



## MUSK MEDDLES in Canadian federal politics

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### NEWS

## Musk's approval of Poilievre good for Conservatives, but may not sit well for others, say pollsters and strategists

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Billionaire tech CEO Elon Musk's weighing in on Canadian politics with his recent endorsement of Pierre Poilievre may resonate with some of the Conservative leader's base, but could also drive away some voters who don't like the link with U.S. President Donald Trump, according to some pollsters and strategists.

In recent weeks, Musk—the U.S.-based CEO of Tesla, owner of social media platform X, and Trump's incoming government efficiency head—has made no secret that he approves of Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.). On Dec. 17, 2024, Bill Ackman, the billionaire CEO of Pershing Square Capital Management, posted on X that Poilievre should be Canada's next prime minister, to which Musk responded with a 100-points emoji. Musk has also been active on X praising Poilievre's media interactions and statements.

Abacus Data CEO David Coletto told *The Hill Times* that Musk is not viewed particularly well in Canada, based on survey data gathered by his firm this month, but which hasn't been released on the Abacus website. Following Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's (Papineau, Que.) Jan. 6 news that he intends to step down after his successor as Liberal Party leader is found in March, Abacus conducted a survey of 2,500 Canadian adults from Jan. 6-7, which

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### NEWS

# Fears over Trump's tariffs grow, but Canadian federal political parties' standings static: polls



**Buckle up for Trump 2.0, world:** Donald Trump, left, being sworn in on Jan. 20, 2017, at the U.S. Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. Melania Trump holds two versions of the Bible, a childhood one given to Trump by his mother, and Abraham Lincoln's. Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons/Official White House photograph

BY STEPHEN JEFFERY

As Donald Trump resumes the United States presidency on Jan. 20, polling shows Canadians are increasingly focused on the impact his actions could have on this country's economy and stability, but their concerns have not yet translated into a change in voting intentions ahead of this year's federal election.

"I think once the Liberals select a leader—whoever that person might be—dealing with Donald Trump and managing the bi-national relationship could very well be the ballot issue that Canadians are judging at least the two main parties on," said Nik Nanos, founder and chief data scientist of Nanos Research.

"We may find that Canadians perhaps decide to opt

for an imperfect or unpopular choice depending on how the two leaders of the Conservatives and the Liberals scope out how they're going to manage that relationship."

The polling firm's weekly tracking survey ending on Jan. 10—the week of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's (Papineau, Que.)

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### NEWS

## To succeed Trudeau, Liberal leadership race winner must secure 17,151 points across 343 ridings

BY ABBAS RANA

The Liberals will elect Justin Trudeau's successor across 343 reconstituted federal ridings, with each riding equally weighted at 100 points, requiring the winner to secure at least 17,151 points—50 per cent plus one—to win, according to the party's constitution.

The voting for the Liberal leadership election will take place on March 9 in newly reconfigured ridings, which came into effect in April last year. The ongoing race is the first to take



place under these new ridings, although it is an intra-party election. According to Liberal Party leadership rules released last week, the spending limit for the contest is \$5-million. In



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# Heard on the Hill



By Christina Leadlay

## He's got 'rizz'; he's 'tone-deaf': Carney's *Daily Show* spot attracts attention, buzz



Former Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney appeared on Jon Stewart's *The Daily Show* on Jan. 13, 2025. Screenshot courtesy of YouTube

Reaction to the interview that former Bank of Canada governor **Mark Carney** had with *The Daily Show*'s host **Jon Stewart** last week fell into one of two camps: like/don't hate it or really hate it.

News flash: those who don't identify with right-wing politics had slightly higher praise for the almost 20-minute interview that aired on Jan. 13 on the U.S.-based Comedy Central network compared with those who balk at the left-of-centre.

"I am in fact detecting some rizz from Mark Carney," journalist **Rachel Gilmore** posted on BlueSky on Jan. 14. "I thought he was a rizzless nerd, but it appears I wasn't familiar with his game. Or is Jon Stewart's rizz so strong it rubbed off?"

"This ain't [**Michael**] Ignatieff. And it sure ain't [**Justin**] **Trudeau**," said *Globe and Mail* columnist **Andrew Coyne** that same day, to which political commentator **Chantal Hébert** replied, "Yep—big time..."

Author **Stephen Maher** said "Carney helped himself here. Comes across pretty well," he posted on X on Jan. 13.

Ottawa-based freelancer **Dale Smith**'s hot take is that Carney was "a bit coy, but claims the 'outsider' status. But he struggles with the verbal volleying, and it feels a bit forced."

It was Carney's "I am an outsider" assertion in response to Stewart's remark, "you sneaky—you are running as an outsider,"—meaning he's not saddled with

the baggage of having been a cabinet minister or an MP that might affect other Liberal leadership candidates—that got many folks fired up.

*National Post* senior editor **Terry Newman** quipped on X: "Carney, an outsider? My arse he is," while on the same platform, **Jonathan Kay** said that "Carney's 'outsider' shtick is hilarious."

"If he were a cat, he'd be an inside cat," Conservative House Leader **Andrew Scheer** posted on X on Jan. 14.

In a Jan. 14 post on her Substack titled "Carney is no 'outsider'. He runs the club," Conservative MP **Michelle Rempel Garner** explained that "Carney's attempt to claim outsider status is, at best, tone-deaf—and at worst, grievously laughable. His track record screams the opposite: a staunch insider advocate for left-wing policies, a close advisor to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, a key architect of the Liberal government's much-criticized agenda, and a high ranking member of the world's most elite organizations."

"The only outsider status Trudeau, Carney and his ilk should be afforded is a place far away from the levers of Canada's federal government," concluded the four-term Alberta MP.

Carney's interview with Stewart attracted national media attention, along with coverage from *The Washington Post*, *the Guardian*, *Politico*, *The Economic Times*, and *The Associated Press*.

## NDP MP Angus' 'blunt' take on Tory Leader Poilievre

Meanwhile, veteran NDP MP **Charlie Angus** appeared on the *Toronto Mike'd* podcast which aired Jan. 13 where he and host **Mike Boon** chiefly discussed U.S. president-elect **Donald Trump**'s threats to Canadian sovereignty.

They also touched on Angus' reasons for not seeking re-election—the recent riding redistribution has made Timmins-James Bay, Ont., geographically larger and therefore more time-consuming to meet with constituents—mis- and disinformation, the opioid crisis, and his concerns for Canada in what Angus called "2025, the year of upheaval."

But it was Angus' remarks about Conservative Leader **Pierre Poilievre** that caught our attention.

Halfway into the 45-minute long episode, Boon asks "do you trust that Pierre Poilievre will protect our sovereignty?"

To which Angus replies "I don't believe that Pierre Poilievre is fit to lead our nation. I have known this man for 20 years. I believe he is a political arsonist. I believe that his entire political career has been on rage and blame. He has offered nothing but slogans."

He continued: "I am very concerned with Mr. Poilievre getting a majority, a super majority," saying



*Toronto Mike'd* host Mike Boon, left, and NDP MP Charlie Angus, who appeared on the podcast recorded in Boon's Etobicoke, Ont., basement. Photograph courtesy torontomike.com

he worries that Trump and **Elon Musk**'s endorsement is "going to start to damage Mr Poilievre. Pretty blunt: I don't think this man should be anywhere near the reins of power at this time."

Angus also has no love lost for businessman and one-time Conservative leadership hopeful **Kevin O'Leary** who recently joined Alberta Premier **Danielle Smith** at Trump's Florida estate: "This punter [O'Leary] has no mandate to speak for anybody. He's a grifter. Grifters love grifters... I'm sorry, but you're undermining our nation." Find the whole episode on torontomike.com.

## Kevin O'Leary gets spicy on CBC



CBC *Power and Politics* host David Cochrane, left, speaks with Kevin O'Leary on Jan. 13, 2025, days after O'Leary visited the U.S. president-elect's Florida estate. Screenshot courtesy of CBC

Speaking of **Kevin O'Leary**, the current chair of O'Leary Ventures was in fighting form on the Jan. 13 edition of CBC's *Power and Politics* with **David Cochrane**.

Speaking via video from New York, O'Leary and Cochrane warmed up with discussing **Donald Trump**'s tariff threats and the relationships Alberta Premier **Danielle Smith** is building in the new White House cabinet before turning it up a notch with the O'Leary-approved notion of a "common currency" and an European Union-style passport between Canada and the U.S.

"I am pulling from all that signal," O'Leary told Cochrane when asked whether this idea has come directly from the U.S. president-elect, with whom O'Leary and Smith had met in Florida just days earlier.

As O'Leary gained steam in noting the hundreds of billions of dollars such an association would bring to Canada, he then said "Who doesn't want to do that? The only guy I know who doesn't want that is **Gerald Butts**,

and I think we've had enough of him."

"Gerry Butts has been out of government for a long time," Cochrane corrected.

"Let me correct you," said O'Leary, citing how Butts, as Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau**'s principal secretary in the Liberal government's first mandate—who quit in 2019 and who's VP at the Eurasia Group—"put all the policy in place. We had to litigate that policy in Oct 2023 to get me to bring back \$75-billion into Canada."

"Gerald Butts is the anti-Christ of Canada," O'Leary spat.

"Mr. Butts is a private citizen now, he is not in public life, he goes not control the govt, he hasn't been since—well anyway, I want to move on," Cochrane said with nary a bead of sweat on his bald head.

Responded O'Leary: "Isn't he backing the Liberal leadership right now? Didn't I hear **Mark Carney** is going to bring him in behind him? That is an unholy union."

## Ex-Tory minister Solberg and sons shift gears

Former Conservative federal cabinet minister **Monte Solberg** has left his role as CEO of Calgary-based New West Public Affairs, and he's taken his sons **Matt** and **Michael** with him.

The three Solbergs are now with the newly-launched Shift Media Strategies, a "new digital campaign firm offering a holistic suite of creative services to clients across Canada and the United States," according to a Jan. 13 press release.

Solberg represented Medicine Hat, Alta., from 1997 to 2008, and held roles in **Stephen Harper**'s cabinet including citizenship, and human resources.

His sons each bring their own skills in communications and politics. According to LinkedIn, Matt has worked on campaigns and in the offices of both Wildrose and

United Conservative politicians, while Michael's background is in government relations and public affairs.

Both worked with their father at New West for the past seven years.

Also switching from New West to Shift is political strategist and former Alberta NDP government staffer **Keith McLaughlin**. And rounding out the new leadership team are senior Conservative Party of Canada strategist **Stephen Taylor** who's Shift's chief technology officer and partner, and **Timothy Gerwing**, a former communications director for the United Conservative caucus in Alberta. He is Shift's creative director.

Shift has offices in western Canada and Toronto.

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# NEWS

# To succeed Trudeau, Liberal leadership race winner must secure 17,151 points across 343 ridings



Since the leadership race will be short, candidates won't have time to sign up a large number of new members, so the existing membership will play a crucial role in choosing the winner, says pollster Darrell Bricker.



Government House Leader Karina Gould entered the Liberal leadership race on Jan. 18. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Continued from page 1

addition, each candidate must pay a \$350,000 leadership vote deposit. Of the total deposit, \$50,000 is refundable, and \$300,000 is non-refundable.

The Liberal Party has provided a payment schedule to all potential candidate interested in the party's top job. To declare their candidacy, each candidate must make an initial refundable compliance deposit of \$50,000 by Jan. 23. A second instalment of \$50,000 is due by Jan. 30, followed by two payments of \$125,000 on Feb. 7 and Feb. 17. All donor cheques must be sent

directly to the party office. The party does not take a cut from the first \$500,000 raised, but charges a 25-per-cent fee on any amount beyond that. Additionally, candidates are prohibited from exceeding a debt limit of \$200,000 at any time.

In response to a question from *The Hill Times*, the party did not say how many members it had at the start of the leadership election. But, according to a Liberal source, the party had about 85,000 members when the leadership race was triggered after Trudeau's (Papineau, Que.) resignation announcement on Jan. 6. The party is holding a condensed leadership

process because of time constraints, as the opposition parties are threatening to defeat the government as soon as the House comes back in early spring.

Prior to announcing his plans to leave, Gov. Gen. Mary Simon granted Trudeau's request to prorogue the House until March 24. After winning the leadership election, the new leader will have only about two weeks before the House reconvenes for the winter sitting of Parliament. Based on statements from the three opposition parties, it appears that all opposition parties plan to defeat the government soon after prorogation ends.

CBC/Radio-Canada reported Jan. 10 that before announcing his decision not to lead the party in the next election, Trudeau personally reached out to NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, B.C.) and Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil-Chambly, Que.) to explore a deal that could help the governing party last a few more weeks. However, both leaders did not respond positively to Trudeau's overtures.

"Trudeau's gambit faltered, with both the Bloc and the NDP refusing to back the embattled prime minister as they stood by their respective promises that they would bring down the government at the first opportunity," Radio-Canada reported.

According to the Liberal Party rules, the membership cut-off date to participate in the contest is Jan. 27. It remains to be seen how many new members register during the sign up process.

The new national riding boundaries came into effect April 22, 2024. As a result of these boundary changes, the House will increase to 343 ridings. Of the current 338 ridings, only 45 are unchanged under the redistribution, while 293 have undergone updates in boundaries and population.

Depending on the movement of population in the last decade, a riding may have undergone

a negligible adjustment, or a significant change where its name, geography, and population may have been greatly modified. The change in riding boundaries could range between a minor tinkering to a constituency completely disappearing.

Of the 45 ridings that are unchanged, 24 are in Quebec, 15 in Ontario, three in British Columbia, and one each in Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Alberta.

Canada's Constitution requires a review of electoral boundaries every decade to reflect population movement and changes in riding boundaries. In 2013, when the last redistribution took place, the country's population was about 35.1 million, according to Statistics Canada. Currently, the population is approximately 40 million. Independent and non-partisan commissions in all provinces have redrawn geographical boundaries.

This time, according to Elections Canada, five new federal ridings have been added to the 338-member House. Of these, Alberta has received three more, and Ontario and British Columbia will get one more seat each. With the addition of these new



Liberal MP Jaime Battiste who represents Sydney-Victoria, N.S. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Former Montreal Liberal Frank Baylis. *Handout photo*



Liberal MP Chandra Arya who represents Nepean, Ont. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

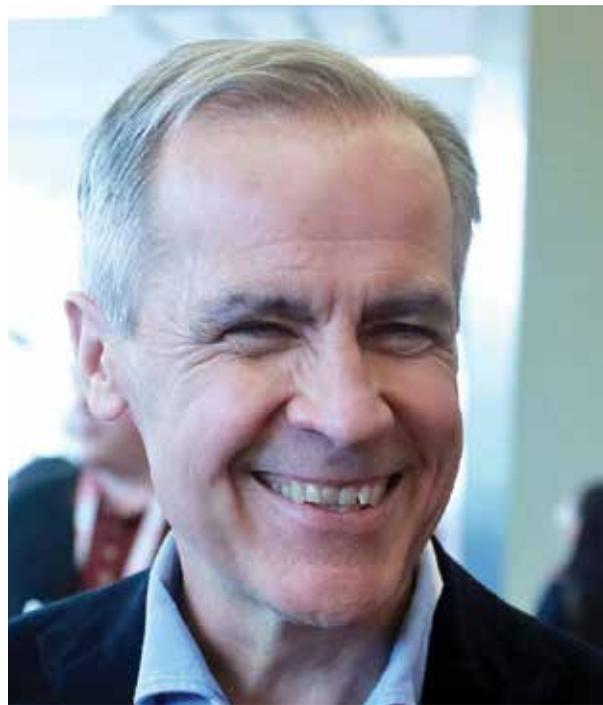


Energy Minister Jonathan Wilkinson. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



To succeed Justin Trudeau as party leader and prime minister, the winning candidate needs to carry 17,151 points out of 34,300 in 343 ridings nationwide. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

# NEWS



Former deputy prime minister and finance minister Chrystia Freeland, left, and former Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney have emerged as the front-runners in the March 9 Liberal leadership race. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade and Sam Garcia

Former Bank of Canada and Bank of England governor Mark Carney officially announced his candidacy for the Liberal leadership on Jan. 16. Prior to his announcement, businessman and former Liberal MP Frank Baylis, as well as Liberal MP Chandra Arya (Nepean, Ont.), had declared their intentions to run for the party leadership.

Former deputy prime minister and finance minister Chrystia Freeland (University-Rosedale, Ont.) announced her candidacy on Jan. 17. Government House Leader Karina Gould (Burlington, Ont.) was set to officially launch her Liberal leadership campaign. By press time, Natural Resources Minister Jonathan Wilkinson (North Vancouver, B.C.) was still mulling his candidacy. Liberal MP Jaime Battiste (Sydney-Victoria, N.S.) also wants to run.

Darrell Bricker, CEO of Ipsos Public Affairs, said given that the Liberal leadership race is an abbreviated process due to time constraints, candidates will not have the chance to sign up a significantly large number of new members. Bricker said that, as a result, the existing membership will play a crucial role in determining the winner of the election. He described the leadership election as absolutely “critical” because the winner will become the next prime minister. Bricker said that following Trudeau’s resignation, there was an expectation of excitement and anticipation surrounding the Liberal leader-

ship race, but so far, no significant change has been observed in the polling numbers for the Liberals. However, he added that this could shift in the coming days.

