



Thompson ADDS TO fisheries CREW

► PAGE 22

Women are essential to security

► PAGE 12



Age verification won't
keep young people
safe: Tabish ► PAGE 13

Party
Central
p. 20



THE HILL TIMES

Josie
Sabatino
p. 9

THIRTY-SEVENTH YEAR, NO. 2284

CANADA'S POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER

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NEWS



Prime Minister Mark Carney, right, and Canada-U.S. Trade Minister Dominic LeBlanc face a difficult task to keep CUSMA alive, say observers. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

BY NEIL MOSS

A mandated review of Canada's most consequential trade pact is set to take place in the new year, and as much remains unknown about how it will unfold, some are questioning whether the federal government has done the necessary groundwork.

The Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) mandates a review be held on its sixth anniversary of entry into force. It first came into effect on July 1, 2020.

Through the review, the pact can be extended for a second 16-year term beyond its current one. But if a party to CUSMA decides not to extend, it will start a process of annual joint reviews until the deal expires in 2036, if a course change isn't made.

Canadian Labour Congress senior researcher Elizabeth Kwan said Canada is not ready for the review, remarking that the government had "much more" engagement with civil society during the renegotiations of NAFTA, which eventually led to CUSMA.

'This is a process unlike any we've ever seen': questions loom over Canada's readiness for CUSMA review

During the renegotiation, the Canadian government had more than 1,300 engagements with stakeholders from February 2017 to December 2019, according to a Global Affairs Canada (GAC) summary of the talks. It also received more than 47,000 submissions from Canadians. It was those engagements, the department said, that informed the government's negotiating objectives.

"Groups were involved—like unions, women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, civil society organizations, academics—so we are six-

and-a-half months out and we're really short ... in comparison to where we were in the last round of the negotiations with the U.S. and Mexico," Kwan said.

GAC conducted public consultations on the operation of CUSMA that ran from Sept. 20 to Nov. 3. The department has yet to release a final report on what it heard.

The foreign ministry also held consultation on the trade pact in 2024, during which it received 137 submissions.

Continued on **page 14**

NEWS

'Something's gotta give': Liberal agenda needs a majority to make progress in 2026, says Grit strategist Joe Jordan

BY STUART BENSON

In its final fall sitting week, Parliament devolved into finger pointing, accusations of obstruction, and "procedural tricks and games" in the House of Commons and at committee, and was capped off with another floor crossing as the governing Liberals inch closer to a majority. Grit strategist Joe Jordan says that, whether

Continued on **page 4**

NEWS

Senators to get earlier look at documents, hear more budget requests publicly after CIBA practices questioned

BY LAURA RYCKEWAERT

Things are being done a bit differently at the Senate Internal Economy Committee with the recent adoption of new processes following concerns raised by Senators over the declining frequency of meetings, the late submission of documents, and the role of its steering committee.

The Senate Internal Economy, Budgets, and Administration Committee (CIBA), which is responsible for overseeing the finances, administration, and rules of the Senate, began its internal reflections in late October leading to changes proposed and adopted late last month, and put in practice for the first time last week.

Continued on **page 16**

NEWS

'A disturbing sign for allies': Trump's national security strategy raises red flags as Ottawa works on Canada's response

BY STUART BENSON

Nearly two weeks after the release of United States President Donald Trump's *National Security Strategy*, Canada's response has been muted, despite resounding condemnation of the document from former ministers, diplomats, and national security experts.

Former Canadian Security Intelligence Service analyst Stephanie Carvin told *The Hill Times* that the document "reflects the new reality" of the Trump administration's foreign policy approach, and sends "a profoundly clear message that the U.S. has decided that it is no longer interested in

Continued on **page 19**

NEWS

Redactions up: foreign ministry hiding more memo titles with 38 per cent kept secret this year

BY NEIL MOSS

The proportion of briefing note titles being redacted by Global Affairs Canada is climbing year over year, jumping from 7.1 per cent in 2020 to 38.2 per cent so far in 2025.

The Access to Information Act stipulates that titles and reference numbers for memos prepared for a cabinet minister or deputy head must be published within 30 days of the end of a month. But the act allows for records not to be published if

Continued on **page 18**

Heard on the Hill



By Christina Leadlay

PSPC eyes possible 'invisible lift' for Centre Block

Public Services and Procurement Canada is exploring the idea of an invisible lift system or 'retractable stairs,' within the steps leading to Centre Block's main doors, pictured, to make the Peace Tower's entrance more accessible. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Public Services and Procurement Canada is considering the potential installation of an invisible lift system within the stairs leading to Centre Block's main doors to make the historic Peace Tower entrance point more accessible.

The idea was previously noted in Sept. 16 meeting minutes of the MP working group on Hill construction when it was alternatively

referred to as "retractable stairs," and MPs requested more details from the department on the potential costs involved, and examples of use in other locations.

Speaking to efforts to make Centre Block more accessible during an update on the ongoing, multibillion-dollar Hill renovation project at the Procedure and House Affairs Committee on Dec. 10, **Jennifer Garrett**, PSPC's assistant dep-

uty minister for the Parliamentary Precinct, highlighted the exploration of "invisible lifts" technology, which she noted is currently being piloted in the East Block.

"Essentially what it is, is it looks like a stair, until it isn't, and then it turns into a lift," said Garrett, adding that the project team is "looking at it for the ceremonial entry of the Centre Block." —by *Laura Ryckewaert*

Ex-Tory MP Rahim Jaffer mulls federal comeback

Former Conservative MP **Rahim Jaffer** is pondering whether to re-join his old party, and run in the future federal by-election in Edmonton-Riverbend, Alta.

The National Post reported on Dec. 11 that the ex-caucus chair "said he's been approached by a few different people about running for the soon-to-be-vacated seat and will take some time over the holidays to mull over a return to federal politics."

The 53-year-old former MP held the Alberta riding of Edmonton-Strathcona from 1997 to 2008, and is married



Then-Conservative MP Rahim Jaffer in 2010. *The Hill Times* file photograph

to another former Conservative MP, **Helena Guergis**. This past October, Jaffer placed fifth in the contest to succeed **Amarjeet Sohi**—himself an ex-Liberal minister—as mayor of Edmonton.

Conservative MP **Matt Jeneroux** has held Edmonton-Riverbend since 2015, but announced on Nov. 6 that he would be resigning his seat in the spring.

Jaffer said he's being encouraged by "one of the local riding association vice-presidents" to renew his party membership and attend the Conservative Party's national convention in Calgary next month.

'I feel very lucky': Mark Norman thanks first responders after health scare

First responders deserve more support, said retired vice-admiral **Mark Norman** following a health scare last week.

The former vice-chief of defence staff posted on X on Dec. 10 that, "regrettably," he "collapsed during a conference earlier this week," and was impressed with the "prompt and professional" care he received at Ottawa's Civic Hospital, calling it "first rate."

"Our first responders and health-care professionals are doing an amazing job in terrible circumstances. They are working in worse conditions than I've seen in many other parts of the world," wrote Norman, who spent his Armed Forces career with the Royal Canadian Navy.

"I feel very lucky, but we must do a better job enabling them."

Jagmeet Singh wins gold at wrestling event in Niagara Falls

Former NDP leader **Jagmeet Singh** is ending this year as a winner.

Eight months after losing his British Columbia riding on election night, and then promptly resigning from the New Democratic leadership after eight years at the helm, Singh won gold at the ADCC Submission Fighting Canada Niagara Open on Dec. 14 in Niagara Falls, Ont.

Due to lack of competitors in the over-40 age group, Singh was moved into the "30 and above" category, "which meant one of my competitors was 34 years old—12 years my junior," he explained in a minute-long video on X recapping last weekend's event.

"What drives me to do this is I like to test myself and you never really know where you're at until you do a competition," he said.



Former NDP leader Jagmeet Singh won gold in the over-30 category at a submission fighting tournament last weekend in Niagara Falls, Ont. Screenshot courtesy of X

Ex-Bloc MP Kristina Michaud weighs in on riding redistribution

In a French opinion piece in *La Presse* titled "The important question of political weight," former Bloc Québécois MP **Kristina Michaud** shared her views on electoral riding redistribution on Dec. 15.

At issue is the National Assembly's new law to stop Quebec's Electoral Representation Commission from eliminating two ridings whilst making two new ones elsewhere to better reflect population distribution. The Court of Appeal has deemed the law unconstitutional. Among the changes being proposed to the provincial riding map is the elimination of one of three ridings in Gaspé, as has been done federally.

"Eliminating a riding to avoid diluting the vote of citizens from other regions seems, at first glance, perfectly logical. However, it becomes less so when viewed from a regional perspective," wrote Michaud, whose old federal riding of Avignon-La

Mitis-Matane-Matapédia, Que., was split up between two existing ridings into what's now Gaspésie-Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine-Listuguj and Rimouski-La Matapédia.

"Some believe that politicians shouldn't interfere in the electoral map, and I largely agree, but who better than an elected official to truly understand the specific characteristics of the territory they represent?" writes Michaud. She lists how larger ridings are not only a "headache" for the person elected, but also that grassroots voices won't be heard.

"These are essentially the arguments I presented to the Federal

Commission a few years ago [...] we lost the battle. This is one of the reasons that led me to withdraw from political life," writes Michaud, who didn't reoffer in the April 28 federal election, and who also gave birth to her first child earlier this year.



Then-Bloc MP Kristina Michaud in 2022. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

Independent Senators Group elects new leadership team

As Independent Senator **Raymonde Saint-Germain** steps back from her Red Chamber roles ahead of her October 2026 retirement, the Independent Senators Group elected its new leadership team last week.

Senator **Lucie Moncion** is the new facilitation team lead, supported by Senator **Joan Kingston**

as the new deputy, succeeding Senator **Bernadette Clement**. Senator **Pierre Daphond** takes over as legislative liaison from Senator **David Arnot**, while Senator **Chantal Petitclerc** remains in the role of chair of deliberations.

The new facilitation team will begin its two-year mandate on Jan. 1, 2026.



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NEWS

‘Something’s gotta give’: Liberal agenda needs a majority to make progress in 2026, says Grit strategist Joe Jordan

With only two substantive bills receiving royal assent since the spring, Conservative strategist Ashton Arsenault says the Liberals’ legislative performance this fall would be an ‘embarrassment’ under any other Parliament.

Continued from page 1

it’s a spring election or another defector, “something’s gotta give” if Prime Minister Mark Carney hopes to make greater progress on his promised agenda in 2026.

Speaking with *The Hill Times* on Dec. 12, Jordan, a former parliamentary secretary to then-prime minister Jean Chrétien, said that while the blame isn’t entirely at the feet of Carney (Nepean, Ont.), his lacklustre legislative record since being elected this spring isn’t living up to his promised “transformative agenda.”

“The prime minister is trying to make significant changes, but he’s meeting with the reality of a minority Parliament,” explained Jordan, now a senior associate with Bluesky Strategy Group.

Of the 18 bills the Liberals have tabled since the start of the 45th Parliament in late May, only five have received royal assent. Three of those were appropriations bills: C-6, C-7, and C-17, the latter of which was approved at third reading in the Senate on Dec. 10 and received royal assent the following day, thanks to an agreement reached by the Liberals and Conservatives to

allow progress on specific pieces of government legislation.

Both the Liberals’ border-security legislation, C-12, and affordability bill, C-4, that codifies its repeal of the federal consumer carbon price, passed through the House and progressed to second reading in the Senate on Dec. 11, where, the day before, Senators had also approved Bill C-17, which approved funding for the federal civil service. On Dec. 10, the Liberals’ omnibus Budget Implementation Act, Bill C-15, also passed second reading in the House, and was referred to the Finance Committee where it will be studied following Parliament’s return in the new year.

The first piece of Carney government legislation to make it into law was Bill C-5, the One Canada Economy Act, which received royal assent on June 20, just 14 days after it was tabled in the House of Commons. Bill C-3, the Lost Canadians Act, also received royal assent on Nov. 20.

Over the final two days of the fall sitting, the Liberals and opposition parties each defended their conduct and productivity while pointing fingers across the aisle at their opponents’ alleged attempts to obstruct and disrupt.

On his way into the Dec. 10 Liberal caucus meeting, Carney said he had wished to see more progress on the government’s budget and crime bills, but said he believes Parliament is still “functioning well.”

“It’s a minority Parliament,” Carney told reporters. “We’re making progress. Canadians rightly expect us to make a lot more progress.”

The next day, Government House Leader Steve MacKinnon (Gatineau, Que.) told reporters that “despite the Conservatives’ obstruc-

tion strategy, we have pressed ahead and endured, and we have a record that we can be proud of.”

“Since September, we have accomplished a great deal,” MacKinnon said in a Dec. 11 press conference in the West Block foyer. “It has been a hard ride because of the Conservatives’ obstruction, but we did get results, [and] we will continue to do that when the House returns in the new year.”

MacKinnon said he had been “systematically disappointed” by the “part of the Conservative caucus that views obstruction as a good day for them.”

MacKinnon also criticized what he called “schemes and gimmicks” from the Conservatives during committee meetings, particularly the House Justice and Human Rights Committee, which had been conducting a clause-by-clause study of Bill C-9, the government’s anti-hate legislation, earlier in the week.

During a Dec. 9 meeting, Liberal and Bloc Québécois committee members voted to approve a Bloc amendment to remove the religious exemption from Canada’s hate speech laws—a move Conservatives say will threaten freedom and religious expression.

As the clause-by-clause study extended into a second meeting on Dec. 11, some Conservative MPs arrived at the committee with Bibles, which they displayed on their desks to emphasize their arguments.

MacKinnon told reporters that while opposition parties “have the ability to hold up government legislation,” he added that “responsible opposition parties do that in a responsible way to offer alternatives and present reasoned arguments.”

He was responding to accusations from the Conservatives that it was the Liberals who



Even though Prime Minister Mark Carney is inching closer to a majority government via floor crossings, the Liberals’ pace this fall isn’t matching the ‘transformative agenda’ he campaigned on, say strategists. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Government House Leader Steve MacKinnon, centre, holds an end-of-sitting press conference in the West Block with deputy House leader Arielle Kayabaga, left, and parliamentary secretary Kevin Lamoureux to highlight the Liberals’ legislative progress. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

were responsible for delaying legislation at the committee, and “operating a deliberate campaign of self-obstruction.”

“For the past few weeks and months, we’ve seen all kinds of procedural tricks and games that Liberals have played that had the effect of holding up their own agenda,” Conservative House Leader Andrew Scheer (Regina-Qu’Appelle, Sask.) told reporters on Dec. 10, adding that his party had offered an “open hand” to the Liberals on their bail reform legislation, C-14.

“It’s the Liberals’ choice,” Scheer said, pointing to their ability to set the agenda at committee and their decision to prioritize the more controversial C-9, as well as the cancellation of the previous day’s committee meeting.

“The blame for a lack of action on bail lies 1,000 per cent with the Liberal government,” Scheer said.

During the Justice Committee meetings last week, Conservative members made 17 attempts to receive unanimous consent to set aside the study of C-9 in favour of C-15, but each was rebuffed by Liberal MPs.



Conservative House Leader Andrew Scheer says the blame for the lack of legislative progress lies with the Liberals’ ‘deliberate campaign of self-obstruction.’ *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

When asked by *The Hill Times* whether it would have been more efficient to allow the study of C-9 to conclude on Dec. 9, and allow the committee to begin its work on C-14, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Battle River-Crowfoot, Alta.) accused the Liberals of having their priorities backwards.

“We should have had Liberal bail repealed about five months ago,” Poilievre said during a Dec. 11 press conference. “Canadians said there was a problem ... that murderers, rapists, car thieves, [and] extortionists were being released under Liberal bail. The problem wasn’t that they [Canadians] believed that we needed to have police and prosecutors be in places of worship to make sure that clergy don’t quote religious texts.”

During his year-end West Block press conference on Dec. 10, interim NDP Leader Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, B.C.) said it was “too early” to judge how well Parliament is functioning as it is “still trying to find its feet” following this year’s election, but said the “games” being played at committees were not a positive signal.

