

Canada must follow through on **Gaza tone shift:** advocate p. 6



Soldiers still in the dark on **details about promised pay bump** p. 4



Rookie Senator Farah Mohamed reflects on the Red Chamber's role p. 9



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NEWS

Winning the legislation lottery: MPs eye causes that hit close to home for fall bills

BY LAURA RYCKEWAERT

The lottery has been drawn and places have been set, and the first lucky 30 MPs on this Parliament's list for the consideration of private members' business have until September to decide what proposed legislative changes they want to bring forward.

Conservative MP Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, Alta.) landed the No. 18 spot this time around—after pulling spot No. 167 at the start of the previous Parliament—and says he plans to use his upcoming opportunity to revive a bill on organ donation that he first proposed during the 42nd Parliament, but which was swiftly voted down by the then-Liberal majority in the House in 2016.

"I never even thought about doing anything last Parliament because I was too far [down] on the list, and with a minority government it's always tough. This time definitely I'm lucky in getting in the first 30 and I'm looking forward to putting something forward that's useful," he told *The Hill Times*.

Aboultaif's previous bill, C-223, proposed establishing a Canadian Organ Donor Registry, which would compile information on organ donors and recipients and create a system to link "compilations held by third parties," as well developing a national strategy to promote organ donation in Canada and "facilitate the exchange of information on organ donation between provinces." It was ultimately voted down at second reading, 171 to 131, with Liberal and Bloc Québécois MPs voting against it.

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NEWS

'A critical mistake': former Grit ministers call out what they say is Carney's capitulation to Trump

BY NEIL MOSS

After promising to be a truculent foil to the Trump administration during the spring federal election, Prime Minister Mark Carney now faces questions about whether his rhetoric matches reality.

Rescinding the digital services tax (DST) is the latest conciliatory gesture that Carney (Nepean, Ont.) has made to United States President Donald Trump. The American president had previously suspended trade talks over complaints about the DST. The two sides agreed to return to the negotiation table afterwards.

Former Liberal international trade minister Sergio Marchi said Carney has done "exceptionally well" in dealing with Trump, but noted that his first falter was dropping the DST, calling it "a critical mistake."

Set to come into effect on June 30, the DST applied a three-per-cent tax on revenue above \$20-million earned from digital services that rely on engagement, data, and content from Canadian users, as well as the sale or licensing of some Canadian user data. Payments were slated to be retroactive to 2022, with billions of dollars anticipated to be paid

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DIPLOMATIC CIRCLES

Parliamentarians celebrate Fourth of July at Lornado amid trade war, annexation threats

BY NEIL MOSS

A trade war and annexation threats didn't keep MPs and Senators—including those in the government benches—from taking in Fourth of July festivities at the United States ambassador's Lornado residence.

A trio of parliamentary secretaries were spotted in the crowd, which included Ali Ehsassi, parliamentary secretary to Canada-U.S. Trade Minister Dominic LeBlanc, as well as Mona Fortier and Rob Oliphant, parliamentary secretaries to Foreign Affairs Minister Anita Anand. Both LeBlanc and Anand are actively involved in Canada's response to U.S. trade action.

U.S. Ambassador Pete Hoekstra's first invitation-only July 4th celebration was a more subdued affair than that of previous envoy David Cohen.

Gone were the packed crowds, long lines, and Philly cheesesteaks. In its place, more traditional Americana favourites were available for guests, including hamburger, pulled pork, and veggie sliders; mini corn dogs, chicken skewers, as well as potato salad, coleslaw, mac and cheese, cornbread, corn on the cob, and watermelon salad.

Conservative Senator Michael MacDonald, chair of the Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group, was in the crowd, as was Independent Senator Tony Loffreda.

Just over three months since the Liberals were campaigning on a "elbows up" approach to the U.S., the only elbows that were seemingly raised were to down an American drink.

While not on the shelves at local Ontario liquor stores, California red and white wine was being offered, including from Bread and Butter, Bonny Doon Vineyards,

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Prime Minister Mark Carney campaigned on an 'elbows up' response to U.S. President Donald Trump. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Heard on the Hill



By Christina Leadlay

Full ambassadors to Laos and Cambodia among 24 diplomatic appointments



Kent Vachon, left, is heading up Canada's new full embassy in Laos, which opened in March. His was one of 24 heads-of-mission appointments announced on July 3, including Anderson Blanc to Mozambique, Alison Grant to Austria, and Tarik Khan to Pakistan. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia, screenshots courtesy of X and the Government of Canada

Canada recently announced full ambassadors to Cambodia and Laos, following through on a Liberal pledge from last fall to upgrade our diplomatic missions in those countries to full embassies.

Erstwhile head of the Indo-Pacific Strategy Secretariat **Christian DesRoches** is Canada's new envoy to Cambodia, and current chargé d'affaires in Laos **Kent Vachon** becomes ambassador.

Then-prime minister **Justin Trudeau** had announced in October during a visit to Laos that Canada would open a full mission there and in Cambodia. Global Affairs Canada's website confirms our missions in both Vientiane, Laos, and Phnom Penh, Cambodia, were upgraded to full embassies back in March "as part of Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy." Prior to this, Canada's ambassador to Thailand, **Ping Kitnikone**, was concurrently accredited to Laos and Cambodia. She remains as ambassador to Thailand.

Desrochers and Vachon's appointments are just two on a slate of 24 head-of-mission postings that Foreign Affairs Minister **Anita Anand** announced on July 3.

In other head-of-mission appointments in Asia, **Tarik Khan** succeeds **Leslie Scanlon** as high commissioner to Pakistan; **Philippe LaFortune** becomes ambassador to Korea, replacing **Tamara Mawhinney**; and **James Nickel** takes over from **Shawn Steil** as ambassador to Vietnam. **Vicky Singmin** hands over the keys to our mission to ASEAN in Jakarta to **Ambra Dickie**; **Isabelle Martin** arrives from leading Canada's mission in Qatar to be the new high commissioner in Sri Lanka, replacing **Eric Walsh**; and **Stephen Doust** is the new ambassador to Mongolia, taking over from **Sandra Choufani** who is headed to Côte d'Ivoire to replace **Anderson Blanc**.

Honing in on Africa, **Blanc** leaves Côte d'Ivoire to replace **Sara Nicholls** in Mozambique. **Nicolas Simard** becomes ambassador to Ethiopia, replacing **Joshua Tabah** who is heading to Kenya to be our high commissioner and permanent representative to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and to the UN Environment Programme, succeeding **Christopher Thornley**. **Alexandre Bilodeau** takes over from **Lorraine Diguer**

as ambassador to Tunisia, while **Marie-Claude Harvey** becomes high commissioner to Cameroon, replacing **Lorraine Anderson**.

Looking over to the Middle East, the aforementioned **Martin's** post in Qatar will be filled by new ambassador **Karim Morcos**. Meanwhile, **Gregory Galligan** succeeds **Stefanie McCollum** as ambassador to Lebanon, and **Natalie Britton** will become consul general in Istanbul, Turkey, replacing **Tara Scheurwater** who is headed to Kuwait to take over from **Aliya Mawani** as ambassador.

In Europe, **Alison Grant** is Canada's new ambassador to Austria and permanent representative to the International Organizations in Vienna, replacing **Troy Lulashnyk**; **Patrick Hébert** replaces **Jeanette Stovel** as ambassador to Finland; and **Patrick Wittmann** passes the head-of-mission portfolio in Switzerland to **Jean-Paul Lemieux**.

And in South America, **Jean-Dominique Ieraci** will become ambassador to Peru, replacing **Louis Marcotte**; and **Craig Kowalik** succeeds **Stephen Potter** as ambassador to Ecuador.

NDP leadership hopefuls start lining up

A pair of potential candidates have signalled their entry into the race to succeed **Jagmeet Singh** as the New Democratic Party's permanent leader. Ontario farmer **Tony McQuail** launched his bid on June 23, and Quebec author **Yves Engler** was put forward as the NDP Socialist Caucus' pick on July 7.

McQuail has been a regular Huron-Bruce, Ont., NDP candidate since the 1980s. He told CTV News that his bid will aim to cre-

ate a union between the Greens and New Democrats. "The two parties need to figure out what they can agree on, not what they need to fight about, so that we can start having a political party that has a strong progressive and environmental policy to deal with the crisis we're in," he said.

The Montreal-based Engler is founder of the Canadian Foreign Policy Institute.

"Forty years of neo-liberal capitalist policies has led to

radically increased inequality and homelessness as well as a weakened working class and social welfare system," Engler said in a press release. "It's time for the NDP to take on unmitigated corporate power and fight for a democratic economy that puts workers first. We stand for the billions, not the billionaires."

NDP MP **Don Davies** was named as the party's interim leader on May 5.

Dhanraj out at CBC

CBC journalist **Travis Dhanraj** has exited the public broadcaster more than 18 months after taking over the helm of the CBC News Network's primetime *Canada Tonight* program. In an email sent to CBC colleagues, Dhanraj said he was "forced to resign," and that this "was not a voluntary decision." *Canada Tonight* has since been replaced by *Hanomansing Tonight*, anchored by **Ian Hanomansing**.

Dhanraj had been missing from the airwaves for months, and his letter says his departure "comes after trying to navigate a workplace culture defined by retaliation, exclusion, and psychological harm. A place where asking hard questions—about tokenism masquerading as diversity, problematic political coverage protocols, and the erosion of editorial independence—became a career-ending move."

In response, the CBC said Dhanraj "is currently on leave,"



Journalist **Travis Dhanraj** says he was 'forced to resign' from the CBC. Photograph courtesy of CBC Media Centre

that he made "serious allegations," and that the network "categorically rejects the accusations made about CBC News, our staff, and management."

In February, the network confirmed Dhanraj was on leave following a statement by Dhanraj's lawyer **Kathryn Marshall**, which said "due to ongoing systemic issues" her client

"has been compelled to step away for a time."

Prior to his most recent stint at the CBC, Dhanraj was co-host of investigative consumer affairs program *Marketplace*, and has previously worked for the CBC as a senior parliamentary reporter, and a general assignment reporter in Edmonton and Toronto. The Calgary-born reporter also worked at CP24 and CTV News, and became the Queen's Park bureau chief for Global News before returning to CBC in 2021.

Politicos converge on Calgary Stampede grounds



Conservative MPs **Greg McLean**, left, and **Blake Richards** got behind the griddles for Calgary Stampede breakfasts on July 3. Photographs courtesy of X



The 113th annual Calgary Stampede is like catnip to politicians, with the federal types turning up in their best jeans and cowboy hats to eat pancakes and rub elbows.

Conservative Leader **Pierre Poilievre** took a break from byelection campaigning in the Alberta riding of Battle River-Crowfoot to show off his horse-riding skills in the Stampede's opening parade on July 4. "Thrilled to kick off the Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth for 2025 in my hometown with [wife] **Anaida**. A celebration of enterprise, family, and rugged hard work," he posted on X that day.

Prime Minister **Mark Carney** starred at a Stampede-themed reception for big Liberal Party donors on July 5 in downtown Calgary. He was joined by Emergency Management Minister **Eleanor Olshewski**, Natural Resources Minister **Tim Hodgson**, and Tourism Minister

Rechie Valdez. Carney showed off what Canadian Press reporter **Bill Graveland** described as less-than-stellar pancake-flipping skills the following day at a United Brotherhood of Carpenters event.

Meanwhile, Conservative MPs **Blake Richards** and **Greg McLean** documented their less-critiqued pancake-flipping skills at the many mandatory carb-loaded breakfasts on July 3. The Conservative Party also hosted a more protein-filled event on July 6 with a barbecue.

NDP interim Leader **Don Davies** popped over from his neighbouring province to take part on July 6, attending an Alberta NDP breakfast and an Equal Voice reception. Green Leader **Elizabeth May** was also in Calgary on July 5 to take in the sights and sounds.

The Stampede runs until July 13. cleadlay@hilltimes.com
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Feds tighten grip on consultant contracts with new procurement rules, \$20M cap on time-based work

New procurement rules include a \$20-million limit on time- and task-based contracts, stricter oversight, and mandatory value-for-money reviews.

BY IREM KOCA

Public Services and Procurement Canada has rolled out new rules aimed at strengthening oversight of professional services contracts and shifting towards “outcome-based” procurement practices amid years-long criticism over major delays in project delivery, cost overruns, and heavy reliance on external consultants.

Federal suppliers and buyers were notified of the changes through CanadaBuys—the website where federal tender opportunities and contract awards are posted—in mid-June. Eight out of the 10 new measures took effect on July 1, and apply to all new professional services contracts using mandatory methods of supply from this date onwards. The other two measures will be implemented at a later date.

According to the government, the new measures are intended to reinforce Public Services and Procurement Canada’s (PSPC) oversight as the government’s central purchasing authority to address concerns raised in recent procurement audits, and to reduce reliance on professional services contracts.