Bricker said that all leadership candidates are expected to focus on orphan or unheld ridings, particularly in Western Canada, where the Conservatives dominate most seats. This strategy is driven by the fact, he said, that Liberal membership numbers in these rid-

ings are likely to be low, yet each riding is still worth 100 points.

“Western Canada is going to become more important because a lot of orphan seats [for the Liberals] and the addition of new seats probably that don’t have riding associations or anything,” said Bricker. “So, you’ve got three members in one of those ridings, and you win all three other votes, you get 100 points.”

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*The Hill Times*

## Who Supports Who in Liberal Leadership Race

### Chrystia Freeland

Randy Boissonnault  
Ben Carr  
Sean Casey  
Michael Coteau  
Julie Dabrusin  
Lena Diab  
Julie Dzerowicz  
Hedy Fry  
Ken Hardie  
Mark Holland  
Anthony Housefather  
Kevin Lamoureux  
Lloyd Longfield  
James Maloney  
Ken McDonald  
John McKay  
Alexandra Mendes  
Rob Oliphant  
Leah Taylor Roy  
Anita Vandenberg



### Mark Carney

Parm Bains  
George Chahal  
Sukh Dhaliwal  
Brendan Hanley  
Randeep Sarai  
Patrick Weiler  
Sameer Zuberi  
Francesco Sorbara  
Maninder Sidhu  
Shafqat Ali  
Ali Ehsassi  
Iqwinder Gaheer  
Salma Zahid  
Sophie Chatel  
Wayne Long  
Bobby Morrissey



### Karina Gould

Sheila Copps  
Pam Damoff  
Lisa Hepfner

seats, Alberta will have a total of 37 seats after the 2025 election, Ontario 122, and British Columbia 43.

Currently, Ontario has 121 seats, Quebec 78, British Columbia 42, Alberta 34, Manitoba and Saskatchewan 14 each, New Brunswick 10, Nova Scotia 11, Prince Edward Island four, Newfoundland seven, with Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut with one each.

According to Elections Canada, a donor can contribute \$5,175 in

a year to political parties, riding associations and leadership contestants. Of this, \$1,725 can be donated to a political party, \$1,725 to a riding association and \$1,725 in a leadership contest.

Usually leadership contests go on for months, allowing candidates travel across the country to meet with Canadians and to participate in debates, but the Liberals are electing their new chief in less than two months because Trudeau left very late.

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## NEWS

# Musk's 'meddling' in Canadian, European politics shows 'American exceptionalism' at work: observers

The tech billionaire and Trump confidante has recently attacked incumbent governments in Canada, the U.K., and Germany, prompting Heritage Minister Pascale St-Onge to warn that 'we need to do everything in our power to defend and protect Canada.'

BY STEPHEN JEFFERY

Elon Musk's attempts to intervene in Canadian and European politics are part of an "American exceptionalism" narrative that many in the tech billionaire's adopted country have vocally advocated for in the wake of Donald Trump's return to the U.S. presidency, according to one expert on Canada-U.S. relations.

"Basically, the United States is the leading country in the world, so it wants to dictate to other countries, including Canada, on important issues," said Ivan Katchanovski, a political studies professor at the University of Ottawa, of the ideas advocated from Trump and his allies.

"It's a very dangerous kind of development, and this is a real issue which a lot of people ignored or chose to take for granted, but is a long-standing issue in Canadian politics. It just goes to show that Canada is not equal in power to the United States, and other countries are the same."

Musk is poised to wield considerable influence in Trump's second administration, having

spent \$US277-million (\$398-million) to assist his election campaign and those of other Republicans.

Following Trump's election victory on Nov. 5, 2024, Musk has been frequently seen at the president-elect's Florida resort, and was tapped as co-chair of a proposed presidential advisory commission on government spending and regulations known as the Department of Government Efficiency.

Since the election, Musk has offered his thoughts on the politics of other countries, including Canada. The South African-born, U.S.-based multi-billionaire has held Canadian citizenship, but campaign financing laws in this country would prevent Musk from donating on the scale seen in America during a federal election.

But Musk retains considerable global influence in the digital information sphere, following his October 2022 acquisition of social media platform Twitter. Renaming the site X, Musk restored the

accounts of those who were previously banned for harassment and death threats, and watered-down rules on the spread of mis- and disinformation.

A 2024 Queensland University of Technology study found potential platform-level changes that shifted engagement and algorithmic recommendations toward Republican-leaning accounts following Musk's endorsement of Trump in July of that year.

Claiming to be a "free-speech absolutist," Musk has banned the use of the term "cisgender," as well as journalists that have reported critically on him and his companies, and has removed an account that tracked the movements of his private jet.

Musk has used X to make most of his political pronouncements on countries outside the U.S., including Canada. Even before to owning X, Musk had long-shown a public dislike of outgoing Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.). He supported the so-called "Freedom



Convoy" that occupied downtown Ottawa in late January and early February 2022, and posted—then deleted—a meme comparing the prime minister to Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler at the time.

More recently, Musk called Trudeau "an insufferable tool" who "won't be in power for much longer," and posted a follow-up on the day of Trudeau's Jan. 6 resignation announcement, stating "as I was saying..."

After Trump threatened to annex Canada as a "51st state" and Trudeau responded that there "isn't a snowball's chance in hell" that it would happen, Musk repeated Trump's terminology and replied with, "Girl, you're not the governor of Canada anymore, so doesn't matter what you say."

At the same time, Musk has praised videos of Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.), describing one of his interactions with a reporter as "a masterpiece."

Poilievre did not directly answer when asked at a Jan. 9

press conference whether he accepted Musk's endorsement, instead stating that "it would be nice if we could convince Mr. Musk to open some of his factories here in Canada."

Meanwhile, NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, B.C.) has used Musk's endorsement to attack Poilievre, accusing the Conservative leader of not using stronger language against Trump's tariff threats, and not being "interested in defending Canadian jobs because he doesn't want to upset Elon Musk... he is a bootlicker for billionaires. That's who Pierre Poilievre is."

Musk's statements on Canada have been noted by at least one cabinet minister. The Canadian Press reported on Jan. 14 that Heritage Minister Pascale St-Onge (Brome-Missisquoi, Que.) criticized Musk's "meddling" in politics.

"What we've been witnessing in the past few weeks is a guy, a billionaire that owns a very influential platform, meddling in other countries' elections and politics, and he's doing it in Canada," St-Onge said.

"We know and all the experts know that with everything happening online on social media, we know that we cannot trust these platforms as sources of information."

St-Onge followed up with an appearance on CBC's *Power and Politics* on Jan. 14, where she used the threat of Musk and other tech moguls to justify the importance of the public broadcaster, and to criticize Poilievre's proposed defunding of the institution.

"There's still time for us to do the important work that we need to do to protect Canada from foreign business owners like Elon Musk, who's not only the owner of Twitter, but he's also part of Trump's administration, and we need to do everything in our power to defend and protect Canada as it is," she told *Power and Politics*.



X owner Elon Musk, right, has posted a string of tweets criticizing outgoing Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, left, and endorsing Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade and courtesy of NVIDIA



Elon Musk, left, Tulsi Gabbard, Donald Trump, Robert Kennedy Jr., and U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson on Nov. 16, 2024. Photograph courtesy of Wikipedia/Office of Mike Johnson

“CBC/Radio-Canada has been there for almost 100 years, they’ve been there through Conservative and Liberal governments, and they’ve been doing their job of informing the Canadian population... this is what Pierre Poilievre is ready to destroy, and give the keys to a guy like Elon Musk.”

*The Hill Times* reached out to the office of Democratic Institutions Minister Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Ont.) to ask whether, given St-Onge’s comments, the government is concerned about the influence Musk could have on this year’s federal election and, if so, which measures were in place—or the government intends to put in place—to safeguard against potential interference in the democratic process.

The office did not provide a response by deadline.

Katchanovski said the U.S. has traditionally been more content with using other more subtle methods of control and coercion on political leaders in areas such as Latin America and Eastern Europe. But he said Trump “often acts in the way of American exceptionalism, regarding the

United States as a unique country which can dictate to other countries. He’s now doing this openly.”

That would continue to be a problem for Canada throughout Trump’s term, with or without Musk’s involvement or with the billionaire’s chosen candidate being elected, Katchanovski said.

“I think even if a Conservative leader is elected, this would continue,” he said.

Musk has also weighed into the politics of European countries, though he has predominantly backed far-right, anti-immigrant and nationalist groups rather than mainstream conservative parties on that continent.

Nigel Farage, a key Brexit advocate and leader of the anti-immigration Reform UK party, said this past December that Musk was considering donating millions of funds to the party. But Musk and Farage fell out earlier this month over the former’s call for the release of anti-Islam activist Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, who is serving a prison term for contempt of court after repeating lies made about a Syrian refugee school boy who successfully sued him for libel.

At the beginning of this month, Musk echoed calls for a new inquiry into a series of child sexual abuse cases in northern England in which groups of men—many of them from Pakistani backgrounds—who were tried and convicted for abusing dozens of girls. A seven-year inquiry into the issue wrapped up in 2022, and many recommendations have yet to be implemented.

Musk made a series of claims that U.K. Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer had failed to prosecute grooming gangs during his time as director of public prosecutions, and that Home Office Minister Jess Phillips was a “rape genocide apologist” who deserved “to be in prison.”

Those comments were an escalation of his intervention into U.K. politics, including by claiming that “civil war is inevitable” as violent anti-immigration riots broke out amid lies spread about the identity of a suspect in a stabbing attack last year.

On his most recent comments, Starmer responded—without naming Musk—by criticizing “those that are spreading lies and misinformation.”

“When the poison of the far-right leads to serious threats to Jess Phillips and others, then in my book, a line has been crossed,” Starmer said.

Since Musk’s interventions in the U.K., his unfavourable rating has risen to 71 per cent among Britons, according to a Jan. 8-9 YouGov poll, up from 64 per cent in November 2024. That unfavourable rating has also risen among Reform UK voters—whose party Musk has endorsed—with 41 per cent having an unfavourable view this month, compared to 26 per cent in November.

In Germany, Musk has thrown his support behind the far-right Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), which has promised the mass deportations of both migrants

and so-called “non-assimilated citizens.” Senior figures in the party have criticized Holocaust memorials and been fined for using Nazi slogans, and declared that SS members weren’t automatically “criminals.”

AfD is currently polling second ahead of Germany’s Feb. 23 federal election, but is all but guaranteed to be shut out of government due to other parties’ historical reluctance to enter coalition talks with the party.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who Musk called a “fool” late last year, told *Stern* magazine that criticism from “rich media entrepreneurs who do not appreciate social democratic politics and do not hold back with their opinions” was “nothing new,” according to Associated Press.

“I find it much more worrying than such insults that Musk is supporting a party like the AfD, which is in parts right-wing extremist, which preaches rapprochement with Putin’s Russia and wants to weaken transatlantic relations,” Scholz said.

Other European leaders to criticize Musk as meddling in the continent’s politics, either by name or in more general terms, include French President Emmanuel Macron, Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre, and Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez.

The European leaders have yet to announce any measures against Musk and his companies, though others have attempted to stem misinformation from X. In October 2024, Brazil’s Supreme Court banned X in the world’s seventh-most populated country after the platform refused court orders to ban accounts deemed to be spreading lies about the 2022 presidential election. The ban was only lifted after X paid a 28 million reais (\$6.67-million) fine and agreed to remove the accounts.

[sjeffery@hilltimes.com](mailto:sjeffery@hilltimes.com)  
*The Hill Times*

## CIAC welcomes Greg Moffatt as President and CEO



The Board of Directors of the Chemistry Industry Association of Canada (CIAC) is pleased to announce Greg Moffatt as its new President and CEO.

Greg has been with the organization for the past nine years, including time as Executive Vice-President where he oversaw operations while leading on a range of files. He has a deep understanding of CIAC, its members, and their priorities.

Known as a capable, forward-thinking leader, Greg is eager to advance the critical role of chemistry and plastics in shaping a sustainable, competitive, and innovative economy. With his strong background in policy, advocacy, petrochemicals, and association management, he has the CIAC Board of Director’s full confidence to lead the organization through this complex political and economic landscape.

Greg looks forward to making what’s possible in chemistry and plastics in Canada a reality through strategic advocacy and championing Responsible Care®.



Read more here

[canadianchemistry.ca](http://canadianchemistry.ca)



Heritage Minister Pascale St-Onge said preserving Canadian organizations like CBC/Radio-Canada is a tool in protecting Canada from ‘foreign business owners like Elon Musk.’ *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

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# Editorial

## Editorial

# Who speaks for Canada right now? It appears to be Doug Ford

When *The Hill Times*' reporter Sophall Duch asked Prime Minister Justin Trudeau who speaks for Canada at last Wednesday's presser after Trudeau met with first ministers in Ottawa, the prime minister said he's encouraging "everyone" to speak up, as Canada faces a potential 25-per-cent tariff slapped on all Canadian goods imported to the United States under incoming American president Donald Trump.

"We have encouraged from the very beginning—encouraged all premiers, all Canadian business owners, all Canadians with any sort of interaction with United States—to engage on issues and to speak up for the benefits of free and open trade between our two countries," said Trudeau on Jan. 15.

It is positive that the premiers and cabinet ministers are working collaboratively and across party lines on Canada's planned response to Trump under Team Canada, but there's an obvious leadership vacuum at the federal level, and we could be headed for a national unity crisis. Canada needs one top person to speak for country, especially right now.

As Trudeau bows out, this government does not currently have the

mandate to fight Trump, and Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre—who could be Canada's next prime minister—is talking about pipelines instead of joining forces for a united Canada. So far, the premiers are the ones stepping up, led by Ontario Premier Doug Ford, who chairs the Council of the Federation. Ford says Ontario could lose 500,000 jobs under the 25-per-cent tariffs. Meanwhile, Alberta's Danielle Smith is the only outlier among the premiers.

Ford said Trump is going to try to divide our country, which is part of his negotiating strategy, and that Team Canada needs to be united. He's right. Canada needs collaborative, positive, and strong leadership. We don't need divisiveness. Yes, the Team Canada approach is working along with an army of people behind the scenes, but this country still needs one person to speak for it. It appears it's Doug Ford right now, who sees Trump "coming full tilt at Canadians."

The next prime minister will have to be someone who is going to defend Canadian interests against Trump, period, and that should be the next ballot-box question.

*The Hill Times*

## Letters to the Editor

# Fiscal irresponsibility is failure to recognize government's job isn't to meet arbitrary fiscal 'anchors': Larry Kazdan

**R**e: "Questions remain about how Liberals missed deficit target by over \$20-billion, says PBO," (by Ian Campbell, *The Hill Times*, Jan. 9). Under the stringent watch of then-finance minister Paul Martin (1994-96), severe budget cuts decreased Canada's economic growth by 3.5 percentage points, downloaded costs onto provinces, and led to an explosion of homelessness that still troubles us today.

The economy can be likened to a cup. While we want to avoid overfilling and causing inflation, neither should we underfill, tolerating unnecessary recession and an excess level of joblessness.

Today's economic punditry ignore the high cost of keeping unemployed almost 1.5 million Canadians who are not contributing to economic production, and whose skill levels, mental health, and family life deteriorate over time, leading to expensive and intractable social problems.

Real fiscal irresponsibility is failure to recognize that the job of government is not to meet arbitrary fiscal "anchors," but to create a fully productive economy that allows Canadians to earn income, contribute to society, and share the benefits.

Larry Kazdan  
 Vancouver, B.C.

# Our prime minister has let us down once again, writes Williams

**I**n his opinion piece ("Trudeau stands up for the rule of law on Netanyahu," Dec. 2, 2024, *The Hill Times*), Michael Harris commends Prime Minister Justin Trudeau for having "the guts to [...] stand up for the rule of law." Apparently, Mr. Harris is pleased that the International Criminal Court was right in issuing arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his former defence minister Yaov Gallant.

Fact is, these actions by the International Criminal Court (ICC) were both illegal and morally bankrupt. From a legal perspective, since Israel is not a signatory to the Rome Treaty—which established the ICC in 1998—the court has no jurisdiction over Israel.

Before asking a panel of ICC judges to consider issuing the warrants, ICC Chief Prosecutor Karim Khan had a moral and ethical obligation to meet with Israeli officials and confer with them on key evidentiary issues. He failed to do so. Instead, on the same day that he cancelled a scheduled trip to Israel, Khan appeared before a panel of ICC judges asking them to consider issuing arrest warrants for Netanyahu and Gallant.

Furthermore, the warrants allege two war crimes: that of starving the population, and of intentionally ordering attacks against the civilian population. Both allegations have been completely

debunked. Since the start of the war, Israel has allowed the international community to bring 54,270 aid trucks into Gaza, carrying 1,064,820 tonnes of humanitarian aid through various crossings, including 38,746 trucks carrying approximately 824,078 tonnes of food. According to the UN World Food Programme, 2.2 million people need 4,287 tonnes of food/week. As such, enough food has been delivered into Gaza to support the population for nearly four years. Perhaps if the Hamas terrorists ceased stealing and hoarding the food, medical supplies and fuel for their own interests, more would be available for the men, women, and children in Gaza. As for indiscriminate attacks on the civilian population, the exact opposite is true. What other army makes phone calls and drops thousands of leaflets into Gaza informing the residents as to when and where bombings will occur so that they can get out of harm's way?

