



Breaking: CBC and our link to public broadcasting?

► SUSAN RILEY p. 12



AEROSPACE

policy briefing

► pp. 15-21



DATE NIGHT, WITH CANADIAN AMERICAN BUSINESS COUNCIL

► PARTY CENTRAL p. 29

Exclusive News: INSIDE



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CANADA'S POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER

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NEWS

House filibuster is putting money for military, dental care, and keeping the government lights on at risk

BY SOPHALL DUCH

A funding bill to pay for government programs, the military, and to keep departments afloat could fall victim to the ongoing filibuster in the House of Commons.

Parliamentary approval of supplementary estimates (B), which includes \$21.6-billion in proposed government spending across multiple federal organizations, is on the line if the stalemate in the House doesn't end.

"Unfortunately, if there was a delay in the approval of those supplements, it could result in the lapsing of [Canadian Armed Forces] funding," said Defence Minister Bill Blair (Scarborough Southwest, Ont.) in response to *The Hill Times* on Nov. 20.

"It's one of the reasons I'm going before committee tomorrow, to share with my parliamentary colleagues the urgency of making sure we provide to the Canadian Armed Forces the resources they need to do their job. It's our responsibility as government, but also to make sure that the money that Ukraine so urgently needs is made available to them," said Blair.

Supplementary estimates are routinely tabled throughout the year, and outline additional and unforeseen government spending needs not included in the annual main estimates. Once tabled, a subsequent supply bill—or money bill—is introduced that will authorize the expenditures.

Continued on page 24

NEWS

What Trump's election means for Canada: 'institution of government needs a sharp wakeup call,' says Donald Savoie

Canadians do not want a wrecking ball approach, but they do want the government to do much better, warns one of the country's leading experts on the machinery of government.

BY ABBAS RANA

The takeaway for Canada from the U.S. presidential election is that the general public feels they are not receiving adequate value for the \$80-billion spent annually on wages and consultant fees, and that both politicians and public servants would be well advised to ask tough questions about how to address public dissatisfaction and meet Canadians' expectations before it's too late, says Donald Savoie, Canada's



leading expert on the machinery of government and author of a new book, *Speaking Truth to Canadians About Their Public Service*.

"At some point, the level of [Canadians'] frustration will be such, there'll be some impetus to throw a wrecking ball at it," said Donald Savoie, who holds the Canada Research Chair in Public Administration and Governance at the Université de Moncton, and is the author of 45 books on the



Not their first rodeo: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, left, and U.S. president-elect Donald Trump. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade and courtesy Wikimedia Commons

inner workings of government and politics. "My advice is for the public service to take a good look at how it operates, a good look at its size, and it could look at how it spends resources."

Savoie said that Trump's election as U.S. president reflects the American public's decision to take a "wrecking ball approach" to its government, driven by dissatisfaction with the performance

Continued on page 26

NEWS

PCO clerk subject of human rights complaint over Israeli-Palestinian conflict

BY ABBAS RANA

Some members of the federal public service have questioned Privy Council Office Clerk John Hannaford's neutrality following his decision to issue a statement after the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas terrorists attack on Israel, but declined to do the same to mark the deaths of thousands of Palestinians and Lebanese in the ensuing conflict.

The public servants question why Hannaford issued a statement following the deaths of 1,200 Israelis, but didn't send out a similar email following the loss of more than 46,000 Palestinian and Lebanese lives since then.

"On Saturday [Oct. 7, 2023] morning, Canadians across the country were horrified to learn of the gruesome terrorist attacks launched by Hamas against Israel, and shocked by the terrible loss of life that occurred," Hannaford wrote in an email to all federal public servants on Oct. 11, 2023, with the headline "Attack against Israel in bold letters," and subject line "Message from John Hannaford, Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to the Cabinet."

"I join those around the world in unequivocally condemning these inhumane acts and in supporting Jewish people. I offer my sincere condolences for all of the innocent lives lost."

In his email, Hannaford described the Oct. 7 events as "deeply personal and painful"

Continued on page 27



Christina Leadlay

Heard On The Hill

Psst... Lawrence Martin's friend says Chrétien says Trudeau is 'toast'



Former prime minister Jean Chrétien, left, and author Lawrence Martin. A friend of Martin's heard Chrétien say that Justin Trudeau is 'toast.' The Hill Times photographs by Andrew Meade and Jake Wright

Former Liberal prime minister **Jean Chrétien** apparently thinks current Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** is "toast," according to award-winning author and *Globe and Mail* columnist **Lawrence Martin**, who wrote a social media post to that effect on Nov. 20.

"Bumped into a longtime Liberal of good standing who told me he asked Jean Chrétien about Justin Trudeau's future. Chrétien, he said, took a sip from his drink and muttered, 'He's toast.'"

Martin has been with the *Globe* in various roles including bureau chief in Washington, D.C., and Moscow, Russia, since 1974. He's also written 10 books, including a two-volume biography on

Chrétien—1995's *Chrétien: The Will to Win*, and 2003's *Iron Man: The Defiant Reign of Jean Chrétien*. He's also written books about non-Liberal politics, including *Harp-erland: The Politics Of Control* published in 2010.

Greenpeace activists target Pierre Conservative Leader Poilievre at Stornoway

Conservative Leader **Pierre Poilievre** and his family's morning was disrupted on Nov. 21 when they woke up to a dozen

Greenpeace protesters outside their Rockcliffe Park residence.

"Two activists locked themselves to a replica oil pumpjack in the driveway of Stornoway, the official residence of the leader of the opposition in Ottawa, unveiling a strong message: Poilievre: Protecting polluters, betraying people," Greenpeace wrote in a statement later that day.

"The oil jack, surrounded by burned forest and flames, was painted with charcoal made from wood burned in the 2021 wildfire that destroyed the town of Lytton, British Columbia to symbolize the costs of climate inaction," reads the statement.

"Not going gently into that dark night of Trump-lite in Canada. I'm currently chained to a replica oil jack blocking Pierre Poilievre's driveway, calling him out for protecting polluters over people," posted Greenpeace Canada's **Keith Stewart**, one of the activists locked to the oil pump jack.

Ottawa Police confirmed that two people were arrested after the "group blocked access to the residence with a structure, and some proceeded to chain themselves to the structure, not allowing the family to pass," according to a Nov. 21 statement, noting that the two who were arrested were due to appear in court later that day.



Six of a dozen Greenpeace activists who installed a replica oil pumpjack on the driveway of the official opposition leader's residence on Nov. 21. Photograph courtesy of X.

Grit MP Bittle takes a bite out of Tory MP Viersen



"Hunting provides sustenance, brings family and friends together, and allows us to enjoy the beauty of creation" posted Conservative MP Arnold Viersen on Nov. 16. Photograph courtesy of X

Liberal MP **Chris Bittle** called out Conservative MP **Arnold Viersen** last week who was out moose hunting instead of speaking to his bill protecting youth from sexual predators online.

"Conservative MPs are filibustering their own bill," wrote Bittle, referring to Viersen's bill C-270 to stop online sexual exploitation which is at the House Justice committee. "Multiple meetings. They refuse to let the sponsor come and testify. They are so afraid and embarrassed [sic] of what he might say they'd rather filibuster. Rather than testifying, Arnold is on a hunting trip #WheresArnold," Bittle posted on X on Nov. 18, re-tweeting Viersen's original post and photo from a hunting trip.

"Landed a moose! We will have a full freezer for the winter. I am proud of our way of life in northern Canada. Hunting provides sustenance, brings family and friends together, and allows us to enjoy the beauty of creation," Viersen posted on X on Nov. 16.

This just in: Justin Trudeau meets #MilkshakeMonday guru Larry Canam

Before jetting off to Brazil for the G20 meetings last week, Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** stopped by **Larry Canam's** house in Fredericton, N.B., for a cold treat.

"Happy Milkshake Monday," Trudeau greeted viewers of Canam's popular TikTok channel *The Spirit Alchemist* on Nov. 18.

"Hey, Mr. Prime Minister, that's my line, haha," the retired septagenarian laughed before the video cut to a sequence of the two making a Canadian maple shake.

Canam's regular #MilkshakeMondays series is part of what's earned him 6.8 million followers on TikTok. According to a March 18 story from CBC New Brunswick, his "most popular videos feature him in his



Larry Canam, left, and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau make a Canadian maple milkshake on TikTok on Nov. 18. Screenshot courtesy of TikTok

National Addictions Awareness Week 2024

Forging strong connections can help address substance use health issues.



Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction



#NAAW2024

#ForgingConnections

NOV. 24-30

Continued on page 31



MONGOLIA AND CANADA: HALF A CENTURY OF FRIENDSHIP, FOSTERED BY SHARED VALUES AND CONSOLIDATED INTO A COMPREHENSIVE PARTNERSHIP

AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF MONGOLIA TO CANADA SARANTOGOS ERDENETSOGT

In celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the Proclamation of the Mongolian Republic and the adoption of the first Constitution of Mongolia, and in commemoration of the 51st Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between Mongolia and Canada

November marks the onset of winter for both Mongolia and Canada, the two nations that share similarities in geography and climate. Their vast landscapes house sparse populations – the Mongols and Canadians, whose connections trace back to the first half of the previous century. In 1920's, camels brought to Canada from the Gobi Desert served as carriers in the gold mines of British Columbia. Since then, people-to-people ties have continued to shape the legacies and vision, open-heartedness and resilience of the friendship between the two nations. Today, the statue of a Mongolian wild mountain sheep *argali* gifted by the renowned Canadian sculptor, Rick Taylor, stands in the heart of Mongolia's capital, Ulaanbaatar, as a symbol of the pristine natures of our countries and testament to the friendship between our peoples.

November commemorates important dates for Mongolia: the Mongol Pride day, the day Mongols celebrate the birthday of the Great Chinggis Khaan – the first day of the first month of winter by the lunar calendar, which usually falls in November. Also, the first Constitution of Mongolia was adopted on the day of proclamation of the Republic on November 26, 1924. Tomorrow, Mongolians are celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Constitution, which granted our people a supreme power to rule the state through a parliament elected by women and men enjoying equal voting rights.

Mongolia's latest parliamentary election, held last June, was the ninth under the 1992 Constitution. This election was special as it expanded the membership of the legislative body to 126 from 76 deputies. The 2024-2028 Parliament of Mongolia represents 5 political parties and features a record number of female members, with 32 of 126 members being women.

The three major parties – the Mongolian People's Party, the Democratic Party and the National Labor Party (HUN Party) – have formed a Coalition Government and started to outline the key development goals prioritizing 14 mega projects in the next two years. Those projects will be implemented in renewable energy, mining, industry, tourism, intensive livestock farming, and innovation and digitalization. Mongolia's economy has grown by 7.4% in 2023. The growth remains steady with economic growth at 5.6% in the first half of this year and upgraded credit rating of "B+" by Fitch and S&P.

November is also special for the official relations between Mongolia and Canada. The strategic vision of our leaders was on full display when the two nations established diplomatic relations on

November 30, 1973, at the time when the world was divided by the heavy curtain of the Cold War.

In 2023, we commemorated the 50th Anniversary of the Mongolia-Canada relationship by declaring a Comprehensive Partnership in a Joint Statement by Her Excellency Battsetseg Batmunkh, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia, and the Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada. Mongolia and Canada agreed to diversify our trade and investment relations onto new areas, such as green building and infrastructure, energy efficiency, climate-smart agriculture, and clean energy, while also emphasizing people-to-people ties, education, and cultural exchanges.

The semicentennial anniversary coincided with the first year of the implementation of Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy. It encouraged us to look into a wider spectrum of potentials to benefit our peoples and the Asia-Pacific region. As Canadian investment and experience increase in the region, the presence and engagement of Canada, our "third neighbour", continues to grow in Mongolia. This year's visits by Ambassador Ian McKay, Canada's Special Envoy to the Indo-Pacific, and Paul Thoppil, Canada's first Indo-Pacific Trade Representative, to Mongolia highlight the potential of the strategy for the Mongolia-Canada relations.

Over the last decades, Canada has been Mongolia's trusted development partner in crucial areas of social development and a major investor in the extractive sector. Notable projects in women's empowerment, civil service and judiciary have become Canada's signatures in Mongolia along with the investment in the major mining project *Oyu Tolgoi*.

This year's launch of the new project on climate-smart agriculture by the Canadian Government and exploration of project opportunities with Parks Canada opened new areas of collaboration. Mongolia and Canada pursue shared goals for climate change and biodiversity agendas and we both implement national reforestation initiatives. Mongolia reaffirms its commitment to green development by hosting the 17th Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification in 2026.

The Mongolia-Canada Business Forum, held in Toronto last month in support of Mongolia's small and medium-sized entrepreneurs, is part of the two nations' efforts to encourage business exchange and commercial contacts for practical outcomes. Mongolia supports its youth in pursuing higher education in Canada with over 80 students studying in Canada this year under scholarships from the President and the Prime Minister as well as government loans. Vocational training is emerging as a new area of collaboration between our educational institutions with the commitment of the Colleges and Institutes Canada (CiCAN).



Aspiring to strengthen the noble tradition of the Mongol studies in Canada, the Embassy of Mongolia organized the "Mongolia-Canada Relations in Global Perspective" Conference with the University of Toronto in 2023 and the "Mongolian studies in Canada: Building Bridges for Future Collaboration" Forum in Ottawa this year.

Culture, arts and humanitarian relations play a major role in bringing our peoples closer, both intellectually and spiritually. Mongolian films have been making their debuts in Canada, the prominent Mongolian *Morin Khuur* player N.Jigjiddorj has recently performed in Ottawa and the popular Mongolian rock band "The Hu" has been gathering thousands of fans across Canada.

Mongolia and Canada share common values and priorities in multilateral and regional fora and are committed to advancing gender equality and sustainable development. Canada continues to support Mongolia's initiative to foster dialogue and cooperation in Northeast Asia: the Ulaanbaatar Dialogue. Mongolia hosted the first Female Foreign Ministers' Meeting in 2023 and this year we hosted the World Women's Forum.

Canada has played a key role in creating the concept of the UN peacekeeping efforts, and Mongolia was recently ranked as the 19th biggest contributor of military personnel to the United Nations peacekeeping missions. Both countries strive to actively contribute to the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. Mongolia hosted "Women, Peace and Security" conference in 2022 and participates in the "Elsie Initiative" led by Canada.

Mongolia has long been championing the cause for the interests of landlocked developing countries (LLDC), and hand-in-hand with fellow LLDCs we will continue our efforts, particularly within the framework of the ICAO to address the specific needs of these countries.

Our shared commitments to promoting and safeguarding peace, democracy, the rule of law, and human rights have been re-affirmed at every summit, high-level visit and meeting. With the coldest capitals in the world, Mongolia and Canada are developing the warmest of relations guided by the principles and goals of Mongolia's Foreign Policy Concept and Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT:

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News

‘While the future cannot be predicted, it absolutely can be redirected’: young people hit Parliament to call for action

Climate change, demographic shifts, and new technologies will dramatically change childhood in the coming years, while Children and Social Development Minister Jenna Suds acknowledged governments needed to reflect young people’s ‘voices and your wants for the future.’

BY STEPHEN JEFFERY

Youth advocates have urged action on education, health care, mental health care, racism and discrimination on the 35th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, while also calling on governments to address climate change, disruptive technologies, and changing demographics with children and young people in mind.

“The future is wildly unpredictable, it neither offers nor owes us any guarantees, that’s not its job,” said UNICEF Canada president and CEO Sevaun Palvetzian. “But [our job is] to do something, to get ready and lean in because the facts are painfully obvious in what action is needed to match it. Because while the future cannot be predicted, it absolutely can be redirected, and I’m very excited to see what this generation of youth advocates have in store for all of us.”

Palvetzian made the comments at the Youth Advocacy Summit in Ottawa on Nov. 20. Coinciding with National Child Day, on the 35th anniversary of the UN adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the event included recommendations from youth advocates on action the federal and provincial governments could take to improve children’s lives.

Participants in UNICEF Canada’s Youth Advocacy Program identified education, health care, mental health, and racism and



Families, Children and Social Development Minister Jenna Suds told the Youth Advocacy Summit last week that ‘we know there’s still too many children in this country living in poverty, and we need to change that.’ *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

discrimination as four areas of focus in a 2024 “playbook,” with recommendations for decision-makers on each topic.

Most of the education recommendations focused on integrating the sustainable development goals adopted by UN members in 2015. The goals should be integrated in school curricula, the advocates recommended, while youth-led projects should be better funded, and youth voices and leadership should be incorporated into decision making.

On health care, many of the recommendations focused on childhood-onset Type 2 diabetes mellitus. Diabetes Canada has reported that Indigenous children make up 44 per cent of new childhood-onset diagnoses, while it was also predisposed in people with West Asian, African, and South Asian backgrounds.

The youth advocates recommended a national plan, targeted outreach to urban, northern, and rural Indigenous children, investment in national surveillance, and the inclusion of health literacy concepts into education.

For mental health, the advocates backed the creation of a mental health curriculum, increased funding for services in schools and communities, programs for parents, and the encouragement of partnerships between schools, community groups, and mental health professionals.

The racism and discrimination section urged enhanced anti-racism policies, more diversity benchmark incentives, mandatory training on unconscious bias, safe spaces for people of colour where support could be received without fear of retaliation, and “emotional tax” awareness campaigns.

The latter recommendation is a term to describe when “[people of colour] expect to experience racism in the workplace, causing

them to be on guard against bias related to race or ethnicity.”

Organizations such as UNICEF, Save the Children Canada, BGC Canada, and Plan International contributed to the development of the playbook.

Climate change, demographic shifts, technologies major ‘megatrends’

The playbook was formally released in the same week as a global report, *The State of the World’s Children 2024*, detailed three “megatrends”—climate change, demographic shifts, and emerging technologies—that will affect children’s lives between now and 2050.

Palvetzian also warned at the summit of what she described as “polycrisis,” meaning “multiple challenges afflicting the world simultaneously.”

“That is a part of childhood that didn’t exist 35 years back, and as we close in on this, the first quarter of the 21st century, we give pause to think about what’s ahead for children,” she said.

The report noted that the number of humans aged 18 and under in 2050 is predicted to be roughly 2.3 billion—approximately the same number as today—but the number of adults is expected to rise from 5.7 billion to about 7.5 billion, while those aged 65 and over will double from 2021.

The number of children in North America is expected to remain relatively stable, while decreasing in western Europe, South Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and East Asia and the Pacific. Growth is expected in Africa and the Middle East.

“Even as children make up a smaller and smaller share of the population, their needs must remain priorities,” the report said. “Education, health care and social

services—including birth registration—and public services such as schools, childcare and leisure facilities must remain available and accessible.”

Climate change, meanwhile, presented a threat to children’s health and education, the report said. It could also lead to short- or long-term displacement.

Those threats also apply to Canada. A UNICEF report released earlier this year found that particulate matter released from wildfires was “approximately 10 times more harmful to respiratory health, particularly in children” compared to the matter from other sources of air pollution.

“From before they take their first breath, children are impacted by their environment. Their developing brains, lungs and immune systems are uniquely susceptible to pollution, disease and extreme weather,” the November 2024 report said. “As they grow, every realm of children’s lives—from education to nutrition, from safety and security to mental health—is shaped by the climate and environment.”

Emerging technology was noted as presenting both benefits and risks to children. The report said that connectivity and digital skills could break generational cycles of inequality, and new vaccines promise protection from diseases, but those had to be counterbalanced with potential risks to privacy, exposure to harmful content and the misuse of personal information.

“Technology alone will not make a better world: Its promise can only be fulfilled if societies, governments and companies embed child rights into the design and application of innovations,” the report said.

“We need leaders to ensure the rights of children are prioritized in plans and policies, and the voices of children and youth are meaningfully heard as these policies are formed,” Palvetzian said.

‘How we approach these things is really what matters’

Families, Children and Social Development Minister Jenna Suds (Kanata—Carleton, Ont.) said it was important for decision-makers to listen to those they served.

“We need to listen to your voices—to young people, to children across the country—and make sure that we provide the space for that to happen,” she said. “Our

programs, the policies that we work on, they need to reflect your needs. They need to reflect your voices and your wants for the future. It’s not always easy, but it is incredibly important that we get that right.”

Sudds touted the government’s school meals program and dental care for youth as examples of work the government had taken to improve children’s lives in Canada.

“There’s lots more work to do, and I’m sure all of us in this room realize that and feel it because we know there’s still too many children in this country living in poverty, and we need to change that,” Sudds said. “We need to change that together. We need to work to address and reduce inequalities across this country for children and for youth.”

Speaking virtually at the event, Bob Rae, Canada’s ambassador to the United Nations, said attitudes and the approach to the problems the world faced were key. He said that climate change, racism, and mental health challenges were particularly difficult issues with which to contend at present.

“It’s not about [whether] we live in a difficult world, we do, and our parents did, and our grandparents did, and our great-grandparents did, and they went through different times with different experiences,” he said. “But none of them were easy, and that the answers were not easy, but the attitudes are what count, and character is what matters, and how we approach these things is really what matters.”

“There will always be difficulties. They may be small, they may be big, but I think the key thing is to really work on our mental health, on our ability to absorb difficult facts and difficult information, on our willingness to work with others, on our enthusiasm, on our positivity.”

Referring to National Child Day in the House on Nov. 20, Bloc Québécois MP Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, Que.) said that “too many children still live in precarious conditions with unequal access to education, quality health care, nutritious food and a healthy environment.”

“Poverty, abuse and a lack of resources are an everyday reality for many children in Quebec and Canada,” she said in French. “It is our duty to ensure that they have a better future.”

The day before, NDP MP Gord Johns (Courtenay-Alberni, B.C.) told the House that he “would like to salute the work of UNICEF and all child-focused organizations that take the time to educate us, as parliamentarians, about how to meaningfully improve children’s lives.”

“Over the last several years, we have seen absolute devastation for children in worldwide conflicts, including those in Ukraine, Palestine, Sudan and now Lebanon,” he said. “International law and human rights are under attack, and children bear the brunt of these conflicts.”

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The Hill Times

U.S. vetoes UN Security Council resolution for immediate, unconditional ceasefire in Gaza

Fourteen states on the Security Council spent days crafting a resolution that included the release of all hostages, the exchange of Palestinian prisoners, the return of the remains of hostages who have been killed, the return of Palestinian civilians to their homes in all areas of Gaza, and a full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza.

Douglas Roche

Opinion



EDMONTON—It doesn't matter about the mounting deaths of innocent people in Gaza that have reached genocidal proportions. It doesn't matter that 14 other members of the UN Security Council want an immediate ceasefire. It doesn't matter that the Biden administration was repudiated in key battlegrounds in the recent U.S. election because it has failed to protect Gaza. The United States still singularly killed a Security Council resolution that demanded an immediate and unconditional ceasefire in the Gaza Strip.

Think about this. Fourteen states which serve on the Security Council spent days crafting a resolution that included the release of all hostages, the exchange of Palestinian prisoners, the return of the remains of hostages who have been killed, the return of Palestinian civilians to their

U.S. President Joe Biden, pictured in Ottawa on March 24, 2023. The United States vetoed a UN Security Council resolution calling the immediate and unconditional ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, which Doug Roche says in an egregious use of the veto. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia



homes and neighbourhoods in all areas of Gaza—including in the north—and a full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza.

But because it did not link the release of hostages with the ceasefire, the U.S. vetoed it. This is an egregious use of the veto. It says that the U.S. will stand by Israel no matter the cost.

More than 40,000 people have been killed in Gaza over the

course of the war, according to the local health authorities, and a UN-backed panel warned of growing famine. Almost the entire population of more than two million people has been internally displaced.

The veto was the fourth time the U.S. stopped the UN Security Council from demanding a ceasefire since the war began over a year ago, when Hamas

led an attack on Israel and took more than 200 people hostage. Algeria's ambassador to the UN Amar Bendjama, one of the sponsors of the resolution, was livid: "Today's message is clear to the Israeli occupying power—you may continue your genocide ... with complete impunity. In this chamber—you enjoy immunity."

Continued on page 31

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 ROGERS



News

October environment lobby tackles energy concerns, hydrogen, and push-back on emissions cap

The Calgary Chamber of Commerce argues that increased protectionism from the U.S. after Trump's re-election increases the need to address Canada's competitiveness in oil and gas.