“In the new year, you’re going to see how the opposition parties—the Bloc and Conservatives—deal with that, and whether or not we make Parliament work or not,” Davies said. “I’ll be looking to the Carney government to demonstrate that they understand they’re in a minority Parliament, and that they have to work across party lines if they’re going to get solutions. They haven’t shown that willingness yet.”

However, just hours after the House rose last week, Carney took one step closer to a majority with the defection of former Conservative MP Michael Ma

Continued on page 5

Continued from page 4

(Markham–Unionville, Ont.), who announced his floor crossing on social media less than an hour before the Liberals' annual holiday party, bringing their seat count to 171. One of those Liberal seats belongs to House Speaker Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Que.), who doesn't vote except to break a tie.

Ma's floor crossing follows that of his colleague, former Conservative MP Chris d'Entremont (Acadie–Annapolis, N.S.), who joined the Liberals on budget day, Nov. 4, citing Poilievre's leadership style. Days later, Conservative MP Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, Alta.) announced he would be vacating his seat in 2026, and d'Entremont said he expected more to follow.

In his Dec. 11 statement written on Liberal letterhead, Ma said he made the move "after listening carefully" to his constituents, and reflecting "on the direction of our country."

"This is a time for unity and decisive action for Canada's future," he wrote.

According to *The Toronto Star*, Ma's decision to cross the floor was only sealed earlier that afternoon, following a meeting with Carney earlier that day.

In a Dec. 14 interview with CTV's *Question Period*, Davies

said his party would be "open" to taking on the Speaker's role in exchange for resources, but said no such discussions have occurred on the "hypothetical" scenario that would deliver the Liberals a majority government.

"I think you have to be fluid. You have to be open. We haven't had that proposal put to us, so I can't say that we've given any consideration to it," Davies told host Vassy Kapelos.

Jordan told *The Hill Times* that the Liberals' difficulty at the Justice Committee is a "microcosm" of the problems they face, and serves to "reinforce the notion that this minority government is unsustainable going forward."

"Either the Liberals get another floor crossing, or there's a spring election," Jordan said.

Conservative strategist Ashton Arsenault told *The Hill Times* that, given the Liberals' "embarrassing" legislative record this fall and Carney's pursuit of potential floor crossers, "it's pretty clear" the prime minister doesn't like being in a minority government. The Liberals are "ineffectual at passing legislation," are "getting absolutely smothered in committee," and "are not skilled" when it comes to governing, Arsenault said.

"It's pretty transparent that the Liberals would rather do just about anything else other than

governing and passing legislation," Arsenault said. "The prime minister wants a majority, but he does not want an election, so he's going about it another way."

While caucus defections are "not great," Arsenault said he is still confident Poilievre's support will be "robust" during his leadership review at the end of January.

"[H]aving interacted with Pierre and having seen him in action, he's not somebody that takes anything for granted, and I think this will strengthen his resolve, if anything else," Arsenault said, adding that, in contrast to Carney, Poilievre has had much more success in Parliament this fall.

"It's the opposition's job to oppose, and if you want a scorecard, the opposition has performed remarkably well with respect to preventing, stymying, altering, and amending legislation," Arsenault said, noting that while the Liberals are now "teetering on a majority," they've had a workable minority with which any other government would have been far more productive.

"Only passing two pieces of substantial legislation since forming government is a joke," Arsenault said. "Any other government doing the routine stakeholder management and opposition outreach would have fared far better."

sbenson@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

Status of government bills

HOUSE OF COMMONS

SECOND READING:

- **S-2**, An Act to amend the Indian Act (new registration entitlements)
- **C-2**, Strong Borders Act
- **C-10**, Commissioner for Modern Treaty Implementation Act
- **C-16**, Protecting Victims Act
- **C-18**, Canada-Indonesia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement Implementation Act

COMMITTEE:

- **C-8**, An Act respecting cyber security, amending the Telecommunications Act and making consequential amendments to other Acts: Public Safety and National Security Committee
- **C-9**, Combatting Hate Act: Justice and Human Rights Committee
- **C-11**, Military Justice System Modernization Act: National Defence Committee
- **C-13**, An Act to implement the Protocol on the Accession of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership: International Trade Committee
- **C-14**, Bail and Sentencing Reform Act: Justice and Human Rights Committee
- **C-15**, Budget 2025 Implementation Act, No. 1: Finance Committee

SENATE

PRE-STUDY:

- **C-15**, Budget 2025 Implementation Act, No. 1: National Finance Committee

SECOND READING:

- **S-4**, An Act to amend the Energy Efficiency Act
- **C-4**, Making Life More Affordable for Canadians Act
- **C-12**, Strengthening Canada's Immigration System and Borders Act

COMMITTEE:

- **S-3**, An Act to amend the Weights and Measures Act, the Electricity and Gas Inspection Act, the Weights and Measures Regulations and the Electricity and Gas Inspection Regulations: Banking, Commerce, and Economy Committee

RECEIVED ROYAL ASSENT SINCE MAY 26:

- **C-3**, An Act to Amend the Citizenship Act: Nov. 20, 2025
- **C-5**, One Canadian Economy Act: June 26, 2025
- **C-6**, Appropriations Act No. 1: June 26, 2025
- **C-7**, Appropriations Act No. 2: June 26, 2025
- **C-17**, Appropriations Act No. 3: Dec. 11, 2025

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COMMENT

Geoengineering for grown-ups

We need to use every viable technique to hold the average global temperature down while we work frantically to end our emissions.

Gwynne Dyer

Global Affairs



A majority of early-career climate scientists now see geoengineering as necessary and inevitable, while many senior ones are still in transition, writes Gwynne Dyer. *Photograph courtesy of Pixabay*

LONDON, U.K.—A few days ago, the European Union’s Earth Observation program, Copernicus, made a special announcement at the end of its monthly report on the state of the climate. It said that the average global temperature for the past three years (2023-2025) has been 1.5 C above the pre-industrial level. That’s the level we were warned that we must never exceed.

“For November, global temperatures were 1.54 C above pre-industrial,” said Samantha Burgess, deputy director of the Copernicus Climate Change Service. “The three-year average for 2023-2025 is on track to exceed 1.5 C for the first time.” Weirdly, the air-raid sirens did not go off. You couldn’t imagine a worse emergency, but not even the fire sirens sounded.

In fact, most traffic was heading in the opposite direction. The United States is completing its withdrawal from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) for the second time. COP30, the annual conference on how well the world is doing at emissions cuts, made almost no progress in Brazil last month, and the final report didn’t even mention fossil fuels.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz is urging the EU to soften the 2035 cutoff date for the sale of combustion-engine cars. And worst of all, perhaps, there are attempts to ban even research on direct attempts to hold the heat down. By sincerely concerned people, no doubt, but chopping holes in your lifeboats is rarely a good idea.

There are loonies and fraudsters cavorting around the fringes of the geoengineering question, but the right people to talk to are the climate scientists. Doing two books on climate change (published in 2008 and 2024), I have interviewed more than half a hundred climate scientists, and I have seen a slow but steady migration among them towards a pro-geoengineering stance.

It’s not that they love the idea. They all understand that the core policy has to be ending emissions of greenhouse gases, primarily carbon dioxide and methane. But they also know that the average global temperature, like many large-scale natural processes, tends to change by sudden great lurches rather than a slow, smooth creep (the technical term is “non-linear”).

Consider, for example, the leap of almost one-third of a degree Celsius in June of 2023. It was not predicted, it gave us all the warming we had been expecting down to the mid-2030s in a single bound, and it has not gone away again. The warming we have caused directly by our emissions crossed an invisible boundary, and suddenly we were at 1.5 C. We still are.

There are bound to be other hidden “feedbacks” up ahead. Indeed, the “never-exceed” average global temperature targets of 1.5 C (aspirational) and 2 C (deadly serious) were chosen by the IPCC precisely because they hoped that staying below those levels would minimize the risk of triggering events like June 2023. A bit too optimistically, it seems.

Those familiar with minefields will know that the best policy is to stay out of them, but we’re past that point already. Every step forward (or rather, every tenth of a degree warmer) risks triggering another big feedback—or possibly even a cascade of feedbacks.

We really don’t want to venture any further into this minefield than we absolutely have to. Or skip the metaphors. We need to use every viable technique to hold the average global temperature down while we work frantically to end our emissions.

If geoengineering can hold the temperature down by even a few tenths of a degree until we get on top of our emissions problem, hopefully within the next 30 or 40 years, that could make the difference between mere misery, expense, and upheaval on the one hand, and catastrophic global dieback on the other.

This is the context within which climate scientists are now making their choices. It’s a balance of risks, but most of them are reluctantly bringing geoengineering “into the main room of the decision space,” as Johan Rockström, director of Germany’s Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, put it.

I have never met a climate scientist who thought that geoengineering should be used as a substitute for ending greenhouse gas emissions. The entire conversation is about keeping the warming as low as possible while we work frantically to eliminate those emissions.

A majority of early-career climate scientists now see geoengineering as necessary and inevitable, while many senior ones are still in transition. Comically, the seniors often have trouble saying the actual word “geoengineering” (because they are recanting their previous convictions), but their meaning is clear.

“We have no choice,” Rockström said. “We are simply so big and so dominant that we now need to drive the vehicle. Currently we are just sitting there and not really recognizing that we are the ones with the levers now.”

Gwynne Dyer’s new book is *Intervention Earth: Life-Saving Ideas from the World’s Climate Engineers*. The previous book, *The Shortest History of War*, is also still available.

The Hill Times

Will Poilievre find the right thread to pull, or will his coalition unravel in 2026?

Pierre Poilievre knows how to fight, and he has built his own political coalition, but those are the very things that could prove his to be downfall as opposed to his salvation.

Tim Powers

Plain Speak



OTTAWA—It was one year ago that federal politics changed dramatically. Then-deputy prime minister and finance minister Chrystia Freeland wrote her poison pen letter to then-prime minister Justin Trudeau, stepped away from cabinet, didn’t deliver the planned fall economic statement, and set in motion a chain of events no one could have foreseen.

Within a few weeks, Trudeau announced he was stepping down as prime minister, and by March, Mark Carney, the oft-sought saviour of the Liberal Party, had thrown his hat in the ring and became the new head of government. Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, who seemed all but certain to win the general election with Trudeau as his opponent, soon found himself waging an electoral battle against Carney—and, to a large degree, United States President Donald Trump.

Carney didn’t wait long to call the election, as Liberal polling numbers previously in the basement rebounded quickly, and after a five-plus-week campaign, found himself as a duly-elected MP. Albeit with minority government.

Poilievre, once seen as unbeatable, lost the Ottawa-area riding that he had held for 20 years, and—while garnering a historic showing in the popular vote for a second-place finisher—found the Conservatives on the opposition benches for the fourth consecutive time. Despite not winning, Poilievre still had strong control

of the party, and by August, had won a byelection in Alberta to find his way back into Parliament.

If the fall of 2024 was brutal for Trudeau, the fall of 2025 has offered little kindness to Poilievre. In the early fall, Poilievre found himself under strong criticism for appearing on a far-right podcast where he accused the leadership of the RCMP of being incompetent—if not inept—in handling matters related to Trudeau. He also went as far as suggesting Trudeau ought to have been charged with a crime. Poilievre back-peddled a little, but it didn’t turn the entire tide of concern about his ability to move beyond political gamesmanship to substantive leadership.

Deeper into the fall, things have worsened for the Conservative leader: two former Tory MPs have joined the Liberals, and another was apparently on the verge of doing so, but instead announced his intention to resign. As we enter the holiday season, Carney is one seat short of a majority government. Numerous reports over this past weekend suggest it is only a matter of time until another current Conservative Member of Parliament swaps a blue jersey for a red one.

Poilievre, who was supposed to be prime minister, now heads into 2026 facing a leadership review, more potential defections, and the possibility he could end up sidelined as leader. Few people, if any, saw that coming this time last year.

Poilievre knows how to fight, and he has built his own political coalition that has some teeth. But those are the very things that could prove to be his downfall as opposed to his salvation. In his battle for a strong performance to win his leadership review, he has shown more pugnacity than the kind of reasonableness with which his opponent seems to be scoring well with the public.

Poilievre and his surrogates, while more measured in their personal critique of the most recent Conservative-to-Liberal floor crosser, still can’t acknowledge their own errors or be accountable. The fault is with Carney, or those leaving the party, it is not with them. That approach plays well with ardent Liberal haters, but it doesn’t much work with a broader audience that doesn’t see weakness in acknowledging mistakes or learning from them as leadership

failure. Quite the contrary.

Heading into 2025, it looked like the Liberals were prepared to unravel. Heading into 2026, it might be something of which the Conservatives have to be more conscious.

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



Ahead of Conservative Pierre Poilievre’s leadership review, he has shown more pugnacity than the kind of reasonableness with which his opponent seems to be scoring well with the public, writes Tim Powers. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

COMMENT

2026: Another year on the edge for Carney and Canada

For all the Liberals' high points since they dodged what was shaping up as certain electoral defeat, the year ahead looms as an even more difficult minefield.

Les
Whittington

Need to Know



OTTAWA—A little more than a year ago, on Nov. 25, 2024, then-United States president-elect Donald Trump changed everything for Canada.

On social media that night, the incoming occupant of the White House announced he would, as one of his first acts after inauguration, hit Canada and Mexico with a 25-per-cent tariff on "ALL products coming into the United States and its ridiculous Open Borders."

So much for U.S. fidelity to the 31-year-old continental free-trade agreement.

It was the first act in the outrageous, disruptive saga that Canadians have experienced ever since. It has probably forever ended Canada's close relationship with the U.S., put an economy dependent on the American market on life support, and upended the Canadian political picture, with rookie politician Mark Carney vaulted into the prime minister's job.

But, for all the high points for the Liberals since they dodged what was shaping up as certain electoral defeat at the hands of the Conservatives this past spring, the year ahead looms as an even more difficult minefield for Carney and his government.

While the economy appears to have weathered Trump's attack a bit better than expected, the outlook is grim. The country only avoided a technical recession in the July-through-September quarter because of a statistical anomaly. And early estimates for October show the economy dropping back into negative territory.

Canada's economic fundamentals remain weak. Trump's tariffs continue to be a drag on the U.S.-bound exports that account for about 25 per cent of Canada's GDP. And, importantly, the uncertainty caused by U.S. protectionism is discouraging much-needed Canadian business investment. The Bank of Canada—which before Trump 2.0 had been predicting 2.25 per cent annual GDP growth in the near future—has now cut its estimates by nearly a whole percentage point, to the tepid 1.4 per cent range.

And one big non-win for Carney has been dealing with Trump. Things were bad enough before Ontario Premier Doug Ford disrespected the president with anti-tariff ads. Now, the only question seems how bad the damage will be from Trump as the Canada-U.S.-Mexico trade deal is officially up for review in 2026.

Against that backdrop, Carney has over the past six months demonstrated his intention to respond with a comprehensive plan to do nothing less than remake the Canadian economy. Whether you're talking about opening up interprovincial trade, building pipelines, creating an industrial strategy, or launching a wave of huge infrastructure projects, this is a monumental undertaking.

After decades of Canada relying mostly on the handy U.S. market, the idea of building big and rethinking the economy

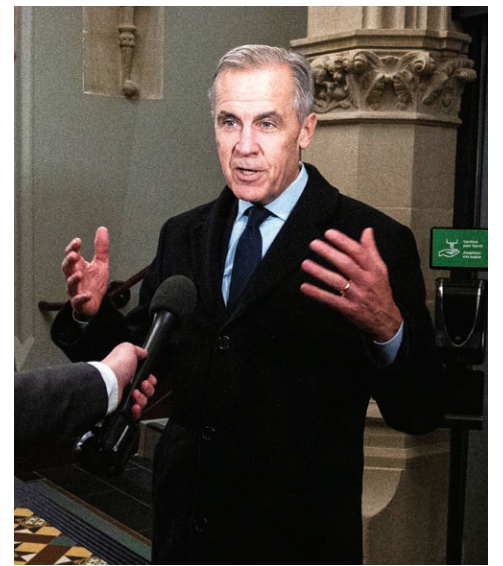
is not something that will fall quickly into place. Carney is dealing with a Rubik's cube of provincial, financial, environmental, political, labour force, and Indigenous issues.

