arctic nation.

As an important NATO and NORAD partner, Canada must revise its Strong, Secure, Engaged defence policy. Since

the Wales summit in 2014, when NATO members reaffirmed their commitment to two per cent of GDP spending on defence, Canada has continued to fall short of its commitment. Canada needs to be serious about its contribution, revise its problematic procurement processes (characterized by delays and cancellations on the whims of political leadership), and increase defence spending and investing in capabilities needed now and into the future. For its own national security interests, and as a continental defence partner, Canada must be serious about upgrades to North American defence, including the Arctic (particularly replacing the aging North Warning System of early-warning radars), potentially requiring a revisit to missile defence participation. Reaching 1.4 per cent of GDP on defence spending by 2024 may no longer be viable for the complex and diverse defence challenges in multiple domains we must be prepared for today. Canada needs to join its U.S. partner in revising its defence and deterrence posture with serious investment in all domains to remain a credible defence partner.

Our alliances are more important than ever in today’s unpredictable and volatile international security environment. As peer competitors and other adversaries continue to violate international norms and rules, alliances like NATO and NORAD provide a means to promote and, if necessary, enforce the boundaries of acceptable conduct in international and regional spaces. Canada has a vested national interest in supporting NATO and NORAD to promote shared values and defend the rules-based international order.

Nancy Teeple is an adjunct professor and research associate at the Royal Military College of Canada, a postdoctoral fellow at the North American and Arctic Defence and Security Network, and the Fulbright Canada Visiting Chair in Peace and War Studies at Norwich University.

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Defence Policy Briefing

Canada's surface combatant costs might be taking on water



Parliamentary Budget Officer Yves Giroux is expected to release an updated costing of the Navy's Canadian Surface Combatant project, and if his office finds that significantly more money is needed to deliver this project, that may be a good sign that Canada should revisit the governance and project management to ensure it is being best managed, writes David Perry. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

It is unclear where exactly the project stands, as the government has said virtually nothing about the progress on the project since February 2019.



David Perry

Opinion

Sometime soon, the Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) will release an updated costing

of the Navy's Canadian Surface Combatant (CSC) project. Much of Canada's naval future, military combat capability, and ability to defend our country and continent are wrapped up in that project, the most expensive we have ever undertaken. Currently budgeted at between \$56-billion and \$60-billion, the PBO will likely report that substantially more money is needed to deliver CSC.

As it stands, the last PBO costing from 2019 estimated the budget should be closer to \$70-billion. Two key things have changed since then that will likely push their estimate higher. First, there are rumblings that the project is facing significant delays. In its last effort, the PBO pegged the cost of an additional year of delay at more than \$2-billion. It is unclear where exactly the project stands, as the government has said virtually nothing about the progress on the project since February 2019 when Lockheed Martin Canada was confirmed as Canada's winning bidder and the project entered into a critical period of detailed design work. Canada and Irving Shipbuilding,

the project's prime contractor, have been reviewing the detailed bid to fully understand it, make changes, and translate the bid proposal into the actual ship that will be built in Halifax. That effort is complicated, time consuming, and arguably more difficult than the earlier phases of the project that came before it, and in those earlier phases, the project consistently missed one milestone after another. There is no evidence suggesting that the pace of the project has improved as the work became more difficult—and that is without trying to account for any COVID-related impacts. Using the PBO's last report, a delay of just a couple of years on its own could increase costs by about \$5-billion.

The second key change between the PBO's last report and the present time relates to the actual ship itself. When the PBO last costed the project, their analysis was based on the Royal Navy's Type 26 frigate, which had been identified at the time as the ship design upon which the winning submission was based. But the Type 26 was just the starting point for that bid, as it proposed modify-

ing that ship design extensively to ensure it meets the Navy's requirements and provides the economic benefit required by the process. Since submitting that bid in October 2018, the requirements have gone through a "reconciliation" process that was either finished a long time ago, recently, or is still ongoing, depending on who you ask. While the parameters of this process have been fuzzy, it seems to have resulted in additional combat capability being added to Canada's future warships.

The net result, as material recently released by the RCN makes clear, is that the CSC, as currently envisioned, is a very different ship than the Type 26. It is both heavier and longer. And while the hull and related systems are largely the same, virtually the entire combat systems are different. Costing out the differences between the major components of the combat system would presumably be a key feature of the PBO's report, including the radar, major weapons systems, combat management system, and Co-operative Engagement Capability. Similarly, the PBO might try and assess the implications of

Canada acquiring a ship with a purpose-built combat system and the extensive design and systems integration work that will be required to make it combat effective, including the impact on schedule.

As we await the PBO's report, it is worth remembering that the organization has developed a solid track record of estimating the costs of ships built under the National Shipbuilding Strategy. If they find that significantly more money is needed to deliver this project, that may be a good sign that Canada should revisit the governance and project management of this project to ensure it is being best managed. The project's schedule appears to keep drifting and some of the most difficult work lies ahead. Ensuring we have project management and governance that can effectively manage an extraordinarily complicated, developmental project is the best way to keep the project's costs down and deliver the Navy Canada needs.

David Perry is the vice-president and a senior analyst at the Canadian Global Affairs Institute. *The Hill Times*

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Defence Policy Briefing



A CF-18 Hornet from 409 Tactical Fighter Squadron in Cold Lake, Alta., flies in the Alaskan airspace in preparation for Exercise Vigilant Eagle 13 on Aug. 25, 2013. To ensure that Canada meets its obligations to NATO and to NORAD, modernization is essential, not least of all because it also represents a contribution to wider NATO aims, write Andrea Charron and James Fergusson. DND photograph courtesy of Cpl. Vicky Lefrancois

In the return of major power rivalry, Canada should cement its role

Failure to rediscover the NATO-NORAD connection means that North America is vulnerable, Canada forfeits its commitment to its allies, and Canada's ability to contribute to international peace and security is curtailed.



Andrea Charron & James Fergusson

Opinion

The demise of NATO, especially, and NORAD, occasionally, has been declared by many pundits on numerous occasions. During the 1990s, having defeated the Soviet Union and reached "the end of history," NATO and NORAD discovered new missions. NATO went out of area and added counterterrorism and crisis management to its to-do list. NORAD provided air surveillance

to assist with drug interdiction missions. NORAD was assumed to defend Canada and the continental United States exclusively; NATO was dedicated to Western Europe only.

Now, with the return of great-power politics, the collective defence missions of NATO and NORAD are surely self-evident. But are they? According to a recent poll by Nanos for the Canadian Defence and Security Network, Canadians are decidedly pro-NATO (a NORAD-specific question was not asked), but for their collective security/assistance to civilian authorities' missions—not for their primary and intended roles to deter great-power aggression, thus defending Canada, the United States, and European allies. Indeed, NORAD and NATO are still thought of as parallel, rather than complementary defence relationships that

reinforce the other. The "gaffe" that Diefenbaker made in the late 1950s, to convince Canadians to join NORAD by suggesting the former was the North American contribution to NATO, was actually correct—just 60 years premature. For too long, however, NORAD and NATO operated as if separate and apart. This is no longer the case; indeed, it is essential they work together.

While Canada is hesitant to call out Russia and China as adversaries (there are scant references to either in the 2017 Strong, Secure, Engaged defence policy), the United States does consider them major concerns. The changing nature of conflict means that threats (a combination of intent and capabilities) from Russia and China, other states, as well as non-state actors, no longer rest in one domain. A maritime vessel can quickly become an airborne threat (as the launch platform of a missile), which may carry a nuclear or conventional warhead targeting vital infrastructure, guided by GPS (space-based) and likely presaged by cyber misinformation attacks (the cognitive domain).