Never before has a democratic country with an independent judiciary been subject to these kind of obscene allegations. Any responsible leader would have recognized this reality and terminated support for the ICC. Sadly, our prime minister has once again let us down.

Alan Williams  
 Ottawa, Ont.



## COMMENT

# Here's why Karina Gould's got my vote

Karina Gould may not have the same Bay Street credibility as Mark Carney, but she resonates big with Main Street.

Sheila  
Copps

Copps' Corner



**O**TTAWA—Why Karina Gould? That's the question friends posed when I gave a couple of television interviews promoting her as the next leader of the Liberal Party of Canada.

At press time, Gould had not yet announced, but her team was putting together a campaign to create a fighting chance in this shortened race to name the next prime minister of Canada. Gould has already recruited more than a dozen caucus members.

Not overwhelming, but considering her campaign only started a week ago, it is a good start.

Mark Carney has been running for the job for years. Press reports say he has about 30 MPs

on his team. That number should be twice as large if Carney's support is as wide and deep as the media keep claiming.

On just about every network, including his American pre-campaign interview on Jon Stewart's *The Daily Show*, Carney is constantly presented as the almost certain winner of the upcoming race.

Resisting that pull may be difficult, but many Liberals would like to support a leader who's in it for the long haul.

Does anyone really think that Carney—who declined offers of more than one nomination in the last election—will stick around if the party ends up in third-party status? The answer is no.

Liberals need a leader who will appeal to young people. Gould is the most appealing to that cohort because she reflects their values and energy. Gould has managed multiple cabinet portfolios with energy and savvy.

A superb communicator in multiple languages, Gould negotiated Canada's national childcare via multiple provincial agreements. While child care is seen as crucial for Canadians, Gould is being critiqued internally by those who say motherhood is a reason not to vote for her.

Before we dismiss misogyny's role in leadership, we cannot for-



Government House Leader Karina Gould on the Hill on Dec. 11, 2024. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

get what happened to the Kamala Harris vote in the United States. She lost the presidency because American men voted against her. Had the election been determined only by women, Harris would have won.

No one asked Justin Trudeau if he could manage both politics and a young family when he ran for office at age 36 back in 2008. Instead, his youth and a campaign that included cannabis legalization managed to ignite the attention of a new generation.

Gould has been generating much interest with young people.

She also has support from senior Liberals who have supported the party for decades.

Unlike some colleagues, Gould reaches out regularly to party elders, seeking their advice and wisdom while other leadership candidates have either ignored them or publicly denigrated them.

Party faithful remember the very off-putting negative response of then-Foreign Affairs minister Chrystia Freeland when former prime minister Jean Chrétien offered to go to China to negotiate a solution to the extradition of Meng Wanzhou to the United States.

Freeland scorned his offer, and ended up with a protracted fight with China that cost our country economically and politically. But Freeland's high profile during the Trudeau years have set her up as an obvious runner-up to Carney's stardom.

Neither Carney nor Freeland have Gould's likability factor. Parties make decisions based on whom they think can win.

Canadians make decisions on the emotional feel they get from a politician. Is that person someone you would like to have a beer with? Kim Campbell was elected Progressive Conservative leader and prime minister because she was seen to be the best choice to rebuild her party in the post-Brian Mulroney era.

It turned out to be a terrible decision that left the Tories reduced to two seats in a Liberal majority government in 1993. Today, Liberals have little time to judge the emotional IQ of each of the candidates.

But when it comes to support from young people, reaching out to party faithful, and a commitment to the long-term rebuilding process, Gould is our best bet.

The first question at any leadership debate should be, "If the Liberals lose the next election, are you willing to remain as leader?" The second question should be, "How can we recapture the dynamic wave of support by young people that carried Trudeau to power in 2015?"

The answer to both questions is Gould studied Latin American and Caribbean studies at McGill and philosophy at Oxford and who worked for the Organization of American States on migration." She learned Spanish while volunteering at a Latin American orphanage. Gould may not have the same Bay Street credibility as Carney, but she resonates big with Main Street.

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

*The Hill Times*

# The politics of Trump's Panama Canal gambit

Panama's president met Trump's threats with defiance, declaring 'we will all unite under our Panamanian flag.' That's the way of politics: nationalism on one side triggers nationalism on the other.

Gerry  
Nicholls

Post Partisan Pundit



**O**AKVILLE, ONT.—Whenever I think of Donald Trump, the first words that usually spring to mind are "agent of chaos."

That's to say, one of Trump's defining characteristics is that he's totally unpredictable.

You never know what outlandish thing he'll say or which part of the world he'll offend or what protocol he'll break.

His talk about annexing Canada with "economic force" or his musings about buying Greenland are the types of comments that certainly fall into the "chaotic" category.

Yet, that said, there are also occasions when his seemingly "out of left-field" comments are actually based on a solid political foundation.

In other words, sometimes there's a method to Trump's apparent madness.

A good case in point is his recent controversial comment about re-asserting American control over the Panama Canal.

Saying the canal fees are too high and that Americans are getting "ripped off," Trump declared that, if things don't change, "We will demand that the Panama Canal be returned to the United States of America, in full, quickly and without question."

On the surface, such saber-rattling over the canal seems to be a needlessly provocative strategy, one which will only spark cries of

"American imperialism" from the international community.

But from a domestic political point of view, it could be viewed as a savvy move.

Why do I say that?

Well, we need to keep in mind that the strategically important Panama Canal was previously—until the late 1990s when it was handed over to the Panamanians—American-controlled property.

That means Trump's tough talk about the canal will likely appeal to a sense of nationalism, which usually benefits politicians.

Simply put, many Americans probably believe that since the Panama Canal was American in the past, it can and maybe should be American again in the future.

Indeed, the issue of the Panama Canal's ownership has long been a hot spot in American politics.

In fact, its importance as an issue can be traced back to the Republican presidential primaries of the mid-1970s, when Ronald Reagan was battling against then-president Gerald Ford for the party's nomination.

At the time, Reagan had not yet defined himself or his political



One of U.S. president-elect Donald Trump's defining characters is that he's totally unpredictable, writes Gerry Nicholls. *Photograph courtesy of Commons Wikimedia/Gage Skidmore*

brand, so he needed an issue to rally Republicans to his banner.

Luckily for him, his pollster did find such an issue: the Panama Canal.

It turns out many Republicans at the time were livid at how their government was negotiating a treaty to give up American ownership.

Thus, to attract their support, Reagan decided to make this his top issue; he promised to stop the giveaway of the Panama Canal.

It almost worked.

Fuelled by his "Panama Canal strategy," Reagan went from being a long-shot candidate to narrowly losing to Ford.

Of course, that wasn't the end of Reagan's story as his strong stance on this issue firmly established him in the minds of Republicans as their true champion, which helped to eventually propel him to the U.S. presidency.

Anyway, my point is Trump is likely hoping that, like Reagan, he can capitalize politically on the Panama Canal, an issue that likely still lingers in the minds of nationalistic Americans.

It could, at least, galvanize Trump's Republican base.

Whether or not Trump's nationalistic chest-thumping will actually convince the Panamanian government to alter its shipping fees is an entirely different question.

In fact, Panama has met Trump's threats with defiance, with its president declaring "when it comes to our canal, and our sovereignty, we will all unite under our Panamanian flag."

Of course, that's the way of politics: nationalism on one side triggers nationalism on the other.

*Gerry Nicholls is a communications consultant.*

*The Hill Times*

## COMMENT

## Oil and gas before country

America First meets Alberta First is the perfect Trumpian tango.

Michael Harris

Harris



HALIFAX—So, Alberta Premier Danielle Smith has decided not to play for Team Canada.

It doesn't get tackier than that. U.S. president-elect Donald Trump's 10-thumbed meddling in Canadian affairs has led to exactly what he wants: a house divided. America First meets Alberta First is the perfect Trumpian tango.

Alberta's premier did not bother to personally attend the critical meeting in Ottawa last week between Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the Council of the Federation led by Ontario Premier Doug Ford, joining them virtually from Panama. Never mind that the country may soon be under a frontal attack on its economy by Trump. Too busy, on vacation. British Columbia Premier David Eby also did not attend in person, tuning in instead from his home province.

So Trudeau and 11 premiers met face-to-face, while Smith and Eby joined them virtually. With the exception of Smith, the Council of the Federation and the prime minister agreed that, depending on how far Trump carries his economic blackmail, all retaliatory options are on the table.

No one attending this crucially important meeting wanted to increase tensions by getting too detailed about what that might look like.

But it could mean counter-tariffs on American products coming into Canada, and even shutting off the flow of crucial resources from this country to the U.S. That includes a lot of things America needs: precious metals, aluminum and steel, lumber, and energy.

If things get truly ugly with Trump, the most potent tool at our retaliatory disposal is energy—both hydro, and oil and gas. Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Andrew Furey made a chess analogy. The most powerful piece on a chessboard is the queen, capable of moving any number of squares in any direction to trap the enemy king, or take an opponent's pieces.

Furey said withholding oil and gas is the queen of the weapons that could be used against Trump, if—and only if—his bullying gets out of hand. The premier said that, despite the fact that his province would have a lot to lose if Canada stopped the export of fossil fuels, or imposed an export tariff on energy.



Alberta Premier Danielle Smith refused to agree with the other premiers and the prime minister on retaliatory measures against the U.S. Deciding not to play for Team Canada is one thing, but playing for Team Trump is quite another, writes Michael Harris. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

That's because Newfoundland and Labrador has been a serious player in the patch since Discovery Well B-08 found oil off the province's east coast in 1979. That initial find would eventually become the Hibernia oil field.

With subsequent discoveries, the province will have an important oil and gas industry stretching out to 2040. In other words, Canada's youngest province has a lot to sacrifice if Trump's threats materialize, and we are forced to respond.

Even Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe—whose province also produces oil—was onboard with his fellow first ministers and the prime minister. Importantly, Moe signed the joint statement at the end of the meeting of the Council of the Federation.

In a public show of solidarity, Moe appeared at the event's closing press conference. Heady stuff, from a premier better known for bashing Ottawa, not standing shoulder-to-shoulder with it in a common cause. That common cause could—as is the case with Newfoundland and Labrador—mean a sacrifice for his province in the national interest. No small

Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Andrew Furey, left, and Quebec Premier François Legault talk before the first ministers meeting in Ottawa on Jan. 15, 2025. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



“ALBERTA PREMIER DANIELLE SMITH HAS DECIDED NOT TO PLAY FOR TEAM CANADA. IT DOESN'T GET TACKIER THAN THAT.”

thing for a province that produces the second-most crude oil and the third-most natural gas in the country.

By comparison, Smith didn't sign the joint statement at the end of the meeting. She didn't even bother to attend the closing press conference. Maybe that's because she didn't want to explain why she was the odd premier out, while Ford and the others enthusiastically backed the plan to use every tool in the toolbox to fight Trump.

Careful to give a nod to the importance of standing up for your jurisdiction, Ford nailed the poverty of carrying that philosophy too far. There were circumstances when “country comes first,” and this was one of them. Canada must strike back hard against Trump, Ford said, if the U.S. president-elect insists on coming for Canadian jobs—500,000 of them in Ontario alone.

Smith wasn't buying. Instead, she warned that if the federal government tried to impose a ban on energy exports, it would lead to what she called a “national unity” crisis.

So what does it all mean?

Deciding not to play for Team Canada is one thing, and a pretty pathetic one at that. But playing for Team Trump is quite another. Whether knowingly or unknowingly, that's exactly what Smith is doing.

Consider a few facts. Although she didn't have time to join her colleagues personally in one of the most important meetings in recent Canadian history, she did have time to stop by in Mar-a-Lago, Fla., where, according to the *Edmonton Journal*, she met with Trump twice over a recent weekend while on holiday.

She did so at the invitation of Kevin O'Leary, a Canadian businessman who would need concessions from the province to do business in Alberta. O'Leary plans to build a \$70-billion data centre in that province—a project that has already raised the ire of First Nations players.

How interesting that the meeting with Trump and O'Leary took place during what was supposed to be Smith's family holiday. When she left Alberta, the public itinerary email she released to the media made no mention of the trip to Mar-a-Lago or the O'Leary and Trump connection.

As reported by *The Tyee*, that caught the attention of Thomas Lukaszuk. Alberta's former Progressive Conservative deputy premier found Smith's dealings to be deliberately secretive, and perhaps improper.

“When premiers and provincial politicians travel abroad and meet with foreign elected officials, these trips must be cleared by Global Affairs Canada,” he said. “Also these trips, their goals, and cost must be approved prior to departure.”

That didn't happen, so here is the question: What was discussed by Smith with Trump? What was discussed with the premier and O'Leary? Is there a record or readout of the meeting? Or was it all just Diet Coke and burgers?

Beyond that, there are other questions. Why can Smith make time to schmooze with a guy who wants to annex Canada, Greenland, and take back the Panama Canal, but not be available to show up personally to meet the prime minister and her fellow premiers on a matter of grave national importance?

Why is she following up her sojourn to Mar-a-Lago by attending the inauguration of a president who thinks our prime minister is the governor of the 51st state, and who believes the 49th parallel is just an arbitrary line drawn on a map? Trump prefers his own map, with the American flag covering the whole continent.

Despite that, can anyone find a serious critical word spoken by Smith against Trump? But then again, the incoming president did give Smith something: she got a selfie with the king of the far-right. And who knows, maybe Trump even threw in a MAGA hat.

But oil and gas before country? Really?

Michael Harris is an award-winning author and journalist.

*The Hill Times*

## COMMENT

# Trudeau's legacy marked by partial reforms, missed opportunities

Time will tell whether Justin Trudeau's Senate reforms will change this country's governance in an enduring way. Hopefully, future leaders will recognize the need to engage Canadians in a meaningful talk about democratic reform.

Lori Turnbull

Opinion



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at an event on the Hill celebrating Canadian Olympians' accomplishments at the 2024 Paris Summer Games on Dec. 4, 2024. Trudeau promised to change this nation's democratic governance, but his legacy is marked by partial reforms and missed opportunities, writes Lori Turnbull. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



OTTAWA—Justin Trudeau promised to change democratic governance in Canada, but his legacy is marked by partial reforms and missed opportunities.

Back in 2015, when he was campaigning to be prime minister, he said that a Liberal government would do things differently by governing through cabinet rather than an all-powerful prime minister, by ending the tradition of partisan appointments to the Senate, and by replacing the first-past-the-post electoral system with something else—though he didn't say what.

Ten years later, the only governance promise that he kept in earnest was Senate reform—and, on this front, he may have gotten more than he bargained for.

Trudeau followed through on his commitment to appointing Canada's first gender-equal cabinet. As he said at the time, it was 2015 and gender equity within the apex of power was long past due. However, his declaration that "government by cabinet is back" upon the swearing-in of his first cabinet rings hollow. By multiple accounts, Trudeau's government has been as prime minister-centric as any other. Several of the high-profile, impressive, experienced people whom Trudeau recruited to help him win the 2015 election ended up leaving cabinet in disappointment with a distant prime minister who did not seek their input.

Former ministers Bill Morneau, Jody Wilson-Raybould, and Marc Garneau have all written books criticizing the prime minister's leadership style, poor communication skills, and failure to engage with cabinet colleagues. Morneau writes about how difficult it was even to get a meeting with Trudeau, recalling that one of the few times that they met one on one was when Morneau resigned.

When Chrystia Freeland quit as finance minister and deputy prime minister on Dec. 16, 2024, she published a resignation letter in which she distanced herself from Trudeau's approach to managing the economy, and was critical of the use of "political gimmicks" at the expense of tough policy decisions.

Sharan Kaur, Morneau's former chief of staff, has written about the Trudeau PMO's efforts to undermine ministers through leaks to the media, and has described the culture in cabinet as one of "toxicity."

The promise of electoral reform was a flat-out bust. To be fair, not everyone was disappointed that this particular campaign pledge never came to fruition, but it was a

central aspect of the Liberals' democratic reform agenda, and the broken promise did not go unnoticed.

Trudeau boldly and now infamously claimed that the 2015 election would be the last under the first-past-the-post system but, not even halfway through his government's first mandate, he abandoned the electoral reform project entirely.

Trudeau justified the reversal by saying that there was a lack of "consensus" in the country about the issue of electoral reform, and about what system could or should replace the existing one. There was no consensus because the government did not build one.

Instead, it ran two parallel and largely disconnected paths of exploration with one led by a minister, and the other led by a parliamentary committee. There was little chance a consensus would emerge from that.

Senate reform has been the most impactful action that the Trudeau government has taken with respect to democratic governance. Instead of continuing with the tradition of partisan appointments to the Senate, the prime minister now takes advice from an Independent Advisory Board on Senate Appointments.

Senators are appointed on the basis of merit, professional credentials, and community work. This has made for a more active, autonomous Senate.

The Upper Chamber maintains a sense of deference to the House of Commons as an elected body in the sense that it tends not to overturn legislation coming from the House, but Senators are not shy to amend legislation in substantive ways.

This has made the legislative process longer and harder to predict. It would be fair to say that the Senate is no longer a "rubber stamp" as it has been described in the past.

