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CANADA'S POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER

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STEPPING *OUT ON THE* WORLD STAGE



▶ **Who are the top 50 people driving Canada's foreign policy as the Carney era begins?** **PAGES 12-16**

▶ **Global leaders set to converge on Alberta for G7 summit** **PAGE 17**

▶ **Kirsten Hillman: Canada's woman in Washington** **PAGE 18**

NEWS

Senator Dasko pitches elections law reforms to address enduring issue of candidate diversity

BY LAURA RYCKEWAERT

Ontario ISG Senator Donna Dasko has revived her bid to reform election rules to encourage political parties to do more to

ensure diversity in their candidate slates, and hopes the setbacks seen this past election will help spur her legislation across the finish line this Parliament.

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NEWS

Enlisting Coast Guard to buoy defence spending expected to hit choppy waters, say analysts

BY STUART BENSON

Prime Minister Mark Carney's plan to float Canada's defence spending over its current two per cent of GDP NATO

target with the help of the country's Coast Guard may hit rough waters as it navigates between a resistant public service and service members opposed to becoming

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By Christina Leadlay

Heard on the Hill

Conservative MP Hoback shows compassion comes first in a crisis



During the June 3 emergency debate on the Prairie wildfires, Conservative MP Randy Hoback, left, offered to share his Prince Albert, Sask., constituency office with Secretary of State for Rural Development Buckley Belanger, whose riding has been affected by the ongoing fires. Screenshots courtesy of CPAC

Conservative MP **Randy Hoback** used his first speech in the House of the 45th Parliament to extend a helping hand across the aisle to a fellow Prairie MP.

In last week's emergency debate about the ongoing wildfires in Saskatchewan, before launching into his first-hand account of the crisis, Hoback offered to share his constituency office with Liberal MP **Buckley Belanger**, who is secretary of state for rural development.

"Mr. Speaker, in the riding of Prince Albert, we have extended our hospitality to the member

for Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River if he needs an office to work out of in Prince Albert as some of his constituents are moving south, so he has a place to work out of," Hoback said in the House on June 3.

Hoback noted that his riding is "receiving some 7,000 to 8,000 evacuees, and that could go up to 15,000 throughout the province of Saskatchewan."

"At least 20 communities have been evacuated so far in Saskatchewan and 8,000 people have been evacuated, with the premier saying today that he estimates it could be as high as 15,000 in

the next three or four days," said Hoback last week.

While Belanger didn't explicitly acknowledge Hoback's offer during the emergency debate, the rookie MP noted that "compassion comes first" during this "tragic time for the people of Canada."

"The people of Saskatchewan, and in particular the people of northern Saskatchewan, are resilient," said Belanger. "Tonight is a tough night for them ... Through helping each other, supporting each other, and, quite frankly, in many ways praying for each other, I think we will survive this storm."

Cormier elected Senate Speaker *pro tempore*



ISG Senator Pierrette Ringuette, left, lost her bid to remain Senate Speaker *pro tempore* to ISG Senator René Cormier on June 5. *The Hill Times* photographs by Sam Garcia and Cynthia Münster

It was a battle of New Brunswick in the Senate last week as two Senators from that province vied to be Speaker *pro tempore*, the Senate equivalent of deputy Speaker. The incumbent, ISG Senator **Pierrette Ringuette**, had held the role since 2020, but was challenged by fellow ISG Senator **René Cormier**.

Ahead of the vote which took place June 3-4, each candidate delivered brief remarks to their fellow Senators, with Ringuette touting her "experience and perspective," while Cormier said the

time off during prorogation made him reflect on what he wants to achieve in the next five years leading up to his retirement. "I am known for my willingness to listen, for putting the common good ahead of my own personal beliefs and interests, and for creating a working environment that is conducive to lively, yet constructive and respectful, debate," he remarked, noting that he's presided as acting Speaker on "several occasions." Ultimately, Senators elected Cormier to the position on June 5.

CAFP memorial service set for June 16 in the Senate

The Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians will hold its annual memorial service on June 16.

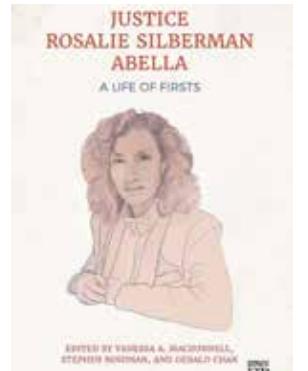
Taking place in the Senate Chamber at 9 a.m.—doors will close at 8:45 a.m.—the service will honour 27 past parliamentarians who have died in recent years: **Marlene Catterall, Michel Cogger, Robert Corbett, John Cummins, Joe Daniel, Joseph Day, Peter Elzinga, Francis Fox, Maurice Godin, Robert Lane, Edward Lumley, Charles Mayer, Yves Morin, John Murphy, Gilbert Normand, Frank Oberle, Jim Peterson, Murray Sinclair, Robert Sopuck, Chuck Strahl, Paul Szabo, Don Taylor, John William Thomson, Monique Vézina, John Glass Williams, Lois Wilson, and Bob Wood.**

Now in its 25th year, this "solemn ceremony serves as a meaningful opportunity to reflect on the contributions and public service of those who served in Parliament," reads the invitation, which noted that the flag on the Peace Tower will be lowered to half-mast on the morning of the service. An informal reception will follow.

New book on ex-Supreme Court judge Abella

There's a new book out on former Supreme Court justice **Rosalie Silberman Abella** published last week by University of Toronto Press. *Justice Rosalie Silberman Abella: A Life of Firsts* pays tribute to the first Jewish woman appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada who retired in 2021 after 17 years on the bench. It is co-edited by

professor **Vanessa MacDonnell**, co-director of uOttawa's Public Law Centre; visiting professor **Stephen Bindman**, executive-in-residence at uOttawa's Faculty of Law; and **Gerald Chan**, adjunct professor at the University of Toronto. The book is "a wide-ranging and thoughtful reflection" on Abella's contributions to law and public life.



Justice Rosalie Silberman Abella: A Life of Firsts (University of Toronto Press). Image courtesy University of Toronto Press

Mark Critch presents award honouring his late reporter dad

Comedian **Mark Critch** got to show his serious side last week when he presented the first **Mike Critch Excellence in Crime Reporting Award** at the Atlantic Journalism Awards in Halifax on June 7. **Tara Bradbury** from *The Telegram* in St. John's, N.L., won for her story "He is going to kill me. Did the justice system fail St. John's woman?"

The star of *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* created the award in honour of his late father, an award-winning radio journalist in Newfoundland and Labrador known as "Mr. Crime," who "had the reputation of being the most trusted news reporter in Newfoundland," according to a press release.

"The old man would be tickled pink to have his name associated with such great work," wrote Critch on Instagram along with a photo of himself presenting Bradbury with a certificate and a \$2,000 cash prize.



This Hour Has 22 Minutes' Mark Critch, left, with *Telegram* reporter Tara Bradbury at the AJA gala in Halifax on June 7. Photograph courtesy of Instagram

Hill Times deputy editor's health story wins award

Speaking of prizes, *The Hill Times'* deputy editor **Tessie Sanci** has won an award for a health policy story she wrote late last year.

The Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario announced Sanci as the winner of the category "Online – Best news story," one of 10 categories in the RNAO's Media Awards competition.

The awards were handed out at a virtual awards ceremony on June 5.

Sanci's standout story appeared in the *Hill Times Health* on Nov. 1, 2024: "Canada Health Act letter 'needs to be done right,'

says health minister as nursing advocates push for its release."

"I'd like to thank the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario for recognizing my story about the Trudeau government's delayed guidance to provinces and territories telling them that the services of nurse practitioners should be

compensated under the publicly funded health care system," Sanci told *Heard*

on the Hill on June 9. "I've spent a lot of time reporting on health human resources since the pandemic began in 2020, and [this recognition] means a lot."

cleadlay@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



Tessie Sanci is the deputy editor of *The Hill Times'* Monday edition. Photograph courtesy of Tessie Sanci

COMMENT

Will Carney's moonshot become cannon fodder?

Domestically, the biggest current threat to Mark Carney's success is tripping over his own heels while trying to keep a blistering pace towards tangible accomplishments.

Tim Powers

Plain Speak



Prime Minister Mark Carney is running at an Olympic sprinter's pace to complete his list of tasks, and the public—for now—is giving him all the track he needs, writes Tim Powers. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

given the inherent challenges that come with making both political and policy achievements in any jurisdiction.

As Carney has oft stated throughout his time in office, we are in a moment of crisis—or a hinge. He uses the words interchangeably. In either of those circumstances, it can be easier to push forward more items of change more quickly. Carney is running at an Olympic champion

sprinter's pace to complete tasks. The public—for now—is giving him all the track he needs. Meanwhile, his political competition is still figuring how to lace up their spikes to race with this guy.

Domestically, the biggest current threat to Carney's success is tripping over his own heels while trying to keep a blistering pace towards tangible accomplishments. He has many initiatives in motion, with the most recent—

and they are all relatively recent, to be fair—being wanting Canada to hit its NATO two-per-cent of GDP defence spending commitment by March 31, 2026.

Along with the NATO pursuit, Carney is promising the premiers he is going to get major projects approved in two years, and streamline other challenges related to their operationalization. These prime ministerial intentions saw Ontario Premier Doug Ford label Carney "Santa Claus" for his ambitions to reward everyone with development presents. Carney and the team will be hoping his gift from the provinces won't be lumps of coal.

The prime minister has also said all federal legislative impediments to interprovincial trade will be done away with by July 1. That might be the easier of some of the tasks he has set for himself and his government, but nonetheless is not an insignificant asterisk of action.

Carney is smartly empowering his caucus while trying to drive the government at breakneck speed. He has done away with a Justin Trudeau-era practice of including Prime Minister's Office staff in Liberal caucus meetings. The symbolism of that is important, and timely. By returning to a peers-only forum, Carney is signalling a degree of openness and a respect for his colleagues that wasn't present with the last government. If others feel like they are thought of as part of a team, they might well act as a uni-

fied force on a mission. And this prime minister is so far conveying in word and deed that he is on a mission.

Word on the street was that when Carney was recruiting candidates, he made very compelling arguments about the need for people to jump into the fray with him so they could make a difference for Canada together. His approach thus far with caucus suggests he is continuing that practice.

The Trudeau government talked a lot about "deliverology," and brought in so-called experts to guide them on that path. Carney has just grabbed the steering wheel himself, and is flying along as fast as he can. It is hard to remember a time when a government—particularly a minority one—launched itself so forcefully out of a cannon. And these Liberals are doing so with little regard to the key political performance indicators they are setting for themselves. None of these are easy KPIs to hit.

The Carney government is either fearless or foolish, or some combination thereof. Predicting its trajectory is a fool's errand. But its intentions are clear: take this hinge moment as far as it can before traditional conventions of behaviour return.

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

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COMMENT

How soon should we expect this ‘immediate’ military overhaul?



In Europe, Defence Minister David McGuinty backed away from the word ‘immediate,’ noting the federal government will have more to say ‘very soon’ about its plans, writes Scott Taylor. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

The defence minister said the feds will take ‘immediate and decisive action to rebuild Canada’s defence capacity’—but announced nothing further.

Scott Taylor

Inside Defence



On May 28, new Defence Minister David McGuinty gave an address to kick off the 2025 CANSEC exhibition.

For those outside of Canadian military circles, CANSEC is the largest annual defence and security trade show in Canada. Held at the sprawling EY Centre in Ottawa, organizers claim that this year’s conference attracted more than 12,000 industry, military, and government delegates from Canada and around the world. This group included more than 600 VIPs and more than 40 international delegations.

The attraction was the weaponry, vehicles, and munitions on display in 280 exhibitor booths.

McGuinty was only appointed to his current post when Prime Minister Mark Carney named his cabinet on May 13. Thus, McGuinty’s breakfast speech at CANSEC was highly anticipated as a stage-setter for the roughly 1,000 defence industry executives and senior military officers in attendance.

In the interest of full disclosure, I was in attendance that morning, and I have attended every CANSEC show since the exhibition was first held in 1998. I can honestly say that in those 27 years, the mood at CANSEC among the gathered arms dealers was the most optimistic by far. There is definitely blood in the water—to use a shark analogy—as everyone realizes that the Canadian Armed Forces are in dire need of just about every weapon platform you can imagine.

There is also the worrying commentary from United States President Donald Trump threatening to annex Canada. In bowing to Trump’s pressure, Carney made election promises to bring Canada’s defence spending up from the current 1.3 per cent of our gross domestic product to two per cent sooner rather than later. Carney also ordered a review of the ongoing F-35 fighter jet pur-

chase with a view to seeking non-American defence suppliers in the future.

McGuinty’s speech writers are to be given full credit as they realized this venue, at this juncture, was a key opportunity to build bridges with those who supply the CAF with gear.

As such, McGuinty made the point that, moving forward, the CAF rebuild will be done in partnership with industry.

“We’re moving quickly to ensure our military has the tools to defend our country and continent, while remaining an engaged, reliable partner abroad,” McGuinty said. “Here’s the key message I want to leave with you here this morning: this work can only be done in partnership with you.”

Where McGuinty really won over the room was when he discussed the possible timeline. In his closing remarks, he pledged the newly re-elected Liberal government would take “immediate and decisive action to rebuild Canada’s defence capacity.”

The word “immediate” was the most discussed issue among the attending delegates for the remainder of the two-day exhibition. Many were buoyed at the prospect of a Liberal government finally cutting through the Gordian Knot of bureaucracy that reduces Canadian military procurement projects to that of a snail’s pace.

However, more keen-eyed attendees realized that in the wake of McGuinty using the word “immediate,” the minister actually made no further “decisive” announcement. For those of us that have become accustomed to hearing words and not witnessing deeds from successive Liberal and Conservative governments, McGuinty’s failure to take “immediate” action after using that particular word speaks volumes.

Fast-forward to June 5 wherein McGuinty was attending a defence ministers’ meeting at NATO headquarters in Brussels, Belgium. In response to questions from the European media, McGuinty backed away from the word “immediate,” telling them instead that the federal government will have more to say “very soon” about its alliance spending commitments, and will be “making announcements in this regard.” All of this is in advance of the NATO leaders’ summit, which will take place at the end of this month in the Netherlands. It is widely expected that many of our allies are seeking to raise the current NATO spending objective to five per cent of GDP.

With Canada flailing and stumbling to get to the two-per-cent benchmark, suddenly we’re looking at more than tripling our current defence expenditure? As Charlie Brown would say, “Good grief.”

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

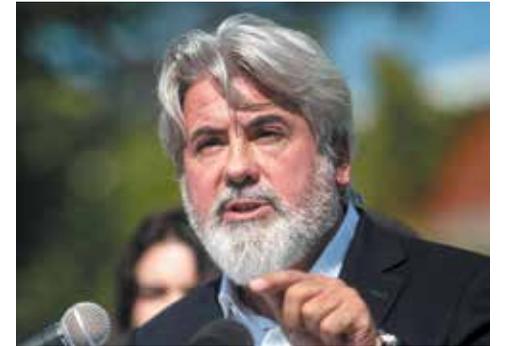
The Hill Times

Can Rodriguez dodge the ‘Anyone But Pablo’ movement developing in Quebec’s Liberal race?

It is not just Pablo Rodriguez’s name or urban swagger that may hold him back—he has little growth potential among young people.

Andrew Caddell

With All Due Respect



Despite the ‘Anyone But Pablo’ campaign that is emerging, former federal cabinet minister Pablo Rodriguez could win the Quebec Liberal leadership race on the first ballot, writes Andrew Caddell. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

KAMOURASKA, QUE.—It is an impressive political advertisement. One by one, 10 mostly Anglo Members of the National Assembly come smiling up to the camera, and state why they are supporting former federal cabinet minister Pablo Rodriguez to be the next Quebec Liberal Party leader.

The seemingly eternal leadership race will finally end June 14. Former Liberal leader Dominique Anglade left politics after losing the 2022 provincial election to Premier François Legault and his Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ). Since then, the CAQ has faded due a series of missteps, and the separatist Parti Québécois has dominated the polls, led by the youthful Oxford graduate Paul St-Pierre Plamondon.

Despite having only five MNAs, the PQ acts as if it is the real opposition as the Liberals survive with temporary leader Marc Tanguay. As the Liberals are the only nominally federalist option in the National Assembly, they have stayed above water in the polls, and with 19 of 125 seats, are the actual opposition. Almost all the Liberal seats have large proportions of anglophone and allophone voters. Fearing political oblivion, the Liberals have gone out of their way to not offend francophone nationalist voters, who are not their natural constituency.

For example, they did not oppose Bill 4, the shortest law in the Commonwealth, which offered to make the oath to the King—a constitutional requirement—optional. They followed that up with support for a unanimous resolution demanding the elimination of the post of lieutenant governor, the day after Indigenous leader Manon Jeannotte’s appointment was announced last December. They voted in favour of a motion denouncing bilingualism, another repudiating Prime Minister Mark Carney’s call for “One Canadian economy, not 13,” and joined in calling for the end of the monarchy the day King Charles left Canada last month.

The leadership race has attracted five candidates: Rodriguez, and a series of former candidates and business types. Marc Bélanger, a tax lawyer, ran and lost in two long ago federal elections. Karl Blackburn, former MNA in Roberval and recently president of the Conseil du patronat du Québec business group, was seen as a front runner and came in late. Charles Milliard was the president of the Federation of Quebec Chambers of Commerce, while Mario Roy is an economist and farmer.

What is truly astonishing is the vast majority of Rodriguez’s support comes from anglophone MNAs. The former Trudeau cabinet minister was known on Parliament Hill as a hypernationalist who publicly denied there was such a thing as a native anglophone community in Québec. As someone whose ancestors arrived directly in Quebec City and lived there several generations, I was gobsmacked when I heard this.

Rodriguez is also one of the architects of Bill C-13, which applies the rules of the Charter of the French Language on federal employees and federally regulated businesses, and declares French Canadians as the only linguistic minority in Canada. In the passage of Bill C-13, I heard from several anglophone MPs that the Trudeau PMO—egged on by nationalists like then-heritage minister Rodriguez—discouraged them from voting against Bill C-13, with promises their nomination papers might not be signed in 2025.

The greatest irony of the raft of endorsements for Rodriguez is that his MNA supporters are presuming he can win a majority. I have been reading about and participating in Quebec politics since I was a teenager in the 1960s. I live in one of the rural “regions,” and I don’t see Rodriguez cleaning up here. It is not just his name or his urban swagger—he has little growth potential among young people.

On June 14, it will be interesting to see how his front-runner status plays out. Despite the “Anyone But Pablo” campaign that is emerging, Rodriguez could win on the first ballot. If he doesn’t, I would not be surprised to see the other candidates coalesce around Milliard. The 57-year-old Rodriguez has plenty of baggage along with his grey beard, while the 46-year-old Milliard looks younger than his age.

As the CAQ is considered as dead as Monty Python’s parrot, the next Quebec election will focus on the future of a federal or separate Quebec, between the young PQ leader Plamondon and the Liberals. A younger, more dynamic Liberal leader would make a difference.