This can all occur from anywhere in the world, which means

the NORAD and NATO seams of geographic areas of responsibility are now potential liabilities if we continue to think of them as acting in parallel rather than in concert. More and more attention is paid by the U.S., European, and Canadian militaries to the strategic position of the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom (GIUK) and Norway "gap," which exists in the North Atlantic and aligns almost perfectly with the seam between the U.S. geographic combatant commands—EUCOM and USNORTHCOM—whose commanders are also NATO's supreme allied commander and USNORTHCOM and NORAD's commander, respectively. These threats may never materialize, but the primary purpose of NORAD and NATO is to deter aggression and to be prepared to defeat them. They are Canada's and its allies' insurance policies—we resent these military costs when all is well, but the alternative is unthinkable.

CAF attention has shifted decidedly to Canada and to North America. Fifty per cent of CAF missions are now domestic ones to deal with environmental disasters and provide assistance to other agencies or government (helping Parks Canada with avalanche mitigation measures, for example), and to support NORAD and the other bilateral security and military operations. To ensure that Canada meets its obligations to NATO and to NORAD, modernization is essential, not least of all because it also represents a contribution to wider NATO aims. Prioritizing North American defence co-operation and NORAD also aligns with the priorities of all of the defence policies dating

back to 1964—first to defend Canada, then North America, and then assistance in the world.

This does not mean that Canada should abandon Operation Reassurance in Latvia or refuse UN stability missions, such as in Mali, but it does mean that Canada needs to prioritize missions to deter future aggression by revisionist states like China and Russia against North America first to ensure that other peace and stability operations are more effective because they require allied assistance. As the U.S. military champions a new way of rapidly planning and executing operations using capabilities from all domains in a synchronized and co-operative fashion with the Joint All-Domain Awareness Command and Control (JADC2) concept, NORAD and NATO will necessarily play a role in this strategic redesign. Canadian industries will have opportunities to benefit and the CAF will contribute to an all-domain picture, which will be an information multiplier for all allies. NATO and NORAD are still relevant. Canadians need to rediscover NORAD and the NORAD-NATO connection. Failure to do so means that North America is vulnerable, Canada forfeits its commitment to its allies, and Canada's ability to contribute to international peace and security is curtailed.

Andrea Charron is director of the Centre for Defence and Security Studies (CDSS) at the University of Manitoba and associate professor in Political Studies. James Fergusson is deputy-director of the CDSS and professor in Political Studies at the University of Manitoba.

The Hill Times



SkyAlyne offers Canada a rare opportunity:

keep RCAF training in Canada's control and maximize the economic benefits at home.



Tracy Medve, President of KF Aerospace and Board Chair of SkyAlyne



France Hébert, Vice President and General Manager, CAE Defence and Security Canada and President of SkyAlyne

Canada is choosing its next long-term training partner for the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF). Future Aircrew Training (FAcT) is an ambitious, next-generation program combining all phases of RCAF pilot and aircrew training and in-service support. It's a significant Department of National Defence (DND) contract that is expected to be awarded in 2023.

SkyAlyne - one of four qualified suppliers competing for FAcT - is a partnership between Canadian defence and aerospace leaders KF Aerospace (based in Kelowna, BC) and CAE (based in Montreal, QC).

Below, two of Canada's leading defence executives, Tracy Medve, President of KF Aerospace and Board Chair of SkyAlyne, and France Hébert, Vice President and General Manager, CAE Defence and Security Canada, and President of SkyAlyne, elaborate.

Q: FAcT has drawn some intense competition to win this contract. What sets SkyAlyne apart?

Hébert: Proven expertise, training continuity and deep roots in Canada! SkyAlyne is a partnership between two Canadian-founded companies, both experts in military pilot training and

in-service support. Canada's leadership in military aircrew training has been identified by the Government as a key industrial capability and is recognized by our allies. Choosing SkyAlyne is an opportunity for Canada to keep RCAF aircrew training in Canadian hands — we're the only fully Canadian bidder — and free from external disruptions that could affect this critical military capability.

Medve: And then, there are the economic benefits to Canada of keeping this large and crucial contract in Canadian hands! In fact, SkyAlyne is the only solution for the FAcT Program that will keep all economic benefits in Canada, including the potential to export our expertise to allies and partners in the future. And the benefits will cascade across the country thanks to the impressive team of Canadian subcontractors we've assembled. The SkyAlyne team includes Canadian businesses that operate in every region of Canada. Collectively, these companies employ more than 14,000 Canadians, from coast to coast to coast. It's pretty clear that choosing SkyAlyne for FAcT would maximize the economic growth opportunities for Canadian workers and communities, including Indigenous communities, for years to come.

Q: You mention proven expertise. Can you elaborate?

Medve: Both our companies are the incumbent contracted training providers for the RCAF. The Contracted Flying Training Support (CFTS) program in Southport, MB, has been managed by KF Aerospace since 2005, and the NATO Flying Training in Canada (NFTC) program in Moose Jaw, SK and Cold Lake, AB, is managed by CAE. Today, all RCAF pilots are trained in phases between these two programs.

By forming SkyAlyne, we've brought all current contracted military pilot training in Canada under one umbrella. We're ready to advance and implement the FAcT program immediately, minimizing the transition risk and ensuring there will be no interruption of service.

Hébert: CAE is the worldwide leader in aircrew training, simulation and in-service support. Typically

we train more than 220,000 pilots and aircrew around the world each year across military and civil aviation. KF Aerospace is Canada's largest commercial aviation maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO). Both of our companies have long histories working with the RCAF and supporting Canada's military.

Q: SkyAlyne is making a strong pitch for FAcT. Why is this so important to you?

Hébert: Ha! Is it so obvious? Both our companies' histories are intertwined with Canada's military. It's in our DNA. We've been supporting Canada's military for decades. We intend to use our innovative, world-leading training expertise and to continue honouring the RCAF's proud heritage as we work to ensure that Canadian military pilots and aircrew remain among the best in the world.

Medve: This is personal for us. Canada is our home. This is a chance for us to draw on our vast experience as two successful Canadian companies and create something new and unique — a Canadian defence company that honours our proud past but that, as France says, has the capabilities and the knowledge to accelerate military pilot training in Canada into the future. And with the many economic and strategic benefits our selection for FAcT would bring, it's a win-win for Canada.

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Defence Policy Briefing

A more assertive Europe to enhance transatlantic security

In a world of changing global political structures and great power competition, our Canadian partners can count on the EU as a reliable and capable ally on the other side of the Atlantic.



Brigadier-General Fritz Urbach

Opinion

The COVID-19 pandemic has taught us many lessons, one of them being the importance of a more assertive role for Europe as a security provider and a reliable defender of the rules-based international order. The pandemic accelerated already existing and worrisome trends—questioning of multilateral institutions, the disengagement of some of our allies, growing vulnerabilities in critical sectors of our defence co-operation. The pandemic also happened at a time when the U.S.—so far, the unquestionable security and power provider—continued to withdraw from many parts of the world due to its increased focus on China, while the rules-based international order came under permanent pressure from many sides.

In Europe, these developments have had a catalyst effect, triggering reflections on the need to strengthen our resilience and capacity to act as a security provider, with autonomy in such strategic areas as access to connectivity, digital technologies, critical raw materials, and health-care supplies. In short, Europe realized it needs to be more self-reliant to guarantee the necessary capabilities in the broad field of security and defence. The term that has been used in this context by high-level EU representatives and think tanks is “strategic autonomy.”

