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THE HILL TIMES

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NEWS

Senate rule change 'tough pill to swallow' for Conservatives, but backers say vote protects Red Chamber's independence

BY SAMANTHA WRIGHT ALLEN

All Senate groups except the Conservatives voted in favour of changing the Upper Chamber's rules in what proponents say is "a powerful message" supporting Senate independence, and removing the "outdated partisan" Liberal-Conservative duopoly. But supporters acknowledge it was likely a "tough pill to swallow" for the Conservatives, who were vehemently opposed to the changes.

The May 8 vote on Motion 165 was more than eight years in the making, said Senator Raymonde Saint-Germain (De la Vallière, Que.), facilitator of the Independent Senators Group (ISG), which represents 42 out of

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On May 8, 67 Senators voted in favour of Motion 165, which cemented changes to the Red Chamber's rules to recognize groups other than the opposition and government, granting them new procedural powers. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

NEWS

House Foreign Affairs Committee offers no advice to reverse foreign service 'atrophy'

BY NEIL MOSS

As a growing number of reports spotlight the need to modernize the foreign service, MPs on the House Foreign Affairs Committee made their addition to the pile with zero formal recommendations for the government to take to fix the troubles of the foreign ministry.

As part of its study looking at Canada's diplomatic capacity, the House committee held 10 meetings, and heard from 27 witnesses. The work followed an in-depth study on Canada's foreign service by the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, and an internal modernization effort within Global Affairs Canada (GAC).

Unlike the Senate committee, which offered 29 recommendations in a 67-page report for the government to chew on last December, MPs didn't offer a single formal recommendation in their resulting 12-page report, which was tabled in the House of Commons on April 29.

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NEWS

Foreign influence registry 'more than a positive step forward,' but not far enough, say diaspora groups

BY STUART BENSON

Diaspora groups say the government's proposed foreign influence registry is a long-overdue step in the right direction to finally address their communities' concerns and keep them safe.

But national security expert Dan Stanton says the government's "country-agnostic approach," and unfairly high expectations from the public have the potential to create a "bureaucratic monster."

On May 6, Public Safety Minister Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour,

N.B.) introduced Bill C-70, the Countering Foreign Interference Act, in the House of Commons.

Alongside amendments to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) Act, the Security of Information Act, the Canada Evidence Act, and the Criminal Code,

the bill also proposes a new Foreign Influence Transparency and Accountability Act, which would create a foreign agents registry to be administered by an independent transparency commissioner.

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Christina Leadlay

Heard On The Hill

'A straight-shooter and a gentleman': former trade minister Jim Peterson has died

Former Liberal cabinet minister Jim Peterson died on May 10, at the age of 82. He is being remembered across party lines and levels of government as a big-hearted 'gentleman.' *The Hill Times* photograph by Jake Wright



Former Liberal trade minister **Jim Peterson** died on May 10, aged 82. The Canadian Press reported he'd had a heart attack at his farm.

Born in Ottawa to parents from Saskatchewan, Peterson was a lawyer by training who represented the Toronto area riding of Willowdale for a total of 23 years: first from 1980-1984, and then from 1988 until he stepped down in 2007.

Peterson held a handful of increasingly important roles under three successive Liberal prime ministers: he was a parliamentary secretary under **Pierre Trudeau**, a secretary of state for **Jean Chrétien**, and finally was minister of international trade under **Paul Martin**.

After he left federal politics, he was called upon twice by the Ontario Liberal government to act as the province's chief negotiator during two disputes: during bilateral trade, investment and labour mobility talks with Quebec in 2007, and in 2017 during the Canada-U.S. softwood lumber dispute.

Politics was a family affair for Peterson. His brother **David Peterson** served as Ontario premier from 1985 to 1990, his other brother **Tim Peterson** was an MPP from 2003-2007, and his wife, **Heather Peterson**, was not only a staffer in Trudeau senior's PMO, but also was national director of **John Turner's** successful 1984 federal Liberal leadership campaign.

Condolences poured in last weekend after **Compass Rose's Jacquie Larocque** shared a statement from the Peterson family on his passing, and Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** issued a statement of his own. Among the mourners posting on X were cabinet ministers **Seamus O'Regan**, **Dominic LeBlanc**, and **Mary Ng**; Liberal MPs **Yasir Naqvi**, **Hedy Fry**, and **Peter Fragiskatos**; Canada's envoy to the UN **Bob Rae**; and current Ontario Liberal Leader **Bonnie Crombie**.

Former Conservative MP **Ted Menzies** and ex-Tory cabinet min-

ister **Peter MacKay** also offered condolences—MacKay recalling Peterson's generosity and big heart—as did media types **Susan Delacourt** and **John Ivison**, who called him a "straight-shooter and a gentleman." Both former Liberal deputy prime minister **Sheila Copps** and ex-PMO staffer **Penny Collette** agreed that the Petersons were a respected political power couple.

The flag on the Peace Tower has been lowered in Peterson's memory. As of deadline, funeral arrangements had yet to be announced.

New name, same tasty times at ITK showcase

As Ottawa's political party season kicks into high gear, one stalwart event returns but with a fresh name.

Formerly known as Taste of the Arctic, the event now known as Tapiriit is Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami's (ITK) annual showcase of Arctic culture and cuisine. It's scheduled for May 30 at the National Arts Centre, and always draws a crowd of dignitaries, special guests, Inuit community members, and those

who are simply curious about Inuit culture.

The media relations team at ITK confirmed to **Heard on the Hill** recently that "Tapiriit" means "united" in Inuktitut, and that the signature event's new name better communicates the group's goal of bringing people together to celebrate and learn about Inuit culture.

"We work closely with National Arts Centre executive chef **Kenton Leier** and Inuk chef **Sheila Flaherty** to develop a menu that includes muskox, Arctic char, caribou, reindeer and whitefish—roasted, smoked, stewed and skewered. We'll also have vegetarian options available and desserts that feature northern berries," the ITK team told HOH.

In addition to food, guests can sample aspects of Inuit culture, including games and music. This year's event will feature the Beatrice Deer Band and influencers **Braden Kadlun-Johnston** and **Hovak Johnston**, among others.

Aside from a three-year hiatus thanks to the pandemic, this hot-ticket event has been happening every year since 2010.

Broadbent's book on shortlist for J.W. Dafoe Book Prize

The late former NDP leader **Ed Broadbent** and **John Vaillant** and are among the Canadian authors whose books have been shortlisted for the 2024 J.W. Dafoe Book Prize, the eponymous foundation announced on May 9.

While the winner(s) of the \$12,000 prize—which is celebrating its 40th anniversary—will be officially named June 10, there will be a gala dinner this fall in Winnipeg with a public talk, the author(s), jury members and special guests, the Dafoe Foundation's honorary secretary **Andrea**

Rounce confirmed to HOH on May 13.

Broadbent—who died on Jan. 11—had co-written *Seeking Social Democracy: Seven Decades in the Fight for Equality* (ECW Press Ltd.) with **Frances Abele**, **Jonathan Sas**, and **Luke Savage**.

Vaillant's *Fire Weather: The Making of a Beast* (Alfred A. Knopf Canada) won this year's Shaughnessy Cohen Prize for political writing at a gala event in Ottawa on May 7. The book was also a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize's "general non-fiction" category. Columbia University announced May 6. Back in November, *Fire Weather* won Britain's Baillie Gifford Prize for the best non-fiction written in English from around the world.

Also shortlisted are **Leo Baskatawang's Reclaiming Anishnaabe Law: Kinamaadiwin Inaakonigewin and the Treaty Right to Education** (University of Manitoba Press); **Kristin Burnett** and **Travis Hay's** book *Plundering the North: A History of Settler Colonialism, Corporate Welfare, and Food Insecurity* (University of Manitoba Press); and **Ken McGoogan** for *Searching for Franklin: New Answers to the Great Arctic Mystery* (Douglas & McIntyre).

Based at Winnipeg's University of Manitoba, the J.W. Dafoe Foundation awards its annual literary prize to the best book on Canada, Canadians, and/or Canada's place in the world published in the previous calendar year. The prize is named in honour of **John Wesley Dafoe**, who was editor of the *Manitoba Free Press*, which was later renamed the *Winnipeg Free Press*, from 1901-1944.

This year's prize jurors are all affiliated with the University of Manitoba: former journalist turned historian **Dale Barbour**, recently retired vice-president (Indigenous) **Catherine Cook**, and economics professor **Gregory Mason**.

CAJ saddles DND with Code of Silence Award

Keeping in the spirit of awards season, the Canadian Association of Journalists is in the midst of handing out its 2023 Code of Silence Awards, which name and shame government departments or publicly funded agencies that actively hide information to which the public is entitled under access to information laws.

This year, the CAJ awarded the Department of National Defence the dubious honour of Outstanding Achievement in Government Secrecy for taking three years to respond to an access request by an Ottawa-based researcher who asked about the cost of a program to build new Canadian warships.

"Even though this project is still stuck in the dry dock of the Irving Shipyards, it feels like a project that's already sunk

in terms of accountability and transparency," said **Brent Jolly**, president of the Canadian Association of Journalists, in a May 8 press release.

Last year's federal winner was the Canada Border Services Agency for failing to disclose basic data about how the ArriveCan app's cost to taxpayers ballooned so massively beyond the original estimates.

The Code of Silence Awards are presented annually by the CAJ, the Centre for Free Expression at Toronto Metropolitan University, and the Canadian Journalists for Free Expression. The provincial category "winners" will be announced May 22.

No need to imagine: Blair and Yamanouchi sing John Lennon



Defence Minister **Bill Blair**, standing, and Japan's Ambassador **Kanji Yamanouchi** unwind with a bit of music on May 8 in Ottawa. Screenshot courtesy of the Embassy of Japan's X account.

A video clip made the rounds last week of Defence Minister **Bill Blair** and Japan's Ambassador to Canada **Kanji Yamanouchi** in an impromptu performance of **John Lennon's** famous song, *Imagine*.

Yamanouchi—a virtuoso musician renowned in Ottawa for his searing rendition of *O Canada* on electric guitar—plays the piano while he and Blair, who looms at his left hand, sing of a peaceful world.

The jam session posted on X on May 8 appears to have followed a meeting the two had at the Japanese residence on military presence in the Indo-Pacific, judging by the preceding post of the two men in a slightly awkward arms-crossed handshake situation with five of their staff.

The duet brought back memories of then-prime minister **Stephen Harper's** own Beatles' tribute back in 2009 when he joined cellist **Yo-Yo Ma** on stage at the National Arts Centre to perform the classic **Paul McCartney** and **Lennon** tune *With a Little Help from My Friends*, in which Harper sang while playing the piano.

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The Hill Times



Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami's president **Natan Obed**, bottom right, will host the group's annual showcase of Arctic culture, music, and food on May 30 in Ottawa. *The Hill Times* photographs by **Andrew Meade** and **Cynthia Münster**



For Canada to be a global human rights leader, it needs to get its AI law right from the start

Any law we adopt in Canada will serve as a blueprint for other jurisdictions that will regulate AI.

Yuan Stevens

Opinion



Canada is in an incredibly important window of time when it comes to regulating artificial intelligence. The pace of laws being adopted and proposed on AI has been staggering. Numerous binding laws on AI have been adopted in the European Union, the United States, and China in the last year, serving inspiration for other countries the globe.

A handful of other countries have also proposed binding laws on AI in the last year, including Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Panama, and Serbia. Canada's draft AI law—the Artificial Intelligence and Data

Act (AIDA)—came in 2022, far ahead of these other legal proposals.

But beating other countries to the punch and proposing a law so soon has not been without issue. In an unusual and Frankenstein-esque move, the initial law was so incomplete that the minister of innovation, science and industry issued further changes to AIDA by way of a letter in November 2023.

The law has been criticized by civil society, lawyers, and academics alike for being incomplete, confusing, and rushed, yet there is no doubt that any law we adopt in Canada will serve as a blueprint for other jurisdictions that will regulate AI. That's why we need to get this law right, and to do so from the get-go.

A few things are in order if we want robust, sustainable, and future-proof AI laws in Canada. The first thing needed is adequate public consultation. Many AI experts have emphasized the need for comprehensive public consultation specifically on AIDA, including myself and others such as University of Toronto professor emeritus Andrew Clement, Toronto Metropolitan University postdoctoral researcher Anna Artyushina, University of Ottawa professor Teresa Scassa, and a wide range of civil society actors, academics, and experts.