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

The Hill Times

COMMENT



The crackdown on recent demonstrations in Los Angeles are an example of what lies down the path to criminalizing protesting that the Canadian government is trying to legislate with Bill C-2, writes Erica Ifill. Screenshot courtesy of NBC News

becoming the norm. This was not difficult to foresee.

The 2020 protests opposing police brutality following the murder of George Floyd initiated the call for reducing police power by defunding them and reallocating that money towards building strong communities. One of the reasons is that we are funding police to stamp out our civil rights. Trump first deployed the National Guard to stop these demonstrators, calling them “thugs,” and setting in motion the criminalization of protesting. At that time, protesters were told that they had to do so peacefully.

Then in 2024 came the student protests of the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians. Instead of respecting that right, universities around the country brought in law enforcement. They, too, escalated violence on unarmed, peaceful protests. Obviously, the goalposts have moved. We can no longer protest near religious centres, or MPs’ homes, or any other place deemed sensitive. Imagine if the protesters had done so in front of a bank. They would’ve been shot in the street for disrupting commerce. No matter what you think of where people have a right to express opposition to policy and its execution, governments have disrespected these rights with every iteration of civil discontent.

And that is how governments slowly whittle down rights to nothing. Prime Minister Mark Carney’s tough-on-crime, right-wing flavour of governing and his border bill, C-2, will not only crack down on the right to protest by deploying well-financed police in military gear, but he will also “make it a criminal offence to intentionally and willfully obstruct access to any place of worship, schools, and community centres; and a criminal offence to willfully intimidate or threaten those attending services at these locations.” Though this sounds good to some on paper, it is a backdoor way of reducing our right to protest. The border bill will expand the collection of data and the surveillance of Canadians in order to assist law enforcement. It is not far-fetched to declare that we are entering into a dystopian future that—despite what Carney says—will not keep us safe; it will keep us compliant. That is what civil disobedience is for, and our governments are criminalizing it for power and control.

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

The Hill Times

Public safety or public suppression?

We are entering into a dystopian future that will not keep us safe—it will keep us compliant.

Erica Ifill

Bad+Bitchy



arrests, which “unlike a criminal arrest, refers to detention for civil immigration violations such as overstaying a visa or lacking legal status, and does not require criminal charges. These arrests can result in detention, deportation, temporary re-entry bans and denial of future immigration requests.” The

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NO MATTER WHAT YOU THINK OF WHERE PEOPLE HAVE A RIGHT TO EXPRESS OPPOSITION TO POLICY AND ITS EXECUTION, GOVERNMENTS HAVE DISRESPECTED THESE RIGHTS WITH EVERY ITERATION OF CIVIL DISCONTENT.

practice of holding people in criminal detention centres for administrative infractions is inhumane—migrants aren’t criminals. But politicians and news media have criminalized migrants, and now all immigrants, to the point where mass deportations—a tenet of fascism—are

OTTAWA—Los Angeles is looking like 1992, and sounding like *The Chronic*. As of writing on June 9, protests in downtown L.A. have devolved into mayhem for three days. On June 6, United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), in concert with other alphabet-riddled federal law enforcement agencies, launched immigration raids, which resulted in the arrests of 44 people. Unarmed protesters gathered—peacefully—at the federal detention centre where the arrested were held. They attempted to block ICE agents from continuing arrests in predominantly Hispanic neighbourhoods. If you have watched footage on social media, you would’ve seen an operation carried out with full military gear on unarmed, peaceful protesters.

U.S. President Donald Trump has already deployed 2,000 National Guard troops to L.A. to quell the protests, which has set in motion the inevitable escalation of violence. For example, there’s a video of members the L.A. Police Department stomping a man on the ground with their horses. As the Associated Press reported, California Attorney General Rob Bontas “accused Trump of fanning protesters’ anger with his announcement of the deployment, saying he set off Sunday’s clashes with law enforcement in downtown Los Angeles.” It was the arrival of National Guard troops that escalated the violence.

Please note that, as *Al Jazeera* wrote in its explainer, these are administrative

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NEWS

Bitumen skepticism not a blanket 'no' to pipelines, says B.C. Liberal MP Greaves

Jurisdictional respect is a 'core principle' of any consideration of future national projects, says a spokesperson for Energy and Natural Resources Minister Tim Hodgson.

BY STUART BENSON

Prime Minister Mark Carney says he wants to create "one Canadian economy out of 13" with his government's latest piece of legislation, but to do so, he'll have to keep all of the premiers onside and find consensus to build the "national interest" projects he has in mind. Yet, despite the smiles at the First Ministers' Meeting last week, it won't be easy for Carney to check off every item on 13 different wish lists.

However, while the governments of British Columbia and Alberta have long disagreed over having more bitumen flowing to the West Coast, newly elected Liberal MP Will Greaves (Victoria, B.C.) warns against mistaking his province's skepticism for a blanket "no" on new pipelines.

"Pipeline is almost too broad a category," Greaves told *The Hill Times*, noting that while the Alberta government's position has been to support "all pipelines everywhere," the issue for B.C. is what kind of energy is being transported.

On June 6, Carney (Nepean, Ont.) unveiled Bill C-5, which is aimed at eliminating federal barriers to internal trade and labour mobility, and enabling the federal government to identify and expedite "nation-building projects," which he said have become "too difficult to construct" in recent decades due to the overlong and "arduous process" of reviews and assessments that major projects must undergo to be approved.

"[That process] is holding our country back," Carney told reporters, flanked by several members of his cabinet, including Canada-U.S. Trade, Intergovernmental Affairs, and One Canadian Economy Minister Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, N.B.), who would

have the power to add or remove a project from the list of those approved as in the national interest. Once a project is approved, a new federal Major Project Office would consult the relevant federal departments and agencies to provide a single set of conditions that must be met for the project to move forward.

Carney said the legislation aims "to enhance Canada's prosperity, national security, economic security, national autonomy" while also protecting the environment, upholding Indigenous rights, and addressing President Trump's "illegal and unjustified" tariffs—issues that Carney said the 13 premiers "unanimously committed to" at the June 2 First Ministers' Meeting in Saskatoon, Sask.

However, while the premiers expressed unanimity about moving forward, divisions over what projects should be on their collective wish list quickly surfaced.

B.C. Premier David Eby rejected the comments made by Ontario Premier Doug Ford on his way into the meeting when he suggested he was confident that Eby—who was not at the Saskatoon gathering—and Carney would "work things out" on a second pipeline between Alberta and northern B.C.

Speaking to reporters on June 3 in Osaka, Japan, while on a 10-day trade mission to Asia, Eby dismissed Ford's comments, adding that Alberta Premier Danielle Smith's "vision" of reviving the Northern Gateway is "many, many years off" with no proponents within the province.

During a June 8 interview on CTV's *Question Period*, Smith said she is "going to convince" Eby that a new pipeline is "good for the country."

"I can't imagine, in the end, that if we meet the issues that have been raised by British Columbia, that he would go off Team Canada," Smith said. "I recognize that there's a *quid pro quo* here, that there has to be a way for everyone to benefit and to address legitimate concerns being raised. That's what we're prepared to do."

While Smith remains optimistic, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre accused Carney of giving premiers a "veto on resource projects and pipelines," referring to Carney's answer to reporters that the federal government "will not impose a

project on a province," and that they would need consensus and participation from all involved provinces, territories, and Indigenous Peoples.

"The NDP premier of B.C. has said 'no' to pipelines, so is the prime minister effectively saying we're not going to get any pipelines built?" Poilievre said at a June 6 press conference in the West Block, alongside his party's critic for energy and natural resources, Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, Alta.).

In response to a shouted question from *The Hill Times* regarding why he thinks provinces or territories should not be able to reject a project that must cross their borders, Poilievre said Canada needs "to start saying 'yes'" before heading back into the House of Commons lobby.

Carolyn Svonkin, current director of communications for Energy and Natural Resources Minister Tim Hodgson (Markham-Thornhill, Ont.), told *The Hill Times* that each province and territory has its own "unique considerations and desires," but the current tariff crisis has created the opportunity and willingness to co-operate amongst the premiers that has been absent in previous attempts to build major cross-border projects.

To keep the premiers happy and working together, the "bilateral relationship" between the federal and provincial governments will remain a "core principle" in any consideration of future national projects, Svonkin said.

"We respect each other's jurisdictions and no one supersedes another."

Greaves, a former associate professor of political science at the University of Victoria, said that despite B.C.'s "skepticism" over the need for a new bitumen pipeline, and the significant environmental and social risks it would pose, the opposition is more about what's flowing through it than a blanket rejection of new pipelines.

"It's not new that B.C. and Alberta have differing perspectives and positions on the value of bitumen pipelines in particular, but B.C. has certainly championed [liquefied natural gas] LNG pipelines as part of its economic strategy," Greaves said, noting that Eby's government approved the construction of a new pipeline project, which will supply LNG to an export terminal off B.C.'s northern coast, on June 5.



Alberta Premier Danielle Smith says she isn't giving up on convincing B.C. that a new pipeline connecting the two provinces is 'good for the country.' *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Greaves said it is too early to judge on which projects B.C. and Alberta could agree.

"We will see whether or not Alberta has a specific pipeline project that it identifies, but our government's and the prime minister's position is clear: if a proponent wants to bring forward a proposal, then it will need to be considered for review under Canada's environmental regulations and in accordance with [treaty rights]," Greaves said. "In the absence of an actual project and a company that wants to spend its money, there isn't much for us to discuss about new bitumen pipelines from Alberta."

However, Greaves said he was optimistic that a consensus could be achieved as Smith has already demonstrated an "admirable willingness to compromise" due to her accepting that any new pipeline would need to be "decarbonized."

"That's a tall order, and it will require Alberta to step up and significantly invest in the decarbonization of its energy sector, but it's a considerable concession on the part of her government," Greaves said.

The rookie MP added that both provinces and the federal government would all need to take some "water in their wine" to achieve that consensus. He pointed to the controversy over similar bills to accelerate infrastructure projects in B.C. and Ontario as "cautionary tales" for Carney as he attempts to pass C-5.

"It would be completely contrary to our goal of rapidly moving forward with projects that will help strengthen Canada's economy to have our legislation similarly derailed because of a lack of adequate consultation," Greaves said.

Nation-building projects shouldn't include 'sunset industry' fossil fuel infrastructure: May

Green Party Leader Elizabeth May (Saanich-Gulf Islands, B.C.) told *The Hill Times* that rather than rush to build a new pipeline, if Canada is looking for a national project that can simulta-

neously lower costs for residents and make the country more competitive while still protecting the environment and reducing emissions, "an energy grid that works across provincial borders" should be a priority.

"If we had a functional east, west, north, and south electricity grid, that's a surefire winner," May said, pointing to calls from territorial premiers for north-south cables, including from Yukon Premier Ranj Pillai, who signed a memorandum of understanding with B.C.'s government proposing the construction of a roughly 1,000 kilometre high-voltage link to connect their power grids.

On the East Coast, the federal government should focus on facilitating links between the Atlantic provinces with Quebec and Ontario's grid, similar to the agreement between Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador to develop the Churchill Falls hydroelectric plant, May said.

During Carney's June 6 press conference, he also mentioned the Arctic and western energy corridor proposals and the Energy East partnership as cross-provincial projects that the premiers had unanimously supported earlier that week.

As for how to power those expanded energy grids, May suggested the federal government should pursue solar and offshore wind farms, as well as geothermal energy projects, rather than fossil fuel infrastructure, which will have lifetimes of just a few decades.

"Fossil fuels are a sunset industry," May said, pointing not just to analyses by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, but also those done by the World Bank, the International Energy Agency, and the International Monetary Fund.

"If you look at global trends toward renewable energy, the economics and the price of natural gas, and the climate science, they're all saying not to build any new fossil fuel infrastructure," May explained. "There are many nation-building projects that make a ton of sense, and pipelines aren't one of them."

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Editorial

Editorial

Canadians deserve more than economic explanation for questionable G7 invites

Prime Minister Mark Carney will welcome fellow leaders of G7 countries to Kananaskis, Alta., next week for what could be a fairly consequential summit.

As *The Hill Times*' Neil Moss reports, observers have set the bar fairly low for Carney to be deemed successful at the Alberta event, and have tempered expectations for there to even be an agreed-upon joint communiqué.

But when it comes to human rights concerns, Carney continues to lower that expectation bar himself. Invitations to these summits to non-G7 leaders are commonplace, but extending golden tickets specifically to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in today's geopolitical climate have understandably raised eyebrows.

NDP MP Alexandre Boulerice summed up those concerns in a June 9 scrum, calling the invitations "really weird." He said the NDP was already opposed to inviting United States President Donald Trump "because he is threatening our own sovereignty. Mr. Modi is at the head of a government that already been involved in killing Canadians on Canadian soil, and you know, MBS is a dictator who shot journalists in his own country. So, I don't know what kind of message Mr. Carney want[s] to send."

Liberal MP Sukh Dhaliwal has said the invitation to Modi "is sending the wrong message," and it's something he's hearing about from his Surrey, B.C., constituents.

Carney said India is a major economy and should be at the table, despite the ongoing investigations into whether the Indian government was involved in the killing of Hardeep

Singh Nijjar. He said India and Canada "have now agreed importantly to continued law enforcement dialogue. So there's been some progress on that."

"There are certain countries that should be at the table" for G7 discussions and that India has agreed to "continued law enforcement dialogue," said Carney.

Liberal MP Rob Oliphant, parliamentary secretary to the foreign minister, told reporters on June 9 that the "invitation list is obviously designed to make sure that Canada's economic behaviours and economic activities are preserved, and also, dialogue is important."

"I believe that the prime minister has a very strong economic agenda, but he also will always have a strong human rights agenda, so he'll make sure that those things are talked about," said Oliphant.

More than talking is necessary—though it wouldn't hurt for Carney to say something about these invitations that actually attempts to address the concerns.

Carney has been moving quickly to make major changes to Canada's economic landscape. But the problem with looking at everything through that lens is that some of the human element gets overlooked.

Some camps say keeping an open dialogue is the right move, wherever a country may fall on the "friend" scale. In that case, the government should be making equal moves to ensure Canadians are taken care of, not just when it comes to the money in their pockets, but also with concrete steps to protect people from transnational repression. And so far, that's taken an unwelcome back seat.

The Hill Times

Letters to the Editor

Canada needs to be prepared for Trump's attempt to subvert U.S. democracy: Toronto reader

Re: "Trump requires entry permit for Canada's G7 summit: letter writer," (*The Hill Times*, June 4, p. 8).

A dark cloud hangs over the G7—and the free world—with United States President Donald Trump attempting to destroy his country's legal system. Trump has been ignoring the courts, and he is now working to take away their last power to enforce the rule of law. Trump's seemingly innocuous legal language in his "Big Beautiful Bill" will remove the court's last remaining line of defence, and allow Trump to become a dictator. His "big ugly bill" being squired through Congress by his Republican henchmen contains wording that would prevent judges from enforcing U.S. law through the use of contempt of court.

The architects of the U.S. constitution took great pains to construct a system

that could not be bulldozed into an authoritarian government. The power of the U.S. government was deliberately distributed over four parties: the president, the House, the Senate, and, most importantly, the courts. Republicans are supporting Trump in his attempt to castrate the courts, and ride roughshod over this carefully built defence of freedom and democracy. If Trump succeeds in this endeavour, he will have crossed the boundary from democracy to dictatorship, acting with wanton disregard of the U.S. constitution and more than 200 years of democracy. The U.S. will no longer be a free democratic country and an acceptable member of the G7—like Russia.

These are dangerous times, and Canada needs to be prepared.

Tom McElroy
 Toronto, Ont.

Take bold climate action now, says letter writer

Re: "Urgent: ambitious methane emissions reduction needed," (*The Hill Times*, June 2).

Some things are hard. Like finding cures for diseases.

Some things are not hard. Like implementing existing solutions to reduce abnormal warming, air pollution, and unusual and destructive weather. We know what to do. Instead, we delay and water down any plan to reduce harmful and costly greenhouse gases. It doesn't make sense to this voter.

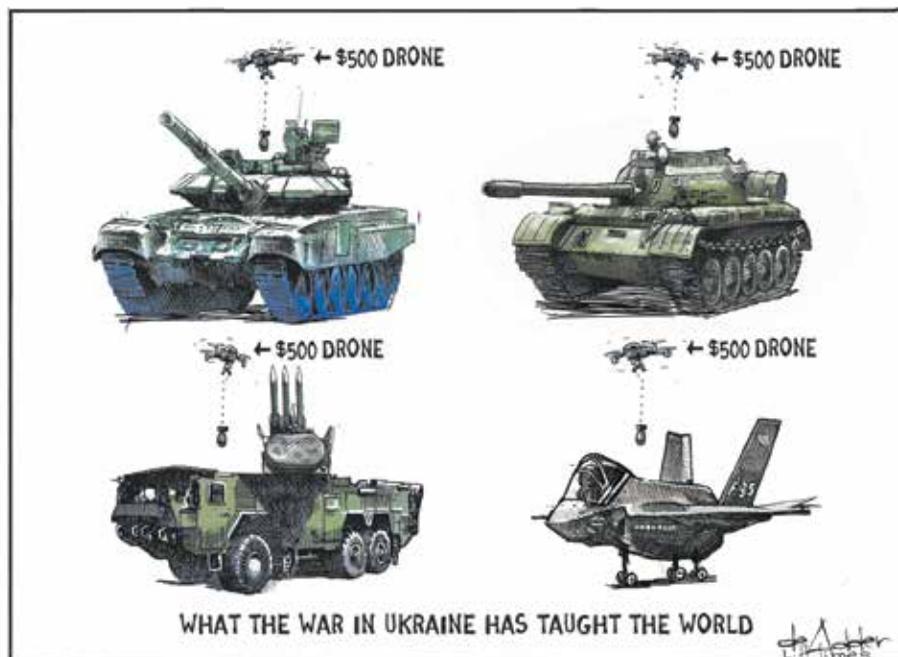
Finding and stopping methane leaks is one of those unrealized solutions. Methane is a potent but short-lived greenhouse gas, making it a good target for reduction. Canada has already pledged to do so, and we must follow through if we want to increase trade with like-minded countries. As a bonus, stopping methane leaks saves

companies money. Again, there is a long list of best practices. Let's just follow it.

Canada, as a global oil and methane gas nation, can and should lead the way to decarbonization. We have the expertise in our energy workers. The oil and methane gas industry has the profitability and opportunity to act. Canada could lead, but we are not. So, let's follow. Action on methane is a relatively easy win, with points for health, nature, and the economy.

Canadians want our government to strengthen action on climate change. Whether through regulations, bans, caps, carbon pricing and rebate programs, efficiency standards—we will leave that to you. For the love of this amazing country and all life, we ask you to take bold climate action, now. Please.

Laura Lindberg
 Etobicoke, Ont.



COMMENT

Visions of a gold rush in expanded oil exports fly in the face of a decades-old reality

The potential for a conduit to load oil tankers in the dangerous waters of the northern B.C. coast actually ended more than three decades ago.