“The changes are part of a broader shift to bring the federal government’s procurement approach in line with best practices in other governments and commercial organizations,” reads a PSPC statement to *The Hill Times*.

PSPC manages approximately \$37-billion annually on behalf of departments and agencies. Over the last couple of years, the department has faced criticism due to a series of contracting controversies, political scrutiny, committee showdowns, scathing watchdog reports, the historic admonishment of a contractor, and multiple RCMP investigations.

The new measures include implementing a \$20-million cap on task- and time-based contracts to reduce the government’s reliance on professional services contracts.

The department underlines that these contracts have historically resulted in cost overruns



Government Transformation, and Public Services and Procurement Minister Joël Lightbound previously said the rules, ‘the roles, and the responsibilities of everyone in the procurement process across departments need to be very clear.’ *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

and “weak accountability.” Under the new rules, any contract valued over \$20-million must be procured through solutions-based methods.

“If not managed properly, time-based contracts incentivize effort rather than outcomes. They pay vendors for the hours worked, not for the value delivered. This can lead to project delays, scope creep, cost escalations, and difficulty holding vendors accountable—particularly for large, complex IT or transformation initiatives,” reads the explanation on the procurement portal.

The widely used task-based informatics professional services (TBIPS) arrangement will not be eliminated, but its use will now be phased out, and limited to low-value, low-complexity, routine services. According to PSPC, a TBIPS requirement is for “finite work assignments that require one or more consultants to complete. A task involves a specific start date, a specific end date, and set deliverables.”

According to the new measures, contracts valued at more than \$3.75-million for task-based professional services will be limited to a maximum period of two years, including any option period.

Contracts can only be extended beyond two years with assistant deputy minister (ADM) approval. ADMs will also have to approve all non-competitive professional services contracts or amendments that exceed \$3-million.

Any increase to the original contract value will now be capped at 30 per cent, and will require further approvals based on the size of the increase. Any increases between 21 and 30 per



Procurement Ombud Alexander Jeglic says his office will release follow-up reviews of previous procurement reports in the upcoming months. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

cent will have to be approved by an assistant deputy minister.

The department will also introduce mandatory “Value for Money Assessments” for all requests for proposals—the first step of procurement in which the government invites firms to submit their bids—to ensure it pays fair market value.

Other measures include quarterly reporting on the use of mandatory methods of supply—procurement instruments such as standing offers and supply arrangements that departments use to purchase goods and services—as well as further due diligence on invoices and timesheets, clarification for task authorizations, and the use of an outcome-oriented approach to avoid misuse and reduce the risk of employer-employee relationships.

The new rules are a step up from the Treasury Board’s

2023 *Manager’s Guide*, which is essentially a procurement guide for departmental managers, but did not offer clear direction or account for different risk levels, according to Allan Williams, a former assistant deputy minister of materiel at National Defence.

Williams said the new measures will add value to the procurement process, but a meaningful change would have to include a cultural reform in PSPC promoting accountability and productivity.

“It is better than what they had, which was a total disaster. But it misses the core problem,” Williams told *The Hill Times* in a July 1 interview.

“If you want to improve procurement, you have to change the culture from a risk-averse culture to one that embraces continuous learning and innovation where officers can review case studies

and better understand how to fulfill their role in safeguarding integrity in the procurement process.”

Canada’s federal procurement system has long been criticized for its heavy reliance on outside consultants and contractors. In 2023-24, Ottawa spent a record \$20.7-billion on outsourcing, and reports show that IT contractors cost at least 22-per-cent more than in-house staff. Critics have repeatedly said that outsourcing professional services leads to higher costs in government projects, reduced transparency, and a loss of institutional knowledge within the public service.

Williams also questioned how much training and discussion had taken place with procurement officers ahead of the rollout of the new measures.

“Do officers understand what is meant by ‘adequate documentation’ or ‘appropriate documentation?’” he asked, referring to the lack of details in the government’s notice.

Williams also challenged the \$20-million threshold and the 30-per-cent cap. “That’s a lot of money. Why not try to introduce solutions-based contracts at much lower dollar values whenever the risk is warranted?” he said.

Federal Procurement Ombud Alexander Jeglic told *The Hill Times* in a July 2 email that some of the new measures will be tested in upcoming reviews by his office, following up on their PSPC, ArriveCAN, and McKinsey reports, which will determine if they addressed his recommendations.

“Without completing these follow-up reviews, it is too early to comment on the sufficiency of the changes. That being said, I continue to advocate for foundational reform,” Jeglic said.

The ombud published a new report this week outlining the top five foundational changes needed to address long-standing federal procurement issues.

Auditor General Karen Hogan’s office also acknowledged the new procurement measures.

“While the Office of the Auditor General does not comment on government policy decisions, our future audits will consider the implementation of these measures to determine whether they are being applied effectively and as intended,” said senior communications adviser Claire Baudry in a July 2 email.

Baudry added that in June 19 remarks, Hogan had “stressed the need to return to the fundamentals of procurement—ensuring that rules are well understood and properly followed across departments.”

Hogan’s previous reports into the government’s procurement practices cited consistent issues across departments, such as missing security clearances, payments for incomplete work, and poor documentation.

Lightbound said PSPC has “done a lot” to apply Hogan’s recommendations and educate departments to properly apply the rules to avoid mistakes, and pledged further reforms to fix government procurement.

ikoca@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

NEWS

Time for feds to clarify plan for military wage boost, say observers



Defence Minister David McGuinty indicated in June that the pay raise for military members would be immediate. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Defence Minister David McGuinty initially signalled an ‘immediate’ 20-per-cent pay raise, but Chief of the Defence Staff Jennie Carignan has indicated a longer timeline.

BY NEIL MOSS

A month after Defence Minister David McGuinty promised an immediate pay bump for members of the Canadian Armed Forces, it has yet to materialize as observers say the federal government owes its soldiers an explanation.

The 20-per-cent pay raise was promised as part of Prime Minister Mark Carney’s (Nepean, Ont.) large-scale defence investment pledge.

On June 10, McGuinty (Ottawa South, Ont.) said in an interview with Newstalk 1010 that there would be “about a 20-per-cent pay increase immediately for our members.”

Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Jennie Carignan told the Canadian Press in a July 6 interview that the pay raises “will be this year.”

“We want everything to be ready for the fall and winter-time,” she said, suggesting that the increase won’t be an across-the-board raise, with a focus on recruitment and training.

“It’s an envelope that will be adapting to what we need. Some of it will be a pay increase, some of it will be for benefit allowances for specific trades or specific functions,” Carignan told CP.



Chief of the Defence Staff Jennie Carignan says the pay raise will occur this year. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

The competing timelines have created confusion about when the boost will be implemented and in what form.

Former vice-chief of the defence staff Mark Norman said members of the military deserve to be told what will happen.

“You never promise them something you can’t deliver. If you can’t deliver something, you better start explaining what your plan is because they will quickly lose faith,” he said.

The pledge to boost military pay occurs amid a personnel crisis in the Armed Forces. The recent departmental plans for 2025-26 target filling “at least” 95 per cent of its regular force by March 31, 2027, and “at least” 95 per cent of its reserve force by March 31, 2032. The last departmental results for the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces in 2023-24 showed that the regular force

was at 89 per cent and the reserve force was at 78 per cent.

The plans also aim to improve morale metrics, including the percentage of military members who feel the Armed Forces provide a “reasonable quality of life” for them and their families. The target is “at least” 85 per cent by March 31, 2026. The result in 2023-24 was 30 per cent.

The same 85 per cent target is outlined for 2026 for military members who “feel positive about their job.” In 2023-24, the result was 58 per cent.

Norman said that the government needs a “damn good reason” to not yet have done something that it had promised.

“If somebody doesn’t grab this sooner than later, it is going to become a festering problem,” he said.

The former commander of the Navy said that soldiers and sailors are looking at billions of dollars being committed, but something as relatively simple as a pay raise isn’t being effectively communicated.

“The troops are already understandably frustrated” about the promised pay boost with little information about implementation, said Norman. “They will respect honesty and transparency.”

“At the moment, they are skeptical. They are not sure who to trust. And they are not seeing the transparency,” he said.

“This is an issue and it needs to be addressed quickly,” he said.

Pay boost alone won’t fix military morale

Defence expert Charlotte Duval-Lantoine, a Canadian Global Affairs Institute vice-president, said the morale metrics outlined in the departmental plans are a “big issue.”



CGAI’s Charlotte Duval-Lantoine says factors other than pay will play key roles in military recruitment and retention. *Photograph courtesy of Charlotte Duval-Lantoine*

She said that the pay boost can help, but noted that will depend on the details, noting that the implementation of the pay increase still needs to be ironed out.

“The government has been quite ambivalent in the way it’s going to do this, so that creates tension,” she said.

She said that increased pay will help boost recruitment and retention, but noted that other factors play important roles such as the willingness to work on aging equipment.

The departmental plans for 2025-26 earmark a target of critical shortages in occupations to fall to “at most” five per cent by March 31, 2032. In 2023-24, it was 73 per cent.

Duval-Lantoine said meagre morale has to be understood beyond a pay fix.

The plans target having “at least” 75 per cent of Armed Forces

members agree that the military “reinforces a culture of mutual respect, trust, honour and dignity” by March 31, 2029. In 2023-24, it was 62 per cent.

By the same target date, the department wants to have “at least” 65 per cent of military members agree that the culture in the Armed Forces “surrounding sexual misconduct has improved in the last 12 months.” In 2023-24, it was 52 per cent.

“Examining morale and retention beyond pay is going to be critical to understand why people are leaving,” she said.

Royal Military College professor Grazia Scoppio, an expert on Armed Forces personnel, said nothing in the government happens immediately.

“The fact that the announcement was made, it does not follow that the implementation will be immediate,” she said.

She remarked that the government should give a timeline for when the pay increase will take effect.

But she said that the commitment is “money in the bank.”

“I think it’s going to happen,” she said. “It will happen. They are not going to back out of it. They would lose all credibility, so there’s no question that it will happen. When is a different question.”

She said the pay raise will be a “much needed incentive” for both retaining current members of the Armed Forces as well as enticing new recruits.

However, the wage boost is a “tool” in the government’s arsenal to help boost recruitment and retention, but not a panacea, said Scoppio.

“By itself, it’s not going to fix every single problem that an organization might have,” she said.

Scoppio noted that pay alone won’t boost quality-of-life metrics for Armed Forces members, citing issues around access to training and the frequency of being posted to new places.

“There’s so many things that come into play when you talk about quality of life, but the pay is but one of them,” she said.

Former Liberal MP John McKay, who chaired the House Defence Committee in the last Parliament, said the pay bump will help to keep and attract more members to the Armed Forces.

“It gets them closer to a commercial-level contract. It should help with retention and it should help with recruitment,” he said.

He said the quality of candidates applying to join the military will also be upgraded.

McKay said the increased investment in the Armed Forces is for the long haul.

“Either you are going to build a high quality military or this is just a shot in the dark,” he said. “I don’t think the threat environment is going to change dramatically in the next few years.”

“If you’re going to have a serious military, you’re going to have to pay people seriously,” he said. “That’s why I would anticipate that this is a longer-range commitment.”

nmoos@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

COMMENT

Is the CAF past the point of no return?

Perhaps the Liberals need to do more than make promises of massive budget increases if there are too few personnel left in uniform to manage that influx of money.

Scott Taylor

Inside Defence

OTTAWA—To a casual observer of the Canadian Armed Forces, recent announcements by the Liberal government would seemingly paint a positive future for our long-neglected military.

On June 9, Prime Minister Mark Carney vowed to massively increase the defence budget immediately. The long-elusive NATO alliance target goal of spending two per cent of gross domestic product on defence will now be met within the current fiscal year. To meet that mark, Carney has boosted Canada's defence budget from the original \$43-billion to \$62.7-billion. All of that money



Senior leadership may be accurate in assessing a seven-year window to recover the military. However, in what universe can that be considered a plan, asks Scott Taylor. DND photograph by Corporal Brendan Gamache

is earmarked to be spent before March 31, 2026.

However just days later, at a NATO Leaders' Summit meeting in The Hague, Netherlands, Carney committed Canada to meeting the alliance's newly agreed upon spending objective of five per cent of GDP by 2035. Based on Canada's current GDP forecast, that would mean an annual defence budget of more than \$150-billion within the decade.

That much cash should surely mean that our long-struggling military will be boosted back to full strength in next to no time.

Well, think again. It turns out that you cannot simply force feed a starving individual back to health overnight.

Last week, *The Hill Times* cited a new internal defence department report wherein senior military officials predict the organization will not be able to meet

their current operational responsibilities for at least another seven years.

