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## NEWS

**'Sunshine is what is needed': 2025 election, foreign interference issues on deck for PROC this fall**

BY LAURA RYCKEWAERT

Voting errors and irregularities during this year's federal election, and a possible dive back into the issue of foreign interference are on the docket for the Procedure and House Affairs Committee when the Lower Chamber returns later this month.

After electing a new chair, vice-chairs, and wading through adoption of standard motions setting out committee procedures for the coming session on June 10, MPs agreed to Bloc Québécois House Leader Christine Normandin's (Saint-Jean, Que.) proposal to examine the 45<sup>th</sup> general election and consider potential changes to "implementation of the electoral process and the application of the Canada Elections Act in order to prevent the failures and breaches that occurred" last election.

Top of mind for the Bloc are, of course, reports of voting irregularities in Terrebonne, Que., and issues in the northern riding of Abitibi-Baie-James-Nunavik-Eeyou, Que.

Terrebonne was initially called for the Bloc's Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné, but a subsequent recount—automatically required due to the slim vote margin—saw the riding change hands, with now-Liberal MP Tatiana Augustine declared the winner by a single vote.

Following media reports, Elections Canada confirmed five ballots—which had incorrect postal codes on their return envelopes—had been received late, and a reported 16 others were not received. Sinclair-Desgagné filed a Quebec Superior Court challenge of the result in May, which is expected to be heard in October.

In Abitibi-Baie-James-Nunavik-Eeyou, some polling stations



## Foreign influence watchdog needs experience and compassion, not eminence: national security experts

Beyond the requisite knowledge and experience, ensuring the incoming Foreign Influence Registry Commissioner is clear of any appearance of partisanship will be critical, says Canadian Foreign Influence Transparency Registry Coalition spokesperson Gloria Fung.

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## NEWS

**'Waiting is deadly for Palestinians': Canada can't put off state recognition, says NDP's McPherson**

BY STUART BENSON

As Israel begins the initial stages of an expanded military operation in Gaza, Canada can't wait another month to recognize Palestine and must take concrete action now to defend a future two-state solution and international law, says NDP foreign affairs critic Heather McPherson.

Continued on **page 5**

## NEWS

**Latvia extension forges near-permanent Canadian Army presence in Europe, leaving limited ability to deploy elsewhere**

BY NEIL MOSS

Canada's three-year extension for its mission in Latvia entrenches a permanent presence in Europe for the Canadian Army—prioritizing the region over all others, with limited ability to deploy elsewhere.

Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.) announced on Aug. 26 that Canada would be extending its mission in the Baltic nation. Currently, it has around 2,000 troops in Latvia, and leads

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# Heard on the Hill



By Christina Leadlay

## Grit MP Duguid to seek vacant House lead of Canada-U.S. group



Liberal MP Terry Duguid has previously served in cabinet as minister of the environment and of sport, and as the minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Veteran Liberal MP **Terry Duguid** has his eyes set on becoming the new co-chair of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group when Parliament returns in the fall.

The group—which builds important links on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C.—has been without a leader in the House of Commons since the last election as previous co-chair **John McKay** did not seek re-election. Its Red Chamber leader is Conservative Senator **Michael MacDonald**.

Previous House co-chairs have called the vacancy “very concerning” and a “significant detriment.”

Duguid confirmed to *The Hill Times* that he would be seeking the role.

He won re-election in his riding of Winnipeg South, Man., in the last federal election, earning 58.7 per cent of the vote. He has held the riding since 2015.

Duguid has previously served as the environment and sport minister, and as the minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada.

Under the constitution of the Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group, a meeting to appoint a new executive is supposed to be held within 60 days of the opening of Parliament, but that didn't happen.

As previously reported by *The Hill Times*, the Joint Interparliamentary Council sent a notice in late 2024 that delayed annual general meetings until the fall of 2025, and suspended the constitutional provision on holding a meeting within 60 days.

—by Neil Moss

## New book tells story of Southeast Asian refugees

A new book hitting shelves this month spotlights the stories and experiences of the more than 210,000 refugees who came to Canada from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, fleeing violence, genocide, and government collapse, between 1975 and 1997.

Co-authored by former Immigration Canada director **Peter Duschinsky**, Carleton University professors **Colleen Lundy** and **Allan Moscovitch**, former Canadian immigration official **Michael J. Molloy**, and Canadian Mennonite University associate professor **Stephanie Phetsamay Stobbe**, *Hearts of Freedom: Stories of Southeast Asian Refugees* is being published by McGill-Queen's University Press.

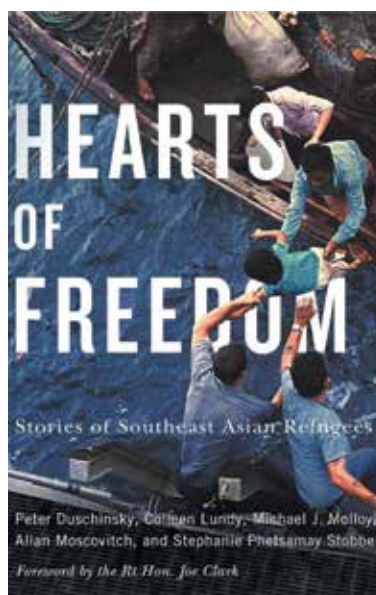
The book features firsthand accounts and interviews with 145 former refugees to Canada, and includes a foreword from former prime minister **Joe Clark**. Roughly three million people are estimated to have fled the

trio of Southeast Asian countries over that more than 20-year period. The book explores the “remarkable experiment in civic compassion” that was the private sponsorship program that helped bring more than 200,000 of those refugees to Canada.

“Survivors recount their perilous voyages across storm-lashed seas, the inhumane horrors of re-education camps, and fortifying private moments of hope and gratitude,” reads a release from the publisher.

Along with highlighting “the complex realities of resettlement,” the testimonies help “illuminate the strengths and blind spots of Canada's refugee policies and the profound human consequences of bureaucratic practices.”

Among the upcoming events to promote the new book is an Oct. 4 gathering at Ottawa's Atrium Art Gallery, which will feature a keynote address from Clark.



*Hearts of Freedom: Stories of Southeast Asian Refugees* is being released this month. Photograph courtesy of McGill-Queen's University Press

## NDP rebuilding from '14-year slide': Davies

Potential candidates are making moves in the federal NDP's leadership race, but in the meantime, interim NDP Leader **Don Davies** said the party has some “naval gazing” left to do as it prepares to enter its new era.

Speaking on the Aug. 28 episode of *The Paikin Podcast*, Davies told host **Steve Paikin** and panellists former Conservative MP **Tony Clement** and former Liberal MP **Martha Hall Findlay** that “one of the few advantages of being burnt to the ground is that you get to recreate your foundation.”

The party's 2025 campaign was “one of the worst” Davies has seen, he said, but added that it wasn't just about external pressures. “We've been in a secular slide since 2011, if we're honest. ... So, we can't blame it all on the last election. It has been a 14-year slide.”

Davies told the podcast the party may have to re-examine the balance between class and identity issues.

“I think one of the questions is: have we veered too much from our sort of class-based analysis to identity politics? My own view—this is just me speaking—is that we have. And it's not that those intersectional issues aren't important—they are. It's just a question of the right balance,” Davies said. “And I think the NDP's at our best ... when we are bringing a perspective to Parliament that is coming from working people.”

On Aug. 27, *The Toronto Star* reported that MP **Heather McPherson** and prominent activist **Avi Lewis** are actively prepping their leadership bids. Author and activist **Yves Engler**, and activist and farmer **Tony McQuail** have already announced their leadership intentions. The first major deadline for the race was Aug. 20, when application packages became available.

“I know who the potential candidates are. They're all magnificent,” Davies said on the podcast.

## Ottawa park gets name swap to honour GG

The green space currently known as Whitewood Avenue Park in Ottawa's Manotick neighbourhood will be renamed to honour Governor General **Mary Simon**.

Ottawa City Council approved the change during an Aug. 27 meeting following a motion from Rideau-Jock Councillor **David Brown** to “recognize [Simon's] outstanding contributions to Canada and celebrate her legacy as an advocate for Indigenous Peoples.”

As per the motion, Mary Simon Park, at 5490 Whitewood Ave., will feature an “appropriate stand and plaque be installed displaying the name and including a brief history of Mary Simon's contributions,” which will be funded through the mayor's office.

Simon was installed as the country's 30<sup>th</sup> vice-regal representative in July 2021, and is the first Indigenous person to hold the role.



Governor General Mary Simon, right, who is King Charles' representative in Canada, will soon have an Ottawa-area park named in her honour. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

“Mary Simon's leadership and dedication have inspired countless Canadians and fostered a greater understanding and appreciation of Indigenous cultures,” the motion reads.

## New envoy to India set

Following through on a promise to renew the Canada-India relationship, Foreign Minister **Anita Anand** named Canada's newest high commissioner to India last week.

**Christopher Cooter** will be the new mission lead in New Delhi, filling a vacancy left by predecessor **Cameron MacKay**. MacKay left India in 2023 after completing a three-year posting, shortly before the bilateral relationship hit a nadir after then-prime minister **Justin Trudeau** rising in the House of Commons that September to announce allegations that New Delhi was involved in the murder of **Hardeep Singh Nijjar**, a Canadian citizen and Sikh separatist leader, in Surrey, B.C. The Indian government has denied involvement in the killing.

Acting high commissioner **Stewart Wheeler** was pulled from

the chancery in October 2024 as part of the reciprocal withdrawal of diplomats as tensions continued.

Cooter has 35 years of diplomatic experience, having served most recently as Canada's chargé d'affaires to Israel, and as high commissioner to South Africa, Namibia, Lesotho, Mauritius, and Madagascar. He previously also served in India as first secretary at the Canadian High Commission to India, Nepal, and Bhutan from 1998 to 2000.

On Aug. 28, the Indian government also announced that **Dinesh Patnaik** will be its envoy in Ottawa. Patnaik will be coming to Canada from his post as the top diplomat in Spain, where he's been stationed since 2022. Patnaik previously led India's missions in the United Kingdom, Morocco, and Cambodia.

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# Foreign influence watchdog needs experience and compassion, not eminence: national security experts

Beyond the requisite knowledge and experience, ensuring the incoming Foreign Influence Registry Commissioner is clear of any appearance of partisanship will be critical, says Canadian Foreign Influence Transparency Registry Coalition spokesperson Gloria Fung.

BY STUART BENSON

Civil society and diaspora groups are asking to be included in consultations before candidates for the long-awaited foreign interference watchdog are presented to party leaders for consideration this fall. Yet, while those groups hope to ensure the Liberals choose a “distinguished” Canadian to meet the challenge, intelligence and national security experts say the candidate’s résumé should take precedence over reputation.

“Out of all the skills and attributes the commissioner will need, the last on the list is eminence,” national security expert and former Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) analyst Stephanie Carvin told *The Hill Times*. “What you want is someone familiar with the intelligence and enforcement communities, but also understands the perspectives of diaspora communities ... it’s not an easy task, and I’m not sure a prominent Canadian is necessarily the right choice.”

In August, Public Safety Minister Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough–Guildwood–Rouge Park, Ont.) told CBC News that the long-awaited commissioner of the Foreign Influence Transparency Registry (FITR) would be named later this month, with the registry itself to be launched later this fall.

The registry will be established as part of the new Foreign Influence Transparency and Accountability Act, which was included in last year’s Bill C-70, the Countering Foreign Interference Act, alongside amendments to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act, the Security of Information Act, the Canada Evidence Act, and the Criminal Code.

The new registry will require those acting on behalf of for-

ign states or economic entities to disclose influence activities directed at the Canadian public or elected officials within 14 days of entering into the contract. Failure to do so or being found in contravention of the act could result in a fine of up to \$5-million and/or up to five years in prison.

Introduced on May 6, 2024, the Countering Foreign Interference Act received royal assent following unanimous approval from all parties in June of that year.

Before the bill was passed, government officials estimated that implementing the registry would take “up to a year.” However, this past May, Public Safety officials stated that several steps remain before full implementation—including office setup, IT infrastructure, and regulation development—but did not provide an updated timeline.

Anandasangaree told the CBC that the government was screening candidates for the registry’s commissioner, and intends to present them to recognized party leaders—the Conservatives and Bloc Québécois—for review before Parliament returns on Sept. 15. He added that once a commissioner is named, the government will proceed with the necessary order-in-council, and regulations are currently being drafted.

Yet, despite playing outsized roles in the debate on foreign interference in the past two years, neither the New Democrats’ nor the Green Party’s leaders will be asked to provide their input on the new commissioner before being asked to approve their appointment in Parliament.