Les Whittington

Need to Know



OTTAWA—It's a good thing the federal government is going to build up Canada's military because the Army will be needed if there is ever a decision to construct an oilsands pipeline from Alberta through northern British Columbia to a tanker terminal in Kitimat.

Although the Calgary-based backers of the never-built Northern Gateway pipeline never seemed to figure it out, the potential for such a conduit to load oil tankers in the dangerous waters of the northern B.C. coast

actually ended more than three decades ago.

The defining moment began with a ship radio call: "Yeah, this is Valdez. We've ... should be on your radar there. We've fetched up, hard aground, north of Goose Island off Bligh Reef and ... evidently ... leaking some oil ..."

The collision of the Exxon Valdez with the reef just after midnight on March 24, 1989, in Prince William Sound, Alaska, tore open the tanker's hull, causing some 11 million gallons of crude oil to empty into the water. Early efforts to contain the spill accomplished little, and the oil slick eventually polluted about 2,000 kilometres of coastline.

The oil killed:

- An estimated 250,000 seabirds
- 2,800 sea otters
- 300 harbor seals
- 250 bald eagles
- As many as 22 killer whales
- Billions of salmon and herring eggs

Efforts to clean up the ecological damage from the accident, which happened about 1,400 kilometres north of the B.C. border, were still underway 30 years later.

So it's not surprising that Enbridge's Northern Gateway proposal ran into overwhelming opposition throughout B.C. when the Harper government was trying to sell it in 2012-13.

Alberta Premier Danielle Smith would have been in her late teens when the Exxon Valdez changed the public attitude forever on pipelines on B.C.'s northern coast, so maybe she didn't pay much attention.

But her blithe contention that Albertans will only settle for a bitumen pipeline to the northern B.C. coast, including the attendant reversal of the Justin Trudeau-mandated ban on crude oil tankers in the area, is so unrealistic that one has to wonder if it's some kind of set up.

For all the upbeat camaraderie among Prime Minister Mark Carney and the premiers concerning the Donald Trump-driven need to renew Canada's nation-building spirit, there is no reason to think that laying down a bitumen pipeline to tidewater in northern B.C. remains anything more than a fantasy.

B.C. government ministers keep trying to point out politely that their province gave at the office in the form of absorbing the tripling of the capacity of the Trans Mountain line, built at a cost of \$34-billion by the federal government to increase oil carried from Alberta to a tanker port in Vancouver.

First Nations along the northern coast have been gearing up for another showdown on this



Alberta Premier Danielle Smith would have been in her late teens when the Exxon Valdez forever changed the public attitude on pipelines on B.C.'s northern coast, so maybe she didn't pay much attention, writes Les Whittington. Photograph courtesy of Flickr/Jim Brickett

matter for months because of calls from Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre—who appeared likely to become prime minister until March—to scrap the tanker ban and renew Northern Gateway.

"I truly believe people are willing to rise and fight when they see injustice," Arnie Nagy, a member of the Haida Nation who was part of the anti-Northern Gateway movement, commented on the renewed push to start allowing oil tankers in the area. "This community is still willing to stand up and defend this place," he told *DeSmog* recently. "And as I've always said, I'll fight till my last breath."

It is, in any case, beyond comprehension why Carney—despite his understandable desire to capitalize on this country's resource strengths in the Trump era—would risk his party's popularity in B.C. to help Alberta where the Liberals received zero credit for financing the most expensive infrastructure project in Canadian history in the TMX pipeline expansion.

B.C., despite some opposition from Greens and First Nations, is pushing forward instead with economically significant liquefied natural gas exports (critically, a broken natural gas pipeline

does not foul the environment the way crude does).

As for Canada's oil, leaving aside questions about why we should build more pipelines when we are trying to curb greenhouse gas emissions (not to mention the fact that Canada seems to be on fire as a result of global warming), there is no obvious option for a new petroleum pipeline to move the increased oilsands production Smith favours.

The idea of a pipeline to Hudson Bay is a non-starter for all kinds of reasons. The only vaguely realistic option seems to be the once-dead Energy East line from Alberta to New Brunswick. It currently lacks a proponent, would probably have to be financed largely by Ottawa, and could be scuppered by opponents—especially in Quebec. But it has a legitimate claim of vital national interest as the current pipeline from western Canada going through Michigan—which delivers about half of Quebec's and Ontario's oil—means that more than 20 million Canadians are hostage to Trump's disposition in the midst of a trade war that could go off in any direction.

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

OPINION

What does Trump 2.0 mean for Canada-China relations?

Since the U.S. can no longer unite western democracies, Canada should not view China in all negative terms.

Lynette H. Ong

Opinion



The second Trump administration has brought the United States-led liberal world order to the brink. Its treachery of the very notion of western alliance has upended enduring security and trade pacts among western democracies when many of its allies such as Canada sent troops to fight alongside the American forces in Afghanistan after the 9/11 attacks. Worse still, its bullying of Canada by calling it "the 51st state," and threatening to take over territories like Greenland by force has shattered the illusion that Canada could always count on the U.S. for military,

intelligence, or economic support. Simply put, it is no exaggeration that Canada's worldview has been turned upside down since U.S. President Donald Trump's inauguration in late January.

Where does this leave Canada's relations with China, our second-largest trading partner and the world's second-largest economy? The June 5 exchange between Prime Minister Mark Carney and Chinese Premier Li Qiang is the highest level official exchange between the two countries in recent years. The bilateral relations hit a rock bottom with the detention of the Two Michaels by

Beijing in 2018 following the arrest of Huawei CFO Meng Wanzhou in Vancouver. Since the release of Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig in what could be described as a "prisoners' exchange," there have been some signs—albeit modest—of rapprochement between the two countries. As I wrote in July 2024 following then-foreign minister Mélanie Joly's visit to Beijing, the relations had thawed somewhat. Almost a year ago now, China was still reeling from the burst of the real estate bubble. To boost trade, China signalled its willingness to rebuild relations with its trading partners, including

Canada, by toning down its "wolf-warrior diplomacy."

However, by the end of 2024, the initial signs of thawing had subsided. Canada followed the footsteps of then-U.S. president Joe Biden administration's imposition of 100-per-cent tariffs on Chinese-made electric vehicles (EVs) on the justification of the unfair advantage of government subsidies. In retaliation, China slapped 100-per-cent tariffs on imports of Canadian canola oil, and 25-per-cent tariffs on seafood and pork—industries that are heavily on the Chinese market—for the purpose of maximizing the pain imposed by the penalty as my recent paper shows.

Biden's tariffs were a protectionist policy to shield the U.S. auto industry from Chinese competition. However, Canadian auto plants do not currently produce any EVs. Canadian consumers could,

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OPINION

The cost of coming home: are tariffs and trade deficits really so bad?

The notion of a trade deficit signalling economic weakness is misleading. Meanwhile, domestic production prompted by tariffs simply costs more.

Luis Napoles Medina

Opinion



Factories are on their way home. Under a revamped trade policy, the United States will no longer tolerate being ripped off by its trading partners. What started off with tariffs on Canada and Mexico has since escalated into sweeping “reciprocal” global tariffs aimed at bringing back domestic manufacturing and restoring American economic strength—or at least that’s what U.S. President Donald Trump seems to be suggesting.

His argument centres on the trade deficit the U.S. runs with its trading partners, which raises important questions: what exactly is a trade deficit, and is it a bad thing? Put simply, a trade deficit occurs when a country imports more than it exports. According to Trump, yes, it’s a bad thing—and Americans, he argues, are



Part of the logic behind U.S. President Donald Trump’s push for tariffs is a desire to bring production back home, but the consequences could hit local economies hard, writes Luis Napoles Medina. *White House photograph by Gabriel Kotico*

better off accepting the consequences of tariffs rather than continuing to run a trade deficit.

As many economists have noted, the notion of a trade deficit signalling economic weakness is misleading. The U.S. has run trade deficits for many decades, all while seeing economic growth and prosperity.

“If I buy more from you than you buy from me, I’m losing.” That’s the mindset Trump has brought to America’s trade relationships. But running the world’s largest economy isn’t the same as running a business. In reality,

trade deficits are often a sign of strong domestic demand—meaning consumers and businesses have the purchasing power, backed by a strong currency, to buy cheaper foreign goods. That, in turn, allows the U.S. to concentrate more of its production in high-value sectors like technology and finance, rather than fruits and textiles.

Another often-overlooked fact is that in an economy like the U.S., a trade deficit will typically be mirrored by capital surplus. The money spent on foreign goods doesn’t just vanish—it cir-

culates through the global economy, and often finds its way back into the U.S. through investments, whether in private enterprise or government bonds.

Part of the logic behind the president’s push for tariffs is a desire to bring production back home. On paper, it sounds appealing: jobs coming back to the U.S., locally made products, a revival of American manufacturing. What’s not to like? In practice, though, it’s far more complicated—and the consequences could hit local economies hard.

For starters, Americans would face higher prices at the check-out. Domestic production simply costs more, and those costs would inevitably be passed on to consumers. That’s not exactly in line with the president’s promises of lowering everyday costs. On a broader scale, forcing a shift to domestic production would result in significant productivity losses, as businesses move away from industries where the U.S. holds a competitive edge. Ignoring comparative advantage—one of the most basic principles in economics—means choosing to spend more time and money manufacturing things that you could import for less.

These measures are already sowing global trade uncertainty, and other countries won’t quietly step aside when their own domestic industries are at stake. Here in Ontario, we’ve seen how Trump’s threats to the auto sector have triggered swift, co-ordinated pushback from all levels of government. Part of that resistance involves working with like-minded trade partners to blunt the impact—often by rerouting trade flows, and shifting supply chains. The result? Wasted resources as industries scramble to rebuild capacity from scratch, and more disruption in already fragile global supply chains.

Ultimately, everyone stands to lose. Canadians will feel the pinch, but so will Americans and every country that trades with the U.S. It’s a costly way to learn a simple lesson: a trade policy built on tariffs and protectionism doesn’t restore economic strength—it undermines it.

Luis Napoles Medina is a director of parliamentary affairs for Independent Senator Paul Massicotte. His work focuses primarily on policy related to the economy, commerce, energy, and international relations.

The Hill Times

What does Trump 2.0 mean for Canada-China relations?

Continued from page 9

therefore, benefit substantially more from lower vehicle prices than car producers could from selling their products in the future. EV tariffs are also nonsensical for meeting climate change goals.

Canada has paid a steep price for its allyship with the U.S. in this instance, but what have we gained in return? Trump’s tariffs and his overall policy thrust have treated America’s partners and allies far worse than its supposed foes. Canada is a prime example, and so are the European Union, Australia, and other western democracies. The recent electoral victory of the Liberal Party from its plummeting popularity prior to Trump’s re-election, as well as the resounding defeat of the



The June 5 exchange between Prime Minister Mark Carney, left, and Chinese Premier Li Qiang is the highest level official exchange between the two countries in recent years, writes Lynette H. Ong. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade and screenshot courtesy of YouTube/China News Service*

Trump-mimicking Liberal coalition in Australia are strong mandates delivered by the Canadian



people and U.S. allies who reject Trumpian politics of xenophobia and pettiness.

Recent public opinion polls suggest that since Trump’s re-election, Canadians’ views of the U.S. have fallen to a historic low, faring worse than the public perception of China, which has been in the negative territory since the pandemic. In short, Canadians think worse of Washington, D.C., than of Beijing. Does it mean Canadians have forgotten about Beijing’s arbitrary detention and economic coercion of late? Not at all; but Beijing now appears to be the lesser of the two evils.

This constitutes policy ground for fundamental reconsideration of China’s policy under Carney’s government. As the U.S. under Trump can no longer unite western democracies by presenting the “China chal-

lenge,” Canada—much like the EU—should not view China in all negative terms. In the wake of Trump’s re-election, the EU now considers China “a partner for co-operation, an economic competitor, and a systemic rival.” “Partner,” “competitor,” and “rival” are seemingly contradictory terms, but they should not be mutually exclusive in the age of global uncertainty. The Canadian government can ill afford to be binary in its thinking or ideologically obstinate in offering solutions to economic challenges. Abolition of tariffs on Chinese EVs is a good place to start, I’d argue, since it is nonsensical in economic terms or building political capital. Carney’s China policies in the next four years call for nimbleness—a differentiated approach that allows us to step forward when it serves our interest, and prompts us to deliberate when it does not.

Lynette H. Ong is the distinguished professor of Chinese politics at the University of Toronto, and director of the China Governance Lab at the Munk School.

The Hill Times

OPINION

Let Canada's telecom builders keep building

Bell, Rogers, and Telus should be excluded from the wholesale internet access regime.

Robert Ghiz

Opinion



Industry Minister Mélanie Joly must reject policies that incentivize the largest network builders to reduce their investments in network infrastructure, writes Robert Ghiz. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Today, Canada faces a generational opportunity to build a stronger, more self-reliant nation. As the federal government sets out to deliver on its mandate to rebuild Canada's economic foundations, it must ensure that our national strategies treat telecommunications not just as a consumer product, but as strategic infrastructure.

Our digital networks are the backbone of modern Canadian life. They power trade corridors,

secure our sovereignty in the North, connect remote communities to opportunity, and enable everything from remote health care to next-generation manufacturing. In 2024, the telecommunications sector added more than \$87-billion to our GDP—more than two-thirds of which came

from productivity gains enabled by enhanced connectivity across other industries. Telecom doesn't just connect Canadian businesses; it multiplies their potential.

That success has been built on a clear policy principle: facilities-based competition. In other words, encouraging providers to invest in building, expanding, and enhancing their own infrastructure, rather than depending on the networks of others.

Which is why Canada must reject policies that incentivize our largest network builders—Bell, Rogers, and Telus—to reduce their investments in network infrastructure and instead operate as resellers on the networks of other service providers, including small regional providers.

That is exactly what is happening since the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission made the three large national service providers eligible to take advantage of the mandated wholesale high-speed access (HSA) regime. This policy tilts the economics of network investment away from building and toward resale. It encourages these large

telecommunications companies to lease capacity from their competitors rather than expanding their own networks. Over time, this erodes incentives for long-term capital investment, weakens competition at the infrastructure level, harms smaller regional network operators, and undermines efforts to expand connectivity to underserved rural and remote communities.

Let's be clear: Canada's world-class networks exist because Bell, Rogers, and Telus, along with smaller regional service providers, have invested heavily in building them. In 2024 alone, the Canadian telecom sector invested more than \$12-billion, or 18 per cent of their revenues into capital expenditures—a higher share than counterparts in the United States, United Kingdom, or Australia. This is particularly impressive given the enormous costs of building networks across Canada's vast and often difficult geography.

And Canadians are seeing the benefits. According to a recent PwC report, inflation-adjusted prices for mobile and home internet plans have declined by up to 70 per cent and 45 per cent, respectively, since 2020. Coverage is broader. Speeds are faster. New offerings—from digital-only brands to intuitive apps—put more control in the hands of consumers. This didn't happen through regulation. It happened through competition between builders trying to outdo one

another in network performance and customer service.

Extending wholesale mandates to the three large national network operators would reverse that dynamic. It would encourage them to divert investment capital toward wholesale resale models instead of next-generation network buildouts. In an era where resilience, security, and digital sovereignty matter more than ever, this is a strategic mistake Canada cannot afford.

Instead, public policy should focus on enabling more investment. That means standing firm behind facilities-based competition as the cornerstone of Canada's telecom success by prohibiting Bell, Rogers, and Telus from operating as resellers on the networks of their competitors under the mandated wholesale HSA regime.

We can't build a stronger, more connected Canada by encouraging our largest network builders to stop building.

A connected Canada is a competitive Canada. It's a secure Canada. It's a unified Canada.

As the federal government charts its course for the next decade, one thing must remain clear: when it comes to broadband, let the builders build.

Robert Ghiz is the president and CEO of the Canadian Telecommunications Association, and was previously premier of Prince Edward Island.

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TOP 50 CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY INFLUENCERS

TOP 50 CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY INFLUENCERS

All eyes on Trump: meet the top 50 foreign policy influencers navigating Canada's role in a rocky world

The Hill Times spoke with nearly 20 insiders, including current and former senior government officials, past diplomats, business leaders, analysts, and academics to compile the list of the top 50 foreign policy influencers.

BY NEIL MOSS, STUART BENSON & IREM KOCA

The return of United States President Donald Trump to the White House hurled Ottawa's relationship with its southern neighbour into chaos—and with it, Canadian foreign policy—as a long-standing trading and security relationship was destabilized by Trump's threats to annex Canada as a "51st state."

Enter new Prime Minister Mark Carney who promised a different relationship with the U.S. While still in the early months of his government, foreign policy insiders are anticipating he will have an international legacy impact that will surpass any prime minister in recent memory.

On the eve of the most consequential G7 summit in recent memory, hosted by Canada in Kananaskis, Alta., *The Hill Times* offers a moment-in-time snapshot—due to the speed of the post-election government's transition—of who is swaying the county's direction on the world stage.

This includes cabinet ministers focused on Canada-U.S. ties, like Foreign Affairs Minister Anita Anand and Canada-U.S. Trade Minister Dominic LeBlanc; staffers looking south of the border, such as the Prime Minister's Office's Lisa Jørgensen; and top bureaucrats and diplomats, including Privy Council Clerk John Hannaford, and Canada's top envoy to Washington Kirsten Hillman.

Those with influence also include people focused on international peace and security in a destabilized world—as conflicts persist in Europe and the Middle East—like G7 sherpa Cindy Termorshuizen and David Angell, the Privy Council Office's foreign and defence policy adviser to Carney.

To compile the list of the top 50 foreign policy influencers, *The Hill Times* spoke with nearly 20 insiders, including current and

former senior government officials, past diplomats, business leaders, analysts, and academics.

Beyond those who made the final list, a number of players also received high praise, including Global Affairs Canada's (GAC) Alexandre Lévesque and Weldon Epp, assistant deputy ministers for Europe, Arctic, Middle East and Maghreb, and for the Indo-Pacific, respectively; Liberal MP Rob Oliphant, a longtime parliamentary secretary to the foreign affairs minister with close ties to the diplomatic community in Ottawa; NDP MP Heather McPherson, an influential critic of the government's direction; Canada's top diplomat in China Jennifer May, who received praise for managing an arduous posting; University of Ottawa professor Roland Paris and University of Toronto professor Janice Stein, who both offer reliable perspectives; and Ukrainian Ambassador to Canada Yuliya Kovaliv, who continues to be applauded for her tenacity.

The list is presented by category in no specific order.

Politicians

Mark Carney, prime minister

During his early days as prime minister, Mark Carney has already reshaped Canada's foreign policy and repositioned it in response to Trump's belligerence. Since taking office this past March, Carney has adopted a more prominent and "disciplined" approach to international relations than his predecessor, Justin Trudeau, especially regarding engagement with Americans, according to sources who spoke with *The Hill Times*.

One academic with expertise in foreign policy said Carney has taken "a very keen, substantive interest in foreign policy," in contrast to Trudeau's "virtue-signalling" approach. The academic lauded the former's early efforts to improve relationships during his trips to France, the U.S., and Italy.