Just over a year ago, prior to the announced budget boosts, the same military senior officials predicted they would achieve a 90-per-cent operational readiness status by March 31, 2025.

As one would expect, the CAF keeps close tabs on things like equipment and weapon-system serviceability, and far from achieving the 90-per-cent goal, none of the three branches even managed a passing grade. In the latest readiness report, the Royal Canadian Navy, Royal Canadian Air Force, and Army are all at historic lows of 45.7 per cent, 48.9 per cent, and 49 per cent, respectively.

This latest internal report has tabled what they term a more "realistic and achievable" target date of 2032 for the CAF to

return to operational readiness. One of the reasons cited for the recovery period being pushed out from one year to seven is the rapid increase in the budget. The already woefully understrength CAF and Department of National Defence will need to manage the new procurement projects with staff that simply do not exist.

New platforms such as the CF-35 fighter jets due to start being delivered in 2026 will require pilot training in the United States while understrength squadrons in Canada struggle to maintain and operate our aged fleet of CF-18s.

The Navy is already unable to effectively crew the warships in the fleet at present, yet they are due for delivery of the first Joint Supply Ship next year.

The Canadian Army has been hard pressed to maintain a forward-deployed battle group in Latvia as part of NATO's Operation Reassurance. The Liberals have promised to increase the size of that battle group from 800 personnel to nearly 2,000 this year. No doubt that will strain the ranks of trained soldiers even further.

Canadian civilians are still enlisting in the CAF, but the problem lies in the training cycles. With more personnel taking release than those who are joining the CAF, personnel get through their basic military training only to spend upwards of 200 days awaiting their trades training. As a result, those who most recently joined are the high-

est demographic requesting early release. It is a vicious cycle. It is also unacceptable.

The senior leadership may be accurate in assessing a seven-year window to recover the organization. However, in what universe can that be considered a plan? Where in the corporate world could a CEO tell shareholders they are going on a seven-year run of losses? What sports franchise owner would admit that for the next seven seasons the team will not make the playoffs?

What players would want to join such a team? In terms of the CAF, who would enter a recruiting centre to sign up for a three-year basic engagement knowing that the organization will not achieve operational readiness until at least four years after you release?

Thankfully, Canada is not presently at war. However, with the world becoming increasingly unstable and the CAF facing an existential threat, perhaps the time has come to declare a national crisis.

Perhaps the Liberal government needs to do more than make promises of massive budget increases if there are too few personnel left in uniform to manage that influx of money. Since personnel is the biggest challenge, dare I suggest that Canada implement a targeted, mandatory-service conscription? Food for thought.

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

The Hill Times

Is Plamondon a wolf in expensive clothing?

Parti Québécois Leader Paul St-Pierre Plamondon could be Quebec's next premier. What does that mean for Canada?

Andrew Caddell

With All Due Respect

MONTREAL—The political interview is an interesting art. The late Peter Gzowski had a brilliant technique, which I tried to emulate as a broadcast reporter and in undertaking any interviews I do for this column.

Gzowski would lull his guests into a false sense of security by

warming them up with a few "softball" questions. Once they felt comfortable, he would casually ask a question that was clearly the centre of the exercise. Thus, after warming up former Quebec premier Robert Bourassa, he asked "Do you love Canada?" Bourassa, flummoxed, began to talk about his respect for the "Canadian economic common market," but couldn't say the words. Which revealed a lot about Bourassa, and his nationalist inclinations.

This thought occurred to me while listening to two extensive interviews with putative future premier Paul St-Pierre Plamondon, the dapper, confident McGill and Oxford-educated leader of the separatist Parti Québécois, who is known by his initials, PSP.

In recent French-language podcast interviews totalling about three hours, Plamondon spoke with three sympathetic journalists: Stéphane Bureau of *Contact*, and Étienne Crévier and Philippe Lamarre of *Les Dérangés*.

The interviews revealed much about Plamondon, his plans for an independent Quebec, and his assessment of Canada as a country. Perhaps a bit too much.

Having endured these interviews so you, dear reader, would not have to, I arrived at the conclusion that under his chic, tailored suits, and crisp cotton shirts, there beats the heart of a diehard who has no clue about Canada or its people.

To begin with, asked if the United States under President Donald Trump had created a greater sense of Canadian pride among Quebecers, Plamondon replied, in French, "There is no such thing as Canadian nationalism, there is only, according to Justin Trudeau, a post-national principle. There is no real cohesion, there is no unity."

He was then asked about the "Trump effect" on Canada, and replied, almost sneering, "Indeed, it is exactly that agglomeration, that lack of cohesion, that weakness that led Trump to say 'You

consume 100-per-cent American goods and culture, your economy is almost 100-per-cent aligned with the U.S., you have no army, no reason to exist.'"

When asked by Bureau if Trump might be an ally to Quebec independence, Plamondon replied that Canada has its own problems with provinces like Alberta, which want to become independent or negotiate directly with the U.S.

Bureau then asked Plamondon what English Canadians would do if Trump were to try to annex or invade Canada. Plamondon said, "there is no chance Canada would offer any resistance to the largest military power in the world."

This contradicts many military strategists who say a U.S.-Canada conflict would result in a ruinous counterinsurgency. In the *Dérangés* interview, Plamondon said, "every leader has to have an ambition, a strategy, a game plan," adding, "we have lost so many decades in the loss of culture and language" in waiting for independence. It echoed former premier Jacques Parizeau in the 2015 book *The Morning After*, by Chantal Hébert and Jean Lapierre. Parizeau told the authors in the event of a majority "Oui" in 1995's referendum, he was prepared to make an immediate unilateral declaration of independence or UDI, with the support of France.

Plamondon, despite currently holding five seats in the

National Assembly, is expected to become premier in the 2026 Quebec election. He is promising a referendum on sovereignty in his first mandate, which begs the question: if Plamondon believes Canada would be in disarray after a "Yes" in the referendum, would he follow Parizeau's game plan?

Nationalists argue United Nations Resolution 1514, the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, applies to Quebec, as Canada is a "colonial power." This would offer Quebec an opening to a UDI.

That right is contradicted by the federal Clarity Act, which insists Quebec independence can only be negotiated if there is a clear majority "Yes" vote to a clear question. Quebec's Bill 99 rejects the Clarity Act, saying the right to determine Quebec's destiny rests solely with the National Assembly.

If Plamondon wins the election next year, we could be heading toward a constitutional crisis, and a national catastrophe in the midst of a Trump presidency. Don't say you were not warned.

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 pierson52@hotmail.com.

The Hill Times

OPINION

Action must follow Canada's tone shift on Gaza

History will judge Canada's response over Gaza; it will not be enough to point to statements of concern, or empty ultimatums.

Ketty Nivyabandi

Opinion



In May, Canada made its strongest statement yet against Israel's ruthless siege of Gaza.

In a joint letter with the United Kingdom and France, the Canadian government said it "will take further concrete actions" if the Israeli government does not halt its military assault on Gaza and lift restrictions on humanitarian aid. The letter also threatened sanctions in response to further attempts to expand illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank.

The shift in tone—paired with Canada's decision to freeze assets and impose travel bans on two Israeli cabinet members for inciting violence against Palestinians in the West Bank—suggests that Prime Minister Mark Carney's government may be more emboldened than its predecessor to defend the lives and rights of Palestinians in Gaza.

These were encouraging signs, if painfully overdue. However, vague threats and half measures will do little for two million Gazans at imminent risk of destruction and starvation—a risk now obscured by Israel-Iran hostilities. Canada must do more now to protect Palestinians' rights, starting with a full ban on the transfer of military equipment to Israel.

Announced in 2024, Canada's partial ban on arms transfers to Israel does not go far enough to meet our obligations under the Genocide Convention, nor to ensure that the Canadian-made military technology is not used to commit war crimes in Gaza. Canada has not cancelled all of its existing arms-sales permits to Israel, nor has it fully prohibited Canadian-made arms or weapons components from being exported to Israel via a third party such as the United States.

Along with an arms embargo, trade is one of the most powerful tools Canada possesses to pressure allies who violate international law. If the Carney government's new tone reflects a willingness to act, it will follow the lead of the European Union, which voted to review its trade agreement with Israel. Ottawa can draw inspiration from another long-time Israel ally, the U.K., which suspended trade talks with Israel

just hours after the Canada-France-U.K. missile was released on May 19.

The need for Canada and its allies to put action behind words could not be more urgent. In December 2024, Amnesty International determined that Israel's military campaign in Gaza—marked by the indiscriminate killing of civilians, the denial of basic supplies such as clean water and electricity, and the destruction of civilian infrastructure including health-care facilities and schools—meets the legal definition of genocide.

Seven months later, the evidence of genocide continues to mount after Israel imposed a full blockade preventing independent humanitarian aid from entering Gaza. Evidence gathered by Amnesty International demonstrates how—since the launch of its militarized "aid" distribution system in May—Israel has continued to use starvation of civilians as a weapon of war against Palestinians in the occupied Gaza Strip. On multiple occasions, Israel Defense Forces soldiers have also opened fire on the crowds, killing dozens of people, and creating a booby trap for desperate and already starved Palestinians.

In total, according to the United Nations, the Israel-Hamas war has killed more than 50,000 Palestinians, including more than 3,900 Gazans since mid-March when a ceasefire broke down.

To date, Canada has not publicly acknowledged that a genocide is taking place. In a televised election debate this past April,

Carney said that he would not use the term genocide in reference to Gaza, lest it "politicize the situation." Contrary to his stated objective, Carney's remarks *did* politicize the determination of genocide, which has a strict definition under international law.

Canada's timidity on the genocide question stands in contrast to its duty to prevent atrocity crimes wherever they occur. The Genocide Convention, to which Canada is a party, is not optional. It requires states to act—decisively and without delay—when ever a serious risk of genocide exists.

It's too early to tell whether the Canadian government's May statement signals a meaningful shift toward a "human rights first" approach to Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories. Either way, history will judge Canada's response over Gaza.

It will not be enough to point to statements of concern, or empty ultimatums. Immediately strengthening our arms embargo on Israel, imposing trade restrictions, and recognizing that Israel is waging genocide in Gaza will demonstrate that Canada is serious about protecting Palestinian lives and upholding its human rights obligations under international law.

Ketty Nivyabandi is the secretary general of Amnesty International Canada's English-speaking section.

The Hill Times



Prime Minister Mark Carney. It's too early to tell whether the Canadian government's May statement signals a meaningful shift toward a 'human rights first' approach to Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories, writes Ketty Nivyabandi. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

It's time to end Canada's control over First Nations identity

Despite promises to gradually transfer control of status registration to First Nations, there is no roadmap, no new funding model, and no accountability.

Kyra Wilson

Opinion



A recent Senate report and auditor general review confirm what First Nations have long known: Canada's status registration under the Indian Act is chronically underfunded and deeply broken. It's a system that deliberately divides, controls, and denies basic rights to First Nations families.

The Senate Finance Committee's report on the 2025-26 main estimates highlights a staggering inequity: nearly one-third of First Nations receive only \$5,000 per year to administer status registration—barely enough to fund one day's work per week, at wages lower than minimum wage. Meanwhile, the auditor general reports that more than 80 per cent of registration applications processed in Ottawa take more than six months—with some dragging on for years—leaving nearly 12,000 applications in limbo and hundreds of Elders waiting.

This isn't just government inefficiency—it's a tactic to maintain colonial control. I can state clearly: first, our registered status numbers are falling not because our populations are shrinking, but because families cannot access the system. Second, as a result, many are denied housing, health care, education, and post-secondary support—all treaty rights to which we are entitled, but routinely blocked from accessing. That is not oversight; it is systemic exclusion.

Worse still, the federal funding model for administrators hasn't changed since 1994. First Nations must reapply annually with little stability, and Indigenous Services Canada rarely upholds its own training or monitoring requirements. Despite promises to gradually transfer control to First Nations, there is no roadmap, no new funding model, and no accountability.

Our Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) Chiefs-in-Assembly have repeatedly affirmed that First Nations possess inherent jurisdiction over their citizenship, based on their laws and customs. Yet Canada treats us differently from the Métis—who are trusted to develop and control their own citizenship codes—while First Nations remain under paternalistic oversight. The result? Identity fraud, confusion, and erosion of treaty rights.

Our families have waited long enough. We participated in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Action Plan with hopes for a real partnership only to be told the process is "paused" indefinitely. We have sent explicit letters to federal ministers, demanding a cabinet mandate and resources to end leg-



Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister Rebecca Alty, left, and Prime Minister Mark Carney. First Nations cannot be the only group held back by outdated legislation, and an unaccountable bureaucracy, writes Grand Chief Kyra Wilson. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

islative assimilation. It's time for the new ministers to act where their predecessors failed: engage with AMC and our member Nations, and co-develop a plan rooted in treaty, inherent rights, and true nation-to-nation relationships.