The polls indicate that a change in government is likely in the next election, and there is no guarantee that an incoming prime minister would continue with the new approach to Senate appointments, which has no constitutional weight or protection.

However, a return to partisan appointments might be seen as a regression in democratic practice. Further, even if a new prime minister were to abandon the new regime, it would take a long time to appoint enough Senators to change the culture of the place as an institution with the authority to engage the legislative process in earnest.

Time will tell whether Trudeau's Senate reform measures will change Canada's governance in an enduring way. Hopefully, future leaders will recognize the need to engage Canadians in a meaningful conversation about democratic reform.

Lori Turnbull is a senior adviser at the Institute on Governance.

*The Hill Times*

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# Global



Greenpeace activists paint 'peace not oil' on the side of a tanker transporting oil from Russia to Poland in March 2022. Recent U.S. sanctions on Russian oil exports are having a big impact, writes Gwynne Dyer. *Greenpeace photograph courtesy of Flickr*

## Russia's 'shadow fleet' of oil tankers stalled by U.S. sanctions

Is Donald Trump really going to maintain the U.S. sanctions on Russian oil sales when he's in power? Meanwhile, Russia's 'shadow fleet' of second-hand oil tankers is in limbo.

Gwynne Dyer



Global Affairs

**L**ONDON, U.K.—The name is brilliant: vintage tonnage. It evokes 17<sup>th</sup>-century pirate vessels flying the skull-and-crossbones, 18<sup>th</sup>-century ships-of-the-line bristling with cannons, or even 19<sup>th</sup>-century clipper ships in full sail bringing tea to England and America. The images are always romantic, and often beautiful.

Whereas the reality is just hundreds of giant old rust-buckets.

The 'vintage tonnage' is the 'shadow fleet' of second-hand oil tankers that were spared from the ship-breaking yards in 2022 because Russia lost its export market in Europe when it invaded Ukraine. There were plenty of potential customers for cut-price Russian oil in India and China, but no pipelines to get it there. It had to go by sea.

Unfortunately for Moscow, the American sanctions meant that shipping companies that traded internationally and paid insurance on their cargoes were unwilling to risk action by the U.S. Treasury, and refused to carry the Russian oil. However, the Russians needed tankers, and they were willing to pay well over the odds.

There was already a smallish shadow fleet of antiquated tankers carrying embargoed oil from Venezuela and Iran, but the sanctions on Russian oil exports expanded that fleet at least fourfold. Anybody with a tanker that could still float—however decrepit and unsafe—could make a pile of money by putting it at Moscow's disposal.

You'll have to reflag it with some country that doesn't care much about its reputation: current favorites are Gabon, the Cook Islands, and Laos (which doesn't even have a coastline). Hire a crew from various low-wage countries, and don't waste money on maintenance or insurance.

If yours is the tanker that picks up the oil in Russia, you'll need to transfer it to another one out at sea so the documents and the maritime tracking data don't mark the delivery as coming from a Russian port. (Yes, there's a risk of a big oil spill if you do a transfer in mid-ocean with ships that weren't designed for it, but the spill would be somebody else's problem.)

And after a few years you'll have made your pile. Scrap your ships or sell them on to some other chancer, and you're home and dry. You probably should not visit the United States because the U.S. Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control has a long memory—but maybe all will be forgiven once Donald Trump is in the White House again.

Is Trump really going to maintain the U.S. sanctions on Russian oil sales when he admires dictators like Russia's Vladimir Putin?

Isn't Trump the man who said he could settle the war between Russia and Ukraine in one day? Doesn't that imply he's just going to force the Ukrainians to accept Russia's peace terms?

Who knows? It's a fair bet that Trump himself doesn't know what he will do. And some of what the Biden administration has been doing in its final week goes well beyond just sowing poison pills to limit the future damage Trump will do.

True to form, at the last possible minute, the outgoing American administration has finally done what it should have done a couple of years ago. It extended sanctions to the biggest Russian oil and gas companies—Gazprom Neft and Surgutneftegas—as well as 183 more named vessels that carry oil as part of Russia's so-called "shadow fleet" of tankers.

At least 65 of them immediately dropped anchor, no longer able to deliver their oil to customers—including China—that are unwilling to breach the sanctions against specific named ships. Many more will doubtless follow once they have reached a safe anchorage. It will have a large

and immediate effect on Russia's cash flow, which is already under serious strain.

This is giving Trump considerable extra leverage against Russia if he wants to use it. Why would he throw it away by immediately ending the sanctions and putting the Russian economy on the road to recovery?

Trump's vice-president—still JD Vance, not Elon Musk—may say he "doesn't really care what happens to Ukraine one way or the other," but the man himself hates looking like a loser above all else.

Even if the Russians have something on him—remember that two-hour one-on-one meeting with Putin in 2018 with only translators present, from which Trump emerged looking like a whipped dog—Trump needs an imposed settlement on Ukraine not to look like an unconditional surrender.

Whatever happens with Trump, Putin and Ukraine won't happen overnight. It probably won't be pretty, but there will almost certainly be real negotiations about the terms before any ceasefire. (An actual peace deal seems out of the question.)

Trump will need leverage, and the Biden administration is actually giving him some.

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

*The Hill Times*

## COMMENT

# Not so fast with your fixations and power levers, buddy

Trump cannot simply start his term by knocking Canada out of existence, or by dismissing our trade and neighbourly relations as a damage-free, effortless move.

Ken Rubin



Opinion

OTTAWA—U.S. president-elect Donald Trump says he's No. 1, and Canada is No. 51. But hold on, can we just give in without a fight under the threat of a continued U.S. economic invasion?

Trump wants either Canada to erase the "artificial" border and be happy to be annexed, or to



On the annexation front, even if U.S. president-elect Donald Trump keeps using this as a distraction to ridicule Canada's trade position, can we not just slow down that part of the baiting and bullying, asks Ken Rubin. *Photographs courtesy of Wikimedia Commons*

subject Canadians to lower living standards by bringing in a 25-percent tariff on good imported from this country. The big tariff and a 50-cent dollar will put America more in charge of our future.

On the annexation front, even if Trump is persistently using this as a distraction to ridicule us on our trade position, can we not just slow down that part of the baiting and bullying?

Canada would be 13 separate state entities—not just one—which would give us electoral college clout, along with minimally maintaining French language and cultural legal guarantees; a constitutional exception to the right to bear arms and an end to American gun smuggling into Canada; abortion rights protection; state medicare, dental care and pharmaceutical; our oligarchies' access to American markets; along with racial, ethnic diversity and special Indigenous rights, and more.

But this is not quite the "Made in North America" merger Trump has in mind. Better than a humiliating forced annexation of nearly 40-million people, Trump should stick to 50 shades of statehood, and let us continue with the multi-billion-dollar remake of the federal Parliament buildings, and our own political battles and changes in government.

It sounds crazy that Trump wants better Canadian border protection from illegal drugs and migrants entering the United States, and high tariffs for Canada, but he also says wants to get rid of the border.

Problem solved.

In the meantime, Canadian authorities are putting more than a billion dollars into border security measures largely because of Trump's current demands, and his main promise to deport millions of undocumented people from America. The famously unprotected border between us becomes the fortified and costly dividing line.

A Feb. 9, 2024, a Canadian Embassy in Washington report sarcastically entitled *Build Eh Wall*—obtained under the access-to-information act—documents the then-build up of talk about the soft northern border, where reputedly far too many drugs and migrants were infiltrating the U.S. The report indicated that "roughly one in four Americans live in states that border Canada," so these issues of lethal drugs and migrants coming in, however over-stressed, are to be feared and dealt with.

This fixation on the northern border "problem," it was noted, picked up steam in early 2023 with the creation of a Republican Northern Border Security Caucus, and the holding of a House of Representatives

Homeland Security Committee hearing on "Death, Drugs and Disorder on the Northern Border." It took off even further when in late 2023 when some Republican presidential candidates demanded that a northern border wall be built.

The Canadian embassy report concluded that "the trend of negative rhetoric.... could lead to the thickening of the Canada-U.S. border, impacting both commercial and individual traffic".

That growing concern, as exploited by Trump, has indeed led to Canadian federal authorities beefing up border security, and some provinces assigning enforcement personnel to their borders with neighbouring states, even before Trump's takeover as president on Jan. 20.

Canadian authorities are already developing a retaliatory plan of action to respond to Trump's provocative plans for increased tariffs and control over our nation. And it's not just us that must deal with Trump's aggressive wishes to exert greater American influence.

Trump cannot just begin his term by knocking Canada out of existence, or by dismissing our trade and neighbourly relations as a damage-free, effortless move.

It's best, buddy-boy, to place Canada higher than 51<sup>st</sup> on your must-get-on-with list.

Ken Rubin is reachable via [kenrubin.ca](mailto:kenrubin.ca)

*The Hill Times*

## OPINION

# Canada's snowbirds should boycott travelling to U.S.

With Trump's increasingly expansionist rhetoric targeting Canada looming large this winter, it might be wise for some snowbirds to make nest and hunker down like the rest of us.

Curtis Metcalf



Opinion

"Snowbird" refers to the more than one million Canadians who travel south to the United States each year to escape the frigid Canadian winter. Some of the most popular locations

for these mostly retired travellers include the sunny states of Arizona, Texas, and Florida—all overwhelming Republican and Trump-supporting states.

The governors of Texas and Florida, and the two most recent ex-governors of Arizona endorsed Donald Trump's 2024 presidential bid. All three states also voted in support of Trump at the electoral college level. The three states each have a significantly higher percentage of Trump supporters relative to the U.S. as a whole. According to a study conducted by the Environics Institute, Canadians in their retirement years—those over 55 years old—and most likely to be snowbirds take a rather hardline anti-Trump stance when asked which presidential candidate they would want to win. The results were overwhelmingly anti-Trump coming in at just 13 per cent of those in their peak snowbird years supporting a Trump victory in 2024.

It seems odd that more than one million Canadians participate in this annual mass migration especially when we take into consideration the increasingly

divisive and controversial realities of modern American politics. The evidence is clear that our snowbirds likely don't support Trump, yet they enjoy the states that support him.

The economic impact of the snowbird effect on Canada appears to be a little-studied subject, but numbers published by Florida-based sources show that Canadian visitors contributed US\$6.5-billion or about C\$9.43-billion to Florida's economy in 2019. The same news source cites an older report that in 2016 Canadian tourism resulted in US\$686.56-million to state and local taxes, indexed for inflation and converted to Canadian dollars that's about \$1.2-billion of today's dollars in tax revenue generated for Florida state and local governments in one year alone.

If retired Canadians want to spend their winters kicking back deep in Trump country, they are well within their rights, but it's worthwhile to consider the lasting implications that their actions have in diverting billions of dollars out of Canada. This



Pelicans, pictured. If retired Canadians want to spend their winters kicking back deep in Trump country, they are well within their rights, but it's worthwhile to consider the lasting implications that their actions have in diverting billions of dollars out of Canada, writes Curtis Metcalf. *Photograph courtesy of Pixabay*

massive transfer of wealth is at the expense of the Canadian economy at large which is struggling with a weak dollar and high unemployment rates compared to our warmer southern neighbour.

From the perspective of an outsider, snowbirds could be considered an enviable group, leaving Canada's bleak and frosty winters and economy to enjoy their retirement by spending their money in a foreign country. If snowbirds love spending so much time and money in some of the most Trump-supportive states, perhaps they would welcome Trump's annexation plans. After all, it would make for a quicker time at the border if Toronto to Miami were only a domestic flight.

For the sake of the billions of dollars lost on the Canadian economy each year due to snowbirds flying south, and the damage done to our economy because of it, snowbirds need to understand the damage they are doing by weakening our dollar and economy relative to Trump's America. With Trump's increasingly expansionist rhetoric targeting our country looming large this winter, it might be wise for some snowbirds to make nest and hunker down like the rest of us.

Curtis Metcalf is an undergraduate student at the University of Ottawa studying history and political science.

*The Hill Times*

## COMMENT



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at the first ministers' meeting in Ottawa on Jan. 16, 2025. The Trump administration is expected to pursue a hostile policy toward Canada, intent on making us a vassal state. Our best bet is to focus on nation building, writes David Crane. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

# Canada can't win a retaliatory trade war with the U.S.

Instead, we should focus on a nation-building strategy to transform our economy, identifying and pursuing our best chances for a post-Trump world.

David Crane

Canada & the 21<sup>st</sup> Century



**T**ORONTO—There's much debate on how best to respond should newly inaugurated U.S. President Donald Trump's declared plan to impose a 25-per cent tariff on all imports from Canada and pursue other forms of "economic force" to bend this nation to his will.

Proposals range from penalizing Florida orange juice, Ohio motorcycles, and Tennessee bourbon whisky to cutting off oil, electricity, and strategic minerals

shipments. But while Canadians will need to push back with some kind of retaliation, we cannot win such a trade war with the Americans. They can hurt us more than we can hurt them.

Instead, we need to look to Americans to lead the fight against the tariffs, which will not only impose higher direct costs on their businesses and consumers, but will be highly disruptive to cross-border value chains, forcing new and more expensive production arrangements in many industries. Canada is not alone. The impact of similar tariff increases on Mexico will also cause significant problems for Americans. There will be Congressional elections in two years, and the Republicans already have to work with their tiniest majority in decades. Trump can't afford to be reckless with Canada and others.

Instead of retaliation, our nation's focus should be an all-out nation-building strategy to transform the economy, identifying and pursuing our best chances for a post-Trump world. We need to build a high-value economy that is less dependent on the U.S., and based on building and supporting Canadian potential as a prosperous, sovereign nation.

Such a strategy would need wide support, including all levels of government, the private sector, and the academic community. This means effective leadership since the transition to a new economy will be highly disruptive and painful.

A nation-building strategy would have many dimensions, from the elimination of interprovincial barriers to trade, labour mobility, and investment; policies to strengthen innovation; and active support for our ambitious entrepreneurs in creating a new generation of competitive Canadian-owned firms. It must also include aggressively moving on climate change and the shift to clean energy, embracing new-skills development, building the infrastructure for sustainable communities, supporting our cultural industries, improving place-based opportunity, and meeting an aging society's needs. It would extend from agriculture to quantum computing, and the theme would be innovation and the pursuit of new ideas.

This means a visionary and operationally realistic plan for nation-building; looking to the future world of transforming technologies; geo-economic forces; the existential threat (and

opportunity) from climate change; an aging population; food, water and health challenge; and a country where the rewards of growth and productivity are widely shared. We would continue to co-operate with the U.S., but not as a vassal state.

A key part of a nation-building strategy would be to build a new base of economic activity that would raise our productivity, provide good jobs, and the wealth generation to sustain a meaningful quality of life. This would mean, for example, putting in place the incentives and supports—and removing barriers—to enable our entrepreneurs to scale up for global success. Too many of our best new firms are sold to foreign multinationals often due to a lack of access to domestic funding. Such a strategy would, for example, look for ways to improve access to long-term patient capital.

As journalist Sean Silcoff recently reported in *The Globe and Mail*, we do have ambitious and successful entrepreneurs. He identified 77 Canadian tech firms that had grown to \$100-million or greater in revenue. It should be our goal to enable more to join this list and to enable them to become truly scaled up companies with annual revenues in the \$400-million-plus range.

Research by Industry Canada shows that size matters. Large businesses—those with 500 or more staff, or just 0.2 per cent of all businesses—accounted for 47.6 per cent of GDP, while large businesses, just 2.4 per cent of all Canadian exporters, generated 57.3 per cent of exports.

To build a new economy we need new thinking. Yet many businesses still think of Canada today as simply a modern version of our economy from 100 years ago, based on raw materials. A recent report from the

Expert Group on Canada-U.S. Relations at Carleton University argued that Canada needs to become "an energy and natural resource powerhouse" promoting oil and gas production, as well as strategic minerals. Likewise, as reported in *The Logic*, a recent event with five senior bank economists focused on strengthening the natural resource sector. Yet the future of Canada won't come from efforts to boost fossil fuel exports, or exporting strategic minerals.

We now live in a world where knowledge-based capital—intangibles such as intellectual property, computerized information, and business competencies, matter much more. So policies on research and development, public procurement, skills development, and higher education are critical since knowledge-based capital and the focus on intangibles are becoming even more important than investments in machinery and equipment. Economic growth comes from new ideas. An economy built on knowledge-based capital is more likely to be engaged in high-value activities with high skill and well-paying jobs.

The Trump administration over the next four years is expected to pursue a hostile and dangerous policy toward Canada, intent on making us a vassal state subservient to American commercial and security interests. This may not end with Trump. Our best bet, then, is to focus on nation building, so that we have a more prosperous and sovereign nation, less dependent on the U.S., and hence no need to feel subservient. But it's up to us to make this happen.

Trump has given us the incentive to do so. Will we?

David Crane can be reached at [crane@interlog.com](mailto:crane@interlog.com).  
*The Hill Times*

# COMMENT

# Canada in the world and the war in Gaza

Ottawa extends humanitarian aid for Palestinians, insisting it ‘no money goes into the hands of Hamas.’ But since Hamas controls what happens on the ground in Gaza, that’s likely hollow, a bit like Canada’s influence on the world stage.