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Environment-related discussions dominated federal lobbying in October with energy concerns including a push from some for Ottawa to do more to support the hydrogen sector, and others calling for removal of an oil-and-gas emissions cap—an action they argue has taken on added urgency due to Donald Trump's recent re-election in the United States.

"One of the main topics we talked about is hydrogen's role in decarbonizing Canada," said Ivette Vera-Perez, president and CEO of the Canadian Hydrogen Association (CHA). "By developing low-carbon hydrogen, you are—by default—decarbonizing ... specific processes in industry, hard to decarbonize spaces that could be difficult to fully electrify."

The environment emerged as the top subject matter discussed in federal lobbying in October, appearing in 1,288 communication reports for the month based on a search of the federal lobbyists' registry on Nov. 20. Advocacy related to taxation and finance followed with 1,120 reports, and economic development, which was listed in 1,118 reports.

Among the most active groups discussing the environment last month was the CHA, owing mostly to the organization's federal advocacy days on Parliament Hill on Oct. 8-9. The CHA ranked fourth among groups discussing the environment, and filed 21 communication reports on that subject in October.

During the advocacy days, more than 35 CHA representatives met with MPs and other government officials to discuss the hydrogen industry's needs. The start date of the advocacy event, Oct. 8, was chosen because it matches the atomic weight of hydrogen, which is 1.008, said Vera-Perez.

The CHA's advocacy concerns included Canada's Clean Hydrogen Investment Tax Credit (ITC), which the group's representatives



Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault said 'every sector of the economy in Canada should be doing its fair share when it comes to limiting our country's greenhouse gas pollution, and that includes the oil and gas sector,' in an Environment press release on Nov. 4. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

argue has limitations that prevent Canada from realizing its hydrogen potential.

The Clean Hydrogen ITC is a refundable tax credit of up to 40 per cent of investments in projects that produce hydrogen, and became available for use on or after March 28, 2023, and before 2034. The CHA is advocating for changes to the ITC, such as expanded eligibility so more "hydrogen carriers" may benefit from the tax credit.

Hydrogen molecules, which are two hydrogen atoms bounded together, can be difficult to transport because they are so small they can diffuse through many storage vessels. To get around this problem, these molecules are sometimes stored within compounds or materials that can release the hydrogen through chemical reactions. The CHA is advocating for all viable hydrogen carriers, such as methanol and e-methane, to be eligible for the ITC.

The CHA representatives also discussed ways hydrogen could be used in the transportation sector, according to Vera-Perez.

"[Hydrogen is] coming up and emerging as a very effective way to decarbonize heavy-duty trucks," she said. "We talked about the impact on, for example, the [Highway] 401 Corridor, being one of the most polluting corridors in North America. So, what would it mean for that truck traffic, for example, if we could replace all of it or even a fraction of the diesel trucks with hydrogen trucks?"

During the advocacy event, CHA representatives spoke with MPs including Liberal MP George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Alta.),

chair of the House Natural Resource Committee, and Conservative MP Shannon Stubbs (Lakehead, Alta.), her party's natural resources critic.

The CHA is represented on the registry in-house by Vera-Perez. Representatives for CHA from Toronto-based law firm Fasken include lawyers Henry Gray and Aniket Bhatt, and Cara Arsenault, an articling student in the firm's office.

The most active groups in October discussing the environment included Agnico Eagle Mines Limited (which filed 31 communication reports for that subject), Air Products Canada (30), and ArcelorMittal Dofasco (28). *The Hill Times* reached out to these organizations to ask about federal



Ruhee Ismail-Teja, the Calgary Chamber of Commerce's vice-president of policy and external affairs, says Ottawa's emissions cap 'will not just impact oil and gas, but will impact various sectors of our economy.' Photograph courtesy of the Calgary Chamber of Commerce

advocacy last month, but did not receive a response by deadline.

Also among the top 10 most active organizations discussing the environment in October was the Calgary Chamber of Commerce, which filed 18 communication reports on the subject.

Ruhee Ismail-Teja, vice-president of policy and external affairs for the Calgary Chamber of Commerce, told *The Hill Times* that her organization's top concern last month related to the environment was the federal government's oil-and-gas emissions cap, which she argues has unintended consequences.

The much-debated emissions cap is a regulatory tool intended to ensure the fossil fuel sector does its fair share to reduce greenhouse gas pollution, while also creating new jobs in Canada. The proposed regulations would put a limit on oil and gas pollution, but not on production.

"[The emissions cap] will not just impact oil and gas, but will impact various sectors of our economy, and is not the most effective way to decarbonize," said Ismail-Teja. "Because it makes for such a complex environment to be able to operate in, it actually ends up making it harder for companies to invest in decarbonization because there's so much uncertainty in the market. When they try to go get investment for decarbonization, it's unclear if they'll be able to produce for the long-term and are unable to secure the financial backing that they need."

On Dec. 7, 2023, the Liberal government introduced a draft of the Regulatory Framework for an Oil and Gas Sector Greenhouse Gas Emissions Cap, which pro-

posed to cap 2030 emissions at 35 to 38 per cent below 2019 levels in order to reach a goal of reducing emissions in the sector to net-zero by 2050. Draft regulations for the cap were announced on Nov. 4, 2024, and consultations are ongoing for final regulations that will be published in 2025.

"Every sector of the economy in Canada should be doing its fair share when it comes to limiting our country's greenhouse gas pollution, and that includes the oil-and-gas sector," said Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, Que.) in an Environment press release on Nov. 4. "We are asking oil and gas companies who have made record profits in recent years to reinvest some of that money into technology that will reduce pollution in the oil and gas sector and create jobs for Canadian workers and businesses. The science is clear—greenhouse gas pollution must be reduced significantly and urgently to avoid the most severe impacts of climate change," he said.

In an open letter to Guilbeault in March, the Chamber argued that an emissions cap would add regulatory burden and compliance costs, and would increase the price to produce and consume energy.

Ismail-Teja told *The Hill Times* that now would be a particularly bad time for any regulation that could impede the fossil fuel sector because of Trump's recent re-election as U.S. president.

"Now that we know that President Trump is going to be back in the White House, we know that there is an increased level of protectionism, and a greater focus on American production," she said. "To have regulations that make it harder to compete and invest ... makes it really difficult to compete with the U.S. and be seen as a stable provider of energy, and we know the U.S. is prioritizing energy security moving forward."

Proponent organizations for an oil-and-gas emissions cap include Environmental Defence, with Aly Hyder Ali, the group's oil and gas program manager, referring to the regulatory framework as "a much-awaited step in the right direction," in a post on the organization's website on Jan. 23, 2024.

Hyder Ali added that the regulatory framework still wasn't perfect, and argued that the emissions reduction target for the fossil fuel sector of 35 to 38 per cent from 2019 levels by 2030 falls below a call for the sector to reduce emissions by 60 per cent by 2030, which was set by the International Energy Agency in November, 2023.

Last month, the Calgary Chamber of Commerce communicated with Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland (University—Rosedale, Ont.) on Oct. 16, and with Immigration Minister Marc Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs, Que.) on Oct. 21.

The Chamber is represented in-house on the registry by Deborah Yedlin, its president and CEO. jcnockaert@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



Sci-Tech Cooperation Contributes to Economic and Social Development, and Advances Human Well-being

On October 30, China successfully launched the Shenzhou-19 manned spacecraft from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in the Gobi Desert. Six hours later, it successfully docked with the orbiting 'Tiangong' space station. Not far from Jiuquan is the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang, famous for its 'Flying Apsaras' murals. The distance between Dunhuang and Jiuquan is only a few hundred kilometers, but it has taken thousands years to go from the ancient 'Flying Apsaras' of Dunhuang to the modern 'Flying' of Shenzhou spacecraft. Generations of Chinese aerospace efforts have transformed ancient legend of flying into the sky into a tangible reality, creating a uniquely Chinese tale of romance in space exploration.

China's journey in space exploration mirrors its technological development and progress, backed by economic strength and a society-wide focus on innovation. In 2023, China's R&D input exceeded 3.3 trillion RMB or 460 billion USD, the second-largest number in the world. In the Global Innovation Index, China has climbed from the 34th place in 2012 to the 11th in 2024. For many years, China has stayed at the global top echelon in number of R&D personnel, high-level academic papers and invention patents and made major breakthroughs in manned space missions, lunar exploration, BeiDou navigation, high-speed rail, deep-sea and deep-earth exploration, etc. Technological progress now contributes over 60% of China's economic growth, and the new quality productive forces driven by breakthroughs in technology, innovative allocation of production factors, and profound industrial transformation are increasingly becoming a new driver of high-quality economic development in China.

China's technological innovation is brimming with vitality, and immense opportunities are to be unleashed on its fertile ground for innovation. With a full-fledged industrial system, a robust economic foundation, a super-size market, a large base of high-end consumers, and a huge number of businesses, China offers a rich landscape for technology applications. This environment provides space for emerging business models to grow and creates fertile soil for start-ups to thrive. More than 360 unicorn businesses have been established in China, and the attracted start-up capital is among the highest in the world. Industries across China are enthusiastic about innovation, with sectors like high-speed rail, logistics, and e-commerce becoming more tech-driven, making everyday life from shopping to transportation more convenient. In essence, China's dedication to sci-tech innovation and its numerous achievements

continuously fuel the innovative drive of companies and bolster public confidence in China's economic outlook.

Promoting open cooperation in science and technology has been a consistent principle upheld by the Chinese government. Over the years, China has engaged in exchanges and shared experiences across various fields with many countries and international organizations, demonstrating an open and inclusive stance and strong commitment to jointly addressing global challenges. The Chang'e-6 lunar mission, China's sixth lunar exploration mission, marked the first time humanity collected lunar soil samples from the far side of the moon. China also extended an invitation to all countries dedicated to the peaceful use of outer space to collaborate and share the achievements of space exploration for the benefit of people worldwide. This partnership in space is only one example of China's broader commitment to global technological cooperation. Confronted with challenges such as climate change, desertification, and food security, China has also actively contributed its ideas and solutions in areas such as renewable energy, environmental protection, and communications.

Exchange and cooperation are an inherent part of scientific research. Fostering sustainable development through sci-tech innovation is a pressing necessity in tackling global challenges, and also aligns with the shared aspirations of people worldwide and the global scientific community. China convened the Third Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee and the National Science and Technology Conference this year, at which China announced to build an open economy with higher standards, and uphold a strategy of open cooperation for mutual benefit to enhance human well-being through scientific and technological collaboration.

China will firmly advocate and practice principles of open, fair, just, and non-discriminatory international cooperation in science and technology. It will actively work toward joint solutions to major scientific and technological challenges, foster an open and innovative ecosystem, and promote the sharing of scientific achievements. China stands ready to strengthening scientific and technological exchanges and cooperation with all countries, including Canada, to support economic and social development and benefit the people.

H.E. Chinese Ambassador to Canada Wang Di

For more information please visit: <http://ca.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/>

Upper Left Photo: The Shenzhou 19 crewed spacecraft being launched from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center.

Upper Right Photo: Footage of the Chang'e-6 sample collection replay on the screen at the Beijing Aerospace Flight Control Center, captured on June 4.



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Editorial

Trudeau needs Boissonnault scandal like he needs another hole in the head

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau finally realized the political liability then-employment minister Randy Boissonnault posed to him and to his embattled government when he returned from the G20 meetings last week. After defending him on Nov. 19 in Rio de Janeiro, Trudeau removed Boissonnault out of cabinet on Nov. 20 in Ottawa. The allegations just kept piling up and, in this toxic political environment, there was no way out.

Boissonnault has been under a negative media spotlight for months over possible breach of ethics, and his connections to the firm which he co-owned, Global Health Imports, a medical supplies company, and more recently, about how he has described his family’s Indigenous history.

First elected in 2015, defeated in 2019, and re-elected in 2021, Boissonnault was made a cabinet minister in the latter year—the only Albertan at the table. The *National Post* recently reported that Boissonnault’s former company described itself as an Indigenous firm in a 2020 bid for a government contract. Boissonnault has blamed his ex-business partner, Stephen Anderson, for describing the business as Indigenous. But Indigenous Services Minister Patty Hajdu also told

a House committee last week that Global Health Imports has never been listed in the federal database of Indigenous companies.

For his part, Boissonnault said his adopted mother and brother are both status Métis. But the Liberal Party listed Boissonnault as one of eight “Indigenous Liberal candidates” in a news release in 2015, and, according to *The Globe and Mail*, Boissonnault also described himself as a non-status adopted Cree from Alberta in 2018. Two weeks ago, he held a news conference in Edmonton to apologize for not being clear about his family’s history.

Boissonnault is in a hole over this, over allegations about his business dealings, and over his apparent lack of judgment, and it all makes for just another problem piled onto the Trudeau government at a time when it really doesn’t need anymore self-inflicted problems, especially ones that include apparent confusion over a cabinet minister’s Indigenous family history.

Boissonnault wants to clear his name, but that might not happen until after the next election, and by that time, it will likely be too late for his federal political success.

The Hill Times

Letters to the Editor

Any ‘deal’ the West makes with Putin is uncertain, writes McElroy

Re: “Relaunch advisory group to prepare for Trump’s return, says original NAFTA Council member,” (*The Hill Times*, Nov. 13, by Neil Moss). Canadians must look over the horizon to the North, and consider what detente between Donald Trump’s United States and Vladimir Putin’s Russia might mean to us. The world’s longest, undefended border may well be the one between Canada and Russia.

At the end of the Second World War, Franklin Roosevelt pressed extremely hard on Russia’s dictator Joseph Stalin to join other countries to form the United Nations (UN). The goal was to establish the idea of international law to prevent such a horrific debacle from ever happening again. Probably the most significant part of this agreement was that it would be illegal for countries to invade and subjugate other independent states.

By way of inducement, Roosevelt even agreed to grant Russia a seat and a veto on the UN Security Council. This arrangement actually did stabilize post-war relations to a considerable degree and allowed the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. to navigate a path through the Cold War without having it degrade into a hot one.

But the international situation changed. The U.S.S.R. broke up in 1991 and released its satellite countries in Europe, and peace and prosperity seemed to be the future for both East and West. Certainly, it improved living conditions in Eastern Europe and in Russia.

However, as Russia tried to become a more democratic state, oligarchs associated with Putin seized control of Russia. Now Putin apparently wants to reconstitute the ‘empire’ of the former U.S.S.R. He pretended to uphold the tenets of the UN, including not invading other countries, but has since taken a different course.

The rest of the world made two big mistakes that have helped him on his quest to conquer Europe: they let him keep the Russian veto on the security council—even after his invasion of Georgia and Ukraine—and then failed to stop him.

Clearly, any ‘deal’ the West makes with Putin is uncertain. Promises and pie crusts are made to be broken. First Georgia, Donbas and Crimea, then Ukraine, then Europe—and maybe even Canada, if NATO falls apart.

Tom McElroy
Toronto, Ont.

Mindless profit-making will destroy our environment: B.C. reader

I’m a fisheries biologist, and I was born, raised, and educated in Alberta. It is at times like this that I am happy to own property in Alberta, but am happier to live in British Columbia where a greater degree of common sense for our environment and our children’s future prevails. Watching the Alberta UCP and their big oil and gas friends operate is like watching the last Trump government in the United States. One can almost see some entertainment in their irrational behaviour, but in our real world and its future, their behaviour is totally depressing.

As with many past actions by Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, her actions are misleading, and are based on a myopic view of the environment, our economy, and societal needs. Her “scrap-the-cap” campaign is nothing but a Trump and big oil “drill-baby-drill” mentality, and their collective denial of the destructive impacts that fossil fuels are now having on life on this planet is truly sad. It’s part

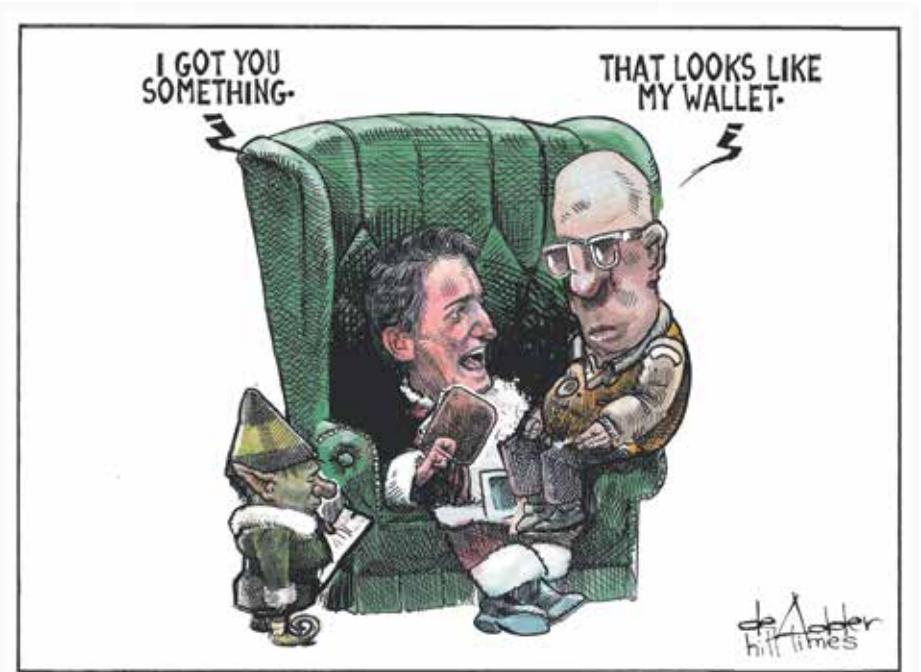
of an ideology that advocates growth and mindless profit-making at any cost.

Recently, our federal Parliament passed a law to prevent greenwashing advertising. If Smith’s \$7-million advertising campaign is not greenwashing with its claims on losses in jobs, the economy and in oil production, what is misrepresentation if her claims cannot be proven?

Above all, putting any cap on oil and gas production emission is not anti-Alberta legislation. Saskatchewan, Maritime offshore oil, and B.C. could also cry wolf in that this addresses oil and gas emissions wherever they occur. What the legislation opponents again fail to do is accept the need to greatly trim all greenhouse gas emissions, or the future of life on this planet is at great risk of extinction.

It’s time the Competition Bureau enforced its new laws, and force the Alberta premier to act in a more responsible manner and leave the lying to Donald Trump.

Otto Langer
Richmond, B.C.



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Identity politics run amok

At the conclusion of the anti-Boissonnault attack, there's only one question that matters: which political party has a plan to tackle the gross injustices Indigenous People have faced since colonization?

Sheila
Copp

Copp's Corner



OTTAWA—Identity politics run amok. How else to explain the resignation of employment minister Randy Boissonnault on Nov. 20?

Boissonnault was forced to step down for claiming that he is a Métis except he has never done so.

By his own admission, he was adopted into a Métis family and raised by them although he has often mentioned the influence of a Cree grandmother.

A prime ministerial statement said Boissonnault "will focus on clearing the allegations made against him."

Boissonnault was listed as Métis by the Liberal Party Indigenous Peoples' Commission when they compiled a list of successful Indigenous candidates after the 2015 election.

According to a commission member, an adoption by a Métis family confers Métis status on the child, which is why Boissonnault was so identified.

The Conservative Party has made Boissonnault a clear target. Three members were ejected from the House of Commons last week because of the nature of their personal attacks.

Seven Tories peppered Boissonnault with a dozen questions while Government House Leader Karina Gould tried to set the record straight.

Gould said the company managed by Boissonnault while he was not in politics was never listed as an Indigenous company, and did not receive any contracts from the government.

NDP MP Blake Desjarlais joined the attack, suggesting that

Boissonnault should resign as minister because he is making decisions about Indigenous lives without knowing about his own.

Allegedly, Boissonnault's grandmother is listed as a person with German ancestry, although Boissonnault's understanding was that she was full Cree.

The bottom line is that this so-called scandal was nothing more than a successful attempt to unseat a minister so popular that he got elected during a Conservative near-sweep of his home province, Alberta.

Boissonnault's departure leaves the province without a federal minister at the table.

This opens the door to the ministerial elevation of Calgary Liberal MP George Chahal.

Boissonnault's departure is a huge loss for Indigenous and minority supporters.

He was one of the most well-liked ministers in the government with a reputation for speaking out for the underdog. He is also a self-identified gay man.

Liberal First Nations MP Jaime Battiste defended Boissonnault as an advocate for Indigenous people who never self-identified as Métis.

Battiste characterized the attack as a witch-hunt, and said that the whole issue was blown up to score points. Boissonnault

was a member of the Liberal Indigenous caucus, but there are also supportive men who have been members of the women's caucus.

Embittered former justice minister Jody Wilson-Raybould weighed in on the controversy, blaming it all on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and saying "we get to watch white people play ancestry wheel of fortune."

The wheel of fortune has been anything but. Until Trudeau actually began tackling Indigenous issues with real financial support, the education of on-territory Indigenous children was funded at a level 40 per cent less than the rest of Canada's children.

The wheel of fortune meant that if you lived in Indigenous territory, you were likely to suffer for years under a boil-water advisory. Trudeau and the Liberal Party fixed that.

As for Indigenous ministers, the Liberal Party actually set up a recruitment system to attract Indigenous candidates. That was how Wilson-Raybould was rewarded with an uncontested nomination in the coveted Vancouver-Granville, B.C., riding in 2014.

Conservatives who succeeded in ousting Boissonnault have zero strategy of their own on reconcil-

iation and the recruitment of Indigenous Members of Parliament.

They are ready to use identity politics to destroy the reputation of someone as earnest and hard-working as Boissonnault.

When Andrew Scheer was leader of the Conservative Party, Indigenous voters in his own riding voted against him because he did not represent the views of Indigenous constituents.

Yet he was frontline in the attack on Boissonnault. According to everyone who follows the issue, Boissonnault's departure means the loss of a vociferous supporter of reconciliation and minority political engagement.

At the conclusion of the anti-Boissonnault attack, there is only one question that really matters: which political party has a plan to tackle the gross injustices that have been faced by Indigenous People ever since Europeans settlers arrived to overtake their land?

Certainly not the Conservatives, whose slash-and-burn political strategy would turn back the clock on reconciliation, housing, and a huge array of other issues.

Pierre Poilievre's carbon-tax election isn't happening. Instead of focusing on character assassination, why doesn't he work on specific positive issues to get things done?

That could actually make Indigenous lives better.

Sheila Copp is a former Jean Chrétien-era cabinet minister, and a former deputy prime minister.

The Hill Times

The anger-versus-joy election

What does all this joy-versus-anger stuff teach us? If you're going to campaign solely on emotion, make sure that it's in sync with the public mood.

Gerry
Nicholls

Post Partisan Pundit



OKAVILLE, ONT.—In *Bad Boy*, his biography of late American political consultant Lee Atwater, author John Brady writes "like the old carnival barker, he (Atwater) needed a hook to get them (voters) into the tent ... simple impressionistic issues that appealed to attitudes, created a reaction, not a thought."

Of course, Atwater was a trendsetter for employing emotion-laden political tactics, but I'd



Donald Trump, left, and Kamala Harris. In the U.S. election campaign, the vibe Harris chose to emphasize was 'joy,' whereas Trump chose 'anger.'

Photographs courtesy of Wikimedia Commons/Flickr

argue even he might have been shocked at how both candidates in the recent U.S. presidential election used "simple impressionistic issues" not just as "hooks," but as the main centrepieces of their respective campaigns.

In other words, Democratic nominee Kamala Harris and her Republican rival Donald Trump each made their communications strategies about appealing to "vibes."

The vibe Harris chose to emphasize was "joy," whereas Trump chose "anger."

Thus, we had two opposing emotions battling it out for the heart of America.

How did we get here?

Well, as we all know, Harris was a last-minute presidential candidate, replacing U.S. President Joe Biden who was more or less forced to step aside in July.

Essentially, then, she was starting her campaign from scratch, meaning she also had to reach out to voters as quickly as possible to define herself and her candidacy.

Her solution was to embrace the "politics of joy."

Rather than engaging in the usual guttersniper politics, Harris was always smiling, always happy, always exuberant.

It was a campaign style that won many a rave review during the election.

For example, commentator Andrew Cohen noted of Harris: "She smiles, she jives, she laughs. Cackles, too. America may be on the cusp of authoritarianism, we know, but just choose me, she implies, and we'll live—and laugh—another day!"

Meanwhile, writing in *Time* magazine, Kara Alaimo, a professor of communications, asserted of Harris' strategy: "Adopting a joyful approach has simultaneously highlighted Trump's biggest weaknesses (his age and cantankerousness), taken the spotlight off him and possibly endeared Harris to the majority of Americans who've had enough of our country's uncivilized politics."