Of course, this term, which covers all domains of international policy—from climate change to diplomacy, from trade to social standards—raises questions on this side of the Atlantic, especially in security and defence matters: do Europeans want to replace NATO? The answer is obviously

Despite the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, which absorbs a lot of efforts, the EU security initiatives are on track and expanding. Flickr photograph courtesy of the EU Naval Force Somalia



“no.” Our efforts do not aim to redefine the transatlantic relationship, but rather to enhance it. It is neither politically desirable nor realistic that EU member states replicate the military capabilities and the political power of NATO. It would be also unreasonable to think that EU member states would fund European duplications for nuclear defence, command and control, intelligence-surveillance-reconnaissance or strategic airlift capabilities. The collective defence against any military threat will unquestionably remain NATO’s key role, based on its crucial capabilities provided jointly by allies on both sides of the Atlantic.

For many years, our transatlantic allies have insisted that the EU boosts its security and defence capabilities to be able to act as a security provider, especially in its geographic neighbourhood, when NATO is not available or does not have the appropriate tool-set to solve a crisis. The key word is thus complementarity between NATO and EU. This complementarity cannot be taken for granted, and does not happen overnight—it must be organized and backed by political will and enhanced military capabilities on the European side.

Let us consider the new, overarching strategic priorities

of the EU: the Green Deal, the promotion of multilateral partnerships, strategic autonomy, and resilience. These priorities reflect the very broad and comprehensive European understanding of security with a decisive role of resilience at its centre. This resilience is a national responsibility, a result of whole of government measures. But it is the EU that sets standards, co-ordinates and orchestrates solidarity actions among member states, as it happened during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

New European security initiatives should be perceived within an all-encompassing effort and co-operation with partners. They were launched to improve European military capabilities, which will of course benefit NATO because we all have only one single set of armed forces and no duplication can be allowed.

Despite the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, which absorbs a lot of efforts, the EU security initiatives are on track and expanding.

First among them is the Permanent Structured Co-operation, or PESCO, one of the pillars of the EU’s defence policy. PESCO allows for co-operation among EU member states to create and develop defence capabilities, invest in shared projects, and en-

hance the operational readiness and contribution of their armed forces. This initiative has recently been expanded to include participation from third countries. Under this latest development, trusted partners such as Canada are invited to identify and join specific PESCO projects.

Another initiative, known as Military Mobility, enables allied military forces, including from Canada, to move across Europe, to the destination of their operations. Thanks to financing from the common EU budget (1.5-billion EUR/US\$1.77-billion), the Military Mobility infrastructure will now be upgraded across the continent. Additionally, legal and administrative procedures required to move troops and hazardous goods across Europe are also being revised and streamlined in hopes of facilitating these movements.

The third initiative is the European Defence Fund (budget of 7-billion EUR/US\$8.84-billion), which aims to provide financial incentives for a better co-operation among stakeholders in the European defence industry. What is important to note is that this mechanism will also be open to participation from third countries under specific conditions. It will certainly be of interest to the Canadian defence industry, as Canadian companies with subsidiaries in Europe will be

able to benefit from EU-funds for research and development when joining co-operation projects with other European companies.

Finally, on the conceptual side, the EU is currently developing the Strategic Compass, a concise document outlining the general policy guidance, future CSDP priorities, and needed capabilities, starting with agreeing on a common EU threat assessment.

In conclusion, a more assertive, strategically autonomous EU will only benefit and strengthen transatlantic relations. Our transatlantic allies, Canada and the U.S., should not be concerned about a more assertive EU. Should the term “strategic autonomy” be better explained by European leaders? Probably. But it is clear that the EU’s goal is to improve complementarity with NATO without creating any duplications or competition.

Consequently, in a world of changing global political structures and great power competition—which will not disappear with a Biden administration in Washington—our Canadian partners can count on the EU as a reliable and capable ally on the other side of the Atlantic.

Brig.-Gen. Fritz Urbach is the EU Defence Attaché in Canada and the United States of America. The Hill Times

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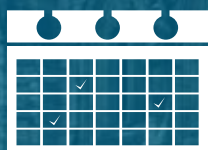
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Opinion

Canada must legislate climate targets to avoid embarrassment at COP26

Experts from the nation's environmental community agree that Canada must enact accountability legislation if we are to reach emissions reduction targets.

BY CATHERINE ABREU, JULIA CROOME, ANDREW GAGE, DALE MARSHALL, & MARC-ANDRÉ VIAU

For the past quarter-century, late autumn has marked the beginning of the UN's annual climate negotiations. Had 2020 gone as planned, thousands of negotiators, diplomats, journalists, activists, land protectors, and elected officials would be gathering in Glasgow for the 26th Conference of Parties (COP26) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change to discuss, with painstaking detail, the policy paths still left to get us to a climate safe future.

The year 2020 was meant to be one of ambition, when all signatories to the landmark Paris Agreement returned to the UN with more ambitious climate pledges. But of course, 2020 has not gone as planned. While COP26 is still set to take place, the schedule has been pushed back a year, to November 2021.

Media from every corner of the globe follow these negotiations closely. Had COP26 proceeded as intended, the headline in every news outlet across Canada would read: "Canada is not on track to reach the emissions-reduction target agreed to in Paris."

Lack of accountability leads to an inconsistent performance

Canada continues to send mixed messages on climate change—professing to prioritize climate action while continuing to subsidize the fossil fuel industry to the tune of more than \$600-million each year. Meanwhile, nations like Denmark, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom are faring better—thanks largely to their legislated climate accountability frameworks.

Take for instance the United Kingdom. In 2008, its Climate Change Act made the nation's long-term climate targets and five-year interim targets legally binding. The result? The U.K.'s carbon emissions have fallen by 38 per cent since 1990, and most steeply since the Climate Change Act passed in 2008, while Canada's have increased by 21 per cent in the same period.

Necessary features of Canadian accountability legislation

The Liberal government has made a welcome commitment



Environment Minister Jonathan Wilkinson is pictured leaving the West Block on Oct. 21, 2020. The Liberal government has made a welcome commitment to net-zero legislation. However, setting long-term targets in law is not enough. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

to net-zero legislation. However, setting long-term targets in law is not enough. We need accountability—a law that makes explicit who is responsible for given elements of climate action, makes those responsible answerable for their actions and decisions, and is enforceable, by attaching conse-

(net-zero by 2050 and a stronger 2030 goal), but a schedule of short-term ones as well. A series of five-year carbon budgets will map out emissions reductions, and regular five-year impact reports will map out how we need to adapt to climate change as a country.

Thirdly, we need a system of independent expert oversight, in the form of a committee representing the best scientific and technical minds, which will provide advice on everything—targets, budgets, plans—and independently report on our progress.

so we never miss another climate target. Anything less is unlikely to deliver the results we need.

We are weeks away from 2021. That means we're one year closer to our 2030 target, and we have less than a decade left to do our fair share to stave off the most disastrous and irreversible impacts of climate change.