So, what needs to happen next?

First, Parliament must allocate adequate, multi-year funding to support First Nations registration services. A one-size-fits-all, underfunded model that hasn't been updated in more than 30 years is not acceptable. If Canada can meet legislative timelines and targets for itself—like it did under Bill C-5—then it can and must do the same when it comes to Treaty implementation and First Nations identity.

Second, we need co-development of a legislative framework that transfers status registration authority to First Nations fully, and in a way that reflects the diversity of our Nations. This isn't about tweaks or pilot projects. This is about ending colonial control.

Third, implementation must be rooted in real partnership. That means working with First Nations organizations like AMC and our member Nations, and establishing clear timelines, mandates, and political will. We are not interested in another round of consultation that goes nowhere. We need a cabinet mandate. We need a commitment. And we need a government that is not afraid to act.

Finally, Canada must end its discriminatory approach to First Nations identity. First Nations cannot be the only group held back by outdated legislation, and an unaccountable bureaucracy. Our inherent rights don't need Canada's permission. They need Canada's recognition.

Let this be the year we break the Indian Act's control over First Nations identity. We are ready to reclaim jurisdiction; Canada must match our readiness with action.

Grand Chief Kyra Wilson is Anishinaabe from Long Plain First Nation, and was elected as the second woman and youngest Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs in January 2025.

The Hill Times

COMMENT

Canada today: an exporting country in a trade-compromised world



International Trade Minister Maninder Sidhu. The reordering of Canadian export options is taking place in a world of increasing anti-globalization, splintering trade frameworks, and deteriorating supply chains, writes Les Whittington. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

For all the effort towards building new overseas trade relationships, the prospects for an outward-focused nation like Canada—where exports account for 34 per cent of GDP—are, at best, uncertain.

Les Whittington

Need to Know



OTTAWA—Back in the 1970s, Canadian trade officials in embassies all over Europe were coaching business people from Canada on how to expand sales on the continent, offering substantial federal government financial incentives along the way.

The market was there, the potential was there, and the need to reduce Canada's export dependence on the United States was obvious. But the reorientation away from the U.S. market in favour of the 400-million-strong European Union never happened. And, ever since, the same can be said of the efforts of Canadian trade officials in embassies in Asia, South America, and elsewhere.

But that equation changed almost overnight. And the push to do business anywhere but the U.S. after President Donald Trump's trade onslaught has shown some results. In May, the portion of overall Canadian exports going to the U.S. declined sharply to 68.3 per cent from 75.9 per cent on average in 2024, according to Statistics Canada. It is the lowest proportion in this measure since StatsCan started tracking it several decades ago.

Economists welcomed the shift in trade, but noted that the upsurge in sales to non-U.S. markets was largely driven by a 30.1-per-cent hike in exports of unwrought gold, most of it to the United Kingdom. And

Canada still has a \$5.9-billion merchandise trade deficit as the U.S.'s protectionist measures undercut manufacturing exports.

Looking ahead, the fact is that for all Prime Minister Mark Carney's commendable stress on strengthening the economy by building new overseas trade relationships, the prospects for an outward-focused nation like Canada—where exports account for 34 per cent of GDP—are, at best, uncertain.

The reordering of Canadian export options is taking place in a world of increasing anti-globalization, splintering trade frameworks, and deteriorating supply chains. Factoring in Trump's ongoing tariff war against dozens of countries, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in April downgraded its forecast for global economic growth in 2025 to 2.8 per cent from 3.3 per cent just three months earlier. And the IMF foresees little improvement in 2026. "The global economic system under which most countries have operated for the last 80 years is being reset, ushering the world into a new era," the IMF's Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas blogged.

The rules-based trading order—today centred on the World Trade Organization (WTO)—is on the way to being rendered largely meaningless by nationalist, beggar-thy-neighbour policies on the rise in the U.S. and other countries. "Whatever its faults, this system has fostered global prosperity and political stability," wrote David H. Feldman and Gary Clyde Hufbauer of the Washington, D.C.-based Peterson Institute for International Economics. "Both are at risk as the current [U.S.] administration deliberately torpedoes a rules-based global order that America created out of the ashes of the Great Depression in the 1930s and global war in the 1940s."

Finding significant alternatives to the U.S. market for Canada in this context will not be easy. Take Europe. Carney has drawn on his alliances with continental leaders to renew ties with the European Union in hopes of boosting mutual economic co-operation. But eight years after the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) went into force provisionally, 10 out of 27 EU countries—including France, Italy, and Ireland—have yet to ratify the pact with Canada. A general dislike of liberalized multilateral trade,

plus concerns about Canada's environmental and agricultural standards, and fears of the competitiveness of Canadian beef exports have helped generate resistance to ratifying CETA. In the meantime, trade

has continued, showing gains in value—via inflation—but little gain in traded goods.

Much attention has also been devoted over the years to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). Besides Canada, it includes seven Asia-Pacific nations as well as Mexico and Peru (and recently post-Brexit Britain), and covers 580 million consumers. But, as promising as the CPTPP may appear, the potential trade benefits for Canada are modest.

Altogether, in contrast to the 68 per cent of Canadian trade tied to the U.S., CETA accounts for about eight per cent of Canada's global sales, and the CPTPP represents 4.4 per cent.

Liberalized trade with India, the centrepiece of the federal government's Indo-Pacific Strategy, seems out of the question anytime soon given current bilateral relations. And Canadian producers now face damaging Chinese tariffs on agricultural products and seafood in response to Ottawa's import taxes on Chinese-made electric vehicles.

But, as Canadians move to reshape their export-led economy, Ottawa's existing commercial relationships do offer advantages. For instance, Europeans are talking about going around the paralyzed WTO by advancing rules-based trade co-operation with Canada and its Pacific Rim allies. "We are working closely with like-minded partners, including CPTPP countries, to advance meaningful, rules-based reform that upholds fair and open global trade," officials in Brussels said recently as the EU began looking beyond Washington to shore up the international economy.

Les Whittington is a regular columnist for The Hill Times.

The Hill Times

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circulation@hilltimes.com
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Editorial

Editorial

Amid Trump’s trade turbulence, Canadians deserve more transparency

The Carney government’s walk-back of the digital services tax that had long been a thorn in the side of our American neighbours was welcomed in the United States, but has ruffled a few feathers on this side of the border.

It has left many Canadians justifiably questioning in which direction those symbolic elbows are pointing, and whether Prime Minister Mark Carney is living up to the promises he’s made since stepping into the Liberal leadership race and promoting himself as the best choice to “handle” U.S. President Donald Trump.

Set to come into effect on June 30, the digital services tax (DST) applied a three-per-cent tax on revenue above \$20-million earned from digital services that rely on engagement, data, and content from Canadian users, as well as the sale or licensing of some Canadian user data. Payments were slated to be retroactive to 2022, with billions of dollars anticipated to be paid by tech giants like Meta, Google, and Airbnb.

The DST was dropped on June 29, as announced in a 10 p.m. statement from Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne saying Canada is “leading complex negotiations” with the U.S.

Those negotiations are certainly complex—it’s hard to imagine they’re anything but when one is dealing with a figure as unpredictable and mercurial as Trump.

The Canadian government has been saddled with getting the best possible deal for the country when it comes to sorting out a modern economic

relationship with the U.S. under this current president.

Last week, Champagne expressed optimism about that task, telling Bloomberg News that Canada can negotiate a better deal for removing tariffs than other countries have in their dealings with Trump.

“We buy more from the U.S. than China, Japan, the [United Kingdom], and France combined, so we’re not in the same league as others,” said Champagne.

A negotiation is a tricky business, and it’s not something that should be done in public, *per se*. But the lack of transparency around the objectives Canada is attempting to achieve has raised eyebrows, and hackles. When people can’t see what’s going on behind closed doors, they’ll start to fill in the gaps themselves—and what they come up with may not be a favourable narrative.

As Abacus Data recently highlighted, the perception of progress the government is making on key files is all part of the process.

“And this matters, because in politics, perception often becomes reality. If people don’t feel like change is happening, it can damage trust—even if, behind the scenes, the policy machinery is hard at work,” according to Abacus.

No one is asking for the Canadian side to show all of its cards, but tabling objectives in Parliament and indicating red lines could likely go a long way towards maintaining the trust the electorate recently gave the Carney team. They shouldn’t squander it on the back of the unpredictable Trump.

The Hill Times

Letters to the Editor

Canada should step up to fill gap in foreign aid, says reader

With the collapse of the postwar global order, Canada scrambles to redefine itself on the world stage. Mostly this is about trade and military buildup. But there’s a critical factor that’s been absent from news cycles, and that’s our role to fill the chasm left by the abandonment of the United States in the arena of global development.

Too often, foreign assistance is met with platitudes about spending the money at home, and that our needs come first. But this simplistic notion is blind to the fact—as we’ve seen all too clearly in the last few years—that

Canada doesn’t exist in a self-sufficient vacuum.

What happens around the world has a direct impact on our economy, and indeed our very health. Helping the development of emerging countries into robust trading partners, with stable democratic leadership and the capacity to fight emerging diseases, is to our own benefit. The alternative is to push these states into the arms of hostile regimes.

Along with a greater military presence in the world, it’s critical that Canada also adopts a greater humanitarian stance through foreign assistance.

Nathaniel Poole
Victoria, B.C.

Trump motivated by self-interest in trade talks: letter writer

Re: “What is being promised?”: NDP, labour call for more transparency in trade talk with Trump. (*The Hill Times*, July 2, 2025, p. 4)

International stability in the world cannot be guaranteed by autocrats. It is clear from history that the personal failings of individual leaders, unchecked by the order of law and elected members of the government, will definitely go downhill as they become more paranoid and more controlling. As English historian and politician Lord Acton was recorded as saying, “power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.”

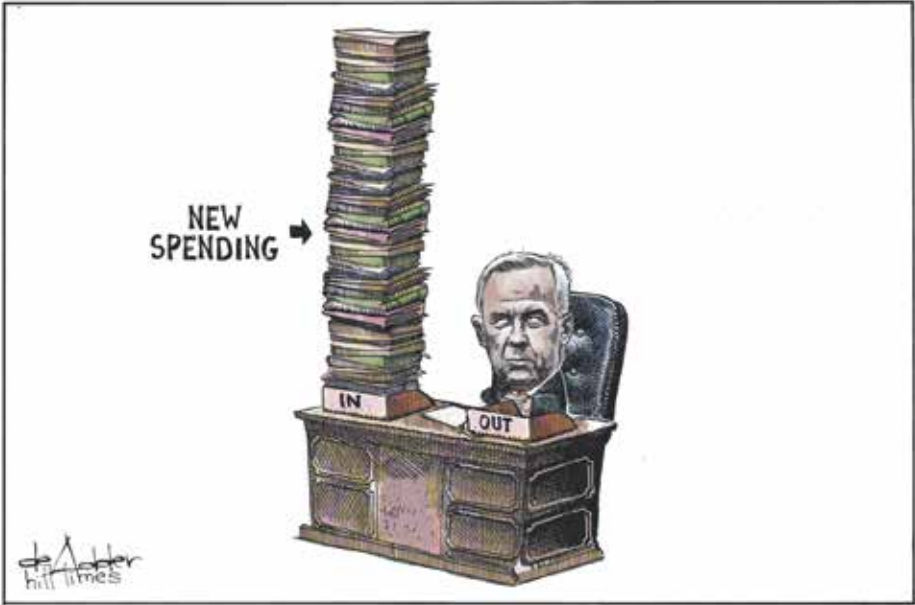
How can Canada reach an international agreement with such a person as United States President Donald Trump? Any deal he wants is to gratify himself, and not to make the people of his and other countries prosper.

Trump, with his rampant self interest, is now desperately trying to continue his economic rampage in the U.S. by using every means possible to

divert the attention of the public from his fundamental character failings. As Hillary Clinton said well before Trump’s first election and recounted at length in her book *What Happened* in 2017, he is a man unsuited to the job of president. Trump has no intention and has shown no evidence of living up to his oath of office to defend the constitution of the United States. For him, it is a nuisance to be ignored, unlike the thousands who have died defending it.

Trump has shown only too well—with his unconstitutional, crass use of the presidency to enrich himself and his friends (the billionaires who bought him the election for their own ends)—that there is one man he looks after: himself. Republican voters in the U.S. must wake up and smell the corruption, or they will be living in a dictatorship like the one run by Trump’s boss, Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Tom McElroy
Toronto, Ont.



COMMENT

The world could use more like Musgrave

When people crap on the mainstream media and talk about bias and self-interest, they clearly have never met anyone like Sharon Musgrave.