His government's extensive fiscal initiatives will help offset the Trump effect on the economy, but the growth and jobs envisioned as a result of an infrastructure boom will not materialize quickly even if business steps up to invest in projects. The

promised explosion in house-building is a slow starter. Diversifying trade is a long-term project, and the economic benefits of advancing free trade within Canada have proven hostage as always to the premiers' prerogatives.

The Liberal government's attempt to ease the way for an Alberta-to-the-British-Columbia-coast oilsands pipeline provides a case

Continued on page 10



Prime Minister Mark Carney is dealing with a Rubik's cube of provincial, financial, environmental, political, labour force, and Indigenous issues, writes Les Whittington. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

ADVERTISEMENT

MERRY CHRISTMAS: A Celebration of Hope, Not Provocation

By Dr Bryan Brulotte



nation built on confidence and generosity now finds itself second guessing words that were never meant to divide. I am proud to say Merry Christmas, and I believe Canadians should feel equally free to speak from the heart.

My pride in saying Merry Christmas is not a rejection of anyone else. It is an affirmation of my faith and an expression of goodwill anchored in a long historical tradition. I was baptized as a Catholic. My Christian faith is woven into who I am and how I was raised. But even beyond personal belief, Christmas has shaped the cultural character of Canada for centuries. It reminds us of the values that built strong families and durable communities. It recalls duty, service, generosity, and the quiet dignity of giving without expecting anything in return.

These values are not exclusive to Christians. They are recognisable to people of many faiths and to those of no religious faith at all. Christmas in Canada has always been more than a doctrine. It has been a season of kindness and renewal. For many families, it is one of the few moments in the year when busy lives pause for reflection and connection. To dilute or avoid this greeting is to misunderstand both its purpose and its spirit.

There is a quiet hesitation that has crept into our public life. In stores, offices, and even among friends, people pause before offering what was once a simple and genuine greeting. Many now search for neutral phrasing. Some avoid seasonal references entirely. The result is that a

We are told that saying Merry Christmas may offend. Yet I have found the opposite to be true. When greetings are offered sincerely, they are almost always received in that same spirit. When someone says Happy Hanukkah, Eid Mubarak, or Happy Diwali, they are sharing a piece of who they are. They are extending respect, joy, and cultural warmth. I am not diminished by their greeting. I am honoured by it. The strength of a pluralist society is not measured by verbal caution. It is measured by our willingness to let each other speak honestly.

The impulse to sanitise public language is part of a broader cultural trend. We have become so anxious about giving offense that we risk erasing the very traditions that give our society depth. Canada flourishes when people stand confidently in their own heritage, not when they bury it under vague and lifeless phrasing. A nation that cannot speak openly about its own holidays is a nation uncertain of its own identity.

I grew up in a small northern Quebec mining town, on dirt roads where community mattered. People worked hard. They offered help without fanfare. They valued education, faith, and integrity. At Christmas, neighbours visited one another. Churches filled. The season reminded us that however modest our circumstances, hope was real and renewal was possible. Merry Christmas was not a slogan. It was a blessing.

Today, I continue to say it with pride because I believe in the message it carries. At its core, Christmas celebrates the arrival of light in a world that can at times feel very dark. It invites us to pause, to give thanks, and to recommit ourselves to the people we love and the country we share.

So, as the season approaches, I will say Merry Christmas openly and gladly. Not to exclude. Not to provoke. But to remind us of who we are and the virtues that still bind us.

Merry Christmas.

Dr Bryan Brulotte is the Chairman of Sterling-Trust and can be reached at Brulotte@Sterling-Trust.ca.



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Editorial

Editorial

Can Canadian politicians unwrap compromise this holiday season?

The year 2025 was one marked by constant movement and change, kicking off with a prime ministerial resignation, and comprising—among many other events—a Liberal leadership race, a trade war with Canada’s once-closest ally, a federal election, a royal visit, a G7 presidency, and multiple floor crossings.

There was a surge of nationalism and patriotism that buoyed the Liberal Party—once seemingly dead in the water—to electoral victory, and, for the briefest of moments, seemed to fuel some multipartisan co-operation. But that obviously wasn’t going to last, and as the year comes to a close, we’re once again left with politics of division, and frustration on the part of anyone who wants to see things done differently.

There appear to be different views as to the outcome of the election this past spring. While no one is disputing the result, eight months later, there’s still disagreement about the implications of the electorate giving the Liberals just enough seats to be shy of a majority in Parliament. Was it simply that the Conservatives were too powerful an opponent with all of the good ideas, and that many people wanted them to have as much influence as possible (but not govern)? Or is this a really strong mandate for the Mark Carney Liberals, and it’s practically an administrative error that they were unable to implement the “generational” and “transformational” change at “speeds never before seen” because they’re just a couple of seats short?

End-of-sitting polling numbers don’t quite offer any clarity since the

two major parties are in a statistical tie. The clear advantage for the Liberals remains in the fact that Carney, personally, continues to poll leagues above Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre when it comes to preferred prime minister support. But that, and the potential defection of additional Tories to the Grit benches, can’t be the only strategy to enact the kind of change Carney says he was elected to make.

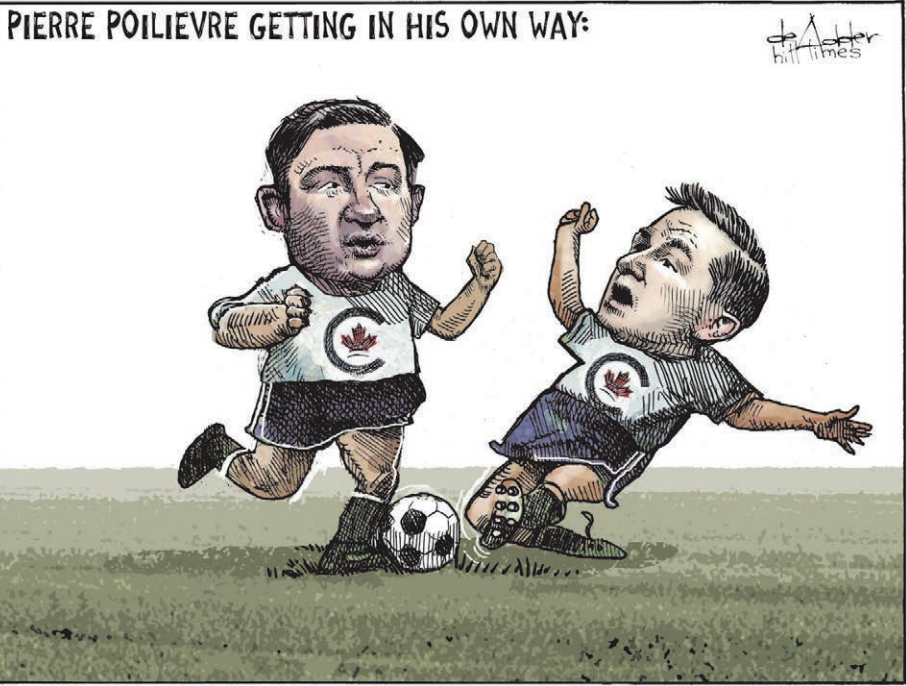
As The Hill Times’ Stuart Benson reports, the government’s legislative agenda went nowhere fast this year. Of the 18 bills the Liberals have tabled since the start of the 45th Parliament in late May, only five have received royal assent, and three of those were appropriations bills.

Conservative strategist Ashton Arsenault told The Hill Times that the Liberals “are not skilled” when it comes to governing. Meanwhile, Liberal strategist Joe Jordan highlighted that the recent filibustering and stall tactics at the House Justice Committee are a “microcosm” of the problems the Grits face, and serve to “reinforce the notion that this minority government is unsustainable going forward.”

As Jordan said, “something’s gotta give,” and while he may have been referring to the prime minister needing a majority in Parliament, there is another option that Carney hasn’t wanted to use: compromise.

This is, after all, a democracy. And the people chose a setup that requires parties to work together. There hasn’t been enough of that this year, and it should be tried on for size in 2026.

The Hill Times



Letters to the Editor

Christmas came early for the Grits: Liberal MP Fisher

‘Twas two weeks before Christmas.
I still can’t hold back the smile.
Even we didn’t believe we’d be back on this side of the aisle.
Canada needed someone smart, a proven young steed.
That ruled out a guy who blew a 22-point lead.
The Conservatives were lost with the carbon tax dead,
While visions of Trudeau on a yacht danced in their leader’s head.
The Bloc dreamed of king-making, of holding great sway,
But His Majesty’s loyal opposition? Oh, mon Dieu, not even for a day!
The NDP, well, they were reduced to seven.
My gosh, even Nova Scotia now has 11.
Now, for a “new” government, we sure have a lot of grey hairs,
But we won four in a row, so ... “Who cares?”
A trade war with friends, what’s ahead is a fight.
Christmas came early. Canadians chose right.
There’ll be no Christmas election, of that I’m now certain,
Thanks to two Conservatives hiding behind that curtain.
Now, I’ve thrown a lot of jabs, but I promise they’re in jest.
To each and every one of you, I truly wish you all the best.
I hope you all could hear me, with my voice raised up.
All we hear in this place these days are heckles—
I hope the Speaker doesn’t wake up!
Merry Christmas, everyone.
Liberal MP Darren Fisher
Dartmouth–Cole Harbour, N.S.

Grinchy Liberals should bring back Christmas joy: Conservative MP Goodridge

Thanks to these Liberals, this Christmas is looking bleak,
Because so many Canadian families’ paycheques are too weak.
With Grinchy Liberal ways,
Canadians face a bleary plight,
High taxes and spending stealing Christmas magic and light.
And just like the Grinch swiped every morsel, decoration, and treat,
Liberal inflation robs their

joys, leaving families in defeat.
While 2.2 million visit food banks, month on month they plead,
Hoping for a food hamper, a simple happy deed.
These Grinchy Liberals’ hearts are oh so small.
Disconnected from realities, Liberals let these families fall.
But like little Cindy Lou, who made the Grinch’s mind see,
Christmas doesn’t come from a store; it’s so much more, you see.
So our ask is simple, a change we hope they make:
Listen to Conservatives for Canadian families’ sakes.
Bring back affordability, let their hearts grow in size,
And bring back Christmas joy right before our very eyes.
Conservative MP Laila Goodridge
Fort McMurray–Cold Lake, Alta.

‘Kindness moves from door to door’: Liberal MP Fancy

As the season slowly gentles on South Shore–St. Margarets land,
there is a warmth across our villages that only we understand.
From Lunenburg’s bright storefronts to Cape Sable Island’s cold sprays,
our communities shine brighter than the shortest of winter days.
The lobster boats are twinkling as they head out on the dawn,
and the families gently gather as the holiday lights come on.
In Liverpool, Tantallon, and Bridgewater, and the coves that line our shores,
kindness moves from door to door and lifts our spirits evermore.
This time of year reminds us of the ties that truly bind,
the neighbours who step up for us, the generous hearts we find.
From volunteers to small businesses, from first responders to friends,
the magic of our riding is the way that never ends.
So as we look to the new year, with hope in every heart,
may peace and joy find you all wherever you may start.
South Shore–St. Margarets, my gratitude rings clear.
Happy holidays to everyone. A bright, resilient year.
Liberal MP Jessica Fancy
South Shore–St. Margarets, N.S.

The above are SO 31 statements delivered by MPs on Dec. 10 and 11 in the House.

COMMENT

Carney is shifting the goal posts in bid to redefine voter coalition

The Liberals appear to have made the calculation that securing new voters from the Conservative base is far more advantageous than strictly appealing to the existing coalition that re-elected his party.

Josie Sabatino

Opinion



OTTAWA—After a marathon fall session, the House of Commons officially adjourned for the winter recess. Ottawa receptions will soon be exchanged for Christmas open houses as parliamentarians spread across the country to recharge and reconnect with their constituents.

There will be no shortage of dinner-table conversation during

the holidays this year as Canadians gather round with family, friends, and loved ones to take stock of the current political situation. While United States President Donald Trump and affordability concerns continue to dominate the issues set, the Liberals and Conservatives remain statistically tied in the year-end public opinion polls.

The Liberals started the year as underdogs facing the prospect of electoral wipeout. Then came the exit of then-prime minister Justin Trudeau, an expedited leadership race and general election, and a redrawn playbook that leaned into standing up to Trump. These events transformed the fortunes of the Liberal Party. Add in some clever politicking that resulted in a couple of disenfranchised Conservatives crossing the floor, and the Carney Liberals now find themselves just one seat shy of a majority government.

It is an envious position in which to end the year, especially when you consider that the coalition of voters that consecutively re-elected Trudeau ultimately rallied behind Prime Minister Mark Carney in the last election. But as Abacus CEO David Coletto has emphasized, that support comes with the challenge of managing a far more ideologically diverse set of expectations than the Con-



New Liberal MP Michael Ma, left, and Prime Minister Mark Carney celebrate Ma's defection from the Conservatives at the annual Liberal holiday party on Dec. 11. *The Hill Times* photograph by Stuart Benson

servatives, whose base remains largely focused on affordability.

The prime minister has rejected the notion that because he is a rookie, he lacks the political acumen to succeed in the cut-throat arena of Parliament. In fact, Carney has pulled off perhaps the greatest feat possible in the sense that he used the Trudeau-era coalition of Liberal voters to retain power while simultaneously using the levers of government to shift the party's policy agenda to the right. Carney is now attempting

to solve his coalition challenges by enacting a series of pragmatic policy reforms focused on economic growth, neutralizing relations with Conservative premiers in Alberta and Saskatchewan, and restoring confidence in the public service through a series of targeted cuts.

So far, these changes have largely come at the expense of the previous government's environmental policies. The carbon tax, oil and gas emissions caps, and the pause on electric vehicle mandates have

led one-time environment and climate change minister Steven Guilbeault to conclude that the Carney government will fall short of meeting its 2030 climate goals. While Guilbeault stepped down from cabinet after the climate policy rollbacks of the last few weeks, and a number of MPs from Trudeau's former cabinet are speculated to be considering their post-politics futures, any fallout for Carney as he continues to shift the party seems to be largely contained for the moment. This is helped by

the fact that the NDP are currently consumed by a leadership race, limiting their ability to sway voters who should naturally be giving their party a second look.

Carney and his team appear to have made the calculation that securing new voters from the Conservative base is far more advantageous than strictly appealing to the existing coalition that re-elected his party. This strategy is evident not only in the government's recent policy decisions, but also their willingness to accept floor crossers who ran under the Conservative banner just a few months ago.

One thing is certain heading into the new year: the prime minister is both willing and prepared to redefine the Liberal Party in his image and fight for his place in the historical record, even if it means losing members of his own caucus. If the last 12 months have proven anything, it's that Carney shouldn't be underestimated. To do so may spell one's own political demise.

Josie Sabatino is a vice-president at Summa Strategies. Prior to joining Summa, Sabatino spent nearly a decade as a Conservative political staffer, providing communications and issues management advice to Members of Parliament and the leader of the official opposition.

The Hill Times

Time to look back, and ahead

It 'remains to be seen' what will prove relevant in 2026 from this past year, but there's plenty to from which to choose.

Andrew Caddell

With All Due Respect



KAMOURASKA, QUE.—The snow is piling up around the village, and the Christmas lights are everywhere. It appears we will have an old-style holiday as the year ends. I look out my window onto the frozen St. Lawrence River and think of how four seasons and 12 months passed in the blink of an eye.

I have often avoided year-end summaries, or predictions of the

year to come. To me, they can suffer from an overweening pretension, often too bold in their presumptions, or failing to grasp the pertinence of events past for some "unremarkable" stories that may yet prove to have historic importance. Remember the first computers, the internet, and COVID-19 did not initially make headlines.

In looking back, I note half my columns featured topics connected to Quebec. That's understandable, given I live in the Bas-Saint-Laurent region, and am often in Montreal. It has also been my desire to provide insight into the issues concerning rural Quebec, which may differ from your average resident of the National Capital Region.