According to the legislation, the appointment of the commissioner is to be made after consultations with the leader of the opposition in the House of Commons, and the leader of each “recognized party” with at least 12 members in the House of



Then-public safety minister Dominic LeBlanc, right, tabled the Countering Foreign Interference Act in the House on May 6, 2024. The bill created a new ‘country-agnostic’ foreign influence and transparency registry. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



NDP interim leader Don Davies says his party has not been asked to consult on the potential candidate for the commissioner despite the ‘instrumental role’ his party plays in confronting foreign interference. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Commons, and leaders of every other recognized party or parliamentary group in the Senate. The appointment will also require approval by resolution in both parliamentary chambers.

Under those parameters, both the NDP and the Green Party would be excluded from consulting on the potential candidate they would be asked to approve in a parliamentary vote.

In a statement to *The Hill Times*, interim NDP Leader Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, B.C.) confirmed that his party has not received any communication from the government on the registry or potential commissioner candidates.

“[A]s an established national political party [that] has been affected by these issues and played an instrumental role in confronting them, we believe we should be kept appropriately informed and consulted by the minister,” Davies wrote, noting that he had served as his party’s representative on the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians for the past five years.

“Foreign interference and transnational repression are non-partisan issues that affect all citizens, parties, our country and sovereignty,” Davies wrote.

Green Party Leader Elizabeth May (Saanich–Gulf Islands, B.C.) told *The Hill Times* that she has yet to hear from Anandasangaree’s office, but expects she and the NDP will still be afforded the same consideration and consultation as with previous parliamentary appointments.

## Foreign Interference Commissioner too critical to risk on ‘total rookie,’ say diaspora, civil society groups

Before Parliament considers any potential candidates, a coalition of diaspora communities, think tanks, and human rights organizations is calling for broader consultation first to ensure that candidates are up to the task, and will avoid the controversies associated with those named to similar roles in the past.

On Aug. 22, the Canadian FITR Coalition “welcomed” the reported progress on establishing the registry, and called for the chosen commissioner to be “non-partisan” and a “highly respected Canadian of relevant background commensurate with the importance of their critical role.”

Additionally, the coalition called for “meaningful consultation” with civil society stakeholders and diaspora communities before the potential candidate is presented to party leaders in the House and Senate, and for funding to establish the registry and commissioner’s office to be included in the upcoming fall budget.

In an interview with *The Hill Times*, coalition spokesperson Gloria Fung said the task

assigned to the commissioner is too critical to be given to a “total rookie,” but noted that, in terms of priority, a good résumé is more important than a distinguished reputation.

Fung noted that, beyond the requisite knowledge and experience, ensuring the commissioner is clear of any appearance of partisanship is critical, pointing to the political backlash over then-prime minister Justin Trudeau’s appointment of “eminent” Canadian and former governor general David Johnston as a special rapporteur on election interference.

Fung said she believes a candidate exists who can meet the expectations of the role. Still, she emphasized that it is crucial for the government to consult with stakeholders to ensure that the name it proposes for consideration is the right one.

However, Fung said that the coalition had not yet received a response from Anandasangaree’s office, and sent a follow-up email on Aug. 27 requesting a meeting with the minister, but had not received a response as of publishing deadline.

Anandasangaree’s office confirmed to *The Hill Times* that the NDP and Green leaders would not be included in the parliamentary consultations, and that the government already conducted “extensive consultations” with diaspora communities and civil society organizations before the legislation’s passage.

“Those perspectives played a critical role in shaping the registry’s framework, ensuring it reflects the concerns raised, addresses potential risks and upholds a high level of transparency while safeguarding the rights and freedoms of Canadians,” wrote Anandasangaree’s press secretary, Simon Lafortune. “The Government of Canada will continue to consult diaspora and civil society groups through the regulations-making process.”

Anandasangaree’s office also confirmed that funding for implementation was appropriated in Budget 2023 as part of the \$48.9-million allocated over three years to Public Safety Canada.

## Registry ‘an exercise in sovereignty,’ but no ‘perfect unicorn’ for commissioner, say national security experts

Carvin said she understands the desire to name a prominent Canadian as commissioner, but she thinks what is more critical is someone who can “hit the ground running with an uncertain budget.”

“There’s the idea that you can find this perfect unicorn who can run it and make everyone happy, there isn’t,” Carvin said. “There are always going to be tradeoffs.”

Instead, more useful attributes would be things like empathy and managerial skills, as well as proficiency in French, English, and preferably a few other languages, Carvin said.

“You want someone who is a good listener, who can manage the office and staff in multiple



## NEWS

# Ministers also expected to take scissors to office budgets in spending review



Prime Minister Mark Carney's 28-minister cabinet will also be facing budget cuts as part of the government's fiscal review, which calls for departments to cut spending by 15 per cent over three years.  
*The Hill Times photograph by Sam Garcia*

The challenge in cutting ministers' budgets is ensuring their offices 'can still do what they need to do, and only they can do,' says former chief of staff David McLaughlin.

BY MARLO GLASS

The offices of Liberal cabinet ministers aren't immune from the Carney government's sweeping spending review, and will also have reduced budgets of 15 per cent over the next three years.

"You can't have expenditure reduction across the public service without having ministerial staff take a haircut, too," said David McLaughlin, a former chief of staff to then-prime minister Brian Mulroney and also chief of staff to Harper-era finance minister Jim Flaherty.

"It just politically doesn't fly."

Treasury Board spokesperson Martin Potvin confirmed ministers' offices are part of the spending review launched this summer by Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne (Saint-Maurice-Champlain, Que.), who has instructed departments across the federal government to find incremental savings starting at 7.5 per cent next fiscal year, reaching 10 per cent in 2026-27, and 15 per cent by 2027-28. Ministers were expected to present their plans to reach these targets by Aug. 28.



Jobs and Families Minister Patty Hajdu has among the largest ministerial offices with a confirmed 28 staff. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

Unlike departmental budgets, full fiscal details on ministers' offices aren't a matter of public record, though office expenditures like travel are reported. Ministers' budgets include personnel costs for political staff, operating costs, and more. A minister can ask for a budget increase from the Treasury Board, but first must get the blessing of the Prime Minister Office.

According to McLaughlin, when faced with budget cuts, ministers have options: cut staff, hire people at lower salaries, or "create a fit-for-purpose minister's office by eliminating positions and allowing departments to pick up the slack."

Unlike departmental budgets, full fiscal details on ministers' offices aren't a matter of public record, though office expenditures like travel are reported. Ministers' budgets include personnel costs for political staff, operating costs, and more. The budgets are set by

the Prime Minister's Office, and approved by the Treasury Board Secretariat. A minister can ask for a budget increase from the Treasury Board, but first must get the blessing of the PMO.

Monique Lugli served as chief of staff to Anita Anand (Oakville East, Ont.) when she was Treasury Board president from 2023 until 2024. When the minister's budget is set, "many chiefs will make a case about why they need more," Lugli said, "very rarely saying they need less."

Chiefs of staff in ministers' offices are responsible for managing the budget after it's put in place by the PMO and Treasury Board. "They say, 'OK, what are our priorities? Where do we need to put people?'" Lugli said, noting the budget includes both operating and staffing expenses. Raises to staffers are set out by Treasury Board guidelines.

"You have to manage the trips, the airfare, and then also the people."

Lugli pointed out that ministers' offices are cognizant of the costs that get publicly reported.

"Chiefs of staff are very prudent, and they are really conscious about public money," she said.

Ministers' offices aren't all created equally, though. Some ministers are busier than others, with larger portfolios, more responsibilities, and even more staff. Departments that oversee many transfer programs—like Employment and Social Development—require "political responsiveness" and oversight from an involved minister, McLaughlin said, while procedure-heavy departments like Public Services and Procurement Canada need political staffers to keep the gears turning on ministerial reviews and approvals. Regulatory departments like Fisheries and Oceans also require political staff with knowledge of regional nuances. Political staff are also responsible for regional political operations, he said, with some departments having Quebec-based French-speaking political staffers.

Amid the spending review, ministers have been busy this summer staffing up their offices, as reported in Hill Climbers columns.

*The Hill Times* understands Jobs and Families Minister Patty Hajdu (Thunder Bay-Superior North, Ont.) currently has one of the largest ministerial offices, with a confirmed 28 staff including numerous policy advisers, communications advisers, and regional advisers covering the West, North, Ontario, Quebec, and the Atlantic.

Carney's cabinet includes six secretaries of state—not counting Women and Gender Equality

Minister Rechie Valdez (Mississauga-Streetsville, Ont.), who is also secretary of state for small business and tourism—who so far have assembled notably smaller political staff teams compared to their ministerial counterparts, with five staff total, for example, in Secretary of State Stephen Fuhr's (Kelowna, B.C.) office.

The challenge in cutting ministers' operating budgets is ensuring their offices "can still do what they need to do, and only they can do," which is to provide political support to ministers, McLaughlin said.

"The bureaucracy of the public service writ large would prefer fewer [political] policy staff getting in the way of doing our jobs," he said, "and political staff would say we need political people to drive bureaucracy, to produce policy. So there's going to be tension there."

McLaughlin said cutting ministers' budgets could take the form of a "share-the-pain" approach, where cuts are made "regardless of demand" on ministers. But he noted his time in Flaherty's office when the PMO approved a "modest" increase in the finance minister's staff in order to deliver the budget.

"It'll be interesting to see how far it goes, and whether there are exceptions," he said. "But you've got to lead by example, and this is one example."

Jocelyne Bourgon, former clerk of the Privy Council and secretary to the cabinet who served under former prime minister Jean Chrétien from 1994 until 1999, advocated for spending cuts to target political staff. She argued spending cuts have historically focused on departments, and "might it be worth starting at the top, for a change?"

She acknowledged her suggestion "may lack credibility" with political staffers, coming from a former public servant, "but let's at least consider it," she said at her June 18 keynote Manion Lecture at the Canada School of Public Service.

Bourgon estimated the ranks of political staffers grew 60 per cent between 2011 and 2024, and said "there are reasons to be concerned that this expansion has contributed to an erosion of ministerial authority, and—in some ways—has been undermining the cabinet system of government."

In the dying days of the Trudeau government, there were close to 750 political staffers working in cabinet offices and the PMO.

Former prime minister Justin Trudeau was criticized for a ballooning cabinet, which peaked at 40 ministers in 2024 towards the end of his tenure. Ministers are paid \$99,900, plus a \$2,000 car allowance, on top of their base MP salary of \$209,800 per year.

Prime Minister Mark Carney's (Nepean, Ont.) first post-election cabinet was pared down from that of his predecessor, with a two-tier structure of 28 ministers and 10 secretaries of state, the latter of which make \$74,700 on top of their base MP salary.

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# ‘Waiting is deadly for Palestinians’: Canada can’t put off state recognition, says NDP’s McPherson

Canada intends to recognize the State of Palestine at the United Nations General Assembly later this month, but holding off until that time endangers more lives as Israel ramps up its military operation, the NDP’s foreign affairs critic says.

Continued from page 1

But as the United States revokes Palestinian Authority visas and sanctions international court judges, it creates a “zone of uncertainty” about the recognition’s impact, no matter the timing, according to foreign policy expert Thomas Juneau.

Juneau, an associate professor of international affairs at the University of Ottawa and a former Middle East policy analyst for the Department of National Defence, said that he broadly supports the government’s “imperfect” intention to recognize a Palestinian state. Still, the announcement lacked clarity on “why now?”

On July 30, Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.) announced that Canada intends to recognize the State of Palestine at the United Nations General Assembly later this month, provided that the Palestinian Authority, the recognized governing body in the West Bank, agrees to fulfill certain conditions.

The 80<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly will officially open on Sept. 9, with the first day of the high-level general debate beginning on Sept. 23.

Carney said that recognition is “predicated on the Palestinian Authority’s commitment to much-needed reforms,” including general elections to be held by 2026, “in which Hamas can play no part,” and demilitarization.

The decision followed Carney’s discussions with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas earlier in the day, as well as similar announcements by United Kingdom Prime Minister Keir Starmer the day before, and from French President Emmanuel Macron the week prior.

Carney told reporters that he had spoken to both Starmer and Macron in the days leading up to Canada’s announcement. In their judgment, “the prospect of a Palestinian state is literally receding before our eyes,” Carney said.

The prime minister pointed to the threat of Hamas and its rejection of Israel’s right to exist, the expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, and “the ongoing failure by the Israeli government to prevent the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian disaster in Gaza” as “steadily and gravely erod[ing]” a future two-state solution.

On Aug. 29, the U.S. State Department said it is denying and revoking visas held by members of the Palestinian Authority and the Palestine Liberation Organization ahead of the General Assembly.

The State Department said that the Palestinian Authority mission to the UN will receive waivers, but also warned that it must “end its attempts to bypass negotiations through international lawfare campaigns ... and efforts to secure the unilateral recognition of a conjectural Palestinian state.”