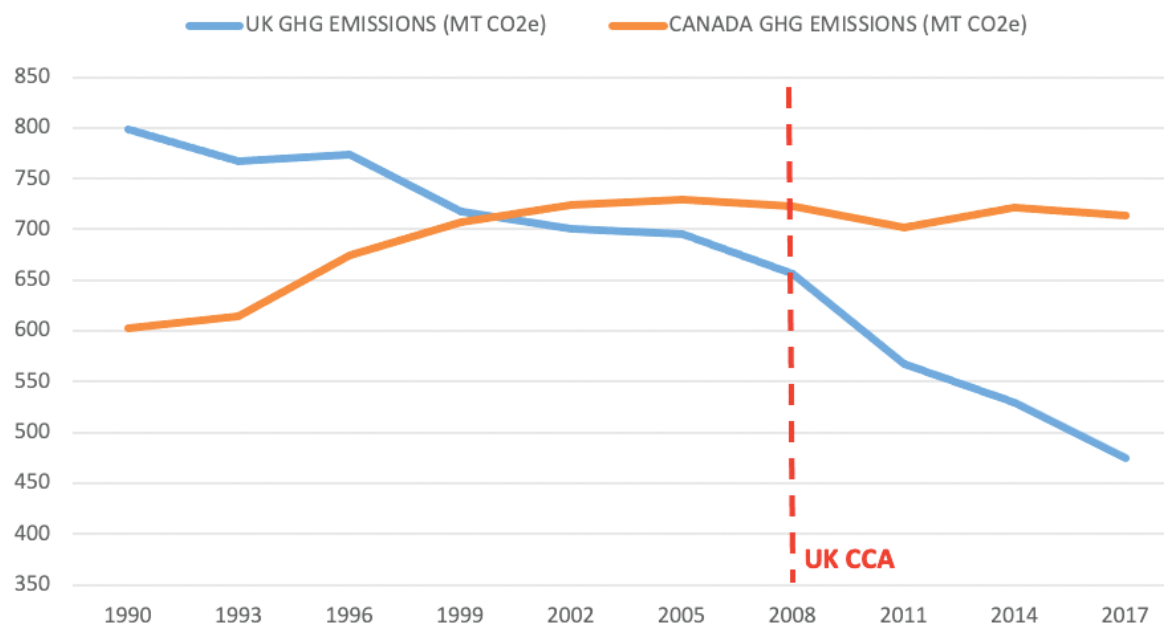
Canada's international respect as a climate leader is already waning as we continue to blow past the climate targets we set for ourselves. As a society that has historically benefited from the high-emissions oil and gas industry, we owe it to the world and to ourselves to use our wealth and ingenuity to hasten our transition to a clean energy future. What Canada does matters. And failure is not an option.

This year has demonstrated that our environmental health is deeply intertwined with our physical and sociological wellbeing. Although COP26 has been delayed we cannot afford to set aside climate commitments in favour of concentrating solely on pandemic relief—the hour is too late, and the crises too interconnected—and we certainly cannot wait to hold ourselves accountable for our actions.

Catherine Abreu is the executive director of Climate Action Network Canada; Julia Croome is a staff lawyer at Ecojustice; Andrew Gage is a staff lawyer at West Coast Environmental Law; Dale Marshall is the national climate program manager at Environmental Defence; and Marc-André Viau is the director, government relations at Équiterre.

The Hill Times

CANADA VS UK GHG EMISSIONS: 1990-2017



Source: Canada and U.K. 2020 annual National Inventory Reports to UNFCCC—Total CO2 equivalent emissions in millions of tons (MT) without land use, land-use change and forestry. Chart courtesy of Julia Croome, November 2020

quences for failing to live up to commitments.

What does that mean for Canada? First, that we set not only long-term targets in law

Secondly, we need to set up a clear and results-based cycle of planning, reporting, and reassessment targeted to those carbon budgets and impact reports.

Legislation that imposes explicit duties on responsible actors to achieve these three key elements can make this and future governments accountable



With around 97 per cent of the expected vote counted, U.S. president-elect Joe Biden is leading U.S. President Donald Trump by 3.6 points in the popular vote as of Nov. 17. Pre-election national polls projected Mr. Biden would win by at least eight points. Photograph courtesy of Flickr/White House and Twitter/Joe Biden

What can Canadian pollsters learn from mistakes in American presidential polling?

‘The methods they are using aren’t capturing a certain segment of the population,’ Abacus Data’s David Coletto says of U.S. pollsters.

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the performance of their U.S. counterparts.

Soon after the Nov. 3 election, as the early returns came back in favour of U.S. President Donald Trump, pollsters were once again placed on the hot seat. A *New York Magazine* headline asked if the public should even stop paying attention to polls.

But as the vote count progressed and mail-in ballots were counted, the vote totals got closer and closer to the results that were projected in pre-election polls. Yet, the results were still off. With around 97 per cent of the expected vote counted, U.S. president-elect Joe Biden is leading by 3.6 points as of Nov. 17. National

polls leading up to the election had Mr. Biden leading by at least eight points.

Pollster David Coletto, CEO of Abacus Data, told *The Hill Times* that there are “lessons” for Canadian polling firms to learn from the mistakes that are being made in the United States.

“Something happened that we, I think, really need to understand,” he said.

The exact reason why some polling was off won’t be known for some time, as U.S. polling firms and academics analyze what went right and what went wrong.

“It’s hard to defend the performance in the U.S. when it’s pretty clear that the same kinds of mistakes or some kinds of errors that might be showing up in these polls [in previous elections] happened again,” he said, adding there’s more work to be done to figure out what’s going on and how to better estimate vote intentions.

In 2016, Hillary Clinton won the national vote by 2.1 percentage points, but lost the electoral college. While national polling was largely accurate—most national polls had Ms. Clinton with a three-point lead—polls

underestimated Mr. Trump’s performance at the state level, a 2017 report by the American Association for Public Opinion Research found.

He said the likely explanation is that there are certain people that polls aren’t accounting for.

“The methods they are using aren’t capturing a certain segment of the population,” said Mr. Coletto, adding that Canadians polling is not immune to the same challenges pollsters face in capturing the U.S. electorate.

In the last federal election, Canadian pollsters fared well. But there have been issues in the past, especially in provincial and municipal elections.

“Our ability to maybe capture the mood of the country is in part a function of how ... less polarized we are now as a country,” Mr. Coletto said, noting that partisanship isn’t as strong.

Frank Graves, founder and president of EKOS Research, said while there were some areas of “systematic underrepresentation of Trump support,” he said he didn’t think the polling was “particularly inaccurate.”

“It looked worse than it was at the outset because of the unusual

nature of this election,” said Mr. Graves, adding that the accuracy of the polling was within the realm of what has been seen over the last 20 to 30 years.

Most polls likely predicted the accurate results in 48 of 50 states, according to polling aggregator FiveThirtyEight.

Mr. Graves said one issue for U.S. pollsters is accounting for voters who distrust institutions.

“Because much higher levels of institutional mistrust—and in the media and polling and all those sorts of things—just don’t do surveys, which they’ll have to figure out,” he said.

Mr. Graves said Canadian pollsters can always learn and adapt to different changes that have happened south of the border.

Pollster Greg Lyle of Innovative Research Group said it will likely be two years before all the work is finished in assessing what working theory is the most likely behind polling errors.

Some have said certain voters aren’t accounted for due to a “shy” Trump voter effect, where those surveyed don’t admit that they are backing Trump, but research by the Pew Research Center has unearthed little evidence for the theory.

Nik Nanos, chief data scientist and founder of Nanos Research, said the effect is “complete media speculation” by Trump supporters to discredit polls because they were behind.

He said when the full national vote is counted, Mr. Biden is likely to win by four or five points, which is around the margin of error.

Mr. Nanos said U.S. polling is more vulnerable to error because they do extra modelling for likely voters, which doesn’t happen in Canada.

“That’s the most vulnerable part of the polling that is done in the United States,” he said.

Perception of poor U.S. polling could hurt Canadian industry

Mr. Coletto said a high-profile event, such as the U.S. presidential election, will “no doubt” have an effect and raise questions about polling and methodology at home.

“My view has always been that I don’t necessarily think the tool that we have available to us—the survey itself—is not as precise and perfect as people make it out to be,” he said. “The expectation of perfection and being dead-on accurate, I think, is unrealistic.”

University of British Columbia emeritus professor Richard Johnston, who previously held the Canadian Research Chair in public opinion, elections, and representation, said the perception of poor polling accuracy “absolutely” has an impact on the industry.

“Polling firms are susceptible to the same sort of anti-intellectual mistrust ... that’s out there” that impacts academics and others, he said.

“They are going to be very sensitive as an industry,” Prof. Johnston said, but added there might not be much they can do about it.