AIDA—and the private-sector-privacy-focused Bill C-27 that contains it—are also of significant importance. AIDA is just as important as the proposed law to regulate online content, which involved a multi-month public consultation and release of a “what we heard” document. The government also facilitated public consultations on the public sector-focused Privacy Act in 2021, publishing submissions later that year. AIDA and Bill C-27 deserve the same.

AIDA also needs stronger accountability requirements when it comes to the data used to train AI systems. Let's take the field of genomic research to explain why this matters. Right now, white European people are over-represented in genomic datasets and studies relative to the world's population. Using AI for genomic research right now may perpetuate and exacerbate such biases, potentially resulting in both missed diagnoses and misdiagnoses for people of colour.

AIDA has mere record-keeping requirements relating to training data that's used to develop any AI system. But the law arguably still remains somewhat of an “empty shell,” to quote AI governance researcher Christelle Tessono. Training data is of such importance in the EU AI Act that Article

10 of the law is devoted to data governance practices, requiring that training data be “relevant, representative, free of errors and complete.” There are no such requirements in AIDA, which is a massive oversight.

Finally, AIDA fails to protect human rights. The current law is too permissive and reactionary to address risks that arise when AI is used in various contexts and for certain ends. AI systems can be used to augment the ability to surveil, profile, nudge, and sway. The technology can be used to violate the right to privacy, limit freedom of expression, and discriminate on intersecting bases of people's identities. It can also be used to deny access to housing, public benefits, and procedural fairness in court proceedings.

AI can also generate synthetic content, replicating people's images, voices, and likeness without their consent. Generative AI systems can also violate copyright held over content that people have created. AIDA in its current form fails to address the majority of these rights and issues.

While the law allows for reactive prohibition of AI systems that may give rise to a serious risk of harm, there are no preventative bans in AIDA to against the most egregious uses of AI, which is a serious problem. Canada is falling behind its peers by failing to address such human rights risks associated with AI. If we want a robust, sustainable, and future-proof law on AI, Canada needs to start fresh and get this law right from the start.

Yuan Stevens is an academic associate at the Centre of Genomics and Policy at McGill University, where her work examines the legal, policy, and ethical aspects of using AI in genomics research.
The Hill Times

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Comment

Today, the truth may not set you free

Ideology and propaganda overwhelm discourse, which is disheartening for those who believe in public debate based on genuine evidence.

Andrew Caddell

With All Due Respect



MONTREAL—As a young broadcast reporter, I had a reputation of being a contrarian. If a politician tried to present a line of argument that seemed disingenuous, I would call them out on it. It made for great radio with some tough characters from whom I did not back down.

It was a habit I developed as a boy, when I would join my siblings as we pored over the *Montreal Star* newspaper. We would then move to the dining room, where we debated the issues of the day. This approach got me into trouble in high school, as I had the temerity to correct my error-prone history teacher. One day I raised my hand to say I had a question. Her response was: “You are not here to ask questions! You are here to learn!”

I thus learned facts were powerful weapons, in the right hands. In university, we studied Plato and the Hegelian dialectic as the basis of argument. Ideas, with intellectual rigour, came from facts. Karl Marx, an early Hegelian, perverted Hegel’s theories and called for class struggle.

This leads me to a series I have been watching, *A Gentleman in Moscow*, which encapsulates the life of a fictional Count Rostov in 20th century Russia. He watches as Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin turn the country into a totalitarian state. A cultivated, intelligent man, he survives while others who embraced Marxist propaganda die in the Gulags.

In Quebec, nationalism and propaganda are a powerful cocktail. Doubling down on his French language and cultural advocacy, Premier François Legault announced a “national” museum of Quebec history, which will “show the history of the Quebec nation...that started with [Samuel de] Champlain, and Jacques Cartier.” The museum will focus exclusively on Quebec history and “great Quebecers,” presumably all francophone.

Not surprisingly, Indigenous groups aren’t happy their presence here for thousands of years is being overlooked. As are the Scots, Irish, and other nationalities who helped build modern Quebec. The premier acknowledged, “Leonard Cohen might be included.” What might have engendered

pride now appears to be a victim of nationalist groupthink.

Meanwhile, the protesters occupying university campuses are accusing Israel of “genocide” without acknowledging the United Nations definition of the word. They are the “useful idiots” of China, Russia, and Iran, who have been investing millions of dollars in propaganda in support of Hamas, to indict Israel—and the West—for the alleged deaths of 30,000 people. This despite recent wars in Congo, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen in which millions of people have died, many at the hands of proxies of China, Russia, and Iran.

Last week, the UN posted revised numbers of identified women and children estimated to have been killed in Gaza. The percentages were halved from previous, unidentified estimates (though still leave more than 10,000 people unidentified), which I think gives credibility to Israel’s contention they are targeting Hamas, which relies on civilians to be combatants.

Also last week, it was reported that nothing has been publicly disclosed regarding the results of an \$8-million project at the former Kamloops residential school where ground-penetrating radar was said to have discovered the potential remains of 215 children in 2021. The prime minister ordered flags flown at half-mast for six months, leading to a national existential crisis and expenditures of hundreds of millions of dollars. Recently discovered school records show anomalies on the grounds could be a septic system installed in 1924.

It is disheartening for those like me who believe in public debate based on genuine evidence, where facts and context matter. Instead, ideology and propaganda are overwhelming intelligent discourse. Journalist Terry Glavin, with whom I spoke over the weekend, describes us as living in a “post-literate society.”

Glavin talked to me about his friend Rex Murphy, who died on May 9. When I lived in St. John’s in the 1980s, Murphy was seen as Newfoundland and Labrador’s leading public intellectual, and he delighted in skewering the powerful. When he took his enormous vocabulary to the mainland, he moved from left of centre to right. But, while not the cup of tea of many, he deserves credit for praising the common man, eviscerating the pretentious, and for being a contrarian.

As journalists die and the media shrinks, we are left with social media propaganda to inform us. I am reminded of the famous quote in George Orwell’s book, 1984: “War is peace. Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength.” We cannot allow this to become true.

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

The Hill Times

Rex Murphy: rollicking, rowdy, and uproarious



Rex Murphy’s passion for Newfoundland and Labrador, and Canada is something difficult to replicate, but crucial to emulate, writes Tim Powers. *The Hill Times* photograph by Cynthia Münster

Commentator and writer Rex Murphy, who died on May 9, was the gold standard of no-holds-barred analysis.

Tim Powers

Plain Speak



OTTAWA—Rex Murphy was brilliant. He was a one-of-a-kind public intellectual, and commentator extraordinaire. He feared no one, and currying favour was a foreign concept to him.

Even in his latter years when some of his positions on climate change were somewhat extreme—at least from my perspective—he did not hesitate to offer and defend them. He still felt he needed to be heard, and ideas—no matter how controversial—ought to be debated. However, trying to debate Murphy was not a position anyone really wanted to be in given his sublime linguistic toolkit and world-class mind.

People paid attention to Murphy even if they were in complete discord with his perspective. He had a way—both in language and presentation—to have you stand up and take notice of his point of view. You might be snarling and sneering as he said something, but you definitely heard it. While you may have started and ended the debate on opposing sides, you grabbed it for a moment and played with it. Murphy’s gift was to cut through and be heard.

A towering force behind a camera or on a microphone, he was a gentle, warm fellow off air. A quiet, private man when not asked to be performative, he was a delight in person. About 15 years ago, we struck up a friendship, and God, as an admirer of his for a long time, I felt blessed. Most of our meals and conversations revolved around our beloved Newfoundland and Labrador. I got first-hand tutorials of our history since the time of Confederation onwards with all the colour and passion only Murphy could present. Rollicking, rowdy,

and uproarious, as you would expect, he had deeply held views on many people and things.

For many of us from Newfoundland and Labrador, he was a figure we celebrated and admired. Here was this guy from our tiny province, shaping and determining the political conversation of our country for decades. He was the gold standard of no-holds-barred analysis. Yet as mighty as he was at the pulpit broadcasters and paper barons built for him in Toronto, he remained humble and home-oriented when not enlightening the nation.

As Peter Mansbridge, Murphy’s long-time friend and colleague, wrote in *The National Post*, Murphy disdained brag-garts and bullshitters. You wouldn’t find him hobnobbing with the the high and mighty unless he was dragged kicking and screaming. He was happiest holding court with a dinner companion at his beloved Pearl restaurant by the Toronto waterfront. He treated the fine people there with decency and respect. No airs about the man at all.

Murphy ran for political office on a few occasions. We were probably blessed he didn’t have electoral success. Certainly no political leader I know would have loved the thought of Murphy in their caucus. He was someone properly described to be a “natural born shit-disturber, the good kind.” I couldn’t agree more.

Though his views took more of a harder-right turn in his latter years, in some ways on many issues he was reflecting the anger he felt in the nation. Even in his last hours, he was banging out a column decrying what he saw as the moral ambivalence of the current prime minister. It’s no shock that Murphy wanted a last word as he was checking out.

I am going to miss Rex Murphy. I will forever treasure the times I got to spend with him, his graciousness, kindness, and the interest he took in me and others. His passion for Newfoundland and Labrador, and Canada is something difficult to replicate, but crucial to emulate. Rest in peace if you can, Rex, though I am sure wherever you are a, debate has already begun.

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

The Hill Times

Police brutality is a feature of democratic Canada, not a bug



It is quite plausible that the police in both Edmonton and Calgary violated the students' Charter rights by forcibly removing them from their university campus encampments, writes Erica Ifill. Screenshot courtesy of CBC News

mental action subject to Charter scrutiny." This is the standard for all Alberta universities. It is also what makes the disproportionate police intervention on school grounds a suspension of Charter rights. Instead, it's rights being decided upon by university administrators. It also makes Alberta unique. *The Herald* confirms: "That answer is less clear in other provinces, where activities allowed on university campuses are more often subject to policies of each university." We sure have given university administrators a lot of power that is often manipulated by politicians.

In Alberta, even the trespass statute is subject to Charter rights.

The dictatorship-like approach that unelected university administrators pursue has become the norm. And that norm had been set by the 2010 G20 protests in Toronto that turned into the largest mass arrests in Canadian history. "The Ontario Court of Appeal in Canada has unanimously held that Toronto Police breached the appellant's rights to freedom of expression and liberty during the 2010 G20 summit," according to the Human Rights Law Centre.

This is yet another example of how liberal, western democracies play themselves. The duplicity is glaring and the accountability absent. Many are losing faith in democratic ideals because the Powers That Be do not uphold them, and rules of law are consistently violated for those without power. And that is what democracies are becoming: the same oligarchies that they pledge are anathemas to democracy. It's not long before oligarchies become kleptocracies, and society is in tatters as a result of blatant civil and human rights violations.

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

The Hill Times

Once the ruling class sniffs change and dissent, they send in their goons to force those opposing actors to fall in line.

Erica Ifill

Bad+Bitchy



terrorizing peaceful protests. We can see on social media—yet largely absent on mainstream media—that police brutality is a feature of democratic Canada, not a bug. Edmonton police were shown to beat unarmed students with batons, attack them with tear gas, and shoot them with rubber bullets just to clear out encampments at the University of Alberta. Even the *Calgary Herald* noticed the disproportionate response by university presidents: "Video posted by encampment organizers showed police striking protesters with batons and arresting demonstrators."

We are constantly told when, where, and how to protest by people who have never had to fight for anything in their lives, or risk state violence. The goalposts keep moving. During Black Lives Matter, we were told that we could only protest peacefully, yet during the convoy, police chatted and laughed with the insurgents. Apparently, protests—peaceful or not—are only for white people who uphold white supremacy.

We have seen the terror police have unleashed on Wet'suwet'en protesters and journalists alike. In a scene out of a *coup d'état*, journalists were also recipients of state violence on Alberta campuses, as were faculty and parents.

All the free speech advocates are on mute.

It is quite plausible that the police in both Edmonton and Calgary violated the students' Charter rights. In 2020, the Alberta Court of Appeal heard the case of *UAlberta Pro-Life v. Governors of the University of Alberta*, which involved pro-life demonstrators holding anti-abortion events on

campus. The appellate court ruled "that the University of Alberta's regulation of free expression on campus is a form of govern-



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OTTAWA—Remember that one moment in time, after George Floyd's 2020 death, when everyone was focused on police brutality? Remember when, a couple of years later, the lazy "tough-on-crime" policies and weaponized safety led to increased police budgets throughout Canada?