In a July 30 statement, the Conservative Party condemned Carney’s announcement as a “reward” for Hamas, and said it “legitimizes terrorism,” noting that while the Conservatives have “long supported a two-state solution,” they would not “cave to political pressure or reward terror with recognition.”

Conservative MP Michael Chong (Wellington-Halton Hills North, Ont.), his party’s foreign affairs critic, was unavailable for an interview and did not respond to *The Hill Times*’ request for written comment by publication deadline.

In an Aug. 27 interview, McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, Alta.) said Canada cannot wait until later this month to recognize Palestine “because waiting has proven so deadly for Palestinians.”

Despite the rejection of the announcement by Israel’s foreign affairs ministry and its ambassador to Canada, Iddo Moed, McPherson pointed to the Israeli citizens—including families of hostages—currently protesting their government, demanding an agreement to release their loved ones and an end to the war.

The escalation in Gaza “is so dangerous and will not result in peace for Palestinians or Israelis,” McPherson said. “There is only a diplomatic solution, and if we believe that both Palestinians

and Israelis have a right to live in peace in their countries, then we have to recognize the state of Palestine.”

On Aug. 29, Israel announced that the “initial stages” of the planned offensive in Gaza City and the surrounding areas had begun, and that it had suspended the scheduled midday pauses in fighting that were implemented to allow for the distribution of food and humanitarian aid.

Israel’s military also announced it had recovered the body of one hostage and the remains of another, one of whom was identified as Ilan Weiss, a man who had been killed in the initial Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas terrorist attacks that killed more than 1,100 Israelis and saw more than 200 people taken hostage. Weiss’ daughter and wife were also held hostage but were released in November 2023.

There are still 48 hostages being held by Hamas, of which the Israeli military believes less than half are still alive.

By the end of August, the death toll in Israel’s war had surpassed 63,000 Palestinians, according to the Gaza Health Ministry.

On Aug. 22, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Famine Review Committee released a report confirming that famine is occurring in parts of Gaza, and “rapidly spreading” to other areas of the enclave.

In an Aug. 23 statement, Secretary of State for International Development Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, B.C.) said Canada is “deeply alarmed by the horrific deteriorating conditions in Gaza,” and called for an immediate ceasefire to increase the delivery of food and humanitarian aid.

Beyond recognition of Palestine, McPherson said there are several actions Canada “can and is legally obligated to take,” including implementing a full arms embargo, suspending the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement, and imposing further sanctions on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and members of his government.

On June 10, Canada imposed sanctions on Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir in co-ordination with the U.K., Australia, New Zealand, and Norway for “inciting violence against Palestinians in the West Bank.”

“This government needs to take action and make that happen now,” McPherson said, adding that there is much more



Prime Minister Mark Carney, right, and Foreign Affairs Minister Anita Anand announced Canada’s intention to recognize a state of Palestine at the United Nations General Assembly in New York at the end of September on July 30. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Canada can and should be doing, but is currently doing very little beyond symbolic statements.

## Lack of clarity, Trump’s inconsistency creates ‘zone of uncertainty’ over Canada’s Palestine recognition: Juneau

Carney has offered little rationale for what Canada hopes to achieve, nor why it foreshadowed its recognition by nearly two months, Juneau said.

“Ultimately, there’s no timing that obviously makes sense for this, but—to me—the government hasn’t sufficiently explained its rationale for doing this,” Juneau said. “The easy criticism is that this is just performative.”

Additionally, Juneau said the government has not explained how it plans to define success or progress in relation to the criteria it set out, or how that will be assessed.

“It was evident at the time that sufficient progress would not be made in that very short term, and that, in all likelihood, there would actually be regression before September,” Juneau said, pointing to the escalating crisis in Gaza since the announcement, as well as the recent approval of a large settlement in the West Bank that even its proponents claim would kill a future Palestinian state.

Two days before the IPC report, Israel approved the controversial E1 settlement project east of Jerusalem, which previous U.S. administrations had opposed as it would functionally divide the West Bank into two, destroying plans for a future Palestinian state.

The plan’s proponents have said much the same, including Smotrich, who said the approval “finally buries the idea of a Palestinian state.”

Foreign Affairs Minister Anita Anand (Oakville East, Ont.) signed on to a joint statement—alongside foreign ministers and representatives of 20 G7 and European countries—in condemning the approval and calling for an immediate halt to all settlement construction.

Juneau said that Netanyahu’s government opposes a two-state

solution, alongside the majority of the Israeli Knesset who voted overwhelmingly in July 2024 to reject any future Palestinian state, and that is not likely to change regardless of what Canada does.

What is more uncertain is how the recognition will impact Canada’s relationship with the U.S. and the ongoing trade negotiations with President Donald Trump, Juneau said.

“To me, the U.S. angle is critical, but it’s not entirely clear where Trump stands,” Juneau said, noting that Trump is “consistently inconsistent.”

“There’s a huge zone of uncertainty on this.”

While Trump declined to take a position on the U.K.’s planned recognition while visiting Scotland, he later said that Canada’s announcement would make it “very hard” to make a trade deal with this country.

Trump’s administration also recently sanctioned a Canadian judge serving on the International Criminal Court (ICC) for ruling to authorize the court’s investigation into the conduct of U.S. personnel in Afghanistan.

Three other ICC judges—France’s Nicolas Guillou, Fiji’s Nazhat Shameem Khan, and Senegal’s Mame Mandiaye Niang—were also sanctioned over their involvement in the investigation into Israel’s actions in Gaza and the Israeli-occupied West Bank, according to the U.S. State Department’s press release.

Canada has not officially commented on the sanctions. However, sources in Anand’s office have stated that the issue was raised during her meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Aug. 21, the day after he announced the sanctions.

Juneau said that it shouldn’t surprise anyone that Trump would be willing to use Palestinian statehood as a negotiating tool, despite some previous comments empathizing with the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

“We have to be careful not to make decisions that will be too costly on the relationship, but it’s a difficult balance to strike because we don’t really know where Trump stands,” Juneau said.

*sbenson@hilltimes.com*  
*The Hill Times*



## COMMENT

# Putin's gulling of Trump a historic setback for Ukraine and the world's democracies

The Aug. 15 meeting gave Russia the green light to continue its invasion without worrying too much about Washington intervening in a major way on Ukraine's behalf.

Les  
Whittington

Need to Know



OTTAWA—The role of the United States as a leading world power veered toward historic meaninglessness in a single moment last month when President Donald Trump applauded Russia's Vladimir Putin as the latter stepped off an airplane for their meeting in Alaska.

As usual, the two-man confab—this time on the subject of Moscow's attack on Ukraine—was a victory for the death-spewing Russian dictator. And Putin didn't leave anything to doubt afterwards, releasing his campaign of terror and murder on Ukrainian civilians with renewed fury shortly after.

And two weeks later, fresh from his escape in Alaska from his status as an international pariah, Putin was welcomed at a much-heralded meeting in China of Asian leaders hosted by Chinese President Xi Jinping. The conference, replete with military parades, was a paean to Xi's long-running campaign to blunt U.S. global influence, and undermine liberal democracy around the world. Putin's ability to nullify U.S. opposition to Moscow's blatant aggression against neighbouring Ukraine could not help but be seen by Xi as validation of his crucial support for Russia during the war. Putin and Xi must have had a good laugh privately about the so-called Alaska summit.

The Trump-Putin talk on Aug. 15 did indeed defy all expectations. You'd think, watching the whole thing, that the two leaders were meeting to continue some joint effort to make the world a better place, or a plan to use their powers to co-operate on improving the lot of humanity.

But no, Trump was conferring the prestige of the U.S. in a moment watched by the world on the man who, unprovoked, set off the worst conflict in Europe since the Second World War—with more than a million people dead, 35,000 children kidnapped, and Ukraine's infrastructure being relentlessly destroyed.

Trump often decries the violence and death caused by Putin's unprovoked attack. But he acts like it's a horrible accident of some sort.

The American media mostly tiptoe around it, but the fact is that Putin exposes Trump for the lightweight, unprincipled diplomatic novice he is. Before the Alaska meeting, the occupant of the White House

had complained vigorously about Putin talking nice and then launching vicious attacks on Ukraine the minute the two men hung up the phone. And he threatened to slam Moscow with punishing economic sanctions if Putin failed to agree to an unconditional ceasefire.

All that got pushed aside as the wrung-out-looking U.S. president emerged from several hours of talks with his Russian buddy at the U.S. Air Force base in Anchorage. One has to assume that Putin—who obviously knows how to play to Trump's vanity and love of power—reminded the U.S. leader that he considers a free, democratic Ukraine with ties to the West a threat to his country and his ambition to make Russia great again, as it were. Trump, who if anything seems to see Putin as a kind of role model, by all indications allowed himself to be strung along by the Russian's snow job about someday negotiations.

Barring any changes, the closed-door meeting ended up giving Russia the green light to continue its invasion without worrying too much about Washington, D.C., intervening in a major way on Ukraine's behalf. This is momentous. It is an historic shift in the balance of power underpinning the evolving conflict and global hopes of ending it.

"Make a deal," Trump told FoxTV in a comment directed at Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy shortly after the Alaska meet. "He's got to make a deal. Russia is a very big power." He added, "We're number 1, they're number 2."

"It's not a war that should have been started," Trump also said. "You don't do that. You don't take on a nation that's 10 times your size."

It's clear that Trump has decided—at least as of this past weekend—that it's up to somebody else to confront Putin's obsession with wiping out Ukraine and who knows what other nation-states in eastern Europe.

The U.S. appears to be agreeing to take part in vague security guarantees for Ukraine (but no troops). And it is selling billions of dollars' worth of military hardware to Europe to be passed on to Zelenskyy. But it's Europe's show now.

No one seems to know whether this is a function of Putin's hold on Trump, or the dollar signs Trump envisions from normalizing economic relations with oil-rich Russia. Or maybe it's simply a matter of Trump's oft-stated preference for big power supremacy.

Whatever is behind it, the fact that Trump appears to have finally decided he has no responsibility to step up in a significant way and try to stop the all-out war against Ukraine scrambled the prospects for putting an end to the killing that has become the *raison d'être* of Putin's Russia.

At Xi's conference on Sept. 1, the Russian leader retailed his false narrative that regional interference by NATO was to blame for his Ukrainian assault. But Putin went on to tell Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other leaders that, in Alaska, he and Trump had succeeded in "opening a way to peace" in Ukraine—neglecting to add "on Russia's terms."

Les Whittington is a regular columnist for The Hill Times.

The Hill Times

# The fall political roadmap has plenty of potholes



Prime Minister Mark Carney, left, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, centre, and interim NDP Leader Don Davies. The fall has the potential to be an interesting one, writes Tim Powers. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

The Liberals, Conservatives, and NDP all need to show signs of life when Parliament resumes.

Tim  
Powers

Plain Speak



OTTAWA—Technically, summer doesn't leave us for another two-and-a-half weeks, but with schools back in session and Parliament set to resume mid-month it's hard not to feel like we are being dragged back into the normal political rhythms. How many weeks until Thanksgiving?

This fall has the potential to be an interesting one for the Liberals, Conservatives, and, yes, even the NDP. The latter aren't dead yet, but they aren't showing many signs of life, either.

For the Liberals, the fall is going to be about seeing if the goodwill that Canadians seem to hold for the prime minister can be retained. Mark Carney regularly runs ahead of his party, and hasn't made too many early-term errors. Though, like others, he is human, and those errors are bound to come.

The key to Carney's success or decline still likely resides in some measure with where Canada ends up on United States President Donald Trump's trade and tariff map. Equally important to the prime minister will be how effectively the boldness of change he has talked about in terms of government spending reform, enabling energy projects, and just getting things done materializes. If it gets bogged down in the Ottawa swamp, neither he nor public opinion will be happy.

The Liberals also need to get better at speaking about affordability and the cost of living. A recent Abacus poll noted that more than 60 per cent of Canadians pegged that as the No. 1 issue. Unsurprisingly, in that same poll, the Conservatives for the first time in a while went ahead of the Liberals in party standings. Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre seems to

have the silver tongue of sensibility with Canadians when it comes to understanding the pressures their wallets are under.

While his connection to Canadians' economic anxieties remains an asset for the Conservative leader, and the return to Parliament is an important tick mark on his path back to trying to become prime minister, other vulnerabilities remain. Poilievre is obviously focused on ensuring a strong, positive leadership review vote from the Conservative Party membership when he faces them in January. Thus, it appears his language and posturing on issues speaks more to his base than the broader public. The Canadian Sovereignty Act—or however he has styled it—and his recent calls to reform self-defence provisions in the Criminal Code may have some policy merit, but they are more about beating a populist drum.