Within government, Carney is viewed as likely to become the most impactful prime minister on the international scene in recent memory. A second academic observed that Carney, who governed both Canada and England's central banks before chairing the board of a global investment firm, entered politics with a "considerable array of international contacts that he can call upon," independent of anyone else in government or within the PMO.

"Carney is the best-connected prime minister since possibly

Lester B. Pearson," the source said. "He understands the mechanics of international affairs, so you can give him the master's level briefing, if not PhD level, because he has one of those, too."

Anita Anand, foreign affairs minister



As GAC's lead minister, Anita Anand brings a steady hand and international experience to the file. Her recent appointment was cheered by Ukrainian officials, as well as members of NATO's Eastern Flank—a region she has worked with in her past role as defence minister.

Unlike that past role, Anand will have to manage a department that is in the process of budget cuts, instead of accelerated growth. At the same time, she finds herself in the middle of an increasingly disruptive world order, with fewer allies to rely on than Canada enjoyed in the past. Stickhandling relationships with the U.S., China, and India will be top of mind. She will also have to build up her global Rolodex to match the connections left by her predecessor, Mélanie Joly. She also has responsibility for international development as global foreign aid contributions are drying up.

Dominic LeBlanc, Canada-U.S. trade, intergovernmental affairs and one Canadian economy minister

Aside from Carney, Dominic LeBlanc is Canada's most important voice in its relationship with the Trump administration. "Every ounce of progress—whether large or small—that Canada's been able to make with the United States has Dominic LeBlanc's hands in it," said a former senior government official.

LeBlanc represents consistency between the Trudeau and Carney governments in dealing with Trump—he was at Mar-a-Lago for Trudeau's meeting with Trump last November, and was by Carney's side in the Oval Office in May. Described as a "savvy operator," LeBlanc knows how relationships can spend new money fast enough even if it is available.

François-Philippe Champagne, finance minister While it may keep him closer to home, François-Philippe Champagne's newest role as custodian of the nation's finances will keep him central to Carney's foreign policy.



Observers say Prime Minister Mark Carney's foreign policy legacy could be a major one as he navigates the country's response to moves made by U.S. President Donald Trump. *White House photograph by Daniel Torok*

underfunding of Canada's defence establishment, another fixture in the Canada-U.S. relationship. He built links inside the U.S. through his past work as public safety minister, for which he was given credit for accelerating bilateral co-operation on the border. He has also been described as a steady pair of hands.

One defence expert said McGuinty has been "very influential" in shaping Canada-U.S. relations over the last four months. Prior to Trump's return to the White House, Canada faced global criticism for being laggards falling well short of the NATO defence spending mark of two per cent of GDP as the American president has championed more than doubling the target. The challenge for McGuinty will be whether Canada can spend new money fast enough even if it is available.

Maninder Sidhu, international trade minister A new face in cabinet, Maninder Sidhu has been around the trade file since 2023 as parliamentary secretary. As LeBlanc manages Canada-U.S. trade, Sidhu will be responsible for everything else, including Carney's hopes for increased East-West diversification.

In his early days in the post, Sidhu has brought together his G7 counterparts for meetings in Paris, as well as journeyed to Ecuador. With trade deals all but released with Ecuador and Indonesia, Sidhu will have an early test to stickhandle implementation bills through Parliament. Beyond trade negotiations, an important part of his role

will be to help Canadian businesses pivot to new markets and mitigate the country's dependency on exporting to the U.S.

Michael Chong, Conservative foreign affairs critic The Conservative point-man on foreign policy, Michael Chong is the official opposition's leading voice holding the Liberals' feet to the fire on the government's response to issues related to foreign interference and Canada's relationship with the government of China. Yet, while Chong's name is the one most often attached to the party's official statements related to the issue, sources also noted the influence of other caucus members on specific issues, including Conservative deputy leader Melissa Lantsman regarding the Israel-Hamas war, and MP Randy Hoback for his leadership on the Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group.

Flavio Volpe, the president of the Automotive Parts Manufacturers Association of Canada, said that Conservative opposition voices like Chong and Hoback are "very useful" in influencing debate in a "highly partisan" Washington.

Peter Boehm and Peter Harder, Senators Former GAC senior officials, Independent Senator Peter Boehm

and Progressive Senator Peter Harder bring international experience and institutional memory to the Red Chamber. While some Senators have pet issues on the global file, these two Senators look at the broader picture of Canada's international landscape and policy development. Boehm is a former G7 sherpa, a past ambassador to Germany, and deputy minister of international development, while Harder served as the top bureaucrat at GAC.

Both are sought out for their counsel by the government. The chair and vice-chair, respectively, of the Senate Foreign Affairs and International Trade Committee in the last Parliament, Boehm and Harder blunted a bill to ban supply management concessions in trade negotiations that was politically popular, but heavily criticized in trade circles. "That was really about Canada's stature in the rest of the world, and our ability to negotiate with the rest of the world," said a former senior government source.

Doug Ford, Ontario premier Dubbed "Captain Canada," Ontario Premier Doug Ford has played "a critical role as a catalyst" in uniting the premiers and federal government to Trump's tariff and annexation threats and defending Canada's interests.

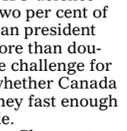
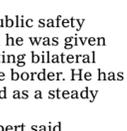
"Ford has been influential in getting the federal government to respond to Canadian sentiment, and galvanizing Canadians around this new world order shaping up around the leanings of the White House," Volpe told *The Hill Times*.

As exemplified by his blue "Canada is not for sale" baseball cap, Ford has presented himself as a uniquely Canadian counterbalance to Trump's protectionism. Ford has been highly engaged in his advocacy for the "fortress Can-Am" message for audiences on both sides of the border, making regular appearances on American news broadcasts, from Fox News to CNN and MSNBC.

Staffers

Lisa Jørgensen, PMO senior adviser for Canada-U.S. relations The chief political adviser in the PMO on all things Canada-U.S., Lisa Jørgensen has

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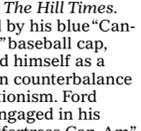
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The top 50 people influencing Canadian foreign policy

Politicians

- Mark Carney, prime minister
- Anita Anand, foreign affairs minister
- Dominic LeBlanc, Canada-U.S. trade, intergovernmental affairs, and one Canadian economy minister
- David McGuinty, defence minister
- François-Philippe Champagne, finance minister
- Mélanie Joly, industry minister
- Maninder Sidhu, international trade minister
- Michael Chong, Conservative foreign affairs critic
- Peter Boehm and Peter Harder, Senators
- Doug Ford, Ontario premier

Staffers

- Lisa Jørgensen, PMO senior adviser for Canada-U.S. relations
- Scott Gilmore, PMO senior foreign and defence policy adviser
- Oz Jungic, PMO senior policy adviser
- Marco Mendicino/Marc-André Blanchard, outgoing and incoming PMO chief of staff
- Tom Pitfield/David Lametti, outgoing and incoming PMO principal secretary
- Taras Zalusky, chief of staff to the foreign affairs minister
- Brandon Rowe, chief of staff to the Canada-U.S. trade, intergovernmental affairs, and one Canadian economy minister
- Ian Foucher, chief of staff to the finance minister

Civil servants

- David Morrison, deputy minister for foreign affairs
- Rob Stewart, deputy minister for international trade
- John Hannaford, Privy Council clerk
- Nathalie Drouin, Privy Council deputy clerk, and national security and intelligence adviser to the prime minister
- David Angell, foreign and defence policy adviser to the prime minister
- Cindy Termorshuizen, associate deputy minister for foreign affairs and G7 sherpa
- Christiane Fox, Privy Council deputy clerk, and associate secretary to the cabinet and intergovernmental affairs deputy minister
- Aaron Fowler, associate assistant deputy minister for international trade and chief trade negotiator
- Jennie Carignan, chief of the defence staff
- Stefanie Beck, deputy minister for national defence
- Daniel Rogers, CSIS director
- Caroline Xavier, CSE director
- Kevin Brosseau, fentanyl czar

Diplomats

- Kirsten Hillman, ambassador to the United States
- Bob Rae, ambassador and permanent representative to the United Nations
- Ian McKay, ambassador to Japan
- Heidi Hulan, ambassador to NATO
- Pete Hoekstra, U.S. ambassador to Canada
- Tjorven Bellmann/Matthias Lüttenberg, German ambassadors to Canada
- Rob Tirline, U.K. high commissioner to Canada
- Kanji Yamanouchi, Japanese ambassador to Canada

Civil society and others

- Goldy Hyder, Business Council of Canada president
- Flavio Volpe, Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association president
- Jean Charest, former Quebec premier
- Meredith Lilly, academic
- Thomas Juneau, academic
- Jennifer Welsh, academic
- Laura Dawson, Future Borders Coalition executive director
- Steve Verheul, former chief trade negotiator
- Khalil Shariff, Aga Khan Foundation Canada CEO
- Bob Fife/Steven Chase/Mark MacKinnon, *Globe and Mail* reporters
- Katie Simpson/Josh Wingrove, CBC and Bloomberg reporters



since taken on a broader foreign policy portfolio. With a background in law, she has previously served as chief of staff to the

justice and public safety ministers. Believed to have taken on a permanent role in Carney's PMO, she is noted for her involvement with both tactics and strategy when

dealing with Canada's unpredictable southern neighbour.

She is also noted for her mastery of the details on a quick-changing file. "Lisa Jørgensen has the most important job in government," a former senior official said. One business leader called her a "pivotal figure in the PMO," involved in all conversations and engagement between the PMO and White House. Her wider

TOP 50 CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY INFLUENCERS

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foreign policy docket includes national security and defence, as well as NATO and G7 matters.

Scott Gilmore, PMO senior foreign and defence policy adviser

A former diplomat, **Scott Gilmore** was brought into the PMO to provide stability in the early days in the Carney government amid the departure of a band of senior staffers who had their fingerprints on the international file for years. While he may not be a permanent fixture in the PMO, Gilmore has Carney's trust and has driven some big international transformations, including what was seen in the Throne Speech, with a new direction for Canada in its relationship with the U.S. and the world.

While he may lack the institutional memory of his predecessor in the role, **Patrick Travers**, who was in the PMO from 2016 until he left earlier this year, Gilmore has deep connections in Ottawa and around the globe.

Oz Jungic, PMO senior policy adviser



Becoming an increasingly experienced hand, **Oz Jungic** is another carryover from the Trudeau to the Carney PMO. He's described

as a "pair of safe hands" with the most "depth and experience" among staffers, having served in senior policy adviser roles in the defence and foreign ministers offices before joining the PMO in 2021.

He has solid links with the diplomatic community in Ottawa, as well as with stakeholders. Like Carney, Jungic holds a doctorate from Oxford University.

Marco Mendicino/Marc-André Blanchard, outgoing and incoming PMO chief of staff

While it remains to be seen whether Carney's newly named permanent chief of staff, former United Nations Ambassador



Marc-André Blanchard, will be as influential as **Katie Telford** was in Trudeau's PMO, he will nonetheless be in every meeting and the last person in the room when Carney speaks with foreign leaders.



Blanchard will begin his tenure next month, taking over from Carney's current interim chief, former public safety minister **Marco Mendicino**, who took on the role after Carney became Liberal leader in March. Mendicino also accompanied Carney on his visit to the White House.

Tom Pitfield/David Lametti, outgoing and incoming PMO principal secretary

Like Carney's chief of staff, the PMO's outgoing and



Prime Minister Mark Carney and then-foreign affairs minister Mélanie Joly meet with U.S. President Donald Trump in the White House on May 6. Photograph courtesy of X/Mélanie Joly



(reported) incoming principal secretaries, **Tom Pitfield** and **David Lametti**, respectively, draw their influence from

their proximity to the prime minister.

Fittingly, Carney is replacing a lifelong friend of Trudeau with one of his own, as Lametti is also a former Oxford University alumnus and played a key role in Carney's leadership campaign and transition into government, including advising on cabinet appointments. Pitfield—a former CEO of Data Sciences, the firm behind Liberalist, the party's voter outreach tool—served as the party's executive campaign director and chief strategist in the last federal election.



Taras Zalusky, chief of staff to the foreign affairs minister

Hill Times sources say **Taras Zalusky** is set to take on the post, and he'll have automatic influence leading GAC's top minister's office. He previously worked with Anand for a spell in the defence minister's office before Anand took over a new cabinet post. Zalusky continued in the role with then-defence minister **Bill Blair** until the recent cabinet shuffle.

A longtime Liberal staffer, he was a chief of staff during the governments of **Jean Chrétien** and **Paul Martin**. He also brings considerable insight on Ukraine as a former CEO and executive director of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress from 2011 to 2016.

Brandon Rowe, chief of staff to the Canada-U.S. trade,

intergovernmental affairs and one Canadian economy minister

LeBlanc's right-hand man, **Brandon Rowe**'s influence on the foreign file comes from his boss' all encompassing hand on the Canada-U.S. file. He has a long tenure with LeBlanc, having been in his office since 2018 and his chief of staff since last year—a role he continued following the cabinet shuffle.

Rowe is described as having an understated style, not the one to chart a new path forward in a senior staff meeting. But he is a steadying force for LeBlanc. "He's the guy that makes him feel comfortable," says a former senior official, remarking that Rowe is the staffer that LeBlanc wants by his side.

Ian Foucher, chief of staff to the finance minister

Following his boss from Industry to Finance, **Ian Foucher** will undoubtedly continue to play a leading role in whatever endeavour Champagne is tasked with, providing his own extensive network of contacts and advising on strategy.

Sources told *The Hill Times* that, beyond Champagne's office, Foucher remains a "trusted voice" within the government and will remain influential due to his proximity to the finance minister.

Civil servants

John Hannaford, Privy Council clerk
The top bureaucrat, **John Hannaford** is seen



as someone who is in the perfect role for the consequential foreign policy moment in which Canada currently finds itself. He brings a wealth of foreign policy experience to his central job, which he has held for nearly two years. He has previously served as deputy minister for international trade, as well as the foreign and defence policy adviser to the prime minister.

Hannaford is a former ambassador to Norway and has a background in international trade law. One lobbyist said that Hannaford knows the trade file like the "back of his hand." His experience and expertise put him in the middle of everything important that is happening on the foreign file, most evidently seen standing behind Carney, Joly, and McGuinty for the Oval Office meeting with Trump in May. The biggest question is: how long will the clerk stick around?

David Morrison, deputy minister for foreign affairs

The top civil servant in the Pearson Building, **David Morrison** has served as No. 2 in foreign affairs since 2022. He has extensive diplomatic experience at a time when there is much need for it at GAC—a 2023 Senate committee study urged the government to ensure senior officials have extensive knowledge and experience in the international file. Morrison has been described as a "very smart guy" who is "very effective."

A past G7 sherpa and foreign and defence policy adviser to Trudeau, he has also served in various senior executive roles in the foreign ministry, including as deputy minister for international trade. Morrison has been frequently in the inner circle when decisions are being made.

Rob Stewart, deputy minister for international trade



A tenured presence at GAC, **Rob Stewart** has been lauded for the breadth of policy knowledge that he brings

to the file. He was appointed as the international trade deputy minister in 2022 after serving in the same role in public safety. He also had G7 and G20 responsibility while a senior executive at Finance Canada.

One academic with expertise in foreign policy noted that Stewart has the trust of Carney, and has been a "key player" on all things Canada-U.S. Another source described him as a "real focal point" as the review period for Canada's North American trade deal turns into a renegotiation.

Nathalie Drouin, privy council deputy clerk and national security and intelligence adviser to the prime minister

In her second year in the role, **Nathalie Drouin** is and will continue to be an "essential voice" advising Carney on security and defence files, sources told *The Hill Times*, noting she has already been travelling extensively—whether to India to try and improve relations under Trudeau or, more recently, to Europe to expand Canada's intelligence-sharing relationships—and her role has become even more critical with the creation of the National Security Council.

David Angell, foreign and defence policy adviser to the prime minister

The top foreign and defence policy adviser in the Privy Council, **David Angell** has immediate influence being by Carney's

side for all foreign policy meetings and international trips. A former senior official said that Angell already established himself as highly respected and highly trusted in his past role as Canada's NATO ambassador during a time when the military alliance was increasingly in the spotlight due to Russia's aggressiveness. "He's no-nonsense, and provides good advice and good counsel," the source said.

Angell was also the political director at GAC, which put him in frequent contact with G7 counterparts on peace and security issues from Ukraine to the Middle East. When the G7 top diplomats met in Charlevoix, Que., in March, Angell was the top bureaucrat present. In his new role in the PCO, Angell serves as an important liaison between the centre and the Pearson Building.

Cindy Termorshuizen, associate deputy minister for foreign affairs and G7 sherpa

Described as one of Canada's



TOP 50 CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY INFLUENCERS

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most capable diplomats, **Cindy Termorshuizen** will be at the centre of everything when Canada hosts the G7 Leaders' Summit later this month. She is respected both within the foreign ministry and throughout Ottawa. With the Group of Seven likely to address competition with Beijing, she is well situated.

Noted for her extensive knowledge on China—including speaking the language—Termorshuizen was a previous deputy head of mission in Beijing. Success at the summit will be guided by her work, as finding agreement on a joint communiqué will quite likely have her burning the midnight oil. The challenge will be whether the summit can stay on track amid the erratic nature of the Trump show.

Christiane Fox, Privy Council deputy clerk and associate secretary to the cabinet and intergovernmental affairs deputy minister



One of the Privy Council's two deputy clerks, **Christiane Fox** has played an influential role on Canada-U.S. issues as a

go-to on the file who is described as an unsung hero. "She is the one that moves mountains and gets things done," said a former senior official. That includes addressing American concerns over the border.

She also plays an increasingly internationalized role as the No. 2 for intergovernmental affairs, with premiers increasingly focused on Canada's relationship with its southern neighbour. Despite her fingerprints on the international file, much of Fox's role remains domestic. She is a former deputy minister for immigration, and previously held the same role at Indigenous services.

Aaron Fowler, associate assistant deputy minister for international trade and chief trade negotiator

Canada's lead negotiator for Canada-U.S. trade, **Aaron Fowler** is destined to play a crucial role as the future of the



North American trading relationship is re-envisioned. He led the completed talks with Indonesia—a key pillar of Canada's Indo-Pacific strategy. Like past trade giant **Steve Verheul**, Fowler has served as chief trade negotiator at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

"He inspires a high level of confidence," said a lobbyist, who noted Fowler has in-depth technical knowledge and an understanding of the business side of trade talks. Like Carney, Fowler keeps the status of trade talks close to his chest. When information from stakeholder briefings was leaked to the press, he changed their format, disclosing far less. He has been charged with preparing for the review of CUSMA. One business leader said Fowler plays a "key role" in ensuring that Canada is prepared,



Foreign Minister Anita Anand, left, and Canada-U.S. Trade Minister Dominic LeBlanc will play major roles in Canada's foreign policy space. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

and that Ottawa is positioned to have success during the process.

Gen. Jennie Carignan, chief of the defence staff



Canada's first female chief of the defence staff, **Jennie Carignan** will be a "key voice" as the government debates how

best to increase Canada's defence spending to meet its NATO commitments.