Tim Powers

Plain Speak



OTTAWA—During a time when mainstream media are being maligned, one of the best is stepping away from her highly successful career. You probably don't know her name because you haven't seen her on a screen or heard her on the radio, but you have most certainly taken in some of her excellent work.

She is well known and well respected across political parties, provinces where she has helped called elections, among media, and certainly with anyone who has ever worked with her and



Recently retired senior CBC producer Sharon Musgrave is an unforgettable force, writes Tim Powers. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

been even more fortunate to befriend her. Who is this mystery woman? Her name is Sharon Musgrave, now-retired senior CBC producer, and, by any measure, an unforgettable force.

I have had the pleasure of knowing her for almost 25 years from the days when Don Newman allowed me to go on his program. Musgrave, a fellow Atlantic Canadian, and I got along like a house on fire. Truth be told, she helped me, like many others, by taking me under her wing and guiding me through the landmines of

Ottawa. She also had the ability to swear like a Newfoundlander—even though she was from that other island, Cape Breton. That, among her many other attributes, cemented our bond.

The brilliance of Musgrave—beyond the incredible skill she's displayed for years as a central figure in the CBC's standing election coverage unit—is her authenticity and humility. Musgrave dealt with everyone the same way, showing her humour, intelligence, kindness, and—if she really liked you—her colourful language.

She worked with many of the country's top broadcasters and the best-known leaders. They all knew her on a first-name basis, listened to what she said, and knew she did everything with the utmost professionalism because public broadcasting was a vital vocation for her.

She was invested in getting to know the people she covered and worked with on a human level. A lot of people in the media now—and in the past—live in a transactional space with not much time for legitimate connection. It made Musgrave a better journalist because she really got to know what made people tick, and why they thought the way they did—but that wasn't her main motivation. A good Cape Bretoner at heart, daughter of the late Roddy and Jean, she was raised proper—as we like to say down East—and treated people fairly and equally. Well, unless they fell into her dreaded arsehole category, which was different from the beloved version.

The thing about Musgrave is you can't write seriously about her without a layer of teasing because even though she took her work seriously and performed it exceptionally, she never let it go to her head. She didn't need her ego constantly fluffed, and wasn't about to do that for others. In large

measure, that is why she served as the sought-after *consigliere* of the Parliamentary Precinct—she gave people the straight goods when it came to advice, and she leaned in with all her might when it came to helping others.

Musgrave managed to balance her potent work life with raising three wonderful children and her awesome husband—the other “Tim,” as I have special dispensation to call him. Musgrave could have taught a class to the rest of us parents on how to perform at home and at the office. She was also ahead of her time there.

When people crap on the mainstream media and talk about bias and self-interest, they clearly have never met anyone like Musgrave. A straight-shooting, accountable person, filled with integrity and decency. A hard worker who didn't see herself as different from others, who viewed her job as telling fair stories, in the same way she'd expected stories to be told to her.

She is retired, not dead. Thankfully. The world will get more Musgrave, and let us all be thankful for that.

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

The Hill Times

OPINION

This moment in our history calls all Canadians: reflections from a first-time Senator

The role of the Senate is to look beyond the headlines, to resist reactive politics, and to legislate for a Canada that thrives across generations.

ISG Senator Farah Mohamed

Opinion



As a newly appointed Senator, I find myself reflecting on my Canadian journey from arriving stateless to serving in one of Canada's highest democratic institutions. My lived experience is as a former refugee, a woman

of colour, and someone who has spent more than 25 years working on the ground addressing the gaps that policy too often overlooks. I ask myself how can I best use my voice and my vote to help shape a more equitable, integrated, and future-ready, Canada? How best to do this when Canada's—and the world's—political, economic, and social systems are under stress and too many Canadians are facing deepening inequality, a fraying social fabric, and global instability?

Canada's Senate is built to rise above partisan spin and focus on substance—to scrutinize, to strengthen, and to help future-proof the laws of this country. With the 2015 shift to an independent appointment process, the Senate has become more independent and more representative—but that only matters if we use our independence to drive bold, evidence-based decisions.

Canada's challenges are not isolated: housing affordability,

youth unemployment, trade, climate change, Indigenous reconciliation, health care—they are interconnected. To tackle one, we must consider them all. That demands not just new policies, but also a new mindset. And it requires political courage—something far too rare in a political system built on short-term wins between elections.

We are beginning to see glimmers of that courage. Bill C-4, An Act Respecting Certain Affordability Measures for Canadians, takes critical steps to provide direct relief to those being squeezed by inflation and economic uncertainty. These supports are lifelines. For low-income families, seniors, and young people just starting out, these measures can be the difference between stability and despair. And they are an important first step. True affordability demands structural change that puts people before profit.

Alongside it, Bill C-5, One Canadian Economy: An Act to Enact the

Free Trade and Labour Mobility in Canada Act, is a nation-building blueprint. It reduces internal trade barriers, increases labour mobility, and modernizes infrastructure planning.

And, if we are serious about building for the future, the Government of Canada must prioritize youth employment as an economic emergency. As a nation, we are at risk of abandoning an entire generation—one that is educated, diverse, and ready to lead, but too often locked out of meaningful work. The cost of inaction is not just economic, but it is also a rupture of trust that could take decades to repair. Economic recovery must prioritize young people, or it is not recovery.

Canada has risen to meet difficult challenges before. When Canadians have chosen integrity over inertia, we have redefined what is possible—at home, and on the world stage. Lately, I am worried. Have we grown hesitant? Is our ambition dulled? Has our

voice on global issues faded? If we are serious about reclaiming Canada's leadership—and I believe we are—it must begin with our domestic choices. Equity, broad-based participation, and long-term fiscal and policy planning are the foundations for global competitiveness and investor confidence.

This is the role of the Senate: to look beyond the headlines, to resist reactive politics, and to legislate for a Canada that does not just survive, but also thrives—across generations.

I am proud to sit in a diverse Senate amongst people with deep expertise and deep conviction. We do not all agree. But we share a belief that this country is worth the hard work.

This moment in our history calls all Canadians. We need more ambition, more collaboration, and more resolve. We have the tools. We have the talent. And increasingly, we have the will. We can meet our challenges with clarity and courage. As I take my place in the Senate, I feel what so many Canadians feel right now: determined, fiercely hopeful, and ready not just to imagine a better Canada, but to work hard to help build it.

Senator Farah Mohamed, a member of the Independent Senators Group, is a former refugee and social impact leader with 30 years' experience championing the economic advantage of investing in girls, women, and youth in Canada and globally.

The Hill Times

OPINION

Carney's record on foreign interference is uninspiring, so far

The new government must demonstrate a genuine commitment to rebuilding confidence in our democratic system by appointing a commissioner for the Foreign Influence Transparency Registry.

Henry Chan

Opinion



Many of us who have been involved in the fight against foreign interference and in establishing a foreign transparency registry are frustrated by the new government's apparent lack of concern on this issue. Foreign interference by hostile regimes was not mentioned in the Speech from the Throne read by King Charles, nor in Prime Minister Mark Carney's mandate letter to cabinet.

After significant effort, the previous government finally—though reluctantly—passed Bill C-70, the Countering Foreign Interference Act. Yet, more than a year after the bill received royal assent, no meaningful steps have been taken. The Act provides the government with the authority to create a registry requiring individuals working on behalf of foreign entities to register their interests. However, the government has yet to appoint a commissioner to oversee the implementation of this registry.

Readers familiar with my previous articles will recognize that I have raised serious concerns about the nomination process for political candidates—an issue that foreign interference has brought into sharp focus. If the new government is unwilling even to take the basic step of appointing a commissioner to implement the most foundational tool for countering foreign interference, how can Canadians believe it will do more to ensure transparency and fairness in party political nominations, or to guard against influence from hostile foreign powers?

Opposition parties are not off the hook, either. They have failed to demand meaningful legislation or to hold themselves to higher standards to ensure fair and clean nomination processes.

Now that a new Parliament has been elected, we are once again racing against time. Parties will soon begin selecting candidates for the next election, and it is critical that these nomination processes are transparent, fair, and free from manipulation.

We find ourselves in a delicate position. The threat from major global powers—including both allies and adversaries—is real. While it is easy to rally public support in defence of national sovereignty, we must also turn our gaze inward. We must ensure that our political

institutions are robust, and that decisions—especially regarding who represents Canadians—are made by Canadians, and Canadians only.

Anyone who has spent time on the doorstep speaking with voters knows that trust in politicians and the political system is dangerously low. Politicians are often seen as self-serving, benefiting from nepotism and cronyism, looking out only for their friends. The major scandals under the Trudeau administration have only reinforced this perception.

To restore trust, the new government must demonstrate a genuine commitment to rebuilding confidence in our democratic system. That starts with taking foreign interference seriously, and with addressing the undemocratic and often opaque nature of party nominations—something I, among many others, have written extensively about.

The upcoming fall sitting of Parliament will be a test of Carney's seriousness about democratic integrity. He should begin by promptly appointing a commissioner to oversee the Foreign Influence Transparency Registry, and by working to clean up the nomination process within his own party. He should also open a cross-party discussion on legislative frameworks that would require parties to close loopholes currently exploited by foreign regimes to manipulate nominations.

Approaching this in a non-partisan manner, and in consultation with other parties, would help restore public trust and send a strong signal to hostile foreign actors: that Canada takes its democracy seriously.

Strengthening nomination processes not only makes foreign interference more difficult, but also ensures that those selected as candidates are more representative, more qualified, and better prepared to serve. Right now, nominations are too often determined not by merit or ideas, but by who can stack a meeting room with supporters—some of whom may not even be eligible voters. This encourages backroom deals, vote-buying, and unethical tactics that erode the very foundations of democracy.

I write this article not because I have been paid to do so, nor because I have time to spare. I write because I care. I've attended nomination meetings, helped organize races, and have even run in one myself. From experience, I can say: our biggest enemy is not China, Iran, or India. It is ourselves—our complacency, our tolerance for nepotism, and the lack of rigour that has corroded our democratic processes from within.

I care deeply about our democracy, and I hope others do as well. What I've outlined here is not a partisan attack—these concerns are shared across party lines. My plea is simple: I ask our elected officials to work together, to act swiftly and responsibly, and to ensure that we can still be proud to call ourselves a democracy at the end of the day.

Henry Chan is former co-director of Saskatchewan Stands with Hong Kong. He has been invited multiple times to give expert testimony before Parliament concerning issues relating to Hong Kong and Canada-China relations.

The Hill Times

What good is a social safety net that doesn't catch you?

The government should rebuild the Canada Disability Benefit to uphold human rights.

Amanda Therrien

Opinion



Applications for the Canada Disability Benefit opened in June and the federal government now faces a choice: allow the benefit to remain an ineffective thread in Canada's fraying social safety net, or tighten that net's weave by amending the benefit to ensure that it achieves its purpose of lifting disabled people out of poverty.

The messaging from the federal government regarding the Canada Disability Benefit's intended purpose has been inconsistent. On one hand, it has said the benefit will lift more than 600,000 people with disabilities out of poverty, and ensure they have more money to cover the costs of accessible housing, medical care, and disability supports. On the other hand, the maximum benefit amount clocks in at an anemic \$200 per month (\$2,400 per year), and the government now insists that the benefit is only intended to fill a gap in other income supports.

Keeping disabled people poor

The Canada Disability Benefit Act, the underpinning legislation, is clear that the benefit is meant to reduce poverty and support the financial security of working-age persons with disabilities. In setting the amount of the benefit, the government was required to take an intersectional approach that considered the official poverty line, the additional costs associated with living with a disability, the challenges faced by those living with a disability in earning an income from work, and Canada's international human rights obligations. It failed to do so.

Instead, the amount is minimal, and is reduced by 20 cents for every dollar earned above \$23,000 for single individuals (\$32,500 for couples). These thresholds fall below the poverty line. Applicants must also first qualify for the Disability Tax Credit, which has a complex application process and a narrow definition of what constitutes a disability. Prime Minister Mark Carney pledged to reform this tax credit, but the House of Commons has now adjourned for the summer without that promised reform.

Putting women at risk

The benefit's structure also puts disabled women at risk. Eligibility is based on family income because the government assumes that individuals in relationships pool their assets. This assumption ignores the realities of intimate partner violence and economic abuse where one person may control all the financial resources. The fact that both the applicant and their spouse/partner must have filed their taxes for the previous year also becomes a



Jobs and Families Minister Patty Hajdu. The messaging from the federal government regarding the Canada Disability Benefit's intended purpose has been inconsistent, writes Amanda Therrien. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

potential tool of coercion and control for abusers. These are not hypothetical concerns as more than half of disabled women have reported experiencing some form of intimate partner violence in their lifetime. While the tax-filing requirement can be waived in situations of family violence, the government could completely eliminate this risk by basing the benefit on individual, rather than household, income.