We are bearing witness to one of the most consequential movements of our time since apartheid South Africa. Naturally, once the ruling class sniffs change and dissent, they send in their goons to force those opposing actors to fall in line. Over the past couple of weeks, those of us who are still in on-line social spaces have seen videos of Canadian police officers violently removing young, unarmed teenagers (i.e. children), young adults, and faculty from university campuses. Much like how police clear homeless encampments, the police are viciously

“Many are losing faith in democratic ideals because the Powers That Be do not uphold them, and rules of law are consistently violated for those without power.”

News

Military revisiting beartrap necessity as feds explore Arctic ship chopper capabilities

The initial decision to not include the securing device on the Arctic and Offshore Patrol Ships limits the ability for big helicopters to be operational at sea.

BY NEIL MOSS

As the Canadian Navy looks into operating maritime helicopters aboard its fleet of Arctic patrol ships, it will have to revisit a past decision that saw military leadership prioritize tightened purse strings over additional capabilities.

The recently released defence policy update—titled *Our North, Strong and Free*—outlines that the Canadian military will “explore options” to equip the Arctic and Offshore Patrol Ships (AOPS) with the ability to “embark and operate our maritime helicopters at sea.”

The AOPS are armed surveillance vessels that give the Navy increased access to the Arctic with the ability to sail in 120 centimetre-thick first-year ice. They will participate in search and rescue and coastal defence operations, as well as humanitarian and global security missions. The AOPS project was launched under the Harper government in 2007, and is expected to be completed in 2027 with the construction of eight ships at a pre-tax price tag of \$4.98-billion.

If the Armed Forces wants to add the helicopter capability, it



The policy update released in April by Defence Minister Bill Blair included a commitment to ‘explore options’ to have helicopters operate aboard the AOPS while at sea. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



HMCS Harry DeWolf passes a 25-storey tall iceberg in Nunavut’s southern Davis Strait in August 2023. *Canadian Armed Forces photograph by Pte Brendan Gamache*

will have to install a hauldown system to secure its Cyclone helicopters in rough seas.

A Canadian invention, the helicopter hauldown and rapid securing device was designed in the 1960s so the now-retired Sea King could land on ships in rough seas. Colloquially known as beartraps, the hauldown system’s design is different depending on what helicopters will be used.

The team charged with overseeing the AOPS design recommended that a beartrap be installed in the new ships, but that advice was nixed by the day’s naval leadership.

“We briefed it, but the senior leadership said it wasn’t required,” said David Soule, who was the project director for the procurement of the AOPS.

Soule, who retired from the Navy in 2014, said at the time there was a focus on remaining within budget, and to not provide additional capability that wasn’t necessary.

“No one wanted to go back to government and beg for more money,” he said.

While cost was a “major factor” in not adding a beartrap, Soule said “several factors” were also in play, which included high in-service maintenance costs, and an insufficient number of Cyclone helicopters at the time.

Soule said he thinks the ships should have been fitted with the device from the outset, and that adding the capability would still be a good thing.

“I fundamentally think where the ship could operate up North, the capability to operate in harsh weather is a good one to have,” he said.

“In the end it makes sense,” he said. “But at the time, [the ques-

tion was] do you want to increase costs?”

Soule said a beartrap gives added flexibility for the AOPS to operate in conditions that aren’t pristine, including away from the protection of the coast.

In the North, there can be more options for a ship to find a bay with calm enough conditions to launch a helicopter. But the AOPS is also tasked for coastal defence in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, as well as missions in the Caribbean Sea.

HMCS Harry DeWolf, the first of the AOPS off the production line, took part in drug enforcement operations as part of Operation Caribe in the Caribbean Sea, as did another AOPS, HMCS Margaret Brooke, in 2024. When construction is completed, the Navy will have six AOPS and the Coast Guard will have two. Currently, there are three AOPS in active naval service.

“If you want your surveillance, if you want your sovereignty

protection, [and other] presence missions, it’s nice to have that helicopter there,” Soule said. “And being able to operate in high-sea states, I would consider it mandatory.”

Instead of installing the device, a decision was made to make space available for a beartrap system so one could be installed down the line if it were required. Weight for the beartrap was also accounted for in the AOPS construction.

Then-Navy commander Mark Norman was asked in 2014 at a meeting of the House Defence Committee about not including a beartrap in the AOPS.

“That is a legacy system designed exclusively to support Sea King operations. The AOPS is not designed to support Sea King; it will be designed to support the Cyclone and other helicopters in the Canadian Forces inventory,” he said, remarking that the “next generation of arresting gear” would be installed in the AOPS

once it has been “fully engineered and tested.”

Former naval captain Norman Jolin said without a beartrap system, the only option is to operate helicopters on board in “pretty calm conditions.”

“Genuinely up North it doesn’t work,” said Jolin, now with CFN Consultants.

If the capability is now added to the AOPS, it will come at a premium.

“Anything retrofitting is always more expensive,” Jolin said, but remarked that having designed the space for it will reduce the sticker shock. “It would have been a whole lot cheaper if they had done it in build ... but it’s not as bad as it could have been if they hadn’t designed it in.”

Jolin said the beartrap—designed because Canada didn’t have an aircraft carrier—allows a ship to pitch and roll in heavy seas while keeping a helicopter secure on board.

Jolin said the decision to not include the beartrap on the completed ships limits the ability for big helicopters to be operational at sea unless the weather conditions co-operate.

He said it is “great news” that the decision was made to explore installing the system on the AOPS.

“We should have done it from Day 1,” he said.

The defence policy update highlighted that having the Cyclones operate on AOPS at sea would boost the Armed Forces’ presence in the Arctic and the North, including participating in surveillance, reconnaissance, and search and rescue.

Canadian Global Affairs Institute president David Perry, an expert on defence procurement, said adding the ability to have helicopters operate abroad the AOPS while at sea would add “significant capability” and “really expand the functionality of the AOPS,” especially with anti-submarine warfare tools.

“I understand they were trying to constrain costs initially on a number of issues, so it makes sense they closed off some capabilities that were otherwise desirable,” he said. “We’re in a very different, much higher, defence budget environment now, so it’s good to look at this option.”

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The Hill Times



A Cyclone helicopter takes off from Halifax-class frigate HMCS Vancouver in the Yellow Sea in September 2023. *Canadian Armed Forces photograph by Corporal Alisa Strelley*

Aamjiwnaang First Nation shows importance of environmental racism bill

The ongoing Crown failure to uphold and advance Indigenous sovereignty and rights has created unique environmental injustices.

Melanie Snow & Victoria Watson

Opinion



On April 16, Aamjiwnaang First Nation issued a warning to its members as a benzene leak from the nearby plastics chemical plant, INEOS Styrolution, sent the levels of cancer-causing chemical soaring. Sarnia, Ont.'s Chemical Valley was created around the Aamjiwnaang First Nation, and is now a toxic hub for oil refineries and by-products including rubber,

fertilizer, jet fuel, and ingredients for plastics.

On April 25, the Aamjiwnaang Band Council declared a state of emergency after air monitoring stations showed that benzene levels were far above health-based air quality standards. INEOS Styrolution has denied any elevated levels, but the Ontario government has since suspended an environmental compliance approval for the company, and the threat from benzene remains.

As the community struggled to breathe while feeling fatigue, dizziness, and nausea, just a few hours away in Ottawa the world gathered for the United Nations Plastics Treaty Negotiations to negotiate a legally binding treaty on plastic pollution.

Members of Aamjiwnaang attended these negotiations and told the world that successive governments have failed to take sufficient action to address the impact of this pollution on Aamjiwnaang, and that inaction has had real consequences on lives.

It doesn't have to be like this. Bill C-226, the National Strategy Respecting Environmental

Racism and Environmental Justice Act, is now at report stage in the Senate. The emergency in Aamjiwnaang shows why Bill C-226 is so important. If passed, the new legislation will mark a significant Crown commitment to begin the long-overdue work to develop and implement a national strategy and study on environmental racism and environmental justice.

Unfortunately, this is not the first time that Aamjiwnaang First Nation has faced severe negative health impacts from nearby industrial pollution. As Chief Christopher Plain's submission to the Senate committee studying Bill C-226 outlined, "Community members who grew up swimming in the waters and harvesting fish and traditional medicines now report negative health effects from engaging in these traditional activities that are constitutionally protected Aboriginal and treaty rights under section 35 of the Constitution Act of 1982."

This is just one example of the enduring and severe environmental racism that Indigenous Peoples face in so-called Canada. Indigenous communities are

disproportionately exposed to environmental toxics from industry on their territory because Canadian laws and regulations are built to serve the interests of industry and capital growth, while oppressing Indigenous culture and sovereignty.

Successful implementation of Bill C-226 requires decolonized action and the equal involvement of impacted communities at all stages. Any resulting initiatives must embed both procedural and distributive rights within all Crown departments to meaningfully address the root causes of environmental racism.

Strategic initiatives from Bill C-226 must also recognize that justice does not have one definition in so-called Canada. To adequately account for and uphold the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), Indigenous Peoples should be able to define the injustices they face, and shape how those injustices are addressed. There are many Indigenous legal orders that understand the process and substance of justice differently from Canadian law. Ultimately, the administra-

tion of justice is ineffective if it does not resonate with the community it is intended to help.

The ongoing Crown failure to uphold and advance Indigenous sovereignty and rights has created unique environmental injustices, such as enabling disproportionate industrial development on Indigenous lands without Indigenous involvement in decision-making. It has also led to limiting access to environmental gifts and benefits, including access to ancestral lands, plants and medicines, as well as clean water and air, thereby threatening the livelihood and continued cultural existence of Indigenous communities.

Bill C-226 is an opportunity to begin to redress these failures, and put so-called Canada on the path to the full realization of UNDRIP.

Though this bill is a critical tool for tackling environmental racism, the perpetual battle between community and industry has deeper roots. Until federal and provincial governments stop propping up industry at the expense of communities and the natural world, there will continue to be instances of environmental injustice and toxic pollution.

We must recognize legal pluralism on these lands. The landscape in Canada is littered with opportunities for the federal government to do more and do better, what's lacking is the moral courage to act in the face of powerful industry influence.

Melanie Snow is a government relations and campaign specialist focusing on federal law reform work at Ecojustice. Victoria Watson is a staff lawyer on Ecojustice's law reform team focused on legal pluralism, environmental justice, and biodiversity.

The Hill Times

Why digital assets will be Canada's economic equalizer

Despite its critics, cryptocurrency will prove to be the greatest financial equalizer because it treats everyone the same regardless of where you're from or how much money you have.

Lucas Matheson

Opinion



The "why" behind the shift to a digital economy isn't obvious to everyone, yet. Most people

have a credit card, a debit card, and are convinced that what they have is good enough. But the reality is that the financial system wasn't designed for our benefit, and is completely inaccessible for billions of people.

Three years ago, this really hit home for me when I tried to buy a custom painting of my daughter. I was on Instagram and discovered Tony Jagas, a prodigy artist who now has 172,000 followers. The cost of an original work: \$500 in Bitcoin.

This transaction wasn't just a deal; it was a lifeline. Turns out, he was just a teenager living in rural Nigeria. And why was Tony asking for Bitcoin? Simple: he couldn't open a bank account. Ultimately, after months trying to help Tony set up an online store, his inability to participate in our current financial system was the blocker to launching his business.

This is a story of a flawed system. For billions of people, the financial world is a closed door. More than 1.7 billion people in the world are underbanked or unbanked.

It's a problem millions of Canadians face, too. A recent survey we completed found that 80 per cent of Canadians feel that the financial system is not fair for everyone, and 86 per cent agree it could use an update. The majority say it's out of touch, and 72 per cent believe that it's designed for the benefit of the wealthy. This is not a system that's working for Canadians.

Coinbase recently took a major step forward to update the financial system: we became registered as a restricted dealer in Canada, making Coinbase the first international and the largest cryptocurrency exchange registered in the country.

Despite its critics, cryptocurrency will prove to be the greatest financial equalizer. Cryptocurrency treats everyone the same regardless of where you're from or how much money you have. Fairness and equal access are foundational values for Canadians—one reason I'm convinced Canadians are early adopters,

and will continue to rapidly expand our use of digital assets.