Mind you, there's nothing really all that new about campaigning on joyous optimism.

Former U.S. president Barack Obama, for example, triumphed on "hope and change" messaging, while Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's "sunny ways" attitude helped him sweep to power in 2015.

It should also be noted that when Obama and Trudeau first won, voters were in the mood for rosy optimism.

But that perhaps wasn't the case for Americans in 2024.

That, at least, was the hope for Trump's campaign, which he himself defined when he stated: "In 2016, I declared: I am your voice. Today, I add: I am your warrior. I am your justice. And for those who have been wronged and betrayed, I am your retribution."

Trump was clearly tapping into an already existing sense of anger and resentment that was percolating across America.

And it worked.

Simply put, a great many American voters weren't looking for smiles or for exuberance or for joy, they were seeking a leader tough and strong enough to solve the country's problems.

Trump, despite his age and cantankerousness, seemed to fit the bill.

I'd also note that one "act of God" that worked to cement Trump's reputation for determined toughness was his immediate reaction to that failed July assassination attempt, where he defiantly pumped his fists into the air, an act which resulted in one of the most iconic photographs in American history.

Okay, so what does all this joy versus anger stuff teach us?

To me the lesson is this: if you're going to campaign solely on emotion, make sure that emotion is in sync with the public mood.

Gerry Nicholls is a communications consultant.

The Hill Times

Comment



Just when Prime Minister Justin Trudeau would like to focus the public's attention on the government's upcoming fall economic statement, the Liberals lose a cabinet minister in true soap-opera fashion, writes Michael Harris. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Trudeau's reset options dwindle as government puts itself above Parliament

There is only one answer: hand over the documents, if only to show that Pierre Poilievre is wrong when he says you're out to 'axe the facts.'

Michael
Harris

Harris



As Canada's parliamentary system sputters into dysfunction, Justin Trudeau's ability to hit the reset button for his unpopular government has suffered another major setback.

Just when the prime minister would like to focus the public's attention on the government's upcoming fall economic statement—which is likely to show that both inflation and the cost of living are coming down—the Liberals lose a cabinet minister in true soap-opera fashion.

After blistering and relentless attacks on then-Employment Minister Randy Boissonnault for a variety of alleged ethical shortcomings and unsavoury connections, the Conservative opposition got the ultimate political prize

short of forcing an election. They pushed the Liberals into dropping the controversial cabinet minister whom they had defended in the House of Commons for days.

In politics, taking out a cabinet minister is the equivalent to scoring the winning goal in overtime in hockey.

What makes this more embarrassing for the government is that the prime minister himself initially came to Boissonnault's defence, as well.

While still in Brazil for the G20 meeting, Trudeau claimed that his minister had addressed the various allegations brought against him, including falsely claiming Indigenous ancestry. At the same time, Trudeau praised Boissonnault for "continuing to lead" on issues around jobs and employment.

But that quickly changed when Trudeau returned from Brazil, before he made an appearance in Question Period. The government announced that it had been mutually agreed that the embattled minister would leave his post to deal with the allegations against him.

The only people who believe that version of events are still putting a small white object under their pillows. The more likely scenario is that before the prime minister went into the House, Boissonnault was summoned for a frank discussion regarding the multiple accusations against him, including his business partner allegedly sharing a mailbox with a cocaine dealer.

Whatever the truth may be of the allegations, Boissonnault's answers clearly did not persuade Trudeau that further defence of the minister was tenable.

No surprise there.

The Alberta MP represented a Pandora's box of political liabilities, from allegedly faking Indigenous roots through his great-grandmother, to remaining listed in business registries as the director of Global Health Imports (GHI) a year after he was put into cabinet.

Boissonnault has denied all the charges, and blamed allegations of business fraud on his partner at GHI, Stephen Anderson. It is worth noting that the ethics commissioner has "so far" not found the ex-minister to be in a conflict of interest between his public duties and his private activities.

But this case is much more than the particulars of a sketchy situation filled with dubious characters. In politics, there are four stages that ultimately lead to political oblivion: longevity, broken promises, arrogance, and finally corruption. The Trudeau Liberals are now flirting with the fourth stage.

The long-term significance of the Boissonnault affair is that it fits the pattern of a government that has lost its way.

Trudeau himself violated conflict-of-interest rules when he pressured his then-attorney general to help SNC-Lavalin settle corruption charges. Jody

Wilson-Raybould, Canada's first Indigenous AG, was later fired for doing her job. Add to that the WE Charity scandal, the ArriveCan fiasco, and now Boissonnault.

Sitting behind all that is the iceberg of the now defunct green-tech foundation that handed out hundreds of millions of dollars for green technology projects.

Armed with a production order from House Speaker Greg Fergus, Conservatives are demanding that the Trudeau government turn over documents to the RCMP related to the operation of the former Sustainable Development Technology Canada (SDTC). Why? The opposition suspects that what they call the former "green slush fund" was corrupt, and want the Mounties to investigate for possible crimes.

That is not such a far-fetched position given what the auditor general had to say about the former SDTC. One in six projects for funding did not qualify. The auditor general found 90 cases where conflict of interest policies were broken. No one knows how many millions may have been squandered or purloined.

The ethics commissioner concluded that the former chair of the foundation, Annette Verschuren, took part in funding decisions that benefited groups with which she was associated. The proper course would have been to recuse herself from such deliberations.

The Liberal government, which frequently asserts its

commitment to transparency, is refusing to abide by the Speaker's ruling. In a plainly lame process argument, the government says that the order to produce documents to the RCMP would blur the lines between Parliament and the judiciary. It might also get at the truth.

The Conservatives say that until the government hands over the files, it will continue to prevent the resumption of normal House business. That could put Trudeau in some strange company, depending on what he decides to do.

Then-prime minister Stephen Harper once refused to hand over unredacted documents on the role Canadian Forces may have played in handing over detainees to Afghan authorities whom they later tortured.

Harper prorogued Parliament to smother the continuing uproar in the House, driven by the charge that the government was putting itself above Parliament. Harper was later found to be in contempt of Parliament.

Will Trudeau—like Harper—prorogue Parliament to break the deadlock with the filibustering Conservatives, and the daily drubbing in Question Period? It pays to remember that he did it once before in the wake of the WE Charity scandal.

But as great as the temptation might—especially since Question Period has now become the Pierre Poilievre show—it would be the last nail in the government's coffin.

It will be next to impossible to find a reset button if the government continues to put itself above Parliament. If Trudeau follows Harper's path, the party's over.

There is only one answer: hand over the documents, if only to show that Poilievre is wrong when he says you are out to "axe the facts."

Michael Harris is an award-winning author and journalist.

The Hill Times

As COP29 wraps up, will Canada finally stop funding fossils this fall?

The pathway to zero emissions and a climate-safe future doesn't include support for the fossil fuel industry. Will Canada finally turn off the financial taps to our most polluting industry, and use part of that cash to pay its climate debt?

Julia
Levin

Opinion



Climate finance has been at the heart of this year's COP29 negotiations. When countries signed



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau speaks with reporters in West Block on Nov. 6, 2024. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

the Paris Agreement back in 2015, they agreed to centre equity in how we tackle the climate crisis. A big part of that comes down to wealthy countries needing to provide financing to countries in the Global South both to take climate action, as well as respond to climate disasters. We know the Global South has contributed the least to the climate crisis, yet faces the brunt of its impacts.

The Global North, including Canada, owes a climate debt.

One of the best ways that Canada can pay its debt is by finally eliminating all the support going to oil and gas companies, and redirecting those funds into

projects in developing countries, like rolling out renewable energy, or investing in infrastructure that can withstand storms and floods.

Canada has a longstanding, dubious record of being one of the world's most generous providers of public dollars to the oil and gas industry. In fact, over the last four years, the federal government's total financial support to the fossil fuel industry has been at least \$65-billion.

Every dollar that is spent supporting an oil company or project is a dollar which can't be invested in areas that benefit all of us, both here at home and around the world. That \$65-billion could

have fully funded every major wind and solar project in Canada from 2019-2021, 12 times over. It could have equipped 4.3 million homes—all the low-income households in the country—with heat pumps to allow families to heat and cool their homes, and pay less on their energy bills. And it could have gone a long way in contributing to this country's climate finance obligations.

The firms receiving these subsidies don't need government handouts. According to data from Statistics Canada, in just two years, oil and gas extraction companies in Canada made over \$100-billion in pure profits.

The Government of Canada has taken some important steps towards eliminating fossil fuel financing—including new rules ending international public financing, as well as some fossil fuel subsidies. Unfortunately, the government's refusal to ensure any kind of transparency and reporting means we have no idea how effective these rules have been.

We do know these rules have not translated into significantly lower levels of financial support. This is because most of this na-

tion's financial support is provided by Crown corporations such as Export Development Canada for domestic oil, gas, and petrochemical businesses, and, therefore, has not been addressed by new policies.

Canada has committed to ending all financing before the end of this year, so new rules may be coming soon.

A strong approach to eliminating all domestic financing of oil, gas, and petrochemical activities will set up our country as a global leader, a helpful position as Canada approaches its G7 presidency next year.

However, a weak approach would set a dangerous global precedent—and may turn out to be worse than having no rules at all.

That's why 73 organizations and more than 100 academics recently sent a letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau urging him to deliver on the promise he made to Canadians to stop funding fossils.

The pathway to zero emissions and a climate-safe future does not include subsidies or public financing for the oil and gas industry. Will the feds finally turn off the financial taps to Canada's most polluting industry, and use part of that money to pay its climate debt?

Julia Levin is associate director of national climate at Environmental Defence.

The Hill Times

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Breaking: the CBC and our link to public broadcasting?

If this is public broadcasting's last chance to save itself, it needs to move fast—and the majority of Canadians who, polls say, still support the limping institution will need to make their voices heard.

Susan Riley

Impolitic



CHELSEA, QUE.—It will take more than nostalgia and ideology to save the CBC, notwithstanding its rich archive and historic importance as a cultural lifeline for our large and scattered country.

It will take programming that—more—people want to see and hear, available on all media platforms; it will take focus, originality, and fun. In recent years, it has become difficult to muster much enthusiasm for the CBC product, even among those who insist on the need for a national public broadcaster to “tell Canadian stories.”

As well, the corporation has only a few scant months to turn things around before Pierre Poilievre becomes prime minister, and makes good his threat to defund English-language broadcasting. The Conservative leader says he will preserve some French-language broadcasting for franco-phone minorities, but details are scarce. Whatever he intends will require rewriting legislation, and that is widely expected to weaken Radio-Canada as well as decimating the English service.

In one of his applause lines at rallies, he also promises to sell CBC Toronto and Ottawa headquarters to provide “beautiful new housing” for hard-pressed families. That would be an extremely expensive renovation project, but it makes for popular campaign fodder.

CBC television has been trying, with fitful success, to tell Canadian stories, and some of its efforts—*Baroness von Sketch*, *Schitt's Creek*, the long-standing *Murdoch Mysteries*—have met with international acclaim. But, in a media environment that is increasingly global and increasingly competitive, CBC has a smaller presence than Australia and some European nations when it comes to online television hits.



More urgent than anything is the potential loss of CBC News. Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre is convinced—as have all Conservative leaders before him—that CBC reporters favour Liberals, and universally betray a socially liberal bias, writes Susan Riley. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Its defenders will point to the enduring popularity of English radio, and it, too has some lively programming, including shows such as *White Coat, Black Art*; *The Cost of Living*; *Commotion with Elamin Abdelmahmoud*; *The Current with Matt Galloway*; and Tom Powers' Q, the weekday pop culture show. But the overall product can feel hollowed out for older fans, as venerable shows like *Writers and Company* with Eleanor Wachtel end, and mid-week offerings are heavy with replays, or podcast segments, including American shows. Meanwhile, the young people to whom those shows are aimed aren't listening to radio any more.

For years, corporation bigwigs have inflicted their own thought experiments on a dwindling audience as they dream up ways to attract a youthful demographic, and to better reflect the increasingly multi-ethnic nature of the country (especially Toronto).

Righteous goals. But it isn't working if anecdotal evidence and ratings are to be believed. In fact, outgoing CEO Catherine Tait told an interviewer last month: “Social media is where the audience is today, the young audience. They're not on TV, they're not listening to radio, and they're barely on our streaming platforms. If we can crack this nut, we have a future. And if we don't, I wonder.”

Tait sees the real numbers, and they clearly do not look encouraging. While young listeners and viewers are not flocking to the CBC, an older, traditional—mostly white—fan base is turning off the car radio every time they encounter yet another discussion of “intersectionality,” or anti-trans prejudice, or Indigenous struggles and successes.

These are not trivial issues and, with Indigenous People in particular, their voices have long been marginalized. But, CBC programming, well-meaning though it is, rarely offers fresh insights—just a familiar chorus of grievance. Some might say: so what if that bores/bothers

the comfortable, white, middle class, the corporation's traditional audience? But this kind of programming also shortchanges the very communities it is meant to recognize.

In 1997, a clever CBC Radio show called *Dead Dog Cafe*, conceived by Indigenous writer Thomas King, offered famously dead-pan humour, interspersed with tart political commentary, and sometimes ended with a sonorous reading of the unfulfilled promises in the 1991 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Affairs. That show proved that woke can be witty and humour universal.

More urgent than anything, however, is the potential loss of CBC News. Poilievre is convinced—as have all Conservative leaders before him—that CBC reporters favour Liberals, and universally betray a socially liberal bias.

All networks, all media organizations, are peopled by journalists with their own values, both personal and political. What is important and different from the proliferation of right-leaning outlets that Poilievre favours is that CBC journalists are accountable. They are not allowed to retail lies, or torque stories. Public complaints are responded to; corrections are issued when required.

Losing that news function—accountable, widely available, Canadian—would be dire, given the proliferation of false information, pretend media outfits, and political polarization that mark the current media world. Given, also, the loss of 450 newspapers since 2009, and the media deserts in many small towns and rural areas, where do people go for the facts—or the nuance, at least—without CBC's network of professional journalists and editors?

The CBC has a new CEO, veteran Quebec television executive Marie-Philippe Bouchard, who is set to replace the tone-deaf Tait in January 2025. And, only weeks ago, the corporation announced it will be hiring 25 more journalists to provide smaller communities—mostly in Western Canada—with online reporting in areas without local coverage. It is also promising a new vision for the CBC, based on recommendations from an expert panel summoned by Heritage Minister Pascale St-Onge.

But that vision, that modernized CBC—as with everything this government does—has been slow in coming. And the heavy participation of CBC veterans on the panel does not suggest a bold departure. To be fair, every public broadcaster in the world is experiencing the same pressures: provisional funding from governments, dwindling audiences, and mad competition for viewers and readers at a time when political discourse is circling the drain.

If this is public broadcasting's last chance to save itself, it needs to move fast—and the majority of Canadians who, polls say, still support the limping institution will need to make their voices heard.

Susan Riley is a veteran political columnist who writes regularly for *The Hill Times*.

The Hill Times



The CBC News office in Ottawa. *The Hill Times* photograph by Jake Wright

Billions from public-service pension plan surplus gives Liberals many options

The government could use the extra dollars to cut the deficit, sweeten departures, improve pensions, or take a contribution holiday and give one to public servants, too.

Kathryn May

Opinion



Treasury Board President Anita Anand is under intense pressure from unions to share the surplus and improve pensions. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Treasury Board President Anita Anand is poised to table a report revealing a multi-billion-dollar surplus in the public-service pension plan at a time when the government is struggling to meet its deficit target, and is facing financial pressure on all fronts.

The chief actuary's report on the pension plan landed on Anand's desk on Sept. 27. She has 30 sitting days to table it in Parliament, which could align with the timing of the yet-to-be-announced fall economic statement when public service job cuts could be announced.

The country's largest pension plan has been running a surplus for years, but sources say it has now reached a "non-permitted" size that requires the federal government to take a contribution holiday under the law.

The holiday could save the government \$3.1-billion per year, and give it several options in the hunt for spending cuts or revenue boosts as it tries to tame an expected \$47-billion budget deficit for 2023-24, as reported by Parliamentary Budget Officer Yves Giroux. The deficit for this fiscal year is expected to be slightly lower than last year's, but still above the Liberal's \$40-billion target.

"A (pension) surplus could be a significant, non-negligible, positive development for the deficit in the near term," said Giroux.

Surplus soars beyond permitted levels

The public service has two pension plans, but the surplus at issue is in the post-2000 plan, which is invested in the markets. Like other defined-benefit plans, it built up a surplus thanks to

strong market performance and rising interest rates. Under the Income Tax Act, surpluses are not allowed to exceed 25 per cent of liabilities.

And that's where the government is today.

As of March 2023, the plan had a \$35-billion surplus, with \$1.5-billion considered "non-permitted" under these rules. Sources say union projections suggest this non-permitted surplus could now be 10 times larger.

Under the plan's funding policy, the government is only obligated to chip away at the non-permitted part of the surplus, most likely through a contribution holiday. The rest of the surplus is supposed to remain in the plan as a cushion. Anand, however, does have the authority to override this policy.

The need to address the surplus comes as federal unions were told in early November that spending cuts could go beyond attrition and lead to layoffs after a decade-long hiring spree. Until then, the Liberals pledged to reduce staff without resorting to layoffs.

The public service has faced intense scrutiny for unchecked growth and lagging productivity, with critics arguing that it has become too large for the quality of service it provides.

That's led to much speculation about how the government could use its pension holiday and surplus. The government has several options, some more likely than others.

Reduce the deficit

One option is to leave the extra cash in government coffers to reduce the deficit.

The government paved the way for that move with an amendment passed in the budget

bill, which now allows the Public Sector Pension Investment Board to transfer funds into the Consolidated Revenue Fund—the government's central bank account for managing income and expenditures.

It seems this may also have been the preferred option of the management members on the advisory committee.

But it would not go without a fight as unions were already seeking to improve pension plans before the size of the surplus was known.

Sweeten departures

With job cuts coming, some speculate the government could hasten retirements and early departures with incentives.

"The unions may not want it, but you've got the pension surplus potentially available to waive pension penalties for early retirement. I think a lot of public servants would like it," said Sahir Khan, executive vice-president of the Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy at University of Ottawa.

"It doesn't help in that there will be up-front costs for the package, but when you can shrink the size of the government, there will be ongoing fiscal benefits of having a lower payroll."

Early-retirement incentives were a key feature of the Chrétien government's deficit-cutting strategy in the 1990s. It spent about \$3-billion on buyouts and early retirement packages, which helped eliminate 55,000 jobs during the historic downsizing. This significant reduction highlights how effectively \$3-billion can be leveraged to reshape the public service.

"From a political perspective, it looks like a painless way to reduce the size of the public service, which most Canadians really think needs to happen," said one senior financial bureaucrat.

Such incentives could appeal to public servants near retirement, perhaps unhappy with the return-to-office order or the prospect of a possible change in government. They are typically at peak-career salaries. Their departures would allow departments to bring in younger, tech-savvy recruits with lower salary expectations.

However, they also carry a risk of losing valuable and experienced employees. Also, staff who might otherwise leave could stay in hopes of securing a package, which would undermine efforts that rely on natural attrition to reduce headcounts.

Such incentives might not sit well with the broader public service, either, as all employees contribute equally to the plan.

Others argue the government would gain more political mileage from using the extra money to reduce the deficit, which could resonate more with the public than offering pension enrichment to a select group of public servants.

Improve pensions

Anand is under intense pressure from unions to share the surplus and improve pensions. Unions argue that since workers make half of the contributions, the surplus is deferred wages and should be partially shared with them.

The big ask—led by the Public Service Alliance of Canada—is for the government to reverse Harper-era pension reforms, which created a two-tier system

for public servants: those who joined before 2013 can retire at 55 with 30 years of service, while those hired after 2013 must wait until age 60.

PSAC wants to go back to a single-tier pension with employees able to retire at age 55. It's unclear how much that would cost, but it would need legislation, which wouldn't get far with the gridlock bogging down Parliament these days.

Improving pensions could be a hard sell to Canadians who already believe public servants have better benefits than they do.

Similarly, Parliament's dysfunction is delaying the legislative changes the government promised border services officers and hundreds of other public safety workers allowing them to retire with penalty-free pensions after 25 years of service.

In June, Anand promised the changes—known as "25 and out"—would be introduced in the fall. Her office is now saying it will be before Christmas.

The changes require amendments to the Public Service Superannuation Act and the Income Tax Act, as well as changes to regulations.

PSAC led the charge for "25 and out" for border officers, arguing the reform was affordable partly due to a mounting surplus in the public-service pension plan.

A contribution holiday for staff, too

Instead of sweetening pension or departure incentives, some public servants may prefer a contribution holiday for employees, which would amount to a boost to their paycheques.

The government, as employer, and public servants together contribute \$6.2-billion annually to fund the pension plan. If the government stops making its half of the contributions, it could also give employees a break to the tune of \$3.1-billion a year.

A contribution holiday would effectively amount to a 10-per-cent pay raise.

Anand's many options will be informed by a pension-plan advisory committee with labour and management members who advise the minister on managing the plan. Anand has received its confidential report, but is not obligated to accept recommendations.

But the debate over how to use the surplus is fraught, given the fiscal challenges, the looming election, and the expectation of a Conservative victory. Conservatives have long argued public-servant pensions are too generous and should be reined in. Public opinion adds another layer considering public servants have more generous benefits than most Canadians.

This article was republished with permission from Policy Options. Kathryn May is a reporter and the Accenture fellow on the Future of the Public Service, providing coverage and analysis of the complex issues facing Canada's federal public service for Policy Options.

The Hill Times

Opinion



Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, pictured on the Hill. Whether it's Bob Rumson, Donald Trump, Doug Ford or Poilievre, the folks peddling slogans and simple solutions don't care about fixing the real challenges people face, writes Jamie Carroll. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade/illustration by Neena Singhal

The wisdom of Homer Simpson and Aaron Sorkin

The political right in North America isn't interested in fixing anything for anyone. Poilievre is the epitome of this. He's only interested in two things: making you afraid, and telling you who's to blame. That is how you win elections.

Jamie Carroll

Opinion



Two analogies keep coming to mind since Nov. 5.

The first is a classic *Simpsons* line from Homer: "Kids, you tried your best and you failed miserably. The lesson is: never try."

The second is the penultimate speech from the 1995 film, *The American President*: "I've known Bob Rumson for years. And I've been operating under the assumption that the reason Bob devotes so much time and energy to shouting at the rain was that he simply didn't get it. Well, I was wrong. Bob's problem isn't that

he doesn't get it. Bob's problem is that he can't sell it!

"We have serious problems to solve, and we need serious people to solve them. And whatever your particular problem is, I promise you Bob Rumson is not the least bit interested in solving it. He is interested in two things, and two things only: making you afraid of it, and telling you who's to blame for it. That, ladies and gentlemen, is how you win elections."

Between these two quotes lies the truth of the American election and, I fear, the next Canadian one, as well.

Those classic seasons of *The Simpsons*—say, seasons two through 10, more or less—were chock a block with biting wit and cultural insight. Homer's advice to the children is squarely in that vein of uncurious anti-intellectualism that personifies the Trump voter.

Now, that's not to say Trump voters are dumb. This most recent election must end the idea that only slack-jawed cousin-f\$%ers voted for Trump: his support was truly national, won him the White House, House, and Senate, and came from across almost every demographic going—despite many of them facing the real prospect of a demonstrably worse life with his victory.

In Canada, we have Pierre Poilievre leading the charge on the right-wing populist movement (with hat tips to Doug Ford, Danielle Smith, Scott Moe, and John Rustad). Four out of five will have contested (and likely won) elections by the end of 2025.

The American President is a film about, well, an American

president who is widowed. He starts dating a lobbyist, and the Republican candidate, of course, says horrible things about both of them. Aaron Sorkin of *West Wing* infamy wrote the script, so the dialogue is fantastic and familiar. Rob Reiner directed it.

The exchange above comes from the White House podium after months of the president ignoring these personal attacks.

Despite the passage of nearly 30 years, the line is as timely as it was prescient. The political right in North America isn't interested in fixing anything for anyone. This doesn't just include Poilievre—it epitomizes him.

And particularly that last part: "He is interested in two things, and two things only: making you afraid of it, and telling you who's to blame for it. That, ladies and gentlemen, is how you win elections."