Carignan has also been traveling to shore up Canada's military alliances, most recently to meet her counterparts in Australia and New Zealand last week, as well as earlier trips to Singapore and to Washington, D.C., prior to the election.

Stefanie Beck, deputy minister for national defence

The top bureaucrat at the Department of National Defence, **Stefanie Beck**



brings an international perspective to the role. She is a GAC alum, having served as an ambassador in Croatia and Cambodia, and a deputy head of mission in the United Kingdom.

Described as a "good thinker," her department will be in the spotlight with a sharp focus on defence spending. One academic said that her connections in the foreign ministry make her a "key voice" in international discussions. She took up her post in 2024 after serving in the same role at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

Daniel Rogers, CSIS director

Before becoming director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service last



October, **Daniel Rogers** served as Trudeau's deputy national security and intelligence adviser since May 2023, and he has more

than a decade of experience working with Canada's Communications Security Establishment (CSE).

According to one source who spoke with *The Hill Times*, Rogers has also been making regular international forays. He has been dispatched to help expand Canada's intelligence partnerships outside the U.S. as "serious concerns" grow over intelligence sharing with the Trump administration.

Caroline Xavier, CSE director



Caroline Xavier, the daughter of Haitian immigrants and the first Black person to be named a deputy minister in the

federal public service, may not garner the same attention as some others on the list, but sources who spoke with *The Hill Times* indicated that the CSE's lack of media attention is partially what makes it "the golden child" of the Canadian intelligence community.

"[CSE] is well respected by our allies. You often hear about how our allies criticize Canada for being free riders; that is sometimes true, but it's not true in the world of security intelligence, where CSE is well regarded," one source explained. "As the head of that agency ... her role makes her quite influential behind the scenes."

Kevin Brosseau, fentanyl czar

Trudeau's former deputy NSIA, **Kevin Brosseau** is a former Mountie who brings more than two decades of law enforcement



experience—including as RCMP commissioner and commanding officer in Alberta—to his new role working alongside McGuinty and their U.S. counterparts to address Trump's concerns about the flow of fentanyl across the two countries' border.

Brosseau was appointed to the role by Trudeau in February, and

joined a Canadian delegation to Washington in March where he met with U.S. border czar **Tom Homan** and Secretary of Homeland Security **Kristi Noem** in an attempt to demonstrate Canada's progress on the border to avoid Trump's tariffs.

Diplomats

Kirsten Hillman, ambassador to the United States

Ottawa's most important ambassador is always the one that sits in Canada's largest embassy along Washington, D.C.'s National Mall.

Kirsten Hillman brings added influence having been in the role for nearly six years—starting as acting ambassador in 2019 and full-fledged envoy in 2020. A trade policy and negotiation wonk, she was at the table during the NAFTA renegotiations as deputy head of mission in D.C. A business leader said Hillman remains the "cornerstone" on all aspects of Canada-U.S. trade, describing her as "extremely smart, extremely connected, and is absolutely a key figure in our bilateral trade relationship." Volpe said she's someone who knows when her voice is needed, and knows the "importance of pushing back at the Americans at times, which requires somebody with credibility."

Hillman established herself as a trusted voice in the Trudeau inner circle—a trust that she will have to earn under the new prime minister. In addition to managing the hub on Pennsylvania Avenue, she also shepherds the work of the dozen consuls general, who including **Tom Clark** in New York City, who has received praise for his influence. The question for Hillman will be how much will she want to stay in the American national capital having already served a full-term's length inside the high-pressure beltway.



Bob Rae, ambassador and permanent representative to the United Nations



Canada's most outspoken envoy, **Bob Rae** has been a frequent critic of the Trump administration on social media. Like Hillman,

the former Ontario NDP premier and interim leader of the federal Liberal Party could be nearing the end of his term, having succeeded incoming PMO chief of staff **Marc-André Blanchard** as ambassador in 2020. Volpe said that Rae is someone who understands Canada's place in the world, remarking that he "uses it to influence areas of international consequence, like the future of AI and the role of the rule of law in international conflicts." While Rae is a strong ambassador, Canada's position at the United Nations has been weakened after two successive defeats for temporary seats on the Security Council as the intergovernmental organization has come under heavy criticism for its inability to address an increasingly erratic world order.

Ian McKay, ambassador to Japan

Another veteran envoy, **Ian McKay** has been an influential voice as Canada reorients its presence in Asia.

He was first posted as Canada's top diplomat in Tokyo in 2021, and was later named special envoy for the Indo-Pacific. A former national director of the Liberal Party, McKay has deep connections in Japan and speaks the language. Like other influential Canadian envoys, the question will be how long McKay will stay in the G7 post.



Heidi Hulan, ambassador to NATO

With NATO holding an oversized spotlight—

Continued on page 16

TOP 50 CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY INFLUENCERS

Continued from page 15

especially as the alliance's summit approaches later this month—**Heidi Hulan** brings extensive international experience to the role in Brussels. She previously served as GAC's political director and assistant deputy minister for international security. With a push to increase the NATO spending target of which Canada already falls short, Hulan is placed at the centre of tough debates. But Canada's sway is amplified due to leading a NATO mission on the military alliance's eastern flank in Latvia. She is a previous envoy to Austria.

Pete Hoekstra, U.S. ambassador to Canada

A plain-spoken former Congressman, **Pete Hoekstra** hasn't made too many friends since arriving in Ottawa in



April. He has countered Canadian concerns over Trump's "51st state" threats, arguing that they were in the past, which turned out to be wishful thinking. Many in Ottawa are still waiting to get a full reading of the new envoy. "But the nature of his position, he's going to be one of the most influential," said a former senior official, who noted Hoekstra will have to adjust his approach if he wants to win hearts and minds while in Ottawa. Whether Hoekstra is willing to do that is an open question.

An expert on Canada-U.S. relations said the ambassador is someone with credibility as a former legislator, as well as someone who will get his call answered by the White House. "That's the most important criteria for a U.S. ambassador in Canada," the source said, remarking that Hoekstra isn't a "shrinking violet," and will say some things that Canadians will find offensive. "But at least you know where you stand with this guy."

Hoekstra previously served as an American envoy in the Netherlands during Trump's first term—a posting which wasn't without controversy.

Tjorven Bellmann/Matthias Lüttenberg, German ambassadors to Canada

Germany's wife-husband ambassadorial team, **Tjorven Bellmann** and **Matthias Lüttenberg**, had large shoes to



fill when they started their post last September. Previous German envoy **Sabine Sparwasser** was widely considered as one of the most influential ambassadors in Ottawa by the time she



wrapped up her nearly seven-year posting. The couple are swapping the post every eight months—Bellmann had first crack at the post and now Lüttenberg is in the ambassador seat. Like Canada, they had to prepare for a new leader representing their country at this year's G7 summit. Bellman is a past political director of Germany's foreign ministry, and

Lüttenberg worked in the political department with an eye on Ukraine, Russia, and Eastern Europe. Both are considered very active, and have earned high acclaim since arriving in Canada.

It didn't go unnoticed that Germany offered the strongest defence of Canada's sovereignty at the G7 Foreign Ministers Meeting this past March when other top diplomats were loath to comment.

Rob Tinline, U.K. high commissioner to Canada

A newer face in Ottawa, **Rob Tinline** has already won himself fans



around town since starting his posting this past February. The Brit is a career diplomat who oversaw the Americas department in the foreign office. He has deep knowledge of both the Canadian and British systems, and is able to see where they can find connections. Tinline is in the posting at a time when there is opportunity to deepen Canada's relationship with the United Kingdom, especially as its relationship with the U.S. has diminished. It remains to be seen if there will be enough goodwill to progress on trade talks, which were paused in early 2024 after Canada was unwilling to grant additional access for British cheese.

Kanji Yamanouchi, Japanese ambassador to Canada



Whether shredding out *O Canada* on the electric guitar or leading a Beatles sing-along on his grand piano, Japan's Ambassador **Kanji Yamanouchi** is one of the most vibrant figures within Parliament Hill's diplomatic and social circles. As a diplomat's influence in either sphere can be judged synergistically, sources noted that, outside of the U.S. Embassy's July 4 celebration, the Japan National Day celebration Yamanouchi hosts each year in February is "one of Ottawa's most significant international events."

"There's a reason Canada sent its special envoy to Japan," one source said, noting that Yamanouchi has been an effective spokesperson for the two countries' shared values and "like-minded" goals for the Indo-Pacific.

Civil society and others

Goldy Hyder, president of the Business Council of Canada

Now in his sixth year as Business Council president, **Goldy Hyder** is a "prominent and provocative voice in public diplomacy." One source praised Hyder for his extensive outreach to the media, academics, politicians, and bureaucrats on behalf of the Canadian business community, and federal officials are increasingly seeking his advice.

"He's been the public face, and it's been quite effective," the source said, noting the wide array of "face time" Hyder makes



for media interviews, at political events organized by the BCC, or in his frequent trips to Washington, D.C., or accompanying former international trade ministers on overseas delegations.

Flavio Volpe, president of the Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association



Canada's largest auto parts makers, describing him as "a very effective communicator" and advocate for his industry. Maintaining a close relationship with Champagne, Volpe continues to be an effective public and political communicator whose insights and input will remain highly valued.

Jean Charest, former Quebec premier

Described as an "ultimate statesman," **Jean Charest** has been relied on to give important advice to Carney, especially on the U.S. file. The former Quebec premier and **Brian Mulroney**-era cabinet minister sits on the prime minister's Council on Canada-U.S. Relations. Charest has also been a vocal advocate for Canadian trade, both on domestic and American airwaves. "His voice carries a lot of weight," an academic said. Reports indicated that Carney offered Charest a government role shortly after he became prime minister. Charest has taken part in GAC's heads of mission for North America meetings, and he has backers hoping to see him take on a more formal role in the relationship.

Meredith Lilly, academic

A go-to source for insight on international trade, Carleton University professor **Meredith Lilly** is sought out for clarity on thorny trade policy questions. Her research is focused on North American trade and diversification, which situates her well for the current moment. She was then-prime minister **Stephen Harper**'s foreign affairs and international trade adviser. A business leader described Lilly as "extremely smart," and "very effective" on trade policy. "When she writes something about Canadian trade policy, people listen because she knows what she's talking about," the source said. Another source said that she knows North American trade better than anyone else.

Thomas Juneau, academic

A former policy analyst for the Department of National Defence, **Thomas Juneau** is an associate professor at the University of Ottawa Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, and a much



sought-after voice by the media in both official languages. He is also well respected by his academic colleagues and federal officials as "one of Canada's most influential scholars in the Middle East." While that prominence isn't without controversy, sources credit him for the "balance and nuance" he brings to his analysis on issues related to Iran, the Israel-Palestine conflict, and the war in Gaza.

Jennifer Welsh, academic



An expert on the responsibility to protect, McGill University professor **Jennifer Welsh** isn't as vocal in the media as some other aca-

demics on the list, but her influence comes from her contact with the government. A former senior government official said Welsh gets a lot of calls from the feds and is someone who is "effective." She holds the Canadian Research Chair for Global Governance and Security. She was previously a special adviser to then-UN secretary general **Ban Ki-moon** on the responsibility to protect.

Laura Dawson, Future Borders Coalition executive director

An expert on the Canada-U.S. border, **Laura Dawson** has been called on by the government to offer counsel. She is a former director of the now-shuttered Canada Institute at the Wilson Center in Washington, D.C., and worked as a senior adviser in the U.S. Embassy in Ottawa. One lobbyist noted that she is someone who is "very well respected." The Trump administration's focus on border issues has made her well placed, and Dawson also serves as a helpful voice for the government being one of the few public voices advocating for the Canada-U.S. trade relationship south of the border.

Steve Verheul, former chief trade negotiator



Canada's former chief trade negotiator, **Steve Verheul** continues to be relied on to provide advice. Widely respected and seen as an architect of Canadian trade policy while in government, he advocated for retaliation against the Trump administration's tariffs when the rest of the world largely chose inaction. Verheul spearheaded negotiations that led to the Canada-European Union trade pact, as well as leading NAFTA renegotiations during Trump's first term. "He is everywhere and in hot demand," said one source. Verheul is a player who is sought out by the business community for his input, said one lobbyist. "He gives it in a very intelligent way and everyone's listening," the source said. Like Charest, Verheul sits on Carney's Council on Canada-U.S. Relations.

Khalil Shariff, CEO of Aga Khan Foundation Canada

The head of the Aga Khan Foundation in Canada, **Khalil Shariff** is a voice who is listened



to by the government. He offers advice on macro global policy issues. The proximity of the foundation's head-

quarters in Ottawa also boosts his influence as it is located next door to the Pearson Building. Shariff also has a tenure that has led to deep links in Ottawa, having held his post since 2005. He is frequently speaking with senior GAC executives on international development issues. Shariff has also been involved with conflict resolution.

Bob Fife/Steven Chase/Mark MacKinnon, Globe and Mail reporters

Several sources pointed to the continued influence *The Globe and Mail's* reporting has on federal decision makers, led by Ottawa bureau chief **Bob Fife** and senior parliamentary reporter **Steven Chase**, who remain at the "forefront of



reporting" on foreign interference and Canada's relationships and dealings with the governments of China, India, and Saudi Arabia, alongside the "big-picture" reporting from senior international correspondent **Mark MacKinnon**.

Sources also nominated CBC News' **Evan Dyer** reporting, as well as his colleague **Catherine Tunney** and *The National Post's* **Chris Nardi**, all of whom have broken several national security related stories, and are credited with "doing the grind work of writing on Canada's foreign policy infrastructure."

Katie Simpson/Josh Wingrove, CBC and Bloomberg reporters

The CBC's Washington correspondent, **Katie Simpson**, and Bloomberg News' White House correspondent, **Josh Wingrove**, have

both been influential in the Canada-U.S. relationship due primarily to their proximity to and ability to question the seat of power in Washington.

Simpson is partially credited with reigniting the "51st state" issue during the federal election with her question to White House Press Secretary **Karoline Leavitt** about why Trump had seemingly gone quiet, and Wingrove for his question directly to the president regarding the timing of his upcoming tariffs on Canada in the Oval Office.

news@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



‘These events are big challenges’: Carney faces tough road to G7 joint communiqué in Kananaksis

As leaders from the Group of Seven gather in Kananaksis, Alta., the chief task will be to mitigate any upheaval from the ‘Trump circus,’ say summit experts.

BY NEIL MOSS

When United States President Donald Trump heads north of the border next week, Prime Minister Mark Carney will face a tough task getting to a consensus at the G7 summit with the unpredictable commander-in-chief.

The last time Canada hosted the Group of Seven in 2018 in Charlevoix, Que., personal turmoil between then-prime minister Justin Trudeau and Trump overshadowed the summit.

Now, Carney (Nepean, Ont.) will be charged with keeping the summit on track and doing so in his first as a world leader. For Trump, it will be his first multi-lateral meeting since returning to the Oval Office—his only other international jaunts have been to the Middle East in May, and to Italy and Vatican City in April for Pope Francis’ funeral.

The summit will take place in Kananaksis, Alta., from June 15-17. The small village nestled in the eastern side of the Rocky Mountains hosts once again 23 years after an important post-9/11 gathering in 2002.

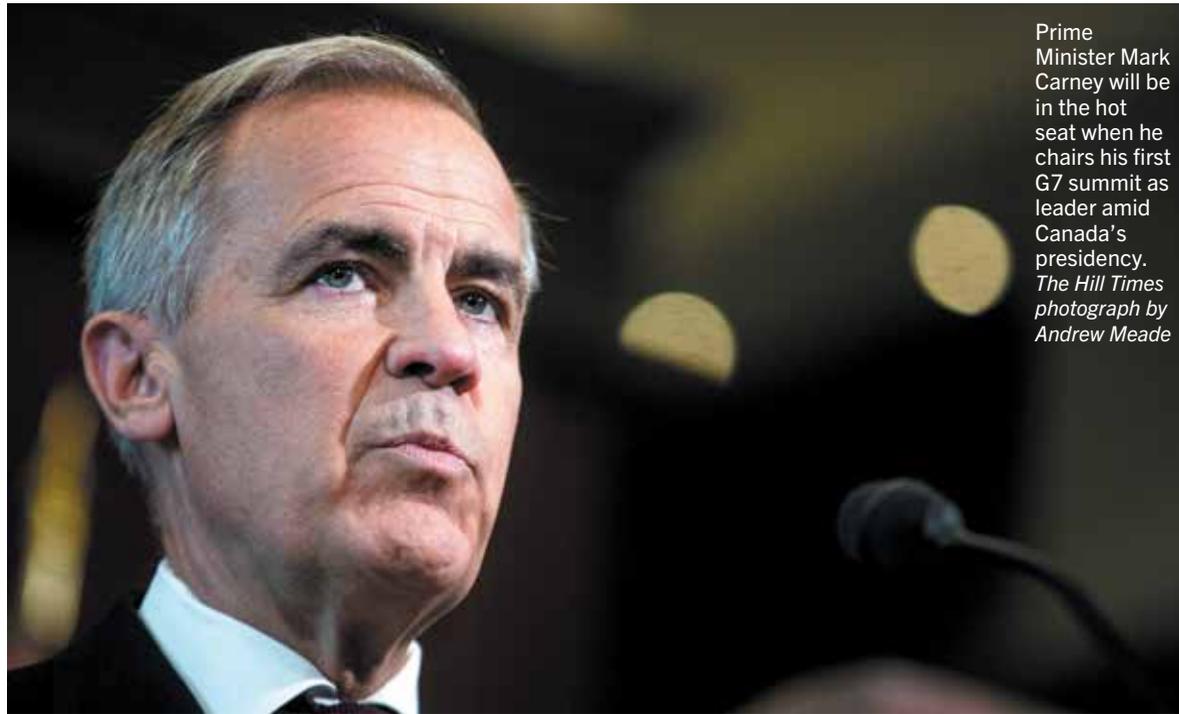
Former Canadian ambassador Deanna Horton said the key to a successful summit will be managing Trump both at the meeting and afterwards.

“A key performance indicator for the summit will [be] getting something down that all leaders can agree upon that will also include the U.S.—and that will be a challenge,” said Horton, who was twice posted to Canada’s Embassy in Washington, D.C.

She said that Canada’s June 9 announcement to meet its NATO target of spending two per cent of GDP on defence by the end of the fiscal year puts the country in a better position for dealing with its G7 partners.

On June 7, Carney’s office laid out Canada’s three priority areas to “seek agreements and co-ordinated action” during the meeting: protecting our communities and the world, building energy security and accelerating the digital transition, and securing the partnerships of the future.

Former diplomat Colin Robertson, a senior adviser at the Cana-



Prime Minister Mark Carney will be in the hot seat when he chairs his first G7 summit as leader amid Canada’s presidency. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

dian Global Affairs Institute, said that there are “low expectations” for the summit.

He said that there is no expectation that the gathered leaders will be able to agree to a joint communiqué by the end of the summit, with questions over whether Trump would be willing to sign onto one.

Joint communiqués were produced after the G7 Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in March, and following the Finance Ministers’ and Central Bank Governors’ Meeting in May.