There are understandable concerns: it's too volatile, and the space has unfortunately seen some bad actors in recent years. These are fair, but we're early, and we're mitigating these risks at a rapid pace.

Yet the obvious challenge is that change is hard. The world is transitioning to an entirely new financial system, and the bureaucratic nature of governments is too slow to embrace change.

We simply don't have enough government employees dedicated to digital assets. We need to work closely with our government to prioritize technology in Canada, or we will continue falling behind.

So, we can't let fear dictate progress. There's too much on the line: the opportunity to create a world where your starting point doesn't dictate your finish line. Technologies like cryptocurrencies can reverse this trend. But there's still work to build that trust, and show that it can be a

real game-changer for millions of people.

Much of that comes down to regulation. Regulation is the key to success for cryptocurrency in Canada. More than 70 per cent of Canadians think that the regulation of cryptocurrency exchanges is important. In fact, 29 per cent said they would be more willing to buy cryptocurrencies if there was more regulation in the industry.

Canadians should take pride that we have a very strong regulatory system for cryptocurrencies, and one of the most stringent regimes globally. Our industry—side-by-side with regulators—has collectively been working for years to build highly compliant, safe, and secure exchanges for Canadians to participate in the digital economy.

Canada is home to some of the best technology companies in the world. Let's not underestimate ourselves. Ethereum was built here, in Waterloo, Ont. With regulation in place, there is nothing holding us back. The future doesn't wait, and neither should we. Tony—and billions of others—are counting on us.

Lucas Matheson is the CEO of Coinbase Canada, overseeing Coinbase's strategic direction and growth within the Canadian market since January 2023.

The Hill Times

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Editorial

Now is the workplace of our discontent

In what's becoming an increasingly frequent scenario, the federal government is at odds with its unionized employees.

This time around, the ire stems from the feds' back-to-office mandate for public servants, who, as of September, must report to their out-of-home desk at least three days per week.

The Public Service Alliance of Canada is promising a "summer of discontent" over the move, threatening to file thousands of grievances and legal challenges, and who knows what else to apply pressure to put a stop to this.

Regardless of how anyone feels about public servants needing to be in office three days per week versus two, and whether the Canadian public is going to feel any sympathy for their plight, the Liberals could have hardly gone about this move in a more antagonistic way.

Sure, there's the argument that there's no approach to increasing the number of days in office the government could have taken that would have been met with a smile and "please, may I have another." However, the unilateral "because I said so" gambit is understandingly hard to swallow.

That extra day could very well be necessary. But beyond some vague references to "collaboration," there hasn't been even a cursory attempt at rationale.

Are there specific government services and operations that are suffering or lacking? Maybe this could have been

an opportunity for Citizens' Services Minister Terry Beech (remember him?) to highlight some data.

But absent any of that, and on the heels of Ontario Premier Doug Ford and Ottawa Mayor Mark Sutcliffe making noises about boosting the downtown Ottawa 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.-only economy, the Liberals seemed to have delivered a sucker punch for no other reason than because they can.

Yes, the government retains jurisdiction over remote work. The collective agreement the union agreed to last spring specifically still gives the government that right as the employer. There was, however, a side letter agreement to create a joint committee to review and update the telework policy. There's no indication that was done, nor was there any consultation with the union before this decision was made.

Couple that with a not-so-great track record of workplace rejuvenation—see: the lead balloon-esque Workplace 2.0 initiative—and a plan to reduce the public service and sell off federal office buildings, this may be a pyrrhic victory.

At a time when the feds are trying to prove to the electorate they have a steady hand on the wheel, a disgruntled workforce with low morale is an own goal for a government that wants to get out from under the perception that it can't handle basic public services.

The Hill Times

Letters to the Editor

Consequences for civil disobedience rooted in context, says CJPME rep

Re: "The right to protest doesn't come without consequences," (*The Hill Times*, May 8, p. 6).

Andrew Caddell's recent column baselessly asserts that "the funds and organization behind the encampments and anti-Israel disinformation on social media, come from Russia and Iran." No serious journalist or expert has promoted this theory, much less found any evidence to support it. It is more than disappointing to read a former Canadian policy adviser and current public official peddle a silly conspiracy theory in a reputable newspaper. Caddell falling for this obvious hoax and a newspaper agreeing to publish it shows just how broken our media landscape has become. The bar for what passes in the media when it comes to slandering Palestinians and their advocates in Canada is remarkably low.

Moving beyond the baseless claim, Caddell's argument is flawed. He suggests that authorities would be justified in intervening if there's violence or hate speech on university campuses. Yet, he also contends that protesters should accept the consequences of their actions. However, if hate speech stems from an agitator, why should all protesters face consequences, especially when they condemn violence and hate speech themselves (as all encampments do)? Consider the incident where a pro-Israel agitator chanted "Kill the Jews" at an encampment, only to be booed by protesters. Should those who booed face consequences?

To compare the actions of individuals like Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., and Saul Alinsky to a broad social movement engaged in a variety of tactics is to misappropriate the important concept of civil disobedience. The theory of civil disobedience is necessarily contextual, it is related to individual decisions, not movements. Each encampment is treated differently by its university host, municipal and provincial government, and police. What constitutes civil disobedience at one encampment may very well not be at another.

The issue becomes all the more complex when you consider that the consequences some students face will be more harsh than others. An international student arrested for protesting may never be allowed to study in Canada again. The consequences have the potential to be so grave and unfair that the civil disobedience framing is misplaced.

So, spare us the pseudo-philosophical arguments for the eventual arrest of student protesters. What is needed is advocating for free expression and condemning the violent police crackdowns on encampments, which ruin lives and distract from the maniacal tragedy being orchestrated by Israel in Gaza.

Jason Toney
 Director of media advocacy, Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East
 Montreal, Que.

Campus protesters misinformed: Toronto reader

Re: "Thanks to our courageous students, says Vancouver reader," (*The Hill Times*, May 8, p. 8).

Paule Houle, who wrote a letter praising students in the encampment at the University of British Columbia, has been influenced by the spreading of lies to foment antisemitism. Hamas propaganda has been accepted as news and he finds himself—as do many of these ignorant students—believing that genocide by Israel exists.

This is a complete projection. Hamas is the genocidal terror group that martyrs its children. It has used its billions of dollars in aid to build nothing but tunnels over the last 17 years during which they have governed Gaza. They place their civilians in an arena of war. Israel has managed to reduce the civilian to combatant ratio of death from the usual 9:1 of urban warfare, as quoted by the Red

Cross, to less than 2:1. Israel did withhold humanitarian aid for a little more than a week, seven months ago, when they had been brutally attacked with rape, torture, mutilation, murder, burning alive, and kidnapping of its civilian population from their homes and a music festival when Hamas invaded Israel.

In the last two months, Israel has flooded Gaza with aid, which Hamas has often stolen and the United Nations has failed to properly distribute. None of the thousand Hamas terrorists, arrested by Israel, have been malnourished. The moral atrocity is Houle's ignorance of the truth, condemning Israel for defending itself against a genocidal terrorist army that uses its own people as martyrs to further its dream of an extremist Islamist caliphate that is free of Jews.

Cynthia Lazar
 Toronto, Ont.



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Political disconnect leaving Liberals far behind

It's not at all clear that the Trudeau Liberals are playing the same game as their opponents.

Les Whittington

Need to Know



OTTAWA—I'm guessing no one can tell me off-hand how many programs to support Canadians, and their domestic and global priorities the current Liberal government has brought in during its eight-plus years in power.

You can go through the recent budget document page by page and still have no idea. Unless you count them one by one, which would take hours. Suffice to say there appears to be more than 100 new programs and initiatives in this year's 405-page economic and fiscal package, in addition to the hundreds of others since Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's first budget in 2016.

The new ones cover everything from house-building incentives to breaks for companies pursuing carbon capture to more support for childcare to money for Ukraine. In all, there's \$39-billion in net new spending.

But that kind of funding is minor compared to the spending the Trudeau Liberals rolled out during the COVID pandemic to try to protect Canadians' businesses and jobs. That totalled somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$500-billion.

What it comes down to is that this has been an extremely activist government. But, as we have seen in the past year, voters' appreciation of all this appears in negative territory. However one looks at it, the messages of support are not getting through or registering with the public.

Take the carbon tax rebate, for example. An Angus Reid poll late last year showed that half of the population is either unaware of the rebate, or unsure whether they are receiving it.

Then there's the housing issue, which now dominates public concerns along with the related matter of inflation. Having accepted responsibility for the housing affordability crunch—which in recent decades had been considered the constitutional responsibility of the provinces and cities—the federal government has sought to marshal an all-of-government, cost-bet damned strategy to launch an ambitious national house-building campaign, including \$25-billion to incentivize construction, and help renters and the homeless.

But the massive housing plan has done nothing to improve the Liberals' poll standing, and an Abacus Data survey found that,

of those who said they were familiar with the budget, only one in five said Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland's policies would have a positive impact on the housing affordability problem, with half of respondents saying it would have a negative impact.

This skepticism is of course part of a much-wider issue when it comes to government and the economy. Despite Freeland's managing to keep the economy from slipping into an extended period of no growth since COVID, a large majority of Canadians have been telling pollsters for nearly two years that Canada is in a recession. It's the same in the United States where the bulk of voters have been convinced their economic situation is a lot worse than it actually is, leading many to say they think they would be better off economically under another Donald Trump administration.

Researchers have attributed this pessimism to widespread uneasiness spawned by the pandemic experience, sharply rising prices, and uncertainty about the future. People don't feel better about their economic situation even if it is in fact better than it was a few years ago, researchers found.

As in Canada, the current malaise in the U.S. is also a feature of the long arc of growing inequality owing to government policies favouring the wealthy and investors over half a century. The resulting decline in the prospects of the middle class has been an ingrained feature of life in North America long before the pandemic arrived.

Huge government outlays to protect people during COVID eased the wealth gap a bit, but it was temporary. And what's more, many people have bought into the incorrect accusation that government spending during the pandemic caused runaway inflation, rather than the actual main causes: global economic factors, and supply shortages.

In this context, it's not at all clear that the Trudeau Liberals—fixed in the policy-oriented, best-efforts brokerage politics of the pre-social media era—are playing the same game as their opponents. As Trudeau has said, Canadians are angry, and his central argument that government can be a force to help the public solve its problems seems to be increasingly going unheard.

The policy-free zone established by Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre seems at the moment to be much more to the public's liking. Appealing to emotion and selling his idea that Canada is "broken," Poilievre has put himself in position to win the next election handily without providing any reason for people to vote for him other than he supposedly gets their anger. Altogether, it's not a propitious moment for a country that needs serious, well-thought-out programs and policies to deal with its many complex, ongoing, and divisive problems.

Les Whittington is a regular columnist for The Hill Times.

The Hill Times

The Canadian Armed Forces' bloated head

As the bottom falls out of the CAF at the rank-and-file level, the top offices remain filled to the brim.

Scott Taylor

Inside Defence



OTTAWA—For months now, the Canadian military's senior leadership have been bemoaning the crippling shortfall of personnel in the ranks.

Before a parliamentary committee last year, Chief of the Defence Staff General Wayne Eyre acknowledged that there are currently 16,500 vacant positions from a Canadian Armed Forces' combined regular and reserve authorized strength of 101,000.

The reason for this crisis is a combination of the CAF's failure to attract recruits while simultaneously failing to retain trained personnel.

For those who follow the affairs of the CAF closely, it will be understood that Eyre's numbers are somewhat misleading. When you factor in all those serving personnel who are currently on sick, stress, maternity, paternity, and retirement leave, and those personnel recruited but still awaiting trades training, those numbers make things far worse in reality than in Eyre's briefing notes.

The lack of experienced, trained technical staff means that ships' companies cannot be put to sea, planes lack pilots, and vehicles are inoperable due to maintenance delays. All of this leads to frustration and burn-out for veteran service members, and as a result they are retiring early. However, things are not bleak across the board as all 138 permanent and temporary general officer and flag officer (GOFO) positions remain staffed at 100 per cent. As the bottom falls out of the CAF at the rank-and-file level, the top offices remain filled to the brim.

Clearly the government realizes that even a casual observer will question that bloated ratio of GOFOs to the dwindling number of troops they still command.