Among those columns, I expressed concern about the rise of Quebec nationalism and the Parti Québécois under its admittedly brilliant but self-absorbed leader, Paul St-Pierre Plamondon. Given St-Pierre Plamondon is presumed to be Quebec's next premier, his determination to hold a referendum and possibly invoke a unilateral declaration of independence mean he bears watching.

Meanwhile, the current occupant of the premier's office, François Legault, is going nowhere, and will more than likely lead the party he created to a crushing defeat. This despite throwing out a plethora of legislation targeting minorities, including a "constitution" to act as a bulwark against multiculturalism and bilingualism.

Meanwhile, it is doubtful Quebec Liberal Leader Pablo Rodriguez will be around to lead his party into the fall election. I warned in June he might not be the best man for the job. His own intra-caucus squabbles, and accusations of corrupt practices during the leadership race do not bode well for his longevity.

In February, I spoke to an international conference in Florida about our relationship with our southern neighbour. I wrote after-

ward, "We have to change the way we do business, and change our collective mindset about ourselves and our country." It appears the Carney government is attempting that in its efforts to trade with the world, as well as recognizing "it is a dangerous world out there, and we need force to defend our sovereignty."

I warned the United States would retreat into its own hemisphere: "But now, things are changing, as Donald Trump backs off from America's role as 'global policeman' and looks inwards. It appears he is seeking a new American Imperium within global spheres of influence." The new American *National Security Strategy* says just that. From a column in March, the implications for our Arctic: "While [Trump's] desire to annex Canada must be taken as real, it may be cover to carve up the North with the Russians and Chinese."

I predicted Justin Trudeau would walk away on his own volition, which didn't happen, and commented on a campaign filled with gaffes by Prime Minister Mark Carney, which may have contributed to his failure to win a majority.



Among the notable moves in 2025 was Quebec Premier François Legault's plethora of legislation targeting minorities, including a 'constitution' to act as a bulwark against multiculturalism and bilingualism, writes Andrew Caddell. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

On federal finances, I wrote about the need for investments in defence and intelligence, and cuts in the public service with a criterion: "serious questions must be asked: does a department or an agency serve the public interest?" It seems the current budget exercise reflects that philosophy, but it's hard to tell: the heavy tome landed with a thud in November, and its "generational" effects are still opaque.

In the year to come, the Quebec National Assembly will hold hearings on the "constitution bill" in February, at which I will be a participant. I will also be at the Supreme Court in March to challenge the notwithstanding clause of the Constitution. Both could have a long-term impact on Canada. I will report on those events and more.

When I was a young reporter, I would joke with colleagues every journalist had an out—to say at the end of a report "it remains to be seen." Indeed, that applies to the above.

Best wishes to readers of this column; thanks for your feedback in 2025. Have a wonderful holiday. I will be back at this location in 2026.

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 former town councillor in Kamouraska, Que. He can be reached at pipson52@hotmail.com.

The Hill Times

COMMENT

The rush to re-arm the Army

As military defence procurements go, the plan to purchase new rifles for the CAF is something of a no-brainer.

Scott Taylor

Inside Defence



OTTAWA—On Dec. 11, the CBC reported that a Department of National Defence internal presentation outlines a plan to rapidly move forward with a procurement to replace the Army's current inventory of assault rifles.

Known as the Canadian Modular Assault Rifle program, this purchase aims to replace the 65,401 C-7 rifles and C-8 carbines that first entered service back in 1985. This replacement program has been on the books for some time as part of the Justin Trudeau Liberals' *Strong Secure, Engaged* policy on defence.

However, with Prime Minister Mark Carney's directive to massively increase Canada's defence spending in the short term, this contract was brought forward by nearly two years.

The scale of this purchase may also be massively increased to produce more than 300,000 of the new rifles if recently proposed mobilization plans proceed to create a 400,000-strong supplement-

tary reserve force of Canadian citizen soldiers.

Based on the original order of 65,401 modular assault rifles, the project is worth an estimated \$500-million to \$1-billion.

As military defence procurements go, this one is something of a no-brainer. The manufacturer, Colt Canada, is based in Kitchener, Ont., and, therefore, this would bolster domestic defence industry capability, and replacing 40-year-old rifles for the Army should not cause consternation among even the most ardent peace advocates.

Presumably, the existing arsenal of 65,401 C-7 rifles and C-8 carbines would be placed into storage as part of an emergency war stock.

Given that the new modular assault rifles will also be of the same calibre as the current weapons, it would make sense to keep a war-time emergency stockpile.

This was not done in the case of the predecessor to the C-7 rifles and C-8 carbines. From 1955 until 1985, the standard Canadian assault rifle was the Fabrique Nationale (FN) C-1. This robust 7.62 mm rifle was beloved by those of us who had the privilege to be issued with them. In total, the Canadian Armed Forces had an inventory of 72,470 of the C-1; and also had the C-2 variant, which had a heavier barrel and served as a light machine gun.

After their replacement with the C-7s and C-8s, the decision was taken to not keep the FN C-1s as a war stock. A few thousand were transferred to the armed forces



If the Canadian Modular Assault Rifle program were ramped up, the country would actually have the genesis of a national defence force worthy of the name, writes Scott Taylor. *DND photograph by Private Kareen Brochu-Harvey*

of Papua New Guinea—which consists of just 4,000 service personnel—and the remainder were scrapped. A few remain in private collections or museums, but Canada divested itself of the ability to rapidly mobilize a reserve force.

In that regard, the post-Cold War mentality among Canada's defence planners also allowed the once-substantial Supplementary Reserve list to dwindle down to nearly nothing. For those not familiar with the term, the Supplementary Reserve List contained former regular and reserve veterans who, upon release from the CAF, signed a voluntary pledge to return to active duty in time of a national crisis such as a war.

In 1995, there were 47,000 names on that list, my own included. By 2011, there were still 19,000 members of the Supplementary Reserve, but the current total stands at just 4,400.

The "Tiger Team" that was stood up by Chief of Defence Staff General Jennie Carignan and DND deputy minister Stefanie Beck to develop a mobilization plan for the CAF envisions a regular force of 85,000, an active reserve force strength of 100,000, and a supplementary reserve of 300,000 citizen soldiers.

I emphasize the "civilian" as the current plan is to give these volunteers one week of basic training and a one week refresher course annually thereafter. The kicker is that these future supplementary reservists will not be issued uniforms.

However, if the Canadian Modular Assault Rifle program is indeed ramped up to purchase 300,000 weapons, and the existing 65,401 C-7s and C-8s are placed into war stocks, Canada would actually have the genesis of a national defence force worthy of the name.

Domestically produced combat uniforms and cold-weather gear would bolster enlistment in the supplementary reserve, as would lengthening the initial basic training course to create at least rudimentary security personnel. In Afghanistan, we gave illiterate teenagers two weeks of training before we issued them with their police badges and uniforms. Surely we have learned something from the folly of those failed practices.

There is an old Chinese proverb that "a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." In the case of the Canadian Armed Forces rebuilding themselves into a modern capable fighting force, that journey may be metaphorically longer than a thousand miles, but in replacing their inventory of assault rifles they are indeed taking a first step.

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

2026: Another year on the edge for Carney and Canada

Continued from page 7

study of the intricacies and risks of trying to promote major change. Carney did so with an eye to encouraging a stronger, more independent economy, and mending his party's longtime feud with Alberta at a time when an independence referendum is in the works there.

Nice idea. But it is alienating climate activists, putting Liberal seats in B.C. at risk, driving a wedge between Carney and B.C. Premier David Eby, and inviting a standoff with First Nations groups in B.C. that could drastically set back reconciliation efforts or—worse—lead to a round of civil disturbances.

Many on the right, including among Alberta Premier Danielle Smith's separatist-minded base, see Carney's gesture as a cynical ploy. And, should a private-sector backer for the proposed pipeline not step forward, Alberta's independence movement could get an immediate boost. (There's also the

question of how much goodwill Carney could hope to generate among Albertans, who gave Justin Trudeau zero credit for spending \$34-billion to double the Trans Mountain pipeline to a Vancouver port.)

At the same time, the erosion of Trudeau's climate programs may play negatively among

Quebec voters, many of whom undoubtedly were attracted to Carney's environmental credentials in the last federal election. Former Liberal cabinet minister Steven Guilbeault suggested that reaction could be pronounced enough to help the province's separatists, who are also looking forward to a promised independence referendum should the Parti Québécois win next October's provincial election.

Neither Albertans nor Quebecers seem inclined to vote *en masse* for separation. But as Brexit showed in the United Kingdom, you never know.

Les Whittington is a regular columnist for The Hill Times.

The Hill Times

OPINION

A self-sustaining path to recovery for Ukraine

Now more than ever, Canada should encourage private sector investment for Ukraine's recovery.

Michael Cholod,
Katherine
Mulhern

Opinion



Ukraine stands at a critical moment in history. The NATO alliance is fraying. As Ukrainians fight to defend their sovereignty, the need for sustainable and long-term financial resources has never been greater. While allied government support has been crucial, it's no longer guaranteed. Ukraine may very well end up standing alone against Russia. What happens then?

A different strategy is required. One that empowers Ukraine to recover, rebuild, and defend itself using its own stolen patrimony. This is not merely an act of solidarity, it's a strategic investment that aligns with global security, fiscal responsibility, and development effectiveness.

If Bill C-15, the Budget Implementation Act, passes Parliament, the government will have new powers to compel Canadian banks to identify any assets they hold on behalf of Russian sanctioned entities, and to re-direct any profits realized from those assets to the solicitor general to be used to support Ukraine.

If Canadian banks do in fact hold eight per cent of the 200-billion euro pool of Russian cash held in Euroclear in Belgium, that means there's approximately \$22-billion earning interest that can be seized to support Ukraine and Canada's commitment to the Coalition of the Willing.

One of the most viable, underused, and forward-looking solutions would be the creation of a self-sustaining asset recovery fund (SSARF), modelled on the successful United States Assets Forfeiture Fund (AFF). A Ukrainian SSARF—once seeded with modest catalytic seed-capital from Canada—could unlock the return of billions in assets stolen through grand corruption, illicit financial flows, and complex multi-jurisdictional fraud.

A new model for international development finance

Litigation funding has become an increasingly well-developed sector for commercial litigants. Practically, funders contract to pay the upfront litigation costs of potential plaintiffs in exchange for a portion of the upside from successful claims. Until now, litigation funding has been too expensive for countries to bear, but new impact-based solutions sharply increase the percentage governments receive back when compared to the pure commercial model.

One such model developed by the non-profit Restitution Impact offers a combination of litigation funding, impact investing, and development-focused partnerships with governments. It provides victim countries with a route to recover stolen funds through civil litigation and related claims in competent jurisdictions, bypassing the delays of criminal pathways. Restitution Impact's approach also integrates post-recovery capacity building to ensure that systems are fortified against future corruption.

This model—supported by a specialized global project team that works alongside

governments to investigate, value, litigate, and enforce judgments related to corruption, fraud, breach of contract, and illicit financial flows—enables countries to pursue claims they otherwise lack the resources, expertise, or political bandwidth to execute.

A proven template for self-sustainable recovery

One of the most compelling precedents for a self-funding recovery mechanism is the U.S. AFF, which holds all seized, forfeited, or recovered assets stemming from criminal activity, rather than channeling them into general federal revenue. Because the fund finances itself through forfeitures, it does not rely on congressional appropriations. Its design eliminated financial disincentives for agencies to pursue complex seizures because the costs of litigation, investigations, storage, and asset disposal are all paid from the fund.

Today, the AFF maintains an average balance of US\$2-billion. Its interest earnings and non-victim seized assets support a wide array of law-enforcement efforts, including co-operation with international partners. Importantly, this system allows the U.S. to assist countries around the world in tracing, seizing, and returning stolen assets without burdening American taxpayers.

A self-sustaining asset recovery fund for Ukraine

This same model, adapted to Ukraine's needs, could be transformative. With an initial investment, potentially as low as US\$100-million, such a fund could mobilize litigation, investigations, and claims capable of returning up to US\$1-billion, depending on the case portfolios. These funds would come from Ukraine's own stolen assets, not from foreign taxpayers.

For a nation at war, this could be lifesaving.

Ukraine urgently needs resources to defend itself, procure weapons, support frontline operations, and begin laying the foundations for reconstruction. Yet it remains dependent on the generosity of allied governments. A self-funded asset recovery mechanism would allow Ukraine to tap into billions in stolen patrimony sitting in foreign banks, real estate holdings, shell companies, and financial instruments across multiple jurisdictions.

This is money that already belongs to the people of Ukraine, money extracted through corruption, fraud, and organized criminal networks. Unlocking it is both an act of justice and a pathway to self-reliance.

Why Canada should act now

Canada and all the Coalition of the Willing countries are facing increased spending commitments coupled with domestic cost-of-living crises. Using money earned by sanctioned Russian assets instead of taxpayers' dollars to support Ukraine is economically prudent. Allocating part of the interest earned on Russian assets (which could exceed \$1-billion per year), and providing seed capital for a self-sustaining financing model for Ukraine's resistance and recovery is a rare opportunity to create permanent, self-reinforcing returns for Ukraine—at no cost to Canadians.

Investing in a self-sustaining asset recovery fund for Ukraine is strategic, prudent, and morally compelling. It empowers a nation in crisis to reclaim what is rightfully its own, and to chart a path toward sover-



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, left, and Prime Minister Mark Carney. Using money earned by sanctioned Russian assets instead of taxpayers' dollars to support Ukraine is economically prudent, write Michael Cholod and Katherine Mulhern. Photograph courtesy of X

eignty, stability, and long-term recovery. Canada's leadership can make this possible. It's the right thing to do, we just need to get our elbows up and make it happen.

Michael Cholod is executive director of The Peace Coalition, a Canadian-Ukrainian non-profit association of NGOs, academic institutions, and independent experts coordinating a variety of initiatives aimed at seizing Russian money to pay for Ukraine's resistance and recovery.

Katherine Mulhern, CEO of Restitution Impact, is a senior lawyer with significant experience in transparency, accountability, governance and anti-bribery and anti-corruption. A former investigator for an African truth and reconciliation commission, Mulhern was a senior law firm partner in private practice and a consultant for governments (including donor governments) on transparency, anti-bribery and anti-corruption and governance.

The Hill Times

THE HILL TIMES CAREERS

Senior Advisor, Government Relations (Telework/Hybrid) JR00006236



Position Title:
Senior Advisor, Government Relations (Telework/Hybrid)

Status of Employment:
Permanent

Position Language Requirement:
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Language Skills:
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OPINION

The Elsie effect: women are essential to security

Diverse perspectives make teams sharper, more adaptive, more responsive, and more effective.

Nathalie Chuard

Opinion



After 25 years working to enhance security sector governance worldwide, and despite strong evidence, we are still asked: why do women matter in policing, defence, and peacekeeping?

There is a simple answer: it is both the right thing to do, and the smart thing to do. This is not about quotas or optics. It is about equity and operational effectiveness.

Better security starts with better teams

Consider this: survivors of sexual and gender-based violence are more likely to report crimes to female officers. Without women on the force, countless crimes go unreported. The data tells a compelling story. Security services with more women show lower rates of excessive force and corruption. Female police officers

are more likely to diffuse volatile situations through communication rather than force.

When women serve in security institutions, these institutions work better. Diverse perspectives make teams sharper, more adaptive, more responsive, and more effective. Inclusive teams collect better intelligence. They make smarter decisions. They build deeper trust with the communities they protect.

Inclusion creates a ripple effect: better security for all. We call this the “Elsie effect.”

Canada’s leadership moment

Every ripple of change starts with a decision. In November 2017, Canada made that bold decision and launched the Elsie Initiative on Women in Peace Operations to enhance women’s meaningful participation in United Nations peacekeeping at the Vancouver UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Conference.

The results speak for themselves. In 2017, women represented just four per cent of uniformed UN peacekeepers. Today, that number has more than doubled to nine per cent.

Progress? Yes. Enough? Not even close. Numbers alone don’t transform missions. The Elsie Initiative goes deeper. It ensures women are not just filling seats, but that they are also at the table, shaping mission planning, leading operations.