Independent Senator Peter Boehm (Ontario), who was Canada’s G7 sherpa during the 2018 summit, said that not finalizing a joint communiqué wouldn’t be the worst-case scenario.

He said if complete consensus can’t be reached, there is little point in releasing a document with partial support.

“You’re just racing towards the lowest-common denominator if you don’t really convince anyone,” he said.

What could happen, Boehm said, is a chair statement—signed by the country that holds the presidency—as France did in 2019, instead of the joint communiqué.

“I don’t think not having a communiqué is somehow a measure of failure,” he said, suggesting that the G7 could release several separate declarations.

No matter what is agreed upon, it will likely be finalized at the last minute, Boehm said.

“If past practice follows through, there will be a few all-nighters before documents are released,” he said.

The lion’s share of the G7 effort is spearheaded by Canadian sherpa Cindy Termorshuizen.

Carney has highlighted security, energy and artificial intelligence, and “securing the partnerships of the future,” as his priorities for the summit.

‘Diplomatic speed dating’

Boehm said he anticipates an “initiative or two” to be launched at the summit filled with a slew of bilateral meetings.

He said that the event will offer Carney a good opportunity to demonstrate his leadership skills.

“There’s no secret that these events are big challenges,” he said. “The last one we hosted was like that, too.”

Citing his experience as a junior officer in the foreign ministry during the 1995 Halifax summit, Boehm said those challenges were the case long before Trump came on the scene.

“There’s going to be a lot of diplomatic speed dating—whether it is in the form of a formal sit-down bilateral meeting or just a more casual pull aside or bump-into type of meeting,” he said. “There’s lots going on, and, of course, we’re in the centre of it.”

Boehm said what makes this iteration of Canada’s presidency unique is the lack of preparation time available.

“Back in 2018—the last time we hosted—we had a lot more time to prepare and to plan,” he said.

Less than a week after Canada assumed the G7 presidency at the start of the year, Trudeau announced his intention to resign following the election of a new Liberal leader. Carney became prime minister on March 14, and by March 23, the government was under the caretaker convention

as the election period began. On April 28, Carney was successfully elected, and swore in a shuffled cabinet on May 13.

“It has really compressed the negotiation period into a small time space,” Boehm said. “That can be challenging, [but] on the other hand it also concentrates the negotiators’ minds in terms of what they might want to achieve.”

The meeting will be Carney’s first leaders’ summit, but he has taken part in previous G7 gatherings as the governor of the Bank of Canada and the Bank of England.

Carney won’t be alone as a rookie around the G7 table as it will also be the first summit for more than half of the leaders, including German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, and United Kingdom Prime Minister Keir Starmer. European Council President António Costa is also new on the scene.

The dean of the group is French President Emmanuel Macron, who will participate in his eighth leaders’ summit. The meeting will be Trump’s fourth, and Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni is taking part in her third. It will be European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen’s fifth time attending.

The University of Toronto’s John Kirton, director of the G7 Research Group, said Carney comes to the summit with extensive international experience.

“His visit to the White House with Donald Trump gives him very recent experience and accumulating expertise,” he said.

He said a key to success at the summit will be to attach Trump to the end result.

“[Trump] will be at the centre of attention as he loves to be,” he said. “He loves claiming credit for any of the good things that happen.”

Kirton said the G7 leaders should let Trump take credit for a successful summit at Kananaksis.

“Make him know that if that claim on his part ... is going to have any credibility, it’s going to have to be real. So, then he’s got to get his fellow leaders to agree on the stuff that he has genuinely led from the beginning of the second mandate.”

The Trump circus

Carlo Dade, director of international policy at the University of Calgary’s School of Public Policy, said the summit will be all about managing Trump, pointing to the histrionics in the Oval Office with South African President Cyril Ramaphosa and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

“At the time we need serious work on preserving rules-based trade or formulating the next evolution of rules-based trade, we are instead going to be dealing with Donald Trump and the circus that comes to town when he arrives,” he said.

The summit will be complicated by the other G7 leaders having to balance also dealing with Trump on trade and tariffs once they go home.

“How do you manage having to deal with a Donald Trump that can be an existential threat to your economy on one hand, and deal with serious issues [like] climate adaptation and mitigation, green energy, and other topics that have been standards on the G7 agenda, but are standards on Trump’s I’m-going-to-kill-that-tomorrow agenda,” he said.

Dade said the goal of the summit should be focused on not losing ground on shared priorities.

“No. 1, you want to avoid disaster. No. 2, maintain progress that the G7s leading up to this have built, and continue to establish momentum to the next leaders’ summit,” he said.

Ramaphosa and Zelenskyy are both guests at the Kananaksis summit, as well as Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum, and South Korean President Lee Jae-myung. Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has also reportedly been invited.

Some of the invitations, including the one extended to Modi, have been met with anger in Canada due to allegations of the Indian government’s involvement with extrajudicial killing in Canada.

Boehm said that the Indian leader has been a consistent guest of the G7, coming to every summit since 2019. He also said that he thinks it is important to have a good mix between the G20 and the G7, applauding the invitation of Ramaphosa, who currently holds the president of the Group of Twenty.

nmoos@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

NEWS

The art of the deal: Ambassador Kirsten Hillman a deft hand in navigating Canada's relationship with Trump

The Canadian ambassador to the U.S. has performed 'heroically' as she works to deliver the country's message to a White House set on upending its relationships with allies, say former envoys.

BY CHRISTOPHER GULY

Within Canada's diplomatic corps, Kirsten Hillman is by far the highest-profile ambassador, and one with the yeoman's task of preserving—if not saving—the Canada-United States relationship that suffered a significant hit earlier this year when President Donald Trump took aim at Canada with tariffs and annexation talk.

The cross-border atmosphere took a more positive turn during the federal election campaign when Trump seemed to favour Liberal Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.) remaining as prime minister, and bilateral relations appeared to be on the mend in early May when the two men met in the Oval Office, with the president later describing the prime minister as a "nice man," and saying he expects that the two countries' relationship is "going to be very strong."

Hillman hopes to keep it that way—but not at the expense of the country she represents as its senior envoy in Washington, D.C.

Following the May 6 Trump-Carney meeting, the focus has been on forging a trade and economic deal between Canada and the United States "that is broad in its scope," explained Winnipeg-born, 57-year-old, five-foot-ten Hillman who was appointed Canada's 20th ambassador to the U.S. on March 26,

2020, becoming the first woman to serve in that position.

"We are in constant contact with the U.S. administration on that, and we are certainly trying to meet the expectations that have been set for us," she said in a recent telephone interview from her office at the Canadian Embassy in the American capital.

"I've been a negotiator almost my entire career, and the core of doing a deal like this is that you have to know what a good deal for Canada looks like—which is at the centre of how we're approaching this—and moving fast can be very beneficial, but not at the expense of getting the right deal."

Hillman said there has to be an "assessment every step of the way" in terms of the impact on Canada, and "that is good for Canadian workers and good for Canadian industry."

Hillman was named deputy ambassador to Washington in 2017, serving in the role for two years before becoming acting head of mission when her predecessor, David MacNaughton, resigned. Prior to her Washington role, Hillman was the assistant deputy minister of the trade agreements and negotiations branch at Global Affairs Canada where she played critical roles in negotiating the Comprehen-

sive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership as Canada's chief negotiator, as well as the successor pact to the North American Free Trade Agreement—the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA)—which came into force on July 1, 2020, and is scheduled for review next year.

"CUSMA underpins our trade relationship with the United States and Mexico," said Hillman. "It covers customs procedures, food safety standards, all sorts of things that are relevant to the ways in which our three economies do business together. A lot more than just tariffs."

She explained that current discussions with the U.S. administration primarily involve the White House, the Department of Commerce, the office of the U.S. Trade Representative, and "agencies that are interested in national security, border security."

After his May meeting with Trump, Carney underscored Canada's willingness to pursue a "new economic and security relationship with the United States—based on respect, built on common interests, and to the benefit of both nations," according to a statement from the Prime Minister's Office.

Having been in Washington during Trump's first term as pres-

ident, Hillman has come to understand the commander-in-chief's approach, and has seen a softer side of him behind the scenes.

She estimates that she met Trump about a half-dozen times during his first administration.

"He is very skilled interpersonally. He always takes a moment to have a bit of a conversation," she said.

During the Trump 2.0 era, the ambassador has met the president twice so far—and his approach with her has not changed.

"While I appreciate that tone, it doesn't take away from the fact that we have many challenging issues to address with his administration that also requires us to have more difficult conversations—and we are having those."

She told *The Hill Times* that when she was at the three-hour dinner hosted by Trump at Mar-a-Lago, Florida, in late November with then-prime minister Justin Trudeau, his chief of staff Katie Telford, and then-public safety minister Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, N.B.), the president told the senior Canadian diplomat that "being ambassador to the United States from Canada is a big important job, and I know you're the right person for the job."

However, he wasn't so keen on her head of government.



Trump referred to Trudeau as the "governor" of the "Great State of Canada."

By contrast, Trump called Carney "prime minister" when they met reporters at their May 6 Oval Office encounter, and even congratulated his Canadian guest for winning the April 28 election, saying that "Canada chose a very talented person, a very good person."

Hillman said that "it's clear that President Trump has respect for Prime Minister Carney, and feels that they have similar expertise as being financially oriented, economically oriented, business oriented."

"He clearly is interested in Prime Minister Carney's perspective on economic issues—not just between our two countries, but generally," she said.

"There's no question that the prime minister has developed, even in a short time, a solid and respectful relationship with the president."

When asked about Trump's relationship with Trudeau, the ambassador said she saw the two men interact "over the course of a very long time, and there were different moments."

"Sometimes, it was very cordial, sometimes they were trying to get stuff done together and there was a lot of common purpose. There was a sense of a friendly bond. They talked about their families, about prime minister Trudeau's father [Pierre]," said Hillman.

"And I witnessed harder moments where we were not always in agreement on things, especially on the renegotiation of the NAFTA," she said. "Some of that was pretty tough."

"They were counterparts for quite a long time, and they had a range of different interactions."



After an initial virtual ceremony earlier in the summer, Hillman presented her credentials to Trump in person in the Oval Office on Sept. 17, 2020. *White House photograph by Joyce N. Boghosian*



Canadian Ambassador to the U.S. Kirsten Hillman, right, greets U.S. President Donald Trump, second left, as ministers Mélanie Joly, right, and David McGuinty look on during a May 6 visit to the White House. PMO photograph by Lars Hagberg

Delivering Canada's message

The ambassador has never had a one-on-one meeting with the president—although she said she would gladly accept one.

Hillman said she mostly deals with a key member of Trump's cabinet: U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer, who, she said, understands the negative effects U.S. tariffs have on America.

"I think President Trump does understand the effects," too, and "knows exactly what the consequences of some of these actions could be and will be," said the ambassador.

"He is using his tariffs policy for a variety of purposes, and I think that he probably thinks that it's working. I think that he recognizes that it's not without a certain disruption in the American economy, but I don't think he ever thought it wouldn't cause some disruption," she said.

"I think some of those disruptions are intentional, and some of them are disruptions that he thinks the U.S. needs to weather to get to a different place."

The lion's share of Hillman's time these days is spent pushing back against the Trump tariffs. She has been schmoozing and selling Canada to U.S. senators, congresspeople, and their staff, including at a "Canada Day" trade fair-like event on Capitol Hill in late February.

As reported by CBC News, Hawaiian pizza—a Canadian invention—was on the menu, and guests were offered free giveaways, such as Canadian water and maple syrup, red-and-white mittens, and stickers bearing the message: "Tariffs on allies hurt Americans."

Back then, Hillman, 12 Canadian consuls general and members of her embassy team—



Prime Minister Mark Carney, left, and Hillman at the Canadian Embassy in Washington, D.C., during Carney's official visit on May 6. PMO photograph by Lars Hagberg

which comprises 338 employees as of late May—were bracing for Trump's 25-per-cent tariffs against Canada on March 3, and pulled out all the stops to try to get the president to back off from the economic assault, holding an astonishing 75 meetings over two days with movers and shakers on Capitol Hill. It was an exhausting time for Hillman, who said it helps to wear "flat shoes" at that pace.

"The goal for Canada is to remove the tariffs that have been placed on steel, aluminum, autos, auto parts, and the tariffs that were in place in relation to the border and fentanyl," she explained, speaking before a consequential court decision in the U.S. was released regarding some of the tariffs.

On May 28, the U.S. Court of International Trade ruled that Trump does not have the authority to impose the fentanyl-related tariffs on Canada under the U.S. International Economic Emer-

gency Powers Act, and ordered an immediate stop to them.

However, the next day, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit in Washington, ordered a stay on halting the tariffs until June 9.

Hillman has been hammering home to American lawmakers about the bilateral damage caused by these levies, which doubled for steel and aluminum imports from 25 to 50 per cent, as Trump announced on May 30.

As the ambassador explained: "We have spent 18 months—from the time that it became fairly clear that there was a very good chance President Trump would come back into office, and he had these very specific tariff views that could be difficult for our integrated economy—working nonstop building relationships and doing the ground work to raise awareness with lawmakers, with businesses, with influencers around the president so that they know how economic disruption

will come—and has come—by putting those tariffs on."

"Now is the time where we're calling on those folks, with whom we've raised awareness, to help continue that fairly constant drumbeat down here," she said. "Because what matters to any government—as it should—is what their voters, their businesses, their communities are saying about policies that have been put in place."

"We want to make sure that where Americans are feeling the pain from these policies that are directed towards Canada, that their voices are at least being raised—hopefully being heard," she said.

Trump's desire to annex Canada as the 51st state also still lingers.

U.S. Ambassador to Canada Pete Hoekstra told the *National Post* last month that although "the president may bring it up every once in a while," Trump "recognizes it's not going to happen unless the prime minister engages with the president."

But in late May, Trump posted on Truth Social that it would cost Canada US\$61-billion to join his proposed Golden Dome missile defence system if Canada "remain[s] a separate, but unequal, Nation, but will cost ZERO DOLLARS if they became our cherished 51st State."

"They are considering the offer!" he added.

Canada is not, and Carney made that clear to pool reporters during his May 6 Oval Office meeting with Trump, when, after the president said "never say never," the prime minister could be seen repeatedly mouthing the word "never."

Hillman, who attended that press opportunity, said that "the president has the view that he has, and believes this to be a good idea."

"But our prime minister couldn't have been more clear that this is not an issue that's up for discussion, and it's not an issue that Canadians are interested in, period—and we're not going to be discussing it," she said.

"To my mind, that takes it off the table because as the president said, 'it takes two to tango,'" and, as the ambassador underscored, Canada is "not interested in that dance."

However, Hillman thought the Carney-Trump meeting "went really well," and "the tone was exactly what it should have been—but it doesn't mean it's going to be smooth sailing."

"I would take note of the fact that the president said in his opening comments that he was honoured to have Prime Minister Carney there. And then we went into a private lunch for 90 minutes, and when that meeting ended, the president said it had been a true honour to spend this time with Prime Minister Carney," she said.

"From where I sit, as Canada's ambassador to the United States, I couldn't be happier than that kind of sentiment being expressed by the leader of this country."

The ambassador said the lunch meeting, which she also attended, involved a wide-ranging

discussion on international matters, security issues and border issues, the Arctic, and, of course, trade and tariffs and affected sectors.

Hillman has performed 'heroically': former envoy

But what happens next between both countries could soon look different on the diplomatic front.

Over the past 25 years, no Canadian ambassador to the U.S. has served more than five years. As of Aug. 31, Hillman will mark six years as Canada's woman in Washington.

She has "performed heroically" after being "thrust in the middle of a very fraught relationship" with the U.S., and has been "managing it extremely well—singularly focused on tariff issues," said former New Brunswick Liberal premier Frank McKenna, who served as Canada's ambassador to the U.S. from 2005 to 2006.

He said whoever succeeds her as head of the Canadian mission in Washington should have a "political background" with "strong communication skills," and be comfortable appearing on Fox News—the preferred media choice for Trump and members of his administration.

McKenna also echoed recent commentary by *Toronto Sun* columnist Brian Lilley that the next Canadian ambassador to the U.S. could be a Conservative to "line up better with the Trump administration."

Jason Kenney, Rona Ambrose, and Peter MacKay—each of whom served in former Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper's cabinet—would be "good choices," according to McKenna, who noted that Harper appointed former Manitoba New Democrat premier Gary Doer as ambassador to the U.S. in 2009 when Democrat Barack Obama was president.

Former Canadian diplomat Colin Robertson, who served as a minister at the Canadian embassy in D.C., agreed with McKenna that "given Trump's all-politics-all-the-time" approach, it would be better to choose the next ambassador who has political experience rather than a career diplomat, like Hillman.

Former Quebec Liberal premier Jean Charest, who also served as leader of the former Progressive Conservative Party of Canada, is someone to consider, said Robertson, a past consul general in Los Angeles.

"Politicians in Washington tend to look at diplomats as civil servants," he explained, "and senior civil servants in the U.S. are almost all political appointees."

Robertson said that as for Hillman, she could either receive another plum posting—Raymond Chrétien, nephew of former Liberal prime minister Jean Chrétien, went from Washington to Paris as ambassador—or she could bring her substantial skillset in the Canada-U.S. relationship, particularly on trade matters, into the private sector.

As Robertson opined, "She is highly saleable."

The Hill Times

NEWS

Senator Dasko pitches elections law reforms to address enduring issue of candidate diversity

Experts offered mixed reviews of Bill S-213, describing it as a 'baby step' forward, or as a watered-down attempt to address an already well-known problem.

Continued from page 1

A previous iteration of Dasko's bill stalled at second reading in the Senate after being introduced in December 2023.

"What's happened in this past election with the declining number of women nominated, I think this is a turning point," Dasko told *The Hill Times*. "I'm hoping that this election serves as a warning signal that we need to do something about this; we need to do more."

On May 6, Equal Voice highlighted a slight decrease in the proportion of women and gender-diverse MPs elected to the House of Commons, dropping from 30.5 per cent elected in 2021 to 30.03 per cent. In 2021, 103 such MPs were elected—reaching 106 at the time of dissolution, or 31.4 per cent of the House.

Recount results announced since May 6 have brought the total number of women MPs elected this year to 104—or 30.3 per cent—of the now-343-member Chamber.

According to Equal Voice, three out of four major federal parties also nominated a smaller share of women candidates compared to the 2021 election.

Some parties did better than others: the Liberal and NDP caucuses both saw increases in their proportions of women or gender-diverse MPs—from 35.6 per cent to 39.6 per cent for the Liberals, and 44 per cent to 57.1 per cent for the NDP—while the Conservatives dropped slightly from 18.5 per cent to 18.1 per cent, and the Bloc Québécois less slightly at 22.7 per cent compared to 37.5 per cent in the previous Parliament.

A May 30 *Policy Options* piece co-authored by researchers Jerome Black and Andrew Griffith similarly highlighted how candidate diversity efforts "stalled" for certain groups—namely women, LGBTQ candidates, and Indigenous people—this past election.

The slight decrease in female representation in the House "proves" that such progress can't be expected to come naturally, said Dasko, a co-founder of Equal Voice. "There needs to be a focus



Ontario ISG Senator Donna Dasko tabled Bill S-213 with proposed reforms to the Canada Elections Act on May 28. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

on it; the parties have to take action to make sure it happens, otherwise it won't."