“We still don’t really know what went on—even in 2016,” he said. “At the end of the day ... you don’t know how much of the problem is a result of people who just aren’t answering the polls in the first place.”

Mr. Lyle said there is some “reputational hit” for the polling industry, especially from election night.

But he said despite the doom and gloom around polling following the 2016 U.S. presidential election, there wasn’t much of an effect on the Canadian polling industry.

“It’s still a big feature of media coverage. And the reason for that is because people like to read those stories,” Mr. Lyle said.

Mr. Graves said the accounts of polling “massively failing” were “egregiously overstated.”

He said there isn’t a great deal of corrosive impact that spills over to Canadian polls from the negative view of polling accuracy in other places.

Mr. Graves said it is important for the polling industry to “point out where the criticisms are unfounded, unfair, or exaggerated.”

Mr. Nanos said the challenge for the industry is that on one day a poll will be championed, but on the next it will be dismissed, based on the partisan advantage it gives.

“The problem is not necessarily the polling. The problem is that people are very quick to dismiss any kind of survey that they disagree with, while at the same time use another survey to support their views,” he said. “If there’s a problem it’s the weaponization of polling ... where they are used, dismissed, discredited, or held up as gospel, depending on where you stand in a particular campaign.”

He said trust in polling is at the same level as it has always been, noting that response rates have increased during the pandemic.

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News

‘Historic’ effort to run two hybrid Chambers a balancing act

‘The reality is that we [had] limited capacity for the House of Commons and the support team in the Senate to go remotely with committees,’ says Progressive Sen. Pierre Dalphond.

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of the Senate administration’s core legislative functions, which are to support Senators with the “services, infrastructure, and advice they need to carry out their work as legislators,” said Ross Ryan, press secretary to Senate Speaker George Furey (Newfoundland and Labrador).

“Owing to the dedication and hard work of Senate staff, the Senate has successfully implemented virtual committees, as well as hybrid sittings of the Senate—both historic firsts for the institution,” said Mr. Ryan, by email, of the first such sitting in the Red Chamber on Nov. 2.

After having only in-person proceedings whenever the Chamber sat during the spring and summer, and after the new session began in September, Senators approved a new hybrid model on Oct. 27. The House of Commons had been running regular hybrid proceedings since Sept. 23.

Senators have been similarly effusive over the past months in their praise for Senate staffers getting all 94 of them online, even as frustrations mounted from procedural delays pushed by disagreement among leadership teams.

Independent Senators Group (ISG) facilitator Yuen Pau Woo (British Columbia) called it a “historic week” and said it went well.

“Hats off to the Senate administration for execution of the plan so well,” said Sen. Woo in an interview Nov. 6, following the Chamber’s first hybrid week.

“We embarked on a major experiment in the Senate’s history. We made preparations over many months and went through a number of trials to get ready for last week and pulled it off,” he said,

bringing in “99 per cent” participation among the ISG’s 44 members.

To get to this point, the Senate administration was tasked over the summer with developing alternatives to in-person sittings with the expectation that technology, logistics, and procedural matters would be similar to the House’s approach, Mr. Ryan said. Senators participated in Zoom rehearsals in August, September, and October co-ordinated by the administration at the request of Sen. Furey.

Scheduling will be a “significant variable for the coexistence” of hybrid sittings and committees, Mr. Ryan added. Senators have yet to decide whether committees will also hold hybrid meetings or if they can also have the option to meet solely by video and teleconference. The two largest groups in the Chamber, the Conservatives and ISG, are on either side of that equation, with both sides saying the other’s position—the ISG wanting the option of virtual meetings, while the Conservatives think hybrid meetings are sufficient—is a non-starter, stalling most committees from meeting.



It’ll be up to Senators to decide how to schedule that work, too. Prior to the pandemic, committees typically didn’t meet while the Senate Chamber was sitting, and it’s likely a similar approach will proceed under the hybrid model, but Mr. Ryan stressed Senators will determine the right balance between the Chamber and committee operations.

Still, fewer committees than usual can likely be supported at one time. Committee rooms are be-

ing upgraded to accommodate virtual meetings, said Mr. Ryan, and prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, four Senate committee meetings could take place at the same time.

“Due to available resources, that number will be fewer because virtual and/or hybrid meetings require more staffing resources to operate,” he said, noting the decision on how many can take place at the same time has not yet been made and will have to take into account several factors, including the issue of time zones with Senators logging in from across the country.

Hybrid-sitting work shared by three partners

Committee meetings and Senate sittings take place on the Zoom platform and are operated entirely in-house, but are juggled among three partners. First, resources from the Senate include committee clerks, legislative and administrative staff, information technology support staff, and committee room support staff. The

ware to connect a larger number of remote participants.”

Even as the meetings occur on Zoom, support staff work from within the committee rooms in order to provide essential services, like interpretation and transcription. Clerks are also on-site as procedural support, as are technical support officers.

The Senate always shares some resources and that’s kicked up a notch with hybrid sittings. That’s meant close work between Senate staff and partners in the Parliamentary Precinct, on whom the Senate is reliant for many shared services, Mr. Ryan noted.

Interpretation services are provided by the Translation Bureau, an agency operated through Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC). Like MPs, Senators are equipped with headsets with a proper microphone to ensure good sound quality and meetings often begin with a reminder to witnesses and legislators alike on proper conduct so translators can do their work. Early in the pandemic, unions representing these interpreters warned a virtual Parliament had created a spike in injuries. PSPC confirmed in a June report there were 56 health incidents among the 70 interpreters working for the Translation Bureau from March to May 2020. Of those 55 were related to sound quality, 17 involved telephone audio, and 38 involved a videoconference signal.

“The Senate administration works in close co-operation with PSPC to ensure these services are maintained while making every effort to ensure the safety of employees—both with respect to the coronavirus and to the technologies used,” Mr. Ryan said.

The Senate has installed interpretation booths in its Chamber and committee rooms to support the necessary physical distance, and translators have also worked outside the relevant meeting room, considered remote interpretation, in some cases.

A “long-standing” relationship with the House of Commons remains in place for multimedia and broadcasting service, with its one team, managed by the House, serving both Chambers. These resources are shared “whenever appropriate to ensure the availability of consistent, reliable service for both Houses,” said Mr. Ryan.

It’s here where Senators have pointed in many cases for under-

standing patience in their delayed start, that the network capacity spread between two Chambers amid COVID-19 has created understandable delays.

Progressive Senator Pierre Dalphond (De Lorimier, Que.) pointed to the paralyzed negotiations between leaders in spring as a major blockage to sittings and most committees, but not necessarily the sole factor. The technical ability of the support systems to have the committees sitting at the same time was a very important aspect, he said.

“Our support system is essentially provided by the House of Commons and at the time [Senators were negotiating over committees], the House was going into remote” sittings and focused on getting committees up and running, he said in an interview Nov. 2.

“The reality is that we [had] limited capacity for the House of Commons and the support team in the Senate to go remotely with committees.”

Conservative Senate Leader Don Plett (Landmark, Man.) said in a Nov. 9 interview he was confident three simultaneous committee meetings could accommodate every committee that has to meet.

With the recent addition of the Audit and Oversight Committee, there are now 18 regular Senate committees. Only three have met regularly amid the pandemic: the Senate Internal Economy, Budgets, and Administration Committee, the Senate Social Affairs, Science, and Technology Committee, and National Finance. The Selection and Ethics committees were also empowered to meet as of April, and did a few times.

The Selection Committee met in spring for a failed effort to set up the majority of committees, and again Nov. 2 and 4 as it sought to get more committees up and running. The National Finance Committee is currently allowed to hold virtual meetings to study government’s emergency rent-relief legislation, Bill C-9.