This is transformation. One woman at the table becomes two,



Lieutenant-General Jamie Speiser-Blanchet, left, and Chief of Defence Staff General Jennie Carignan. When women serve in security institutions, these institutions work better, writes Nathalie Chuard. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

then 10, until a critical mass is reached. Then, decision-making better reflects the realities of the communities these missions serve and protect.

From barriers to breakthrough

For institutions to succeed, they must create enabling environments for women in uniform. That is why DCAF – the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance and the Gender and Security Lab at Cornell University developed the *Measuring Opportunities for Women in Peace Operations* methodology. This tool has become the global standard for identifying institutional barriers and opportunities for women in peace operations.

Since 2017, 21 troops and police-contributing countries have completed the assessment. They have identified the barriers. Now they work towards removing them.

With support from Global Affairs Canada, DCAF helps security institutions implement real change. We provide gender units, focal points, and champions with advocacy tools. We train personnel on gender-responsive policing and unconscious gender bias. We raise awareness among leadership about why inclusion matters. We also encourage young women to see security as a potential career path.

As a result, attitudes are shifting. Organizational cultures are changing. Gender policies are being adopted. More women are

rising through the ranks. These all represent measurable progress towards more inclusive security institutions.

This is the Elsie effect in action.

Equality as a strategic advantage

It is a strategic advantage when women can access security institutions on equal terms; when they serve as equals in policing, defence, and peacekeeping; when diverse teams make better informed decisions; when security institutions earn deeper trust; when conflicts are managed more efficiently; and when security truly serves everyone.

When equality becomes a strategic advantage, that is the Elsie effect.

By investing in women’s meaningful participation, Canada is doing more than promoting gender equality. It is transforming equality into a tool for better security, more sustainable peace, and stronger global influence.

The Elsie effect is Canada’s signature on a safer world.

The question is not why women are needed in security. The question is: what are we waiting for?

Ambassador Nathalie Chuard is a Swiss diplomat, and director of DCAF - Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance supporting people-centred security in more than 70 countries.

The Hill Times

Is an 88-jet fleet already out of date?

In 2017, 88 jets were seen as ‘just enough’ for Canada to fulfill its obligations. Now, penny pinching has been replaced by a concern about how to spend at speed.

Michael P.A. Murphy

Opinion



defence. Constrained defence spending meant that in addition to procuring the planes, there was a limited capacity to absorb the associated costs of infrastructure, maintenance, and training. A planned purchase of 88 fighter jets struck a balance between the budgetary commitment to operating and servicing the aircraft while also meeting the threshold of simultaneous NATO/NORAD deployment. Today, both the budgetary limits and strategic capacity must be re-evaluated.

The government’s plan under then-prime minister Justin Trudeau to procure 88 F-35s emerged in an era when Canadian annual defence spending had no credible pathway to reach two per cent of GDP. Indeed, the *Strong, Secure, Engaged* defence policy set 1.4 per cent as its highest target. Because all signals pointed to the Trudeau government remaining within this spending framework, a plan to acquire more than 88 fighter jets would have required significant cuts to other branches of the Canadian Armed Forces. Today, the budgetary constraint has been lifted with a government promising to spend two per cent of GDP on defence by fiscal year’s end, and unprecedented increases planned over the next decade. The Armed Forces are in a growth phase, and penny pinching has

been replaced by a concern about how to spend at speed. The fighter jet review must recognize that the budgetary constraints that informed the limit of 88 are gone.

In 2017, 88 operational jets were seen as “just enough” for Canada to fulfill its obligations to its two most important military alliances: NATO and NORAD. Only a year before, the minister of national defence had announced plans to supplement the fleet of 77 CF-18s with an additional 18 Boeing Super Hornets (eventually purchasing 25 used F-18s after a trade dispute), indicating that 95 jets met the requirement with a buffer for some planes being non-operational at any given time. The global security environment has deteriorated in the years following. The Russian invasion of Ukraine, accelerating developments in the technologies of war, and increased international tensions all place upward pressure on the capabilities required for national defence. Beyond an increased minimum, the potential risks of operational downtime (due to the loss of an asset or prolonged maintenance requirements) have heightened the risks of moving forward without some level of built-in redundancy. Continuing with the number 88—or even the 95 that the Department of National Defence knew were

required—says that the threat analysis has not changed.

In sum, there are three pathways forward. One is to procure a fleet of fighter jets to just barely meet the demands of the world circa 2017, with no wiggle room for prolonged maintenance, crashes, or other unavailability. A second is to expand the fleet plans today, potentially using that increased order size to negotiate for expanded industrial benefits. A third is to allow additional purchase orders to filter in over time as reality takes some number of jets offline while increasing demands on the Royal Canadian Air Force. Of the three, the third option will be the most costly in the long run, offering less reliable capability than the second option with none of the additional industrial-benefit leverage. But the troubled history of fighter jet procurement may well make option three the most likely.

If Prime Minister Mark Carney’s government wants to signal that it is truly approaching defence differently, this will be a key test of their ability to invest more to spend less.

Michael P.A. Murphy is the director of the Centre for International and Defence Policy at Queen’s University, and a Mathews fellow at the School of Policy Studies. He holds a PhD from the University of Ottawa.

The Hill Times

OPINION



The parent company of Facebook and Instagram is behind the plan that would require app stores to verify user ages, but it conveniently shifts responsibility away from Meta itself, writes Josh Tabish. *Unsplash photograph by Julio Lopez*

App store age verification won't keep young people safe

Protecting young people from online harms requires smart, targeted legislation that addresses the real risks and holds the right actors accountable.

Josh Tabish

Opinion



Members of Parliament are under growing pressure from online safety groups to protect young people from the harms they may encounter online. Unfortunately, one of the highest-profile proposals in Canada is a self-serving, privacy-eroding measure that would do little to actually protect young people.

Meta, the parent company of Facebook and Instagram, is behind the plan that would require app stores to verify user ages. Under this model, anyone using an Apple or Android device would have to provide appropriate identification to the app store to prove their age before downloading apps. Companies like Apple or Google would then send a signal back to app developers to determine what content each user can access. And for kids, downloads would be blocked until a parent approves them.

On paper, this may sound like an OK solution. In practice, it has faced broad pushback from privacy advocates, civil society groups, and other critics in the United States where Meta's global policy team has promoted it in at least 20 state legislatures. Now, they're trying to import this strategy into Canada. As a parent and tech-policy professional, I'm urging Canada to pursue a different path.

The first problem with Meta's proposal is that it conveniently shifts responsibility away from Meta itself. It's no secret that some young people are exposed to harmful content online. Yet, instead of taking responsibility, the world's largest social media platform wants to make app stores the gatekeepers, effectively outsourcing accountability to two of its biggest competitors: Apple and Google. The problem here is obvious: it lets Meta off the hook for problems it helped create and is uniquely positioned to fix.

Second, this proposal is a privacy nightmare. There is no privacy-respecting method for age verification at the scale Meta envisions. Verifying the ages of every Apple and Android user would require massive new data collection and centralization of government-issued IDs, which would create new vulnerabilities and make app stores even bigger targets for hackers. With major data breaches in the headlines every single day, verifying the identities of millions of Canadian consumers would raise the stakes considerably.

A better approach recognizes that safety and privacy aren't mutually exclusive. For example, in the U.S., the Parents Over Platforms Act relies on minimal data collection rather than the type of intrusive verification pushed by Meta. It also applies across more devices and technologies while still giving developers what they need to build safer experiences.

The third issue is practical: Meta's plan doesn't reflect how most families use technology. Parents know that phones and tablets are constantly shared, passed back and forth during car rides, restaurants, or rainy afternoons at home. Under Meta's approach, young users could still access app store services from a shared device linked to their parents account.

The idea that app store checks will prevent harm in these scenarios isn't realistic. And even if they did, the proposal collapses the moment a young person opens a browser. If they can access restricted content through the web, the entire system of app store age verification becomes little more than safety theatre.

Everyone should support a safer internet for young people, and many of the biggest platforms are doing their part. But as MPs consider new laws meant to improve safety and privacy, they should focus on measures that actually protect young people, not headline-grabbing short-cuts designed to improve one technology company's public image.

Political reality matters, too. After Meta's dust-ups with the Liberals, MPs aren't about to referee their feud with Apple and Google. Why should Ottawa bail out one tech giant by imposing sweeping obligations on every smartphone user?

But more importantly, protecting young people from online harms requires smart, targeted legislation that addresses the real risks and holds the right actors accountable. Justice Minister Sean Fraser has said the

government is taking a "fresh" look at its approach to online harms, and new Canadian Identity Minister Marc Miller, who shares the youth safety portfolio, has acknowledged that "Canadians want us to act."

We can and should build a safer digital environment for young people. But that

work starts with MPs developing solutions grounded in evidence, practicality, and respect for Canadians' privacy—not entertaining a flawed proposal that could do more harm than good.

Josh Tabish is the senior director for Canada at Chamber of Progress, a centre-left tech industry association promoting technology's progressive future. Before joining Chamber of Progress, he served as director of policy and advocacy at the Canadian Internet Registration Authority, where he led the organization's domestic and international policy engagement and managed its relationships with the government. Follow him on X @jdtabish.

The Hill Times



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NEWS

‘This is a process unlike any we’ve ever seen’: questions loom over Canada’s readiness for CUSMA review

Canada is being encouraged to ‘ramp up’ consultations as the CUSMA review nears.

Continued from **page 1**

“I don’t think there was enough effort to get Canadians—businesses, workers, everyone—ready for the CUSMA renegotiation next year in July,” Kwan said. “We need to ramp it up quite quickly.”

Steve Verheul, who served as chief negotiator during the NAFTA renegotiations, told the House International Trade Committee in October that it was extensive consultations that gave Canada a leg up during talks last time around.

“Canada had the advantage at the negotiating table of having more detailed knowledge of the issues, more awareness of the pros and cons of various proposals, and more extensive preparation for various scenarios,” he said on Oct. 30. “We also had the advantage of a highly unified Canadian position across industry, labour, and provinces and territories, which gave us the ability to be agile at the table, with strong support behind us. We need to make sure we enter the review with those same advantages.”

Verheul said that Canada wasn’t currently in that position, when he testified on Oct. 30.

“From what I understand, the consultations are taking place, but they are taking place at very high levels,” he said. “That’s not what gets discussed at the negotiating table. Negotiations are all about the fine detail of the very specific issues that you’re dealing with.”

“I’m concerned that if we are just going to have very high-level consultations and rely mainly on high-level officials to have conversations, then we are just putting ourselves in the same place as the U.S., and we’re losing our advantage,” Verheul said.

Uncertainty of review clouds consultations: Miller

Trade consultant Eric Miller, president of the Washington, D.C.-based Rideau Potomac Strategy Group, said the problem that Canada faces during any consultations is that the scope of the review remains unknown.

He said there are questions about how the bilateral trade talks will fit into a broader trilateral negotiation.

For Canada, those bilateral talks have been paused by U.S. President Donald Trump since late October in response to the Ontario government’s anti-tariff ad that was broadcast on U.S. airwaves.

U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer has suggested that CUSMA can turn into two bilateral deals.

“Part of the question becomes, how do you fully prepare for

that? Where Steve [Verheul] is right is that Canada needs to do a detailed sounding of its industry about what it’s looking for and what it isn’t looking for,” Miller said.

“The Carney government is attempting to negotiate the most difficult trade deal that any country has negotiated with this administration,” he said.

Unlike other countries that have accepted an overarching tariff, Canada is looking to strike a deal on the grounds of reciprocity, Miller said.

“The difficulty with the consultations is that this is a process unlike any we’ve ever seen,” he said. “Frankly, we don’t know what the heck this is going to be, what it’s going to mean, and where it’s going to go.”

One of the forums that was supposed to serve an important planning role leading up to the review never occurred. This year’s edition of the CUSMA free

trade commission was supposed to be hosted by Ottawa, but it has yet to take place as 2025 nears an end.

A GAC memo noted that the commission would include preparations for the review, as previously reported by *The Hill Times* in July.

A trusted voice departs

There is also the added complication that Canada’s chief negotiator with the U.S. will be leaving her post in Washington, D.C., soon.

Canadian Ambassador to the U.S. Kirsten Hillman announced on Dec. 9 that she will be departing the embassy in the new year.

Hillman was part of the team that renegotiated NAFTA. She also was chief trade negotiator during the talks that led to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership.

The Globe and Mail reported that Mark Wiseman has been selected as Hillman’s successor in Washington. Wiseman is described as a close associate of Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.).

He doesn’t have the government or trade experience that Hillman brought to the role, but he has financial links that will be familiar to those in Trump’s orbit. Wiseman is a businessman whose past roles have included senior managing director at asset management firm BlackRock, and president and CEO of the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board.

“Mark Wiseman is the kind of person that Trump’s people understand,” Miller said. “I think having an ambassador with a personal relationship to the prime minister is important, and I also think that Trump respects business guys. He respects markets guys. Wiseman is someone in the mould of people that he respects.”

International trade lawyer Lawrence Herman said that the key for a Canadian ambassador in Washington is that they have the prime minister’s ear.

“More so than any other posting, [the key] is that the Americans—the president, the White House, key politicians in the Senate and the House—understand that the Canadian ambassador has direct access to the prime minister,” he said. “That is critical and Wiseman fills that role.”

“If they think that the ambassador has to go through a series of levels to get to the prime minister, the ambassador will have much less influence,” Herman said.

Herman said that Carney has assembled a good team in preparation for the review.

“Whether that team is able to stickhandle the ins and outs of the Trump administration is another question,” he said.

“I have a lot of confidence in the prime minister and his inside team,” he said. “That being said, dealing with the Trump administration is going to be extremely difficult.”

nmoss@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



Prime Minister Mark Carney, left, speaks with U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer at the White House on Oct. 7. *White House photograph by Daniel Torok*



Kirsten Hillman has been Canada’s top diplomat in the United States since 2019. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

Thank you

From  **THE HILL TIMES**

The entire team wishes our readers a joyful holiday season, and a peaceful new year.

We greatly appreciate your loyal readership over these past 12 months. Thank you for supporting the best in independent, Canadian journalism.

This is our last print edition for 2025. Our first paper of 2026 will be out on Jan. 12, 2026.

Visit hilltimes.com over the holidays for juicy, exclusive news and our curated mix of features and opinion pieces.

The Hill Times wishes you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



As a little thank you, please enjoy an end-of-year quiz of the news reported by our team in 2025.

Fill it out and email us your answers at trivia@hilltimes.com for a chance to win a *Hill Times* tote bag!

1) Last February, how did Pierre Poilievre attempt to rebrand his message for an unofficial election campaign launch?

- A) Bring it Home
- B) Carbon Tax Carney
- C) Canada First Rally

2) For the first time in a decade, the public service shrunk by how many jobs as of March 2025?

- A) About 2,000
- B) Nearly 10,000
- C) Over 30,000

3) Which party leader fielded the most press conference questions during the 2025 federal election?

- A) Mark Carney
- B) Pierre Poilievre
- C) Yves-François Blanchet

4) In May, how did U.S. Ambassador to Canada Pete Hoekstra counter Canadian anger over his president's annexation threats to absorb Canada as a "51st-state"?

- A) He said the U.S. is hurt, too
- B) He said Canadians are overly sensitive
- C) He said it would never happen

5) Roughly how many bees are estimated to currently inhabit the Senate of Canada's urban apiary in downtown Ottawa?

- A) 150,000 to 250,000
- B) 300,000 to 400,000
- C) 500,000 to 600,000

6) In one of this year's most-read Heard on the Hill columns, which former Canadian politician topped headlines for "eye-popping pictures" and "a PDA-filled day" with their new romantic partner?

- A) Maxime Bernier
- B) Justin Trudeau
- C) Stephen Harper

7) As reported in Party Central, which ambassador to Canada plays a mean electric guitar?

- A) Irish Ambassador John Concannon
- B) U.S. Ambassador Pete Hoekstra
- C) Japanese Ambassador Kanji Yamanouchi

8) As reported in Hill Climbers, which minister's director of policy previously spent roughly two years working for the Parliamentary Budget Officer?