Upholding the rights of disabled people

The government states that it wants to be a world leader in the eradication of poverty. Canada can, and should, take up that mantle, but it must stop treating poverty as an individual problem, and instead view it as the denial of fundamental human rights that requires serious systemic solutions.

Using this lens, it is easy to see that the Canada Disability Benefit is not charity. It is not something that is merely nice to have. It is a mechanism to uphold the rights enshrined in both domestic and international law. Both the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities have called on Canada to amend the benefit in line with these human rights commitments, and there is still time to do so.

The federal government must immediately:

- Increase the benefit;
- Broaden eligibility;
- Simplify the application process;
- Base eligibility on individual income; and
- Raise the income thresholds so recipients aren't penalized for working.

That is what leadership on poverty eradication looks like: strengthening our social safety net to ensure that no one falls through the gaps.

Amanda Therrien is a staff lawyer at the National Association of Women and the Law.

The Hill Times

‘A critical mistake’: former Grit ministers call out what they say is Carney’s capitulation to Trump

Prime Minister Mark Carney’s ‘elbows up’ approach to U.S. President Donald Trump has evolved into public fawning and a major trade concession with seemingly little gained, say observers.

Continued from **page 1**

by tech giants like Meta, Google, and Airbnb. It was pulled back on June 29.

“You can’t jump every time Trump twitches because he twitches all the time, and if we do it means we’re jumping all the time,” Marchi said, adding that Canada should never negotiate under threat.

He also said that the concession was given without getting anything back beyond a return to negotiations.

“The digital tax was a giveaway for free without getting anything,” said Marchi, remarking that the concession should have been rolled into talks to gain something from the Americans.

During the election campaign, Carney proclaimed that the traditional economic and security relationship Canada had with the U.S. was “over.” He championed an “elbows up” approach to the Trump administration amid trade and annexation threats.

“I’ve been warning for months America wants our land, our resources, our water, our country,” Carney said in his April 29 victory speech. “These are not idle threats. President Trump is trying to break us, so America can own us.”

Shortly after, Carney started dialling back the rhetoric. In his first Oval Office visit on May 6, he called Trump a “transformational president.” At the G7 Leaders’ Summit in Kananaskis, Alta., last month, Carney told the American president that the Group of Seven is “nothing without U.S. leadership and your personal leadership and your leadership of the United States.”

Marchi said that he doesn’t fault Carney for indulging Trump, as long as the Canadians maintain a strong front in private negotiations.



Former top Canadian diplomat Lloyd Axworthy argued that Canada has a ‘responsibility not to pre-emptively fold.’
The Hill Times photograph by Sam Garcia

“You can’t publicly posture in indulging [Trump] and then also indulge him in private with the negotiations,” Marchi said. “The balance for me is: don’t poke them in public unless you have to, but be tough behind the scenes.”

Lloyd Axworthy, who served as foreign affairs minister in the same Jean Chrétien cabinet as Marchi, argued that Carney capitulated to Trump.

“When do we stop pretending it’s all part of some clever negotiating strategy that justifies bootlicking in hopes of tariff concessions,” he wrote in a June 29 Substack blog post.

In a subsequent post on July 6, Axworthy wrote that the previous NAFTA renegotiations demonstrated the value in not caving to Trump’s pressure.

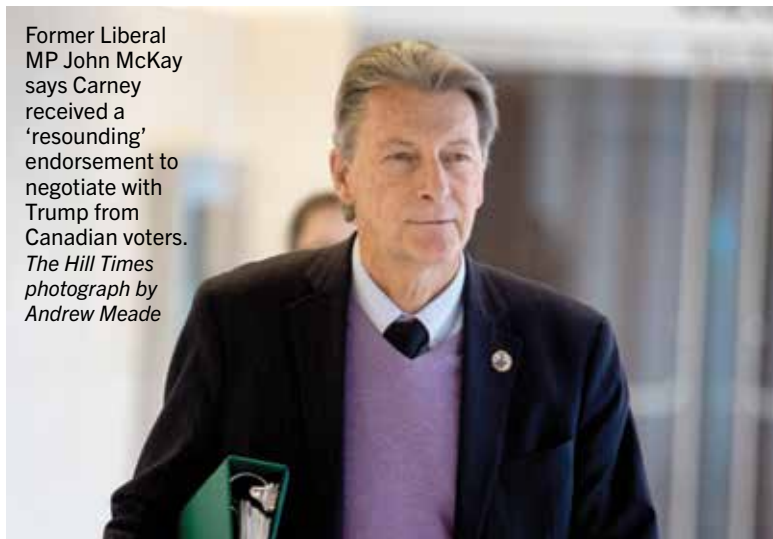
“We have a responsibility not to pre-emptively fold,” he wrote. “To stand our ground—not in bluster, but with co-ordinated strategic and fully democratic resolve. That’s how we push back against the gravitational pull Trump continues to exert on the international order.”

“It is possible to be pragmatic without being spineless,” he added. “And let’s be honest: if the goal is to keep the peace, appeasement rarely delivers. It just emboldens the next demand.”

Marchi said the worry when offering concessions to Trump is that one ask will be followed with another.

“That’s the problem with giving something free away,” he said. “I hope [Carney’s] driving a hard bargain privately because, if

Former Liberal MP John McKay says Carney received a ‘resounding’ endorsement to negotiate with Trump from Canadian voters.
The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade



he’s not, then I think we may be cruising for a bruising.”

He said that Trump’s demands can’t always be met with Canadian concessions to keep the talks going.

“If Trump keeps saying, ‘If you don’t give me this then I’m going to abruptly exit,’ then at some point you have to have the fortitude to say, ‘Then exit,’” said Marchi, a former Canadian ambassador to the World Trade Organization. “At some point, you’ve got to hold the line.”

He said no trade deal would be a better outcome than a bad one.

Do Canadians still want an ‘elbows up’ approach?

Pollster Frank Graves, president of Ekos Research, said most

Canadians are looking at Carney’s softer approach through a lens of governance as opposed to campaigning.

“Most Canadians would say that we have to look at this in terms of what are the lesser evils and what is the appropriate strategy now that you aren’t running for office, but you are the prime minister,” he said.

He said more Canadians are likely interested in the end result of negotiations instead of any “fidelity to the campaign rhetoric,” but remarked there will be some people who will be upset with a perceived change in course.

“Right now, most people are taking a wait-and-see [approach],” he said, remarking that, at the moment, Carney is handling himself well on the world stage.

Graves said it could be a risk for Carney to move too far down a conciliatory path with Trump, especially if it doesn’t lead to a beneficial final deal.

“People will say, ‘Not only did this not turn out well, but you sold us a bill of goods,’” he said, remarking that the prime minister would likely be forgiven for pivoting if it turns out the aggressive approach outlined during the election ended up being a less-effective one.

“If it turns out that we do better than we would have going [down] the path that he seemed to be laying out during the campaign ... I think Canadians will judge by how things look six months from now as opposed to how they look today,” Graves said.

Former Liberal MP John McKay, who served as co-chair of the Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group in the last Parliament, said there will always be a gap between campaign rhetoric and negotiation tactics.

“The Canadian public gave [Carney] a resounding, good-faith endorsement to negotiate with this person that is universally despised by the Canadian public,” he said.

He said the challenge for Carney is to negotiate with Trump, who is flippant and can change direction in an instant.

“Carney is doing his best in the corners of this negotiation to come out with the puck at the end of the skirmish,” McKay said. “Just because you have your elbows up doesn’t mean that you aren’t going to get bodychecked.”

Carlo Dade, director of international policy at the University of Calgary’s School of Public Policy, said Canada shouldn’t be in a rush to strike a trade deal with the U.S.

“If you get a deal and you make concessions, is there any guarantee that the administration is going to hold [to it]?” he asked.

The first Trump administration previously brokered a deal on steel and aluminum tariffs with the Canadian government—an agreement the Trump White House 2.0 broke when implementing the latest levies on Canada.

Dade said that Canada should be waiting on the judicial process to play out regarding the tariffs under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, which—in Canada’s case—dealt with the levies imposed under the guise of fentanyl and border management.

In May, the U.S. Court of International Trade struck down those tariffs, finding they are within Congress’ jurisdiction. The case is currently being appealed.

Reaching a deal with the U.S. before the July 21 deadline would mean doing so without a judicial resolution. Dade said that should only be the case if Canada can receive exemptions from U.S. tariffs across the board.

“There is no good negotiating outcome here other than getting a guarantee of an exemption,” he said.

nmoos@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

NEWS

Winning the legislation lottery: MPs eye causes that hit close to home for fall bills

‘I’m very excited about it,’ says Liberal MP Ahmed Hussen, who’s among the first set of MPs to get a crack at proposing legislation this Parliament after being ineligible to do so since 2017.

Continued from **page 1**

“I want to put this back with a little bit of probably some changes to it, but more or less it will be an organ- and tissue-donation bill,” he said.

The subject is a personal one for Aboultaif, whose son, Tyler, was born with a rare genetic liver condition—ornithine transcarbamylase deficiency—that has caused him to require three separate liver transplants. Aboultaif himself was his son’s first donor, doing a partial liver transplant in 2003. While the surgery itself was “by the book” and “perfect, other things [went] wrong,” said Aboultaif—who noted success rates at the time were not what they are today—and not long after, his son required a second, partial transplant. His son has since had a third, full organ transplant and in the 13 years since, it’s continued “working very well.”

Aboultaif said his previous bill was “killed unjustifiably by the Liberal government” at the time. He hopes that, this time, what he brings forward will be judged without a partisan lens.

“Bills like this deserve to go to committee and be examined, the last attempt in C-223, they shut it down before it even [went] to committee,” he said.

According to Health Canada, on average 250 people die while waiting for an organ donation each year.

“You can only imagine if we save 100 lives a year, how much difference that makes to so many Canadian families and the surrounding communities and everybody,” said Aboultaif.

Aboultaif plans to use the summer to connect with “stakeholders” and draft the legislation so it’s ready to be brought forward in the fall.

At the start of each Parliament, the House Speaker presides over a lottery draw to determine the list for the consideration of private members’ business. This Parliament, the literal pulling of names out of a box took place on June 3, but the list was reworked



Conservative MP Ziad Aboultaif is among the first 30 MPs who will get a chance to bring forward private members’ business. He says he plans to table a bill tackling organ and tissue donation—a subject close to his heart. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

a few days later after the government’s new roster of parliamentary secretaries was announced. Members of the government—including parliamentary secretaries, ministers, and secretaries of state—are not eligible to bring forward private members’ bills. Liberal MP Peter Fragiskatos (London Centre, Ont.), for example, originally drew the lucky No. 1 spot, but after he was named parliamentary secretary to the minister of immigration, refugees, and citizenship on June 5, he was dropped from the list, bumping Conservative MP Frank Caputo (Kamloops–Thompson–Nicola, B.C.) into the top spot.

House rules give MPs 20 sitting days following the lottery draw before the order of precedence is established, at which point the first 30 MPs on the list for consideration have their proposed bill or motion officially placed in the legislative queue. In this case, that countdown will run out when the House returns in September. Generally, once the order of precedence drops to 15 items, the next set of 15 MPs on the list for consideration get their chance to bring something forward. The order of precedence determines the order in which private members’ business will be dealt with during the time allotted for such matters in the House. MPs are still able to table their own bills or motions outside the order of precedence, but those require negotiations—including potentially with colleagues higher on the list for consideration—to move forward.

Liberal MP Ahmed Hussen (York South–Weston–Etobicoke, Ont.), who was eligible for the list for the first time since becoming a cabinet minister in 2017, is now in the prime No. 3 spot—after originally landing at No. 6—and said he considers himself “very lucky.”

“It’s a great opportunity. I’m very excited about it, and I look forward to it,” he told *The Hill Times*.

Hussen previously got a taste of the legislative journey as a non-government MP back in the 42nd Parliament when he drew the No. 18 spot. He used his opportunity to table a bill aimed at amending the Department of Public Works and Government Services Act to give the responsible minister the authority to require community benefit assessments for federal construction, maintenance, or repair projects.

That bill—C-227—made it to report stage in the House by December 2016, but the next month Hussen was named to cabinet. The idea was subsequently picked up by Hussen’s then-caucus colleague, now-former Ontario Liberal MP Ramesh Sangha, who succeeded in getting the bill through the House; however, it ultimately died on the Order Paper at second reading in the Senate upon Parliament’s dissolution ahead of the 2019 election.

“I really enjoyed that journey,” said Hussen of his attempt at getting private members’ legislation passed. Compared to tabling government legislation, it’s “a more personal” process, he said. “It’s very rewarding because you build an idea and you try to get the support of everybody ... and I look forward to going through the same thing.”

Speaking to *The Hill Times* in June, Hussen said he had not yet decided how he would use his opportunity this time around, but plans to spend the summer talking to constituents to “see where it will land.”