Between April 11—when some committees were first approved to study pandemic-related matters—and Nov. 6, Senate committees and subcommittees have held 59 meetings, met for more than 116 hours, heard from 200 witnesses, and tabled or presented nine reports, Mr. Ryan said.

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On Nov. 2, the Senate joined the House of Commons in running its proceedings in a hybrid fashion, allowing Senators to participate both in Ottawa and virtually from home. But the Red Chamber, pictured on Nov. 5, has to share limited resources with the House of Commons to make it happen. Screenshot courtesy of SenVu

MPs, Senators look to fill Centre Block's courtyards in recent reno recommendations

The Senate has, for one, recommended a partial infill be built in Centre Block's eastern courtyard, while the House's working group has endorsed an expansion of the lobbies into its western courtyard.

Continued from page 1

House Board of Internal Economy (BOIE) before it can be considered official direction, but recommendations from Senators have already been adopted by the Senate Internal Economy, Budgets, and Administration Committee (CIBA).

Meeting minutes made public last week reveal that at an Oct. 28 meeting, the MP working group—which meets in camera as a subcommittee of the BOIE—agreed to recommend a design for the lobbies that flank that House of Commons Chamber “that includes additional support space located on the ground floor and the adjacent courtyard, with dedicated vertical circulation.”

Design options pitched to MPs in February included multiple options to expand the House lobbies—which, particularly for the opposition, are already cramped under the current MP count—two of which would have seen changes to Centre Block's exterior, western façade.

The third option—which, based on the description, is the one the MP working group has endorsed—would see both the government and opposition lobbies expanded down one floor, with the opposition lobby also expanded east, into the previously unused western courtyard that sits beside it.

At the Oct. 28 meeting, MPs on the working group, which is chaired by deputy Speaker and Conservative MP Bruce Stanton (Simcoe North, Ont.), also recommended that the design for the House Chamber's galleries comply with National Building Code requirements, even though that will mean a “significant reduction” in the number of gallery seats available, and that architects be “instructed to consider solutions to accommodate more visitors.” With MPs having ruled out any changes to the Chamber's existing footprint, bringing the galleries up to code will likely mean available seating drops from 553 to 305 seats.



The Centre Block building, pictured on July 15, is likely to see new construction in its previously unused courtyard spaces as part of the massive modernization and renovation project that's now underway. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Along with Mr. Stanton, the MP working group includes Liberal MPs Mark Gerretsen (Kings-ton and the Islands, Ont.), Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Moncton-Riverview-Dieppe, N.B.), and Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Ont.); Conservative MPs Kelly Block (Carlton Trail-Eager Creek, Sask.) and Martin Shields (Bow River, Alta.); NDP MP Carol Hughes (Algoma-Manitoulin-Kapuskasing, Ont.); and Bloc MP Louis Plamondon (Bécancour-Nicolet-Sauvel, Que.).

Meanwhile, in a report adopted by CIBA on July 23, the Senate's Long-term Vision and Plan (LTVP) subcommittee recommended the Senate approve construction of a “partial infill in the East Courtyard of Centre Block” that would add six Parliamentary office units, and request that Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC)—the department charged with overseeing the Parliamentary Precinct's renovation—provide “further development and costing for an infill in the east lightwell, in order to create additional Senator support spaces in Centre Block.” The east lightwell is located above the foyer outside the Senate Chamber.

The Senate subcommittee also recommended the Senate administration consult with the House administration about options to build an infill in the building's central courtyard—which sits above the Hall of Honour (where the roof sits lower, and which is colloquially referred to as a courtyard)—and report back with options.

In 2019, Senators endorsed a plan to expand the standard size of Senator office units from 80 to 90 square meters each, made up of three adjoining suites.

In turn—and with other renovation requirements to accommodate, like the need to increase and revamp circulation routes to make the building more accessible—finding sufficient office

space for Senators in the Centre Block building is a key challenge for the Upper Chamber when it comes to renovations. Before construction, there were 25 Senator office suites in the building.

Along with recommending that the medium-sized option for the underground Parliamentary Welcome Centre be pursued, as previously reported, CIBA has also adopted a recommendation from the subcommittee for a “separate and secure East entry point” to the welcome centre. Among the questions PSPC put to Parliamentarians earlier this year was whether to have one shared and central entranceway to the welcome centre or to have separate ones.

In a further report adopted by CIBA on Sept. 24, Senators also recommended, among other things, an “underground Centre Block-East Block tunnel connection through [the] Parliamentary Welcome Centre” as the Senate's “preferred option.” A pre-existing tunnel connects Centre Block directly to the East Block.

CIBA adopted these reports—in turn, endorsing the recommendations made in them—while in camera. The recommendations were made public through meeting minutes, which get posted following agreement at its next meeting. CIBA has yet to hold a public meeting to get an update from the Senate's LTVP subcommittee.

Mr. Stanton told *The Hill Times* he anticipates the MP working group will appear before the BOIE in public for a second time for an update on its work later this month, having previously done so on Oct. 8.

At that Oct. 8 meeting, Mr. Stanton noted that MPs were briefed on the preliminary proposed schematic design plans for Centre Block and the welcome centre, laying out the broad strokes of work to be done, on Aug. 13. Senators declined to

confirm on which date they were briefed on schematic design plans as the meetings were in camera.

On Oct. 8, PSPC assistant deputy minister Rob Wright indicated hopes to get feedback from Parliamentarians on schematic design plans—with 10 to 15 key “big boulder decisions” to be sorted out before the department can provide baseline cost and timeline estimates—“by the Christmas-time period.”

Senate subcommittee to get new members

Manitoba Conservative Senator Don Plett, who was chair of the LTVP subcommittee before it disbanded on Nov. 5, told *The Hill Times* he's “cautiously optimistic” Senators will be able to have fully weighed in on plans by the end of the sitting in December.

On Nov. 5, debate over Senate committee formation—specifically over whether to allow virtual-only meetings to be held—resulted in the Senate's Internal Economy Committee ceasing to exist. While the committee has been reconstituted, as of filing deadline its subcommittees had yet to be reformed.

Who will chair the LTVP subcommittee and who will sit on it remained to be seen by deadline, but changes are expected to include two new members from the Independent Senators Group. Previously, Quebec ISG Senator Renée Dupuis and Manitoba ISG Senator Marilou McPhedran were on the subcommittee.

Sen. Plett told *The Hill Times* he understands both ISG members will be changing. Sen. McPhedran confirmed that she is set to leave the group, and CIBA.

Citing frustrations over the subcommittee's decision to only meet in camera, she said she's “OK” with leaving it behind.

“Everything follows the preferences of the chair and the decision-making of the chair,

and that's one of the reasons I'm feeling really quite delighted to be moving off that committee,” she said.

Sen. McPhedran—who said she could not speak to the subcommittee's deliberations on renovation plans so far due to the rules around in-camera meetings—said she thinks the group should only meet in camera for discussions involving security or potential contracting decisions, and otherwise, the decision to keep a lid on LTVP deliberations “doesn't make any sense.”

Sen. Plett said subcommittees generally meet in camera as it allows Senators to speak “more openly” and noted that recommendations become public information once approved by CIBA.

Asked whether they were concerned new members could delay the subcommittee's progress, Sen. Plett and Sen. McPhedran both noted that a number of other Senators have been tuned into the subcommittee's work so far, either as former members or interested individuals (all Senators have the ability to tune into any Senate meeting, even if in camera).

“It would depend who they would put on, but in most cases, no, I wouldn't see it as a problem,” said Sen. Plett of the impact of new membership.

In the Nov. 12 interview, Sen. Plett said he had “every confidence” that CIBA's LTVP subcommittee would be reconstituted this week, “which would mean it [the debate over committees] would have caused virtually no delays at all.”