- A) Industry Minister Mélanie Joly
- B) Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne
- C) Treasury Board President Shafqat Ali

9) This federal election, Abbas Rana reported on numerous complaints from Conservatives that the party was shutting out potential nomination candidates. In the national council's proposed revamp of the nomination process, how many candidates can the leader appoint?

- A) Eight
- B) 20
- C) None

10) Health Minister Marjorie Michel is related to a former prime minister of Haiti. What is her connection to this person?

- A) Niece
- B) Daughter
- C) Cousin

BONUS:

What year did *The Hill Times* begin publishing?

NEWS



The Red Chamber's executive Senate Internal Economy committee recently tweaked some of its procedures. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Senators to get earlier look at documents, hear more budget requests publicly after CIBA practices questioned

The Senate's executive committee has set out new processes for the sharing of documents, and the handling of requests for exceptions to its office management policies.

Continued from page 1

The ball got rolling on Oct. 23 during CIBA's review of the Senate's 2024-25 financial statements and corresponding auditor's report *vis-à-vis* a report from its Subcommittee on Senate Estimates and Committee Budgets.

While Senators raised no concerns about the report itself, CSG chair Flordeliz (Gigi) Osler (Manitoba)—who called herself a “relatively new” member of the executive body—questioned the short timeline Senators had to review relevant documents, asking whether it was the committee's “usual practice,” and whether it was best practice, “to send a complex package with a lot of information less than 48 hours before the meeting.”

In response, then-CIBA chair ISG Senator Lucie Moncion (Ontario) pointed to the timing of the committee's meetings, saying “because we meet every two weeks and your steering committee meets on a weekly basis, access to the documents is according to the schedule that we have.” She also flagged the question of document sharing with Senators who are not regular members of CIBA—a body

all Senators have the right to attend—and only receive documents the day of a meeting.

Moncion noted such practices were something the steering committee—made up of the chair and three deputy chairs—planned to review and discuss.

Moncion chaired her last CIBA meeting on Dec. 11 after being elected to become the new Independent Senators Group facilitator in January, with ISG Senator Tony Loffreda (Shawinigan, Que.) replacing her as committee chair.

That response led to comments from Conservative Senate Leader Leo Housakos (Wellington, Que.), raising additional concerns over the frequency by which CIBA has met in recent years, and the role being played by its steering committee.

“The practice in the past has also been that this body called CIBA would meet at least once a week, not once every second sitting week, sometimes every third. We have also had instances now where this committee has not met for five or six months.

Steering has taken decisions, and, in the past, that was the practice, but steering was obligated within a week, two weeks, three weeks maximum, to get those decisions approved by this executive committee,” said Housakos, who was appointed to the Senate in 2009. “We have a problem because this committee is not meeting frequently enough. Whenever there are prorogations and breaks, we go away and steering operates.”

CIBA is one of the few parliamentary bodies with intersessional authority, empowering it to continue to meet when the Senate isn't sitting, including when Parliament is prorogued or dissolved ahead of an election.

A *Hill Times* analysis of Senate Internal Economy Committee meetings over the last two decades—between 2004 and 2024—found that, between 2004 and 2019, the committee met on average 18.75 times per year, whereas since 2020 (and the pandemic), it has met on average 13.6 times per year.

The lowest number of annual meetings over this period was in 2004 when CIBA met just eight times, with the second lowest being 2021 when it met nine times through the course of the year. The highest rate of frequency was seen in 2017 when CIBA met a total of 33 times, followed by 2012 when it met 25 times.

CIBA has met 14 times or less per year since 2020. Between 2010 and 2020, it met no fewer than 16 times per year, with an average of 23.7 meetings held per year over that decade.

It's relevant to note, however, that the 2004, 2006, and 2008 elections resulted in minority Parliaments, as did the 2019 and 2021 elections, whereas the 2011 and 2015 elections resulted in majority Parliaments (altogether spanning 2011 to 2019). Parliament was also prorogued in late 2008, late 2009, and over the summer of 2020.

The Oct. 23 discussion ended with a commitment to return to the matter, which CIBA did on Nov. 27 with the tabling of a report from the steering committee.

That report, which CIBA ultimately adopted, recommended that, going forward, any documents longer than five pages be shared with committee members one meeting in advance—so, two weeks before the meeting in which they'll be discussed, as was done in 2021. Documents, however, will continue to be shared on the day

of with non-CIBA members “to mitigate the risk of confidentiality breaches and to ensure that sensitive information remains appropriately protected,” reads the report.

But on the matter of meeting frequency, the steering committee recommended the current twice-monthly meeting schedule be maintained, though it noted more “ad hoc” meetings could be held “in response to exceptional circumstances” if an “urgent or unforeseen matter arise[s] requiring timely consideration.”

“In making this recommendation, your subcommittee assessed CIBA's workload, agenda planning, and the volume of matters requiring consideration. Your subcommittee also noted that the frequency of the CIBA meetings remains significantly higher than that of the House of Commons' Board of Internal Economy,” says the report.

It also recommended that requests from Senators for exceptions to the Senators' Office Management Policy (SOMP) be dealt with by CIBA as a whole in public, rather than by its steering committee behind closed doors, though an exception was carved out—at outgoing ISG Facilitator Raymond Saint-Germain's (De la Vallière, Que.) urging—for appeals related to human resources and “confidential personnel matters,” which will instead be handled by CIBA in camera.

Housakos' office declined an interview request seeking to better understand his concerns and get his thoughts on the adopted changes (or lack thereof).

In an emailed statement to *The Hill Times*, Moncion said the “frequency of [CIBA] meetings is a good indicator of our overall efficiency, and we are pleased to have reduced the number of meetings over the years.”

“As for the distribution of documents, our goal is always to ensure that Senators are fully prepared to make informed decisions. Reviewing our processes to confirm that we are on the right track is an important exercise,” reads the statement.

In an emailed response to questions, Osler said CIBA's new document-sharing plan “some-what” satisfies her concerns, but noted that “if there are 15 items/documents, that could still yield 150 pages to read, digest, and formulate an opinion on in a very short period of time.”

Asked whether she's concerned CIBA business could be delayed if documents aren't ready by the new timelines, Osler said she thinks it's possible to “manage the load by increasing the frequency of meetings as needed.”

“I think CIBA should meet as often as our workload requires us to meet,” she said, clarifying later that, for her, it “isn't about a minimum number of meetings,” but the workload.

CIBA should flex its intersessional powers, says Saint-Germain

Saint-Germain—whom Moncion will officially replace as group head on Jan. 1—told *The Hill Times* she's happy with the changes adopted.

While the timing of documents hadn't been an issue for her, Saint-Germain said she understands the concerns raised. However, she noted “it's not always” possible to have documents ready two weeks in advance of discussion, and in turn, “flexibility” will be needed.

“The steering committee will have to make sure that when we have decisions to make, when there's a deadline, we should not delay or slow business because this criteria has not been respected,” she said.

Saint-Germain said, in her view, CIBA's biweekly meeting schedule is “normal,” but she agrees it should meet more often if it's warranted by an “emergency or unforeseen situation.”

However, she said CIBA should be flexing its intersessional authority more often to meet during periods of prorogation or dissolution.

“It would be possible, or even preferable, that once in a while during prorogations the whole committee meets in order to make sure that the whole committee agrees with all decisions that are made during these periods that might be very long,” she said, though added she hasn't encountered decisions made unilaterally by steering during such periods that were “that important, or that contentious that it would have been reasonable or preferable that CIBA steering called the whole committee.”

Yukon Senator Pat Duncan, the newly installed deputy government liaison in the Senate, was the lucky first Senator to bring a SOMP exception request to CIBA in public on Dec. 11.

It involved a request for additional living expenses—a request that CSG Leader Scott Tannas (Alberta) noted will be one of “another 10, 15, 20, potentially” in light of CIBA's “arbitrary” decision last year to reduce the envelope from \$37,000 to \$30,000 in an effort to “average down” the amount automatically being made available to Senators.

Duncan, whose ask was ultimately approved, noted she often stays in Ottawa over the weekends “to focus on work here” rather than make the long trek to Whitehorse, which she said is overall “more cost effective for the Senate,” but has drained her budget.

“I did not anticipate a public request,” said Duncan, to which the chair, Moncion, responded: “Nor did we.”

Also on Dec. 11, CIBA's flexibility on document submissions was put to the test when members agreed to accept an annual report of the Inter-Parliamentary Joint Council as part of its “consent agenda” of items adopted without discussion, despite it only having been received within the last 48 hours.

—with files from Samantha Wright Allen
lryckewaert@hilltimes.com

FEATURE

The year that was, in photos

The Hill Times photographs by Andrew Meade



1. Ontario Premier Doug Ford speaks with reporters as he arrives for the First Ministers' Meeting on Jan. 15, wearing a 'Canada is Not For Sale' hat. **2.** Assembly of First Nations National Chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak scrums with reporters outside the Prime Minister's First Nations summit on Bill C-5 in Gatineau, Que., on July 17. She called it a 'good start' after the nation-building law sparked concerns it could bypass environmental regulations and Indigenous treaty rights. **3.** King Charles raises a shovel after planting the small deciduous tree native to eastern North America during a ceremonial tree planting on the grounds of Rideau Hall on May 26. **4.** Leadership hopefuls Chrystia Freeland, left, and Mark Carney shake hands before the Liberal Party leadership debate in Montreal, on Feb. 25. **5.** Prime Minister Justin Trudeau puts his hand on his heart after making his final speech as leader of the Liberal Party on March 9. **6.** Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, left, and his wife Anaida bid an emotional goodbye after Poilievre delivered his speech to about 3,000 supporters at a whistle-stop rally at Olde Stanley's Maple Lane Farm in Edwards, Ont., on April 27. **7.** Prime Minister Mark Carney speaks with reporters on the way into the Cabinet Committee on Canada-U.S. Relations and National Security on Parliament Hill on April 2. **8.** Poilievre gives a thumbs up after addressing the Conservative caucus at a Sept. 14 meeting held nearly one month after he returned to the House of Commons following a successful Alberta byelection. **9.** Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet, second left, holds a press conference in the House of Commons foyer on Sept. 15. **10.** NDP interim leader Don Davies takes the podium at a rally held by the Canadian Union of Public Employees in front of Centre Block on Sept. 16. The NDP called for the deletion of Sec. 107 from the Canada Labour Code, which the government recently invoked to get striking Air Canada flight attendants back to work. **11.** NDP leadership candidates Avi Lewis, left, Tony McQuail, MP Heather McPherson, Tanille Johnston, and Rob Ashton address the crowd at a forum hosted by the Canadian Labour Congress in Ottawa on Oct. 22.

NEWS

Redactions up: foreign ministry hiding more memo titles with 38 per cent kept secret this year

Titles and reference numbers for memos prepared for a cabinet minister or deputy head must be proactively released by law, but are becoming 'less obtainable' as government entities exploit a 'loophole,' say transparency advocates.

Continued from page 1

they would be excluded as exceptions under the statute.

Global Affairs Canada (GAC) has increasingly chosen not release the titles of memos, according to a data analysis of the Open Government Portal conducted by *The Hill Times*.

Titles of 38.2 per cent of memos posted to the portal so far in 2025 have fully redacted titles. That is an increase from 36.3 per cent in 2024, 33.1 per cent in 2023, 25.9 per cent in 2022, 16.4 per cent in 2021, 7.1 per cent in 2020, and 7.6 per cent in 2019. Memos with partially redacted titles are not included in the analysis.

Of the 210 titles of memos that have been redacted so far this year, 149 were action memos for the foreign affairs minister.

When the titles are hidden, it is not explained which exemption to the Access to Information Act is being employed. The department frequently uses a broadly defined exemption to the act, which is that information is redacted if its release "could reasonably be expected to be injurious" of Canada's international affairs or its defence.

The reporting requirements for proactive disclosure of memo titles were part of a series of changes to the Access to Information Act that became law in 2019.

The Treasury Board Secretariat has lauded the changes as having "significantly" expanded "the openness and transparency of government information and provided Canadians with unprecedented insight into the government's priorities, decision-making, and operations."

Questions to GAC weren't answered by publication deadline.

Democracy Watch co-founder Duff Conacher said that the increase in redactions by GAC points to the department abusing a cabinet confidence loophole.

Under the Access to Information Act, the government can exempt information being disclosed if it pertains to advice to cabinet.

"That loophole should be restricted to just what the actual advice is; instead, it is used to hide anything that is going to cabinet," Conacher said.

He said that the redactions show that there is a "cult of



Since 2019, Global Affairs Canada has fully redacted the titles of 1,933 of 9,772 memos for its ministers and deputy heads. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

excessive secrecy" in the federal government.

"That cult is alive and well," he said, remarking that the only fix is changing the law and putting in place penalties for violating the act.

Memos becoming 'less and less obtainable': Rubin

Transparency advocate Ken Rubin said that with the increase in redacted titles, briefing notes are becoming "less and less obtainable."

"They're being regressive, and that is not a good sign," he said, remarking that the fact the exemption being used to redact the title is not disclosed is a problem in itself.

"You don't get any sense of accountability or any reason for it being wiped out," Rubin said. "You're just proving that what you put forward as proactive, it really didn't mean what it says."

Ottawa-based journalist Dean Beeby, an expert on the access-to-information regime, said the increasing trend of redacted memo titles is a "worrisome" one.

"In 2019, through Bill C-58, the government instituted a regime of proactive disclosure, and

briefing note titles were a large part of that change. But what the law failed to do was to assign an independent body to police the proactive regime, to ensure the government was posting according to legally mandated timelines and was not playing fast and loose with redactions," he said.

Beeby noted that the Office of the Information Commissioner lacks jurisdiction over proactive disclosure.

"So we really have no one to keep the government honest," he said. "How is transparency served when the government can black out documents with no independent oversight?"

In 2023, Information Commissioner Caroline Maynard told the House Committee on Access to Information that "there should be an authority to evaluate what's being provided on the proactive disclosure list."

"Right now, there's nobody looking at whether people are meeting their obligations. I don't have the authority. I definitely don't have the resources to do it now," she said.

Martin Potvin, a spokesperson for the Treasury Board Secretariat, said that heads of government institutions are responsible for the administration of the act

within the departments that they oversee, and are responsible for its compliance.

"Their responsibilities include making decisions on disclosing information that is subject to exemptions under the act in a fair, reasonable, and impartial manner after considering all relevant factors for and against disclosure, the relevant provisions of the act, and any applicable jurisprudence," he said.

He referenced two provisions of the Access to Information Act which guide the non-disclosure of information required under proactive publication—including the titles of memos—if that information would be exempted when responding to an access-to-information request.

GAC redacted the most memo titles since 2019

GAC leads with the highest overall number of redacted titles of memos to ministers and deputy heads. From 2019 to 2025, it fully redacted the most memo titles of any government entity, keeping secret 1,933 of 9,772 titles of briefing notes, which is just shy of 20 per cent.

The department with the second most redacted memo titles is Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), which redacted 906 of 4,195 titles in the same period, or 21.5 per cent.

Cecelia Parsons, a spokesperson for ECCC, said the department applied the redactions in accordance with the Access to Information Act to "protect sensitive information."

"Titles are redacted when disclosure could reveal information that is exempt or excluded under the act," she said.

"As a regulatory department, ECCC manages a significant volume of legal and policy-sensitive issues, which contributes to a higher proportion of redacted titles. This includes situations related to matters currently before the courts, personal

information, intergovernmental relations, and unannounced regulatory proposals or operational decisions," Parsons added.

"ECCC remains committed to transparency and proactive disclosure while ensuring compliance with legislative requirements," she said.

The Public Prosecution Service of Canada (PPSC) redacted the highest percentage of titles of its memos for the minister or deputy head, keeping 49.9 per cent of its 1,511 titles hidden.

Nathalie Houle, a spokesperson for PPSC, said that many of the department's briefing notes involve active or potential legal cases or advice between the director of public prosecutions and the attorney general.