Now, if my choice of reference material hadn't already done so, let me positively confirm my status as an aged political warrior: I'm not convinced that's how either side *used* to win elections in Canada. We had disagreements about matters of policy—e.g., wage and price controls, free trade, the GST, balancing budgets, sovereignty—and at least two sides staked out their position.

At the same time, I do not accept that either Poilievre is Trump—not in any of the ways that matter most. To wit, tunnelling under the 401 is not rounding up and deporting immigrants; and "axing the tax" is moronic, but not the same as threatening to execute journalists and political opponents.

There are, however, a whole lot of similarities in approach, outlook, message and—most importantly—tactics and audience.

Which brings us back to both Homer and Bob Rumson: Justin Trudeau and Joe Biden have tried on a host of issues: COVID, climate, the economy, global authoritarianism—the underlying elements of the polycrisis we are now facing. They tried, and, yes, sometimes they failed. And those failures are now the basis for almost every attack on them.

By contrast, Poilievre and Trump don't bother to offer any concrete commitments, policy projects, or discernible goals beyond the rage-fuelling rhetoric they spew across every channel available to foment and manage the anger they need to raise money and mobilize vote.

But, unlike a Sorkin script, quality rhetoric and a defiant protagonist is not enough to defeat them.

Vice-President Kamala Harris lost votes compared to both Biden and Hillary Clinton in most places that matter. And she lost them in worrying demographics: most notably, men aged 18-29 in battleground states voted 60 per cent for Biden in 2020, and barely 50 per cent for Harris.

For possibly the first time in Canadian history, the 18-29 age group is the key target for both leading parties. They are a critical part of the coalition that propelled Trudeau's Liberals from third place to a majority government in 2015. People—i.e., both men and women, but that divide is less acute than it was—are now supporting Poilievre by a margin

of 34 to 20 per cent, according to Abacus. The groups that were in that slot when Trudeau was first elected are now 30-45 years old, and even less likely to vote for him, also according to Abacus.

So why are they flocking away from more progressive ideas and people? Back to Homer: they've tried to get ahead, feel they've failed, and don't want to keep trying without some reasonable chance of not failing.

But let's be fair: people born in 1995 have gone through an endless series of world historical events. Think about it: 9/11, the Great Recession, Trump I, COVID, and a runaway housing market, inflation and interest rates that they were told couldn't happen.

On top of that, the ongoing climate crisis, the inevitable demographic crisis fuelled by aging baby boomers who just won't share, and a seemingly endless series of global conflicts have all added to their angst.

As the key to their victories, Trudeau and Biden both promised those folks a lot. Given how broke and defeated that cohort feels at the moment, it is incredibly difficult to convince them either leader has delivered.

In other words, these people are pissed—and some with good reason.

But here's the point: whether it's Bob Rumson, Donald Trump, Doug Ford or Pierre Poilievre, the folks peddling slogans and simple solutions don't give a damn about fixing any of real challenges people face. They just don't.

So, if you're looking for solutions to your very real concerns, you better ask yourself if Poilievre and his three-word slogans are very likely to deliver the goods.

Otherwise, you might as well accept the wisdom of Homer.

Jamie Carroll is a former national director of the Liberal Party of Canada, and is now an entrepreneur and consultant.

The Hill Times

The Hill Times Policy Briefing | November 25, 2024

AEROSPACE

'CHALLENGE OF A LIFETIME'

transition to net-zero
AVIATION NEEDS INVESTMENT
CERTAINTY AND LESS
expensive sustainable
fuels, say sector experts

**WHY AN
AEROSPACE
INDUSTRIAL
STRATEGY**
is crucial
for Canada

National
aerospace
strategy
NEEDS TO
FOCUS ON
**CLIMATE CHANGE
MITIGATION**

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO
BOOST GLOBAL **CONFIDENCE**
in our aerospace supply chain?

Securing blue skies:
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**CANADIAN
AVIATION IS IN
dire need of
GOVERNMENT
ATTENTION**

**FLYING INTO
the future:
THE CASE FOR
SUSTAINABLE
AERONAUTICS**

**THE AEROSPACE
INDUSTRY IS IN
the midst of its
FOURTH REVOLUTION**

Aerospace Policy Briefing

Low-cost sustainable fuels, more investment needed for aviation's net-zero transition

To compete with the U.S., Canada needs to take actions intended to incentivize the domestic production and use of sustainable aviation fuels, according to a roadmap released by the Canadian Council for Sustainable Aviation Fuels in June, 2023.

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Airlines in Canada have committed to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050, but the massive transition towards sustainable fuels and greener technologies could use more co-ordination at the federal level to incentivize domestic production and keep innovation within the country, say aerospace sector experts.

Pierre Ruel, president and CEO-elect of the Air Transport Association of Canada, told *The Hill Times* that part of the challenge in the transition to net-zero in aerospace is the high cost of commercial sustainable aviation fuel (SAF), which he estimated to be at least three to four times as expensive as conventional aviation fuel.

A first step in reducing SAF costs could be implementation of federal government policies intended to incentivize production and use of those fuels, he suggested.

"What we need is policies in place because there's a lot of investors out there—a lot of people with a lot of money, banks, investment funds, and so on. They're more than willing to invest in low carbon fuels ... but they need a level of certainty, and that level of certainty will come from policies," he said. "When we start increasing supply, the demand will grow and the prices are going to go down, right? That's just pretty much basic economics."

Ruel highlighted how renewable energy costs have decreased in recent years. Solar photovoltaic costs have fallen by 90 per cent in the last decade, onshore wind by 70 per cent, and batteries by more than 90 per cent, according to a report released on June 13 by Our World in Data, a scientific online publication that focuses on global issues.

"If you go back 20 years ago, man, these things were so expensive [that] nobody was touching them, and eventually they got over the hump. And now people can buy solar panels to put on their vans,

on their houses, on their cottages. The same thing would apply, I think, to sustainable aviation fuel," said Ruel.

Canada's Aviation Climate Action Plan, which sets out a vision for net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050 for the aviation sector, was released in September 2022. According to the plan, the contribution of SAF towards the aviation sector's 2050 target is dependent on the production and scale-up of SAF.

In early 2022, a consortium of 60 domestic, international, and cargo airlines operating in Canada formed the Canadian Council for Sustainable Aviation Fuels (C-SAF) with the goal of advancing the commercial production and use of Canadian-made SAF.

The C-SAF released a roadmap for the development of a SAF market in Canada in June 2023. It argues that the United States' Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) is a real danger to SAF production in Canada as it creates incentives that make the production and investment climate of SAF more attractive south of the border.

Canada has neither clear supply-side production incentives, nor a mandate to help build the SAF market—just a nascent voluntary credit market under the Clean Fuels Regulation, according to the roadmap. To compete with the U.S., it indicates Canada needs to take actions intended to incentivize the domestic production and use of SAF, and position its technology providers in global markets with programs that support the scaling of Canadian firms.

Ruel said that without the right policies in place, Canada will be exporting feedstock to the U.S. to be converted into SAF, only for the excess to be shipped back to Canada.

"We're already behind our timeline, which is not good. But you know what? We can fix it. This can be fixed. If there's a will, there's a way," he said.

Mike Mueller, president and CEO of the Aerospace Industries Association of Canada, told *The Hill Times* in an emailed statement on Nov. 20 that meeting the target of 10 per cent SAF use by 2030 will require "political leadership and decisive government action." That includes fostering collaboration across ministries, supporting the production and adoption of SAF, and also implementing forthcoming recommendations resulting from an SAF blueprint exercise led by the government's Sustainable Aviation Task Force, he said in the email.

A blueprint to help address SAF challenges is currently being prepared by the C-SAF and the federal government. The document will include recommendations for policies, incentives, investments, and other elements to help the domestic SAF market.



Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne announced an investment of \$350-million support Canada's Initiative for Sustainable Aviation Technology, in June 2023. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Co-ordinated efforts across the supply chain—from feedstock suppliers to fuel producers, distributors, and end-users—are essential, according to Mueller.

The journey to net-zero cannot be undertaken by the industry alone, he said.

"Strong government leadership from all parties is essential to align policies and investments through an industrial aerospace strategy, creating a supportive regulatory environment that positions Canada as a leader in low-carbon aerospace technologies. Without such a strategy, Canada risks falling behind as other nations secure their aerospace industries' competitiveness. By acting decisively, Canada can lead the global shift toward greener aerospace, ensuring industry thrives," Mueller stated by email.

Geoffrey Tauvette, executive director of C-SAF, told *The Hill Times* in an emailed statement on Nov. 20 that SAF represents the most important tool available to significantly reduce aviation emissions and secure clean energy for transitioning to a sustainable aviation industry.

He said it's a critical time for the decarbonization of Canada's aviation industry, but the impact of the American IRA on the clean energy landscape in North America is "massive."

"When it comes to biofuels—including SAF—the U.S. has continually shown the will and desire to ensure that biofuel production and usage is supported. The IRA provides generous incentives to

SAF producers in the form of a [US\$1.75] per gallon (62 CDN cents per litre) production tax credit starting in 2025," said Tauvette in the email. The IRA's SAF tax incentive "is driving production, and the U.S. is rapidly becoming the largest market for SAF."

"Simply, Canada does not have a competitive SAF investment environment compared to the U.S.," he said.

Canada has all the right ingredients "from start to finish" to create a world-leading SAF market, but is missing a national SAF policy tailor-made for the domestic aviation operating environment, said Tauvette.

SAF is harder and more expensive to make, and therefore higher incentives are needed to support investment in SAF production, he added.

"Countries with an abundance of sustainable feedstock are focused on supporting SAF production (like the U.S. and Brazil). Accordingly, Canada should implement measures that unlock investments to scale a made-in-Canada SAF market to ensure security of supply in the future," he argued by email. "Canada should extend the Clean Technology Investment Tax Credits to include capital investments made in SAF production facilities."

Chris Baczynski, CEO and principal consultant for BAC Aerospace, told *The Hill Times* he considers SAF to be more of a short-term solution when it comes to emissions reductions.

He argued "the solution should come through technology," such as development and implementation of electric, hybrid electric, and hydrogen propulsion technologies.

SAF can help reduce emissions because of how those fuels are made. Sustainable fuels are created by recycling the carbon dioxide that has been absorbed by the biomass used in various feedstocks, compared to conventional aviation fuels, which are created by taking fossil resources out of the ground, releasing stored carbon into the atmosphere. When burned, however, SAFs still produce emissions similar to those of traditional fossil fuels.

"What we need is hybrid electric aircraft that are capable of transporting passengers, basically to replace—or at least to supplement—the current offerings in the airline industry," said Baczynski. "Canada was among the world leaders in the aerospace sector, and we should ensure that we regain that position, and the focus towards sustainability actually provides us with some opportunities that we can take advantage of."

To support sustainable aviation, Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne (Saint-Maurice-Champlain, Que.) announced an investment of \$350-million on June 19, 2023, to support Canada's Initiative for Sustainable Aviation Technology (INSAT).

The investment is intended to support an industry-led aerospace network focused on funding research and development projects such as hybrid and alternative

Investment certainty : sector experts

propulsion, aircraft architecture and systems integration, the transition to alternative fuels, and aircraft support infrastructure and operations.

“Our government is committed to making Canada a leader and a strategic partner of choice when it comes to sustainable aviation. Today’s \$350-million investment to support the Initiative for Sustainable Aviation Technology will help drive and accelerate the green industrial transformation of Canada’s aerospace industry, generating high-value jobs while strengthening supply chains and supporting the transition to a net-zero economy,” said Champagne in a departmental press release.

Despite this investment, Baczynski said Canada’s aerospace companies are facing funding challenges. In the U.S., the sustainable aviation revolution is largely being spearheaded by startup companies, as opposed to major players like Boeing or Airbus, he said. He argued that the \$350-million investment represents a drop in the bucket.

What Canada needs is a strategy for connecting aerospace companies and manufacturers that are working on new sustainability technologies with available commercial sources of funding, according to Baczynski.

“In the U.S. and in Europe, these startups driving the revolutions have been able to secure significant funding largely through venture capital investment. Whereas, here in Canada, we do have some companies ... [that] have the capability, yet they’re having significant difficulty securing any sort of funding beyond the minimalistic funding provided by the [Business] Development Bank of Canada and the INSAT initiative, simply because the investment climate in Canada is not conducive,” he said. “We cannot really expect the government to field the bill, but there’s definitely opportunities for government to promote and to facilitate investment in Canadian aerospace industry, both from domestic sources and from sources abroad.”

In a follow-up email on Nov. 20, Baczynski said Canada is becoming a resource for foreign startup companies, instead of supporting its own domestic startups. As an example, he cited MHIRJ Aviation Group, which has a head office in Quebec and announced a deal on Nov. 14 to support development of M80 hybrid electric regional aircraft for Maeve, a startup aerospace company based in the Netherlands.

He said that Canada’s National Aerospace Strategy should focus on facilitating growth of the country’s domestic industry.

Michel Dion, INSAT’s CEO, told *The Hill Times* that all projects supported by INSAT must include at least one small- or medium-sized enterprise (SME) to ensure involvement across the supply chain.

“This is criteria that needs to be met. It cannot be just one large enterprise doing a project. There needs to be at least one SME involved in each project,” he said. “We’ve been visiting several cities already over the past few months and meeting with small and medium enterprises, making sure that they understand the program and they understand that they can submit proposals to get funded.”

On Nov. 6, INSAT announced the launch of its first five research projects, representing an investment of \$101-million, which includes a contribution of \$28-million from the federal government’s Strategic Innovation Fund through the INSAT initiative.

The projects include ground testing of an experimental electric jet aircraft in collaboration with Duxion Motors Inc. and Tronosjet Maintenance Inc., and a project in collaboration with Pratt & Whitney Canada and Next Hydrogen Solutions Inc. related to hydrogen combustion technology.

“The funding has to go to Canadian entities. The work has to be done in Canada, developing talents in the country,” said Dion. “It’s really a program that is meant for Canadian entities, for the benefit of the country.”

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The Hill Times

The aerospace industry is in the midst of its fourth revolution

Canada can lead the global shift in sustainable aviation. Our country boasts one of the world’s robust aerospace industries supported by a unique ecosystem of research institutions, manufacturers, and innovators.

**Benoît
Schultz**

Opinion



Earlier this month, at the Canadian Aerospace Summit in Ottawa, industry leaders reaffirmed our shared commitment to decarbonization, acknowledging both the urgency and the opportunity to shape a sustainable future for aviation. A new national consortium—H2CanFly—was launched to accelerate hydrogen flight from concept to commercialization. However, decarbonization of the aerospace industry requires a nationwide, constant effort that unites our brightest minds and industrial strengths. Canada’s strategic focus on innovation—backed by substantial investment in sustainable technology—will enable us to design, manufacture, and deploy sustainable solutions for the aerospace industry on the world stage.

With nearly five billion air flights projected by the end of 2024 and mounting calls for climate action, the aerospace industry faces a clear challenge: reducing carbon emissions while supporting connectivity, security, and economic growth.

And it is important to not forget that our industry itself is a source of considerable economic activity. Aviation supports some 87 million jobs worldwide today, a contribution of 3.9 per cent of global economic activity, a third of world trade by value, more than 58 per cent of tourist arrivals and connectivity for people all over the planet.

For a country as vast as Canada, air travel—by way of helicopters and airplanes—is essential to our way of life. It links remote communities, keeps us connected with the world, bridges people and cultures, powers trade, saves lives, and drives innovation. The indispensability of the aerospace industry in our modern world cannot be overstated.



In celebration of the firm’s 50th anniversary in 2019, Airbus conducted a special formation flight with representatives from each member of its in-production commercial aircraft product line — A220-300, A319neo, A330-900, A350-1000 and A380 — plus the next-generation BelugaXL airlifter. Photograph courtesy of Airbus

But as the aerospace industry continues growing, so too will its environmental impact. The International Air Transport Association (IATA) forecasts international air transportation to grow at an annual rate of 3.6 per cent over the next two decades. Decarbonizing this industry is not just an environmental issue, it’s also a national and moral imperative, one that requires strong collaboration between government, industry, and research institutions.

Pioneering new energy paths to decarbonization

Over the past 40 years, the sector has reduced CO₂ emissions per passenger kilometre by an impressive 80 per cent. Airbus and the industry are determined to advance innovation, and to find new technologies to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 as targeted by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the Air Transport Action Group, and IATA. The answer to a more environmentally responsible sky doesn’t lie in a single approach. Thus, we need to accelerate several high-potential pathways simultaneously such as:

1. Advanced aircraft design: Airbus is dedicated to designing more efficient aircraft. Our A220 models, destined for worldwide customers, but produced here in Canada, deliver 25 per cent lower CO₂ emissions compared to previous generations. These technological advancements are key to making immediate strides in reducing our carbon footprint—as they are already available and flying.

2. Sustainable aviation fuels (SAF): SAF have the potential to reduce emissions by up to 80 per cent compared to traditional kerosene. While SAF production is gaining momentum in the United States and Europe, Canada’s involvement is equally critical. But yet not sufficient enough. Airbus signed last year its participation in ICAO’s Act SAF program aiming at providing support for states in various stages of SAF development and deployment under ICAO coordination. By investing in local infrastructure and creating incentives, we can

accelerate SAF adoption. We call on Canadian stakeholders—from policymakers to fuel producers—to prioritize SAF as a central element of our national strategy.

3. Hydrogen-powered aircraft: Our team is making significant investments in hydrogen propulsion through our ZEROe project, which aims at launching a hydrogen-powered commercial aircraft by 2035. This groundbreaking initiative represents the future of aviation. To bring this vision to life, we must build a comprehensive hydrogen ecosystem, including production facilities and refueling infrastructure, at airports across Canada. A recent example is Airbus signing with Canada’s three busiest international airports—Montréal–Trudeau, Toronto Pearson, and Vancouver—to study the feasibility of hydrogen infrastructure.

A Canadian advantage

Canada can lead the global shift in sustainable aviation. Our country boasts one of the world’s robust aerospace industries supported by a unique ecosystem of research institutions, manufacturers, and innovators—all focused on addressing the challenges of the future. At Airbus, we are committed to advancing this ecosystem through partnerships with universities, government bodies, and technology developers.

Decarbonizing the aerospace industry is one of the most ambitious challenges of our time. Canada has a unique opportunity to lead the world in sustainable aerospace innovation, and through collaboration, we can pave the way to a more sustainable sky. The challenge ahead is significant, but so is our willingness to continue earning the right to fly.

Benoît Schultz moved to Montreal in August 2021 to take up his new role as CEO of Airbus Canada. He joined Airbus over 20 years ago, first in engineering, and then in leadership positions in finance, procurement and general management.

The Hill Times

Canada aerospace industry statistics



- In 2023, the Canadian aerospace industry contributed \$28.9-billion to GDP and 218,000 jobs to the Canadian economy. Between 2022 and 2023, the industry contributed an additional \$1.7-billion to GDP and 5,400 jobs to the Canadian economy.
- Canada’s aerospace industry reached 96 per cent of pre-pandemic employment levels in 2023.
- In 2023, the Canadian aerospace manufacturing industry exports were valued at \$19-billion. More than 75 per cent of aerospace manufacturing revenues were export-oriented, with nearly 60 per cent being supply chain related.
- The domestic aerospace industry is a research and development (R&D) leader, ranking first across Canadian manufacturing industries, with an R&D intensity 3.6 times higher than the manufacturing average.
- In 2023, Canada also maintained its global rank in the top five for civil flight simulators, civil engines, and civil aircraft sub-segments.

Source: State of Canada’s Aerospace Industry Report, July 11, 2024

Aerospace Policy Briefing



Canada's expertise in aircraft manufacturing and certification are envied around the world, and we cannot let this ability slip away, writes Mike Mueller, president and CEO of the Aerospace Industries Association of Canada. Photograph courtesy of Pexels.com

Why an Aerospace Industrial Strategy is crucial for Canada

If Canada wants to remain competitive in this strategic field, we need smart, supportive public policy.

Mike Mueller

Opinion



As Canada celebrates the 100th anniversary of the Royal Canadian Air Force, we're reminded of the importance of our aerospace sector—not just for defence, but as a critical engine for economic growth and innovation. Our domestic aerospace industry contributes nearly \$29-billion to our GDP, with approximately 218,000 jobs supported across the country. About a quarter of this contribution is defence-related, underscoring aerospace's role in national security and economic stability. Yet, despite our aerospace sector being a strategic asset for Canada, without the right political leadership and strategic support, this industry risks losing its global standing.

In the words of former NATO secretary general Jens Stolten-

berg, "without industry, there is no defence." Canada's Defence Policy Update, *Our North Strong and Free*, acknowledges the need for close industry collaboration, which is encouraging, but it lacks the concrete steps required to make this collaboration meaningful. A clear aerospace strategy would not only operationalize and institutionalize the policy update's goals, but also give our industry the predictability and support it needs to meet Canada's defence demands and sustain jobs.

Right now, in the absence of strong political leadership and an aerospace industrial strategy, Canada is missing the mark, and the world is taking notice. We are committed to defence goals like NORAD modernization and meeting NATO's two per cent defence spending target, yet we lack the urgency and coordination to get there. Investment and support are needed now, and without action from parliamentarians we are sending the wrong message to our allies as to the importance we place on our national security and sovereignty.

The government's imposition of a job-killing manufacturing tax on Canadian aircraft is also of great concern. Although intended as a revenue generator, this tax has resulted in severe consequences for the industry, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises that form the backbone of our aerospace ecosystem.

On behalf of the industry, I have been voicing concerns about the negative impacts of this tax, and despite multiple assessments, reports, and warnings, the facts are now clear. By the government's own account, the luxury tax has cost taxpayers \$19-million to administer, yet only \$15-million has been collected related to aircraft. Meanwhile, industry estimates that it has lost over \$1.8-billion dollars in sales due to this tax. The sale of these aircraft could have generated \$90-million in GST revenue for the government. Most troubling, according to the government's own Finance Department, this tax is putting well-paying aerospace jobs at risk; the industry estimates approximately 4,000 jobs across the country will be affected. This is why unions representing aerospace workers are also calling for a change to the tax.

Given the strategic importance of our aerospace sector, this is not a partisan issue, but a national imperative. If we want to remain competitive in this strategic field, we need smart, supportive public policy.

A strategic approach would strengthen our military readiness, drive economic growth, create jobs, and solidify our place as a leader in aerospace innovation. Without a clear aerospace industrial strategy, and political leadership from all parties, we risk falling short of our potential. The industry is projected to

see massive growth, with nearly 40,000 new aircraft needed worldwide over the coming decades. Canada's world-class capabilities across manufacturers, suppliers, and maintenance and repair organizations (MRO) uniquely position us to capitalize on this demand, benefiting both our economy, and our ability to deter and defend against threats.

The global aerospace sector is also rapidly accelerating toward more sustainable practices, particularly in reducing carbon emissions and advancing sustainable aviation fuels. Canada has the expertise to be a world leader in sustainability, but an aerospace industrial strategy is essential to guide and support the transition.

Testifying to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance, I underscored that, because of past political leadership, Canada is one of a select few countries that can design and build aircraft from nose to tail—and certify it.

Canada's expertise in aircraft manufacturing and certification is envied around the world, and we cannot let this ability slip away. It must be supported and funded properly. As a leading aerospace nation, we should not cede this ability to other competitor countries, allowing them to claim our share of the global aerospace market and the economic benefits that come with it.

In addition to certification, our aerospace sector is committed

to supporting national environmental goals, including achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 through the Aviation Action Plan, meeting these ambitious targets will require significant political leadership to ensure these goals are met and that Canada remains competitive globally.

In these times of heightened global uncertainty, we can no longer afford to treat our aerospace industry as an afterthought. Whether looking through the lens of defence, sustainability, or the economy, the need for an aerospace industrial strategy for Canada has never been clearer. With capabilities across the country—from manufacturers to suppliers to MRO—our nation has the foundation needed to lead in aerospace. A strategy that combines defence, economic growth, and sustainability objectives would provide the industry with the predictability and planning it needs to thrive.

It cannot be stressed enough that this is a non-partisan issue. By repealing the manufacturing tax and implementing a real aerospace strategy, we can keep Canada's industry strong and ready for the future. A dedicated aerospace industrial strategy will also safeguard our economic resilience, strengthen national security, and position us as a leader in sustainable aviation and innovation.