Tabled on May 28, Bill S-213 proposes amending the Canada Elections Act to require registered political parties to publish information online regarding: rules for candidate selection; any programs or policies implemented to try to achieve "greater diversity" in candidate selection, and a description of them and how they relate to identified groups; a description of measures taken to implement such programs and policies, "including whether the party requires formal search committees" in selecting candidates; a description of how the effectiveness of such measures will be assessed; and a description of the party's "cumulative progress" in achieving such objectives.

Specifically in terms of female candidates, registered parties would also have to make public online a statement of their plan for established targets for the nomination of female candidates, any rules governing the nomination of female candidates in riding where a sitting MP isn't expected to run again or where the previous candidate came within a vote margin of 10 per cent or less, and a description of progress made in meeting such targets.

If no such policies, programs, or rules exist, parties would have to "instead maintain a statement setting out its reasons for not" having any, "and must include a proposed timeline, if any, for its adoption."

Failure to make public the above policies, programs, and rules—and failure to publish party contact information for someone to whom concerns about such obligations can be addressed—would open up parties to potential deregistration, as per the procedure for non-voluntary deregistration outlined in Section 415 of the existing act.

Parties have to be registered with Elections Canada in order to do a number of things, including issuing tax receipts and receiving voter lists.

Bill S-213 additionally proposes amending the Act to direct the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) to send voluntary self-identification questionnaires to nomination, leadership, and general election candidates in order to collect disaggregated demographic data. The CEO would then produce a report on the data collected—which would be "anonymized"—to be submitted to the House Speaker.

Dasko noted that such data collection is something the CEO called for in a June 2022 report reflecting on the 2019 and 2021 federal elections, which highlighted Elections Canada's current lack of a "clear legislative mandate to collect demographic information about electoral participants."

"Many groups are under-represented in the House of Commons, and the reasons for this are complex. There can be little doubt about the value of working toward a Parliament that reflects the true diversity of Canadian society; but that work must start with high-quality information," reads the report.

The issue of gender diversity in elected politics is one Dasko has been active on for decades, going back to 1988 when she joined a group called the Committee for '94, which sought to get women's representation in the House to 50 per cent by 1994.

Currently, the Inter-Parliamentary Union ranks Canada 70th in the world in terms of female representation in Parliament, noted Dasko.

"I look at this and I say, 'this is needed more than ever,'" she said.

Dasko said her bill takes a "building-block approach" to the issue, and is by no means "radical."

"It doesn't go places that other countries have gone with quotas

and timetables and sanctions; it takes a kind of a first step to highlighting, to making the parties accountable," she said.

The idea is that, by asking parties to disclose such information, it will prompt them to take such efforts "seriously," said Dasko.

"We've taken this approach with corporations and companies in Canada ... and if we can require this of public corporations, certainly political parties should be held accountable and be transparent in this way," she said, referencing the Employment Equity Act.

During the previous Parliament, Dasko said her bill got "positive responses" from a "number" of female MPs from different parties—although outreach to each of the registered parties themselves elicited no response. Recognizing that political parties have proven reluctant to take outside direction on internal processes, Dasko said "we will see how they'll greet this."

Asked about potential backlash to such proposals coming from a non-partisan Senator, Dasko said Canadian democracy is something "every citizen in this country" should be concerned about. "We have every right to take actions in this area to make our systems work better."

While she said she hopes to see second reading debate on her bill wrapped up by this fall, Dasko noted that last Parliament saw "frustrations" over the advancement—or lack thereof—of Senate public bills, with debate continually adjourned, "mainly by the [Conservative] opposition."

"Not exactly sure if the situation is going to be different this time—we hope so, in this Parliament—but we'll see," she said.

A 'baby step' forward

Experts who spoke with *The Hill Times* offered mixed reviews of Dasko's bill, describing it as a "baby step" forward, or as a "good faith" but watered-down attempt to address an already well-known problem in Canadian politics.

The "laissez faire" approach taken to boosting diversity in Canadian politics to date "hasn't really worked," and research into why points squarely "in the direction of political parties," said Carleton University associate professor Erin Tolley, Canada Research Chair in Gender, Race, and Inclusive Politics.

"So this bill tries to prompt action, either through encouragement or even, in some cases, more of a stick approach," said Tolley.

S-213's "effort to institutionalize" the collection of demographic data on candidates—in particular in terms of nomination candidates, as such races are "where the [diversity] bottleneck

begins"—offers a positive step forward in ongoing efforts by academics and journalists to analyze "the composition of candidate slates and elected institutions," she said, as what isn't measured, can't be modified.

But one area where Tolley said she wishes the bill went further is in terms of broader—not gender specific—diversity. "There has been a tendency when we have these conversations about diversification to focus on gender, and assume that if we figure out the gender piece, all of the other diversities will follow. The research suggests that's not really the case," she said. "When we focus on diversity in this sort of aggregate or generic way, the primary beneficiaries tend to be white women, often to the exclusion of other groups."

Still, recognizing the "balancing act" in play in regulating political parties, Tolley said she sees the bill as a "baby step" forward.

"This bill is trying to walk a middle ground between reticent or even hostile political parties [to outside input on internal processes], and people who are hoping for more diverse and inclusive institutions, and I see this as a baby step along that path—a way of bringing political parties in without turning them completely off," she said.

Andrea Lawlor, an associate political science professor at McMaster University, described S-213 as a "very limited way of introducing some requirements around political parties," but said the voluntary nature of both aspects of the act—of having policies and programs to disclose, and responding to a demographic questionnaire—undermines its effectiveness.

"It takes a kernel of a really good idea, which is enhanced transparency, but I feel it waters itself down," said Lawlor, who nonetheless lauded S-213 as a "good-faith effort."

Due to its voluntary nature, the survey could produce an "incomplete picture," and the bill gives parties "that are weaker on these measures" an out in terms of even having policies, programs, or rules to encourage candidate diversity, said Lawlor. "A party can kind of say, you know, 'mind your own business, our internal party processes are our own.'"

"You'll probably get compliance by groups and parties that are already thinking about these things, that already have implemented programs or policies—as the bill suggests—in order to, if not enhance their degree of representation, then certainly at least monitor it to be able to make claims about how well they're doing," she suggested.

Lawlor also said she sees the "degree of sanction" proposed by the bill as being "out of sync" with its goals. "Is penalizing parties the way to force this, and what will that produce? Will that produce simply running more women candidates in areas where they can't possibly hope to win because the party doesn't really stand a chance?"

lryckewaert@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

Enlisting Coast Guard to buoy defence spending expected to hit choppy waters, say analysts

Military policy expert James Boutillier says it doesn't matter who's in charge of the Coast Guard, as long as the feds move 'with urgency' to meet the overdue NATO commitment.

Continued from page 1

what they derisively view as a militarized "junior navy," defence analysts say.

"We haven't included the [RCMP] Musical Ride, but we've come perilously close," naval expert James Boutillier told *The Hill Times*. "Canada has bent over backwards to include every possible expense we can find, but we haven't come anywhere close to what we promised [in 2006]."

On June 9, Carney (Nepean, Ont.) announced a \$9.3-billion increase to the Department of National Defence's existing budget. DND requested \$35.7-billion in the 2025-26 main estimates tabled last month. Alongside an additional \$14-billion in defence-related spending from other federal departments—including an additional \$100-million to the Canadian Coast Guard's annual budget of \$2.5-billion—Canada would be expected to meet its NATO commitment by next March with a total spend of \$62.7-billion.

While short on specifics, Carney stated that the new spending, presented in the House of Commons on June 9 as part of the first set of supplementary estimates, would accelerate investment in Canada's military; boost salaries; replace or repair aging equipment; bolster the ranks of the understaffed Canadian Armed Forces, and rearm the military with new armoured vehicles, drones, submarines, and icebreakers.

Last year, DND reported that a little more than half of its maritime, air, and "key land fleets" met operational readiness standards in 2022-23.

During his announcement at the University of Toronto, Carney said that while the plan would align Canada with its current defence spending commitments, "our goal is to protect Canadians, not to satisfy NATO accountants."

"Our plan will help ensure that Canada is strong at home and reliable abroad," Carney said, adding that the plan includes



The wide-ranging border security Bill C-2 proposes amendments to the Oceans Act to expand the Coast Guard's mandate to include security and intelligence-gathering activities. U.S. Navy photo by John F. Williams

ensuring the Arctic is protected with a larger, year-round presence on land, sea, and air, as well as expanding the Coast Guard's search and security mandate, which had previously been announced as part of the Liberals' expansive border security legislation Bill C-2.

Tabled in the House of Commons on June 3, the wide-ranging Strong Borders Act proposes amendments to the Oceans Act to expand the Coast Guard's mandate to include security and intelligence-gathering activities, and the ability to share information with law enforcement and the military, as well as their American counterparts.

Responding to the announcement, Conservative MP James Bezan (Selkirk-Interlake-Eastman, Man.), his party's defence critic, called the inclusion of expenditures for the Coast Guard and Veterans Affairs "creative accounting," adding that NATO would be watching closely to see if Canada is truly spending on military rather than civilian expenditures.

"At the end of the day, to be fully counted in defence spending, they have to bring some security protocols to the table, and that means that ships may need to be armed up, and there have to



Prime Minister Mark Carney, centre, takes questions from reporters with Chief of the Defence Staff Gen. Jennie Carignan, left, and Defence Minister David McGuinty at the Fort York Armoury in Toronto on June 9. Screenshot courtesy of CPAC

be military personnel on board," Bezan said. "These are the things that the Coast Guard is going to have to address, and we'll need to look at how that's going to affect their overall operations."

Carney also announced that the Coast Guard would be transferred to the Department of National Defence from its current home with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO).

In a statement sent to the media, the Prime Minister's Office said Carney would initiate the process to transfer responsibility for the Coast Guard to National Defence Minister David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Ont.). However, this directly contradicted the information provided to the media earlier that day. A DND statement to *The Hill Times* following Carney's afternoon press conference also indicated there was "no active plan" to

move the Coast Guard into the department.

Speaking with reporters on a not-for-attribution basis at a June 9 technical briefing, defence officials said that those the Coast Guard would remain with DFO, and that moving it was not the plan or intention of the funding announcement.

A senior government source familiar with the matter

told *The Hill Times* that, despite internal resistance from the Privy Council Office and the two departments, "ultimately, it's the prime minister's decision."

"It's moving forward because the PM decided [it will]," the source said.

DFO previously told *The Hill Times* the Coast Guard's expanded mandate proposed in Bill C-2 would be completed "alongside the [CCG]'s existing services."

In a follow-up email, a DND spokesperson said it would provide more details, but those would only arrive after *The Hill Times*' publishing deadline.

One military analyst who attended the technical briefing said the decision to move the Coast Guard was easier to make than to execute, telling *The Hill Times* he had been left with more questions than answers.

"This isn't an easy or even a good move," said the analyst on a not-for-attribution basis to speak freely about the announcement. He noted that it would be difficult for the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) to meet NATO's strict standards for what counts as military expenditures, and that doing so would be met with opposition, particularly from its unionized members who would resist being "overly armed" and treated like a "junior navy." He added that many service members chose the Coast Guard explicitly because it was a non-militarized civilian force.

"Leaving aside that the CCG has much more in line with the DFO mandate, it's yet to be seen how this would affect shared infrastructure, or the reaction of people in the CCG, who don't seem to have been fully consulted as far as I know," the analyst said.

Boutillier, a former special adviser to Canada's Maritime Forces Pacific Headquarters and a fellow at the Macdonald Laurier Institute, told *The Hill Times* that the CCG desperately needs the proposed expansion of its capabilities and a rejuvenation of its aging, "less than optimal" fleet. To fulfill its essential responsibility of defending the nation's waterways, and guard against the growing threat from China and Russia in the Arctic will require substantial investments, not only in new ships, icebreakers, and submarines, but also in a wide range of expanded underwater and aerial surveillance systems and the infrastructure required to support it all, he said.

"We desperately need more facilities in the Arctic—from runways to ports—and more patrol ships," Boutillier said, adding that those the CCG currently has are "embarrassingly under-equipped."

Boutillier said that while any Coast Guard vessel is already equipped to provide basic surveillance simply by reporting any vessels they may see, what is desperately needed is the capability to report what it can't.

"The CCG's underwater surveillance capabilities are either non-existent or severely limited in their ability to track submarines," Boutillier said. "The Russians and the Chinese combined represent a major flotilla so those underwater sensors are critical to track their movement."

While Boutillier had no opinion on which department should be responsible for the Coast Guard, he said what matters is that the government moves "with urgency."

"We're a nation of sleepwalkers and our reputation in terms of our ability to fulfill our promises and premier responsibility of defending our own nation is non-existent, unfairly or not," Boutillier said. "We have to put our house in order, not only in terms of reputational standing, but we've allowed our defence capabilities to deteriorate so badly that it will probably take at least a decade before we can even bring it back up to where it should be now."

sbenson@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

Hill Climbers



By Laura Ryckewaert

'A big get': PM Carney's chief of staff pick Blanchard lauded across partisan lines

Marc-André Blanchard will take over as chief of staff to the prime minister in July.

After much speculation and weeks of waiting for news of who would be tapped to lead Prime Minister Mark Carney's office, former ambassador Marc-André Blanchard has been announced as the PM's incoming chief of staff, and his hiring is being lauded by observers for bringing needed experience to the top office.

"This is a big get for Mr. Carney," said Ian Brodie, a former chief of staff to then-Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper and now senior adviser with New West Public Affairs, of Blanchard's hiring in an email to Hill Climbers.

"The chief of staff job should be an extension of the PM's personality and agenda—someone who knows the PM well enough to keep more routine files moving ahead while taking only the most important to the PM for decision," noted Brodie, who lauded Blanchard as a "highly experienced executive" with both public- and private-sector experience, and as someone who is "well known inside and outside Canada."

"It will help that he's also well known inside the Liberal Party," he added.

Carney announced Blanchard's hiring on X on June 1, putting an end to weeks of rumours and speculation over who would permanently take over the post. Former minister Marco Mendicino has been acting as chief of staff to Carney since mid-March, but his hiring was described as temporary. After the April 28 election, multiple names of potential chiefs of staff made the rounds, but in the absence of an announcement, reports surfaced that Carney was encountering troubles in finding someone to take on the job. On May 22, Carney posted on X news that Mendicino would be staying on as chief of staff into the summer.

As noted in Carney's June 1 post, Blanchard will take over as chief of staff starting this July.

"Marc-André has a long and distinguished career as one of Canada's most accomplished builders, legal experts, executives, public servants, and diplomats," wrote Carney.

Blanchard has been executive vice-president and head of Quebec-based pension and insurance investment management firm Caisse de dépôt et placement du



Marc-André Blanchard at a May 2017 press briefing during his time as Canada's permanent representative to the United Nations. Photograph courtesy of the UN/Manuel Elias

Québec (CDPQ) Global—which he helped establish—since 2020, and since 2022 has also held the title of global head of sustainability for CDPQ.

Between 2016 and 2020, Blanchard was Canada's ambassador and permanent representative to the United Nations. He previously spent decades working in law, both with Woods LLP and McCarthy Tétrault. Blanchard worked at the latter firm between 1997 and 2016 (with a brief gap at the turn of the last decade); from 2003 to 2009, he was McCarthy Tétrault's regional managing partner for Quebec, and from 2010 to 2016 he was chair and CEO of the firm.

"Under his leadership, CDPQ Global was established to support its investment teams on the ground through high-level relations with governments and partners worldwide in order to assist Québec companies in their globalization and to position CDPQ as a preferred investment partner internationally," reads a June 1 post from CDPQ on Blanchard's upcoming departure.

"Answering the call to serve my country is a decision I make with humility and enthusiasm," reads a quote attributed to Blanchard in the post.

Blanchard, who turns 60 this year, is also known to be an active Liberal Party supporter, and served as Quebec Liberal Party president from 2000 to 2008. He's a known past adviser to former Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff, and was part of the 2015 post-election transition team assembled by then-prime minister Justin Trudeau. In 2017, Blanchard was among those named to Canada's NAFTA Council, which weighed in on then-ongoing renegotiations of the trilateral trade pact. He's also Canada's former representative to the Ismaili Imam.

Hill Climbers understands that under the Trudeau government, Blanchard was—on multiple occasions—among those called upon to assist with cabinet vetting.

Reacting to news of Blanchard's hiring on X, former interim Conservative leader Rona

Ambrose, who also served on the NAFTA council, called it an "Excellent choice."

Former PCO clerk

Wayne Wouters, who's now a strategic and policy adviser with McCarthy Tétrault, overlapped with Blanchard at the firm for a little more than a year—in fact, he said Blanchard helped talk him into joining it after retiring from the public service in 2014.

"He understood what a non-lawyer like myself, how I could add value to McCarthy Tétrault," said Wouters, noting Blanchard is "very good" at bringing teams together.

"He's a very open, transparent leader. I found him to be also very collaborative; he was very good at reaching out to many of our clients ... as the managing director, he made sure that he got to know the CEOs and senior leadership, the executive suite, of many of these companies and took part in a lot of discussions, and brought me along as well especially if there was a discussion about where the country is, where the country's going, what's the position of the government-of-the-day on various issues," said Wouters.

During Wouters' roughly five years as PCO clerk, he worked with three different chiefs of staff to then-PM Stephen Harper.

"They're incredibly time-consuming jobs; you give your almost 24/7," said Wouters, adding he gives Blanchard "a lot of credit" for taking on such a job at this point in his career. "I also give a lot of credit to the prime minister to seek him out and bring somebody like that in."

Former Trudeau director of communications Cameron Ahmad worked with Blanchard during his time in the PMO when Blanchard was UN ambassador, and described Carney's incoming

chief as "thoughtful, decisive, and compassionate," in emailed comments to Hill Climbers.

"He was a phenomenal representative for Canada, navigating us through difficult times and forging strategic relationships with global counterparts. I'm thrilled he was appointed [as chief of staff]; he has all the right attributes to guide the PMO and government through this critical period," said Ahmad.

Former senior Liberal staffer Zita Astravas, who worked at the federal level between 2015 and 2013 including as a cabinet chief of staff and



Former PCO clerk Wayne Wouters is praising the PM's chief of staff pick. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

director of issues management in Trudeau's PMO, crossed paths with Blanchard "in Liberal circles for the last number of years," in addition to his time as UN ambassador, and described him as a "trusted adviser" and "sharp operator—one of the sharpest."

"He's very clear and concise, and really a brilliant adviser," said Astravas. "He brings a certain tenacity and energy to every room that he's in, and is really able to drive results. ... He brings a wealth of experience, and, you know, there are very few people who have seen it all, and certainly I would consider Marc-André one of the ones who nothing fazes."

Blanchard is someone "cuts through the bullshit," she said. As PMO chief of staff, "he'll be a key cabinet 'interlocutor,'" and the PM's "air traffic controller on whatever the issue of the day is"—responsibilities that she said mesh well with Blanchard's strengths.