On the official Government of Canada website it states, "The Canadian Armed Forces is structured to have 631 Regular Force members per one GOFO, which makes us lighter at the top when compared to like-sized military forces of some of our closest Commonwealth Allies."

This is a classic example of—well, to be blunt—horseshit. Our closest ally is the United States, and in 2017, their military had 900 GOFOs for a force of 1.3 million service members which is a ratio of 1:1,400. The U.S. Marine Corps has just 62 GOFOs for some 180,000 Jarheads, which is an impressive ratio of almost one GOFO per 3,000 marines. The press in the United Kingdom recently questioned why their army was commanded by 53 general officers when the troop strength had dropped to 70,000. That would be a ratio of one GOFO per 1,300 British soldiers.

So no, we are not "lighter at the top" than our allies as the government website claims. Quite the opposite is true. The worst part about this top-heavy structure of the Canadian military is that this is not a new problem.

Back in 1995, in the wake of the Somalia Scandal that had shone a public spotlight on the darker reality of the CAF, citizens questioned why Canada had 96 GOFOs for a military with only 65,000 regular force personnel.

The Liberal government of the day had been quick to disband the entire Canadian Airborne Regiment overnight, but in the case of the bloated command structure they set a goal of one GOFO per 1,000 personnel to be achieved through natural attrition.

Fast-forward nearly three decades and that 96 is now 138, and while authorized for a regular force strength of 71,000, the actual number

is less than 60,000. This means that despite a passage of time which extends beyond that of a full military career, that attrition morphed into addition.

Given that the just-released defence policy update does not project the CAF addressing the present personnel shortfall before 2032, it is time to drastically slash the bloated leadership of the military.

Later this summer, Eyre's retirement will open the door for the Liberals to start making good on that promised reduction through attrition.

Given the reduced size of the CAF, the next CDS should remain a lieutenant-general (a.k.a. a three-star general rather than a full four-star general).

This would set in motion a pattern wherein the 11 current lieutenant-general positions would be reduced to that of a two-star major-general as the incumbent retires.

Our NATO allies do not care how much gold braid our generals wear on their hats. They care about how much actual combat capability we can deliver. And right now that isn't much.

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

The Hill Times



This summer's retirement of Chief of the Defence Staff General Wayne Eyre will open the door for the Liberals to start making good on promised reduction through attrition, writes Scott Taylor. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

News

Senate rule change ‘tough pill to swallow’ for Conservatives, but backers say vote protects Red Chamber’s independence

The rule changes and move to limit debate created ‘resentment,’ but Senate government rep Marc Gold says he expects his relationship with the Tory caucus to get ‘back on track after the dust settles.’

Continued from page 1

96 sitting Senators. As leader of the largest group, Saint-Germain now has unlimited speaking time, putting the group on par with powers historically granted to the government and opposition. The motion also recognized the Canadian Senators Group (CSG) and Progressive Senate Group (PSG) as the next largest groups, granting their leaders 45 minutes speaking time and the ability to assign critics to bills.

“It makes the Senate a more democratic institution,” said Saint-Germain, adding it was “about time” that the rules shifted away from the “outdated partisan duopoly” designed to mimic the House of Commons rather than a second Chamber above the “partisan fray.”

All groups but the Conservatives supported government representative Marc Gold’s (Stadacona, Que.) motion, with 67 votes in favour, and 13 against the rule changes.

“It sends a powerful message,” said PSG Leader Pierre Dalphond (De Lorimier, Que.), with most “overwhelmingly in favour.”

“It does recognize we don’t work anymore on a duopoly,” he said. “The groups are more equal, which is an important thing, because we don’t live in the world of Conservative-Liberals.”

Saint-Germain said the motion was necessary given equality between all groups was at risk.

“Time is of the essence, and we want to protect this independence,” she said. “It is at the core of not only the future of this institution, but the relevance of this institution.”

The groups’ leaders told *The Hill Times* that many felt it was the last chance to change the rules after the opposition systematically blocked movement over



ISG facilitator Raymonde Saint-Germain says the new rules make a big difference in little ways. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

the years. They said since the Parliament of Canada Act was amended to recognize the new groups in 2022, this has added more urgency to put the Senate’s rules in line with the legislation.

CSG Senator David Richards (New Brunswick), who was appointed in 2017, was the only non-Conservative vote against the rules change on May 8, while two non-affiliated Senators abstained. Previously, Richards told the Red Chamber he felt Gold’s motion was designed to “diminish the power” of the Conservative caucus.

That’s exactly what the Conservative Senators accuse those who passed the motion of doing, especially in preparation for what they say the polls show will be a Conservative government next election. They say with the largest group being granted similar powers to government and opposition, that would mean Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) would effectively face two opposition parties in the Red Chamber. They also vehemently object to the changes to the Westminster parliamentary democracy model, and say the few dozen recent appointees since 2015 shouldn’t change a historic institution.

Before the vote, Conservative Senate Leader Don Plett (Landsmark, Man.) took exception to the method Gold took by “ramming” the motion through with time allocation. On the Chamber floor, Plett called the time-limiting tactic “a guillotine,” “muzzling of Parliament,” an “abuse of Parliament,” “a perversion of the notion,” and a clear departure from past procedural practice.

CSG Leader Scott Tannas (Alberta) said the rules changes

clearly needed the “government stamp” to go forward.

“We have spent years with these rule changes proposed going exactly nowhere.”

Asked if he believed Gold went this route because a Conservative government that isn’t supportive of such changes could soon be in power, Tannas said “Yes, I do,” adding “many of us” asked Gold to add the government’s sponsorship to the effort in order to “use the tools to get it done.”

During debate, Plett called Gold’s decision not to speak to, and defend, his time allocation motion “unconscionable.” Gold told *The Hill Times* he didn’t want to take up any of the six hours so others could stand, when he had already “said it all” in his earlier speeches. Time allocation is not a tactic he chooses “with pleasure,” Gold said, and only when there is “no other choice—and this was an example.” In the end, Senators did not use the full time, with Plett’s caucus colleague Senator Leo Housakos (Wellington, Que.) describing the final vote as a “foregone conclusion.”

Time allocation chips away at collegiality, says Tannas

With more time, Plett told the Chamber he would have presented a few amendments, including that the rule changes: be limited to this parliamentary session; continue the evening suspension from 6-8 p.m. (now it’s been reduced to one hour, starting at 7 p.m.); and reduce the time the government could respond to written questions to 45 days from the motion’s 60 days (no time limit previously existed).

In an interview the day after the vote, Gold said “feelings are

running high,” and “anger or resentment still may be close to the surface,” but he has every confidence that “this will pass.”

Tannas was sympathetic to his former Conservative colleagues. Being the official opposition is an incredibly important and necessary role, but it’s the “lousiest job,” said Tannas, who left the caucus in 2019 to form the CSG.

“You get up every day, your job is to criticize, your job is to poke holes, and your job is to lose every single vote,” he said. When Gold moved to limit the debate to only six more hours, it took away some of the procedural tools the opposition uses to apply pressure, and “the minority loses complete control, and that’s always difficult.”

“Whenever time allocation is used, I think you chip away at that collegiality that’s been built,” Tannas said. “We’ll have some fence mending to do ... There’s justification for it, but I recognize it’s a tough pill to swallow.”

That’ll mostly be Gold’s responsibility, and for his part, Gold said he and the Conservatives have always found ways to work together and expect they will again.

“I’m confident that we’ll get back on track after the dust settles.”

Plett told *The Hill Times* the vote and the rule change won’t change his party’s approach.

“We’re not going to shift at all,” he said on May 9, calling the motion “inside baseball” that doesn’t affect the average Canadian.

He said the motion simply helped solidify “two government caucuses” in the Senate, and interfere with opposition powers.

“They are upset that Don Plett and a small group of 13 people know how to use the Senate rules to slow down things that they want to move through,”

and while the numbers were in the other group’s favour, they felt they had to push the vote through. “And so Gold comes down with a hammer.”

‘Modest package of changes’

Gold said he was “very pleased [the motion] passed with such strong support,” demonstrating that the years of work that fed into Motion 165 created a “focused and reasonable” package of changes that had already developed consensus.

Gold said the rules were “not radical,” but an effort to codify what had become the status quo with established groups, and with which the majority of appointees agreed.

“This was a modest package of changes,” he said. “The fundamental rules are still there.”

In Saint-Germain’s eyes, the rules make a big difference in little ways, such as broadening who has power to decide when committees can hold meetings. The one-hour evening suspension also creates more efficiency, and each group having designated critics on bills is “really important,” she said.

Tannas said the rules preserve how the Senate is functioning in the moment, and it’s a better fit than when he first arrived in 2013. Coming from a job where the focus was on collaboration and problem-solving, the former CEO said “it didn’t feel right.”

He said the Upper Chamber should function differently from the “all heat, no light” big fights that can colour the Commons, but in his early days as a Senator, it felt when it came to government legislation, “the whole thing was preordained to end exactly as it began.”

“It just seemed there was no room for independent thinking,” he said.

Gold’s package of changes is “not quite half a loaf,” Tannas said. For example, some Senators would have wanted Gold to go much farther and diminish some of the opposition powers, but Tannas said that perspective is “naive.”

“Frankly, it’s good enough for us to step into the future.”

Dalphond said he doesn’t think the motion went far enough, but it’s a positive start.

“In a journey you have to walk, you have to do the first steps if you want to complete the journey.”

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Conservative Senate Leader Don Plett slammed the government representative in the Senate for using time allocation to end debate on the rule changes. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

House Foreign Affairs Committee offers no advice to reverse foreign service ‘atrophy’

A Senate committee previously presented 29 recommendations to the government to fix Canada’s diplomatic capacity.

Continued from page 1

The House committee—chaired by Liberal MP Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Ont.)—billed its work as building on that done by the Senators.

During their study, MPs heard from senior government officials, former diplomats, and experts about the state of Canada’s foreign service.

Foreign Affairs deputy minister David Morrison told the committee on Feb. 7 that Canada has allowed its foreign service to “atrophy” in “recruiting, retaining, and investing, including in language capacity.”

While on leave, current diplomat Ulric Shannon penned a 2022 report that showed foreign language compliance was at concerning levels inside the department, at 23 per cent, and declining to 18 per cent for executives.

The Senate report recommended that the government increase investment in foreign language training. The House committee had little to say on the matter. Its report had a single reference to foreign language skills, noting that successful employees of GAC require training to “ensure their proficiency in Canada’s official languages and to maintain their foreign language skills once acquired,” citing the testimony of Independent Senator Peter Boehm (Ontario), a former diplomat who now chairs the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee.

The report stresses the importance of the United States to Canada’s foreign policy, and that Canadian diplomacy should be “guided by a foreign policy that is strategic.”

It references calls the committee heard from witnesses about the value in Canada performing a foreign policy review, which has not been done since 2005.

“It appeared to many that a foundation is missing, on which



The second parliamentary report on Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly’s department was tabled on April 29. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Canada’s relationships, positions, activities, spending, and regional strategies can be based,” the report notes, but it doesn’t voice a position on whether a review should be taking place.

The House committee’s report did give an implicit recommendation that more investment is needed into GAC.

Citing testimony of University of Ottawa professor Thomas Juneau, who stated that due to inadequate resources in diplomacy, defence, intelligence, and national security, Canada is only able to “partially defend our interests,” the committee asserted that “the transformation of foreign policy is, therefore, both a process and an objective that can only be realized through the targeted allocation of resources.”

In the most recent budget, GAC received a slight boost in investment, with \$664.4-million in planned spending committed exclusively to the department. At the same time, it is facing \$540-million

of spending “reallocations” over the next three fiscal years.

Calls for increasing investment in GAC have also come from the Senate committee, as well as from Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly (Ahuntsic-Cartierville, Que.).

Appearing before the committee for its study on Feb. 7, Joly said she hoped that everyone could agree that there was a need to invest more in Canada’s diplomats.

“It is important that we have our resources. This work of reforming our department—Global

Affairs Canada—has not been done in decades,” she said. “This is an opportunity for you to say, ‘Yes, I believe in the work that Canada does at the international level.’ I’ll be frank: It should not be partisan.”