“That’s what I did the first time many years ago, and I’m going to do the same now,” he said.

NDP MP Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, B.C.) landed the highest spot among her caucus colleagues at No. 17 on the list for consideration. While she has

already tabled a number of private members’ business items outside the order of precedence, she was not available for an interview, with her office indicating in June that she had yet to determine which bill she’d bring forward.

The list includes Bill C-205, which seeks to amend the National Housing Strategy Act to, in part, “include measures to prevent the removal of homeless encampments on federal land”; and C-212, which seeks to establish an Office of the Ombud for the Department of Citizenship and Immigration.

NDP MP Gord Johns (Courtenay–Alberni, B.C.), who sits further back at No. 71 on the list for consideration, has to date tabled five proposed bills and five motions outside the order of precedence, and was first out of the gate this Parliament, having tabled his first bill—C-201, which proposes amending the Canada Health Act to include mental, addictions, and substance use health services under the definition of “insured health services”—on May 29. Johns followed that up with Bill C-204 on June 4, which seeks to boost the annual tax credit for volunteer fire-fighting and search and rescue volunteer services from \$6,000 to \$10,000—a resurrection of a bill he put forward last Parliament.

Also among the five bills he’s tabled so far is C-206, An Act to establish a national strategy on brain injuries, which resurrects a proposal put forward by Johns’ now-former caucus colleague Alistair MacGregor—who lost his seat in this year’s election—which had made it to report stage in the House prior to prorogation. Johns noted the bill, on which he’d worked closely with MacGregor during last Parliament as the NDP’s mental health and addictions critic, got unanimous support at second reading in the House before stalling amid the legislative gridlock that gripped the Lower Chamber last fall.

“I’m hoping that we can somehow find a pathway to getting it back on track, and quickly,” said Johns, noting he hopes to get “all parties to come together and move it forward expediently” as recently happened with the Bloc Québécois’ supply management protection bill, C-202.

That bill was tabled by Bloc Leader Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil–Chambly, Que.), who’s down at No. 77 on the list for consideration, but was swiftly pushed through the House and Senate thanks to inter-party negotiations.

Now on his fourth term as an MP, Johns said his busy start to the new Parliament comes down to his experience.

“My team’s experienced, I’m experienced—we hit the ground running, basically,” he said.

Given his lower placement on the list for consideration, Johns said he would welcome other MPs—from any party—who placed higher picking up his proposals, saying, for him, it’s about seeing “results for Canadians.” He said he plans to use the summer to start those conversations.

lryckewaert@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

List for the consideration of private members’ business, Top 30

1. Conservative MP Frank Caputo (Kamloops–Thompson–Nicola, B.C.)
2. Bloc Québécois MP Mario Simard (Jonquière, Que.)
3. Liberal MP Ahmed Hussen (York South–Weston–Etobicoke, Ont.)
4. Liberal MP Lisa Hepfner (Hamilton Mountain, Ont.)
5. Liberal MP Terry Beech (Burnaby North–Seymour, B.C.)
6. Bloc Québécois MP Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher–Les Patriotes–Verchères, Que.)
7. Liberal MP Tatiana Auguste (Terrebonne, Que.)
8. Liberal MP Braedon Clark (Sackville–Bedford–Preston, N.S.)
9. Liberal MP Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey Newton, B.C.)
10. Conservative MP Arpan Khanna (Oxford, Ont.)
11. Liberal MP Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Ont.)
12. Conservative MP Jonathan Rowe (Terra Nova–The Peninsulas, N.L.)
13. Liberal MP Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver–Sunshine Coast–Sea to Sky Country, B.C.)
14. Conservative MP Kerry Diotte (Edmonton Griesbach, Alta.)
15. Conservative MP Blaine Calkins (Ponoka–Didsbury, Alta.)
16. Conservative MP Mel Arnold (Kamloops–Shuswap–Central Rockies, B.C.)
17. NDP MP Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, B.C.)
18. Conservative MP Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, Alta.)
19. Conservative MP Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, Ont.)
20. Liberal MP Gurbux Saini (Fleetwood–Port Kells, B.C.)
21. Conservative MP Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, Alta.)
22. Conservative MP Jeff Kibble (Cowichan–Malahat–Langford, B.C.)
23. Conservative MP Dane Lloyd (Parkland, Alta.)
24. Conservative MP James Bezan (Selkirk–Interlake–Eastman, Man.)
25. Conservative MP Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls–Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.)
26. Liberal MP Alana Hirtle (Cumberland–Colchester, N.S.)
27. Liberal MP Louis Villeneuve (Brome–Missisquoi, Que.)
28. Conservative MP Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, Alta.)
29. Conservative MP Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale–Langley City, B.C.)
30. Conservative MP Luc Berthold (Mégantic–L’Érable–Lotbinière, Que.)

Diplomatic Circles

By Neil Moss

Parliamentarians celebrate Fourth of July at Lornado amid trade war, annexation threats



Members of the U.S. Marine Corps present the colours at the Fourth of July celebration. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

up with a new explanation for the threats, telling the CBC that they should be viewed as a “term of endearment.”

Just a week before the Independence Day festivities, Trump announced that he was suspending trade talks with Canada over the digital services tax (DST). The Liberal government announced shortly afterwards that it was rescinding the DST to restart negotiations. The White House said Canada “caved” on the measure.

In March, Prime Minister **Mark Carney** said that the historic trade and security relationship that Canada had with the U.S. was “over.”

The two governments have given themselves until July 21 to reach a deal on a new economic and security partnership. They have offered little information about what could be included in a potential deal.

The wait for a trade deal

Speaking to his invited guests on July 4, Hoekstra joked that he couldn’t announce a trade deal yet.

“I know some of you are waiting for that—so am I,” he said.

He described Trump and Carney as “very, very talented and aggressive effective negotiators.”

“We have one that is doing everything that he can to make America great again. And we have a prime minister in Canada that is doing everything that he can to make Canada great again,” he said.

Hoekstra took issue with a frequent pronouncement of Carney’s that Canada will have the “fastest-growing economy in the G7.”

“No, no, no. That’s not how this works,” the U.S. ambassador said. “America and our president do not like being No. 2. So we will be the fastest-growing economy.”

“I’m hopeful that Canada is No. 2. And I hope that it’s a really close competition because there is nothing better for North America than having the U.S. and Canada seeing who has the fastest-growing economy in the G7.”

Hoekstra said that when Trump and Carney finish trade talks, they will both say that they negotiated a “great deal” for their country.

“That means we have a great win-win for Canada, for the U.S.A., and for all of us,” he said.

Scores of envoys were spotted in the crowd, including United Kingdom High Commissioner **Rob Tinline**, French Ambassador **Michel Miraillet**, Italian Ambassador **Alessandro Cattaneo**, German Ambassador **Matthias Lüttenberg**, Mexican Ambassador **Carlos Joaquín González**, and Israeli Ambassador **Iddo Moed**, among many others.

Pendulum Group’s co-founder **Yaroslav Baran** was spotted, as was Sandstone Group co-founder **Kevin Bosch**. Navy Commander **Angus Topshee** took in the festivities, as did a number of Hill journalists.

nsmoss@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

A smaller crowd than usual gathered at Lornado to celebrate Independence Day, as sliders, corn dogs, and California wine was served to members of the Ottawa bubble.

Continued from page 1

and J. Lohr. The embassy also was serving beer from Budweiser and Goose Island Brewery.

A couple days before the bash, former Liberal senior staffer **Tyler Meredith** wrote that Canadian stakeholders should avoid the party.

“We are neighbours and (usually) friends,” he wrote on LinkedIn. “But as we negotiate a high stakes pact—with the threat of illegal tariffs on our workers—we should avoid appearing bought for a few canapés.”

Many didn’t heed the message.

The Canada-U.S. relationship has been sent to a nadir since President **Donald Trump**’s return to the White House.

The American president has consistently threatened to absorb Canada as a “51st state,” and placed tariffs on Canadian imports.

Since arriving in Ottawa, Hoekstra has spent a lot of energy



U.S. Ambassador Pete Hoekstra hosted his first Fourth of July celebration since arriving in Ottawa. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia



The Independence Day festivities at Lornado were held in front of a smaller crowd this year. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia



The U.S. ambassador’s residence was decorated for the celebration. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia



Hoekstra says the U.S., not Canada, will have the fastest growing economy in the G7. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

responding to Canadian anger over the annexation threats.

In his first interview with Canadian media in May, he told



Hamburger sliders were on the menu for the Fourth of July. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

The National Post that the threats were over. But they have since re-emerged. He subsequently told *The Hill Times* that he was

“not very sympathetic” to the pain being felt by Canadians, remarking that the U.S. is “hurt, too.” More recently, Hoekstra has come

Hill Climbers

By Laura Ryckewaert



Who's who so far in Canada-U.S. Trade Minister LeBlanc's shop

Miro Froehlich has been named director of policy to the minister, while Rebecca Parkinson is director of intergovernmental affairs.

The ground continues to shift on the Canada-United States trade front, so it's a good thing Canada-U.S. Trade and One Canadian Economy Minister **Dominic LeBlanc**—who's also currently Privy Council president, and minister for intergovernmental affairs—has made strides in firming up his ministerial team.

So far reported in LeBlanc's office are chief of staff **Brandan Rowe**; director of operations **Alex Axiotis-Perez**, who is also deputy chief of staff to the minister; director of communications **Jean-Sébastien Comeau**; press secretary and senior communications adviser **Gabriel Brunet**; and senior communications adviser **Ève Loignon-Giroux**.

Adding to that list, for one, is **Miro Froehlich**, who's been tapped as director of policy to LeBlanc.

Froehlich spent the last almost three-and-a-half years working for the federal public safety minister—a role LeBlanc held for much of that time, having served in the portfolio (while also concurrently being minister for democratic institutions and intergovernmental affairs) from July 2023 to December 2024.

Froehlich first joined the public safety office under then-minister **Marco Mendicino** in early 2022 as a Quebec regional affairs adviser, having previously done the same for then-health minister **Patty Hajdu**. In early 2023, he became a senior Quebec regional adviser and policy adviser in the office, tackling public safety and—after that July's cabinet shuffle—intergovernmental affairs. Froehlich stuck with the public safety office after LeBlanc was shuffled out last December, and according to his LinkedIn profile, he spent the past six months as director of policy to then-public safety minister **David McGuinty**.

Froehlich is also a former assistant to Quebec Liberal MP **Angelo Iacono**.



Canada-U.S. Trade, One Canadian Economy, and Intergovernmental Affairs Minister and Privy Council President Dominic LeBlanc, centre, has 15 staffers confirmed in his office so far. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Rebecca Parkinson continues as director of intergovernmental affairs to LeBlanc, as she did through his recent turn as finance and intergovernmental affairs minister (which spanned December 2024 to this past March), and his time as then-minister of public safety, intergovernmental affairs, and democratic institutions before that.



Rebecca Parkinson is director of intergovernmental affairs to Minister LeBlanc. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

A former executive assistant to then-Manitoba Liberal MP **Jim Carr**, between 2017 and the end of 2020, Parkinson worked in the ministers' regional office in Winnipeg—one of 16 regional offices across Canada that support all of cabinet, and include a mix of public servants and political staff. At the end of 2020, she was hired to work for LeBlanc for the first time, beginning as a senior adviser for the Prairies and North in his office as then-Privy Council president and intergovernmental affairs minister.

Sticking with LeBlanc through his time as intergovernmental affairs, and infrastructure and communities minister—which spanned October 2021 to July 2023—and on, Parkinson was promoted to director of policy for intergovernmental to LeBlanc in September 2023. She switched titles, becoming director of intergovernmental affairs in August 2024.

Emilie Simard is LeBlanc's director of parliamentary affairs and issues management in LeBlanc's new office. She, too, comes from LeBlanc's former team as then-public safety, intergovernmental affairs, and democratic institutions minister—*Hill Climbers* will be calling this LeBlanc's "triple role" for the rest of this column to try to spare us all some repetition—which

Simard joined in May 2023 under her current title. Before then, she'd done the same for then-immigration minister **Sean Fraser**. Following last December's shuffle, Simard stuck with the public safety office under then-minister **McGuinty**, becoming director of operations.

Simard is also a former issues manager to Mendicino as then-immigration minister, a past press secretary to then-rural economic development minister **Bernadette Jordan**, and a former special assistant for Ontario and Quebec regional affairs and assistant to the parliamentary secretary to then-veterans affairs minister **Kent Hehr**.

Working under Simard is senior issues adviser **Charles Smith**, and senior adviser for research and issues management **Wallace McLean**.