It is time for parliamentarians to act decisively and collaboratively—aligning our defence needs, industrial capacity, and environmental goals to establish a prosperous and secure future for Canadians.

Mike Mueller is the president and CEO of the Aerospace Industries Association of Canada, and vice-chair of the International Coordinating Council of Aerospace Industry Associations.

The Hill Times

Regarding commercial aviation, the federal government's current governance model does not work, and it's time for a tectonic shift, writes Pierre Ruel, president and CEO-elect of the Air Transport Association of Canada. *Unsplash photograph by Red Dot*



Canadian aviation is in dire need of government attention

It's time for the federal government to consider alternate organizational models for the oversight and regulation of the vital aviation sector.

Pierre Ruel

Opinion



I once heard a colleague of mine say that "Canada is the largest empty country in the world."

That person did not mean to say anything negative about our beloved country. Instead, he was referring to the critical role of aviation for connecting people and moving goods in such a vast land. So true yet, the very high costs of the various fees and taxes

attached to air transportation and the regretful fate of some start-up airlines are troubling, very troubling. I contend that Canadian aviation is in dire need of government attention.

During the recent Air Transport Association of Canada conference in Vancouver, it was obvious that air operators, industry partners, stakeholders, and Transport Canada representatives all share a common goal: a continued safe, vibrant, and sustainable domestic air transport industry. Why then, is it so hard for airlines and their partners to thrive, or even survive?

The current (2021) mandate letter from the prime minister outlining the objectives of the transport minister is approximately 2,000 words long, and buried somewhere towards the end is a sub-paragraph relating to the "air sector." It reads: "Continue to advance the restart of a competitive and viable air sector. ..." In today's context, this is arguably an unremarkable and unspectacular objective.

I strongly believe that, as it pertains to commercial aviation, the federal government's current

governance model does not work, and it's time for a tectonic shift. The Canadian government made a pivotal transformation to the governance of the country's aviation in 1996 when it privatized civil air navigation services. This allowed NAV Canada to focus on its customers, and to innovate unlike any other similar organization. Also in the 1990s, the decision to transfer airports from the federal government to privately operated airport authorities or—in other cases—to municipal, provincial governments, or private-sector interests was a significant game changer. Alas, with this concept came the notion that direct users—not taxpayers—should shoulder as much of the costs of air transport as possible. This is an idea that warrants revision 30 years after implementation. By all accounts, changes to the governance model of commercial aviation can be made, so let's get on with it.

Transport Canada is a multi-mode department where civil aviation is positioned under the safety and security group—in other words, it's quite low in the organization chart. In that

sense, it is unique, and not in a good way. The director general of Transport Canada Civil Aviation is primarily responsible for this country's aviation safety. That is a critical mandate, and a very honourable mission where people are laser focused to protect the travelling public. However, the same director general is not responsible for policies or programs, and has no formal authority on regional headquarters.

Stated differently, he or she does not have the authority to compensate financially for the potential impacts of new regulations, standards, or directives that he or she is advancing on behalf of the minister. Where this matters the most is at airports, which are the hubs of aviation, where everyone converges (I would argue they are a "public good" from a pure economic perspective). If safer regulations impact how an air operator can access—or not—a remote airport, then it would make sense to have financial support earmarked to mitigate the implementation of the new regulations at that airport. Those of you who have a good knowledge of the regulatory

process will point to the regulatory impact assessment that is part of regulatory packages. Such assessments only go so far, and may not cover issues such as operational flexibility, access, etc. They don't cover the big picture.

In the United States, the Federal Aviation Administration is a stand-alone agency. Europe has the European Union Aviation Safety Agency, and Brazil has the Agência Nacional de Aviação Civil. Almost every other country in the world has a focused organization devoted to civil aviation matters, whereas Canada does not. This organizational anomaly does not serve the interests of domestic aviation effectively or economically. As for past reorganization of the Canadian air navigation system—i.e., NAV Canada—it is now time for the federal government to consider alternate organizational models for the oversight and regulation of the vital aviation sector.

A continued safe, vibrant, and sustainable Canadian air transport industry would ensure that the citizens of the "largest empty (and most beautiful) country in the world" are connected, and that the economy is flying. The Air Transport Association of Canada remains available and eager to work with government authorities and stakeholders. So, let's do it!

Pierre Ruel is the president and CEO-elect of the Air Transport Association of Canada. His broad aviation experience spans over three decades with the Royal Canadian Air Force, Ornge, Transport Canada Civil Aviation, and the Boeing Company. He is a graduate of the fighter weapons instructor course, holds an airline transport pilot licence with a valid instrument rating and a seaplane endorsement.

The Hill Times

Aerospace Policy Briefing

Securing blue skies: why we need to invest in aerospace research

By strengthening ties between universities and industry, we can build a sustainable and resilient vision for this vital ecosystem.

Maud Cohen

Opinion



Aerospace is a strategic sector for Canada, both economically and in terms of sovereignty, writes Maud Cohen, president of Polytechnique Montréal. Photograph courtesy of Pexels.com

As globalization slows and supply chains face upheaval, Canada must urgently align its industrial, innovation, and scientific research policies in a critical sector for its economy: aerospace. The future of this strategic hub for Canada depends on it, as does our ability to develop independent solutions and bolster our technological leadership on a global scale.

Canadian engineering universities like Polytechnique Montréal have played a pivotal role

in recent years in the emergence and consolidation of our domestic aerospace industry. They have contributed not only by training specialist engineers for the sector—partly through its BScA in aerospace engineering—but also by driving technological advances through partnerships with SMEs and major industry players.

Our experts are currently collaborating with firms like Bombardier to develop the next generation of aircrafts, which will be more aerodynamic and lightweight, reducing the industry's carbon footprint. Meanwhile,

researchers in the Safran Industrial Research Chair on Additive Manufacturing of Organic Matrix Composites are pioneering new techniques for producing parts through 3D printing with composite materials. Similarly, the team behind the Canada Research Chair in Advanced Manufacturing of Multifunctional Adaptive Structures is working to integrate smart materials into aircrafts to lower energy consumption.

The contributions of Polytechnique Montréal's research teams go far beyond mechanical engineering. All engineering dis-

ciplines are involved. In chemical engineering, one team is developing game-changing processes for the production of biofuel. Our software engineering experts are focusing on integrating AI into flight decision-making, while others are developing cybersecurity tools tailored to the aerospace industry to defend against the real threat of cyberattacks. One of our industrial engineering research programs aims at optimizing the recovery and reuse of aircraft parts at the end of their lifecycle.

In the realm of engineering physics, teams are designing disruptive materials and devices for Canadian aerospace firms, whether through new semiconductor generations or optoelectronic technologies based on fiber optics.

Supporting the rise of a space economy

Whereas the above-mentioned advancements pertain to aeronautics, space exploration is equally thriving. Polytechnique Montréal already has a foothold on the moon through Astrolith, its Transdisciplinary Research Unit on Space Resource and Infra-

structure Engineering, the first such initiative in Canada.

Researchers at Astrolith are collaborating with space agencies and industry on projects aimed at exploring the moon and Mars. Whether it be communication between rovers, advanced satellite communication technologies, tools for facilitating human settlement on the moon, or materials tailored to extreme conditions, a wide range of initiatives are underway to support the growth of the Canadian space economy.

That said, the impact of universities is not limited to applied research. Their ability to attract investments, forge international partnerships, and foster technology transfer is a significant asset—especially in this era of supply-chain uncertainty. These collaborations enable industry to directly benefit from scientific advances while strengthening this country's position on the global stage.

Aerospace is a strategic sector for Canada, both economically and also in terms of sovereignty. By strengthening ties between universities and industry, we can build a sustainable and resilient vision for this vital ecosystem. Polytechnique Montréal, with its multidisciplinary expertise and commitment to excellence, is ready to take a leading role in this collective effort. It is now up to policymakers to recognize this opportunity and invest in a future that will benefit all Canadians.

Maud Cohen is the president of Polytechnique Montréal. *The Hill Times*

National aerospace strategy needs to focus on climate change mitigation

To reduce aviation's climate change impact we must reduce dependence on fossil fuels, and the total energy consumed.

David Zingg

Opinion



Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne said 'we are joining forces with the industry to develop a national aerospace strategy, aimed at keeping leaders ahead in sustainable technologies,' in an Innovation press release on Nov. 6, 2024. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Although it is well known that Canada's aerospace sector plays an important role in our economy and consistently punches above its weight, government support for the sector falls short of what is seen in many other countries. The exception is the Government of Quebec, which generally does an excellent job of supporting its aerospace sector. This situation has led to calls for a national aerospace strategy to ensure that the Canadian aero-

space sector has the support it needs to grow and continue to contribute to the domestic economy. This is a good idea, as long as it is done with appropriate consultation with all stakeholders in the ecosystem, as was the case for the last Aerospace Review completed in 2012.

There are two crucial aspects that an aerospace strategy must address. First, it must focus on climate change mitigation, as this is by far the largest current threat to the future of aviation. To reduce the climate change impact of aviation, we must reduce the dependence on fossil fuels and the total energy consumed. The latter can be achieved by replacing some flights below a certain distance with an alternative mode of transportation, such as electric trains, and by improving the energy efficiency of aircraft and their engines. Therefore, it is important for a national aerospace strategy to recognize that, in addition to developers of next generation fuels, the key players in greening aviation are aircraft and engine manufacturers. Notwithstanding their overall importance, smaller firms have a lesser role to play when it comes to climate change mitigation, given that the components they supply will have a smaller impact on energy efficiency than the system-level decisions made by engine and aircraft manufacturers. Moreover, the burgeoning urban air-taxi industry runs counter to the goal of reducing energy consumption.

The second key to a successful strategy is that it must provide support for the entire aerospace ecosystem, including universities, government labs, and industry, which is only as strong as its weakest link. University research in aerospace is generally taken for granted and excluded from such discussions, but unless aerospace is recognized as a strategic area, university research in this field will lag behind areas currently receiving targeted support. Similarly, a national aerospace strategy must provide a clear role for the National Research Council's (NRC) Aerospace Research Centre along with the resources to deliver. Fortunately, we have successful past programs that provide excellent examples, and there is no need to reinvent the wheel. One of the best was the Technology Demonstration Program launched in 2013. The program run by Bombardier was a perfect model for future initiatives, as it engaged small companies, universities, and the NRC Aerospace Research Centre, while working primarily toward improving energy efficiency and thus reducing climate change impact. This led to a step increase in the capa-

bilities at Canadian universities (which unfortunately are currently being underutilized).

Another successful example was the federally funded Green Aviation Research and Development Network, which supported industry while at the same time ensuring that support flowed to universities and NRC. It is hoped that the new Initiative for Sustainable Aviation Technology will eventually provide similar support to universities and NRC as well as small and large firms.

Aerospace is a highly-competitive R&D-intensive sector where Canada has an outstanding track record of technological achievement and economic benefits. For these benefits to continue, strategic investment is urgently needed, as other countries are investing heavily in aerospace. If the national aerospace strategy is done properly, with a focus on climate change mitigation and recognition of the importance of the entire Canadian aerospace ecosystem, the rewards of such investment will be considerable.

David Zingg has been named the distinguished professor of computational aerodynamics and sustainable aviation at the University of Toronto Institute for Aerospace Studies, where he leads the Centre for Research in Sustainable Aviation. He was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship for research in design of environmentally-friendly aircraft in 2004.

The Hill Times

Flying into the future: the case for sustainable aeronautics

Canada should catalyze its academics by integrating a sustainable aviation research initiative within the aerospace strategy.

Dr. Suzanne Kearns & Dr. Amr ElAlfy

Opinion



Aviation connects our world, driving cultural exchange, economic growth, and societal progress. However, this critical industry faces an existential challenge. Aviation is a hard-to-decarbonize sector. It currently contributes about 2.5 per cent of global emissions, but that figure could rise to more than 20 per cent by 2050 as other industries more easily decarbonize. Already, about half of aviation's emissions are produced by the wealthiest one per cent of our population. Without meaningful progress toward

sustainability, aviation risks losing its social license—the informal public approval and acceptance that allows the industry to operate. Signs of this erosion are already visible in the rise of flight-shaming movements, and activist actions at airports. For an industry reliant on public trust and goodwill, losing this support and legitimacy would be a serious setback.

The aviation industry has rallied around the ambitious goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050, with sustainable aviation fuels projected to contribute over 50 per cent toward this target. However, challenges extend beyond carbon reduction alone. Non-carbon impacts, such as contrails—thin, cloud-like condensation trails that form behind aircraft in certain atmospheric conditions—may have an even greater warming effect than carbon dioxide emissions. Achieving sustainability in aviation calls for solutions that go beyond carbon reduction, requiring expertise from multiple fields and a comprehensive, multi-dimensional approach.

In today's global marketplace, Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles guide companies' approaches to sustainability, and measure impacts across multiple dimensions, illustrating the need to address

diverse issues. ESG standards encourage firms to consider not only emissions, but also policy, employee and public health, resource use, and the social implications of their operations. For aviation, this holistic approach requires integrating sustainability across all facets, from fuel sourcing and workforce impacts to safety and customer transparency. This framework emphasizes that true sustainability transcends reducing aviation's carbon emissions, demanding actions across a full spectrum of environmental and social considerations.

Canada's aerospace industry is often said to punch above its weight on the global stage, yet the academic community has untapped potential to amplify this leadership through leveraging its versatile strengths linked to sustainability. Interdisciplinary collaboration in academia is essential for solving complex, real-world problems, yet it can be challenging to translate academic expertise into practical solutions. Experts often work within the boundaries of their fields, which can lead to knowledge silos. Addressing these challenges demands a national strategy embedding interdisciplinary sustainability-focused research into aerospace priorities.

Aligned with the broad definition of sustainability within ESG frameworks, sustainable aeronautics research encompasses social, environmental, and economic dimensions. Social sustainability focuses on human factors and workforce viability. Environmental efforts target renewable fuels, alternative propulsion, route optimization, and infrastructure. Economic sustainability drives innovations like drones and electric vertical takeoff aircraft. These examples highlight just a fraction of the work across and at the intersections of these dimensions. The Waterloo Institute for Sustainable Aeronautics, launched in 2021, exemplifies the potential for coordinated interdisciplinary collaboration, uniting over 150 professors to tackle complex sustainability challenges alongside industry and government partners. For example, sustainable aviation fuels require engineering expertise to refine production techniques, environmental science to assess ecological impacts, and economics to establish viable pricing models. Similarly, addressing non-carbon effects, such as contrails, involves atmospheric scientists, aerospace engineers, and policy experts working together to evaluate impacts and develop standards. Interdisciplin-

ary academic partnerships will play a critical role in advancing practical solutions to aviation's sustainability challenges.

To harness this potential, Canada should catalyze our academic community by integrating a sustainable aviation research initiative within its national aerospace strategy. Such an initiative would empower domestic researchers to spearhead innovation, building a pipeline of advanced technologies, novel ideas, and skilled talent to lead the sector toward a viable future. With our strengths spanning engineering, environmental science, public policy, economics, and many more, Canada is well positioned to set a new global benchmark for responsible, forward-thinking aviation.

This is a pivotal moment. By prioritizing sustainable aviation academic research as a national imperative, we can chart a path toward an aviation industry that continues to connect and inspire while respecting the environmental boundaries of our planet.

Dr. Suzanne Kearns is an associate professor of aviation at the University of Waterloo, and the founding director of the Waterloo Institute for Sustainable Aeronautics (WISA). Dr. Amr ElAlfy is an assistant professor for the School of Environment, Enterprise, and Development at the University of Waterloo. He also serves as the associate director of the WISA, where he focuses on enhancing environmental, social, and governance performance within the aeronautics sector.

The Hill Times

What must be done to boost global confidence in our aerospace supply chain?

Our aerospace sector represents this country's biggest contribution to strong global commercial and defence programs, and this contribution deserves—and needs—public support.

John Gradek

Opinion



The global commercial-aerospace sector has experienced modest but steady growth since mid-2020, when demand for air travel began to recover from the

precipitous drop caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. By December 2023, demand was back to 97 per cent of pre-pandemic levels, and it's expected to grow between five and 10 per cent annually through 2026. New aircraft orders now total about 15,700. The open-order backlog would take 13 years to address, assuming 2023 delivery rates.

The aerospace and defence industry comprises a highly complex supply chain with multiple tiers of suppliers. For instance, an average American commercial aerospace original equipment manufacturer (OEM) has more than 200 Tier 1 suppliers, and 12,000 Tier 2 or Tier 3 suppliers. Major industry players are confronting supply chain challenges including everything from securing their most critical materials to ensuring part and component deliveries. While many firms have begun working to balance supply chain resilience with efficiency, parts shortages and delivery delays, shipping costs, and sourcing concerns are likely to continue impacting the industry, putting supply chain visibility at the forefront for the years ahead.

Canadian aerospace OEMs are not immune from these global concerns. In 2023, this country exported over \$19-billion of aerospace equipment and, while this represents growth from previous years, supply chain performance issues have increased. More and more domestic aerospace firms have experienced difficulties in meeting the exacting provisioning needs of the aerospace marketplace, resulting in concerns about the reliability and confidence of Canadian suppliers. In last year's aerospace policy briefing in *The Hill Times*, I asked the question of supply chain issues as either a structural problem or just a passing phase. This year, the question remains: how are Canadian aerospace firms failing, and what must be done to increase global confidence in our aerospace supply chain?

The growth rate of the global aerospace sector has reflected aerospace constructors increasing their production capabilities and their associated resources and infrastructure to meet demand. And I use the term constructors rather than OEMs as such firms as Airbus, Boeing,

Embraer, RTX, GE, Lockheed Martin, among many others, have evolved primarily into purchasers of parts and components from true OEMs, and are now assemblers of aerospace components and vehicles. Thus, the reliance on suppliers to ensure that the "right" part is in the "right" place at the "right" time in the "right" quantity with the "right" quality. Not just for Tier 1 suppliers, but for the thousands of Tier 2 and Tier 3 suppliers. For Canadian OEM firms, this degree of supply chain precision and execution is daunting in their normal flow of product, let alone when their constructor customers are requiring increased production levels to meet market demands. Canadian OEMs are in urgent need of both expertise and capital to meet such demand, with significant risk to their relevance—and potentially their survival—in tomorrow's global aerospace supply chain. Constructors have sophisticated supply chain management tools and practices that facilitate alternative supplier identification and parts specification, using supply network analytics and risk

management approaches if they sense an inability for suppliers to meet objectives.

The path to addressing such risk for home-grown aerospace OEMs needs greater attention. While a number of federal programs have been touting the support being provided to the Canadian aerospace sector to maintain R&D leadership and promote industry-government-academic cooperation, there remains a need to establish appropriate funding mechanisms in support of Canadian OEMs needs for investment in growth and capabilities.

Our aerospace sector represents this country's significant contribution to strong global commercial and defence programs and this contribution deserves, and needs, public support. Time is short to undertake this much-needed reinforcement.

John Gradek is a professional engineer, academic program co-ordinator of the supply networks programs at McGill's school of continuing studies in Montreal, and is a member of the Transportation Appeal Tribunal of Canada.

The Hill Times

News

Japan not taking part in procurement bid for Canadian Navy's new subs

With billions of dollars at stake and Arctic security concerns, Canada's submarine procurement competition is poised to be one of the decade's most sought after deals.

BY IREM KOCA & NEIL MOSS

One of the two in-service submarine designs being considered as among the faster options to replace the Canadian Navy's fleet will not be offered to Canada, according to multiple sources.

Japan was the only country, except for South Korea, where an in-service design was offered, which would be ready for deployment sooner than others—a requirement considered critical by some defence experts.

Canada formally kicked-off the procurement process for 12 conventionally powered submarines—meaning non-nuclear vessels, using diesel-electric engines—when it issued a Request for Information (RFI) in September to explore options. Interested parties were invited to submit responses—marking the first step in the procurement process—by Nov. 18. A few days before the deadline, the Japan's embassy in Ottawa confirmed to *The Hill Times* that Japanese companies would not be responding to the government's call.

"We believe that there is no plan on the part of Japanese companies to take part in the planned procurement project of submarines for the Canadian Navy," reads a Nov. 15 statement from the embassy.

Multiple sources told *The Hill Times* that Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI) won't be putting forward the Taigei-class submarine as a potential replacement for Canada's fleet of Victoria-class submarines. MHI didn't respond for comment by deadline.

The Taigei-class conventional diesel-electric powered submarines are the newest in Japan's fleet, and they were amongst the options considered for the Canadian Navy by the Canadian Patrol Submarine Project team.

Richard Shimooka, a defence procurement expert and senior fellow at the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, said Japan's option was "likely among the frontrunners, which means there's one less option for a competition."

Mark Norman, a retired vice-admiral and senior fellow at the Canadian Global Affairs Institute, said the loss of the Japanese submarine "would not be a surprise nor critical."

"The Japanese do not have any history of major export production of military capabilities, and it would have shocked me if they saw a potential Canadian purchase as sufficiently compelling to change their national strategy," Norman said by email.

St. Francis Xavier University professor Adam Lajeunesse, a research chair in Arctic and marine security, said there is a "significant and important benefit" from purchasing a vessel already in production.

While the Liberal commitment for new submarines in the Defence Policy Update had Arctic under-ice capabilities in mind, Lajeunesse said none of the designs being considered are built for that.

But he said it remains uncertain to what extent Japan's decision not to bid will affect the procurement.

"We don't know if the government is looking to get something quickly. We don't know if it's looking to constrain costs. We don't if there are industrial considerations taking precedence. Or if there are diplomatic considerations," he said, remarking that one of the most crucial considerations should be speed.

"We needed these ships last year."

Canada aims to award a contract by 2028, and anticipates the delivery of the first new submarine no later than 2035 to avoid any capability gaps during the transition between vessels. The current submarine fleet will remain operational into the mid-to-late 2030s under the Victoria-class Modernization project.

There is no dollar amount attached to the RFI, but defense observers have previously predicted the purchase would be "eye-wateringly expensive," with some estimating the total cost could rise to \$120-billion, or \$10-billion per submarine.

What are Canada's options?

The Canadian Patrol Submarine Project team had previ-

ously visited France, Germany, Japan, South Korea, Spain, and Sweden to explore submarine replacement option. With billions of dollars at stake and escalating security threats in the Arctic, the competition for Canada's submarine procurement is poised to be one of the most-sought-after deals of the past decade. Japan's decision to bow out limits Canada's choices, given South Korean subs are the only others on the market currently in service.

Public Services and Procurement Canada had not answered *The Hill Times'* questions about which companies responded to the RFI. PSPC spokesperson Stéfanie Hamel said in a statement this stage of the RFI "will help inform the decision-making process moving forward, including a proposed procurement strategy."

The submarine from South Korea's Hanwha Ocean and Hyundai is a strong contender as the future design of Canada's fleet. Hanwha Ocean, which responded to the government's RFI, offers Canada the lithium-ion battery-powered KSS-III which operates in the Indo-Pacific region and can stay submerged for up to three weeks. A Hanwha representative told *The Hill Times* the vessel "meets all of the requirements for the Canadian Patrol Submarine Project, including Arctic operations."

According to a Hanwha representative, the company can deliver the submarines "well ahead of Canada's critical submarine replacement timelines" with the first vessel delivered within six years of signing the contract, followed by another submarine every 12 months. According to that timeline, if selected, the Navy could have an entire fleet of 12 delivered in 17 years—by 2043.

Germany's ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems (TkMS) group is also preparing to bid. The company has several conventionally powered submarines in its portfolio. Six of these new vessels are already under construction—two for Germany and four for Norway—under the \$8.1-billion joint submarine program. The first tests are reportedly scheduled to begin in 2027, with delivery to Norway in 2029. Both nations invited Canada to join this alliance. Defence Minister Bill Blair (Scarborough Southwest, Ont.) reportedly signed a letter of intent to establish a trilateral maritime partnership during the

NATO summit, but emphasized that it does not commit Canada to joining their submarine program.

Germany's Ambassador to Canada Tjorven Bellmann told *The Hill Times* the country is "excited" to participate in the bidding process "with an attractive offer." Bellmann said the Germany offers Canada "a cost-effective and customizable" product that "will be available fast and offer interoperability within the NATO framework."

In an Oct. 29 email, TkMS President Rick Gerbrecht said his firm is "absolutely" pursuing the deal, putting forward an "attractive" proposition that will "promote high value employment and national sustainment, and that TkMS's procurement plan includes technology transfer, strategic partnerships, and long-term in-service support.