In that same Abacus poll, Poilievre continues to run behind his party. He has to address that, and not hope that the winds of change will blow favourably for him. That is not a strategy. If the NDP continues to remain weak, and the country feels Carney is the serious man for these serious times, the Conservative leader can't just dismiss those elements and continue to campaign as if it is 2024 and a guy named Trudeau is in charge.

Without recognized status in Parliament, and with—so far—no big-name candidates putting up their hands to lead the party after the March 2026 leadership vote, the NDP is in a precarious place. Seemingly deeply damaged because of their long political arrangement with the Trudeau government, the New Democrats need to show signs of life in the fall. They need feistiness along with a narrative appeal that has an audience. To their credit, the Conservatives have seemingly eaten a bit of the NDP's lunch with labour unions and blue-collar workers. The Liberals have also given a home to those on the left who never want to see a Poilievre government.

The NDP have a number of big brains who know how to build appeals and sell them. Bring them together, and find a path forward. The NDP doesn't have the luxury of warring with itself now.

Again, how long until Thanksgiving?

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



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# Editorial

## Editorial

### Canadians should strive for a gold medal in safe sport

Take a look at any Olympic/Paralympic Games, or international hockey tournament. Canadians love sports, and truly come together when national athletic prowess and pride is on the line. This makes it all the more disturbing that abuses within the country’s sport system have been allowed to fester for so long. Canadians want their athletes to be their heroes, but far too often, those same people who get put on a pedestal (or podium) are left to fend for themselves when they’re put in vulnerable positions. On Aug. 28, the Future of Sport in Canada Commission released its preliminary report, and the observations contained within are bleak. “Despite growing awareness and the many studies and reports that came before us, maltreatment in sport, including abuse, harassment and discrimination, remains widespread within sport. While instances of maltreatment permeate all levels of sport, they are particularly prevalent at the grassroots and community-level,” the report says. This is compounded by the hodgepodge of systems to handle complaints about such maltreatment across the country. “Complaint management processes and procedures are often overly complex and lack clear timelines to ensure prompt resolution. In many cases, they have not been adequately trauma-informed and lack procedural fairness,” the report reads. Among its 71 recommendations, the commission calls for the federal government to take a leadership role in ensuring that organizations that get federal money conduct Vulnerable Sector Checks for those in contact with athletes, and that everyone complete the relevant chapters of the national safe sport education program once developed. The report also suggests the federal government “collaborate with the provincial and territorial governments to create a national safe sport authority or tribunal to administer federal and provincial/territorial safe sport legislation,” and in doing so, provide for the establishment of a national registry of sanctioned individuals that would “publish provisional measures and sanctions for the duration of their effect.” “A common concern echoed throughout our work was that individuals who are banned from participating in sport can migrate across sport organizations, move to different jurisdictions or different sport settings, and continue their involvement in sport despite being actively suspended,” the commission highlighted. Although the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport currently maintains the Canadian Safe Sport Program Public Registry, it exclusively contains information on individuals who are subject to the Canadian Safe Sport Program (listed federally funded organizations). “Sport is unsafe. As a result of underfunding, insufficient legal/regulatory authority, system fragmentation, and cultural permissiveness,” former Liberal sport minister Carla Qualtrough posted on social media after the report’s release. The commission was announced under Qualtrough in May 2024. “Today we should all be reflecting on what we could have done to prevent this from happening in the first place,” she wrote. “Let’s hold ourselves accountable, and not fall into the trap of defensiveness, excuse-making, and risk management.” Just as Canadians pull together in the midst of an exciting match, we should be equally fervent about protecting everyone involved in sport. *The Hill Times*



## Letters to the Editor



Indigenous leaders from Ecuador Zenaïda Yasacama, left, Fanny Kaekat, and Hortencia Zhagüi called on the Canadian government to end trade talks with their country during an October 2024 visit to Ottawa. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

### Canada shouldn’t trade on its values when seeking new partners: Kairos rep

Re: “Observers eye fall sitting for bills to implement still-secret trade pacts with Indonesia and Ecuador,” (*The Hill Times*, Aug. 20, p.5). Last October, I accompanied the delegation of Indigenous and local leaders—all women—from Ecuador who called on Canada to reject the trade deal between the two countries, which threatens their rights and the environment. Indigenous communities had not been consulted, violating their free, prior, and informed consent, which Canada has a duty to observe under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. They also called on Canada to reject the proposed investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS), which undermines national sovereignty by allowing foreign corporations to sue governments that introduce policies related to public health, environmental protection, and social welfare that may affect corporate profits. ISDS provisions are so harmful to human rights and climate action that UN bodies and experts warn against using them. I cannot stress the egregious impact that resource extraction has on women. Contrary to myth, they experience a decline in economic prosperity when mining projects come to their communities. Women are often displaced, suffer the destruction of Indigenous ancestral knowledge, and are subjected to various forms of gendered and sexual violence linked to the influx of male workers. They are also vulnerable to significant illness and disease when handling contaminated water, which they use in domestic work. Although rarely consulted on proposed mining projects, women typically speak out as leaders in the defence of land and water, making them more vulnerable to harmful forms of gender-based retaliation. There is a real concern for potential violent reprisals for speaking out against Canadian mining in particular, which for 30 years has undermined their communities and environments. The delegates came to Canada at great risk to themselves. While Canada is eager to diversify its trade partners, must we also trade our values in the process? **Silvia Vasquez-Olguin Kairos global partners co-ordinator, Latin America and gender justice Toronto, Ont.**

### Stop the war, says Toronto letter writer

The CBC recently reported that from the 1960s to the '90s, about 3,500 people died in the Irish Troubles. This tragedy occurred over the course of 30 years. By comparison, Israel’s attack on Gaza has killed some 60,000 Palestinians in less than two years. As a Jew, I’m sickened. I urge an immediate ceasefire, release of the hostages, and removal of all impediments to humanitarian aid. **Gideon Forman, Toronto, Ont.**



## COMMENT

# Are we offering human bait in Ukraine?

Canada would need to acquire modern battlefield necessities before it can send any soldiers into Ukraine.

Scott Taylor

Inside Defence



OTTAWA—Last week, Prime Minister Mark Carney completed a whirlwind tour of Europe making all sorts of promises about strengthening defence ties with our European allies.

However, for those familiar with the over-stretched state of the Canadian military, one of those promises struck an ominous chord. In an Aug. 24 joint press conference with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Kyiv, Carney discussed security guarantees in the event of a ceasefire in the Russia-Ukraine conflict. “We know that [Russian President Vladimir] Putin can never be trusted,” Carney said in his speech. “We know that true

peace and security will require security guarantees for Ukraine.”

While acknowledging that the key component would be a front line consisting of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, Carney added that this would be buttressed by members of the Coalition of the Willing. The kicker was that Carney for the first time stated he “would not exclude the presence of [Canadian] troops” as part of that deterrence or buttressing force.

“When that peace comes, we cannot simply trust and verify—we must deter and fortify,” the prime minister said.

If that is indeed the case, that could spell major problems for the Canadian military.

I say that because Canada’s combat cupboard is basically bare. The final stop for Carney and company was a visit to Canada’s forward-deployed battle group at Camp Adazi in Latvia. These 2,000 Canadian troops are part of NATO’s Operation Reassurance, which is intended to provide a deterrent to Russian aggression in the Baltic states.

Canada has led the 14-nation NATO brigade group in Latvia since 2017. The initial Canadian contingent was roughly 400 personnel, but that number has steadily grown. The current strength of 2,000 soldiers is set

to increase to 2,200 by the spring of 2026.

Given that the Canadian Army presently has just three under-strength combat brigades, this means that essentially one of those brigades is posted to Latvia, one has just returned from Latvia, and the remaining brigade is preparing to deploy to Latvia.

In the latest CAF readiness report, it was revealed that nearly half of the Army’s vehicles and heavy weaponry is unserviceable at any point in time. This is due to a shortage of spare parts in the system, a lack of trained personnel to maintain the vehicles, and, in some cases, simply the advanced age of the hardware.

Obviously, logistics priority has been given to the battle group in Latvia as they have Canada’s only, recently acquired low-level air defence system, and the majority of the still serviceable Leopard 2 tanks, which are at Camp Adazi.

Even so, reporters attending Carney’s visit to Latvia were privately advised by soldiers on the ground that even on this operational deployment there is a long wish list among the troops for better kit, and more of it. Witnessing the Russia-Ukraine conflict from a front-row seat, these Canadian soldiers in Latvia want



If Prime Minister Mark Carney intends to actually put Canadian boots on the ground in Ukraine, he needs to make some tough decisions, writes Scott Taylor. Photograph courtesy of X

more air defence, more drones, and newer tanks.

Now, if Carney truly believes that Putin cannot be trusted to keep his word, and he intends to actually put Canadian boots on the ground in Ukraine, then he needs to make some tough decisions.

To find the requisite number of personnel, the Canadian Army would either have to scale down the Latvia mission or stand up a limited mobilization of the militia regiments to a war-time footing.

Prior to deploying into Ukraine, Canada would need to acquire modern battlefield necessities like armoured self-propelled howitzers, fleets of first-person-view drones, counter-drone measures, sophisticated anti-armour systems, and boatloads of ammunition.

Some analysts have suggested that Carney could make his security guarantee to Ukraine an extension of the long-standing training mission. Operation Uni-

fier was stood up in 2015 following Russia’s annexation of Crimea. Originally, Canadian instructors trained Ukrainian recruits in their own country, but that training was relocated to the United Kingdom and Poland following Russia’s invasion in 2022. To date, an estimated 45,000 Ukrainian soldiers have received combat training as part of Canada’s initiative.

However, I would suggest that if there is a ceasefire, these Ukrainian veterans with more than three years of bloody modern warfare experience would be in a better position to train Canadian soldiers rather than the other way around.

If Carney does not properly equip and train a battle group bound for Ukraine, they will be nothing more than human bait.

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

The Hill Times

# As the CAQ flounders, the Parti Québécois appears to be unstoppable

Federalists should be preparing for the worst as the PQ continues to surge in the polls.

Andrew Caddell

With All Due Respect



KAMOURASKA, QUE.—While the Aug. 11 Parti Québécois byelection victory in rural Arthabaska didn’t make headlines elsewhere in Canada, it’s big news here. It gave PQ leader Paul St-Pierre Plamondon a sixth seat in the National Assembly; the star candidate, Alex Boissonneault, is a former reporter for Radio-Canada; and Quebec Conservative Leader Éric Duhaime was defeated in a riding he was expected to win.

There is no question byelection victories are often inter-

preted as signs of discontent with the ruling party, and there is plenty of that to go around towards Premier François Legault and his ruling Coalition Avenir Québec, or CAQ.

In the last week, the CAQ has been prominent at the Gallant inquiry into a \$500-million overrun of the Société de l’assurance automobile du Québec application known as “SAAQclie.” Legault testified at the inquiry this week, and is soon expected to shuffle his cabinet, an exercise fitting the cliché of rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic.

Legault’s fall from grace has been precipitous: from the avuncular leader in the pandemic, he is now the least popular premier in the country. In the Arthabaska byelection, the CAQ received only seven per cent of the vote in a riding it previously held.

In the wake of the byelection loss, the premier took to the streets of Quebec City, asking passers-by why they thought his government was unpopular. He should have known: SAAQclie, the failed Northvolt battery plant,

and a massive \$13-billion deficit. Anglophones like me would add mean-spirited language and cultural values legislation.

A recent Leger poll showed the PQ in front with 35 per cent support, the Quebec Liberals and new leader Pablo Rodriguez at 26 per cent, and the CAQ at a measly 17 per cent. The spotlight is now on the hard-line Plamondon as future premier. Former PQ premier Lucien Bouchard told Radio-Canada that Plamondon “will have to think seriously before maintaining his commitment to hold a referendum.” The PQ leader brushed off the advice, saying he knew what he was doing.

Meanwhile, Plamondon is wading into the debate on public prayer as Muslims have been blocking the streets of Old Montreal, praying in front of Notre-Dame Basilica. Legault has promised to ban the practice, while Plamondon plans to consult PQ members. It’s clear where he stands: alluding to similar bans in Europe, Plamondon said street prayers “create dynamics that I would not want to see in Quebec.”

This is yet another time the PQ, traditionally a left-of-centre party, has supported a right-wing position. In the spring, Plamondon called for the elimination of the Quebec gas tax to be equal to Ontario, despite its purpose in the fight against climate change. And he has questioned a progressive sex education program for Quebec schools.

Plamondon’s frequent mentions of European practices derive from his time spent in Sweden studying international law; and Denmark, where he lived for a year after high school. He seems to view Quebec’s nine million citizens as equivalent to Sweden’s 10 million and Denmark’s six—small, efficient countries capable of collaborating peacefully with their neighbours.