In the NDP’s supplementary to the report, it made six recommendations: recognizing the Palestinian state, supporting international legal efforts on the Israel-Palestine conflict at the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court, ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against

Torture, stopping the “arbitrary and discriminatory” application of consular services, stopping the sales of arms to countries that have “indiscriminately bombed civilian populations,” and strengthening GAC’s legal capacity.

Royal Military College professor Adam Chapnick, an expert on Canadian foreign policy, said the House committee’s report was a “reasonable” and “moderate”

response to Canada’s place in the world.

“What’s relatively novel here is that this is a small-c conservative report, and it’s not trying to change the world,” he said.

Chapnick said that with the multitude of recommendations from the Senate and from GAC’s internal review, there isn’t a need for more recommendations to be added to the pile.

“The situation is not that there aren’t enough proposed solutions. The situation is in actioning recommendations and operationalizing the ideas,” he said.

As calls mount to invest more in GAC, Chapnick said there is an effort by those who believe that Canada is beginning to renege on its international obligations to create an “I told you so” paper trail to prevent the current or future governments from having any excuses if they find out that its interests have been compromised because of its under investment in its foreign policy.

“Between GAC’s own internal review, the Senate report, this report, a number of reports on national security that have been put out, it will be increasingly difficult for any government to claim that they didn’t realize how far our tools have atrophied,” he said.

Former diplomat Colin Robertson said the report outlines the challenges facing Canada’s foreign service.

While not offering any new ideas to fix it, he said having elected MPs voice their view is “important.”

He said Canada needs to invest in its foreign service, but was skeptical that sufficient investment will be coming.

“We need to invest accordingly, and the evidence suggests we are probably not investing enough,” said Robertson, a senior adviser at the Canadian Global Affairs Institute.

“I don’t think we’re going to see it. I honestly don’t think foreign policy is a priority of this government, despite efforts of successive foreign ministers,” he said.

Former diplomat Louise Blais, who twice served as Canada’s consul general in Atlanta and is a past ambassador and deputy permanent representative to the United Nations, said the committee reached the right diagnosis of the issues in the foreign service, but said there wasn’t much that is new being presented.

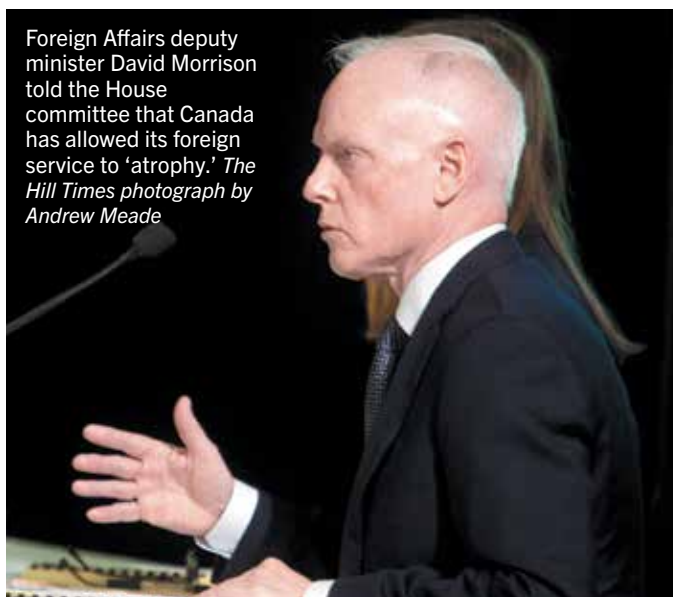
“[It’s] a good diagnostic, but there is no treatment plan,” she said.

While stressing the importance of adequately resourcing GAC, Blais said more investment isn’t necessarily the antidote for the department’s woes.

“I don’t think what’s ailing the department can be solved by writing a cheque,” she said. “It’s the way in which we manage people, the way in which we promote people, the amount of delegation and authority that we give heads of missions and those at posts. All of those things are [part] of a cultural shift that needs to happen.”

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The Hill Times



Foreign Affairs deputy minister David Morrison told the House committee that Canada has allowed its foreign service to ‘atrophy.’ *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

News

Foreign influence registry ‘more than a positive step forward,’ but not far enough, say diaspora groups

Though welcomed, Bill C-70 falls short of the gold standard some were hoping to see Canada adopt, and the registry won't capture the more-covert activities such as those favoured by the Iran regime, say diaspora group reps.

Continued from page 1

Those working for foreign powers, economic entities, or states would be required to register if they are undertaking influence activities under foreign direction to communicate with the Canadian public or office holders, or are handing out money towards the development of policy, legislative proceedings,

decision-making, or elections and nominations. Those failing to register or found in contravention of the act could face a fine of up to \$5-million and/or up to five years in prison.

The bill would make it an indictable offence—punishable by up to life in prison—for anyone acting on the direction of a foreign government to engage in “surreptitious or deceptive conduct” to influence a governmental or electoral process, including party nomination contests.

The bill followed the May 3 release of Justice Marie-Josée Hogue’s first report from the Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference in Federal Electoral Processes and Democratic Institutions.

The Chinese Canadian Concern Group on the Chinese Communist Party’s Human Rights Violations (CCCG)—an organization of activists, professionals, and religious leaders within the diaspora which was granted intervenor standing at the inquiry—called the legislation a “significant step forward in countering foreign interference,” but said it is “imperative to recognize its limitations and the need for

ongoing vigilance and adaptation to address evolving threats.”

In a statement to *The Hill Times*, CCCG spokesperson Thekla Lit said the strengthening of national security partner co-operation proposed in the legislation is “crucial for safeguarding Canada and its citizens,” and that the modernization of the Criminal Code and regular review of the CSIS Act will keep Canada’s legal framework “up to date” in combatting the threats it faces.

However, Lit also noted the timing of the legislation, and said that the bill should have arrived “much earlier.” “Nonetheless,” Lit wrote that “late is better than never,” and that while the inquiry’s final report would have likely recommended many of the same measures proposed in the legislation, had the government waited until that report slated for release in December, it would have been far too late to protect the next election.

As for the proposed foreign influence transparency registry, Lit noted that some “proxies” acting on behalf of foreign principles do not receive direct monetary com-

pensation, but rather less tangible indirect benefits.

“While the registry is a significant step in addressing foreign interference and infiltration, it’s important to acknowledge that it may only capture direct transactions and overlook more subtle forms of influence,” Lit wrote.

The registry and the legislation as a whole should be evaluated based on whether they effectively address the issues raised by the inquiry, including irregularities in nomination contests, alleged “slush funds” being distributed to support favoured candidates, as well as threats and acts of intimidation against members of Canada’s diaspora communities, Lit said.

“The bill’s success will ultimately be measured by its ability to mitigate these threats and protect the integrity of Canada’s democratic processes,” Lit wrote. “As we move forward, continued scrutiny and evaluation will be essential to ensure that the bill effectively safeguards Canada and its democratic institutions.”

Mehmet Tohti, executive director of the Uyghur Rights Advocacy Project (URAP), told *The*

Hill Times that the legislation as a whole consists of “much more than a positive step forward,” but still falls “just in the middle” of the “gold standard” URAP had been aiming for.

Citing the United States’ Transnational Repression Policy Act as the standard bearer, Tohti said URAP had submitted a report to LeBlanc with 37 recommendations for Canada to meet its legal obligation to protect its citizens. With the tabling of Bill C-70, Tohti said the government has addressed nearly one-third of those recommendations.

“Most importantly,” the legislation “clearly defines” foreign interference in the Criminal Code, which indicates that the federal government has “finally gotten the message and started to act,” Tohti said.

“At least Canada has started to realize the widespread infiltration of foreign actors and their influence, and is starting to realize the danger that Canada and Canadians are facing at an individual and national security level,” he added.

The CSIS Act and the National Security and Intelligence Review Agency Act updates allowing for



In her initial report released on May 3, Commissioner Marie-Josée Hogue said foreign interference in the last two federal elections was a ‘stain’ on Canada’s electoral process, but did not undermine the results or the electoral process. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Prominent Uyghur rights advocate Mehmet Tohti says despite its limitations, Bill C-70 shows the federal government has ‘finally gotten the message and started to act’ on foreign interference. *Photograph courtesy of X*



Iranian Justice Collective spokesperson Kaveh Shahrooz applauds the proposed registry, but doesn’t believe it will be effective at combatting the mostly clandestine interference by the Iranian regime. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*



Public Safety Minister Dominic LeBlanc tabled the Countering Foreign Interference Act in the House on May 6. The bill would create a new 'country-agnostic' foreign influence and transparency registry. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

citing allegations of “significant foreign interference.”

Before exiting the race, Shahrooz told *The Hill Times* that he was the target of disinformation efforts “amplified by Iranian regime accounts” online, as well as being physically monitored and threatened. He said that his campaign volunteers also feared for the safety of their families still living in Iran.

Shahrooz welcomed the bill’s attempts to address the concerns around nomination processes, which he called a “mess,” and “ripe for foreign interference.”

In her report, Hogue called nomination contests “gateways for foreign states who wish to interfere in our democratic process,” and said they will need to be “carefully examined” during the inquiry’s second phase.

“The extent to which the legislation addresses that is a good step in the right direction, but it remains to be seen if it goes far enough,” Shahrooz said.

Balpreet Singh Boparai, legal counsel and spokesperson for the World Sikh Organization of Canada (WSO), told *The Hill Times* that the legislation is “promising,” potentially addressing many of the Sikh community’s concerns.

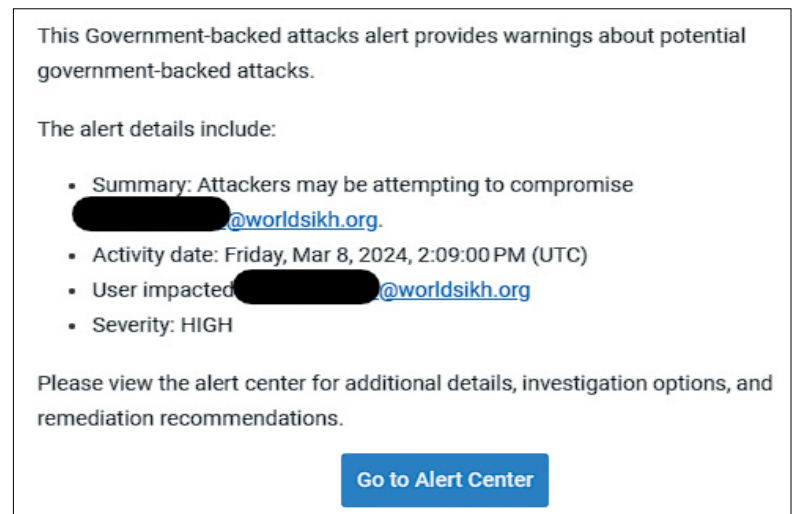
“The exact implications of how this will work once it’s passed—if it’s passed—is something that we’re looking forward to, but it’s definitely a step in the right direction,” Boparai said, adding that his community is also troubled by the lack of two-way communication with CSIS.

Boparai also noted that CSIS officials themselves have shared those same concerns with them, indicating they feel their “hands are tied” by their inability to share information with non-federal partners.

“Once we pass information on to CSIS, we don’t really know what’s going to become of it, if anything,” Boparai explained.

As one example, Boparai said that WSO had shared information with CSIS in 2022 following the death of Ripudaman Singh Malik, who was the victim of a targeted shooting that summer on June 22 in Surrey, B.C., outside of his family business.

After Malik’s killing, Boparai said Indian news outlets identified several members of the British Columbia Sikh community and alleged they had been



A screenshot of the alert the World Sikh Organization received from Google on March 8, warning them of potential ‘government-backed attacks’ on their email accounts. *Screenshot courtesy of Balpreet Singh Boparai*

responsible as part of a “gang war,” and who could potentially be future victims. Boparai said that among those names was B.C. Sikh activist Hardeep Singh Nijjar. Nijjar was gunned down as he was leaving the Guru Nanak Sikh temple in Surrey on June 18, 2023. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) has alleged the killing is connected to the Indian government.

Boparai said that after sharing that information with CSIS, there was no response as to what—if anything—was done with it, though he does know that the individuals identified by Indian media, including Nijjar, had at least been contacted by CSIS with some warning of the threat.

More recently, Boparai said he had received an alert from Google about potential “government-backed attacks” on WSO emails.

While that information was also shared with CSIS at the beginning of March, “we have no idea where that’s gonna go, and we’re not going to hear anything back,” Boparai said.