Alberta Canadian Senators Group Senator Scott Tannas, who was a previous chair of the LTVP subcommittee, said on Nov. 13 that it remained to be seen whether he would officially be returned to the group, but said either way, he plans to continue following its work.

Sen. Tannas said he has no problems with the subcommittee meeting in camera as it allows Senators to ask questions without needing to worry about “how smart we look, because frankly, a lot of the stuff it takes two or three questions to understand what they're talking about.”

“You're dealing with engineers and construction people, they have their own language sometimes that they fall into,” he said. “More often than I'd care to admit, I've sat there and thought, ‘oh man, I've lost the plot here.’ ... If that were a public meeting, some Senators, me included, might sit there and not want to ask the dumb questions.”

Demolition work is already well underway in the Centre Block building, and work to dig a hole directly in front of it to allow for construction of the final phase of the underground welcome centre began in July.

The first phase of the welcome centre was built alongside renovations to the West Block and is now in use. Demolition inside Centre Block began in mid-December 2019, and Jennifer Garrett, PSPC's director general for the Centre Block project, has previously estimated that work could take 18 months to complete.

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HILL CLIMBERS

by Laura Ryckewaert

Katherine Koostachin joins PMO as a senior policy adviser



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, pictured Nov. 10 during a press conference on the government's COVID-19 response in the Sir John A. Macdonald Building. Alongside Veterans Affairs Minister Lawrence MacAulay, he announced a \$20-million temporary Veterans Organizations Emergency Support fund. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Plus, Women and Gender Equality Minister Maryam Monsef is in need of a new director of policy following Yanique Williams' recent exit.

Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** has a new wonk in his office with **Katherine Koostachin** having been brought on board last week as a senior policy adviser.

Ms. Koostachin left her role as director of Indigenous relations and reconciliation to Natural Resources Minister **Seamus O'Regan**, a post she'd taken on at the beginning of September, to join the Prime Minister's Office. In the PMO, she'll be tackling policy work related to Indigenous reconciliation.

Before joining Mr. O'Regan's team, she spent almost a year as a senior policy adviser to Indigenous Services Minister **Marc Miller**, and before that worked just under three years as a senior policy adviser on Indigenous and regulatory affairs in then-environment minister **Catherine McKenna's** office.

Ms. Koostachin is from the Cree Mushkegowuk community of the Attawapiskat First Nation in Ontario, and prior to coming to work for the Liberal government

in January 2017, she was an Indigenous affairs co-ordinator for the University of Ottawa's faculty of law, her alma mater. She's also a former associate legal counsel with Willms & Shier Environmental Lawyers LLP.

Along with her law degree from the University of Ottawa, Ms. Koostachin has a bachelor's degree in political science and international relations from the University of British Columbia and did an intensive program focused on aboriginal lands, resources, and governments with the Univer-



Katherine Koostachin joined the Prime Minister's office last week. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*



Women and Gender Equality Minister Maryam Monsef, who's also responsible for Rural Economic Development, announced a \$600-million agreement with Telesat to provide high speed internet in rural and Northern Canada on Nov. 9. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

sity of Toronto's Osgoode Hall Law school, as noted on her LinkedIn profile.

Marci Surkes is executive director of policy and cabinet affairs, supported by **Rick Theis** as director of policy and cabinet affairs.

August Mills has also recently joined the top office, having started as a special assistant under the PMO's executive office in early November.

The executive office team includes deputy director of scheduling and co-ordination and manager of the executive office **Dunerci Carceres**, deputy director of the executive office and executive assistant to the prime minister **Philip Proulx**, and special assistant **Cordell Johnson**. The unit is overseen at the top by the PMO's executive director of planning, administration, and people **Brett Thalmann**.

In his new role, Mr. Mills replaces **Harry Orbach-Miller**, who himself recently replaced now-former PMO staffer **Jennifer Swan** as executive assistant to Ms. Surkes, as previously reported.

Mr. Mills is a recent graduate from Carleton University's master of public policy and administration program. He previously interned in the PMO over the summer of 2018, after which he briefly stayed on as a financial analyst. He later spent the summer of 2019 as an international trade intern with the Canadian Embassy in Madrid, Spain, after which he spent four months as a policy co-op student with Ontario's ministry of economic development, job creation, and trade, amongst other past experience.

Mr. Mills also has a bachelor's degree in history from the University of Toronto, and spent six months starting in the summer of 2017 as a historical interpreter for Veterans Affairs Canada in Arras, France, where the Canadian National Vimy Memorial Park can be found.

Katie Telford continues as chief of staff to Mr. Trudeau.

Minister Monsef looking for a new policy head

Women and Gender Equality Minister **Maryam Monsef** is on the hunt for a new director of policy after **Yanique Williams'** recent departure from her ministerial team.

Ms. Williams had led policy work in Ms. Monsef's office since the beginning of June 2018. Before taking over the post, she'd spent a year working as a policy adviser to then-international trade minister **François-Philippe Champagne**.

A former Ontario Liberal staffer, Ms. Williams first came to work on the Hill in March 2016 as a policy and Ontario regional affairs adviser to then-small business and tourism minister **Bardish Chagger**. She'd spent three years in all working at Queen's Park, starting as a scheduler and office manager to then-citizenship minister **Michael Coteau** and

ending as a special assistant for policy and executive assistant to the principal secretary in then-premier **Kathleen Wynne's** office.

Now off the Hill, Ms. Williams started her new job as public policy manager for Uber Canada in Toronto at the beginning of November.



Yanique Williams has left WAGE Minister Maryam Monsef's team. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

A new director of policy has yet to be hired since Ms. Williams' exit, but stay tuned for an update on that.

Left tackling policy in Ms. Monsef's office are: **Emily Hartman**, who's been in the office as a senior policy adviser since September; **Kendra Wilcox**, who's been a policy adviser to Ms. Monsef since the beginning of the year; and **Laurence Harvey**, a policy and regional affairs adviser for Quebec since the start of the year. There's also former Liberal MP **Mike Bossio**, who continues as a senior adviser on rural affairs.

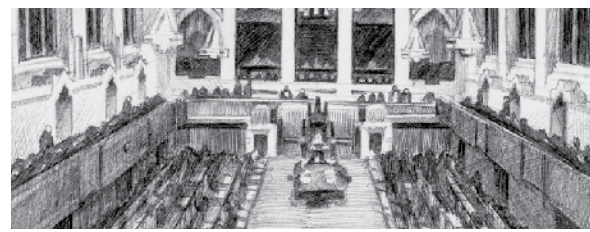
Ms. Monsef is also the minister responsible for the rural economic development file.

Other regional advisers in the office include **Alice Zheng**, who covers Ontario; **Joanna Lam**, who covers Western Canada and the Territories; and **Harry Burton**, who is a special assistant for operations and the minister's Atlantic regional affairs adviser.

Christopher Evelyn is chief of staff to Ms. Monsef.

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Parliamentary Calendar



Chagger, Paul join panel to talk women in politics on Nov. 18

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 18

House Sitting—The House of Commons is sitting in a hybrid format right now during the pandemic, with most MPs connecting remotely. The House is scheduled to sit every weekday from Nov. 16-Dec. 11, and that's it for 2020.

Senate Sitting—The Senate has approved a plan for hybrid sittings during the pandemic to allow Senators to connect remotely. The Senate is scheduled to sit Nov. 17-19 and Nov. 24-26. Nov. 16, 20, 23, 27, and 30 are all possible sitting days for the remainder of the month.