"We are the NATO standard," said Gerbrecht, adding that TkMS currently supplies 70 per cent of the military alliance's conventional submarines.

Sweden's C-71—another in-design option Canada is considering—is being marketed for export, but details such as speed and operational features haven't been fully disclosed to the public.

Simon Carroll, head of Saab Canada, said in an email the company is "excited that the program is moving forward and to take part in the RFI."

While Carroll noted it is too early in the process to detail what features the Sweden option could offer, he emphasized Saab's confidence in meeting the Navy's high-level mandatory requirements, including adhering to the proposed delivery schedule and ensuring the new submarines are fully interoperable with the United States, Five Eyes, and NATO allies.

The French option by Naval Group is Shortfin Barracuda, a conventionally powered variant of the Barracuda-class nuclear-powered submarines. Spokesperson Benedicte Mano said Naval Group does not comment on "prospective acquisition processes," but acknowledged Canada's "large-scale strategic project" and said the company has "extensive experience" and "a wide range of products to meet the needs of navies around the world."

The Hill Times also did not receive a response by deadline from the Spanish company S-80 reportedly considered as an option.

What do the experts say?

Experts say the Canadian Navy's decision hinges on balancing technical details with strategic needs, particularly in Arctic and NATO operations

According to Shimooka, "the core consideration [for Canada] is to get a vessel into the water and crews training by 2035—everything works backward from that."

"This means that platforms that are in service, able to meet Canada's requirements, and the teams that have the ability to produce the vessels at scale are clearly at an advantage," Shimooka said.

Lajeunesse said none of the submarines being considered "are truly Arctic capable."

"The reality does not match the rhetoric," he said. "No conventional submarine is Arctic capable. You are not going to launch deep Arctic operations. You are not going to maintain a regular presence under the ice without a nuclear powerplant."

Unlike conventionally-powered submarines, nuclear-powered vessels have the ability to puncture through ice if required.

Lajeunesse said Canada would likely be limited to operations along the ice edge, with the ability to go under ice for a few hours.

According to Norman, all options offer viable solutions for Canada, but, "it's too early to determine with any confidence 'the best option.'"

"Each platform, whether already in service or a derivative of an existing or previous design, has pros and cons based on the complex trade-offs required in the design and construction of the different submarines," Norman said.

Norman—who spent more than three decades in the Canadian Navy and served as vice-chief of defence staff—managed numerous major procurement projects during his time in the Forces. He also came to public attention in 2017 when he was accused of releasing confidential information related to a \$700-million procurement of naval supply ships. Charges were dropped in 2019, and Norman received an all-party apology from the House of Commons.

Norman argued that Ottawa's decision will be influenced by geo-strategic consideration.

"Ultimately, Canada will be entering a partnership with whichever nation supplies the new submarines. The question isn't so much whether one partnership is more 'policy compliant' than another; the bigger consideration is who Canada wants to partner with for the longer term," said Norman.

He added that timing is a key factor in replacing the Victoria-class vessels before they become obsolete.

"The need for urgency has been openly discussed, and every year that Canada waits, the more critical the schedule becomes."

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Feds request \$24.8-billion boost as Liberals double down on budget 2024 pledges in latest estimates

A quarter of new spending in the latest estimates is tied to the 2024 federal budget with big-ticket items for Indigenous Services and National Defence. But some programs like pharmacare and the Canada Disability Benefit are yet to be funded.



Treasury Board President Anita Anand tabled the government's latest spending estimates on Nov. 18, including big-ticket items for Indigenous Services and National Defence. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

BY IAN CAMPBELL

The Liberal government's latest round of estimates outline \$6.4-billion in new spending to fulfill budget 2024 promises, representing about a quarter of the total dollars set out.

On Nov. 18, Treasury Board President Anita Anand (Oakville, Ont.) tabled the supplementary estimates B in the House of Commons, outlining \$24.8-billion in new budgetary spending for 2024-25—\$21.6-billion of which will be subject to parliamentary votes. The other \$3.2-billion in statutory measures are already approved through existing legislation. The document also outlines \$676-million in statutory non-budgetary measures that affect the government's fiscal position, but not its bottom line.

The new budgetary spending plan brings the year-to-date total to \$486.7-billion, up from last year's total of \$479.4-billion in the corresponding estimates.

An ongoing privilege debate in the House means MPs can't currently vote on the portion requiring their approval. But if and when the measures do come to a vote, MPs will be weighing some big-ticket items from the 2024 budget related to Indigenous services and defence, as well as additional personnel spending in the public service.

Tracking Budget 2024 initiatives

The Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO), which has been tracking the implementation of budget 2024 measures in the estimates, identified 241 budget initiatives in this year's fiscal blueprint, excluding "off-cycle measures" that were introduced following the previous year's fiscal update.

The PBO found more than 200 of those measures pledged new money for the 2024-25 fiscal year, with the latest estimates seeking funding for 143 of them. That aspect of the supplementary request totals \$6.4-billion—about a quarter of the budgetary measures outlined in the document.

The supplementary estimates B are the second opportunity for the government to request budget 2024-related funds because the main estimates were tabled prior to this year's budget.

According to the PBO's tally, the government has so far requested \$8-billion for budget 2024 promises in the two supplementary estimates.

By comparison, at the same stage in last year's fiscal cycle, the PBO analysis found the government had requested a slightly larger amount of money, but for a smaller number of initiatives tied to that year's budget—approximately \$10-billion for 89 of the 2023 federal budget's 170 planned spending initiatives.

PBO Yves Giroux said this likely either means that some departments moved their spending proposals through Treasury Board more quickly this year, or they had a better idea of expected initiatives ahead of the budget, and were able to do more work in advance.

"Either they were not taken by surprise on as many fronts by budget funding, or they worked more diligently post-budget to get these initiatives ready," said Giroux.

There remain several key budget 2024 pledges that have yet to receive appropriations in any of the estimates to date. The list includes \$59-million that was budgeted this fiscal year for launching the national pharmacare program. The government recently told *The Hill Times* it's in talks with all jurisdictions on reaching pharmacare agreements, but multiple provincial and territorial governments have said they have not received "any details," or are not in "formal" talks.

Also missing from the estimates to date are the government's pledged \$43-million to launch a Canada Disability Benefit; \$42-million for "Investing in CBC/Radio-Canada"; or \$50-million for an initiative called "More Skilled Trades Workers Building Homes," \$5-million of which was set to come from existing departmental resources.

Big ticket items

The five largest items in these estimates tied to the 2024 budget—as identified by the PBO—

are related to Indigenous Services or National Defence.

The estimates seek \$629-million for First Nations and Inuit Health, \$348-million for First Nation K-12 education, and \$314-million for supporting Indigenous mental health. These are the first-, second-, and fifth-largest budget 2024 requests, respectively, in the document.

They form part of \$4.5-billion in total new spending for Indigenous Services Canada requested through the supplementary estimates B, including budgetary measures from previous years.

"It's a bit surprising to see money of that magnitude relatively late in the year for programs that are otherwise quite predictable," said Giroux, noting some of the programs in this request were announced before the budget.

"But maybe they were faced with unforeseen or unexpected increase in costs."

The third- and fourth-largest items come from the Department of National Defence, which is seeking \$320-million and \$317-million, respectively, to provide military support to Ukraine and maintain its naval vessels.

In total, the department is requesting \$763.5-million in these estimates to provide military aid to Ukraine, including the \$320-million tied to budget 2024.

This is part of an overall \$3.3-billion in new spending for National Defence, across all budgetary measures.

There's also money in the estimates for Ukraine across some other departments. The Canadian Security Intelligence Service is seeking \$4.4-million to provide assistance for Ukraine, while Global Affairs Canada is requesting about \$45-million to "advance humanitarian demining and promote cyber resilience in Ukraine."

All of those measures will require approval by MPs, but an additional \$400-million loan to Ukraine will not be caught up in the current parliamentary gridlock because it is a statutory measure.

Personnel spending

There's also about \$2.9-billion of new budgetary spending on personnel in these estimates, with about half of that going to the Treasury Board Secretariat.

Giroux said this new spending highlights "two opposing trends."

"On the one hand, you have the government indicating that it plans on reducing the size of the public service by 5,000 over four years through attrition. So you'd expect a slowing down of the increases, or even a stabilization of the personnel spending," said Giroux. "On the other hand, the budget included several measures that require additional [full-time-equivalent staff.]"

For example, he pointed to budget 2024 commitments to improve call centre services and clear immigration backlogs.

Giroux said it appears those efforts are "apparently taking precedence" over the anticipated decline in the size of the public service.

"It seems that the trend that we've seen over the last several years is continuing with more public servants," said Giroux. "Despite the fact that the government has indicated through multiple exercises that it will exercise expenditure restraints or re-allocations, it doesn't seem to be happening."

Estimates come without 'accurate picture' of last fiscal year

Parliamentarians must assess these estimates without knowing the bottom line from the last fiscal year because the public accounts for the 2023-24 fiscal year still have yet to be released.

The PBO has been calling for an earlier mandatory release date for the public accounts so that MPs and Senators have that information when they are assessing documents like the supplementary estimates B, as well as the fall economic statement.

"We don't know what the deficit was for last year, but parliamentarians are asked to agree to more spending," said Giroux.

He noted that MPs also do not have final numbers on any "individual department's spending profile compared to their authority" from the previous fiscal year, meaning they do not know whether departments lapsed on using some of the funds they were previously allocated.

"It's asking parliamentarians to agree to spending of dozens of billions without giving them an accurate picture of what happened last year," he said. "So it's depriving them of very useful information on the fiscal situation of the government."

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Supplementary Estimates B for 2024-25

Numbers are in billions of dollars.

	Budgetary	Non-budgetary	Totals
Voted	\$21.6	\$0	\$21.6
Statutory	\$3.2	\$0.7	\$3.9
Totals	\$24.8	\$0.7	

Government spending is reflected in budgetary measures, while non-budgetary measures like loans and investments affect the government's fiscal position but not its bottom line.

Voted measures must be approved by Parliament, while statutory measures do not require a vote because they are sanctioned by legislation already on the books.

News

House filibuster is putting money for military, dental care, and keeping the government lights on at risk

Treasury Board President Anita Anand says departments are 'okay for the next three to four weeks' if a vote on supplementary estimates is delayed by the House standoff.

Continued from page 1

"That, basically, is the funds that keep the lights on in government, so to speak," said NDP MP Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, B.C.).

"There's a lot of really important things in there: funding for veterans, funding for the Air Force, funding to pay our civil servants. So I'm hoping to find a way forward to make sure that those funds flow," he said.

Blame game

Regular legislative business in the Chamber has been stalled since Sept. 26. That was when House Speaker Greg Fergus (Hull-Aylmer, Que.) ruled that the government violated parliamentary privilege for not fulfilling a House order by handing over all documents related to the now-defunct Sustainable Development Technology Canada (SDTC).

Motions of privilege take precedent over other House business, meaning debate over supplementary estimates (B)'s related supply bill will be added to the growing backlog of legislative items that still need to be debated and voted upon.

"We need the House to function," said Treasury Board President Anita Anand (Oakville, Ont.).

"We need the opposition to recognize the importance of the supplementary estimates on the functioning of this country as well as this government, and we urge the opposition to stop playing political games and get down to the business of serving Canadians," said Anand, who tabled supplementary estimates (B) last week in the House.

But the Conservatives have said the ball is in the Liberals' court when it comes to ending the filibuster.

"The Speaker has ruled that no other business can take place until



The filibuster has put the approval of estimates, which includes \$21.6-billion in proposed government spending, at risk. Clockwise from top left: Government House Leader Karina Gould, Treasury Board President Anita Anand, Defence Minister Bill Blair, NDP MP Don Davies, NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh, and Conservative House Leader Andrew Scheer. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

this this order has been complied with. The Trudeau Liberals are choosing not to comply with this order. So it's really up to them," Conservative House Leader Andrew Scheer (Regina-Qu'Appelle, Sask.) told reporters on Nov. 19.

Government House Leader Karina Gould (Burlington, Ont.) has said that handing over all SDTC-related documents to the RCMP is "inappropriate" since it goes around due process and police independence.

On the nearly 29,000 documents they did provide to the House, Gould said "we've done so in a way that respects the rights of Canadians, and respects the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and respects the separation of powers in this place."

However, Scheer said the government is "picking and choosing which documents it hands over."

Potential pause in the paralysis

While the Bloc Québécois aren't looking to bail out the Liberals after failing to meet their demands on Old Age Security and protecting supply management, all eyes have been on the NDP to see if they will provide the government a lifeline during the filibuster.

However, the leader of the New Democrats hasn't been forthcoming on whether he would rescue the Liberals from the parliamentary impasse.

"They're seeing the Liberals and Conservatives play games in here. The Liberals could just disclose the documents. That's what's holding up this matter," said NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, B.C.) to reporters on Nov. 20. "The Conservatives just want to hold this up because they want to play games. They don't want anything to happen in the House. So I blame both of them, particularly at a time when people are hurting."

While supporting a closure motion might not be in the cards for the NDP, the party is looking to pause the privilege motion

debate to pass a temporary GST/HST relief bill.

Last week, the Liberals announced a two-month tax break on items like ready-made foods, restaurant meals, beer, wine, children's toys, Christmas trees, and more. This temporary tax relief for the holidays will also come with a \$250 cheque to Canadians who earned under \$150,000 last year.

The NDP have claimed this tax holiday as a win for their party.

"We fought for this. We said 'this is important' and the Liberals informed us that they had caved to our demands," said Singh to reporters on Nov. 21.

But the party said they're only looking to pause the privilege motion debate just for a day in order to pass this upcoming temporary tax relief bill.

While the NDP are willing to make procedural moves to pass a two-month tax break, funding for another program that the New Democrats take credit for is still in limbo.

The national dental care program for low-income Canadians, launched last May, was one of the key pillars of the now-ended Liberal-NDP supply-and-confidence deal.

On top of CAF funding, the supplementary estimates (B), also has millions of dollars in proposed spending for key housing programs, the implementation of the National School Food Program, and more.

"Dental care is definitely at risk. Support for the Canadi-

an Armed Forces—\$3-billion. Support for Ukraine—and we just passed the thousand-day mark in Ukraine of the terrible, horrible, illegal war that Russia is waging—and we're seeing that now more than ever they need support," said Gould to reporters, explaining what could be impacted if the estimates aren't passed.

"These are things that matter to Canadians and that are important for Canadians."

But when asked if he would support the Liberals on a closure motion to end the filibuster in an effort to save dental care, Singh would not say.

"The Liberals are putting this at risk. The Liberals could just disclose some documents," said Singh. "Why is Justin Trudeau putting all of this important work at risk just to cover themselves? Just to cover up a scandal? Provide transparency and things move forward."

Even though multiple Liberal ministers have said money for dental care and pharmacare is at risk, Davies, the NDP's finance critic, told *The Hill Times* he was not as worried since some of the funding for dental care was already passed in last year's budget.

Keeping the lights on

When *The Hill Times* asked Gould if she had timelines for when the filibuster needs to end in order to pass the estimates, she said "the filibuster should end now. The Conservatives are being ridiculous."

But it was Gould's cabinet colleague Anand who provided a more pressing timeline.

"We are okay for the next three to four weeks, but we need to make sure that money flows to those smaller departments and then ultimately the larger departments which also fuel so much of the government's and the country's business," said Anand.

However, Parliamentary Budget Officer Yves Giroux said the government does have some breathing room for the next while.

Giroux told *The Hill Times*' Ian Campbell that departments have enough funds to keep operations going through the winter since their annual core funding was already approved in the 2024-2025 main estimates, which was passed last spring.

"If there's no supps B ever, the government will not stop working," Giroux said. "But there might be some programs here and there that will have to take it easy, slow down, or stop operations at some point."

Things will get dicey for the government if the ongoing filibuster goes into the spring when paycheques to some public servants could dry up.

"It's a bit like somebody exhausting or driving their bank account to zero, knowing they'll get paid in two weeks, and if there's a delay a couple of days, yeah, we'll be in a bit of trouble," said Giroux.

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Parliamentary Budget Officer Yves Giroux says some government programs will have to slow down or stop if supplementary estimates (B) doesn't get approved. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Youth unemployment crisis is an \$18.5-billion opportunity

We are creating a less competitive Canada with a workforce as unskilled as it is inexperienced, leaving them the burden of powering our economy and supporting our ageing population.

Farah Mohamed

Opinion



Canada has a youth unemployment problem, and no one is talking about it.

The unemployment rate of young people is the highest it's been in a decade, excluding the pandemic years. At the same time, the number of young people who are not working, not in school, nor in training has reached 850,000. Involuntary part-time employment among young people is on the rise. Something is wrong. Our country is not working for its young people.

So, what's going on? The youth unemployment crisis is complex. It is driven by multiple factors including—but not limited to—a mismatch of skills, increased competition, degree inflation, and fewer hiring opportunities in a tough economy.

Let's start with the skills mismatch. A staggering 59 per cent of Canadian businesses say they can't find qualified candidates to fill vacancies. Employers and young job seekers report a concerning trend that post-secondary education is not equipping graduates with the skills needed in today's job market. While degrees provide essential technical knowledge, they often fall short

in teaching crucial skills such as time management, resilience, and effective communication.

At the same time, more employers are raising the educational and experiential bar for entry-level positions, a trend known as "degree inflation." For example, an entry-level job that requires a master's degree and three years' experience.

Moreover, Canadian employers simply don't invest in training their staff compared to their international counterparts. This reluctance to train results in lowered national productivity, and on an individual level it shows up in employers preferring to hire experienced workers over inexperienced young job seekers, further limiting young people's access to entry-level jobs. What workers learn in entry-level positions—skills like punctuality, collaboration, and responsibility—are fundamental to becoming skilled workers down the line.

Whether or not we realize it, we are creating a less competitive Canada with a workforce that is as unskilled as it is inexperienced,

and leaving them to shoulder the burden of powering our economy and supporting our ageing population. Any economist will tell you that's bad news.

A Deloitte report, commissioned by The King's Trust Canada, showed that even modest action on youth unemployment would result in an estimated \$18.5-billion added to our GDP by 2034.

Beyond the economic impacts, the social costs of youth unemployment are nothing less than devastating. Increased mental health issues, higher rates of substance abuse, and rising crime rates are all linked to unemployment among youth. Managing these social issues will require increased investment in social services, the justice system, and healthcare that we simply aren't prepared for.

Persistent youth unemployment can also contribute to distrust in our institutions, less civic engagement and intergenerational friction, creating a less cohesive and more divided society.

Young people are told that if they go school and play by the rules, they would be able to get good jobs, buy homes, and have families. Unfortunately, that hasn't panned out. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has rightly pointed out that Canada's greatest challenge is its broken promise to young people. Who can blame young

people if they feel disenchanted and disinclined to play by the rules and respect the systems of a generation that let them down?

It's easy to dismiss the struggles of today's youth by assuring ourselves that "the kids will be fine because we were fine," but in so doing, we ignore the fact that young people face a different and more difficult set of conditions than we ever did, and the numbers back that reality up.

Canadians need to pay attention to this crisis because over the next decade, millions of youths will enter the labour force. This isn't a social or special interest issue because no matter who you are, I can guarantee you, you were a young person at one point. This issue is as universal as it gets, and it deserves attention.

We need an all-hands-on-deck strategy that brings together governments, businesses, educators, and community groups because investing in young people isn't an option, it's as crucial as investing in critical infrastructure like food security, healthcare or our military. If we don't do it today, we'll pay for it tomorrow.

Farah Mohamed is the founder of several charities including the Malala Fund, and is the current CEO of His Majesty King Charles III's charity in Canada.

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News

What Trump's election means for Canada: 'institution of government needs a sharp wakeup call,' says Savoie

Canadians do not want a wrecking ball approach, but they do want the government to do much better, warns one of the country's leading experts on the machinery of government.

Continued from page 1

of both public servants and politicians. To address this, Trump has appointed businessmen Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy to co-lead the Department of Government Efficiency. Musk, the owner of Tesla and social media platform X, has publicly stated that he could cut more than US\$2-trillion from government spending. The U.S. government currently spends US\$6.7-trillion annually.

Savoie said that public opinion surveys in Canada have consistently indicated widespread dissatisfaction with the performance of government and public service. He highlighted that taxpayers spend \$65-billion annually on wages for roughly 375,000 federal government employees—excluding uniformed personnel such as the military and RCMP officers—and an additional \$15-billion on consultants, yet many Canadians feel they are not getting value for their money. He emphasized the need for the government to become more accessible and better managed. Savoie also pointed out that rarely a week passes without a scandal emerging related either to a government program, or a cabinet minister.

Savoie stated that if Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) were to lose the next election, public opinion polls suggest that Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) would succeed him. While stating Poilievre is not comparable to Trump, Savoie said that the Conservative leader is expected to pose tough questions about government spending and performance. He highlighted that Poilievre has been a parliamentarian for two decades, serving in various parliamentary and government roles, including as a cabinet



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, left, and then-U.S. president Donald Trump in 2019. The message from Trump's recent re-election for Canada is that people are rejecting status quo, and want political leadership and the public service to perform better, says Donald Savoie. Photograph courtesy of the White House

minister, on House committees, in critic positions, and currently as leader of the official opposition. In contrast, Trump, a businessman, had no prior government experience before being elected president for the first time in 2016.

Savoie said he's not in favour of a "wrecking ball approach," as it could harm government institutions, and that he is confident that Poilievre wouldn't use that approach. Savoie also stated that Canadian political culture would not support such a tactic, but acknowledged that a new prime minister could still pose critical questions and implement significant changes.

"If Pierre Poilievre is elected as the prime minister, we can assume that the status quo will be challenged like it's never been challenged before," said Savoie. "I don't think Pierre Poilievre has a wrecking-ball attitude. I don't like the notion that people compare Poilievre to Donald Trump. The mandate that Pierre Poilievre—if he gets elected—he'll have is to challenge the status quo, and he's quite well-equipped to do that."

Meanwhile, in order to prepare for the upcoming Trump administration in Washington, D.C., Savoie said Ottawa must use a Team Canada approach, which would include all levels of government and the private sector.

"Answer to that is a 'Team Canada' approach," said Savoie. "Get all hands on deck, get the private sector involved, get the provinces involved, get everybody

involved. It's got to be a complete 'Team Canada' approach. It cannot be left in the hands of one or two or three individuals, however competent they are."

Earlier this month, the Republicans won the American presidency by a significant margin, but now they also control that country's House, Senate, and Supreme Court.

Throughout his political career, Trump has championed protectionist "America First" policies, including a publicly stated plan to impose a 10 per cent tariff on all exports to the U.S. Adding to Canada's challenges following the Nov. 5 election are some of Trump's controversial cabinet appointments, people who hold ideological differences with the current Liberal government in this country, and who are eager to see Trudeau defeated in the next federal election.

Trump's second term is expected to bring significant uncertainty to Canada-U.S. trade relations, causing concern as thousands of jobs nationwide depend on the close economic partnership with this country's largest trading partner. When the Trump administration takes office on Jan. 20, 2025, major changes are anticipated in areas such as immigration, the economy, trade, the environment, energy, and defence. Experts and political insiders are urging Canada to publicly outline its strategy for addressing these impending challenges.

Only two days after the presidential election, Trudeau re-established the Cabinet Committee on Canada-U.S. Relations. Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland (University-Rosedale, Ont.) is the chair of the committee, and Public Safety Minister Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, N.B.) is the vice chair. In Trump's first term, Freeland was the top Canadian official—then-foreign minister—to renegotiate NAFTA.

Other committee members include Treasury Board President Anita Anand (Oakville, Ont.), Defence Minister Bill Blair (Scarborough Southwest, Ont.), Industry Minister François-Philippe Champagne (Saint-Maurice-Champlain, Que.), Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly (Ahuntsic-Cartierville, Que.), Agriculture Minister Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, P.E.I.), Immigration Minister Marc Miller (Ville-Marie-Le Sud-Ouest-Île-des-Soeurs, Que.), and International Trade Minister Mary Ng (Markham-Thornhill, Ont.).

The Privy Council Office told *The Hill Times* last week that there is no formal Canada-U.S. relations committee at either the deputy minister or assistant deputy minister level. However, senior government officials regularly meet to discuss various topics, including Canada-U.S. relations. The PCO also mentioned that a director general committee, established in 2022, continues to bring together multiple departments

across the government to coordinate and discuss their efforts on Canada-U.S. relations.