“If this legislation passes, hopefully, some of the people who are in the dark might get more information about the threats they face.”

Country-agnostic registry a potential ‘bureaucratic monster’: Stanton

While diaspora groups and the foreign interference inquiry have singled out specific states as the main culprits of foreign interference—with the People’s Republic of China as the most far-reaching actor, followed by Russia, Iran, and India—the foreign influence registry takes a “country-agnostic approach.” This means those working for foreign bodies must register, regardless of their client’s national origin.

Stephanie Carvin, a Carleton University professor and former CSIS intelligence analyst, told *The Hill Times* that agnosticism is important to ensure fairness and improve its effectiveness.

“The aim of this registry shouldn’t be punishing people; it should be transparency,” Carvin explained. “Having the registry be country agnostic achieves that goal. We don’t want to single people out simply for working with some foreign clients but not others.”

However, former CSIS executive manager Dan Stanton, now director of national security at the University of Ottawa’s Professional Development Institute, disagrees.

“What Canadians wanted is a registry identifying repressive regimes like the PRC, India, and Russia,” Stanton explained. “Let’s be frank, we’re not really worried about the U.S. and Britain.”

However, Stanton opposes the “country-agnostic” approach not simply because those countries are the worst offenders, but also because if the registry isn’t focused, it could become completely unmanageable.

“If they come up with some kind of wishy-washy, any-state registry, it could just turn into a bureaucratic monster,” Stanton explained. “If it’s any foreign state, and it’s not just for clandestine activity, we’ll have an awful lot of leads for someone to follow up on.”

Whether the registry is more targeted or remains agnostic, the government will need to manage the public’s expectations of what it can reasonably accomplish, he said.

“The registry isn’t a magic wand,” Stanton said, adding that he felt there are those who seem to be looking for some kind of “holy grail” policy that would not only mitigate foreign interference, but also halt it entirely.

“I won’t be a downer and say we shouldn’t have it. Obviously, we should have it,” Stanton said. “But I don’t think the government should create something that will become unmanageable.”

As for how effectively he believes the registry will mitigate foreign interference, Stanton said it falls “somewhere between a placebo and a cure.”

However, Stanton noted that in some cases, even just the perception of treatment can improve the underlying condition.

“All the talk about foreign interference in the media, in House committees, and in the public inquiry, and everything else has educated Canadians, and that’s probably the best deterrent to foreign interference,” Stanton said. “We’re finally listening to diasporic communities, and the rest of Canada is certainly more sensitized to it. That’s not something these repressive regimes like.”

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improved intelligence sharing with non-federal partners are also improvements, Tohti said, noting that currently sharing information on possible instances of foreign interference or transnational repression with CSIS is a “one-way street.”

“They take information and never get back to the community,” Tohti explained. “With these new amendments, at least it’s a two-way street, even if it’s a limited scope.”

Tohti also said the changes requiring a review of the CSIS Act every five years would allow the government to address new security threats that could arise in the future more quickly.

“It’s a good step to deter foreign actors, and Canada can strengthen it down the road,” Tohti said. “Bad actors can find all of the possible ways to play around this; we know that, but at least we can have some sort of legislative framework now that we didn’t have in the last two elections.”

Kaveh Shahrooz, a spokesperson for the Iranian Justice Collective, told *The Hill Times* that he welcomes the proposed registry.

“We applaud it, and hope it will be adopted soon,” Shahrooz said, but added that though it is a welcome addition to the fight against foreign interference, “we don’t necessarily think it will combat Iranian influence.”

“The individuals interfering with Canadian affairs or intimidating activists generally have secret ties to Iran’s regime, so they’re unlikely to register,” Shahrooz explained.

However, while the registry itself has limitations, the surrounding elements in the rest of Bill C-70 would be more useful in combatting Iran-backed interference and repression, he said.

“Most of this stuff happens covertly and will be very difficult to spot, but it gives further enforcement powers and a new legal hook to hang them by,” Shahrooz explained. “It probably doesn’t go far enough to offer the full protection we seek, but I’m happy to see it finally be tabled.”

Shahrooz, a vocal critic of the Iranian regime, bowed out of the Conservative Party nomination contest in the riding of Richmond Hill, Ont., this past February,



Balpreet Singh Boparai of the World Sikh Organization of Canada says beyond the registry, he hopes the changes to how and when CSIS can share information with non-federal partners will help potential targets of transnational oppression keep themselves safe. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*



Former CSIS intelligence analyst Stephanie Carvin says the aim of the registry should be ‘transparency’ rather than ‘punishing people’ for working with certain foreign states. *Photograph courtesy of Stephanie Carvin*



Former executive manager in the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Dan Stanton says the foreign influence registry is ‘somewhere between a placebo and a cure.’ *Photograph courtesy of Dan Stanton*



Stuart Benson

Party Central

20th Century Boys rock into spring at the Rainbow Bistro



The 20th Century Boys kept the crowd on their feet until nearly midnight at their annual Spring Dance Party on May 9 at the Rainbow Bistro. *The Hill Times* photograph by Stuart Benson

Party Central ditched the suit and tie in favour of blue dancing shoes for the 20th Century Boys' annual Spring Dance Party on May 9 in support of PAL Ottawa.

Ready or not, the 20th Century Boys returned to the Rainbow Bistro on May 9, rocking into spring for a good time and a good cause.

Wrapping up a week full of swanky receptions at the Fairmont Château Laurier and the Rideau Club, Party Central ditched the suit and tie in favour of flannel and his best pair of dancing shoes to catch a performance of what is fast becoming a personal favourite local supergroup.

The Boys are a band of seasoned political professionals, including two former rival political candidates and a former CPAC anchor, as well as both amateur and professional musicians. Since their formation in late 2003, they have raised thousands of dollars for local Ottawa charities like the Ottawa Cancer Foundation, the Ottawa Food Bank, the Snowsuit Fund, and the Shine Community Music Program, co-run by the Ottawa Boys and Girls Club.

The band's roster varies slightly from show to show, but as always, the lineup on May 9 featured McMillan LLP's Richard Mahoney and the now-retired Peter "the face of CPAC" Van Dusen on guitar and vocals; Kelly Craig, Shine Group CEO and musical director, on bass guitar and back-up vocals; Dave Fraser on back-up guitar and back-up vocals; Jonathan Cook on the keyboard; Chris Gerdei on trumpet; Paul Adjeleian on trombone; Mike Martin on baritone saxophone, and Donovan Allen on drums.

While the packed crowd at the Rainbow consisted mostly of the band's family and friends, Party Central did spot a few denizens of the parliamentary social scene, including Mathieu Gravel, House Speaker Greg Ferguson's director of outreach and media relations; Geoffrey Hall, the PMO's director of administration; and Maple Leaf Strategies' Alik Angaladian.

The Boys' setlist remained much the same as last year, opening the show with The Temptations' *Get Ready*—a tried-and-true method to fill the dance floor right off the top—followed by covers of Amy Winehouse, and The Band—legends say that two years ago, The Boys were joined onstage by GZero Media's Evan Solomon to take the load off lead vocals for a rendition of *The Weight*. They threw in some Van Morrison, as well as other covers added to their repertoire, including Van Dusen getting a little country with Toby Keith's *I Like It, I Love It*. Fraser's son, Drew Fraser-Leach, also joined The Boys onstage for a rendition of Old Crow Medicine Show's *Wagon Wheel*.

During a well-deserved intermission, as The Boys refilled their pints, Catherine Lindquist, executive director of the Canadian Art Museum Directors Organization, announced the winners of the raffle. Those tickets, as well as the night's admission benefited PAL Ottawa, which serves to connect the National Capital Region's senior artists with affordable housing and personal support services. Lindquist told Party Central they are still tallying ticket sales, but the raffle itself raised more than \$600.

Following the intermission, Lindquist joined The Boys onstage to perform Tina Turner's *Proud Mary*, and Creedence Clearwater Revival's *Bad Moon Rising*.

Wrapping up the show, the band picked up the energy while feeding off the crowd—and some liquid courage—with performances of Eddie Floyd's *Knock on Wood*; Neil Diamond's *Sweet Caroline*, and Elvis Presley's *Suspicious Minds*, which saw Mahoney escape the confines of the stage to continue the performance with a lap around the bar.

The Boys' encore—which was demanded by not only the crowd, but also the Bistro's bar staff, who ultimately had the final say on when the show ended, anyway—was a rendition of The Rolling Stones' *Honky Tonk Woman*. While the crowd seemingly had the energy to dance all night had the music kept going, Party Central had once again been defeated by a week full of parties, and enjoyed the final few performances from a barstool with a Hazy Pale Ale as a reward.

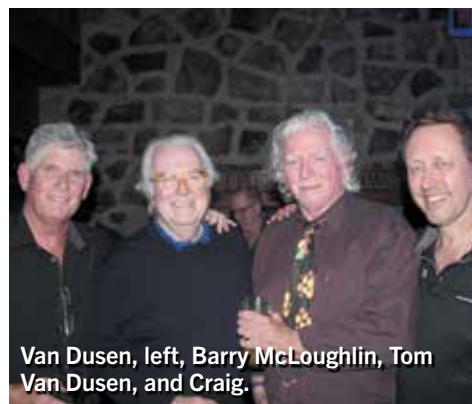
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The 20th Century Boys' 2024 Spring Dance Party on May 9 at the Rainbow Bistro.



The 20th Century Boys' Dave Fraser, left on back-up guitar and vocals; Jonathan Cook on keyboard; Richard Mahoney and Peter Van Dusen on lead guitar and vocals; Donovan Allen on drums; Paul Adjeleian on trombone; Kelly Craig on bass guitar and back-up vocals; Mike Martin on baritone saxophone; and Chris Gerdei on trumpet perform at their Spring Dance Party on May 9 at the Rainbow Bistro.



Van Dusen, left, Barry McLoughlin, Tom Van Dusen, and Craig.



Mahoney, left, Mathieu Gravel, Robyn Heaton, Shauna Gunfoyle, and Kathy Mahoney.



Van Dusen, left, Adjeleian, and Martin.



Van Dusen goes a little country with a cover of Tim McGraw's *I Like It, I Love It*.



Drew Fraser-Leach, centre, joins his dad, Dave Fraser, left, and Richard Mahoney, onstage for a rendition of Old Crow Medicine Show's *Wagon Wheel*.



Mahoney performs Elvis Presley's *Suspicious Minds*.

The Hill Times photographs by Stuart Benson



Catherine Lindquist, executive director of the Canadian Art Museum Directors Organization, centre, joins the 20th Century Boys onstage to perform Creedence Clearwater Revival's *Bad Moon Rising*.

Former top trade negotiator Steve Verheul dives into the CUSMA stakes and the U.S. election on May 15



Canada's former chief trade negotiator Steve Verheul will deliver remarks on renewing CUSMA and offer perspectives on the U.S. election at a lunch hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute in Toronto on Wednesday, May 15. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15

House Sitting Schedule—The House is scheduled to sit for a total of 125 days in 2024. The House is in on break this week, but returns on Tuesday, May 21, after the Victoria Day holiday, and will sit for five straight weeks until June 21. The House resumes sitting on Sept. 16, and will sit for four weeks from Sept. 16-Oct. 11, but take Monday, Sept. 30, off. It breaks Oct. 14-18, and resumes sitting on Oct. 21. It sits Oct. 21-Nov. 9, and breaks on Nov. 11 for Remembrance Day week until Nov. 15. It resumes again on Nov. 18, and is scheduled to sit from Nov. 18-Dec. 17.

BDC President Hudon to Deliver Remarks—Isabelle Hudon, president and CEO of the Business Development Bank of Canada, will deliver remarks at a breakfast event, "Development that Matters: Entrepreneurship in Atlantic Canada" hosted by the Halifax Chamber of Commerce. Wednesday, May 15, at 8 a.m. AT at Courtyard by Marriott Halifax Dartmouth, 35 Shubie Dr., Dartmouth, N.S. Details online: business.halifaxchamber.com.

Bloc to Hold Tourism Conference—Bloc Québécois MPs Marie-Hélène Gaudreau and Julie Vignola will hold a day-long conference on sustainable tourism. Wednesday, May 15, at 9:30 a.m. ET at Quartier Tremblant, Base Camp, 161 Ch. du Curé Deslauriers. Call 613-402-0443.