Nelson Wiseman



Opinion

What has Canada contributed to resolving the tragic war in Gaza? Not much, but neither have other more powerful countries until the recent ceasefire deal. The United States is Israel’s sole potent global ally, and has ensured that Israel emerges intact from the multi-front war forced upon it more than 15 months ago.

Canada’s clout in the world has steadily declined since the 1950s, our military capacity is limited, our diplomatic influence waning. In the 1950s, our nation gained accolades for introducing peacekeeping to the lexicon of international relations; Lester Pearson was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize and a Canadian headed a United Nations force on the Egypt-Israel border. That mission ended when Egypt asked the UN force to withdraw, a prelude to the the 1967 Six Day War.

Nevertheless, Canadians became fond of presenting ourselves as helpful fixers and embraced the peacekeeping meme; it instilled national pride. In Rwanda in the 1990s, the UN compelled another Canadian-led UN peacekeeping force, headed by future Senator Roméo Dallaire, to stand aside as Tutsis were systematically murdered. Although Canadians played a role in a peace support mission in a fragmented Yugoslavia, they played more significant roles as warriors in the Gulf War, Afghanistan, and Libya.

As our allies increased defence spending, Ottawa reined it in. Canada joined the G6 in the 1970s, converting it to the G7, because the United States wanted us in the

group, and Pierre Trudeau fit the bill; he had been prime minister for a significantly longer period than any G6 leader and had more experience in international affairs. Canada’s accession made sense: at the time, we were the world’s largest advanced economy after the G6.

Canada’s GDP is now 10th in the world, and will soon likely rank lower. Ottawa’s repeated failures to secure a seat on the UN Security Council after decades during which the General Assembly repeatedly elected our nation as a member reflect our declining status. Narendra Modi’s India cold-shoulders us, and has assassinated Canadians on Canadian soil. China’s Xi Jinping has scolded Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and, similarly, abruptly dismissed him at the 2022 G20 meeting. Both China and India have brazenly, unapologetically meddled in our domestic affairs, undermining our sovereignty and institutions.

Since Israel’s establishment in 1948, when four Arab states attacked the nascent state, the world has changed, Canada has changed, and Canadians have changed. Ukrainian Canadians, once a pivotal voting bloc, are today outnumbered by Indo-Canadians, Muslim Canadians, and Chinese Canadians. There are more than twice as many Canadian Arabs and five times as many Muslims as Jews. Muslims make up 10 per cent of the populations of Toronto and Montreal. While there are more Jews in Toronto than in Montreal, there are more Arabs in Montreal than in Toronto. Incidents of antisemitism in Montreal have been more numerous and frightening: gunshots at Jewish schools and Molotov cocktails thrown at a synagogue and Jewish centres. No Jew has been charged in the spate of Islamophobic incidents since the Gaza war began, while some Arabs have been charged with antisemitic crimes.

Trudeau’s government has supported Israel’s right to defend itself, and has refused demands to call for a permanent ceasefire. Canada’s position has been synchronized with that of our U.S. and European allies. Although Gaza’s Hamas started the war, Trudeau’s government last year took a more critical position with respect to Israel. With Liberal support, Parliament voted for an NDP resolution endorsing Palestinian statehood and, in October, embargoed arms sales to Israel.

Israel has been doing the West and Canada’s dirty work by decimating Canadian-designated terrorist groups Hamas and Hezbollah, and degrading Yemen’s Houthis who are disrupting international shipping. By pummeling the military capacity of



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at the first ministers’ meeting in Ottawa on Jan. 15, 2025. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Iran—which has the blood of an innocent Canadian citizen on its hands—Israel contributed to the downfall of the Assads’ half-century long villainy in Syria.

Canada has presented itself as taking the moral high ground by imposing an arms embargo on Israel, but Ottawa has not been a relevant player in the Gaza war. In 2022, Canada exported about \$20-million in arms to Israel while military exports to Saudi Arabia, which enforces a repressive guardianship system on women, were well over a \$1-billion. Meanwhile, Israel will sell more weapons than ever this year in response to burgeoning foreign demand,

and despite some of Israel’s allies, including Canada, imposing arms embargoes against it.

Canada accepts Palestinian refugees while Egypt and Jordan do not. Ottawa also extends humanitarian aid for Palestinians, insisting it “will ensure that no money goes into the hands of Hamas.” However, since Hamas controls what happens on the ground in Gaza, the assurance is likely hollow. Somewhat like Canada’s influence on the world stage.

*Nelson Wiseman is a professor emeritus of political science at the University of Toronto. The Hill Times*



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## NEWS

# Fears over tariffs grow, but party standings static: polls

Pollster Nik Nanos said voters' minds could be made up by 'how the two leaders of the Conservatives and the Liberals scope out how they're going to manage' the relationship with the new U.S. president.

Continued from page 1

resignation announcement—showed 20.4 per cent of respondents chose jobs and the economy as their most important national issue of concern. That figure grew from the 19.3 per cent in the week of Dec. 13.

At the same time, concerns about health care, housing, and debt and deficit increased, while those about immigration and the environment dropped. Nanos interpreted the dominant concerns about the economy as being exacerbated by Trump's economic threats against Canada.

"People don't know what a Trump administration will mean for the Canadian economy, but they do know that it might mean bad news depending on where president-elect Trump lands on tariffs on Canadian goods," he said.

Trump has threatened 25-per-cent tariffs against Canada and Mexico from his first day in office unless the countries take nebulous action on illegal immigration and drug smuggling. He has also promised 10-per-cent across-the-board tariffs on all products America imports, though it is unclear whether that measure would be applied on top of the 25-per-cent measures against the country's immediate neighbours.

A Canadian Federation of Independent Business survey of 1,898 members this past December found that 82 per cent would be affected by tariffs in some way, and that 65 per cent would increase prices to offset the impacts of both the U.S. tariffs and Canadian retaliatory measures.

Ontario Premier Doug Ford told reporters on Jan. 14 that the tariffs would put up to 500,000 jobs in the province under threat, citing advice provided by government ministries.

Abacus Data founder and CEO David Coletto said his firm's tracking of the top three issues facing the country

showed respondents increasingly chose the effect of Trump and his administration as number one. For now, however, he said



Canadians' concerns about the economy have grown since U.S. president-elect Donald Trump's threats of tariffs, according to polling. Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons



NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh said Canadians would judge leaders on their ability to stand up to Donald Trump at the next federal election. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Liberal leadership candidate Mark Carney said the Canadian government needs to be prepared for tariffs. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

any such concern had done little to change respondents' domestic voting intentions.

Abacus' Jan. 6-7 survey, conducted in the immediate aftermath of Trudeau's resignation announcement, showed 47-per-cent support for the Conservatives, 20 per cent for the Liberals, 18 per cent for the New Democratic Party, eight per cent for the Bloc Québécois—or 36 per cent in Quebec alone—and three per cent each for the Green Party and People's Party. The Conservatives gained two points compared to a Dec. 17, 2024, survey, while the Liberals, NDP, and Bloc were unchanged.

"We'll see what [Trump] does when he's inaugurated, if he does move towards tariffs and if he continues to have the conversations that he's having about annexing us," Coletto said. "But so far, I don't see any evidence that it's having an effect on people's intended choices."

"I think the question is still much more about what effect Trump's decisions will have on Canada, and who is best able—[either] leader or party—to handle the effects. Because Trump will likely be Trump, regardless of what leader steps forward."

Current and prospective party leaders have sought to promote their bona fides against incoming American president in recent weeks. Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) told Vancouver Island-based radio station CHEK on Jan. 13 that he

would "retaliate with trade tariffs against American goods that are necessary to discourage America attacking our industries. I'd rather we work together, though, because if we do, we can have a bigger, stronger economy."

On the same day, NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, B.C.) told reporters in Ottawa that Trump's effect on the country would be a ballot question at the forthcoming federal election.

"You hear that everywhere you go, people are really worried about what this means for jobs, what this means for cost of living, what those tariffs could mean for grocery prices, for everyday bills," he said.

Singh suggested "turning off the taps" on critical mineral exports to the U.S. in response to Trump's threats, and that similar measures with oil and gas should be "on the table."

"Donald Trump is not rational. You can't discuss a plan over a meal with him. He is a bully, and bullies understand one thing, and that is strength," he said. "They also understand pain. So if he wants to pick a fight with Canada, we have to make sure it's clear that it's going to hurt Americans as well."

Liberal leadership candidate Mark Carney spent the early part of last week promoting his ability to stand up to Trump to a primarily American—rather than Canadian—audience. Carney appeared on Comedy Central's *The Daily Show with Jon Stew-*

art program prior to officially announcing his leadership bid, and said Canada needed to prepare for Trump's tariffs, noting "you look at what happened five, six years ago."

Fellow candidate Frank Baylis, meanwhile, told *The Hill Times' Hot Room* podcast on Jan. 10 that his past work in business negotiations meant he could handle Trump's threats.

"I enjoy working with Americans, but now and then you run into a tough cookie, if I can put it that way. And one of their negotiation tactics is to say, look, 'we're going to ruin you, we're going to bankrupt you,' all kinds of outlandish things they'll say," he said. "So I see this as one of Trump's negotiating tactics. I've dealt with these types of things before, so I'm very capable and able to make us have a great deal with our American neighbours and our American friends."

Nanos said it would take the election of a new leader to indicate whether the Liberal Party's fortunes were tied to Trudeau, and whether Trump and the Canada-U.S. relationship is enough to shake the Conservatives' longtime lead in the polls.

"One of the things that propelled the Conservatives was that Pierre Poilievre was very quick to get on the rising cost of living and the economy, and basically caught the Liberals flat footed, and owns that space," he said. "It's going to be hard for the Liberals to overtake him on that issue."

Then the big question is, in addition to that, what else might be a key factor? I think Donald Trump and managing the bi-national relationship would probably be just as important a factor as the party's position on the rising cost of living."

The Jan. 6-7 Abacus poll indicated that approximately 23 per cent of people were more likely to vote Liberal after Trudeau's resignation, including 14 per cent of those planning to vote Conservative and 28 per cent of those planning to vote NDP. If those would-be voters were completely converted, that would translate into an approximately 12-point vote share boost to the party, placing the Liberals at 32 per cent.

"The effect of him leaving is more Canadians now have an open mind to [voting Liberal] than they likely did if he had stuck around, but they still need to be convinced," Coletto said. "Saying you're somewhat more likely to vote Liberal doesn't mean you will. So I still think there's a lot of work that the Liberals have to do, but the opportunity is probably there in a way it wouldn't have been if Trudeau stayed on as leader and ran in the next election."

Beyond domestic politics, meanwhile, an Angus Reid Institute poll released on Jan. 14 suggested that Trump's threats against this country have soured Canadians' mood on the United States.

Trump's proposed annexation of this country was deeply unpopular with Canadians, though a majority also believe he is not serious about the threat.

Just 10 per cent of Canadian respondents backed the idea, according to the poll, while 25 per cent of U.S. respondents supported it. British Columbians and Ontarians were most opposed to the idea—at 92 per cent each—while Albertans were most receptive, with 18 per cent of respondents from that province willing to vote in favour of joining the United States.

Some 77 per cent of American respondents, however, said any such change should be the choice of Canadians: one per cent believed the U.S. should use military force against this country.

The survey also found a plurality of Americans—46 per cent—had mostly favourable views of Canada, compared with 32 per cent of Canadians who viewed the U.S. in the same light. More Canadians viewed America in a mostly or very unfavourable light than favourable, at 55 per cent to 39 per cent. That is the second lowest favourability score for the U.S. since May 2020, when 38 per cent of Canadians viewed the U.S. favourably and 60 per cent unfavourably.

As for the threat to Canada, 52 per cent of Canadian respondents believed Trump's statements about annexation were either attention seeking or trolling, while 32 per cent believed it was a legitimate ambition of his. Some 24 per cent of respondents believed the Canadian government should approach the United States as a potential threat to this country's interests, up from 13 per cent in November 2024.

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The Hill Times

# Musk's approval of Poilievre good for Conservatives, but may not sit well for others, say pollsters and strategists

Billionaire tech CEO Elon Musk's endorsement is a 'double-edged sword,' according to pollster Nik Nanos.

Continued from page 1

included gathering public impressions of party leaders. Survey participants were also asked to rate how they felt about Musk, although those results were not released along with other results on Jan. 9, according to Coletto.

About 22 per cent of respondents said they felt positively about Musk, while 51 per cent said they felt negatively about him. Another 23 per cent said they were "neutral" about the billionaire, and four per cent said they didn't know how they felt.

About one in three Canadians who do like Poilievre don't like Musk, according to Coletto.

"Almost everybody knows who [Musk] is. He is absolutely a well-known figure in the country, and close to six in 10 Canadians have a negative view of him," he said. "That's a signal that his endorsement and encouragement ... is not likely going to be helpful for Pierre Poilievre."

Coletto said there is almost a perfect correlation between how Canadians feel about Musk, and how they feel about Trump, and that the two have "basically become synonymous with each other." In November, Trump promised Musk would co-lead a newly created Department of Government Efficiency in the U.S., along with biotech entrepreneur and politician Vivek Ramaswamy. During the Nov. 5, 2024, U.S. election, Musk also spent more than \$277-million supporting Trump and other Republican candidates.

Coletto said Musk's endorsement is not just a risk for Poilievre because some of his supporters have a negative view of the tech giant, but also some have an unfavourable view of Trump.

"This new conservative coalition is so much broader and more diverse than it's ever been. Because it's so large, there is a risk that you could alienate a significant part of that conservative voter coalition today by being associated, or by being seen too closely connected, to Elon Musk,"



When asked by a reporter on Jan. 9 if he accepts Elon Musk's approval, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, pictured, said that it would be nice if Musk were to open factories in Canada, and create jobs here. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

said Coletto. "Some of that new ... conservative group [has] gone to the Conservatives because they're looking for change, but they don't want change that resembles Donald Trump or Elon Musk."

About 75 per cent of Canadians have "low trust" in Musk, according to a survey of 1,450 Canadians conducted by the Canadian Digital Media Research Network between Nov. 28 and Dec. 3, 2024, which was released on Dec. 11.

Poilievre was asked by a reporter on Jan. 9 if he accepts Musk's endorsement. Poilievre did not directly answer the question, but responded that it would be nice if Musk could be convinced to open factories in Canada and create jobs.

"I think Tesla, his company, is one of the biggest — if not the biggest — automotive company in the world. Wouldn't it be nice if we were producing more without corporate welfare?" Poilievre told reporters.

Nik Nanos, CEO of Nanos Research, described approval by Musk as a double-edged sword for any politician.

"What we've been seeing is that, although they might initially welcome the endorsement, the endorsement can be taken away. I think that's where the risk comes," he said. "I think what we've learned is that [Musk is] very quick and fast to pass judgment on politicians around the world in terms of laying both praise and

criticism, and that's why it's a double-edged sword to receive an endorsement from him."

Nanos told *The Hill Times* that Musk endorsing Poilievre could be seen as "foreign interests potentially meddling in domestic politics." He said that politicians want to win elections based on their own capabilities, and not have the complication of dealing with a "global personality," like Musk.

"[Poilievre's] been pretty purposeful at trying to develop his own style of politics and his messaging, and to stay clear of what's been happening south of the border. And, I think for any politician, it's probably good politics not to be aligned too closely with what's going on with the Trump administration," said Nanos.

"I think what happens is that the Elon Musk endorsement, for some, will probably bring a connection to the Trump administration."

If Trump was previously a controversial figure, he's become "even more hyper-controversial" lately due to his threats of imposing 25-per-cent tariffs on Canada, or comments about possibly absorbing this country into the U.S., according to Nanos.

"For Pierre Poilievre, the reality is that he cannot control who endorses him, or who does not endorse him. He'd probably be better off just saying, 'I can't control who endorses me and doesn't endorse me, and I'm not going to comment on any of that,'"

said Nanos. "And if an endorsement helps Canada, then that's good. If it doesn't help Canada, then there's nothing that he can do about that."

Muhammad Ali, a vice-president at Crestview Strategy and a former Liberal staffer, told *The Hill Times* that the risk of Musk's approval for Poilievre is that it could irk those Liberal or NDP voters who are considering changing their vote to the Tories.

"For those in the centre, or those who may be considering [Poilievre] but don't like Elon, I think it's not helpful," said Ali. "I think those who are super supportive of Pierre—because they come from that side of the political spectrum—are going to love it ... and then those who really oppose Elon Musk ... [that] will entrench them in that view."

Ali also argued that Musk is closely affiliated with Trump, and the president-elect's tariff threats could have serious economic impacts for Canada.

"There are a lot of American media commentaries saying that [Poilievre] is like the Donald Trump in the north, as well. So, it's sort of spreading for him, and I don't think that's a really great association for him," said Ali. "It's definitely a negative because Pierre Poilievre needs to bring in people outside of his party."

In contrast, Fred DeLorey, chair and chief strategy officer for Northstar Public Affairs, told *The Hill Times* that for Musk to

endorse Canada's Conservative leader is a positive development because it shows "the strength of Poilievre and how his message is resonating, not just in Canada, but worldwide."

"I've never quite seen this before. [Poilievre's] becoming a very vocal world leader of conservatism in so many regards. When he does certain videos, it goes viral around the world," said DeLorey. "It's quite remarkable, and it's obviously a good sign that his message resonates, not just within Canada's borders."