Moyra Davey: The Faithful—National Gallery of Canada hosts this new exhibition, *Moyra Davey: The Faithful*, featuring the work of one of Canada's most innovative conceptual artists, on now until Jan. 3, 2021. National Gallery of Canada, 380 Sussex Dr., Ottawa. This new exhibition features 54 photographs and 6 films by Davey, along with more than a dozen works from the Gallery collection. Developed by the artist and curator Andrea Kunard, the exhibition explores the artist's trajectory from early images of family and friends, through portraits of the detritus of everyday life, her mailed photographs, and films examining the work of authors, philosophers and artists. <https://www.gallery.ca/whats-on/exhibitions-and-galleries/moyra-davey-the-faithful>

Equal Voice National Campaign School—Equal Voice hosts its first online National Campaign School, designed to equip women and gender-diverse individuals with the skills, knowledge, and resources they need to run for political office in Canada. The school will consist of eight online courses (Nov. 3-27) including a mix of group exercises, guest speakers, and networking opportunities. Registration is full, but visit [equalvoice.ca](https://www.equalvoice.ca) for information about being added to the wait-list.

As One Film Screening—The Embassy of the United Arab Emirates to Canada, the Office of Public and Cultural Diplomacy, and Image Nation Abu Dhabi are hosting an online film screening of *As One* on Wednesday, Nov. 18. Screening at 11 a.m. EST, followed by a panel discussion at 12:25 p.m. EST featuring Fahad Al Raqhani, Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to Canada; Conservative MP Mike Lake; and Sharifa Al Yateem, autism spectrum behaviour analyst, UAE. Moderated by Hana Makki, head of documentary, Image Nation Abu Dhabi. Register at imagenationabudhabi.com.

The 2020 Writers' Trust Awards—Join the Writers' Trust online Wednesday, Nov. 18 for the digital premiere of the 2020 Writers' Trust Awards: Books of the Year Edition, hosted by author Kamal Al-Solaylee. The Writers' Trust will be celebrating the finalists and announcing the winners of two of Canada's most notable literary prizes: the \$60,000 Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for Nonfiction and the \$50,000 Writers' Trust Fiction Prize. 11 a.m. PT / 12 p.m. MT / 1 p.m. CT / 2 p.m. ET / 3 p.m. AT / 3:30 p.m. NT. Given for the year's best work of Canadian non-fiction, this prize spotlights books with a distinctive voice, as well as a persuasive and compelling command of tone, narrative, style, and technique. This year's finalists for non-fiction: Lorna Crozier for *Through the Garden: A Love Story (with Cats)*; Steven Heighon for *Reaching Mithymna: Among the Volunteers and Refugees on Lesbos*; Jessica J. Lee for *Two Trees Make a Forest: In Search of My Family's Past Among Taiwan's Mountains and Coasts*; Tessa McWatt for *Shame on Me: An Anatomy of Race and Belonging*; and David A. Neel for *The Way Home*. As well, recognizing Canadian writers of exceptional talent for the year's best novel or short story collection. Congratulations to this year's fiction finalists: Gil Adamson for *Ridgerunner*; Zsuzsi Gartner for *The Beguiling*; Mi-

chelle Good for *Five Little Indians*; Thomas King for *Indians on Vacation*; and Maria Reva for *Good Citizens Need Not Fear*. Watch the premiere or view the show afterwards at your convenience on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter [writerstrust.com/WT Awards](https://www.writerstrust.com/WT Awards)

What's Canada's Climate Plan?—The University of Toronto presents the Douglas Pimlott Memorial Lecture on "What's Canada's Climate Plan? Fairness, Safety, Justice, and Resiliency in a World on Fire." Dr. Tzeporah Berman will explore the social policy implications of climate change and fossil fuel conflicts in Canada. Berman is a professor at York University, international program director at Stand.earth, and chair of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Committee. Wednesday, Nov. 18, from 4-6 p.m. Register via Eventbrite.

Book Launch—McGill University hosts the launch of Dr. Paul W. Bennett's new book, *The State of the System: A Reality Check on Canada's Schools*, exploring the nature of the Canadian education order in all its dimensions. Daniel Béland, director of the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada, will speak with Bennett about the book. Wednesday, Nov. 18, from 5-6:30 p.m. Registration required, at mcgill.ca.

Security of Research in Canadian Universities—The University of Saskatchewan and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) host a public talk on "Security of Research in Canadian Universities" with Tricia Geddes, deputy director of policy and strategic partnerships at CSIS. She will focus on CSIS's efforts during the past few months to work with medical and scientific researchers across the country to sensitize them to threats of foreign interference and espionage targeting their research, data, and other intellectual property. Wednesday, Nov. 18, from 6-8 p.m. ET. Register via Eventbrite.

Dialogue with Anne Applebaum—The Munk Debates hosts a Munk Dialogue with bestselling author Anne Applebaum on the aftermath of the U.S. election, the future of democracy in an era of populist politics and rising authoritarianism. Watch via munkdebates.com or on the CBC Gem streaming service. Wednesday, Nov. 18, from 8-9 p.m.

THURSDAY, NOV. 19

Desiring Muslim Women—A conversation with leading postcolonial feminist scholar Dr. Sherene Razack, a distinguished professor and the Penny Kanner Endowed Chair in Women's Studies in the Department of Gender Studies, University of California at Los Angeles. Presented by uOttawa Public Law Centre, Ottawa Law Review, Alex Trebek Forum for Dialogue and Shirley E. Greenberg Chair for Women and the Legal Profession. 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Register here: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/desiring-muslim-women-a-conversation-with-sherene-razack-virtual-event-tickets-127763460951>

Women in Politics Panel Discussion—Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth Bardish Chagger and Green Party Leader Annamie Paul will take part in a panel discussion on "Women in Politics," hosted by the Canadian Club of Toronto, where they will discuss how they have and continue to overcome challenges, advocate for women and others underrepresented in government, and pave the way for young, politically minded women to follow their lead. They will be joined by former Progressive Conservative prime minister Kim Campbell and Stephanie MacKendrick, CEO of Crisis Services Canada. Thursday, Nov. 18, 12:45-1:45 p.m. Register at canadianclub.org.

Canadian Foreign Policy and the National Interest Post-COVID-19—The Canadian International Council's Edmonton chapter hosts a webinar on "Canadian Foreign Policy and the



Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth Bardish Chagger, left, and Green Party Leader Annamie Paul, right, will take part in a panel discussion on 'Women in Politics,' hosted by the Canadian Club of Toronto on Nov. 18. *The Hill Times* photographs by Cynthia Münster and Andrew Meade

National Interest Post-COVID-19." Panelists include Ann Fitz-Gerald, director of the Balsillie School of International Affairs; Robert Murray, president of Grande Prairie Regional College; and Stephen Wallace, former deputy of the governor general of Canada and career public servant. Thursday, Nov. 19, from 6-7 MST. Register via thecic.org.

David Lametti Gives Mallory Lecture—Justice Minister and Attorney General of Canada David Lametti will take part in a conversation on "From Lectures to Lawmaking," part of McGill University's 2020 Mallory Lecture. Minister Lametti will discuss his work as Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, and ongoing policy issues. Thursday, Nov. 19, from 7-8 p.m. Register via mcgill.ca.

Cindy Blackstock Gives Loughheed College Lecture—The University of Alberta presents its Loughheed College Lecture featuring Cindy Blackstock, McGill University professor and executive director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, who will speak on "Reforming the Repeat Offender: Ending Canada's discrimination toward First Nations children." Thursday, Nov. 19, from 9-10:30 p.m. ET. Register via Eventbrite.

Launching the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation's Virtual Programming—Thursday, Nov. 19, 5:30-7:30 p.m., EST, to launch the theme for the 2020-2023 scientific cycle, Technology & Ethics. Dr. Yoshua Bengio, a professor at the Université de Montréal and a world-renowned expert in artificial intelligence and deep learning, will be the keynote speaker. This virtual event will also feature a Q&A.

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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