In fact, the pre-referendum propaganda has already begun in social media, laying out how “simple” it would be for Quebec to become an independent country. Despite commentators arguing there’s little support for independence, recent polls have shown an upsurge among Quebec youth. Some analysts say this is in

response to the threat from American President Donald Trump, believing only an independent Quebec would survive Canada’s absorption into the United States. There is also antagonism against “open-door” federal immigration laws, which are blamed for unemployment and housing shortages.

If he were to form government in the October 2026 election, Plamondon plans to hold a referendum on independence within two years. His election platform will offer nationalism, better government, and controls on immigration. His only credible challenger is Liberal Leader Rodriguez, who has limited growth potential in the regions like Kamouraska.

And with two-thirds of National Assembly seats outside Montreal, that is a weakness for the Liberals.

We have seen this movie before. Threats of economic disaster for an independent Quebec get little traction, and few Quebec federalists dare say anything good about Canada. Trump will presumably still be in office until 2028. Instead of hoping for the best, federalists should be preparing for the worst.

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

The Hill Times



# OPINION

## Safeguarding Canada's freshwater heritage

Freshwater is a crucial part of the environmental frontline in safeguarding our nation's sovereignty, and strengthening democracy.

Cameron Fioret  
& Maude Barlow

Opinion

Canada completed its 45<sup>th</sup> federal election with existential concerns. In the face of severe external pressure from our country's closest ally, national pride has coalesced, and, predictably, an overwhelming majority of Canadians oppose the idea of becoming part of the United States.

This groundswell of pride must also be a time for reaffirming our collective values and shoring up democracy in a global political environment where it is in recession. But how can this be achieved?

From the bottom up, from the polity to Parliament, our national values and sovereignty may be strengthened through our fresh



The country's political leaders must double down on the popular sentiment that our freshwater must not be sold or privatized, write Cameron Fioret and Maude Barlow. *Unsplash photograph by Kevin Noble*

water, which is shared within Canada and binationally with the U.S. Our nation's freshwater wealth is attractive south of the border, yet it need not be a point of contention. Instead, we can look to our binational history and exemplary stability as future guidance.

The International Joint Commission, established by the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909, is one of ten major treaties and agreements between Canada and the U.S. on freshwater. Our agreements regarding this vital heritage are mutually reinforcing, and position water as an object of preventive diplomacy. Freshwater is, therefore, a crucial part of the environmental frontline in safeguarding our nation's sovereignty, and strengthening democracy.

More than a century of such agreements and co-operation stands in contrast to recent agitation, which threatens this formidable partnership. Though there is present agony, our political leaders must not lose sight of the much longer, sturdier peace enjoyed for such a length of time.

Water-taking is widely unpopular within this country, and Canadians deeply value a healthy environment with clean freshwater. Heeding the voices of Canadians would increase confidence in government, and act as a coalescing force that continues to bring people together.

Canada's political leaders must double down on the popular sentiment that our freshwater

must not be sold or privatized. Each political party should be explicit about *never* using Canada's freshwater as a bargaining chip in the coming interactions with the Trump administration. To bargain with our freshwater would be to bargain with our sovereignty.

As we navigate the dynamic complexities of freshwater management within Canada, it is crucial to recognize that access to clean water is a fundamental human right. The United Nations General Assembly explicitly recognized the human right to water and sanitation in 2010, affirming that clean drinking water is essential to the realization of all human rights. This principle should guide our national policies and priorities.

Crucially, Indigenous inherent and treaty rights in relation to freshwater must be honoured by the Government of Canada. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act is the guiding word that must be used to uphold promises to Indigenous Peoples, as well as democratic and moral ideals. It is, indeed, a moral imperative to realize promises long made but not entirely kept.

Canadian politicians have a shared responsibility to protect and manage our freshwater heritage sustainably and democratically. By prioritizing human rights in our water policies, we can ensure that every Canadian has access to clean and safe water. This commitment not only strengthens our national sovereignty but also reinforces our democratic values.

As Canada moves through this period of consequences, we must all remember that safeguarding our freshwater heritage is not only an environmental and geopolitical imperative, but also a moral one, essential for the well-being of current and future generations.

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*Maude Barlow is an author, water justice activist, and former senior adviser on water to the UN General Assembly.*

*The Hill Times*

## Canada must lead on an all-encompassing treaty to end the plastics crisis

Upholding Indigenous rights and protecting the health of Canadians means continuing to call for an ambitious plastics treaty that addresses upstream solutions.

Sien  
Van den broeke

Opinion

The sixth round of negotiations for a United Nations Global Plastics Treaty failed to secure the hoped-for agreement to end plastic pollution across the plastic

lifecycle. As deadlocked discussions spread frustration among delegates, many countries stood up to reject a toothless waste management deal. This included Canada calling the latest Treaty draft text "unacceptable for future generations." Now, more than ever before, with more eyes on world leaders, Canada must help determine where we go from here. Political will and courage are essential to tackle this issue at the source, not just the symptoms.

Petrochemical and fossil fuel lobbyists showed up in droves to the Plastics Treaty negotiations to persuade governments to steer discussions away from measures that constrain the production and consumption of plastic. They promoted a business-as-usual approach with improved plastic design and better waste management under the guise of a reuse, innovation, and economic prosperity for all. The Chemistry Industry Association of Canada,

a highly active plastics lobby, has said they are "championing a [T]reaty that has plastics circularity at its core" in its latest op-ed in *The Hill Times*. But if we've learned anything from the last few decades, there is no such thing as a circular economy for plastic.

In Canada, recycling rates are extremely low. Even if collection and recycling were to increase dramatically, a 2020 review of the capacity of Canada's biggest mechanical and chemical recycling facilities showed that they are equipped to recycle less than 17 per cent of the country's total annual plastic waste generation. The so-called advanced recycling does not exist for all plastic types, is expensive, difficult to perfect, energy intensive, and produces waste, and is therefore not circular. Even if significant investment and expansion looked promising, the current and continued expansion of plastic production makes

a circular economy impossible. We make and consume too much plastic, so much in fact that plastic pollution is now everywhere.

We are in the midst of a plastic pollution crisis that is harming our health and environment while fuelling the climate crisis. Throughout its lifespan, plastic—including macroplastics, microplastics, and nanoplastics—releases harmful emissions and chemicals. The enormous acceleration of plastic production over the last few decades, paired with a broken waste management system, has dug us into a plastic hole. If business as usual continues, plastic production will rise as predicted, accompanied by an increase in destructive pollution. Plastic pollution is a public health emergency, with recent studies estimating it will result in health-related issues costing more than \$2-trillion a year.

If governments are serious about protecting human health, the new Greenpeace International report is a stark reminder of why we need a Treaty that begins at the production phase. Findings from the report revealed that across 11 countries, the number of people living within five kilometres of plastic-linked petrochemical production is more than 16 million, and increases to more than 51 million people for people living a distance of 10 km; this includes 2.3 million people in Canada. During the fourth

round of the negotiations hosted in Ottawa, Aamjiwnaang First Nation, living next to the notorious "Chemical Valley," declared a state of emergency when a benzene leak from the INEOS Styrolution petrochemical facility was detected, with high air pollution concentrations causing illness in the community. During the facility's decommissioning in June, a benzene leak happened again.

Upholding Indigenous rights and protecting the health of Canadians means continuing to stand alongside the majority of countries calling for an ambitious Treaty that addresses upstream solutions. Studies have found that communities near these plastic-linked petrochemical sites—often located in marginalized areas—suffer from higher rates of illness, including respiratory conditions, kidney disease, damage to reproduction, and even cancer, disproportionately affecting low-income households and BIPOC communities.

*Sien Van den broeke is a nature and biodiversity campaigner at Greenpeace Canada. Her work focuses on environmental policy, biodiversity conservation, ocean protection, and plastic pollution. She holds dual master's degrees in environmental policy, and social and economic sciences; and is fluent in Dutch, English, French, and Spanish.*

*The Hill Times*



## OPINION

# Forty years on: the Macdonald Commission and its enduring legacy

The Macdonald Commission's pivotal report recommended the gradual dismantling of trade barriers, but also warned of the danger that the U.S. could leverage in its economic influence.

Jacques J.M. Shore  
& Wendy Wagner

Opinion



In September 1985, the Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada—commonly known as the Macdonald Commission—unveiled a transformative blueprint for Canada's economic future. Chaired by Donald Macdonald and backed by prominent thinkers, the Commission submitted a three-volume report advocating major reforms.

The Macdonald Commission's pivotal report—issued when Canada's population was 25 million people—recommended the gradual dismantling of trade barriers. This first led to the historic Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement (CUFTA), later superseded by the tripartite North American Free Trade Agreement and its more recent successor, the Canada-U.S.-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA).

As Canada approaches the Commission's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary with our population of 41 million, it is the right time to reflect on its prescient warnings and aspirations.

To adequately mark this moment and the next phase of our CUSMA relationship with the U.S., one must consider the enduring benefits of free trade with the Americans, and the lessons learned.

The Macdonald Commission's report recognized that economic integration with the U.S. could bolster Canadian productivity, foster innovation, and provide consumers with greater choices and lower prices. Canada's strategic entry into free trade has produced tangible benefits: increased access to the largest market in the world, the growth of export-oriented industries, and the strengthening of Canada's manufacturing and technological capabilities. Notably, the integration has allowed Canadian companies to participate more effectively in the North American supply chain, which has become a cornerstone of the continent's economic vitality.

Moreover, free trade has contributed to a more competitive Canadian economy. Consumers have enjoyed access to a wider array of goods and services, often at lower prices, which has increased living standards. Generally, free trade has expanded Canadian businesses' access to lower cost inputs, and has increased consumer choice and driven down prices. The elimination of the vast majority of import duties and enhanced competition has enabled Canadian consumers to access a broad array of goods, from electronics to household items, and to foodstuffs.

Yet, the journey has not been without challenges. The experience of CUFTA and subsequent trade agreements offers valuable lessons. One key takeaway is that trade policy must be strategic and grounded in a clear understanding of national interests. The Macdonald Commission's passages warned of the danger that the U.S. could leverage in its economic influence. Because trade with Canada was viewed as quantitatively far less important to the Americans than their trade is to Canada, the U.S. could feel free to enact protective measures with little concern for domestic political consequences—or for Canadian resistance. In fact, the Commission foresaw that Canada's modest economic weight would make it vulnerable to unilateral American policy decisions, and that political influence in Canada could be weakened should the U.S. be tempted to withdraw or press us through trade coercion.

This fear remains relevant today. The Commission warned: "it is important that any formal arrangement be designed to mitigate the inevitable tensions that it would create for Canadians. [...] the American government might be tempted to threaten the suspension or unilateral alteration of any existing free-trade agreement, in order to persuade Canada to accept a compromise that was relatively more favourable to U.S. interests."

The Commission understood that Canada's ability to shape its own policies and safeguard its interest could be undermined. That prophecy proved nearly exact.

At various instances, Canada has faced sudden imposition of tariffs or investigations, from decades old softwood lumber disputes to the recent Sec. 232 steel and aluminum tariffs under the Trump administration. The core warning remains relevant: Canada's outsized dependence exposes it to political risk unless it establishes mechanisms to anchor market access. The Macdonald Commission urged Canada to reduce uncertainty, and build legal buffers against the U.S. withdrawal.

One crucial lesson Canada has certainly learned recently is the importance of diversification and resilience. Relying heavily on a single trade partner—albeit the largest—has exposed Canada to policy shifts and protectionist sentiments. This awareness has now led us to recognize more than ever the need for robust trade agreements, diversification of markets, and measures to preserve core industries by trading partners.

As Canada works to reduce the U.S. tariff of 35 per cent on non-CUSMA eligible goods, and other higher tariffs, and approaches negotiations to extend CUSMA in 2026, the government should clearly articulate that tariffs and protectionist measures threaten the economic and broader political stability between the two nations. Canadian political and business leaders need to "double down" in their efforts.

This country's trade strategy should unify federal leadership, provinces and territories, business sector representatives, and small and medium-sized enterprises in co-ordinated outreach to American congressional stakeholders, industry, groups, and state governments. This multistakeholder messaging reinforces alignment of the economic and political logic of a trade partnership between us and the U.S.

Canada may best reaffirm its sovereign pride by demonstrating to the White House

the value of us trading with other nations—also potentially opening new avenues for Americans. This will at the same time give comfort to Canadians that we are well-positioned to increase trade more globally. It would also heed the Commission's warned risk of over-reliance on one major trading partner.

Our case must emphasize the mutual benefits of continued free trade. It should highlight that trade restrictions disrupt North American supply chains, increase costs for consumers and industries, and lead to never-ending escalating retaliatory measures. A message grounded in economic reality, supported by data and examples, can reinforce the importance to Americans of preserving CUSMA's provisions and embracing Canada—rather than pursuing punitive economic measures that ultimately compromise Canada's ability to be a strong and contributing partner to North American security and prosperity.