DeLorey's background includes serving as national campaign manager for the Conservative Party during the 2021 federal election, and he is a former director of political operations for then-Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper.

DeLorey argued Musk is someone Canadians should take pride in, and described him as an extremely successful entrepreneur with Canadian roots. Musk, who was born in South Africa, acquired Canadian citizenship at age 18 through his Canadian-born mother. Musk is also the wealthiest individual in the world, with *Forbes* estimating his net worth as approximately C\$603-billion in January 2025.

DeLorey said that Poilievre's response to the endorsement — that it would be nice for Musk to open factories in Canada — is an answer that "perfectly aligns with his view."

"I think Pierre's answer goes to the core of what his worldview is, and that's making things better in Canada [and] if there's any way that he could bring jobs to Canada," said DeLorey. "What he suggested Mr. Musk do, I think that's aligned with everything we've seen from Pierre's way of thinking."

Darrell Bricker, CEO of Ipsos Public Affairs, described Musk as a wild card. He said it would be hard to say what the support means for Poilievre's campaign because a tech leader endorsing a political leader in this country hasn't happened before.

"The idea of an American president or somebody externally having a view on who should run the country in Canada is not unknown, but usually in recent times where you saw the most of that was around Trudeau. For most of the other prime ministers we've had of late, external people really didn't have a strong point of view," he said.

"The most I've seen around this was Trudeau in 2015 and it was all positive towards him and negative towards Harper, but there was no Elon Musk-type character in that scenario. It was mostly like big American democrats, and particularly people in the entertainment industry and people who are activists and that kind of thing."

Bricker said he expects the next federal Liberal leader to argue that Poilievre is in alignment with Musk and Trump, which may cause hesitation among voters who are considering supporting the Conservatives, but who are "not necessarily buying into that big MAGA message."

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## NEWS

# Trudeau encourages all Canadians to ‘speak up for’ the nation in light of Trump’s threats

Ontario Premier Doug Ford says it’s more important to stand up for our country than for jurisdictions right now. And former Ford staffer Laryssa Waler says the next federal election’s ballot-box question will be on defending Canada’s interests against Trump.

BY SOPHALL DUCH

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau says it’s “to be expected that everyone weighs in” on the possible 25-per-cent tariffs on Canadian goods imported to the United States, under incoming American president Donald Trump.

“We have encouraged from the very beginning—encouraged all premiers, all Canadian business owners, all Canadians with any sort of interaction with United States—to engage on issues and to speak up for the benefits of free and open trade between our two countries,” said Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) at the news conference following his meeting with premiers in Ottawa on Jan. 15.

Ahead of Trump’s official return to the White House on Jan. 20, the prime minister convened a meeting in Ottawa with provincial and territorial premiers to talk this country’s response to the potential tariffs from the new U.S. administration.

While the prime minister said there was no one person speaking on behalf of Team Canada, he added that “everyone tries to co-ordinate through our ambassador in Washington.”

Kirsten Hillman, Canada’s ambassador to the U.S., told *The Hill Times* that she tries to connect people in Washington, given she has relationships with Republicans in the Senate and the Trump administration.

“I’m trying to match-make, if you will, people who are interested in certain kinds of topics or certain regions of the country that might have something more to say to Saskatchewan or to Ontario,” said Hillman, who also attended the first ministers’ meeting, to *The Hill Times*.

“Obviously, these premiers know also their area of business and area of influence themselves. But to the extent that I can help



Ontario Premier Doug Ford wears a ‘Canada is Not For Sale’ hat in Ottawa on Jan. 15, 2025. ‘I understand that all around the country everyone has their concerns... but there’s one thing that’s more important than jurisdictions is standing up for the country. Country comes first over anything.’  
*The Hill Times*  
photograph by Andrew Meade

with that and make introductions, I do.”

Hillman said this week she introduced Energy Minister Jonathan Wilkinson (North Vancouver, B.C.) to a number of people she knows well on Capitol Hill.

Trudeau said having multiple voices speaking on behalf of Team Canada is a strength.

“It is actually more impactful when Americans see Canadians speaking from multiple perspective, multiple voices, but standing up for Canada in the same way. That’s the heart of Team Canada, and that’s why we have such a strong approach on this,” said Trudeau.

## A united front

Originally, there were two closing press conferences scheduled to follow the first ministers’ meeting—one from the federal government, and another one from the premiers—but that changed later in the afternoon when reporters learned one big joint news conference would be held with both the feds and the premiers.

With the prime minister and the premiers sitting together facing reporters, all the politicians attempted to portray that they were united.

“Coming out of this highly productive meeting, we have a shared sense of purpose, a shared sense of understanding, and a commitment to stand together on a united path forward,” said Trudeau.

“This is truly a Team Canada approach that we’re taking, and I just can’t emphasize it enough about staying united as Canadians standing up against these tariffs,” added Ontario Premier Doug Ford.

Yukon Premier Ranj Pillai said premiers left the meeting with a

blueprint for how they are “going to message” their American counterparts.

“Part of the goal here was to wake up tomorrow and understand what the role was as a premier, how we interact, how our levels of government will work together,” Pillai told reporters. “Understand how each person’s tools they put on the table can interact or can affect other jurisdictions, but at the same time, how they can be most effective.”

## Cracks in Team Canada emerge

But the image of unity was quickly burst when the meeting’s final communiqué was released without Alberta’s signature.

With an asterisk at the bottom of the statement, it read “The Government of Alberta did not approve the joint statement between the Government of Canada and the Council of the Federation.”

The theme of fracture within Team Canada was present as premiers arrived to the meeting seemingly divided over Canada’s possible response to Trump’s proposed tariffs—with one camp saying nothing is off the table, while others have red lines.

A red line for Alberta is energy exports.

Alberta Premier Danielle Smith—who attended the meeting virtually, but did not attend the final news conference—previously told reporters earlier in the week that a “national unity crisis” could emerge if Canada responded to new U.S. tariffs with an energy embargo.

Ford, who is also chair of the Council of the Federation, said politicians should be putting Canada first.

“[Trump] is going to try and divide our country. And

we cannot have division in our country,” said Ford earlier in the day. “I understand that all around the country everyone has their concerns, their jurisdictions from coast to coast, but there’s one thing that’s more important than jurisdictions is standing up for the country. Country comes first over anything.”

Hillman also emphasized Trump’s use of division as a negotiation tactic.

“President-elect Trump is a lifelong negotiator. He has many tricks up his sleeve. We saw them during the NAFTA negotiations. One of them is to divide, and he is clearly interested in doing that—not just with us, but with others, as well. And we can’t let ourselves fall into that,” said Hillman to reporters.

This division had some premiers calling for everyone to step in line.

A senior government source told reporters on background that a handful of premiers told their colleagues not to negotiate against ourselves. The government official said airing public grievances about talks would only provide fodder for the new U.S. administration.

Smith later posted on X that she could not “fully support the federal government’s plan” in dealing with the proposed tariffs.

“Alberta will simply not agree to export tariffs on our energy or other products, nor do we support a ban on exports of these same products. We will take whatever actions are needed to protect the livelihoods of Albertans from such destructive federal policies,” wrote Smith on X.

Alberta’s premier met with Trump at Mar-a-Lago, Fla., and plans to be in Washington, D.C., for the presidential inauguration on Jan. 20.

Henley Strategies’ Laryssa Waler, former executive director of communications for Ford, told *The Hill Times* that she’s not surprised that Smith didn’t sign the final first ministers’ statement.

“I was not surprised at all. I think Danielle Smith has made no secret about where her lines and stand are. She was elected to defend the interest of Alberta, she was not elected to defend the interests of her fellow premiers’ jurisdictions,” said Waler to *The Hill Times*. “I think other premiers do take on more of a pan-Canadian view. I think Danielle Smith does not and she never made a secret about that.”

But Smith’s colleagues were quick to point out that Trump’s tariffs were going to impact all Canadian and American citizens.

“[Trump’s] coming full tilt at Canadians, as a whole,” said Ford. “That’s one thing we have to understand. We need to be united.”

Trudeau praised Ford for putting the national interest ahead of Ontario’s interest, despite Trump setting his sights on Canada’s auto sector: a key manufacturing industry in Ontario.

## A tariff election?

Waler said Trudeau appearing alongside the premiers is an effort to show that there are some politicians with mandates to negotiate with Trump.

“The practical reality is that the prime minister needs the premiers to show that there are people with mandates to negotiate and with mandates to govern at the table with the Americans because the prime minister doesn’t have that mandate anymore,” said Waler.

Waler said a federal election with Canada’s trade policy as the top ballot-box issue will give the next federal government a stronger negotiation footing with the Americans.

“Whenever there is another federal election, top of the ballot is going to be who’s going to defend Canadian interests against Donald Trump. And as [Pierre] Poilievre wins, he will have been empowered by that win to negotiate with the federal American government,” said Waler to *The Hill Times*.

“You will see Americans take that quite seriously right now. Donald Trump knows he has no opposition. He knows that there is nobody on the other side that has been empowered or has the mandate to negotiate with him.”

Trudeau—who announced on Jan. 6 he was stepping down as prime minister once his Liberal Party picks their next leader—addressed questions on whether his “lame duck” status negatively impacted Canada’s negotiations with the U.S. Trudeau also announced that he won’t be running in the next election.

“The Liberal Party is having discussions about its next leader, but right now our entire focus, the ministers with me and, indeed, all the premiers, is on making sure that we’re protecting Canadians every step of the way,” said Trudeau.

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# Poilievre's transition team must contend with U.S. trade war issues and make long-term plan, say former top bureaucrats

Poilievre will likely be less dependent on transition planning than other past Conservative leaders because 'he knows how government works,' says governance expert and author Donald Savoie.

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Priorities for Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre's transition team will be determining how to handle the trade relationship with the United States and the threat of tariffs, as well as developing a long-term view for if the party forms government following the upcoming election, according to a public administration scholar and former senior bureaucrats.

"A key issue that the transition team and Pierre Poilievre ... and everybody involved in the policy process will need to focus on is the U.S.," said Donald Savoie, Canada Research Chair in Public Administration and Governance at the Université de Moncton in New Brunswick, who is also the author of dozens of books on government and politics.

"The question of trade. That's going to dominate a lot of the transition planning. How do you deal with the U.S.? It's absolutely critical."

A spring election would be on the horizon if the Liberal government loses a confidence vote when the House returns on March 24. Weekly tracking by Nanos Research released on Jan. 14 showed the Conservatives leading with 47 per cent support, followed by the Liberals at 19.6 per cent, and the NDP at 17.9 per cent, with Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) as the preferred choice for prime minister of 41.7 per cent of Canadians.

Based on polling, Poilievre could win the election with a "substantial majority," which has pluses and minuses, according to Savoie.

"A substantial majority cuts both ways. It gives you a mandate to pursue your agenda, but it also brings in a lot of hungry puppies," said Savoie. "If you have 225 MPs,



Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre has not publicly announced any members of his transition team, which will help him prepare to govern if he forms government in the upcoming federal election. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

there's a lot of MPs who you have to listen to. They will have demands. They will have made commitments during the election campaign."

A major issue for Poilievre's transition team—the group of advisers tasked with preparing a future prime minister to govern—will be how to address the threat of 25-per-cent tariffs on Canadian goods, which was first announced by U.S. president-elect Donald Trump back in November. Poilievre said that, if he were to become prime minister, his strategy to contend with the tariffs would include retaliating through highly targeted tariffs against American goods, as well as rolling back the capital gains tax increase, as reported on Jan. 16 in *The Globe and Mail*.

Savoie told *The Hill Times* that Poilievre would likely be less dependent on transition planning than other past Conservative leaders because "he knows how government works."

"Others who had no experience in government—I'm thinking of Brian Mulroney, I'm thinking of Stephen Harper—... they had no experience in government," said Savoie. "Pierre Poilievre has been a minister. He has been a parliamentary secretary. He knows the government from the inside, so in that sense, he has a leg up."

"When he sits in the prime minister's chair, he'll know which levers to push and pull right away. He won't need to be told what levers to push and pull," Savoie added.

If elected, Poilievre's priorities would also likely include a smaller government and less public spending, said Savoie.

"The transition team has to explore those points. How do you bring Canada's fiscal position back in balance? How you deal with the size of government? [Poilievre] is of the view that the federal government has launched too many policy initiatives and too many programs," said Savoie. "I think the transition team has to look at which programs he may declare sort of redundant, which programs he wants to curtail or cut back. These are the issues [where] the transition team will need to be helpful."

Poilievre has not publicly announced any of the members of his transition team. In an attempt to find out, *The Hill Times* reached out to Sebastian Skamski, Poilievre's director of media relations, and to individuals with important links to the Conservative Party, including Ian Todd, Poilievre's chief of staff; Hamish Marshall, a partner with marketing agency One Persuasion and a former national campaign manager for the Conservative Party between 2017 and 2019; Jenni Byrne + Associates, who piloted Poilievre's leadership campaign in 2022; and David Murray, a senior vice-president at One Persuasion who previously served as director of policy to Poilievre between 2022 and 2024.

However, those contacted either declined to comment, or did not provide a response before deadline.

*The Hill Times* also reached out to former Conservative staffers, including Mitch Heimle, director of policy for Enterprise Canada and a former director of parliamentary affairs for

then-Conservative leader Erin O'Toole; Ginny Roth, a partner at Crestview Strategy who previously served as director of communications on Poilievre's Conservative leadership campaign; Hendrik Brakel, director in the federal practice for Sussex Strategy Group and a former chief economic advisor to then-Conservative leader Andrew Scheer; and to former Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper to ask about Poilievre's transition team, but did not receive a response.

Elizabeth Roscoe, senior vice-president of public affairs at Rubicon Strategy, who was a member of the Harper transition team in 2006, told *The Hill Times* that transition teams help get a government up and running. The group's responsibilities may include looking at the electoral mandate and the key aspects of the party platform that need to be implemented, she said.

"The Harper transition was very much impacted by being a minority government with a line of sight that we didn't know how long that government would last," she said. "The Accountability Act was one of the five key areas that the prime minister said that he would change, so we needed to factor that into the legislative agenda ... and, of course, one of the other big considerations was how the cabinet would perform itself, how it would be seen, how it would interact with others and how it would govern the staff."

The Harper transition team was led by Derek Burney, who had served as chief of staff to then-Progressive Conservative prime minister Brian Mulroney until 1989 when he went became

Canada's ambassador to the U.S. until 1993.

Serving as the Harper transition team's spokesperson was Marie-Josée Lapointe, whose background includes serving as Mulroney's deputy press secretary, and as a press secretary for former Conservative transport minister Benoit Bouchard.

Other members of the team included Ray Speaker, a former Reform Party MP who also served as Alberta's municipal affairs and housing minister in 1989 with the provincial Progressive Conservative Party; and Maurice Archdeacon, a retired inspector-general of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

According to Roscoe, the transition team also included Ian Brodie, a current professor in the department of Political Science at the University of Calgary, who was at the time serving as Harper's chief of staff, and Bruce Carson, an aide and senior advisor to Harper. Carson passed away in March 2022.

"Every leader will have, I think, a different style. Clearly, [transition team members] have got to be individuals whose loyalty and trust [the Conservative leader] has in spades, and feels experience in government very helpful, but as well, experience in other areas related to public policy," said Roscoe.

Alister Campbell, a senior fellow with the C.D. Howe Institute and president and CEO of Property and Casualty Insurance Compensation Corporation, argued to *The Hill Times* that the "common sense brand" use by Poilievre was originally invented by former Progressive Conservative premier of Ontario Mike Harris.

Campbell was responsible for policy, speech, communications, advertising, and media during the Harris campaign in 1995.

"I think our point would be—from the Harris team's perspective—that the reason the platform was successfully implemented was, one, because it was a sensible platform, and two, because there was a transition team that was appointed at roughly the same time as the campaign team was, so, literally, a year and a half before the election," said Campbell.

"That transition team worked in parallel with—but was not directly connected to—the campaign team," he said. "It was a totally separate mechanism and was not public, and did its job in private, and prepared private advice for the leader when he became premier, and allowed Mike to have a running start."

Campbell said for any government planning to implement a vigorous change agenda, particularly for Conservatives, an action plan is needed right away.

"To the extent that Mr. Poilievre's indications are that he has a more vigorous and ambitious agenda of change, having that roadmap ready and having the key personnel identified and which senior civil servants can be trusted to function as non-partisan participants in that process ... all of that stuff is critical to getting a fast start," he said.

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*The Hill Times*

## NEWS

# Atlantic Grits open to ‘practical’ leadership candidate who gets rural Canada, say local Liberals

The carbon tax remains a non-starter in the region, says Abacus Data’s Kelly Bennett, as it’s become ‘a symbol of broader discontent, and misunderstanding of Atlantic Canadians.’



Clockwise from top left: Mark Carney, Chrystia Freeland, Karina Gould, Jaime Battiste, Chandra Arya, and Frank Baylis have either declared their candidacy or are expected to enter the Liberal leadership race. Organizers in Atlantic Canada say the region is open to any candidate offering ‘practical’ solutions. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade, Sam Garcia, Peter Mazereeuw, and Stuart Benson

BY IAN CAMPBELL

Atlantic Canada will continue to punch above its weight in federal Liberal politics, so leadership hopefuls must show they understand the region and rural needs to capture this bloc, say several party organizers from the East Coast.