Ministers Blair and Champagne to Deliver Remarks—National Defence Minister Bill Blair and Industry Minister François-Philippe Champagne will take part in a lunch event hosted by the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations. Wednesday, May 15, at 11:30 a.m. ET in a downtown Montreal hotel. Details online: corim.qc.ca.

Lunch: 'Renewing CUSMA and Perspectives on the U.S. Election'—Canada's former chief trade negotiator Steve Verheul will deliver remarks on "Table Stakes: Renewing CUSMA and Perspectives on the U.S. Election" at a lunch hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Wednesday, May 15, at 12 p.m.

ET at 67 Yonge St., Suite 300, Toronto. Details online: cdhowe.org.

THURSDAY, MAY 16

Minister Anandasangaree to Deliver Remarks—Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister Gary Anandasangaree will deliver remarks at the Great Summit on the future of Indigenous women's rights advocacy in Quebec hosted by Quebec Native Women. Thursday, May 16, at 10 a.m. ET at the Hilton Quebec Hotel, 1100 Blvd René-Lévesque E., Quebec City. Contact e.deschenes@seize03.ca.

Ambassador Theodore to Deliver Remarks—Nadia Theodore, head of Canada's permanent mission in Geneva, ambassador and permanent representative to the WTO, UNCTAD, ITC and WIPO, will deliver remarks in a webinar hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Thursday, May 16, at 12:30 p.m. ET happening online: cdhowe.org.

FRIDAY, MAY 17

Pink Tea with Charlotte Gray—The Famous 5 Foundation hosts award-winning non-fiction author Charlotte Gray for its virtual Pink Tea. Friday, May 17, at 2 p.m. ET, happening online: famous5.ca.

TUESDAY, MAY 21

Panel: 'Crafting Your Election Advocacy'—Beacon North Strategies hosts a panel discussion, "Strategizing For Success: Crafting Your Election Advocacy." Yaroslav Baran, co-founder of the Pendulum Group; Kathleen Monk, president of Monk + Associates; Carlene Variyan, associate vice-president of Summa Strategies; and Frank Delorey, partner at NorthStar Public Affairs, will break down the key components of a successful election campaign, and offer practical advice for the stages before, during, and after an election. Tuesday, May 21, at 9 a.m. ET at The Westin Ottawa, 11 Colonel By Dr. Details online: beaconnorthstrategies.com.

Panel: 'How Does Canada Fix the Housing Crisis?'—The Institute for Research in Public Policy hosts a

panel discussion: "How does Canada fix the housing crisis?" Cherise Burda, Jim Dunn, and Carolyn Whitzman will explore practical solutions to the crisis, discuss practical on-the-ground strategies, and evaluate the impact of current and potentials of policies on environmental sustainability and climate-resilience. Tuesday, May 21 at 12 p.m. ET at Impact Hub Ottawa, 123 Slater St., 7th Floor. Details online: irpp.org.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 22

AFN Dialogue on Transport and Storage of Used Nuclear Fuel—The Assembly of First Nations hosts the fourth in a four-part series, "Regional Dialogues on the Transportation and Storage of Used Nuclear Fuel" from April 9-May 22, to advocate for First Nations' active involvement in decisions about used nuclear fuel, management, and transportation across Turtle Island. Wednesday, May 22, at 8 a.m. ET at the Delta Hotels by Marriott, 2240 Sleeping Giant Pkwy., Thunder Bay, Ont. Details online: afn.ca/events.

SOCAN Parliamentary Reception—The Society of Composers, Authors, and Music Publishers of Canada (SOCAN) is back on the Hill to host its annual reception that will showcase some of the best in Canadian musical talent. Wednesday, May 22, from 5:30 p.m. (or after votes) to 7:30 p.m. in the East Block Courtyard, Parliament Hill.

An Evening with Joe Clark—The Pearson Centre hosts "An Evening with Joe Clark," a celebration of the 45th anniversary of Clark's election as Canada's 16th prime minister. Wednesday, May 22, at 5:45 p.m. at the Shaw Centre, 55 Colonel By Dr., Ottawa. Contact info@thePearsonCentre.ca.

THURSDAY, MAY 23

Minister Anand at the Mayor's Breakfast—Treasury Board President Anita Anand will be the special guest at the Mayor's Breakfast, hosted by Ottawa Mayor Mark Sutcliffe, the *Ottawa Business Journal*, and the Ottawa Board of Trade. Thursday, May 23, at

7:30 a.m. ET at Ottawa City Hall, 110 Laurier Ave. W. Details online: business.ottawabot.ca.

Breakfast: 'VIA Rail's 2030 Vision'—The Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal hosts a breakfast event with Mario Pélouin, president and CEO of VIA Rail, who will deliver remarks in French on "VIA Rail's 2030 vision: To be at the heart of Canada's passenger journey." Thursday, May 23, at 7:30 a.m. ET at Le Centre Sheraton, 1201 René-Lévesque Blvd. W., Montreal. Details online: ccm.ca.

FRIDAY, MAY 24

Africa Day 2024—The Casa Foundation for International Development hosts Africa Day 2024, "Celebrating Excellence in the People of African Descent," featuring a panel session exploring opportunities for growth in sustainable investment and development in African countries by Canadian entrepreneurs. Participants include government officials, ambassadors and diplomats, industry experts, and entrepreneurs. Friday, May 24, at 9 a.m. ET at the Sir John A. Macdonald Building, 144 Wellington St. Details online via Eventbrite.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 29

Ambassador Hillman to Deliver Remarks—Canada's Ambassador to the United States Kirsten Hillman will deliver remarks in French at a lunch event hosted by the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations. Wednesday, May 29, at 11:30 a.m. at Le Centre Sheraton Montréal, 1201 Blvd René-Lévesque W., Montreal. Details online: corim.qc.ca.

Vote16 Ottawa Summit—Non-affiliated Senator Marilou McPhedran hosts the Vote16 Ottawa Summit, a historic gathering of groups and leaders working towards youth empowerment through democratic reform. Wednesday, May 29, at 2 p.m. at the Sir John A. Macdonald Building, 144 Wellington St., Ottawa. Details online via Eventbrite.

Vancouver Fraser Port Authority Reception—The Vancouver Fraser Port Authority will be holding a reception. Wednesday, May 29, at 5:30 p.m. ET at the Métropolitain Brasserie, 700 Sussex Dr., Ottawa.

LAC Scholar Awards—Get ready to honour outstanding Canadians who have left an indelible mark on our country's cultural, literary, and historical heritage at the 2024 Library and Archives Canada Scholar Awards. Presented by The Library and Archives Canada Foundation and Library and Archives Canada, with generous sponsor Air Canada. Wednesday, May 29, 6 p.m. ET, 395 Wellington St., Ottawa.

Riverkeeper Gala—The 2024 Riverkeeper Gala will take place on Wednesday, May 29, 6-11 p.m. ET at the NCC River House, 501 Sir George-Étienne Cartier Pkwy., Ottawa. Tickets: riverkeepergala.com.

THURSDAY, MAY 30

2024 Economic Reconciliation Summit—Indigenous Services Minister and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario Patty Hajdu, and Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, and Economic Development Mary Ng are among the speakers at the 2024 Economic Reconciliation Summit hosted by Canada 2020 and Indigenous leaders from across the country. Thursday, May 30, at 10 a.m. ET the Westin Ottawa Hotel, 11 Colonel By Dr., Ottawa. Details online via Eventbrite.

Panel: 'Canada's Current Economic Landscape'—The Economic Club of Canada hosts a panel discussion, "Examining Canada's Current Economic Landscape" with former Bank of Canada governor Stephen Poloz and former federal Liberal finance minister John Manley. Which economic policies should Canada look to apply for the remainder of 2024, what are the options available, and what can be done in the immediate future to ensure the health and longevity of the Canadian economy? Thursday, May 30, at 11:45 a.m. ET at the Hilton

Toronto, 145 Richmond St. W., Toronto. Details online: economicclub.ca.

Doors Open at Justice Canada—The Department of Justice is holding its annual hybrid "Open Doors at Justice" event to engage with the public and stakeholders on various topics related to making government more open and accessible. Thursday, May 30, from 2-4 p.m. ET at the Department of Justice of Canada, 284 Wellington St. Details online via Eventbrite.

Steve Paikin to Launch New Book—TVO host Steve Paikin will take part in the Ottawa launch of his biography on former a prime minister, *John Turner: An Intimate Biography of Canada's 17th Prime Minister*. He will sign copies of the book, which is included with ticketed entry. A reception will follow. Thursday, May 30, at 5 p.m. ET at Walter House, 282 Somerset St. W., Ottawa. Details online via Eventbrite.

Tapiriit 2024—Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami hosts an intimate celebration of Inuit culture and the traditions that unite us. Enjoy an evening of entertainment and a culinary journey of Inuit country food, hunted and harvested across the four regions of Inuit Nunangat. Thursday, May 30, 6-10 p.m. ET, National Arts Centre, 1 Elgin St. Details on Facebook or Instagram. Purchase tickets online: itk.ca.

2024 Ellen Meiksins Wood Lecture—This year's Ellen Meiksins Wood Prize recipient, economist Dr. Isabella Weber, will deliver the 2024 Ellen Meiksins Wood Lecture. Weber is a leading voice on policy responses to inflation, and has advised policymakers in the United States and Germany on questions of price stabilization. Thursday, May 30, at 7 p.m. ET at the Toronto Metropolitan University's George Vari Engineering and Computing Centre. Details online: torontomu.ca.

Webinar: 'How To Run (and Win) Campaigns'—The Right Recruiter Conservative Talent Network hosts a webinar, "How To Run (and Win) Campaigns." Veteran Canadian political campaigner Steve Outhouse will chat with Jenni Byrne, one of the most experienced local campaign managers in the country who has run multiple national general election campaigns, and who piloted Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre's record-shattering leadership campaign in 2022. Thursday, May 30, at 7 p.m. ET taking place online: rightrecruiter.ca/jenni.

German Ambassador in the Yukon—Germany's Ambassador to Canada Sabine Sparwasser will discuss Germany-Canada relations at an event hosted by the Canadian International Council. Thursday, May 30, at 5:30 p.m. PT at the Baked Cafe. Details online: thecic.org.

SUNDAY, JUNE 2

Mexican Presidential Election—Mexico's presidential election happens on Sunday, June 2.

MONDAY, JUNE 3

Minister LeBlanc to Deliver Keynote—Minister of Public Safety Dominic LeBlanc will deliver a keynote address at the day-long 2024 National Security Conference hosted by the Policy Insights Forum. Other participants include New Brunswick Premier Blaine Higgs (by video); former U.S. ambassador to Canada Bruce Heyman; Shelly Bruce, former chief of the Communications Security Establishment; and two former national security and intelligence advisers to the prime minister, Richard Fadden and Vincent Rigby. Monday, June 3, at 9 a.m. ET at the Rideau Club, 15th floor, 99 Bank St. Details online via Eventbrite.

Book Launch and Panel for The Prince—The Ottawa International Writers' Festival hosts a panel discussion for the launch of Stephen Maher's new book *The Prince: The Turbulent Reign of Justin Trudeau*. Panellists include *The Hill Times'* Charelle Evelyn, CBC's Jorge Barrera, *The Globe and Mail's* Steven Chase, and *Le Devoir's* Marie Vastel. Monday, June 3, at 7 p.m. ET at the Church of Saint John the Evangelist, 154 Somerset St. W. Details online: writersfestival.org.

DEFENCE

POLICY BRIEFING

Publication date: **Wednesday, May 29**
Advertising deadline: **Thursday, May 23**

The Liberal government released a defence policy update on April 8 that is projected to bring Canadian defence spending to 1.76 per cent of GDP by 2029, although that still falls short of its NATO commitment to spend two per cent of GDP on defence. Does the update prepare Canada in terms of security and military preparedness?

What are the challenges facing Canada in terms of ensuring security and sovereignty in the Arctic? How can the federal government address Arctic security?

The Canadian Armed Forces has been grappling with a recruitment shortage and delays in procurement of new equipment for years. How can the shortfall in personnel be addressed?

What new technologies and innovations are changing Canada's defence landscape? How can Canada build a culture of innovation for defence?

The Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces continue to deal with issues of discrimination and harassment. How can a cultural shift towards a respectful workplace be achieved?

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