Since its reconstitution, the cabinet committee has been holding weekly meetings, with each minister presenting issues related to their respective portfolios. Topics discussed at these meetings have included protecting Canadian interests during the next Trump administration, border security and immigration, energy and critical minerals, Canada-U.S. defence including Arctic policy, strategies for overcoming tariffs, and domestic implications on taxes, investments, and cross-border cooperation.

According to a July report from the Congressional Research Service, 78 per cent of this country's exports were directed to the U.S. in 2023. The report also highlighted that, as of 2022, the U.S. was "the largest source of foreign direct investment by stock in Canada" at \$438.8-billion, while Canada ranked as the fourth-largest source in the U.S. with \$589.3-billion. The CUSMA agreement, up for renewal in 2026, poses potential implications for thousands of jobs in both countries if substantial changes occur.

In the wake of Trump's return and with eight cabinet ministers either choosing not to run again, resigning, or taking parental leave, Trudeau is expected to announce a cabinet shuffle in the coming weeks. Sources told *The Hill Times* that high-level discussions within the public service have been underway for weeks to prepare for any potential changes the prime minister might make.

The outgoing cabinet members include former transport minister Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Que.), who stepped down in mid-September to run for the Quebec provincial Liberal leadership. Trudeau subsequently assigned that portfolio to Treasury Board President Anita Anand (Oakville, Ont.).

On Nov. 20, Employment Minister Randy Boissonnault (Edmonton-Centre, Alta.) stepped down to clear his name in the face of his shifting claims that he was Indigenous and controversy related to his former business dealings. Trudeau has assigned the employment ministry to Veteran Affairs Minister Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Moncton-Riverview-Dieppe, N.B.). This means two ministers are now doing double duty.

And Heritage Minister Pascale St-Onge (Brome-Missisquoi, Que.), Canada's first openly lesbian cabinet minister, started her parental leave last week after her partner gave birth to a baby boy.

The five cabinet ministers that have announced they will not seek re-election in the next election include Northern Affairs Minister Dan Vandal (Saint Boniface-Saint Vital, Man.), Revenue Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau (Compton-Stanstead, Que.), Minister for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario Filomena Tassi (Hamilton West-Ancaster-Dundas, Ont.), and Sport Minister Carla Quattrough (Delta, B.C.).

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PCO clerk subject of human rights complaint over Israeli-Palestinian conflict

The Palestine-Israel conflict is a political issue which only politicians should be commenting on, says Donald Savoie, an expert on the machinery of government and prolific author.

Continued from page 1

and condemned antisemitism and Islamophobia.

"In addition to the senseless loss of life, there have been disturbing celebrations of violence and acts of antisemitism across the world, including in Canada. Arab and Muslim communities are also fearing increased hate and discrimination due to a rise in Islamophobia. We cannot stay silent. Together we must stand united against all forms of discrimination," said Hannaford in his email.

"We will continue to be vigilant in our commitment to ensuring that all public servants feel safe in their work environments. We believe in empathy and creating an atmosphere of understanding and mutual respect. We condemn any behaviour or expression of hate in the workplace regarding the individual identities of others."

Amira Elghawaby, Canada's special representative on combatting Islamophobia, told *The Hill Times* that Hannaford did not consult her office before sending out the email. She noted that the message failed to mention Canadian Palestinians or address anti-Palestinian racism, and that "many public servants" have expressed their "hurt and alienation" over these omissions.

Elghawaby said that she's raised these concerns with Hannaford, and has urged him to consult her office in the future before issuing such communications. She also encouraged the clerk to send a follow-up email to acknowledge the pain, and to empathize with those who have lost friends and relatives in Gaza and Lebanon. Elghawaby added that the Muslim Federal Employees Network (MFEN), a group representing about 3,000 federal public servants, has also conveyed their concerns to her office regarding Hannaford's email.

"As the message from the clerk did not mention Canadian Palestinians or anti-Palestinian racism,



Privy Council Clerk John Hannaford, right, pictured at the cabinet swearing-in ceremony on July 26, 2023, with Small Business Minister Rechie Valdez. Some public servants are raising concerns about Hannaford's neutrality on the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

many public servants, including the Muslim Federal Employee Network, approached our Office, expressing deep hurt and alienation by these omissions," wrote Fatima Abbasi, deputy director of communications in Elghawaby's office, in an email to *The Hill Times*.

"The special representative brought these concerns forward to the clerk and encouraged consultation in future where statements or initiatives impact on Canadian Muslim, Arab, Palestinian public servants. As well, the special representative encouraged the issuance of a subsequent statement to acknowledge and show empathy for public servants who have lost loved ones in the continuing war in Gaza and, more recently, in Lebanon."

Meanwhile, the MFEN executive met with Hannaford in person on Jan. 29, 2024. MFEN's president declined an interview request for this article, explaining that, as a public servant, he is unable to participate in media interviews. However, according to a summary of the meeting shared with MFEN members afterward, and obtained by *The Hill Times*, the organization submitted written feedback from hundreds of its members to the clerk's office last November.

During the 30-minute meeting on Jan. 29, the MFEN executive urged Hannaford to issue a follow-up message to "redress and balance the negative impacts of his previous message, which thousands of federal public servants view as biased, political, and contrary to the values and ethics code of the public sector and the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) that have been strongly emphasized by senior leadership." But Hannaford declined the request, provided no satisfactory explanation, and refused to acknowledge that his email was "political," according to the meeting summary.

"Hannaford stated that he did not see any benefit in sending a second message, as he did not agree that his Oct. 11 message was political, nor did he believe that the message ran counter to his strong commitment to EDI or upholding the values and ethics code of the public sector," stated the summary of the meeting.

"He also indicated that his message was meant to respond to the traumatic events of Oct. 7, 2023. He noted the importance he places on combatting religious-based discrimination and racism, and pointed to his instruction to and continuing dialogue with deputy ministers that they ensure their organizations make this a priority as well. He also emphasized his commitment to ensuring a safe, equitable and respectful work environment for all public servants."

The MFEN executive told Hannaford that, regardless of his intentions, thousands of public servants viewed his email as "one-sided, dehumanizing, and dismissive of the socio-political complexities of the Israel-Palestine conflict over the past 75 years." They further said that many public servants from diverse backgrounds found the message "insensitive" to both Muslim and Christian Palestinians, noting that numerous Palestinian public servants have experienced personal losses of more than 100 family members in this conflict.

"The meeting concluded with the clerk confirming that there would be no follow-up message and that deputy ministers should be engaged on issues of Islamophobia and anti-Palestinian racism in their respective organizations," stated the meeting summary.

Recently, the MFEN has filed a complaint against Hannaford with the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

The Privy Council Office, headed by the clerk, is the bureaucratic arm of the Prime Minister's Office. The clerk is the top bureaucrat in the federal public service. The prime minister's communications office declined a comment on Hannaford's email, and referred all questions to the Privy Council Office (PCO).

In an email to *The Hill Times*, the PCO communications office said that the clerk sent the Oct. 11, 2023, email following the government's policy of condemning terrorism and violence.

"The Government of Canada unequivocally condemns terrorism and violence," wrote Daniel Savoie, a PCO spokesperson. "Consistent with the government's position, the clerk's Oct. 11, 2023, message addressed this very sensitive, traumatic, and complex issue, offered sincere condolences for all of the innocent lives lost, and called for a united stand against all forms of discrimination. The message also emphasized the clerk's commitment to ensuring that all public servants feel safe in their work environments and condemned any behaviour or expression of hate in the workplace."

The spokesperson also pointed out that the clerk called out antisemitism and Islamophobia in the same statement. The spokesperson said that Hannaford has been notified by the Canadian Human Rights Commission complaint, and that "the complaint will be addressed in accordance with the established process."

When asked if the clerk, who issued a statement following the deaths of 1,200 Israelis, would consider releasing a similar statement now that more than 43,000 Palestinians have lost their lives, a government spokesperson responded: "The clerk's original message offered sincere condolences for all of the innocent lives lost, and called for a united stand against all forms of discrimination," said Pierre-Alain Bujold, acting manager of PCO media relations, in an email to *The Hill Times*.

Donald Savoie, who holds the Canada Research Chair in Public Administration and Governance at the Université de Moncton and the author of 45 books on the machinery of government and politics, told *The Hill Times* that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a political issue. He said that only politicians should comment on political issues.

"At the core, it's a political issue, and political issues are best left to politicians," said Savoie in a phone interview with *The Hill Times*.

Later in an email, Savoie wrote: "They [senior public

servants] have a duty to refrain from engaging in a public debate. People who engage in a public debate become political actors. Public servants are, by definition, not political actors because if they become political actors, then they cannot serve in a non-partisan fashion."

Savoie could not remember the last time a sitting PCO clerk made any such statement on a political issue like this.

Several public servants interviewed for this article said that numerous violent conflicts are occurring worldwide, including in Canada, and questioned why the clerk had not addressed any of those issues in his communications. They said that disappointment with the clerk's message extended beyond the Muslim community, affecting people of various faiths.

Waheed Khan, president of the Community of Federal Visible Minorities who also serves on the board of directors of Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada, in a written statement to *The Hill Times* said that he was surprised to receive the clerk's message. He said that the head of the non-partisan public service should refrain from taking sides on political issues.

"I was very surprised to see the clerk's message, referring to Hamas' attack on Israel. He has not said a word since Israel's counterattack that has taken more than 43,000 Palestinian and over 3,000 Lebanese lives until now. The head of the non-partisan public service should not give the appearance of siding with one group of public servants," said Khan.

"If he had to react to the terrible fighting, which has impacted public servants, predominantly visible minorities, he should have focused his message on solidarity, and on more effectively addressing Islamophobia and antisemitism."

Khan added that Hannaford must undertake "concrete steps to more effectively address Islamophobia under the Government's Directive on the Prevention and Resolution of Workplace Harassment and Violence, which is silent on Islamophobia and antisemitism."

Some public servants interviewed for this article said that before taking any positions on international conflicts, the clerk should address issues of systemic racism within the ranks of the public service, including the \$2.5-billion lawsuit from Black public servants.

According to a recent report in the *Ottawa Citizen*, some "Black women detailed workplace conflicts so severe that they led to chronic depression, the use of antidepressant medications, and suicide attempts." The paper also reported that in one incident, a "former executive shared how a white colleague raised a chair at him and threatened to 'beat the N-word out of him' during a meeting with other participants. Strikingly, no one in the meeting room intervened on his behalf."

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Opinion

Reflections from a new citizen



The Hill Times' deputy editor Stephen Jeffery, right, and his wife Courtney Parrott became Canadian citizens on Nov. 20. Photograph courtesy of Stephen Jeffery

We had no intention of becoming Canadians when we passed through Sydney Airport's departure gates in June 2019. So what changed?

Stephen Jeffery

Opinion



OTTAWA—I'm now one of you. On Nov. 20, I sat on my couch dressed to the nines, read an oath of allegiance to a judge on my laptop screen, and joined 134 of my fellow newcomers in a rendition of the national anthem. I now hold citizenship in two unceded lands.

Had it not been for the COVID-19 pandemic, the ceremony would probably have taken place in the Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada building—incidentally, just across

the street from *The Hill Times* office. But had COVID not happened, we may not have been at the ceremony at all.

We had no intention of becoming Canadians when we passed through the departure gates at Sydney Airport in June 2019. We actually anticipated moving back by early 2022. Our fridge would have a few more magnets, our albums a few more photos, and our vocabulary a few more French words, but we would retain passport monogamy.

I believe our exact words were: "I think we'll move back in a few years, plus we'll be back next year for a bunch of weddings. Of course, that's assuming a deadly respiratory illness doesn't emerge in six months, overwhelm health systems, cripple supply chains, close borders, and usher in a new era of global political uncertainty, the implications of which will not even be fully understood at least four years later!"

Sadly, the one thing we didn't want to happen that day at the airport came to pass, and so in Canada we stayed. We would not set foot in our home country of Australia again for three-and-a-half years.

It's perhaps fitting, then, that we became Canadians while sitting on that couch. After all, it

was there that we hosted the Ottawa friends we'd made, watched the results of two federal elections come and go, witnessed the seasonal colours—green, orange, white, brown—pass by the window, and came to understand that the Sens probably weren't going to make the playoffs.

But it was also where we learned of the pandemic measures, and had to make a choice—either stay or go, and quickly—that determined our future. We sat there with champagne watching the Zoom webcasts of weddings to which we'd been invited. And last year I sat stunned as a voice from 16,000 kilometres away delivered five words I'd been dreading—"I've got some bad news"—and left me scrambling for last-minute flights and a black suit for a parent's funeral on the other side of the world.

That couch was, of course, merely a base for our explanation of this country. We've been to nine provinces—we'll get there, Saskatchewan—stretching from Cape Spear across to Squamish, and from Niagara Falls up to Calgary. Poutine has been eaten, Molsons drank, mountains climbed, ice skated, canals paddled, and Tim Hortons avoided.

So this past Canada Day, we decided it was time to do some paperwork. To even reach that pa-

perwork, there were quite a few prerequisites. We needed to be permanent residents, have lived in Canada for three of the last five years—not including times we left the country on holiday—and proven that we could speak English or French.

The requirement to prove we could speak English had been fulfilled during the permanent residency application process, when we took tests to determine our reading, writing, and speaking comprehension. Funnily enough, the document used to prove we could understand English was a description of public transport in Sydney—the city of my birth. Had I known that I needed to describe how best to travel from Wynyard to Manly, I'd have been less nervous.

Anyway, a passport-style photo, questions about our travel, and \$630 later, the citizenship process had started. We heard nothing until September, when we were instructed to take a citizenship test.

To pass the test, you need to answer at least 15 of 20 questions correctly. Most questions—excluding the names and political affiliations of the part of the country in which you take the test—came from the information booklet *Discover Canada: The Rights and Responsibilities of Canadian Citizenship*.

In the end, 19 was the magic number. I'd sufficiently studied the inside of the guide, but not the outside—the one question I got wrong was the name of the booklet.

Another few weeks passed, and we then received the notice to appear—virtually—to take our oath, and cut our permanent resident cards to pieces on camera. It did feel as if something was missed in holding the ceremony virtually—aside from a couple of people who hadn't muted their microphones, we all sat staring at the screen while waiting for everybody's registration to be completed—but the clerk and the judge repeatedly emphasized the importance of the day, and the pride felt at us deciding to become citizens.

The most moving part of the ceremony was a video titled *Welcome, there is room*, in which Indigenous leaders welcomed us to the country, and stressed the role that all new Canadians shared in renewing the relationship with Indigenous Peoples, and adhering to the principles of truth and reconciliation.

The messages inside the ceremony were a contrast to the creeping anti-immigration sentiment being heard today the world over. The rhetoric and promises of the incoming administration down south aside, plenty of Canadians have seen fit to blame this country's problems on what has historically been a convenient scapegoat.

It's been illuminating that, when I remind someone on an anti-immigrant screed that they're also talking about me, they respond with, "oh, you don't count," or "you're the right kind of immigrant."

Truly fascinating.

So in the end, why did I decide to permanently become part of the Canadian story? It's a question I'm grappling with myself. I could give you an answer you want to hear—its rich multicultural society, welcoming nature, natural beauty, friendly people—but those are slogans from a travel brochure.

The real answer requires quoting the 1997 Australian film *The Castle*: it's the vibe.

Put simply, I feel at home here. I feel the same comfort landing from overseas in Ottawa, Vancouver, or Montreal that I do landing in Sydney, Brisbane, or Canberra.

That said, I won't be integrating completely. Fries will always be chips. I will never, ever, be able to pronounce "premier" the same way my fellow citizens do. A swooping magpie will always inspire a terror in me that the crankiest Canada goose could only dream of. Outside my professional obligation to adhere to *The Canadian Press' Caps and Spelling*, "z" will be reserved for special occasion words—it has no place in "realise" or "visualise."

Ultimately, life has changed little other than there is a warming feeling at being able to call places on both sides of the Pacific home.

Stephen Jeffery is a deputy editor of *The Hill Times*.

The Hill Times



Stuart Benson

Party Central

Date night, with the Canadian American Business Council

The CABC hosted its 30th annual State of the Relationship Gala at the National Gallery of Canada on Nov. 18.

It was a date night Monday night for the Canada-U.S. relationship, and while our relationship may be entering a bit of a rocky period with **Donald Trump** in the White House once again, the Canadian American Business Association's 30th annual State of the Relationship Gala at the National Gallery was a heartwarming, possibly final fling for the two countries' current diplomatic duo.

While a Monday night isn't the most romantic or conducive of evenings for a swinging night on the town, the CABC's annual gala still managed to pull a sizable crowd of politicians, politicos, diplomats, and business leaders, as the crowd buzzed with equal measures of excitement and anxiety less than two weeks after the U.S. elections on Nov. 5.

Arriving nearly an hour late—after satisfying **Party Central**'s first master, the Wednesday print copy deadline—the crowd could already be heard as **Party Central** walked up the gallery's long entrance ramp, either from the aforementioned emotions or, more likely, the open bar and lack of a gala dinner this year.

Mingling amongst the crowd, **Party Central** spotted plenty of politicians from both sides of the aisle, including federal cabinet ministers **Mary Ng**, **Steve MacKinnon**, **François Philippe-Champagne**, **Gudie Hutchings**, **Mélanie Joly**, **Anita Anand**, **Jonathan Wilkinson**, and **Bill Blair**; Liberal MP **Vance Badawey**, and Conservative MPs **Lianne Rood**, **Melissa Lantsman**, **Adam Chambers**, **Stephanie Kusie**, **Shuvaloy Majumdar**, **Dave Epp**, and **Luc Berthold**.

There were also plenty of business people, politicos, journalists, lobbyists, and staffers, including the PMO's **Brian Clow**; the OLO's **Ben Woodfinden**, and political advisor **Jenni Byrne** and her associates; iPolitics' publisher **Laura Pennell**; CTV's **Vassy Kapelos**; former journalist **Hannah Thibedeau** who's now with Global Public Affairs; NorthStar Public Affairs' **Fred DeLorey**; **Philippe Lagassé**, the Barton Chair at the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs; the Business Council of Canada's President and CEO **Goldy Hyder**; and former chief trade negotiator **Steve Verhuel**, now with GT & Co; and **Melissa Cotton**, CN's director of government affairs.

Fortunately, the evening's emcee, CTV's **Molly Thomas**, had just begun to gather the crowd's attention to introduce the Canada-U.S. ambassadorial counterparts, Ambassadors **Kirsten Hillman** and **David Cohen**, for what will likely be their last of these galas together. At least officially, it's not like they're banned from the gala next year.

While the relationship between our two countries is at a moment of change, Hillman said difficulties can also offer opportunities.

"There are opportunities to look at what you have, to make sure you are making the best of [it] and moving forward ... for this relationship ... that is the envy of the world," Hillman said. "We're very, very lucky to have the U.S. as a neighbour."

While it may be Cohen's last date with Hillman, he maintained the same non-partisan optimism on display during election night at Politico's watch party.

"Change always requires adjustment, and that brings a certain level of nervousness," Cohen told the crowd at the gala. "I am 100 per cent confident that our relationship will endure and grow, as it has for over a century."

After the ambassadors spoke, **Nancy Schlegel**, CABC board chair and vice-president of international government affairs at Lockheed Martin, took to the stage to present Capital Power CEO **Avik Dey** with this year's CABC Corporate Leadership award.

Unfortunately, while Dey joked that he has never been accused of being quiet, without a microphone, his acceptance speech was quite difficult to hear over the din of the crowd gathered on the other side of the open bar in the middle of the room.

Continuing on that theme, the noise levels were so distracting that **Party Central** missed the first half of the video introduction for the night's special celebrity guest: comedian **Martin Short**.

Fortunately, Short has quite a large stage presence, and nearly managed to mock the crowd into submission, at least to a low enough volume to conduct a "dialogue" with CABC's **Beth Burke**.

During the discussion, Burke did her best to keep the subject light and non-political, quizzing Short on his border preferences for hockey teams (Toronto Maple Leafs), airports (they're all basically prisons), and Montreal bagels over the New York version. However, at least several jokes from Short at the expense of president-elect Donald Trump had her muttering not-quite off-mic to remind him that the CABC is "non-partisan."

A particular favourite for **Party Central**—based on the reaction it elicited from Burke—was when Short compared his relationship with his *Only Murders in the Building* co-star **Steve Martin** to that of Trump's with tech billionaire **Elon Musk** but "without the sexual tension."

Afterwards, Short hung around for the obligatory handshake and selfie line as the party began to wind down.

Fortunately, this gave **Party Central** a chance to sample a couple of the gala's specialty cocktails—the Okanagan Orchard Smash won the night—and to grab a bowl of pasta from the buffet. There were also large bowls of CABC-branded smarties and jelly beans, of which **Party Central** filled two complimentary goodie bags with before heading home.

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Comedian Martin Short, right, joined CABC CEO Beth Burke, at the association's 30th annual State of the Relationship Gala on Nov. 18 at the National Gallery.



McMillan Vantage's Marisa Maslink, left, Conservative MP Dave Epp, and Richard Mahoney.



Transport Minister Anita Anand, left, and Martin Short.



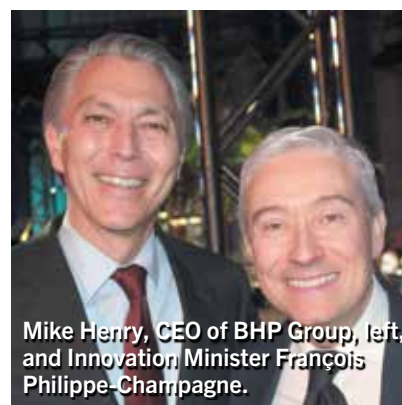
Conservative Deputy Leader Melissa Lantsman, left, and Short.



U.S. Ambassador to Canada David Cohen, left, and Canada's Ambassador to the U.S. Kirsten Hillman.



Cohen, left, and Hillman.



Mike Henry, CEO of BHP Group, left, and Innovation Minister François Philippe-Champagne.



Global Public Affairs' Rachel Wraith, left, Taylor Jantzi, Hannah Thibedeau, and CTV's Vassy Kapelos.



Cohen, left, and Short.



Lockheed Martin International's Nancy Ziuzin Schlegel, right, presents the 2024 CABC Corporate Leadership award to Capital Power CEO Avik Dey.

The Hill Times photographs by Stuart Benson



Summa Strategies' Adam Yahn, left, and Kait LaForce, Martin Short, Amazon Web Service's Alex Maheu, and UPS Canada's Anna Barrera.



Laura Ryckewaert
Hill Climbers

Spokespeople exit for tourism minister, House Speaker

Plus, Indigenous Services Minister Patty Hajdu has seen some changes to her team, including the recent hiring of a new issues manager and parliamentary affairs adviser.

Tourism Minister **Soraya Martinez Ferrada** may have recently welcomed a new press secretary to her team, but she's now in need of a new director of communications.

Alex Cohen's last day leading communications for the minister for tourism and the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec was Nov. 1, marking an end to his almost seven-year-long run working for the Trudeau government.



Alex Cohen has left the tourism minister's office, and the Hill. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Cohen had been working for Martinez Ferrada since shortly after she joined cabinet for the first time in July 2023, and before then was director of communications to then-public safety minister **Marco Mendicino**.

A former vice-president of communications for the Young Liberals of Canada and ex-communications director for the Ontario Young Liberals, Cohen landed his first ministerial gig in early 2018 when he was hired as a special assistant for communications to then-health minister **Ginette Petitpas Taylor**. In Petitpas Taylor's office, he worked his way up to issues adviser, and later press secretary to the minister by the summer of 2019. Cohen has since also been press secretary to then-economic development and official languages minister **Mélanie Joly**, and to Mendicino as then-immigration minister.

"After a decade working in politics and nearly seven years in Ministers' Offices, I am leaving the Hill with a full heart and so many memorable experiences," wrote Cohen in an email to **Hill Climbers**.

"I'll be taking some time off (and skiing a lot) before going to graduate school abroad next year," he shared.

Cohen, who worked as digital editor for Parli.ca most immediately prior to being hired by Petitpas Taylor, already holds a

bachelor's degree in history and political science from the University of Toronto.

As recently reported by **Hill Climbers**, Martinez Ferrada saw a change in press secretaries in October. After **Marie-Justine Torres** left to become press secretary to Government House Leader **Karina Gould**, Martinez Ferrada hired **Jean-Christophe Armstrong** to take over the role as of Oct. 21.