“We’re a pretty pragmatic region,” said Charlie Byrne, a Liberal Party organizer based in St. John’s, N.L., who is also a senior director at the public affairs firm m5.

“If you look at our history, we typically elect practical premiers,” he said. “What people want is a practical, pragmatic approach.”

Byrne—who also serves as chair of the Cape Spear Federal Liberal Association, a new electoral district that contains much of the area currently represented by outgoing Liberal MP Seamus O’Regan (St. John’s South-Mount Pearl, N.L.)—said that pattern applies to Atlantic provincial governments whether they are Liberal, Progressive Conservative, or the one NDP government in Nova Scotia from 2009-13.

He said the kind of federal leadership candidate who could appeal to Atlantic Liberals would be “somebody who recognizes where the country is, and where the region is right now.”

Atlantic Canada has wielded an outsized influence in Liberal Party politics for over a decade. It played a key role in delivering outgoing Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s (Papineau, Que.) first majority government in 2015 with all of the region’s 32 seats going to the Liberals. It continued to form a significant share of the Liberal caucus that emerged from both the 2019 and 2021 elections. Across these campaigns, Atlantic MPs represented 15 to 17 per cent of all seats won by the party.

The Atlantic caucus also flexed its muscle on the national stage during the current Parliament. Atlantic Liberals played an instrumental role in securing two key changes to Trudeau’s marquee carbon tax policy—a top up

to the rural rebate and a carve out for home heating oil—in the face of the tax’s withering unpopularity in the region. Atlantic MPs went on to emerge as some of the more vocal members calling for Trudeau’s ouster as leader, eventually prompting his resignation on Jan. 6.

“I think we’ve punched well above our weight in the last 10 years,” said Byrne. “And I think any successful path in the future goes through Atlantic Canada.”

There are reasons for Atlantic Liberals to remain an important bloc of voters for any candidate in the federal Liberal leadership race, even though the region will not hold as much mathematical weight as it does in the current caucus.

In the leadership race, each of the country’s 343 ridings is worth an equal 100 points—regardless of population or party membership. That means the 32 Atlantic ridings represent just over nine per cent of the total points up for grabs.

However, those points can be captured by converting on a relatively small number of voters.

“A lot of our ridings tend to be rural ridings, or have rural elements, and that’s where your community organizers are very effective,” said Byrne. “People with their old phone books they’ve had for 30 years, and they know everybody’s number. They can sign everybody up.”

He said tactics that might not apply in downtown Toronto, where it’s impossible to know everyone, are still key to campaigning in smaller centres.

“You get people in a small town of maybe a couple 100 people, but they know everybody in the town, and they can sign up 75 per cent of them,” he said. That can be efficiently converted into winning a large share of the riding’s points. “You keep doing that in small community over and over, it adds up pretty quick. So I think it’ll be important for any campaign that wants to make inroads to identify those key organizers.”

There’s another reason the East Coast matters to Liberals. As the party embarks on a possible “save-the-furniture” campaign—currently trailing the Conservatives nationally by over 25 points in some polls—the party must seek to remain competitive with Atlantic voters in a general election.

As of Jan. 15, polling aggregator 338Canada projects the Liberals will win only 37 seats across Canada, but five of those are Atlantic ridings.

## Wide open to leadership field

Local organizers said Atlantic Canada is open to leadership candidates from across the country looking to pick up support, particularly in the wake of the region’s top minister—heavyweight Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, N.B.)—announcing he would not run.

“I think he would have cleaned up in Atlantic Canada,” as well as the rest of the country, said former Liberal staffer Nick McRoberts, who is from Prince Edward Island. “A lot of people in Atlantic Canada were looking at Dom as kind of that shining beacon.”

“I think with him out of the region, it opens it up for any candidate,” said Byrne.

One Atlantic Liberal MP, Jaime Battiste (Sydney—Victoria, N.S.), has signaled his intention to run. But most observers said he does not have the name recognition to be a factor even within the region—let alone nationally—especially in a short race.

## Top contenders still undefined

Abacus Data’s Kelly Bennett—who recently joined the company as vice-president to launch its new Atlantic office in Halifax—said polling found even some high-profile candidates were relatively unknown on the East Coast.

She said that’s a double-edged sword. It presents candidates an opportunity to differentiate from

Trudeau, but they also risk being defined by Conservatives.

An Abacus poll found only 51 per cent of respondents in Atlantic Canada could recognize a photo of former finance minister Chrystia Freeland (University—Rosedale, Ont.), and only 21 per cent recognized a photo of former Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney.

The same poll found that 42 per cent in the region believed Freeland to be similar to Trudeau, while only 28 per cent thought she was different. For Carney, 32 per cent thought he was similar, and 28 per cent found him different.

Many respondents had not yet formed an impression. For Freeland and Carney—30 per cent and 40 per cent, respectively—many said they did not yet know whether that candidate was similar or different from Trudeau.

The poll was based on a boosted Atlantic sample size to better gauge regional attitudes.

“People aren’t sure at this point in time whether Mark Carney would represent a different direction, or if it would be ... more of the Trudeau politics that Atlantic Canada is quickly rejecting,” said Bennett.

She said 40-per-cent unknown is a “huge opportunity there for [Carney] to introduce himself and define himself,” but also an opportunity for Conservatives to frame him as “Carbon Tax Carney.”

## Carbon tax remains ‘deeply concerning’: Bennett

That framing could be a lethal blow in Atlantic Canada.

Bennett said supporting the carbon tax is likely a non-starter for any leadership candidate looking to gain traction in the region.

“The carbon tax continues to be a major source of discontent across the country, but in particular in Atlantic Canada,” she said.

Bennett said discontent “peaked” in the lead up to the fall 2023 changes to the policy, but the tax remains “deeply concerning to

Atlantic Canadians of all types of different backgrounds.”

She said a successful candidate would likely need to say they’ll drop it.

“It’s a symbol of broader discontent and misunderstanding of Atlantic Canadians—how they’re living their day-to-day lives, what they care about, what financial pressures they’re facing, and also what life is like in this part of the world,” said Bennett. “That’s the kind of feelings and negative associations that it brings up.”

McRoberts said a candidate might be able to support carbon pricing in some form, but it would need to be crafted around regional needs.

“It has to take into account that it needs to be applied differently in Atlantic Canada, and it needs to be applied differently in every region,” said McRoberts.

## Atlantic Liberals have rural pulse

Former Liberal ministerial staffer Dale Palmeter—who previously worked for then-minister Scott Brison, and is now a senior consultant with Crestview Strategy based in Halifax—said the Liberal Atlantic caucus has “effectively been the rural caucus” for the party during the Trudeau years.

He said that’s allowed it to deliver policy messages to the national party—on the carbon tax and other topics—that hold true in other rural areas across Canada.

Palmeter noted that even urban Atlantic ridings—in places like Halifax and St. John’s—have some rural components.

He said there are important rural messages the party can take from its Atlantic base, particularly on resource issues like forestry, fishing, and agriculture.

“Atlantic Canadian Liberals will be looking to see, ‘is there a candidate that is going to connect with us as rural Canadians?’” said Palmeter. “I’m not sure that people here feel those issues have been given the attention that they deserve” by the current government.

As an example, he pointed to the national school food program.

“The food security of Canadians is not about providing a national school food program,” he said. “It’s actually about supporting growth and innovation in our agricultural sector, and recognizing that we have to feed ourselves ... It’s growing the food, understanding and valuing the farmers that produce that food.”

Palmeter said a candidate who connects with voters on resource issues would have appeal.

McRoberts said candidates who hail from regions outside the “Laurentian bubble of Montreal, or Toronto or Ottawa” may hold appeal, even if they are not from the East Coast.

Palmeter offered a similar view.

“Atlantic Canadians still think that’s a fine outcome because they will see that people who aren’t from central Canada will have a greater understanding of their issues,” he said. “They have a lot in common with people that live on the other coast.”

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The Hill Times

# Hill Climbers



By Laura Ryckewaert

## Guy Gallant to lead new Treasury Board President Petitpas Taylor's office



New Treasury Board President Ginette Petitpas Taylor speaks with reporters outside Rideau Hall after the cabinet shuffle on Dec. 20, 2024. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Monique Lugli, who had been chief of staff to then-Treasury Board president Anita Anand, recently announced her departure.

New Treasury Board President **Ginette Petitpas Taylor** has brought over a familiar hand to run her new ministerial shop, with **Guy Gallant** confirmed to continue as her chief of staff. Petitpas Taylor was shuffled out of the veterans affairs and associate defence portfolio, and put in charge of the Treasury Board as part of the Dec. 20, 2024, cabinet shuffle.

Gallant has been chief of staff to Petitpas Taylor since 2021, starting during her time as minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.



Guy Gallant has followed his boss to the Treasury Board portfolio to continue as chief of staff. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

He subsequently followed her to the veterans portfolio after she was shuffled in July 2023.

An experienced political staffer and chief of staff, Gallant has been a senior figure in cabinet offices on the Hill since the early days of the Trudeau government, starting in early 2016 as director of communications to Agriculture Minister **Lawrence MacAulay**, who first held the portfolio from 2015 to 2019, and returned to it as part of the July 2023 cabinet shuffle.

In 2018, Gallant went on leave to help out his former boss, then-New Brunswick premier

**Brian Gallant** (no relation), in that year's provincial election. When he returned to the Hill, he stepped into a new role as director of communications to then-heritage minister **Pablo Rodriguez**.

Just a few months later, at the start of 2019, Gallant returned to MacAulay's agriculture office to take over as the minister's chief of staff. MacAulay was shuffled into the veterans affairs portfolio not long

after in March 2019, and Gallant followed to continue leading the minister's office.

From 2020 until November 2021, Gallant worked off the Hill as vice-president of communications for the Canadian Wireless Telecommunications Association (now known as the Canadian Telecommunications Association). When he came back to the political trenches after that year's federal election, it was as chief of staff to then-ACOIA minister Petitpas Taylor.

Prior to 2016, Gallant's CV includes time spent as communications director to then-N.B. premier **Brian Gallant**, and as press secretary to then-Prince Edward Island premier **Robert Ghiz**, who's been president and CEO of the Canadian Telecommunications Association since 2017.

Previously, **Monique Lugli** was chief of staff to **Anita Anand** as Treasury Board president, and briefly also oversaw Anand's office as transport minister after Anand first took on that added role last September. With last

month's shuffle, Anand is now minister for transport as well as of internal trade, and is in the market for a new chief of staff.

Lugli recently announced her decision to once again bid the Hill farewell on LinkedIn, writing that "Over the past

decade, I have been privileged to serve this government. Now, it's time for me to step down from my role as Chief of Staff."

A former executive director of community services with the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit, Lugli first came to Ottawa in January 2016 to become chief of staff to then-status of women minister **Patty Hajdu**, who is also the MP for Thunder Bay-Superior North, Ont.

Lugli went on to serve as chief of staff to then-status of women minister **Maryam Monsef**, and in 2018, joined Petitpas Taylor's office as then minister of health, starting as a senior adviser before becoming chief of staff.

Lugli left the Hill after the 2019 election, becoming vice-president of child develop-



Monique Lugli recently announced her decision to leave the Hill. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

ment and community services at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, and later vice-president of Santis Health. She returned in the wake of the July 2023 shuffle to run Anand's office as then-treasury board president.

In her recent LinkedIn post, Lugli wrote that serving Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** and "the remarkable ministers" Hajdu, Monsef, Petitpas Taylor, and Anand "has truly been the honour of a lifetime."

"The resilience and accomplishments of these women in the face of political challenges are truly inspiring," she said.

Lugli also gave particular thanks to PMO chief of staff **Katie Telford** and former principal secretary **Gerald Butts** "for entrusting me with this opportunity to serve," and a nod to the "incredible staff members who have been the backbone of our work." She also offered some parting advice: "When considering a political staffer for a role, remember that you are not just hiring a partisan individual but a skilled professional well-versed in government operations, regulatory processes, and parliamentary procedures."

"These unsung heroes bring a wealth of knowledge on collaboration, brand loyalty, and the inner workings of governance," wrote Lugli. "To every staffer I've had the privilege to work alongside, thank you for your tireless efforts and for being the driving force behind positive change. You have been my greatest teachers."

Aside from Guy Gallant, also so far confirmed in Petitpas Taylor's office as Treasury Board president is **Mikaela Harrison**, who has followed the minister to continue as director of communications.

Harrison has been in charge of communications for Petitpas Taylor, previously as veterans affairs and associate defence minister, since last September. Before then, Harrison was a senior communications adviser to now-Finance Minister **Dominic LeBlanc** as then-minister for infrastructure and intergovernmental affairs.

A staffer on the Hill since the spring of 2019, Harrison is also a former press secretary to then-families, children, and social development minister **Ahmed Hussen**; an ex-legislative assistant to LeBlanc during his time as then-Privy Council president and intergovernmental affairs minister; and a special assistant for communications and issues management to LeBlanc as then-minister for intergovernmental and northern affairs and internal trade. (LeBlanc has held many different titles under the Trudeau government, with his current one mercifully the most succinct yet.)

Stay tuned to **Hill Climbers** for further updates on Petitpas Taylor's team post-shuffle, as well as for updates on the other offices affected by the Dec. 20 shake-up to the front bench, which affected 11 existing teams.

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*The Hill Times*

# Books & Big Ideas

## Are we fascist yet?

Ken McGoogan's *Shadows of Tyranny* is a calm work born of panic, written before Trump was re-elected. If you've ever wondered how you would have behaved in the late 1930s when the world pitched toward authoritarianism, this book is an almanac of character sketches of people who saw it coming and tried to stop it, or took up arms to try to end it.

BY CHRISTOPHER DORNAN

You are familiar with the meme: "Ever wondered what you would have done during the rise of fascism? You're doing it right now."

An ascendant right rejects the very idea, and with prejudice. To them, this is typical of leftist hysteria, always resorting to the most extreme accusations: Racist. Homophobic. Fascist.

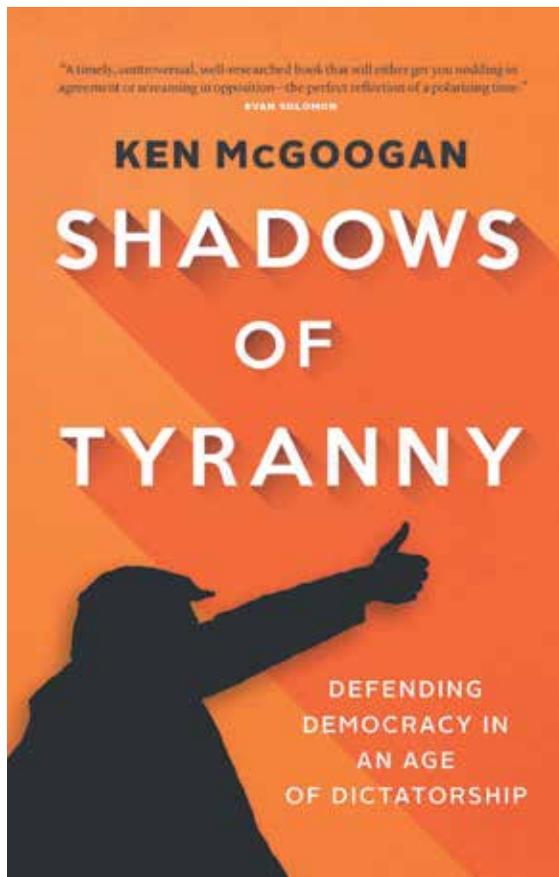
From Donald Trump and Elon Musk to Pierre Poilievre and Stephen Harper, the people on the ascendant right at this moment in history do not see themselves as fascists, and they're getting tired of the comparison. They see themselves as the necessary re-architects of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The old order didn't work. That is why it is being replaced. So, everything it valued should be called into question, made to answer for itself, and either rejected or re-engineered.

This applies especially to the infrastructure of civic institutions the old order insisted were off-limits. The Bank of Canada. Regulatory agencies. The Supreme Court. The CBC. The Canada Pension Plan. For the ascendant right, it's the infrastructure they're after. The more sacred the cow, the sharper the knives.

Does this make them fascist?

Ken McGoogan's *Shadows of Tyranny* is a calm work born of panic. Subtitled *Defending Democracy in an Age of Dictatorship*, it is deeply worried about



In his new book, *Shadows of Tyranny*, left, Ken McGoogan argues we're at a historical juncture, where an ascendant right—personified by U.S. president-elect Donald Trump, right—is fed up with this system of laws, regulations, and institutions and means to rewrite them, writes Christopher Dornan. Book cover courtesy of Douglas & McIntyre and Trump photo courtesy of Commons Wikimedia

a political turn the West may be about to take, and it was written before Trump won re-election and Musk endorsed the German AfD. If you've ever wondered how you would have behaved in the late 1930s, the last time the world pitched toward authoritarianism, *Shadows of Tyranny* is an almanac of character sketches of people who saw it coming and tried to stop it, or took up arms to try to end it.

The book begins with former British prime minister Winston Churchill, and ends by asking, "Where is our Churchill?"