"In these circumstances, even the title of a briefing note can disclose protected information, including the subject matter of legal advice, the existence of a prosecution, or litigation strategy," she said.

Houle said redactions include communication under a provision of the Director of Public Prosecutions Act, which covers communications between the director of public prosecutions and the attorney general regarding prosecutions or interventions that "raises important questions of general interest."

"Titles are redacted where disclosure would reveal the substance or subject matter of that advice," she said.

"Accordingly, the redaction of briefing note titles reflects the nature of PPSC's mandate and its legal obligations," she added.

Across all government entities, complete redactions of the titles of memos for ministers and deputy heads are marginally increasing. So far in 2025, 8.8 per cent of memo titles were fully redacted. That is a rise from 8.2 per cent in 2024, 6.3 per cent in 2023, eight per cent in 2022, 7.3 per cent in 2021, 6.1 per cent in 2020, and 6.8 per cent in 2019.

Potvin said that there has been no change in the TBS's guidance to government entities for proactive disclosure under the Access to Information Act.

"We continue to advise that proactively published information should mirror the information that would be released in response to an access to information request," he said.

From 2019 to 2025, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service redacted 19.1 per cent of titles. It was 16.2 per cent at the Department of Justice; 13.7 per cent at the Department of Finance; 13.5 per cent at the Privy Council Office; 12.8 per cent at Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada; 6.2 per cent at the Department of Public Safety; 2.8 per cent at the Department of National Defence; two per cent at Canada Border Services Agency; and 1.9 per cent at the Communications Security Establishment.

nmoss@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



The titles of memos for action to Foreign Affairs Minister Anita Anand, pictured, and her predecessor Mélanie Joly comprise the majority that were fully redacted so far in 2025. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

'A disturbing sign for allies': Trump national security strategy raises red flags as Ottawa works on Canada's response

The question of how Canada will adapt should be top of mind as Washington makes clear it's no longer interested in being a reliable security partner, says former CSIS analyst Stephanie Carvin.

Continued from page 1

being a reliable security partner to the West and its allies."

Carvin, an associate professor at Carleton University's Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, called the 33-page document "a disturbing sign" for America's allies, particularly in Europe, which the document alleges is plagued by "civilizational erasure" and "activities of the European Union and other transnational bodies that undermine political liberty and sovereignty."

"Should present trends continue, the continent will be unrecognizable in 20 years or less. As such, it is far from obvious whether certain European countries will have economies and militaries strong enough to remain reliable allies," the document reads under a section entitled "Promoting European Greatness."

Released on Dec. 4, the document positions the U.S. as "pre-eminent in the Western Hemisphere," which it says is a necessary condition of its "security and prosperity" and "allows us to assert ourselves confidently where and when we need to in the region."

In its introduction, the strategy states that previous administrations' foreign policies "placed hugely misguided and destructive bets on globalism and so-called 'free trade' that hollowed out the very middle class and industrial base on which American economic and military pre-eminence depend."



U.S. President Donald Trump's foreign policy vision divides the globe between America, Russia, and China while ignoring much of the world, and 'sells out NATO,' says a former American diplomat. White House photograph by Daniel Torok

The strategy says the U.S. will "assert and enforce the 'Trump corollary' to the Monroe Doctrine," which it calls a "common-sense and potent restoration of American power and priorities, consistent with American security interests."

Created in 1823 by then-U.S. president James Monroe to oppose European colonialism in the Western Hemisphere, the doctrine has been invoked by multiple U.S. presidents since, including Ulysses S. Grant, Theodore Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, and Ronald Reagan. In 1933, Roosevelt affirmed a 1898 reinterpretation of the doctrine to promote multilateralism and non-intervention.

The "Trump Corollary" aims to "enlist established friends in the Hemisphere to control migration, stop drug flows, and strengthen stability and security on land and sea," as well as to "expand by cultivating and strengthening new partners while bolstering our own nation's appeal as the Hemisphere's economic and security partner of choice."

The document explains that the strategy seeks to "halt and reverse the ongoing damage that foreign actors inflict on the American economy while keeping the Indo-Pacific free and open, ... support our allies in preserving the freedom and security of Europe, while restoring Europe's civilizational self-confidence and

Western identity [and] prevent an adversarial power from dominating the Middle East, its oil and gas supplies, and the chokepoints through which they pass while avoiding the 'forever wars' that bogged us down in that region at great cost."

Canada receives a single mention in a section about China, and "America's economic relationship" with the country. The strategy states that the U.S. "must encourage ... prominent nations" including Canada, Mexico, and Australia "in adopting trade policies that help rebalance China's economy toward household consumption."

Though Canada only receives a brief mention in the document, "that doesn't really matter," said Carvin. "When you're talking about the U.S. asserting a neo-Monroe Doctrine in the Western Hemisphere, they are clearly saying that Canada is a part of that."

Retired U.S. diplomat Charles Shapiro, who served as ambassador to Venezuela under then-President George W. Bush, told *The Hill Times* that the strategy "captures the ethos of the Trump administration," particularly its more isolationist wing.

"This strategy is full of the Trump administration's bugaboos on mass migration and 'civilizational decline' in Europe, and it essentially looks at the world as three competing power centres," Shapiro explained.

However, while the strategy seeks to divide the world between the U.S., Russia, and China, Shapiro notes that the document is "vaguely critical" of China, but offers no criticism of Russia and "completely sells out NATO."

"It just sort of ignores the rest of the world, except as the objects of action by those three powers and just dumps on the Europeans," Shapiro said.

Lloyd Axworthy, who served as foreign affairs minister to then-Liberal prime minister Jean Chrétien, previously told *The Hill Times* he believes the strategy threatens to make Canada "a vassal state" and "needs to be put on the reading list" of every MP.

Axworthy said that the security strategy illustrates that "the United States no longer has a commitment to collaborative, co-operative multilateralism," and has basically adopted an "our-way-or-the-highway approach in the Western Hemisphere."

One of the few parliamentarians to put the spotlight on the strategy since its release has been Green Party Leader Elizabeth May (Saanich-Gulf Islands, B.C.), who described the strategy as "nationalistic, white supremacist, misogynist," and "a direct assault on [Canada's] democratic values."

During a year-end press conference on Dec. 10, May said that "Parliament should be seized with this," and that "Canadians should be paying a lot of attention" to the strategy.

"Trump is a threat to the global world order," May said, adding that Canada needs to "realign our thinking" to ensure his vision for the world does not "undermine our efforts at democracy, peace, and respect for international law."

NDP MP Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, B.C.), her party's national security critic, described the strategy as "a break from the liberal internationalist script" and "the clearest articulation yet of an old imperial impulse dressed up as 'flexible realism.'"

"By openly reviving a Trump-branded Monroe Doctrine, Washington is no longer pretending that the Western Hemisphere is a community of sovereign nations," Kwan wrote in a statement to *The Hill Times*. "It is declaring a hierarchy, and Canada is firmly placed in the category of subordinate territory whose primary function is to enable U.S. power projection. We cannot and will not stand for it ... Canadians expect us to respond aggressively, in kind, in support of the national interest."

However, while the strategy captures the administration's thinking, Shapiro cautioned against overanalyzing the document's text.

"I spent 34 years working in the State Department and crises

came up all the time—sometimes things you didn't and sometimes things you did—but I don't remember anybody ever turning to a national security strategy."

Since the document's release, Canadian politicians have been muted in their response, with much of their attention focused on the final days of Parliament before the six-week holiday break.

Last week, Defence Minister David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Ont.) told CTV News that Canada is "taking note" of the new American strategy, and will "continue to work closely with our neighbour and partner" in defence, security, and intelligence.

The office of Foreign Affairs Minister Anita Anand (Oakville East, Ont.) told *The Hill Times* in a statement that it "wouldn't comment on another country's domestic policies."

Public Safety Minister Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough-Guildwood-Rouge Park, Ont.) was asked about the American strategy in a Dec. 11 scrum. He said he hadn't yet read it, and would be getting a briefing. He also said that Canada's own national security strategy, which will be available in the "coming months," is the first one in "two-and-a-half decades, so we have to put some work into it. I think a lot of work has already gone in."

While Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.) has yet to comment on the strategy, one senior Liberal source assured *The Hill Times* that he "has read it."

Carvin said she agreed with former Conservative foreign affairs minister Peter MacKay, who told *The Hill Times* last week that Canada needs to send its own "clear-eyed vision of national defence" in response to what he called "the Monroe doctrine on steroids."

McGuinty's office did not respond to a request for comment on when Canada's updated strategy can be expected, nor did the Privy Council Office, by publication deadline.

Carvin said she was informed that Canada has not yet released its updated national security strategy to allow the U.S. to release theirs first.

"The question now is how the government will be adapting Canada's strategy in response to Trump," Carvin said, noting that, "if the rumours are true," issues of social cohesion within Canada will have to be heavily featured.

"It's concerning to have the U.S. government aiming at more polarization at a time when Canada is trying to reduce it," she said.

—with files from Christopher Guly

sbenson@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



Prime Minister Mark Carney, left, meets with U.S. President Donald Trump at the White House on May 6, 2025. White House photograph by Daniel Torok

Party Central



By Stuart Benson

The Grinch steals Conservatives' Christmas, delivers the Liberals a miracle 171st seat

Thousands of Liberals, both old and very, very new, packed the Rogers Centre Ottawa for their annual caucus holiday party on Dec. 11. And to borrow an already-tired cliché, the Grits' Christmas gift came early with the news of former Conservative MP **Michael Ma's** floor crossing announced less than an hour before the party.

Alongside the rest of Canada, the majority of the nearly 2,500 Liberals in attendance at the party's annual holiday fête learned of their newest caucus colleague as they arrived and made their way up to the third-floor Canada Room. According to *The Toronto Star*, Ma's decision was sealed only hours earlier after a meeting with Prime Minister **Mark Carney**.

Held in the same room as last year's party—which had been hot on the heels of the shock resignation of then-finance minister and deputy prime minister **Chrystia Freeland**—the energy in the room last Thursday night was its polar opposite, with excited guests mingling well past the scheduled 7:15 p.m. start for Carney's speech. Ironically, Ma's floor crossing overshadowed another resignation of a high-profile woman: Canadian Ambassador to the United States **Kirsten Hillman**, who announced her own pending resignation on Dec. 9.

By 7:50 p.m., the majority of the guests had made their way to, at least, the vicinity of their designated tables, but had yet to take their seats, despite the pleading of the night's emcees—MPs **Mona Fortier** and national caucus chair **James Maloney**—and the ghostly voice of Irish-Canadian Father of Confederation **D'Arcy McGee**. Guests were also greeted that night by the “ghosts” of Liberal prime ministers past. **Party Central** did not spot any of the still-living former prime ministers.

“Can you feel the mood in the room this year?” Maloney asked the gathered Liberals, noting the contrast between this and last years' parties, and thanking Carney for calling the election for the week after the Easter holiday so that he could “celebrate two resurrections, two weeks in a row.”

Even as the Liberals celebrated the growth of their caucus to 171 MPs, Maloney corrected Fortier that, in fact, his “favourite number is 172,” calling out Liberal Whip **Mark Gerretsen**, seated front and centre at the foot of the stage, who was spotted nodding along vigorously.

While **Party Central** and the other press gallery reporters in attendance—including CBC's **Chris Rands**, *The Globe and Mail's* **Stephanie Levitz**, and *The Canadian Press's* **Catherine Morrison**—were kept tightly corralled to the media riser or right in front of the stage, this reporter was slightly naughty and snuck off to take some photos while the Prime Minister's Office's advance team wasn't looking. As the saying goes, this is where **Party Central** begs forgiveness from senior team lead **Terry Guillon**.

While on walkabouts, **Party Central** managed to spot several notable Liberal plus-ones mingling around the room, such as **Diana Fox Carney** chatting with Foreign Affairs Minister **Anita Anand** and KAN Strategies' **Greg MacEachern**. Also spotted were Irish Ambassador **John Concannon**; Ontario Liberal Leader **Bonnie Crombie**; Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami president **Natan Obed**; Counsel Public Affairs' **John Delacourt** and **Kait LaForce** joining MP **Terry**

Duguid's table; and MP **Darren Fisher** in a neck chain of Christmas lights.

After finally corralling everyone to their seats just after 8 p.m., followed by the singing of *O Canada* led by New Brunswick MP **David Myles**, and a land acknowledgment by Nova Scotia MP **Jaime Battiste**, Carney finally took to the stage with an unsurprising kick in his step.

“Some of you have been Liberals your whole life. Some of you apparently came back from the dead to be Liberals here tonight. Others, like me, are new to politics,” Carney said, before accepting an audience heckle/correction that he is now, in fact, a politician.

“Some may have just joined our party, like, literally just joined our party,” Carney said, before welcoming Ma to the stage, where they embraced and raised clasped hands as if the prime minister were announcing a presidential running mate. While the intent may have been celebratory, **Party Central** got the vibe that the intended audience was a demoralized audience of one.

The last time someone had their nose rubbed in it this bad, **King Priam** was watching **Hector** get dragged around the walls of Troy by **Achilles's** chariot.

Speaking of: while the Liberals' Christmas party raged on Dec. 11, Conservative Leader **Pierre Poilievre** was scheduled to attend a \$1,750-per-person fundraiser at a private residence in Toronto's Forest Hill neighbourhood, in Liberal MP **Leslie Church's** riding.

According to Elections Canada, the Conservatives have held multiple fundraisers at a private residence in the same neighbourhood, including in 2024 and 2022. The 2022 party was organized by **Michael Liebrock**, managing director of Investments & Asset Management at The Stronach Group, and the multimillionaire former co-owner of the Toronto Argonauts, **David Cynamon**.

Ma's floor-crossing predecessor **Chris d'Entremont** also received a PM shout-out and standing ovation, though the Nova Scotia MP didn't appear on stage, and Carney joked the two would have much more fun at the Liberal party than “*Christmas with the Kranks*.”

Ironically, Ma had the best of both worlds this week, having crossed the floor the day after attending the Conservatives' holiday party on Dec. 10, and snagging a Secret Santa gift at the caucus meeting earlier in the morning. You may not like it, but that is what peak office holiday party performance looks like.

Once the fanfare was over, Carney pivoted into a more traditional speech, not dissimilar to the ones then-prime minister **Justin Trudeau** would have delivered in his first few years on the job. In another similarity, the media and **Party Central** were also quickly ushered out of the festivities after the speech.

Fortunately, there were still plenty of smokers or other attendees looking to take pictures in front of the giant red Christmas tree in the lobby who were more than happy to trade some inside gossip in exchange for a light or an assist with their group photo.

And while there may no longer be any stirring in the House of Commons, in case you're already planning your holiday break, **Party Central** imagines the political festivities may not be over just yet.

sbenson@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



The Hill Times photographs by Stuart Benson

1. National caucus chair James Maloney, left, and MP Mona Fortier desperately try to get the attention of a crowd with very little interest in what they have to say, an experience Maloney said he is very familiar with from his duties at the weekly Liberal caucus meetings. 2. Former Liberal MP Bryan May, Public Works and Procurement Minister Joël Lightbound, and Defence Procurement Secretary of State Stephen Fuhr. 3. GRO Senator Sandra Pupatello, left, and Justice Minister Sean Fraser. 4. University of Waterloo Young Liberals Hrushika Devaraja, left, Nicholas Aboagye, right, and the ‘ghost’ of Canada's seventh prime minister, Wilfrid Laurier. 5. Counsel Public Affairs' John Delacourt, left, and Kait LaForce. 6. Stephen Gatphoh, left, Ivan Nunez Gamez, Colin McKone, MP Terry Duguid, Sarah Rollason-MacAulay, Linda Sutterlin-Duguid, and Simon Kinsman. 7. Diana Fox Carney, left, and KAN Strategies' Greg MacEachern. 8. Liberal MPs Fisher, left, and Mark Gerretsen, Megan Blumenthal, and Ekaterina Nova. 9. Prime Minister Mark Carney greets former Conservative MP Michael Ma on stage as if he were announcing his presidential running mate: clasping hands, celebrating, and most importantly, knowing where the cameras are.