Our prime minister and premiers must frame the discussion around free trade as a joint national interest. Canada must also explain it is in the U.S. interest for our economy to do well if we are expected to pay our fair share to NATO, secure our border from illegal migrants, halt the flow of fentanyl, and protect our northern territories and our increasingly ice-free

waterways. Emphasizing co-operation will help foster a positive environment for negotiations and convince Americans it is to their benefit in the context of our continental security. If the Trump administration does not appreciate that, let us further amplify our messages to congressional leaders, state governors, and smart-minded Americans. Have confidence that in doing so we will succeed and fulfill the promise made by Macdonald and his commissioners. They meticulously sketched a positive, well-reasoned, brilliantly crafted blueprint for many generations to come.

While elements of our trade relationship through these years may not have been perfect, the "leap of faith" Canadians took proved to be far more beneficial than any other alternative we may have pursued. This journey is far from over—it has just begun.

Jacques J.M. Shore, C.M., is partner and past chair of the government affairs practice of Gowling WLG Law Firm. He had the privilege to work at the Macdonald Commission on its legal constitutional research program and to contribute to the final report.

Wendy Wagner is partner and head of Gowling WLG's international trade law practice.

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## NEWS

# Latvia extension forges near-permanent Canadian Army presence in Europe, leaving limited ability to deploy elsewhere

Canada last had a permanent military presence in Europe during the Cold War.

Continued from **page 1**

a multinational NATO battle-group of 3,000 soldiers. Canada's deployment is targeted to rise to 2,200 personnel by 2026.

Canada has had an ongoing presence in Latvia on NATO's eastern flank since 2017. Defence observers say the latest extension has essentially created a permanent Canadian presence in Europe harkening back to Cold War days with its base of Baden-Soellingen in then-West Germany.

"This is the point of greatest threat to Canada's defence interests," said former Department of National Defence analyst Andrew Rasiulis.

"The Arctic is closer and it's our territory, but ... the probability of threat is lower in the Arctic than it is in the eastern flank," he said.

"There's a hot war going on there right now. We don't know how that hot war will end in Ukraine. The probabilities are that it will not end in Ukraine's favour, which means that we're probably looking at Cold War Two of some sort," he said.

The deployment to Latvia leaves few other options that the Canadian Army can pursue due to an ongoing recruitment and retention crisis in the Armed Forces.

The most recent DND and Canadian Armed Forces departmental plan for 2025-26 noted that the Latvia deployment encompasses 65 to 80 per cent of the Army's "sustainable deployment capacity."

"To maintain domestic and international response task readiness, the [Canadian Army] is currently at its force generation sustainability limit," the document reads.

The plans give the military land fleets until 2032 to reach a target of 70 per cent that are serviceable to meet training, readiness, and operational requirements, as previously reported by *The Hill Times*. In 2023-24, the result was 49 per cent.

## 'A question of resources and priorities'

Rasiulis said that, for Canada, it is about deciding which missions are of the highest priority, and the answer has been the one in Latvia.



Defence Minister David McGuinty has few options of where he can task the Canadian Army after extending its mission in Latvia. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia



Canada has led the NATO battlegroup in Latvia since 2017. *DND* photograph by Corporal Marc-André Leclerc

"It's all a question of resources and priorities," he said. "It's very clear [that other missions] would be a lower priority for Canadian defensive interests, and we would have to minimize our participation in that."

Chris Kilford, who retired after a 36-year career in the Canadian Forces, said he foresees the mission will have an increasingly permanent element with more Canadians being posted to Latvia for a longer duration.

"I'd prefer not just to see these three-year extensions to the mission," said Kilford, a director at the Canadian International Council. "I'd prefer to see a 10-year extension. Just get it over with and say, 'We're there for the long term.' ... Make a more firm commitment than just three years."

He said that this is a top priority for Canada.

"This mission is about deterring Russia. We've seen what Russia has gotten up to with Georgia in 2008, Ukraine in 2014, Ukraine in 2022," Kilford said. "We know Russia is a challenge and its not necessarily going to go away with [President Vladimir] Putin. The long-term success of this mission is simply deterring the future Russian forays into Europe."

Denis Thompson, a former major-general in the Canadian Army, said he views the mission as taking on a more permanent posture.

"It's no different to when we were in Germany from the start of the Cold War to the end of the Cold War. That wasn't a bad thing. It's what kept our Army relevant—we had the best kit and equipment at the time," he said.

"[Carney's] going to do it in three-year tranches so you can

plan, but I suspect that no government will step away from it unless there is some other unforeseen change in the world of geopolitics," Thompson said.

Kilford said there may be a calculation along the way that Russia no longer poses a threat, at which point a drawdown could take place.

"But I don't see that in the near term or even the medium term," he said. "People have had a big wake-up call, and we've responded."

Canada leads a battlegroup composed of 11 other nations—Albania, Czech Republic, Iceland, Italy, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden. There are also seven other NATO battlegroups in Europe, located in Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia.

## Mission motivating the Army, says retired major-general

Kilford said the mission is also helping with the revitalization of the Canadian Forces, and serving in the pursuit of rebuilding the Army.

"[It is helping to build] a more modern, a more adaptable, more capable force," he said. "That will be a success out of all of this."

Thompson described the Latvia mission as the Army's single best motivator.

"It's probably the best recruitment tool and retention tool, and it reminds me of my time as a young officer in the Cold War when I served in Germany, which was a big attraction for us back then," he said.

He said if the mission wasn't prioritized, the worry would be that the Army "would risk withering on the vine."

"But being on a NATO mission next door to Russia—and next door to Belarus—is important for the Canadian Army, and gives them a sense of purpose," he said. "People want to be involved in something exciting and new and overseas."

Carney's government is prioritizing a pivot towards Europe instead of focusing on other regions such as the Indo-Pacific, Haiti, or Africa, Thompson said, also citing Canada's commitment to join the European Union's rearmament plan.

He said that the mission in Latvia is likely the most important one in which the government can engage.

"There's only ever been so much capacity to go out. At the moment, this is the choice of the government of the day—and I believe in it," he said.

Former Canadian diplomat Chris Shapardanov, who served as an ambassador to Finland, said the security picture given the ongoing war in Ukraine is of "grave concern."

He said lessons from appeasement policies in the 1930s need to be kept in mind when addressing the Russian threat.

The renewal of the mission in Latvia is a clear sign Canada is taking the transatlantic link seriously, and that the ongoing permanent nature of the mission will be determined by Russia when the Ukraine war ends, he said.

"Will they turn their attention to the Baltic states, for example? There's been some very unfortunate rhetoric coming out of Russia about the situation in the Baltic states. The Baltic states fit into a very similar narrative as Ukraine is in, in terms of their legacy of being part of the Russian Empire and then the Soviet Empire," said Shapardanov, now a senior associate at David Pratt and Associates.

He said that in terms of the hierarchy of threats that Canada faces, Russia is at the top.

"[That is] because of their blatant, unjustified aggression against Ukraine, [and] changing international boundaries by force," he said.

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# ‘Sunshine is what is needed’: 2025 election, foreign interference issues on deck for PROC this fall

Conservative vice-chair Michael Cooper says he thinks the Longest Ballot Committee’s efforts may also need to be explored by the House Affairs Committee.

Continued from page 1

reportedly closed early or did not open at all, preventing a number of residents from casting their ballots. The Makivvik Corporation, an organization representing Inuit in Nunavik, subsequently called for an investigation. Elections Canada has apologized and committed to review the situation, and publish a report. Now-Indigenous Services Minister Mandy Gull-Masty won the riding by a margin of roughly 7.2 percentage points over Bloc incumbent Sylvie Bérubé.

In an emailed French statement to *The Hill Times*, Normandin also referenced “several reports of non-citizens” receiving voter cards in Abitibi-Baie-James-Nunavik-Eeyou.

Normandin, who is her party’s democratic institutions critic, said the Bloc in particular wants to hear from Chief Electoral Officer Stéphane Perrault, including to answer questions from MPs on the issues reported in both ridings, and speak to ways to prevent similar incidents in the future.

Along with seeking for Perrault to appear for two hours of testimony and questioning, Normandin’s motion also specifically calls for representatives from each federal party interested in speaking to the subject, and electors or representative groups to appear as witnesses. Questioned on the broadness of the latter group of witnesses to be invited, Normandin explained that the Bloc “didn’t want to limit the study since there may have been incidents during the election campaign that we don’t know about yet.”

As per the motion adopted, the study will take place over four meetings, with party reps first on the docket, followed by electors and interested groups, then Perrault, and finally any other witnesses the committee opts to invite.

On June 12, committee members also agreed to a motion forwarded by Conservative MP Michael Cooper (St. Albert-Sturgeon River, Alta.), who is once again vice-chair of PROC.



MPs attend a post-election orientation session in the House of Commons Chamber on May 21. The Lower Chamber is set to return from summer recess on Sept. 15. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Ontario Liberal MP Chris Bittle is the new chair of PROC. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Cooper’s motion calls for MPs to “assess the need for a study on foreign interference,” and consider testimony from studies during the last Parliament—including on the questions of privilege related to Conservative MP Michael Chong (Wellington-Halton Hills North, Ont.), and “cyberattacks targeting members”—to decide “what work will be deemed necessary to undertake on this subject” after the summer break.

Cooper told *The Hill Times* that another dive into the issue of foreign interference is needed, including in the context of this year’s federal election.

Cooper pointed to the Security and Intelligence Threats to Elections (SITE) Task Force’s findings of an “information operation” by a Chinese news account through WeChat, which boosted stories about Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.). While it raised concerns, the task force indicated the activity did not go beyond WeChat and was not “affecting Canadians’ abilities to make an informed decision about their vote.” He also raised the SITE Task Force’s flagging of a perceived “transnational repression” operation by Hong Kong Police, who in December 2024 offered monetary rewards for information leading to the arrest of six individuals living overseas, two of whom were Canadians, including then-Conservative candidate Joe Tay.

“There could be other instances of foreign interference,” said Cooper. “Sunshine is what is needed; there needs to be transparency. That is what [the Canadian Security Intelligence Service] and the security establishment have long called for, and that is why” a study that gets “to the bottom of exactly what happened” is needed.

Cooper said as part of such a study, he would want to hear from Public Safety Minister Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough-Guildwood-Rouge Park, Ont.), including on questions regarding the delayed implementation of the foreign influence registry, which was created through Bill C-70, which received assent in June 2024.

“The issues with Elections Canada are quite distinct from the issue of hostile foreign states such as Beijing interfering and attempting to influence Canadians in an election,” said Cooper, who also backed the Bloc’s proposed general election study.

Liberal MP Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Ont.), who’s been elected as the new chair of PROC, said that while it will be “up to the committee,” he personally hopes to see a study into the issue of long ballots.

The Longest Ballot Committee—a movement that’s been working to field large numbers of candidates to put their names on ballots since the 2021 federal election in an effort to promote the adoption of a proportional

representation electoral system—was active again this past election, and in the recent Battle River-Crowfoot, Alta., byelection where 214 candidates registered to run.

Due to the high number of candidates in Battle River-Crowfoot, Elections Canada introduced an adapted ballot that saw electors write in the name of their chosen candidate. Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre ultimately won the Aug. 18 race after having lost his Carleton, Ont., seat during the federal election. The Longest Ballot Committee’s efforts added 85 names to the 91-name general-election ballot in Carleton—a seat ultimately won by Liberal Bruce Fanjoy.

“I think it’s an issue—as a Member of Parliament—and hopefully something that’s of interest to everyone to look into,” said Bittle.

Cooper said such a study is “something that PROC may need to take up.” Cooper noted he was a signatory on a July letter from Poilievre to Government House Leader Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Que.), who is responsible for the democratic institutions file, calling for amendments to the Canada Elections Act to curb long-ballot protests.

“It’s an issue that has to be addressed,” said Cooper. “We called on the government to take certain measures in terms of amendments to [the] Canada Elections Act, and it may very well be appropriate for PROC to hear from the Chief Electoral Officer and other officials.”

## ‘From zero to 100’

An MP since 2015, it’s Bittle’s first time taking a seat as a House committee chair. He previously served as a member of PROC from 2017 to 2019, but has more recently sat on the House’s Justice and Human Rights, Scrutiny of Regulations, and Public Safety and National Security committees.

Only two MPs who sat on PROC at the end of the last

Parliament are still committee members: Cooper, and Conservative MP Blaine Calkins (Ponoka-Didsbury, Alta.).