"[The Liberals have] leaned on Marc-André for a number of things ... whether it's from a policy standpoint when he was ambassador, or even just a sage adviser. He's able to unpack really complex problems and really troubleshoot a path to get to where you want to go," said Astravas.

Along with Blanchard's extensive public and private sector contacts, Astravas noted he's "no

stranger" to the complexities of the Canada-United States file.

Though still not confirmed by the PMO or mentioned in Carney's social media posts, media have reported that former minister



Zita Astravas lauded Blanchard's ability to troubleshoot and 'unpack really complex problems.' Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

David Lametti has also been hired by the PMO as principal secretary. Tom Pitfield has served in that capacity for Carney's transition into office, and was executive campaign director during the recent election.

Lametti represented LaSalle-Émard-Verdun, Que., in the House of Commons from 2015 until his resignation in 2024. After serving turns as parlia-

mentary secretary to the trade minister and then to the innovation minister, Lametti joined cabinet as minister of justice in 2019, serving in the role until the July 2023 cabinet shuffle, which saw him dropped from the front bench—a move that surprised many, Lametti included.

A former law professor at McGill University, Lametti returned to his legal roots in 2024, joining Fasken's Montreal team as counsel. He played a hand in both Carney's leadership campaign, and the recent election campaign—having been in the rooms to celebrate both victories—and has reportedly helped with Carney's transition. The two have known each other since their time as students at the University of Oxford in the 1990s.

Speaking to indication of his hiring, Astravas said that as a former MP and minister, Lametti would bring "a real, big strength to the team on caucus relations."

Particularly when it comes to relations with cabinet "you can have a good relationship on a good day, but you need a strong relationship on a bad day, and certainly David does bring that to the table as well," she said.

As recently reported, Liberal MPs told The Hill Times Carney needs to maintain direct and consistent contact with caucus members in order to succeed.

With the naming of a permanent chief of staff, the ball is now rolling for the PMO to firm up staffing hires. Stay tuned to Climbers for more updates.

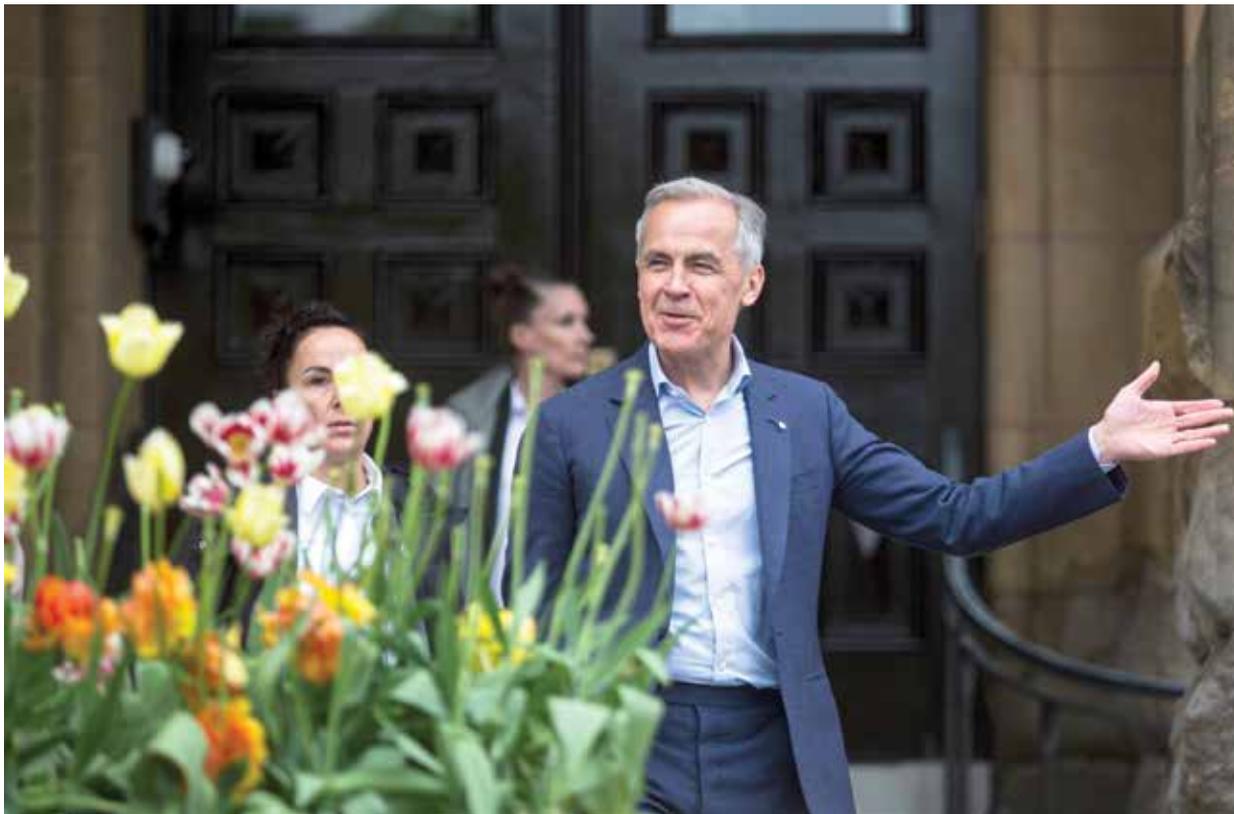
lryckewaert@hilltimes.com
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Parliamentary Calendar

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.

World leaders converge on Alberta for G7 summit June 15-17



Prime Minister Mark Carney will play host to a cavalcade of international leaders during the G7 summit in Kananaskis, Alta., from Sunday, June 15, to Tuesday, June 17. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

MONDAY, JUNE 9—WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11

Minister Champagne at Montreal Conference 2025—Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne will take part in a fireside chat at the three-day Montreal Conference 2025, hosted by the International Economic Forum of the Americas. Over 150 global leaders, decision-makers, experts, and innovators will share their insights on the most pressing economic, social, and technological challenges of our time. Monday, June 9, to Wednesday, June 11, at the Hotel Bonaventure, 900 rue de la Gauchetière O., Montreal. Register: laconferencedemontreal.com.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11

House Sitting—The House goes into late-night sittings from June 9-20, and is scheduled to break for the summer on June 20. The House is scheduled to return on Monday, Sept. 15.

Minister Joly to Deliver Remarks—Industry Minister Mélanie Joly will deliver remarks in French at a breakfast event hosted by the Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal. Wednesday, June 11, from 8:30 a.m. ET at Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth, 900 René-Lévesque Blvd. W., Montreal. Details: ccmm.ca.

U.S. Ambassador Hoekstra to Deliver Remarks—United States Ambassador to Canada Peter Hoekstra will take part in an exclusive lunch event hosted by the Canadian Club of Ottawa. Wednesday, June 11, at 12 p.m. ET at the Fairmont Château Laurier, 1 Rideau St. Details: canadianclubottawa.ca.

Webinar: 'Government's Internal Trade Data Strategy'—The Canadian Association of Business Economics hosts a webinar: "Government of Canada's Internal Trade Data Strategy." Officials with the Privy Council Office and Statistics Canada will present their Internal Trade Data Strategy and key outcomes, such as the Canadian Internal Trade Data and Information Hub and recent Canadian Survey on Interprovincial Trade, which are already helping policymakers, academics, and Canadian businesses better understand our internal market. Wednesday, June 11, at 12 p.m. ET happening online: cabe.ca.

'AI and the Federal Government'—The University of Ottawa's Canadian Internet Policy and Public Interest Clinic hosts its summer speaker series

2025. Mark Schaan, deputy secretary to cabinet for Artificial Intelligence at the Privy Council Office, will speak on "AI and the Federal Government." Wednesday, June 11, at 12 p.m. ET at Fauteux Hall, 57 Louis-Pasteur Priv., University of Ottawa. Details via Eventbrite.

Pearson Centre Laureate Dinner—The Pearson Centre Presents its 2025 Laureates Dinner honouring former Liberal cabinet minister Irwin Cotler, now international chair of the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights. Wednesday, June 11, at 5:45 p.m. ET at the National Arts Centre, 1 Elgin St., Ottawa. Details: rsvp@thepearsoncentre.ca.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11—FRIDAY, JUNE 13

Seminar: 'Faith, Politics, and Uncertainty'—The Laurentian Leadership Centre hosts a three-day seminar titled "Dis/Course: Faith, Politics, and Uncertainty," applying an inquiry-based learning model to the question of faithful Christian living in a time of political uncertainty. Wednesday, June 11, to Friday, June 13, at the Laurentian Leadership Centre, 252 Metcalfe St., Ottawa. Register via Eventbrite.

THURSDAY, JUNE 12—FRIDAY, JUNE 13

Workshop: 'Space Security and Emerging Technologies'—The Centre for International Governance Innovation hosts a two-day workshop in Ottawa on "Space Security and Emerging Technologies: From Principles to Practice" led by Aaron Shull, CIGI's managing director and general counsel, and Jessica West, CIGI senior fellow and senior researcher at Project Ploughshares. Thursday, June 12, to Friday, June 13, in Ottawa. Details: cigionline.org.

FRIDAY, JUNE 13

Elevate on the Hill—Elevate International hosts 'Elevate on the Hill: Rising Leaders,' a leadership forum that brings girls and young women to the steps of Parliament Hill to stand boldly for a day of leadership, empowerment, and celebration. Featuring panels, speeches, workshops, and connections with Members of Parliament, educators, students, and change makers. Friday, June 13, at 9:30 a.m. ET at Sir John A Macdonald

Building, Room 100, 144 Wellington St., Ottawa. Register via Eventbrite.

SATURDAY, JUNE 14

Governor General's Performing Arts Awards—The 2025 Governor General's Performing Arts Awards will take place with a gala evening featuring red-carpet arrivals of the laureates and special guests, performances, and tributes. Saturday, June 14, at 6:30 p.m. ET at the National Arts Centre, 1 Elgin St., Ottawa. Details: nac-cna.ca.

SUNDAY, JUNE 15—TUESDAY, JUNE 17

G7 Summit—This year, Canada is president of the G7, and the annual leaders' meeting will take place in Kananaskis, Alta., from Sunday, June 15, to Tuesday, June 17. Details: g7.canada.ca.

MONDAY, JUNE 16—TUESDAY, JUNE 17

2025 Americas Agriculture & Food Security Forum—Inter-American Institute for Cooperation's office in Canada, with the support of the International Fund for Agricultural Development, and the collaboration of many Canadian and international partners in the agri-food sector, is convening the 2025 Americas Agriculture & Food Security Forum. This event will serve as a positive and inclusive space for dialogue, bringing together government officials, industry representatives, academics, development experts and students, to explore solutions that enhance agriculture, food security, sustainability, innovation, and trade. Monday, June 16, to Tuesday, June 17, held online and in person at Olds College, in Olds, Alta. Details: americasagforum.org

TUESDAY, JUNE 17

Panel: 'Asserting Canada's Arctic Sovereignty'—Nunavut Premier P.J. Akeegagok, the head of Greenland's representation to the United States and Canada Jacob Isbosethsen, Trent University professor Whitney Lackenbauer, and Arctic360 president and CEO Dr. Jessica M. Shadian will deliver the Tom Kierans Lecture 2025 hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Tuesday, June 17, at the C.D. Howe Institute, 67 Yonge St., Suite 300, Toronto. Details: cdhowe.org.

TUESDAY, JUNE 17—THURSDAY, JUNE 19

Workshop: 'The Road to Sovereignty'—Okimaw and Niipaawi Strategies host "The Road to Sovereignty," a three-day, high-level gathering focused on building Indigenous law policy frameworks that reflect the unique traditions, cultures, and governance aspirations of First Nations across Canada. Tuesday, June 17, to Thursday, June 19, at the Rideau Club, 15th floor, 99 Bank St., Ottawa. Details via Eventbrite.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18

NMMA Canada Parliamentary Reception—It's boating season in Canada. Join the National Marine Manufacturers Association in Canada on the Rideau Canal to experience our boats and meet our Canadian manufacturers on Wednesday, June 18, from 5-8 p.m. ET beside the NAC patio and the canal. RSVP by June 13 to rsvp@blueskystrategyygroup.com.

THURSDAY, JUNE 19

Sickle Cell Breakfast—To mark National Sickle Cell Awareness Day, Senator Marie-Françoise Mégie will host a parliamentary breakfast in collaboration with Canada's Sickle Cell Association, and the Interdisciplinary Centre for Black Health of uOttawa. Thursday, June 19, 7:30-9 a.m. ET, Senators' Lounge, Senate of Canada Building, 2 Rideau St., Ottawa. RSVP by June 6 to dichemael.jean-baptiste@sen.parl.gc.ca.

FRIDAY, JUNE 20

Congolese Excellence Award—Liberal MP Marie-France Lalonde will present the Congolese Excellence Award at an evening celebrating the achievements and exceptional talent of the Congolese community in Canada. Friday, June 20, at 6 p.m. ET at 144 Wellington St., Ottawa. Register via Eventbrite.

FRIDAY, JUNE 20—SUNDAY, JUNE 29

Ottawa International Jazz Festival—The Ottawa International Jazz Festival once again shines a national spotlight on Canadian jazz with a stellar lineup that stretches from coast to coast to coast. Friday, June 20, to Sunday, June 29 in Confederation Park and other downtown locations. Details: ottawajazzfestival.com.

TUESDAY, JUNE 24—THURSDAY, JUNE 26

NATO Summit—The 2025 NATO Summit will be held at the World Forum in The Hague, the Netherlands, from Tuesday, June 24, to Thursday, June 26. Details: nato.int.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25

Conference: 'Pluralism, Security, and the Future of the Transatlantic Alliance'—The Canadian International Council co-hosts this conference, "Pluralism, Security, and the Future of the Transatlantic Alliance," exploring the intersection of pluralism, security, and transatlantic partnerships in an evolving global order with an emphasis on how Canada and Germany, as well as other G7 nations, can collaborate to strengthen inclusive societies and enhance stability. Wednesday, June 25, at 8:30 a.m. ET at the Global Centre for Pluralism, 330 Sussex Dr., Ottawa. Details: thecic.org.

Webinar: 'Is the Pivot Possible?'—The Canadian International Council hosts a webinar, "Is the Pivot Possible? Evaluating Economic Diversification Options in the Age of Trump," featuring former co-CEO of the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada Paul Evans, and retired diplomat and host of the *Global Exchange* podcast Colin Robertson. Wednesday, June 25, at 6 p.m. ET happening online: thecic.org.

THURSDAY, JUNE 26

Sharon Musgrave is Retiring—After 35.5 years at the CBC, Sharon Musgrave is ready to travel, sit on the dock and ski her butt off. Come and raise a glass to Musgrave, a friend and colleague. Thursday, June 26, 6 p.m. (speeches begin at 7 p.m.). The Met, 700 Sussex Dr., Ottawa. Please RSVP: rosemary.barton@cbc.ca

FRIDAY, JUNE 27

Fireside Chat: 'Global War and Chaos'—The Royal Canadian Legion hosts a fireside chat on "Global War and Chaos: How Did We Get Here and What's The Solution?" featuring retired general Walter Natynczyk and retired general David Lord Richards of Herstmonceux. Friday, June 27, at 7 p.m. ET at the Fairmont Château Laurier, 1 Rideau St. Details via Eventbrite.

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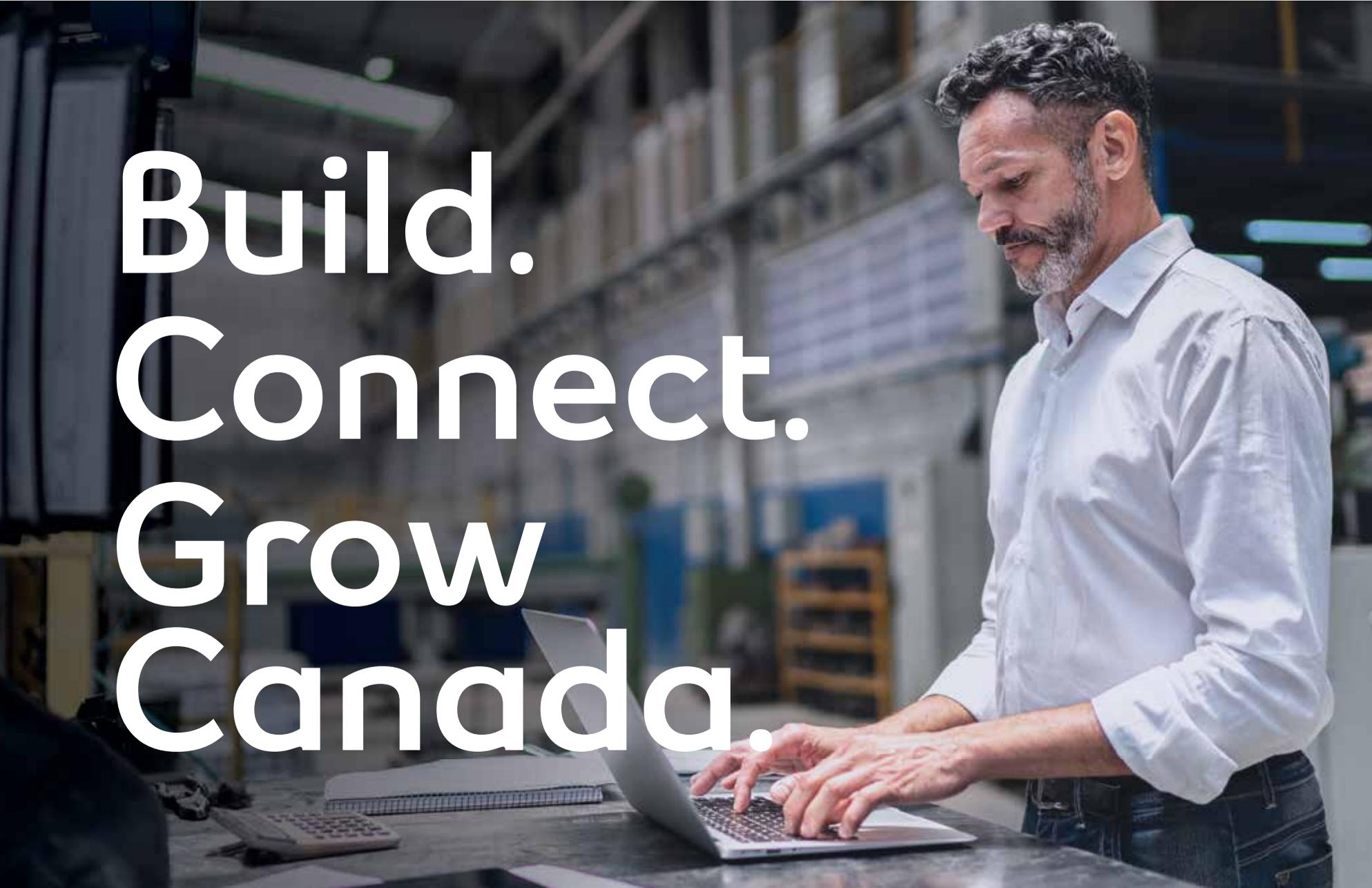
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