In 1929, a decade before Adolf Hitler invaded Poland, Churchill was boozing his way across Canada on a speaking tour, and his central message was the peace dividend. After the atrocity of the Great War, he argued, it was unthinkable that the great powers would ever go to war again, and to make sure that never happened, they should all disarm. No more dreadnoughts.

By 1933, four years later, he was warning against German militarism and clamouring for British rearmament. So, Churchill got it wrong at first, was denounced as a war monger when he got it right, and in the end turned out to be the war monger the free world needed.

McGoogan is a splendid storyteller, the author of 16 previous books on subjects ranging from the Highland clearances to the history of Arctic exploration. What these books have in common is that they tell stories about strength of character in the face of hardship and hopelessness. This is his first political book. The stories he tells here keep the pages turning.

There are portraits of novelists and war correspondents, resistance fighters and underground agitators. People who stood up to tyranny. Some of them are famous even today: George Orwell, André Malraux, Norman Bethune, and we need to be reminded of why.

Matthew Halton is here, the CBC radio correspondent who landed with the first wave of troops at Juno Beach on D-Day. And Farley Mowat, who fought in Sicily in a brutal campaign and went on to become one of Canada's most beloved authors.

Others died in extermination camps and Gestapo prisons, and McGoogan reminds us of their stories, too. One of the chapters—trigger warning—is titled "A Young Mother Survives Torture."

Still, it's only half the book we need. We know why young volunteers parachuted into occupied

France with Sten guns and plans to blow up railway bridges. We need to know why people chose the other side, the side that was so plainly on the wrong side of history and morality.

What made a 20-year-old Spaniard take up a rifle for Franco? Who would join a political party's private army and carry out something like Kristallnacht? Who informs on their neighbour to an occupying military or compliant police? What type of person tortures a young mother?

We tell ourselves that democracy is the thing worth dying for because democracy is the thing that keeps the autocrats at bay. But when the free world went to war with Nazi Germany in the name of democracy, Great Britain was a colonial empire run by autocrats. The United States, the "arsenal of democracy," was a virulently racist society that disenfranchised its citizens of colour. In France, women didn't have the right to vote—it was something promised to them over the radio by Charles de Gaulle, four years into Nazi occupation and six weeks before D-Day.

Was that democracy? It wasn't even human decency.

And today? It's difficult to defend America as a democracy when its voting regimes are so

gerrymandered and beholden to the massive expenditures of money that buy influence and outcomes. The type of money only autocrats have.

Democracy no longer works if we, the people, no longer believe in it. If we begin to see politics as a false and manipulative regime, if our tiny expressions of preference at the ballot are absorbed by a political structure that has other ideas, why bother voting?

All this works for the autocrats who only need a veneer of democracy to provide the mandate for the exercise of power.

In a free society, the thing that prevents autocracy is not the ballot, at least not all by itself. It is the system of laws, regulations, institutions, and precedents designed to prevent authoritarianism, and that up until now has been doing a pretty good job.

McGoogan argues that we stand today at a historical juncture, where an ascendant right has had enough of this system of laws, regulations, institutions and precedents, and means to rewrite it.

If the non-Poilievre parties were all sufficiently frightened of what's about to happen to Canada—if they genuinely believed we are pitching over into authoritarianism—then they might put their differences aside and work together, as though on a war footing. The way Churchill ran a cross-party War Ministry from 1940 until the defeat of Nazi Germany. The way the otherwise splintered French centre-left parties coalesced this past summer to prevent Marine Le Pen's *Rassemblement national* from forming a government.

But the non-Poilievre parties are not sufficiently convinced that the threat amounts to authoritarianism. They can't put their differences aside, they won't work together, and it probably wouldn't make much difference if they did. Power is coming to the Poilievre Conservatives. They will be elected months—possibly weeks—into Donald Trump's second coming to the White House.

Poilievre knows it. Justin Trudeau knows it. Trump doesn't seem to care, one way or another.

He said so at his press conference. A reporter opened a question by pointing out that Conservative leader Poilievre rejected the very idea of Canada joining the United States. Trump shrugged. "Maybe he won't win, but maybe he will. I don't care."

***Shadows of Tyranny: Defending Democracy in an Age of Dictatorship*, by Ken McGoogan, Douglas & McIntyre, 308 pp.**

Christopher Dornan is the co-editor of the upcoming volume *The Canadian Federal Election of 2025* (McGill-Queen's University Press) and eight previous books in this series, in which a roster of academics and journalists dissect the campaigns through which each successive Canadian government has come to power.

The Hill Times



# Parliamentary Calendar

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

## Tam to talk about (mis)information on Jan. 21 in Toronto



Canada's Chief Public Health Officer Dr. Theresa Tam will take part in a panel discussion on "How healthy is Canada's information environment? Action in the face of misinformation" hosted by the Canadian Club of Toronto. Tuesday, Jan. 21, at 11:30 a.m. ET at the Fairmont Royal York, Toronto. *The Hill Times* by Andrew Meade

### MONDAY, JAN. 20

**Parliament Prorogued**—Parliament has been prorogued until Monday, March 24.

**U.S. Presidential Inauguration**—Donald Trump will be sworn in as the 47th president of the United States on Monday, Jan. 20, at the U.S. Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. Industry Minister François-Philippe Champagne and Trade Minister Mary Ng will attend the ceremony on behalf of Canada

### MONDAY, JAN. 20—TUESDAY, JAN. 21

**Prime Minister to Host Cabinet Retreat**—Prime Minister Justin Trudeau will hold a cabinet retreat focused on defending Canadian interests and strengthening Canada-U.S. relations. Monday, Jan. 20, to Tuesday, Jan. 21, in the Outaouais region, Que. Details: [pm.gc.ca](http://pm.gc.ca).

### MONDAY, JAN. 20—FRIDAY, JAN. 24

**World Economic Forum**—The annual meeting of World Economic Forum will take place in Davos-Klosters, Switzerland, from Monday, Jan. 20 to Friday, Jan. 24. This year's theme is "Collaboration for the Intelligent Age." Details: [weforum.org](http://weforum.org).

### TUESDAY, JAN. 21

**Dr. Tam to Take Part in Panel**—Canada's Chief Public Health Officer Dr. Theresa Tam will take part in a panel discussion on "How healthy is Canada's information environment? Action in the face of misinformation" hosted by the Canadian Club of Toronto. Tuesday, Jan. 21, at 11:30 a.m. ET at the Fairmont Royal York, Toronto. Details: [canadianclub.org](http://canadianclub.org).

**Christia Book Launch**—The Bill Graham Centre for Contemporary International History hosts the launch of Catherine Tsalikis' new book, *Christia*, tracing Liberal MP Christia Freeland's journey from Peace River, Alta., to the halls of Parliament Hill. Tuesday, Jan. 21, at 4 p.m. ET both online and in person at the Campbell Conference Facility, Munk School, 1 Devonshire Pl., Toronto. Details: [billgrahamcentre.utoronto.ca](http://billgrahamcentre.utoronto.ca).

**South African Envoy to Deliver Remarks**—Carleton University pres-

ents the third event of the Ambassadors Speaker Series featuring the High Commissioner of South Africa Rieaz Shaik on the topic: "Quo Vadis South Africa? The 'Formestic' Imperative." Tuesday, Jan. 21, at 5:30 p.m. ET at The Westin Hotel, 11 Colonel By Dr. Details: [events.carleton.ca](http://events.carleton.ca).

### WEDNESDAY, JAN. 22

**Hybrid Event: 'The Quest for Medicare in Canada'**—The Bill Graham Centre for Contemporary International History hosts the hybrid launch of the new book, *Tommy Douglas and the Quest for Medicare in Canada*, by Gregory P. Marchildon. Wednesday, Jan. 22, at 4 p.m. ET via Zoom and in person at the Munk School's Boardroom and Library, 315 Bloor St. West, Toronto. Details: [billgrahamcentre.utoronto.ca](http://billgrahamcentre.utoronto.ca).

**Fireside Chat with Carol Off**—World Press Freedom Canada is hosting a fireside chat with CBC journalist and author Carol Off about her new book, *At a Loss for Words: Conversation in an Age of Rage*. Join us for a discussion and Q&A about one of the most important press freedom issues today. Wednesday, Jan. 22, 5:30-7:30 p.m. ET at the Rideau Club, 99 Bank St., 15th Floor. To register, visit [worldpress-freedomcanada.ca](http://worldpress-freedomcanada.ca).

**Panel: 'Big Stories of 2025 that will Shape Canada'**—The Empire Club hosts a panel discussion, "The Journalists' Forecast: Big Stories of 2025 that will Shape Canada" featuring. Participants include Robert Benzie, *The Toronto Star's* Queen's Park bureau chief; Adrienne Batra, editor-in-chief, *Toronto Sun*; and Marieke Walsh, senior political reporter in Ottawa for *The Globe and Mail*. Wednesday, Jan. 22, at 5:30 p.m. ET at Simpson Tower, 8th Floor, 401 Bay St., Toronto. Details: [empireclubofcanada.com](http://empireclubofcanada.com).

**Book Launch: 'Burnt by Democracy'**—The Centre for Urban Youth Research hosts the launch of Carleton University professor Jacqueline Kennelly's new book, *Burnt by Democracy: Youth, Inequality, and the Erosion of Civic Life*, which traces the political ascendance of neoliberalism and its effects on youth living in five liberal democracies: Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Wednesday, Jan. 22,

at 7 p.m. ET at Irene's Pub, 885 Bank St. Details via Eventbrite.

**Webinar: 'Mackenzie King and His Ruins'**—Heritage Ottawa hosts a webinar, "The Abbot of Kingsmere: Mackenzie King and His Ruins." Architectural historian and Carleton University professor Peter Coffman explores the long imaginative tradition in which former prime minister William Lyon Mackenzie King's ruins are situated, how that tradition came to Canada, and the seminal moments which intersected with King's life. Wednesday, Jan. 22, at 7 p.m. ET happening online: [heritageottawa.org](http://heritageottawa.org).

### THURSDAY, JAN. 23

**Deadline to Join Liberal Leadership Race**—Today is the last day for contestants to declare their participation in the race to replace Justin Trudeau as leader of the Liberal Party of Canada. The entrance fee is \$350,000. Details: [lpc.ca/2025leadership](http://lpc.ca/2025leadership).

**Webinar on Eco-colonialism**—The Macdonald-Laurier Institute hosts a webinar on "Eco-colonialism and Indigenous involvement in the natural resource sector" featuring a panel of experts who will examine, from an Indigenous perspective, the tactics and impacts of environmentalists' intervention on resource initiatives. Thursday, Jan. 23, at 1 p.m. ET happening online. Details via Eventbrite.

**The Dance for Her**—Members of Ottawa's Parliamentary and business community are invited to a night in support of ovarian cancer research featuring an open bar, a DJ, and dancing. Thursday, Jan. 23, at 7:30 p.m. ET at the Metropolitan Brasserie, 700 Sussex Dr. Details via Eventbrite.

### MONDAY, JAN. 27

**Panel with Joe Clark, Lloyd Axworthy, and Louise Fréchette**—The Canadian International Council hosts a discussion, "Making Canada Count in an Increasingly Difficult World," featuring former prime minister Joe Clark, former Liberal cabinet minister Lloyd Axworthy, and former Canadian public servant, ambassador and deputy UN secretary-general Louise Fréchette. Monday, Jan. 27, at 5:30 p.m. ET at KPMG, 150 Elgin St., Suite 1800. Details: [thecic.org](http://thecic.org).

### WEDNESDAY, JAN. 29—THURSDAY, JAN. 30

**Crown Corporate Governance Conference**—Ethics Commissioner Konrad von Finckenstein is among the speakers at a two-day conference on "Crown Corporate Governance" hosted by the Canadian Institute. Wednesday, Jan. 29 to Thursday, Jan. 30 at the Hilton Garden Inn, downtown Ottawa. Details: [canadianinstitute.com](http://canadianinstitute.com).

### THURSDAY, JAN. 30

**Mayor Sutcliffe to Deliver Remarks**—The Canadian Club of Ottawa hosts a lunch event featuring Ottawa Mayor Mark Sutcliffe who will speak on "Innovation in Infrastructure: Building More, More Sustainably," exploring the challenges and opportunities facing infrastructure projects in Canada's national capital. Thursday, Jan. 30, at 12 p.m. ET at the Château Laurier, 1 Rideau St. Details: [canadianclubottawa.ca](http://canadianclubottawa.ca).

### FRIDAY, JAN. 31

**Foreign Interference Commission Reports**—The Foreign Interference Commission's final report has been granted an extension, and will be released no later than Friday, Jan. 31. Details: [foreigninterferencecommission.ca](http://foreigninterferencecommission.ca).

### SATURDAY, FEB. 1

**Senator Hartling's Retirement**—Today is New Brunswick ISG Senator Nancy Hartling's 75th birthday, which means her mandatory retirement from the Senate.

### SUNDAY, FEB. 2

**Senator Dagenais' Retirement**—Today is Quebec CSG Senator Jean-Guy Dagenais' 75th birthday, which means his mandatory retirement from the Senate.

### TUESDAY, FEB. 4

**Chief of Defence Staff to Deliver Remarks**—Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Jennie Carignan will join NORAD's deputy commander Lt.-Gen. Blaise Frawley at a bilingual lunch event hosted by the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations. Tuesday, Feb. 4, at 11:30 a.m. ET in Montreal. Details: [corim.qc.ca](http://corim.qc.ca).

**'Affordability of Cancer Care in Canada'**—The Economic Club of Canada hosts an event on World Cancer Day exploring newly published data on the affordability crisis for people with cancer in Canada. Tuesday, Feb. 4, at 11:45 a.m. ET in Toronto. Details: [economicclub.ca](http://economicclub.ca).

**Deputy Trade Minister Morrison to Deliver Remarks**—David Morrison, deputy minister of international trade, will deliver remarks at a lunch event hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Tuesday, Feb. 4, at 12 p.m. ET at 67 Yonge St., Suite 300, Toronto. Details: [cdhowe.org](http://cdhowe.org).

### TUESDAY, FEB. 4—WEDNESDAY, FEB. 5

**National Forum on UNDRIP Act**—The Assembly of First Nations hosts a national forum on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act. Tuesday, Feb. 4, to Wednesday, Feb. 5, at the Westin Bayshore, in Vancouver, B.C. Details: [afn.ca](http://afn.ca).

### WEDNESDAY, FEB. 5

**Canadian Chamber of Commerce CEO to Deliver Remarks**—Candace Laing, president and CEO of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, will deliver remarks at the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce. Wednesday, Feb. 5, at 7:30 a.m. CT, at 2 Lombard Pl., Winnipeg. Details: [business.mbchamber.mb.ca](http://business.mbchamber.mb.ca).

**Stephen Poloz to Deliver Remarks**—Former Bank of Canada governor Stephen Poloz will deliver remarks titled "How do we get Canada's economy back on track?" Stephen Poloz discusses the path forward" at a lunch event hosted by the Canadian Club of Toronto. Wednesday, Feb. 5, at 11:45 a.m. ET at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel, Toronto. Details: [canadianclub.org](http://canadianclub.org).

**Adam Chapnick to Discuss His New Book**—The University of Ottawa hosts professor and author Adam

Chapnick who will discuss his new book, *Canada First, Not Canada Alone: The Past, Present, and Future of Canadian Foreign Policy*, along with professor Roland Paris. Wednesday, Feb. 5, at 3:30 p.m. ET at the University of Ottawa, FSS 4004, 120 University Priv. Details: [cips-cepi.ca](http://cips-cepi.ca).

### TUESDAY, FEB. 11

**Food and Beverage Canada's Policy Breakfast**—Food and Beverage Canada hosts its annual policy breakfast to kickoff Canadian Ag Day featuring a panel discussion titled "Boosting Competitiveness and Productivity in Food and Beverage Manufacturing" on this industry's critical needs to thrive, compete, and lead both domestically and globally. Confirmed speakers include former chief trade negotiator Steve Verheul, and Canadian Chamber of Commerce president and CEO Candace Laing. Full agenda to follow. Tuesday, Feb. 11, at 7:30 a.m. ET at the Rogers Centre Ottawa, 55 Colonel By Dr. Contact [admin@fbc-abc.com](mailto:admin@fbc-abc.com).

**Bloc Leader Blanchet to Deliver Remarks**—Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet will deliver remarks in French on "Quebec at a time of tariff walls" at a lunch event hosted by the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations. Tuesday, Feb. 11, at 11:30 a.m. ET at Le Westin Montréal, 270 rue Saint-Antoine O., Montreal. Details: [corim.qc.ca](http://corim.qc.ca).

**Lunch: Responding to Impending Trade Tariffs**—The C.D. Howe Institute hosts a lunch on "How Can Canada Respond to Impending Trade Tariffs" featuring Canada's former chief trade negotiator Steve Verheul, now principal at GT & Co. Tuesday, Feb. 11, at 12 p.m. ET at 67 Yonge St., Suite 300, Toronto. Details: [cdhowe.org](http://cdhowe.org).

### WEDNESDAY, FEB. 12

**Canada's Premiers to Washington, D.C.**—Ontario Premier Doug Ford, as chair of the Council of the Federation, will lead a joint mission of Canada's premiers to Washington, D.C. to meet with key members of the new White House administration, Congress, and business leaders. Details: [canadaspremiers.ca](http://canadaspremiers.ca).

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