Along with Normandin, also now on the committee are: first-time Conservative MP Grant Jackson (Brandon-Souris, Man.), Conservative MP Tako Van Popta (Langley Township-Fraser Heights, B.C.), and Liberal MPs Elisabeth Briere (Sherbrooke, Que.), Greg Fergus (Hull-Aylmer, Que.), Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Ont.), and Tim Louis (Kitchener-Conestoga, Ont.). Kayabaga is also deputy House leader, while Louis is parliamentary secretary to the minister for intergovernmental affairs and one Canadian economy.

Bittle said he’s “eager” to embark on his new challenge as chair.

“It’s a very different role than what I’m accustomed to. I’ve typically been on committees that have been legislatively heavy and seen as the person to help lead that legislation through the committee, or on a difficult file to be kind of the quarterback on that. This is a much different role; I’m eager to try something new,” he told *The Hill Times*.

PROC is mandated to weigh in on Parliament’s rules, the administration of the House, the Canada Elections Act, and conflict of interest matters related to MPs, among other things.

Given that mandate, Bittle noted things “can go from zero to 100 very quickly” at PROC, “more than any committees that I’ve seen,” and it likewise uniquely garners “the attention of all of the House leaders.”

“There’s a different intensity to PROC; it’s a very interesting committee that for a lot of the time it would be, I think, dull to your average Canadian ... constituents ask me what committee I’m on, I say ‘Procedure and House Affairs’—their eyes gloss over. And a lot of times it’s as dull as they think it is, and for important reasons. You’re dealing with the operations of the House of Commons, and a lot of times it is dull and nerdy, that was my experience. But then you get those moments that capture the attention because we are dealing with democracy and elections, and so the committee can get a lot of scrutiny very quickly,” said Bittle.

Bittle said he aims to do his best to maintain collegiality at the committee table. “I think that’s what Canadians expect,” he said, adding though that given “the topics that are at play ... there’s very little that a chair can do to prevent it from going to” 100. Bittle said he’s especially taking lessons from his former Liberal colleague Larry Bagnell’s time chairing PROC during the 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament.

“He listened, he paid attention, he was someone who, I think, if you ask the opposition would say was a fair-minded chair, and someone who was well respected on both sides of the aisle ... which I don’t know that I’m known for in the House of Commons, but [is] something I will draw upon,” said Bittle with a laugh.

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*The Hill Times*



# Hill Climbers

By Laura Ryckewaert



## A look at Jobs and Families Minister Hajdu's 28-member team

Sebastian Clarke is director of policy to Minister Hajdu, supported by deputy directors Crystina Dundas and Ellen Galupo.

With two previously separate cabinet portfolios under her charge, in addition to responsibility for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, it is perhaps no surprise that Jobs and Families Minister **Patty Hajdu** has assembled a sizable ministerial team, with 28 staffers currently confirmed in her office.

Under the previous Trudeau government, there were separate ministers responsible for families, children, and social development; and for employment and workforce development. That changed after Prime Minister **Mark Carney** took the helm in March. At the end of last year, the families office had some 17 staff on board, while the employment team was about 21-staff strong.

As reported by **Hill Climbers** in May, **Chris Evelyn**—who last ran then-families, children, and social development minister **Jenna Sudds'** office—is chief of staff to Hajdu.

**Sebastian Clarke** has been tapped as director of policy to the minister, and is supported by two deputy directors: **Crystina Dundas**, who's focused on the jobs file, and **Ellen Galupo**, who's responsible for families-related policy.

Clarke previously worked on the housing file, most recently as director of intergovernmental affairs and stakeholder relations to then-minister **Nathaniel Erskine-Smith**, and earlier as director of operations to then-minister **Sean Fraser**. Clarke is also an ex-operations director to Fraser as then-minister of immigration, and has worked for then-immigration ministers **Ahmed Hussen** and **Marco Mendicino**.

Dundas is a past senior policy and labour relations adviser to



Jobs and Families Minister **Patty Hajdu**, centre, with Prime Minister **Mark Carney**, left, and Governor General **Mary Simon** at Rideau Hall for the cabinet swearing in on May 13. *The Hill Times* photograph by **Sam Garcia**

then-employment minister **Steven MacKinnon**, and previously worked in the then-labour and seniors minister's office, starting as a West and North regional adviser to then-minister **Seamus O'Regan** and later continuing as senior policy adviser to then-minister **MacKinnon**.

Galupo was most recently director of policy to then-citizens' services minister **Terry Beech**. Between 2020 and 2023, Galupo worked for the federal families minister, beginning as an Ontario adviser under then-minister **Hussen**, and later as senior policy adviser to then-minister **Karina Gould**. She's also an ex-special assistant to then-heritage minister **Pablo Rodriguez**.

**Tyler Freeman**, **Juan David Gonzalez Camacho**, and **Miles Wu** are senior policy advisers in Hajdu's shop.

Freeman is a former senior policy adviser to **MacKinnon** as then-employment minister. He previously worked as a senior adviser for Ontario regional affairs to then-tourism and associate finance minister **Randy Boissonnault**; when Boissonnault was

shuffled to the employment file in July 2023, Freeman followed as a policy adviser. He's also worked for Gould as then-democratic institutions minister, and for then-public services and procurement minister **Anita Anand**.

**Gonzalez Camacho** previously worked for then-minister **Kamal Khara**. Originally hired as a Quebec adviser in her office as then-seniors minister in 2023, he soon after followed Khara to the diversity and inclusion portfolio, becoming a policy,

Quebec, and Atlantic adviser to the minister. He later dropped his regional responsibilities, and became a senior policy and communications adviser to Khara at the beginning of this year. His CV also includes time work-

ing for a Senator, and for then-sport minister **Pascale St-Onge**.

**Wu** is an ex-senior policy and Ontario regional adviser to then-sport minister **Carla Qualtrough**. For roughly a year and a half leading up to the July 2023 cabinet shuffle that saw Qualtrough put in charge of the sport file, Wu

tackled policy in her office as then-employment minister. He's also a former researcher with the C.D. Howe Institute, among other past jobs.

Four staffers currently carry the title of policy adviser in Hajdu's office: **Nima Mehr-tash**, **Amen Ben Ahmouda**, **Tenzin Chogkyi**, and **Reem Al-Ameri**.

**Mehrtash** is another ex-Senate staffer and a past communications adviser and executive assistant in Beech's office as then-citizens' services minister.

**Ben Ahmouda** comes from the Prime Minister's Office where she spent the last almost two years as a public appointments assistant. Her online résumé includes a summer 2022 internship at Global Affairs Canada, and a 2021 internship in Gould's office as then-international development minister.

**Chogkyi** is another former aide to Gould as then-families minister, having first been hired as a West and North regional adviser in the summer of 2022. He later switched to be Ontario regional adviser to Gould, and more recently did the same for

Beech as then-citizens' services minister. **Chogkyi** is also an ex-assistant to then-Liberal MP **Arif Virani**.

**Al-Ameri** returned to the Hill this past February to join Sudds' office as then-families minister as a parliamentary affairs and issues adviser. She previously worked in the women and gender equality minister's office between 2021 and 2022, first as an operations assistant to then-minister **Maryam Monsef**, and last as an Ontario adviser to then-minister **Marci Ien**. Prior to her return at the start

of this year, Al-Ameri was most recently an international project lead with **Wisdom2Action**.

**Chelsea Kusnick** is now director of parliamentary affairs to Hajdu, having most recently done the same for **MacKinnon** as then-employment minister.

A former MP assistant and special assistant in the Liberal Research Bureau (LRB), Kusnick has been working in ministers' offices since 2020, including as an aide to then-public services ministers **Anand** and **Filomena**



**Sebastian Clarke** is director of policy. *The Hill Times* photograph by **Andrew Meade**



**Tyler Freeman** is a senior policy adviser. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*



**Ellen Galupo** is deputy director of policy for families. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*



Policy adviser **Amen Ben Ahmouda**. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*



**Reem Al-Ameri** is a policy adviser. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*



Senior policy adviser **Miles Wu**. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*



**Chelsea Kusnick** is director of parliamentary affairs. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*



# HILL CLIMBERS

# NEWS

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**Tassi**, communications director to Tassi as then-minister for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, and a parliamentary affairs adviser to MacKinnon as then-labour and seniors minister.

**Osman Omer** is a parliamentary affairs adviser and assistant to Liberal MP **Annie Kouttrakis** as one of two parliamentary secretaries to Hajdu. An ex-Quebec adviser and parliamentary secretary's assistant to Beech as then-citizens' services minister, Omer is also an ex-operations assistant to Anand as then-Treasury Board president.

Serving as assistant to Hajdu's other parliamentary secretary—Liberal MP **Leslie Church**—is **Nanki Singh**. Singh worked on Church's unsuccessful 2024 byelection and successful 2025 federal election campaigns, and is a past press secretary to Ien as then-women and gender equality minister. She's also worked for then-public services minister **Helena Jaczek**, for Anand as then-defence minister and as then-public services minister, and as an assistant to Church's Liberal riding predecessor, former MP **Carolyn Bennett**.

**Joseph Pagani** is an issues manager. He's been on the Hill since 2024. First hired as an issues manager to O'Regan as then-labour and seniors minister, he later did the same for MacKinnon, including as then-employment minister.

**Karam Chima** is director of operations. Chima last did the same for Sudds as then-families minister, and is also a former special assistant for parliamentary affairs to Ien as then-women and gender equality minister. She's also an ex-assistant to Sudds both as an MP, and during Sudds' time as an Ottawa city councillor.

Supporting Chima is deputy director of operations **Andrew Welsh**, who also covers the Atlantic desk. Welsh is another ex-MacKinnon staffer, having tackled regional affairs and operations in MacKinnon's offices as then-employment and then-labour and seniors minister. He's also a past operations adviser to O'Regan as then-labour and seniors minister, and a former aide to then-trade minister **Mary Ng**.

**Wendy Wu** is senior Ontario regional adviser to Hajdu. Wu has covered the Ontario desk for Khera as then-diversity and inclusion minister, and is also a former LRB outreach adviser and a former assistant to Liberal MP **Jean Yip** and Ng as then-MP for Markham-Thornhill, Ont.

**Simaloi Sikar** is senior regional adviser for the West and North. She previously oversaw both regional desks for then-families ministers Sudds and Gould, and is a former constituency assistant to Manitoba Liberal MP **Terry Duguid**.

Covering Quebec regional affairs is adviser **Michael Danzer**, who is an ex-digital communications adviser to MacKinnon as then-labour and seniors minister, and as then-employment minister. He's also worked for Quebec Liberal MP **Anthony Housefather**, and Quebec Liberal MNA **Sona Lakhoyan Olivier**, among other past jobs.



Director of communications  
Aïssa Diop.  
Photograph  
courtesy of LinkedIn

Working as a special assistant as part of Hajdu's operations team is **Trédén Roseau**. Roseau also brings experience working on the employment file, having first joined then-minister **Ginette Petitpas Taylor**'s office as a student last year. According to his LinkedIn profile, he continued in the office part time after MacKinnon took over last December.

Turning to Hajdu's communications team, **Aïssa Diop** has been tapped as director, overseeing senior communications adviser and press secretary **Jennifer Kozelj**, digital communications adviser **Kheyi Isichei**, and communications advisers **Samantha Jerome** and **Allysa Pierre-Louis**.

Diop spent the last roughly four years working for Liberal MP **Marc Miller** through his various cabinet roles. First hired as a communications assistant in Miller's office as then-Indigenous services minister, she went on to be senior communications adviser and press secretary in his office as then-Crown-Indigenous relations minister, and most recently was his director of communications as then-immigration minister.

Kozelj previously held the same title in Hajdu's office as then-Indigenous services minister, and has been working for Hajdu overall since September 2023, starting as a social media manager and communications assistant after a summer internship in then-prime minister **Justin Trudeau**'s office.

Isichei comes from Sudds' old families team, which he first joined as a digital communications adviser in January 2024. Before then, he'd been a video editor and cameraman with Rogers Sports and Media in Montreal.

**Jerome** is a past assistant to an Ottawa city councillor and an ex-social media strategist and fitness instructor at Oxygen Yoga & Fitness, among other things, and first landed on the Hill in November 2024 when she was hired as a digital communications adviser to Petitpas Taylor as then-employment minister.

**Pierre-Louis** was most recently a special assistant for communications in the Prime Minister's Office—a role she first undertook in December 2023—and is a past global communications co-ordinator with aviation company CAE. She previously interned in Petitpas Taylor's office as then-official languages and Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency minister over the summer of 2022, after which **Pierre-Louis** interned with Bombardier.

Finally, capping off Hajdu's 28-member team are office manager **Salam Samara**, and executive assistant to the chief of staff **Fabrice Ahadi**.

Samara is a former executive assistant to then-health minister **Mark Holland**, and a past assistant to then-Liberal MP **Omar Alghabra**, both on the Hill and in his constituency office.