Smith cut his political teeth as an intern with the New Brunswick Liberal Party, and went on to spend the summer of 2019 as a constituency intern to now-Secretary of State for the Financial Sector and Canada Revenue Agency **Wayne Long** as the MP for the then-named riding of Saint John—Rothesay, N.B. By the summer of 2022, Smith had made his way to Ottawa, landing an internship tackling issues management and parliamentary affairs in then-prime minister **Justin Trudeau**'s office. In early 2023, he was hired to then-deputy prime minister and finance minister **Chrystia Freeland**'s office as a special assistant for issues management. Smith was kept on after LeBlanc became finance and intergovernmental affairs minister, and was elevated to his current, senior adviser title, which he continued in through Finance



Charles Smith is a senior issues adviser. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

Minister **François-Philippe Champagne**'s first months on the job.

McLean has been working for LeBlanc since 2019, beginning as an issues management adviser in LeBlanc's office as then-Privy Council president. McLean was promoted to senior issues adviser during LeBlanc's time as infrastructure and intergovernmental affairs minister, and went on to be a search adviser for research in LeBlanc's triple-role office. McLean is also a former: issues manager to then-democratic institutions minister **Karina Gould**, legislative assistant and policy adviser to then-agriculture minister **Lawrence MacAulay**, special assistant for policy and research in Trudeau's office as then-third party leader, and assistant to then-Liberal MP **Todd Russell**.

Galen Richardson is a senior adviser for stakeholder relations to LeBlanc. Richardson is a former senior regional adviser for the West and North to Freeland as then-deputy prime minister and finance minister. For a few months in 2024, while working for Freeland, he also briefly lent a hand doing the same part time for Trudeau's PMO.

An ex-associate with Saskatoon's McKercher LLP, Richardson has also been a policy and West and North regional adviser to Champagne as then-infrastructure and communities minister, and a West and North regional adviser to then-economic development and official languages minister **Mélanie Joly**.

Joining Comeau, Brunet, and Loignon-Giroux on the communications team is adviser **Ariane Mallet**. A former intern and part-time assistant to LeBlanc as then-infrastructure and intergovernmental affairs minister, Mallet was hired to his triple-role office as a communications assistant

in late 2023, and was recently a communications adviser in LeBlanc's short-lived finance and intergovernmental affairs shop.



Ariane Mallet is a communications adviser. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

Mayssam Ibrahim and **Monica Stella Jaillet** are in place as regional advisers in LeBlanc's office. Though usually regional advisers have a specific regional focus, *Climbers* understands that, together, they are covering all of the regions of Canada, from East to West to North.

Ibrahim has been working for LeBlanc since 2021 when she was hired as executive assistant to his chief of staff as then-Privy Council president and intergovernmental affairs minister. She later worked as a policy adviser in LeBlanc's infrastructure and intergovernmental affairs office—focused on the former file—where she also offered Quebec advice. Though it was never publicly noted or reported by *Climbers*, Ibrahim's LinkedIn profile suggests she was also a regional adviser to LeBlanc in his former, triple role.

Jaillet is another seasoned LeBlanc staffer, having worked for the minister since 2020 when she was hired as a special assistant in his office as intergovernmental affairs minister and Privy Council president. She went on to be a special assistant for operations in LeBlanc's triple-role office.

Currently holding the title of special assistant in LeBlanc's new office is **Édouard Blais-Guilbeault**. He previously interned with the National Bank of Canada in 2023, and spent the second half of 2024 as an intern in LeBlanc's triple-role office, after which he was hired as a part-time special assistant in LeBlanc's office as then-finance and intergovernmental affairs minister.

Finally, rounding out LeBlanc's currently 15-member office is **Shannon Ablett**, office manager and executive assistant to Rowe as chief of staff.

Ablett has returned to work for LeBlanc, having exited his former triple-role team—where she'd similarly been executive assistant to the minister's then-chief of staff for public safety, **Cory Pike** (who's now running McGuinty's office as national defence minister)—this past November. Ablett is also a former assistant to Pike during his time as chief of staff to then-public services and procurement minister **Helena Jaczek**, and is a former aide to Ontario Liberal MP **Ryan Turnbull**.

lryckewaert@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



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.

Assembly of First Nations hosts virtual forum to discuss the One Canadian Economy Act on July 10



First Nations chiefs, proxies, council members, regional chiefs, and technicians are invited to a virtual dialogue on the federal government's amended Bill C-5: An Act to enact the Free Trade and Labour Mobility in Canada Act and the Building Canada Act on Thursday, July 10. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

WEDNESDAY, JULY 9

Panel: 'Reforming Access to Information'—As part of its CIPPIC Summer Speaker Series 2025, the University of Ottawa's Canadian Internet Policy and Public Interest Clinic is hosting a panel discussion on "Reforming Access to Information," featuring Information Commissioner Caroline Maynard, freelance journalist Dean Beeby, Canadian Press reporter Jim Bronskill, and access to information activist Ken Rubin. Wednesday, July 9, at 1 p.m. ET at uOttawa, 302 Fauteux Hall, 57 Louis-Pasteur Priv. Register via Eventbrite.

Lawn Summer Night—Cystic Fibrosis Canada's annual lawn bowling fundraiser is switching things up this year in Ottawa, and condensing the excitement into one epic evening instead of four. Invite your friends out to come watch, and get ready for cold drinks and great prizes. Wednesday, July 9, at 6 p.m. ET at the Elmdale Lawn Bowling Club, 1 MacFarlane Ave., Ottawa. Details: lawnsummernights.com.

THURSDAY, JULY 10

National Virtual Forum on Bill C-5—The Assembly of First Nations hosts a national virtual forum bringing together First Nations leaders for continued dialogue on the federal government's amended Bill C-5: An Act to enact the Free Trade and Labour Mobility in Canada Act and the Building Canada Act. The session is open to First Nations chiefs, proxies, council members, regional chiefs, and technicians. Thursday, July 10, happening online: afn.ca.

Webinar: 'Navigating Telecom Regulation'—*The Hill Times* and *The Wire Report* host a subscriber-only webinar, "Navigating Telecom Regulation: A Conversation with the CRTC," exploring

what the CRTC's updated strategic vision means for small and medium telecom players, which regulatory resources are available, and what to expect from key ongoing proceedings. *Wire Report* editor Hannah Daley will moderate the discussion featuring the CRTC's Leila Wright, executive director, telecommunications; and Scott Hutton, vice-president, consumer, analytics and strategy. Thursday, July 10, at 11 a.m. happening online. Details: tinyurl.com/487b2kbh.

THURSDAY, JULY 10—SUNDAY, JULY 20

Ottawa Bluesfest—Ottawa's Bluesfest returns for 10 days featuring a lineup of musicians from a variety of genres including blues, world music, alternative, rock, jazz, funk, soul, rap, folk, urban, and more. Thursday, July 10, to Sunday, July 20 in LeBreton Flats Park, Ottawa. Details: ottawabluesfest.ca.

TUESDAY, JULY 15

Webinar: Can 'Mission-Driven' Government Work Here?—The Institute for Research on Public Policy hosts a webinar, "What is 'mission-driven' government, and can it work here?" Jack Pannell of the U.K.'s Institute for Government and Dan Honig of University College London's School of Public Policy share their insights into what has been the experience so far in the U.K., and can this approach work with Canada's structure and culture of our federal public service? Tuesday, July 15, at 11 a.m. happening online: irpp.org.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 16

CSIS Director to Deliver Remarks—Daniel Rogers, director

of the Canadian Security Intelligence Services, will deliver remarks at a lunch event hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Wednesday, July 16, at 12 p.m. ET at the C.D. Howe Institute, 67 Yonge St., Suite 300, Toronto. Details: cdhowe.org.

THURSDAY, JULY 17

Prime Minister Carney to Meet with First Nations Leadership—Prime Minister Mark Carney, responsible cabinet ministers, and public servants are expected to hold the first in a series of meetings with First Nations rights holders in Ottawa. Details to follow.

SATURDAY, JULY 19

Move Nation: A Parliament Hill Revival—The Canadian Mental Health Association hosts a free, bodyweight workout open to the entire community. All fitness levels, all ages, and all backgrounds are welcome. Bring a water bottle, a fitness mat or towel. Saturday, July 19, at 11 a.m. ET. on the lawn of Parliament Hill. Details via Eventbrite.

MONDAY, JULY 21—WEDNESDAY, JULY 23

Council of the Federation Summer Meeting—Ontario Premier Doug Ford, chair of the Council of the Federation, will host the premiers' 2025 Summer Meeting. Monday, July 21, to Wednesday, July 23, at Deerhurst Resort, Huntsville, Ont. Details: canadaspremiers.ca.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 23

Elevate Girls on the Hill—Elevate International hosts a leadership forum that brings girls and young women to the steps of Parliament Hill for a day of leadership, empowerment, and celebration. Students, emerging leaders, Members of Parliament, educators, and changemakers will take part in keynote speeches, youth-led panels, and leadership workshops. Wednesday, July 23, at 9:30 a.m. ET at the Sir John A. Macdonald Building, Room 100, 144 Wellington St., Ottawa. Register via Eventbrite.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 30

Panel: 'Telecommunications in Canada'—As part of its CIPPIC Summer Speaker Series 2025, the University of Ottawa's Canadian Internet Policy and Public Interest Clinic hosts a discussion on "Telecommunications in Canada," featuring Vicky Eatrides, chair and CEO of the CRTC; and Rachelle Frenette, general counsel and deputy executive director, CRTC. Wednesday, July 30, at 1 p.m. ET at uOttawa, Fauteux Hall, 57 Louis-Pasteur Priv. Register via Eventbrite.

MONDAY, AUG. 18

Byelection in Battle River-Crowfoot—Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre will be running in the byelection in Battle River-Crowfoot, Alta., which will be held today. Former Conservative MP Damien Kurek resigned his seat so that Poilievre could run here and get a seat in the House.

MONDAY, SEPT. 1

Senator Seidman's Retirement—Today is Quebec Conservative Senator Judith Seidman's 75th birthday, which means her mandatory retirement from the Senate.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 3—FRIDAY, SEPT. 5

Assembly of First Nations' AGA—The Assembly of First Nations hosts its annual general assembly. Wednesday, Sept. 3, to Friday, Sept. 5, at the RBC Convention Centre, 375 York Ave., Winnipeg. Details: afn.ca/events.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 5—SATURDAY, SEPT. 6

CSFN Regional Conference—The Canada Strong and Free Network hosts its 2025 Regional Conference. Conservatives will gather to discuss the unique needs and aspirations of Western Canadians within the Canadian federation. Friday, Sept. 5, to Saturday, Sept. 6, at the Westin Airport Calgary Hotel. Details: canadastrongandfree.network.

MONDAY, SEPT. 15

Ottawa Centre September Trivia Night—The Ontario Liberal Party hosts an evening of trivia and fun downtown with fellow Liberals. Each ticket includes snacks and a drink cover, and new Future Fund sign-ups will be accepted at the door. Monday, Sept. 15, at 5:30 p.m. ET at 3 Brewers Restaurant, 240 Sparks St., Ottawa. Details: ontarioliberal.ca.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 16

Conference: 'Canada's Next Economic Transformation'—The Institute for Research on Public Policy hosts a day-long conference, "Canada's Next Economic Transformation: Industrial Policy in Tumultuous Times." Participants include Steve Verheul (former assistant deputy minister of the Trade Policy and Negotiations

branch of Global Affairs Canada); Matthew Holmes (Canadian Chamber of Commerce); Emna Braham (L'Institut du Québec); Jim Stanford (Centre for Future Work); Jesse McCormick (First Nations Major Project Coalition); Chris Bataille (Centre on Global Energy Policy); and Tim Hudak (Counsel Public Affairs). Tuesday, Sept. 16, at the Lord Elgin Hotel, 100 Elgin St., Ottawa. Details: irpp.org.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 17

CUTA 2025 Policy Forum—The Canadian Urban Transit Association hosts its 2025 Policy Forum, bringing together some of North America's leading transit and urban mobility experts to discuss the industry's future. Wednesday, Sept. 17, at 8 a.m. ET the Lord Elgin Hotel, 100 Elgin St., Ottawa. Register via Eventbrite.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 19

First of 2025 CBC Massey Lectures—Former Amnesty International Canada secretary-general Alex Neve will deliver this year's CBC Massey Lectures, titled "Universal: Renewing Human Rights in a Fractured World." The next lectures will take place in Vancouver (Sept. 25), Edmonton (Oct. 1), Happy Valley/Goose Bay, Labrador (Oct. 15), and Ottawa (Oct. 30). Friday, Sept. 19, Koerner Hall, 273 Bloor St. W., Toronto. Details to follow: massey-college.ca.

SUNDAY, SEPT. 21

Senator Mégie's Retirement—Today is Quebec ISG Senator Marie-Françoise Mégie's 75th birthday, which means her mandatory retirement from the Senate.

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