FEATURE

Canada Korea Society
hosts holiday bash

The Hill Times photographs by Sam Garcia



1. Conservative Senator Yonah Martin, left; Young-Hae Lee, Canada Korea Society (CKS) president; and Younggi Ahn, chargé d'affaires/minister of the South Korean Embassy attend the CKS annual general meeting and dinner at Ottawa Hunt & Golf Club on Nov. 27. 2. CSG Senator Flordeliz (Gigi) Osler, left; then-Conservative MP Michael Ma; Jeff Nankivell, president and CEO, Asia Pacific Foundation; Martin; Lee; Ahn; and CSG Senator Rebecca Patterson. 3. Colonel Dongwon Lee, Republic of Korea defence attaché, left; Lee; Marie Cotter, CKS director; Jennifer Eyre and General Wayne Eyre, former chief of the defence staff. 4. Lee delivers remarks to the 90 guests in attendance for the 41st annual event.

Armenia honours ex-MP Bergeron



1. Former Bloc Québécois MP Stéphane Bergeron, left, accepts an Armenian National Assembly medal of honour from Ambassador Anahit Harutyunyan at the embassy on Nov. 4. 2. Bergeron, left, and Independent Senator Pierre Dalphond. 3. Former Bloc leader Gilles Duceppe delivers remarks. 4. Greek Ambassador Ekaterina Dimakis, left, Harutyunyan, Bergeron, and Independent Senator Lucie Moncion.

Hill Climbers



By Laura Ryckewaert

New directors on deck for ministers Thompson, Ali

Additions include Jeff Woodland as issues management and parliamentary affairs director to the fisheries minister, and Adhil Hussain as director of labour relations to the Treasury Board president.

Fisheries Minister **Joanne Thompson** made some key staffing changes to her office this fall, including hiring **Elizabeth Arsenault** as her new director of policy.

Kurtis Layden, a former policy director to then-fisheries and oceans minister **Joyce Murray** and then-environment minister **Steven Guilbeault**, had filled in as Thompson's interim policy director immediately post-election and through the summer, but left—as forewarned, and previously reported by *Hill Climbers*—earlier this fall.

Arsenault has since been hired to lead the minister's policy team. She was last busy as Atlantic regional adviser in then-prime minister **Justin Trudeau**'s office, and has been on break since the top office changed hands with Prime Minister **Mark Carney**'s elevation to Liberal leader this past March.

"Parliament has returned ... and so have I!" wrote Arsenault in a LinkedIn post about taking on her new job "[a]fter a much needed break and reset."

Arsenault covered the PMO's Atlantic desk for roughly a year and a half in all. A former assistant to then-Nova Scotia Liberal MP **Mark Eyking** and Liberal MP **Mike Kelloway**, Arsenault is also a former Atlantic regional adviser to then-health minister **Patty Hajdu**, and a past director of operations to Murray as then-fisheries and oceans minister.

Along with Layden, director of issues management and parliamentary affairs **Andrew Richard-**

son has exited Thompson's shop. Richardson had been with the fisheries office since 2023, previously as issues management and parliamentary affairs director to then-minister **Diane Lebouthillier**.

Hill Climbers understands Richardson has moved over to Transport Minister **Steven MacKinnon**'s team, but stay tuned for a full update on that office.

Jeff Woodland now leads issues management and parliamentary affairs for Thompson. He previously tackled communications in the federal health minister's office, beginning as a senior communications and issues adviser to then-minister **Mark Holland** in 2023. Amid the cabinet transition this past summer, Woodland filled in for a time as communications director to current Health Minister **Marjorie Michel** (a job now permanently held by **Guillaume Bertrand**).

Woodland is familiar with the fisheries file, having previously been press secretary and issues adviser to then-minister **Murray**. He's also a former communications adviser to then-Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario minister **Helena Jacek**, whom Woodland had earlier worked for in her capacity as the MP for Markham-Stouffville, Ont.

In his new role, Woodland works closely with **Daniel Jennings**, who has been promoted from senior adviser to deputy director of issues management and parliamentary affairs. Jennings has been working for the federal fisheries minister since the fall of 2023, beginning as special assistant for parliamentary affairs and assistant to the parliamentary

secretary to then-minister **Lebouthillier**. Previously, he'd worked as a special assistant for communications and issues management to then-veterans affairs minister **Lawrence MacAulay**, and as an assistant to Ontario Liberal MP **Anita Vandenbeld**.

Selena McCuaig has also left Thompson's team. She'd been assistant to the parliamentary secretary to the fisheries minister since the fall of 2024, having first been hired under then-minister **Lebouthillier**.

Sean Cruz has since been hired as both an issues manager and as the new assistant to the parliamentary secretary, Liberal MP **Ernie Klassen**.

He comes straight from the office of Secretary of State for Rural Development **Buckley Belanger** where Cruz had been a regional and policy adviser since June. Among other past jobs,

Cruz is also a former communications assistant and North regional adviser to then-rural economic development minister **Gudie Hutchings**, who at the time was also responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.

Neil MacIsaac continues as chief of staff to Thompson, whose 16-member team also currently includes: **Morgan McCullough**, director of

operations and aquaculture; **Kevin McHarg**, director of fish management and stakeholder relations; **Emily Heffernan**, director of communications; **Erik Nosaluk**, deputy director of communications; **Ira Khedkar**, press secretary and regional adviser for Ontario and the Prairies; **Josh Lindner**, senior regional adviser for British Columbia; **Michael**

Ferguson, senior regional adviser for the Maritimes; **Victoria Dempster**, senior adviser for Newfoundland and Labrador; **Jackson Coles**, policy adviser; **Vinciane Museru**, executive assistant to the minister; and ministerial driver **Joe Amicone**.

Jumping over to Treasury Board President **Shafqat Ali**'s shop, the minister has added two new directors to his team since *Hill Climbers*' last update: **Abdelrahman Amin** as director of parliamentary affairs, and **Adhil Hussain** as director of labour relations.

Amin previously tackled parliamentary affairs and issues management in the PMO, having first been hired to 80 Wellington St. as a co-ordinator for the unit under then-prime minister **Trudeau** in August 2024. Amin is also a former special assistant for parliamentary affairs to then-families, children, and social development minister **Jenna Suds**, and an ex-aide to MP **Vandenbeld**. His online CV also notes time spent as an administrative assistant with the Ottawa Muslim Association, along with brief runs as a public affairs associate with Impact Public Affairs in Ottawa, and as a strategic planning specialist with the Canada Revenue Agency.

Hussain previously worked for the federal Liberal Party, including as a senior field organizer, and served as campaign manager to now-Women and Gender Equality Minister and Secretary of State for Small Business and Tourism **Rechie Valdez** in Mississauga-Streetsville, Ont., during the spring federal election.

Also now part of Ali's team are **Fazal Musa**, who's been hired as a special assistant for parliamentary affairs; **Samar Tariq**, who's been brought on as executive assistant to the chief of staff and for operations; and **Farwa Urooj**, who's now a special assistant for operations.

Musa is a former assistant to Ottawa Liberal MP **Yasir Naqvi**—on whose 2023 Ontario Liberal leadership campaign, and 2025 federal re-election campaigns Musa also worked—and an ex-constituency aide to Toronto

Liberal MP **Rob Oliphant**. Tariq spent much of this year working as a field organizer for the federal Liberal Party, including through last spring's federal election, and graduated from the University of Guelph with a bachelor's degree in political science last year. Among

other things, she'd been active with the school's Young Liberals association.

Urooj joined Ali's team in November, and comes fresh from his office as the MP for Brampton-Chinguacousy Park, Ont., where she worked for the past two years.

Led by chief of staff **Elliott Lockington**, Ali's team now includes 16 staff. Aside from those already mentioned, they are: director of policy **Dan Linden**; senior

policy advisers **Daniel Kucirek** and **Hosai Zurmati Halim**; policy advisers **Elizabeth Wong**, **Farrah-Lilia Kerkadi**, and **Annahat Kochhar**; director of operations **Taimur Ali**; director of issues management and deputy director of communications **Matthieu Perrotin**; director of communications **Mohammad Kamal**; communications adviser **Meher Plahay**; and digital communications adviser **Precious Badru**.
lryckewaert@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



Fisheries Minister Joanne Thompson, left, and Treasury Board President Shafqat Ali have each added two new directors to their respective offices. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade



Jeff Woodland is now director of issues management and parliamentary affairs for Minister Thompson. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Daniel Jennings is now a deputy director in the fisheries office. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Elizabeth Arsenault is director of policy to Minister Thompson. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Sean Cruz has joined Minister Thompson's office. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Samar Tariq has joined the Treasury Board president's team. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Parliamentary Calendar

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



The House of Commons rose on Dec. 11. MPs will be back in Ottawa on Jan. 26, 2026. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Decked halls of Parliament on pause until House returns on Jan. 26

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 17

House Schedule—The House of Commons adjourned last week until Jan. 26, 2026, and is scheduled to sit for 117 days in 2026. Here's the schedule for 2026: it will sit Monday to Friday, Jan. 26-Feb. 13; Feb. 23-27; March 9-13; March 23-Thursday, March 26; April 13-May 8; May 25-June 19; Sept. 21-Oct. 9; Oct. 19-Nov. 6; and Nov. 16-Dec. 11.

Holiday Reception with Liberal MP Acan—Liberal MP Sima Acan and a "guest from cabinet" will attend the Oakville West holiday reception for volunteers, donors, and other supporters. Wednesday, Dec. 17, at 6 p.m. at a location to be announced in Oakville, Ont. Details: event.liberal.ca.

THURSDAY, DEC. 18

Minister Joly to Deliver Remarks—Rescheduled from Dec. 9, Industry Minister Mélanie Joly will deliver remarks in French and English on "Strengthening industrial capacity in a changing world," a breakfast event hosted by the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations. Thursday, Dec. 18, at 7:45 a.m. ET in Montreal at a location to be confirmed. Register: corim.qc.ca.

An Evening with Liberal MP Ntumba—Liberal MP Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba will take part in a fundraiser for the Mont-Saint-Bruno—L'Acadie Federal Liberal Association. Thursday, Dec. 18 at 5 p.m. ET at the Royal Canadian Legion 147, 1622 rue Roberval, Saint-Bruno-de-Montarville, Que. Details: event.liberal.ca.

FRIDAY, DEC. 19

Forte Trio in Concert—The Embassy of Kazakhstan in Canada hosts a special performance by Forte Trio, the State Trio of Kazakhstan. One of Kazakhstan's leading chamber

ensembles, Forte Trio is known for its expressive musicianship and a unique blend of classical tradition and Kazakh cultural elements. Friday, Dec. 19, at 6 p.m. ET, at the Carleton Dominion-Chalmers Centre, 290 Lisgar St. RSVP kazakhembassy@gmail.com.

SATURDAY, DEC. 20

Liberal MP Chang to Take Part in Fundraiser—Liberal MP Wade Chang will take part in a fundraising dinner hosted by the Burnaby Central Federal Liberal Association. Saturday, Dec. 20, at 6:30 p.m. PT at Five Sails Restaurant, 999 Canada Pl., Vancouver. Details: liberal.ca

THURSDAY, JAN. 8, 2026

REEL Politics Film Series—As part of the ongoing REEL Politics Film Series fundraiser, tonight's screening is the 1957 film *A Face in the Crowd* featuring Andy Griffith and Patricia Neal. Thursday, Jan. 8, at 5:30 p.m. ET at the ByTowne Cinema, 325 Rideau St., Ottawa. Details: reelpolitics.ca.

THURSDAY, JAN. 25, 2026

'Big Stories of 2026 that Will Shape Canada'—The Empire Club hosts "Empire Nights: The Journalists' Forecast — Big Stories of 2026 that Will Shape Canada." *Globe and Mail's* Ottawa bureau chief Bob Fife, *Toronto Star's* Ottawa bureau chief Tonda MacCharles, and Sabrina Nanji, founder and lead journalist with *Queen's Park Observer*, will forecast the big political stories that will shape Canada in the year ahead. Ipsos Public Affairs' Global CEO Darrell Bricker will also take part. Thursday, Jan. 25, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. ET at a location to be announced. Details: empireclubofcanada.com.

THURSDAY, JAN. 29—SATURDAY, JAN. 31, 2026

Conservative National Convention—The Conservative Party of Canada will hold its the National Convention. Thursday, Jan. 29, to Saturday, Jan. 31, 2026, at the Telus Convention Centre, Calgary.

FRIDAY, JAN. 30, 2026

Minister Anand to Deliver Remarks—Rescheduled from November, Foreign Minister Anita Anand will deliver bilingual remarks on "Canada's economic diplomacy and strategic autonomy in a multipolar world," hosted by the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations. Friday, Jan. 30, 2026, at 11:30 a.m. ET at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel, 1255 Jeanne-Mance St., Montreal. Details: corim.qc.ca.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 4, 2026

Gala Dinner to Mark 20 Years Since Harper's First Election—Former prime minister Stephen Harper will celebrate the cabinet, caucus, staff and officials who served Canada's Conservative government from 2006-2015 with a gala dinner. Wednesday, Feb. 4, in Ottawa at a downtown location to be confirmed. Details: harperx20.ca.

THURSDAY, FEB. 5, 2026

Bank of Canada Governor to Deliver Remarks—Bank of Canada Governor Tiff Macklem will deliver remarks on "Forces Reshaping Canada's Economy in 2026," hosted by the Empire Club of Canada. Thursday, Feb. 5, 2026, at 11:30 a.m. ET. Details: empireclubofcanada.com.

MONDAY, FEB. 9, 2026

An Evening with PS Blois and Kim McConnell—The Canadian Agri-Food

Automation and Intelligence Network, and the Government of Canada host "In a World of Tariffs, What Does the Future Hold for Canadian Agri-Food?" a discussion featuring Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister Kody Blois, and Kim McConnell, founder and former chief executive officer of AdFarm, on the technology and policies needed to keep Canada atop the global ag ecosystem. Reception to follow. Monday, Feb. 9, 2026, at 6 p.m. ET at the Rogers Centre, 55 Colonel By Dr., Ottawa. Register: bit.ly/CAAINFireside.

TUESDAY, FEB. 10, 2026

'Diagnosing and Combatting Health Misinformation'—The Empire Club of Canada and the the Canadian Medical Association host "Diagnosing and Combatting Health Misinformation: 2026 CMA Health and Media Tracking Survey Launch" featuring Abacus Data's David Coletto, Dr. Jen Gunter, Vass Bednar, and Dr. Tom Frieden, former director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Tuesday, Feb. 10, in Ottawa (location to be confirmed). Details: empireclubofcanada.com.

TUESDAY, FEB. 10—WEDNESDAY, FEB. 11, 2026

AFN Natural Resources Forum—The Assembly of First Nations hosts its second annual Natural Resources Forum under the theme "Strengthening Our Sovereignty." Tuesday, Feb. 10, to Wednesday, Feb. 11, 2026, in Calgary. Details: afn.ca.

TUESDAY, FEB. 24, 2026

Chief Justice Wagner to Deliver Remarks—Rescheduled from Jan. 27, 2026, Chief Justice Richard

Wagner will take part in a roundtable luncheon hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Feb. 24, 2026, at the C.D. Howe Institute, 110 Yonge St., Suite 800, Toronto. Register: cdhowe.org.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4—FRIDAY, MARCH 6, 2026

2026 Progress Summit—The Broadbent Institute hosts its 2026 Progress Summit on the theme "Defending Democracy Across Borders." Wednesday, March 4, to Friday, March 6, at the Delta Hotel City Centre Ottawa, 101 Lyon St. N. Details: broadbentinstitute.ca.

SUNDAY, MARCH 29, 2026

NDP Leadership Election Results—The results of the election for the federal NDP's new leader will be announced today in Winnipeg.

THURSDAY, APRIL 9—SATURDAY, APRIL 11, 2026

Liberal National Convention—The 2026 Liberal National Convention will take place from Thursday, April 9, to Saturday, April 11, 2026, in in Montreal, Que., featuring policy discussions, guest speakers, training sessions, and the election of the next national board of directors. Details: liberal.ca.

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