Alex Corbeil is chief of staff to the tourism minister.

House of Commons Speaker **Greg Fergus** has seen a senior communications staffer exit of his own, with director of media relations and outreach **Mathieu Gravel** having recently left to return to work for the City of Ottawa.



Mathieu Gravel has returned to Ottawa City Hall. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Gravel had been working for Fergus for the last year—and what a year it's been, with (on the downsides) Fergus having found himself in hot water for filming a partisan Liberal video message while in his Speaker's office and robes, and facing multiple calls to resign.

Prior to joining the then-new Speaker's team in November 2023, Gravel was most recently director of strategic initiatives with Intertask Conferences, but before then he spent more than eight-and-a-half years working for the City of Ottawa, ending as director of issues and outreach in the office of then-mayor **Jim Watson**. He's also a former Senate staffer, including to then-Liberal Senator **James Cowan**.

Having bid Fergus' shop farewell, Gravel officially returned to city hall as of Nov. 18, and is now working in the office of Mayor **Mark Sutcliffe**.

Also marking their first day in a new job on Nov. 18 was Gravel's replacement, **Olivier Duhaime**, who is Fergus' new spokesperson and director of media relations.

Duhaime was most recently director of government relations and public affairs



Olivier Duhaime is the House Speaker's new director of media relations. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Tourism Minister Soraya Martinez Ferrada, left, and House Speaker Greg Fergus both recently bade farewell to lead spokespeople. The Hill Times photographs by Andrew Meade

with the Conference of Defence Associations Institute, but he's no stranger to the Hill—or to Fergus. Duhaime helped with communications for Fergus' successful 2015 campaign in Hull-Aylmer, Que., and went on to work in his MP's office for the next almost three years.

Both Duhaime and his once-again boss are avid runners, it seems. In the summer of 2017, Duhaime marked the 150th anniversary of Confederation by embarking on a 400 kilometre run from Quebec's national assembly to Parliament Hill in Ottawa. After he was elected to the Speaker's chair in October 2023, Fergus was quick to revive the informal parliamentary running group that had fizzled out during COVID, with MPs, staff, and even reporters gathering in the wee morning hours to hit the pavement as a pack.

After leaving Fergus' MP office in the summer of 2018, Duhaime went on to work as a policy and Quebec regional affairs adviser to then-infrastructure minister **François-Philippe Champagne**, and later as senior special assistant for operations to Champagne as then-foreign affairs minister.

Amélie Crosson continues as director of communications to Fergus, whose office is run by chief of staff **Tommy Desfossés**.

Two out, one in for Minister Hajdu

There are a couple of recent staff exits from Indigenous Services Minister **Patty Hajdu**'s office to report, along with the hiring of one new staffer: **Olivia McElrea**, who had her first day as an issues manager and parliamentary adviser to the minister on Oct. 28.



Olivia McElrea has joined the Indigenous services minister's team. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

McElrea spent the last year as a communications assistant to Employment, Workforce Development, and Official Languages Minister **Randy Boissonnault**. Before joining Boissonnault's team in the fall of 2023, she'd spent the summer working with the Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services in Kingston, Ont., and earlier in the year did an internship with the Correctional Service Canada.

McElrea graduated from Queen's University with a bachelor's degree in political studies last year; while in school, she served as president of the university's debate club, and as co-chair of the Queen's University Model Parliament, among other things.

Hannah Wieler is director of parliamentary affairs to Hajdu.

McElrea helps in part to fill a staffing gap left by the departure of issues manager and Quebec regional affairs adviser **Ghada Abid** in September.



Ghada Abid is now working for the federal immigration minister. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Abid had been working for Hajdu since this past March, having been hired after roughly four months as a communications adviser to Mental Health and Addictions Minister **Ya'ara Saks**. Prior to joining Saks' ministerial team, Abid had spent roughly a year as her assistant as the MP for York Centre, Ont.

Abid has since joined Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Minister **Marc Miller**'s team, having been hired as an issues manager and parliamentary affairs adviser as of Oct. 7.

More recently, communications adviser **Riley Fox** marked his last day with Hajdu's office on Oct. 18.

A former email engagement manager with the federal Liberal Party, Fox had been working for the Indigenous services minister since this past February. His LinkedIn profile indicates he's now director of strategic initiatives for Women of the Métis Nation.



Riley Fox, left, with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Kaitlin Power is director of communications to Hajdu, and currently oversees press secretary **Jennifer Kozelj**, and **Joy Nwadike**, digital communications adviser and executive assistant to the chief of staff. **Randi Anderson** is currently the minister's acting chief of staff, while **Jordano Nudo** is deputy chief of staff and director of policy.

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U.S. vetoes UN Security Council resolution for immediate, unconditional ceasefire in Gaza

Continued from page 5

He added: “To the Palestinian people, another clear message—while the overwhelming majority of the world stands in solidarity with your plight, others remain indifferent to your suffering.”

How come one country, all by itself, can stop world progress? If all the implications of that question could be figured out, maybe we could steer the world to peace.

The UN’s Charter assigns to the Security Council responsibility to maintain the world’s “peace and security.” But here’s the catch: the founding fathers allowed the five permanent members of the council to hold a veto. Thus, the U.S., Russia, the United Kingdom, France, and China each can veto a resolution. It takes nine votes of the 15 members to pass a resolution, but any one of the five can block it. This doesn’t make any sense. But Winston Churchill, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Joseph Stalin demanded this right at the outset, or their countries would not have joined the UN. Take it or leave it.

As of March 2024, Russia—formerly the Soviet Union—has used its veto 128 times, the U.S. 85 times—47 times to protect Israel—, the U.K. 29 times, China



Pope Francis wants an international investigation into the Gaza war to determine whether Israel’s ground offensive in Gaza constitutes genocide. Photograph courtesy of Flickr/Catholic Church in England and Wales

19 times, and France 18 times. The veto is an obvious abuse of power, and everyone wrings their hands over it. But the UN can’t get rid of it because a veto-possessing state would veto a resolution to abolish the veto.

Other solutions are being tried. In 2022, the General Assembly adopted a resolution ordering any Security Council state casting a veto to come to the General Assembly to explain its

actions. This was thought to be a somewhat mitigating influence, but apparently not. The Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, a U.S. think tank, has proposed that the Charter be amended to require a state wanting to cast a veto to be accompanied by at least one other state; or that a single veto be over-ridden by a two-thirds majority in the General Assembly. In other words, there are solutions to limit the

power of the veto—if there was a sufficient degree of dialogue and desire for co-operation, not to mention comity, in the international community today.

But the reverse obtains. The international atmosphere is poisonous. Many people are losing faith in the UN. Thus, the demand for more munitions grows. The world becomes far more dangerous. Pope Francis wants an international investigation into the Gaza

war to determine whether Israel’s ground offensive in Gaza constitutes a genocide.

So I ask myself: did the U.S. have to veto the Gaza ceasefire resolution? Was it really worth it to keep insisting on the precise location in the resolution of the demand to release the hostages? Has the art of compromise been jettisoned in the new age of conflict?

These are questions our political leaders should be pondering. I was shocked when the U.S. cast this latest veto, which will have a direct impact on hundreds of thousands of lives and perhaps beyond that. I thought somewhere in the Canadian Parliament, an elected Member would get up and ask the government for its views on how to bring peace to the Middle East amid the UN veto situation. I watched the whole of the hour-long Question Period that day, and not once was the subject raised.

The suffering people of Gaza wait for justice. And wait.

Former Senator Douglas Roche’s latest book is *Keep Hope Alive: Essays for a War-free World* (Amazon).

The Hill Times

Heard on the Hill

Trudeau meets #MilkshakeMonday guru Larry Canam

Continued from page 2

home bar, making milkshakes or cocktails.”

In last Monday’s video, Canam adds three scoops of vanilla ice cream into a vintage olive-green blender, to which Trudeau adds half a cup of milk, followed by a generous glug of maple syrup.

“How much?” asks the prime minister, pausing with the glass bottle in hand. “Just measure with your heart,” instructs the affable Canam, who published a recipe book of his Insta-worthy milkshakes on Oct. 29.

Canam whizzes up the mixture, pours it into a tall, frosty glass, tops the drink with maple-infused whipped cream, and asks Trudeau to add a maple cream cookie for garnish.

TikTok Canada responded to the collab with a frosty quip with its own on Nov. 20 on X: “It’s great to see PM @JustinTrudeau collaborating with New Brunswick TikTok creator Larry Canam, one of many Canadian creators supported by @TikTokCanada’s local creator team—a team that would be eliminated under the government’s shutdown order,” alluding

to the federal government’s recent order for the Beijing-owned social media site to close its corporate offices in Toronto and Vancouver over national security concerns.

Trudeau and daughter catch up with Biden and family

Meanwhile, in Rio de Janeiro at the G20 last week, Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** and his teenage daughter **Ella-Grace**

popped up in the Twitter feed of **Chris D. Jackson**, an American elected official from Tennessee.

“President [**Joe Biden**] shares a special moment with daughter **Ashley** and granddaughter **Natalie Biden**, alongside Prime Minister Trudeau and his daughter Ella-Grace, during this week’s G20 Summit. A heartfelt reminder of the bond between our First Families and the enduring friendship between the U.S. and Canada,” Jackson posted, along with a photo, on Nov. 19.

This isn’t the first time Ella-Grace has met Biden, as the U.S. president came to her house when he was in Ottawa in March 2023.



U.S. President Joe Biden, left, Ella-Grace Trudeau, Ashley Biden, Natalie Biden, and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Photograph courtesy of Twitter/X.

Peace Train from Vancouver arrives in Ottawa



NDP MP Don Davies, centre, met with Peace Train participants John, far left, Diane, Nora and Duncan on Nov. 14 in Vancouver. Photograph courtesy of X

Nine days since departing from Vancouver, the 40-member “Peace Train” arrived in Ottawa on Nov. 23 where participants plan to bring their message directly to Parliamentarians.

Described as a crowd of mostly retirees, the Peace Train participants made the trek to Ottawa “to ask government to create a Centre of Excellence for Peace and Justice,” according to a press release.

“Participants intend to ask the federal government to divert a small fraction of the amount of money it spends on the military to establish and fund a Centre of Excellence for Peace and Justice

focused on research, education, and training in conflict resolution, diplomacy, and peace operations,” reads the release.

NDP MP **Don Davies** posted a photo of his meeting with Peace Train members **John, Diane, Nora and Duncan** in Vancouver prior to their departure on Nov. 14. According to the release, the train was expected to arrive in Ottawa on Nov. 23 followed by “a multi-party reception” and public events in Ottawa after Peace Train participants meet Members of Parliament to make their request in person.

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Feature

Parliamentary Calendar

The Parliamentary Calendar is a free events listing. Send in your political, cultural, diplomatic, or governmental event in a paragraph with all the relevant details under the subject line 'Parliamentary Calendar' to news@hilltimes.com by Wednesday at noon before the Monday paper or by Friday at noon for the Wednesday paper.

Mark Carney in conversation with Rev. Raymond de Souza on Nov. 27 in Ottawa



Mark Carney, pictured on May 4, 2023, will be talking to *National Post* columnist Rev. Raymond de Souza on Wednesday, Nov. 27, 2024, at 1 p.m., at Cardus in Ottawa. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

MONDAY, NOV. 25

House Sitting—The House is sitting this week and is scheduled to sit every week until Dec. 17.

Conference: 'What Procurement Processes to Reach Two Per Cent?'—The Canadian Global Affairs Institute hosts a conference on "What Procurement Processes to Reach Two Per Cent?" examining the work necessary to support the government's commitment to reach two per cent of GDP in defence spending. Monday, Nov. 25 at The Westin Ottawa Hotel, 11 Colonel By Dr. Details via Eventbrite.

Forum: 'Solutions for Canadian Digital Policy and Legislation'—The Canadian Internet Society hosts a policy forum, "Solutions for Canadian Digital Policy and Legislation," featuring voices from government, industry, and academia addressing Canada's digital landscape and influence on the future of internet governance, accessibility, and security. Monday, Nov. 25, at 5 p.m. ET at the Rideau Club, 99 Bank St. Details via Eventbrite.

TUESDAY, NOV. 26

Toyota Canada's 11-Millionth Vehicle—Toyota Canada is showing off the 11-millionth vehicle to be assembled in Canada by Toyota: a RAV4 Hybrid. Learn about Toyota's 36 years of manufacturing operations and 60 years of sales operations in Canada. Tuesday, Nov. 26, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. ET at the corner of Sparks and O'Connor streets. Call 905-802-0961.

The David Laidler Lecture—Former Bank of Canada deputy governor Timothy Lane will deliver the David Laidler lecture hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Tuesday, Nov. 26 at 12 p.m. ET at 67 Yonge St., Suite 300, Toronto. Details: cdhowe.org.

Webinar: 'Confronting Censorship and Defending Free Speech'—The Macdonald-Laurier Institute hosts a panel discussion on "Confronting Censorship and Defending Free Speech," exploring a recent MLI publication, *The New Censorship*, reviewing the broader legal frameworks governing free speech in Canada, and how these principles intersect with the responsibilities of professional bodies. Tuesday, Nov. 26, at 2 p.m. ET happening online. Register via Eventbrite.

Association of Canadian Port Authorities' Reception—The Association of Canadian Port Authorities invites Members of Parliament, Senators, and

their staff to a holiday parliamentary reception. Tuesday, Nov. 26, at 5:30 p.m. at Métropolitain Brasserie, 700 Sussex Dr. RSVP: rsvp@strategycorp.com.

Allan Rock and Fen Hampson Talk Corruption—The Canadian International Council's Vancouver Branch hosts "Wholesale Corruption: A Threat to World Order" featuring Fen Hampson, president of World Refugee and Migration Council; and former Canadian ambassador to the UN Allan Rock. Tuesday, Nov. 26, at 5 p.m. PT at YWCA Hotel, downtown Vancouver. Details: thecic.org.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 27

Webinar: 'Integrating AI'—The Logic hosts a webinar, "Integrating AI: Insights from Canada's biggest businesses." *The Logic's* AI reporter Murad Hemmadi in discussion with Manav Gupta, vice-president and chief technology officer at IBM Canada, and Jodie Wallis, global chief analytics officer at Manulife. Wednesday, Nov. 27, at 12 p.m. ET online. Details: crowdcast.io.

Mark Carney and Raymond de Souza in Conversation—Former Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney will join Cardus senior fellow and *National Post* columnist Rev. Raymond de Souza to ask the pressing question: can Canada afford to uphold its cherished values in the face of economic challenges. Wednesday, Nov. 27, 1 p.m. ET at Cardus, 45 Rideau St., 8th Floor. Register at cardus.ca.

Panel: 'U.S. Election results for Europe and Canada'—The Canadian International Council's national capital branch hosts a panel discussion, "What U.S. Election results may mean for both Europe and Canada," featuring Germany's Ambassador to Canada Tjorven Bellmann, and Ramūnas Vilpišauskas, the 2024 Konrad Adenauer Visiting Scholar on Transatlantic Relations at Carleton University and a member of the European Council on Foreign Relations. Wednesday, Nov. 27, at 5:30 p.m. ET at KPMG, 150 Elgin St., Suite 1800. Register via Eventbrite.

Lecture: 'Lifecycle Costing for Defence Purchases'—Former Conservative staffer Ian Brodie, now a political science professor at the University of Calgary, will deliver remarks on "Lifecycle costing for defence purchases is nonsense, makes us dumb, and helps our enemies." Wednesday, Nov. 27, at 6 p.m. MT at the Military Museums, 4520 Crowchild Trail S.W., Calgary. Details: events.ucalgary.ca.

THURSDAY, NOV. 28

Indigenous Defence Conference 2024—The Department of National Defence and OneHoop Indigenous Advisory Services host the National Indigenous Defence Conference 2024. This year's theme is "Strengthening Reconciliation in Defence." Thursday, Nov. 28, at 7:30 a.m. ET at the Canadian War Museum, 1 Vimy Pl. Details via Eventbrite.

Talk: 'Canada's Energy Transition'—The National Electricity Roundtable hosts a discussion "Canada's Energy Transition: Politics as partner or spoiler?" Industry leaders, policymakers, and advocates will explore issues regarding economic security, environmental responsibility, and citizens' needs. Thursday, Nov. 28 at 8:15 a.m. ET at Gowling WLG, 160 Elgin St., Suite 2600. Details via Eventbrite.

Economic Club of Canada Health Summit—Health Minister Mark Holland and Ontario's Economic Development Minister Vic Fedeli will deliver remarks at the Economic Club of Canada's annual health summit, featuring a morning of panel discussions on topics including artificial intelligence in medicine, and the ethics of drug repurposing, as well as a keynote address. Thursday, Nov. 28, 8:15 a.m. to 12 p.m. ET. Details online: economicclub.ca.

PBO Giroux to Deliver Remarks—Parliamentary Budget Officer Yves Giroux will deliver remarks on "Path to Net Zero Series: PBO's Distributional Analysis of the Federal Fuel Charge," a lunch event hosted by the Toronto Association for Business Economics. Thursday, Nov. 28, at 11:30 a.m. ET at CMHC's Toronto office, 11th Floor, 70 York St., Toronto. Details: cabe.ca.

Minister Champagne to Attend Fundraiser—Minister François-Philippe Champagne will join Liberal MP Brenda Shanahan at an fundraiser hosted by the Châteauguay—Les Jardins-de-Napierville Federal Liberal Association. Thursday, Nov. 28, at 5p.m. ET at Le Reggiano 333 Rue Saint-Joseph, Sainte-Martine, Que. Details: liberal.ca.

November on the Hill—November hosts a reception and panel discussion on the health issues facing Canadian men with Dr. John Olliffe from UBC's Men's Health Research Program. Thursday, Nov. 28. Doors open at 5:30 p.m., event starts at 6:15 p.m. at the Metropolitan Brasserie, 700 Sussex Dr. RSVP: Drew.Maharaj@movember.com.

A Discussion on Politics and Hope—The Feminist Conversations hosts "We don't give up: A discussion

on politics and hope." Chat with folks who have been attached to politics in different ways, both in Canada and south of the border. Thursday, Nov. 28, at 6:30 p.m. ET at Happy Goat Coffee Co. (Hopewell), 1124 Bank St. Details via Eventbrite.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 29

Webinar: 'Fundamental Rights and the Notwithstanding Clause'—PSG Senator Peter Harder will take part in a day-long bilingual webinar, "A Call to Action: Fundamental Rights and the Notwithstanding Clause," hosted by the University of Ottawa, University of Alberta, Université de Montréal, and the International Commission of Jurists Canada. Friday, Nov. 29, from 11a.m. to 4p.m. ET. happening online. Details: pdinstitute.uottawa.ca.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 30

Greens' Holiday Party—The Green Party of Canada and Green Party of Ontario in the Ottawa-Gatineau region host a celebration for the holiday season. All Green Party members and friends are welcome! This evening include networking, games, fundraising, and information on the current strategic direction of the Ottawa Centre riding and beyond. Saturday, Nov. 30, at 6 p.m. ET at First United Church, 347 Richmond Rd. Details via Eventbrite.

MONDAY, DEC. 2

Auditor General to Table Fall Reports—Auditor General Karen Hogan will deliver her fall performance audit reports to the House of Commons. Report subjects include Canada Emergency Business Account, Digital Validation of Identity to Access Services, Industrial and Technological Benefits, Programs to Assist Seniors, and Canada Summer Jobs. Monday, Dec. 2, at 11 a.m. ET in the House of Commons. Details: oag-bvg.gc.ca.

Art Exhibit by Ukrainian Journalist—Carleton University's Scholars at Risk Committee hosts the opening of an art exhibit featuring works by Nataliia Kononova, a Ukrainian journalist and artist from Donbas. This exhibit is a powerful look into her journey from conflict to creativity. Yuliya Kovaliv, Ukraine's ambassador to Canada, will deliver remarks, along with a recorded message from Bob Rae, Canada's ambassador to the UN. Monday, Dec. 2, from 7-9 p.m. at the Maxwell MacOdrum Library, Carleton University, 1125 Colonel By Dr. Contact: norahvollmer@cunet.carleton.ca.

TUESDAY, DEC. 3

Conference: 'Economics in an Era of Polycrises'—The Canadian Association of Business Economics hosts its annual conference. Participants include Tyler Meredith, co-founder of Meredith Boesenkool & Phillips; Angella MacEwen, senior economist with the Canadian Union of Public Employees; and Armine Yalnizyan with the Atkinson Foundation, Fellow on the Future of Workers. Tuesday, Dec. 3 at 8:45 a.m. ET at the Fairmont Château Laurier, 1 Rideau St. Details: cabe.ca.

Panel: 'What Next for Canada-U.S. Relations?'—The Institute for Research on Public Policy hosts a panel discussion on "What next for Canada-U.S. relations?" Christopher Sands, director of the Wilson Center's Canada Institute; and Jennifer Welsh, incoming

chair of McGill's Max Bell School of Public Policy, will examine the tools that Canada and the United States have to manage the relationship through the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. Tuesday, Dec. 3, at 5 p.m. ET at the Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1470 Peel St., #200, Montreal. Details: irpp.org.

National Chief's Parliamentary Reception—The Assembly of First Nations hosts the "National Chief's Parliamentary Reception," an evening of music, refreshments, and conversations with many valued friends and colleagues. Tuesday, Dec. 3, at 5:30 p.m. at the Twenty-Two Room, Westin Hotel Ottawa, 11 Colonel By Dr. Details via Eventbrite.

TUESDAY, DEC. 3—THURSDAY, DEC. 5

AFN Special Chiefs' Assembly—The Assembly of First Nations hosts the Special Chiefs Assembly on the unceded, unsundered territory of the Anishinaabe Algonquin People, in Ottawa. Tuesday, Dec. 3, to Thursday, Dec. 5. Details: afn.ca.

THURSDAY, DEC. 5

Former CDS Rick Hillier to Deliver Remarks—Former chief of defence staff Rick Hillier will take part in a roundtable luncheon titled "Time to Step Up: Why Corporate Canada Must Advocate for Higher Defence Spending" hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Thursday, Dec. 5, at 12 p.m. ET at 67 Yonge Street, Suite 300. Details: cdhowe.org.

FRIDAY, DEC. 4

The Walrus Talks Polarization—The Walrus hosts "The Walrus Talks at Home: Polarization" examining the increasing political, social, and cultural divide. A panel of yet-to-be-announced experts will discuss how and why politicians and public figures have ramped up the use of intense rhetoric to galvanize support and create wedge issues, touching on social media and dis/misinformation. Wednesday, Dec. 4 at 7 p.m. ET happening online. Details: thewalrus.ca.

SATURDAY, DEC. 7

Press Gallery's Children's Christmas Party—The Parliamentary Press Gallery hosts its annual Children's Christmas party for children aged 10 and under. Donations for the Food Bank and for less-fortunate children are encouraged. RSVP by Nov. 22 to philippe.perrier@parl.gc.ca. Saturday, Dec. 7 at 12 p.m. ET in Room 100, Sir John A. Macdonald Building.

TUESDAY, DEC. 10

Indo-Pacific Strategy Forum—The Institute for Peace and Diplomacy hosts the fourth annual Indo-Pacific Strategy Forum. Stakeholders from Canada and across the Indo-Pacific to discuss evolving economic, trade, and geopolitical issues, with a special focus on the role of Canadian energy exports in supporting sustainable development across the region. Tuesday, Dec. 10 from 9a.m. to 7p.m. ET at the Delta Hotels Ottawa City Centre, 101 Lyon St. N. Details via Eventbrite.

Panel on Infrastructure and Indigenous Partners—The Empire Club hosts a hybrid panel discussion on "Indigenous Partnerships, a New Way Forward to unlock Canadian Infrastructure" featuring Assembly of First Nations National Chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak; Cherie Brant, partner and national leader of Indigenous law, Borden Ladner Gervais LLP; and Hillary Thatcher with the Canadian Infrastructure Bank's Indigenous Infrastructure team. Tuesday, Dec. 10, at 11:30 a.m. ET. Location to be announced. Details online: empireclubofcanada.com.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 11

Chief of Defence Staff to Speak in Toronto—Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Jennie Carignan will deliver remarks at a lunch event hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Wednesday, Dec. 11, at 12 p.m. ET at 67 Yonge St., Suite 300, Toronto. Details: cdhowe.org.