Ahadi was formerly an operations assistant and executive assistant to the chief of staff to MacKinnon as then-employment minister (at the time **Paul Moen**, who now runs Industry Minister **Mélanie Joly**'s office).

lryckewaert@hilltimes.com  
The Hill Times



Karam Chima is  
director of operations.  
Photograph courtesy of  
LinkedIn



Jennifer Kozelj is senior  
communications adviser and  
press secretary. Photograph  
courtesy of LinkedIn

## Foreign influence watchdog needs experience and compassion, not eminence: national security experts

Continued from page 3

languages to engage with communities and individuals impacted by foreign interference and transnational repression," Carvin said. "And you're going to want someone with compassion because they are going to be hearing a lot of really terrible, sad stories."

Carvin said she agrees with the coalition that the commissioner's success and that of the registry will depend on whether they are provided with the necessary funding and resources to be effective, including enhancing Canada's law enforcement capacity.

"Canada will need to step up to protect itself because this is an exercise in sovereignty," she said. "Ensuring that this office exists, is protected, and that we have greater transparency and enforcement around the issue of foreign lobbying and influence is fundamental to that."

Dan Stanton, a former CSIS executive manager and current instructor in national security at the University of Ottawa's Professional Development Institute, agreed with Carvin, telling *The Hill Times* that, in terms of profile, "the duller and greyer the better."

"We need someone with experience in the public service and experience with

politically sensitive investigations," Stanton said, adding that he doesn't expect whoever is chosen to become a partisan issue.

More important than who is steering the ship, the registry is necessary for the simple fact that the boat is finally leaving port, Stanton said.

"I see a lot of this as mostly symbolic; the registry isn't going to be a panacea or silver bullet to foreign interference," Stanton explained. "It's more about signalling that the government is finally moving forward, and can start on the heavy lifting they have to do."

While the registry itself doesn't specifically address transnational repression nor protect the communities in the crosshairs, Stanton said he hopes it will be a signal to those communities that Canada takes their concerns and safety seriously.

"What's most important is that the government doesn't rest on its laurels and say, 'we've got the registry, now let's get back to focusing on the economy,'" Stanton said. "This is just the first of many steps they have to take to face the challenge of foreign interference."

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# Parliamentary Calendar

The Parliamentary Calendar is a free events listing. Send in your political, cultural, diplomatic, or governmental event in a paragraph with all the relevant details under the subject line 'Parliamentary Calendar' to [news@hilltimes.com](mailto:news@hilltimes.com) by Wednesday at noon before the Monday paper or by Friday at noon for the Wednesday paper.

## Alberta Premier Smith to headline Canada Strong and Free Network conference in Calgary on Sept. 6



Alberta Premier Danielle Smith is a keynote speaker for the Canada Strong and Free Network's 2025 Regional Conference in Calgary on Sept. 6. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

### 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](http://afn.ca/events).

**Cabinet Retreat**—Prime Minister Mark Carney and his front bench will huddle in Toronto ahead of this month's return to Parliament. Wednesday, Sept. 3 to Friday, Sept. 5.

### THURSDAY, SEPT. 4

**Susan Aglukark to Discuss Her Memoir**—Juno Award-winning Inuk singer-songwriter Susan Aglukark will discuss her new memoir, *Kihiani: A Memoir of Healing*, an uplifting story of an Inuk artist's journey to healing and self-discovery. Thursday, Sept. 4, at 7 p.m. at Library and Archives Canada, 395 Wellington St., Ottawa. Details: [writersfestival.org](http://writersfestival.org).

### 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. Speakers include Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, Conservative MP Jamil Javani, former Reform Party leader Preston Manning, and Conrad Black. Friday, Sept. 5, to Saturday, Sept. 6, at the Westin Airport Calgary Hotel. Details: [canadastrongandfree.network](http://canadastrongandfree.network).

### MONDAY, SEPT. 8

**Panel: 'Pole Possessions in International Relations'**—The University of Ottawa hosts a talk: "Pole Possessions in International Relations: Status and Geopolitics in the Scrambles for Polar Pre-eminence." Panellists will ask why states desire to possess the North and South poles, how this competition involves how states see themselves, how they desire others to see them, and how others respond to these

desires. Monday, Sept. 8, at 12 p.m. ET at FSS 4004, 120 University Priv., University of Ottawa. Details: [cips-cepi.ca](http://cips-cepi.ca).

### MONDAY, SEPT. 8— TUESDAY, SEPT. 9

**Bloc Caucus Retreat**—The Bloc Québécois pre-session caucus meeting will be held from Sept. 8-9 at the Hôtel Le Bonne Entente, 3400 Chemin Sainte-Foy, Quebec. Bloc Leader Yves-François Blanchet will hold a closing press conference on Sept. 9.

### TUESDAY, SEPT. 9

**Bell Cybersecurity Summit**—Bell Canada presents the inaugural Bell Cybersecurity Summit. This half-day event will bring together more than 200 leaders and experts from government, business, and technology under the theme "Securing the future: sovereign, smart and seamless." Tuesday, Sept. 9, 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. ET, at The Globe and Mail Centre, 351 King St. E, Suite 1600, Toronto. Details online.

**Webinar: 'Canadian Northerners' Views about Arctic Issues'**—The University of Ottawa hosts a webinar, "Perceptions of Canadian Northerners about Arctic issues." Mathieu Landriault, director of the Observatory on Politics and Security in the Arctic, and Mirva Salminen, associate professor at the University of Tromsø, will share data from a survey conducted among Arctic residents in Canada and their opinions about Arctic security, economic development, and governance. Tuesday, Sept. 9, at 10 a.m. ET happening online: [cips-cepi.ca](http://cips-cepi.ca).

**Panel: 'A Coalition to Protect Canadians'**—Join Canadian Club Toronto to hear from leading voices in banking, telecommunications, policing, and cybersecurity. Anthony Ostler, president and CEO of the Canadian Bankers Association, will moderate the conversation featuring: Nick Bednarz, CEO, Rogers Bank, and senior vice-president, financial services, Rogers Communications; Chris Lynam, director general, National Cyber Crime Coordination Centre, RCMP; Aaron McAllister, vice-president, fraud threat management, Scotiabank; and Jennifer Quaid, executive director, Canadian

Cyber Threat Exchange. Tuesday, Sept. 9, 11:45 a.m. ET, at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel, 100 Front St. W. Details: [canadianclub.org](http://canadianclub.org).

**DND Public Consultation**—The Department of National Defence will host public engagement sessions to answer questions and provide details about the upcoming construction of the Arctic Over-The-Horizon Transmit Site at 0 Thistle Trail, Kawartha Lakes. Community members from Kawartha Lakes and surrounding areas are invited to attend. DND experts will be available to discuss the project. Tuesday, Sept. 9, 2 p.m. ET, at the Coboc Community Centre, 9 Grandy Rd., Kawartha Lakes, Ont. Contact [mlo-blm@forces.gc.ca](mailto:mlo-blm@forces.gc.ca).

**Art from the Archives Workshop**—Library and Archives Canada hosts an English-language painting workshop that pays tribute to a historic site in the National Capital Region. One step at a time, recreate a landscape straight from the collections using acrylic paint. All materials are provided, and no experience is necessary. Wednesday, Sept. 9, at 6:30 p.m. at Library and Archives Canada, 625 du Carrefour Blvd., Gatineau, Que. Register via Eventbrite. French workshop takes place Sept. 10.

### TUESDAY SEPT. 9— FRIDAY, SEPT. 12

**Liberal National Caucus Meeting**—The federal Liberals will meet from Tuesday, Sept. 9, to Friday, Sept. 12, for their national caucus retreat in Edmonton to set their fall strategy.

### WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 10

**Bombardier CEO to Deliver Remarks**—Éric Martel, president and CEO of Bombardier, will deliver remarks on "Bombardier and Canadian Aerospace: A Strategic Partner for Innovation, Defence, and Global Leadership," at a lunch event hosted by the Canadian Club Toronto. Wednesday, Sept. 10, at 11:45 a.m. ET at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel, Toronto. Details: [canadianclub.org](http://canadianclub.org).

**Panel: 'Future Fertility'**—The Economic Club of Canada presents a panel on "Future Fertility: Redesigning

Reproductive Health for a New Era," exploring the future of fertility and family planning in Canada, with a focus on access, equity, and innovation. It will highlight emerging technologies — such as AI-driven diagnostics, personalized IVF protocols, and regenerative therapies — and examine their potential to improve outcomes and patient experience. Wednesday, Sept. 10, 11:45 a.m., Hilton Toronto, 145 Richmond St W. Details: [economicclub.ca](http://economicclub.ca).

**DND Public Consultation**—The Department of National Defence will host public engagement sessions to answer questions and provide details about the upcoming construction of a preliminary Arctic Over-The-Horizon Receive Site at 2225 Sideroad 15 and 16, Clearview Township. Members of the local community and surrounding areas are invited to attend. DND experts will be available to discuss the project. This event will be held at the Creemore Station on the Green, 910 Caroline St. E., Creemore, Ont. Contact [mlo-blm@forces.gc.ca](mailto:mlo-blm@forces.gc.ca).

### WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 10— THURSDAY, SEPT. 11

**GoSec 25**—GoSecure will host a cybersecurity summit, GoSec 25, in person and online. Over the course of two days, GoSec 25 will host more than 1,500 attendees and feature 40-plus sessions led by more than 50 renowned speakers. Wednesday, Sept. 10 to Thursday, Sept. 11, at the Palais des Congrès de Montréal, 201 Avenue Viger Ouest. Details: [gosec.net](http://gosec.net).

### THURSDAY, SEPT. 11

**Panel: 'Strengthening Women in Diplomacy'**—The University of Ottawa hosts a panel discussion on "Strengthening the Representation of Women in Diplomacy: Challenges and Policy Solutions," presenting the work of the LSE IDEAS Women in Diplomacy project. Participants include former Canadian ambassador Dr. Lilly Nicholls, uOttawa professor Rebecca Tiessen, London School of Economics professor Karen E. Smith, and Marta Kozielska, co-founder and manager of the Women in Diplomacy Project at LSE. Thursday, Sept. 11, at 10 a.m. in

FSS 5028, uOttawa campus, and via Zoom. Details: [cips-cepi.ca](http://cips-cepi.ca).

**Competition Commissioner to Deliver Remarks**—Competition Bureau of Canada Commissioner Matthew Boswell will take part in a conversation on "Canada's Competition Moment" hosted by the Canadian Club of Toronto. Boswell will touch on what's changing, what's at risk, and what lies ahead as major reforms to the Competition Act take shape and powerful new enforcement tools come into play. Thursday, Sept. 11, at 5:30 p.m. ET at 485 King St. W., Toronto. Register: [canadianclub.org](http://canadianclub.org).

### FRIDAY, SEPT. 12

**Minister Sidhu to Deliver Remarks**—International Trade Minister Maninder Sidhu will take part in a fire-side chat on "Canada's Trade Future" hosted by the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce. Friday, Sept. 12, at 9 a.m. MT at World Trade Centre, 9990 Jasper Ave., Suite 600, Edmonton. Details: [business.edmontonchamber.com](http://business.edmontonchamber.com).

### SUNDAY, SEPT. 14— MONDAY, SEPT. 15

**Supreme Court Justices to Visit Yellowknife**—Chief Justice Richard Wagner and Justices Nicholas Kasirer and Michelle O'Bonsawin will visit Yellowknife, N.W.T., for the third in a series of five visits planned this year to celebrate the Supreme Court's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The judges will meet with members of the legal and academic communities, and engage with students, the public, and the media. Sunday, Sept. 14, to Monday, Sept. 15. Details: [scc-csc.ca](http://scc-csc.ca).

### MONDAY, SEPT. 15

**House Returns**—The House of Commons returns on Monday, Sept. 15, and it's expected to be a busy fall session. It will sit Sept. 15-19; Sept. 22-26; Oct. 1-3; Oct. 6-10; Oct. 20-24; Oct. 27-31; Nov. 3-7; Nov. 17-21; Nov. 24-28; Dec. 1-5; and Dec. 8-12. That's 11 weeks left before it breaks for the year 2025. In total, the House will have sat only 73 days this year. Last year, it sat 122 days, and in 2023 it sat 121 days. In 2022, it sat 129 days, and in 2021 it sat 95 days.

**Justice Malcolm Rowe to Deliver Remarks**—Supreme Court Justice Malcolm Rowe will deliver remarks in honour of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Supreme Court of Canada. The lecture will describe the changes leading up to the current role of the court in the Charter era. Monday, Sept. 15, at 4 p.m. ET at Grant Hall, Queen's University Campus, Kingston, Ont. Details: [queensu.ca](http://queensu.ca).

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