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THE HILL TIMES

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NEWS

Despite challenging first two years, Canada's special rep on Islamophobia is undaunted

BY LAURA RYCKEWAERT

A lot has changed—globally and domestically—in the two years since Amira Elghawaby stepped into the role of special representative on combatting Islamophobia, and despite the rising challenge she's faced, she says she remains "very hopeful" about the effect her office is having.

Elghawaby's team recently released the *Canadian Guide to Understanding and Combatting Islamophobia: For a more inclusive Canada*, which defines Islamophobia, explores its impacts, wades through myths and facts about Islam, and, among other things, offers strategies to prevent and combat such hate.

Speaking to *The Hill Times* in her office in Gatineau, Que., on March 6, Elghawaby said she's particularly proud of its section on solidarity and the reminder it offers Canadians that "there's so much more that we have in common than that divides us."

"This is what all this work is about: it's making sure that those who perhaps don't know better, or who are deliberately bad actors, that they don't get to set the agenda for what it means to live in Canada; that we as Canadians do have shared values that we are going to protect and defend for the prosperity of all of us ... and this [guide] is really just one more resource in that work," she said.

Elghawaby is now halfway through her four-year mandate.

Announced as the federal government's new special representative in late January 2023, she marked her first day in office a few weeks later on Feb. 21. Prior to her appointment Elghawaby had spent years working in jour-

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Grits' grassroots hope Carney keeps 'eyes and ears open' for party renewal

Despite renewed hope among Liberal staffers and volunteers, any plans for structural party change will remain secondary priorities until after the next election, says Bluesky Strategy Group's Angelo Bakoulas.

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The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

NEWS

Trudeau failed to live up to initial foreign policy promise, says past foreign minister Axworthy

BY NEIL MOSS

Coming to power with the expectation of boosting Canada's international role, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau will leave his post having failed to live up to those hopes, say foreign policy observers.

After forming government in 2015, Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) proclaimed that Canada was "back" on the world stage, but

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NEWS

'No money, no fanfare': questions loom over scope of belated Africa strategy

BY NEIL MOSS

The long-delayed strategy for Canada's engagement with Africa has been released, but some are questioning how comprehensive the plan is.

The new strategy was released on March 6 with little fanfare. It was unveiled in Toronto by Liberal MP Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Ont.), parliamentary secretary to Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly (Ahuntsic-Cartierville, Que.), instead of any cabinet ministers.

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By Christina Leadlay

Heard on the Hill

‘Nothing is more important than health’: Bloc MP Villemure has cancer



Bloc Québécois MP René Villemure announced on March 4 that he is battling cancer. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Bloc Québécois MP René Villemure has cancer. The rookie MP shared the news in a five-part post in French on X on March 4, opening the statement with, “Nothing is more important than health.” Describing this as an unexpected “detour” on his life’s path, Villemure said he is focused on eradicating the unspecified cancer from his body, and on coming back stronger. The MP noted he is surrounded by an “extraordinary” medical team, and is thankful for the support he’s received from his family, friends, and colleagues.

“As a consequence, I will be absent from the public sphere for a few weeks, and following the necessary treatments for a complete recovery,” he wrote, reassuring his Trois-Rivières, Que., constituents that he will continue to represent them, and he still intends to run in the upcoming federal election. Villemure is now the fourth MP who’s shared their recent cancer diagnosis, joining Liberal MP **Alexandra Mendès** and Conservative MPs **Jacques Gourde** and **Luc Berthold**. They are all from Quebec.

Minister Ien says ‘it’s time to move on’

Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth **Marci Ien** will not run in the next federal election. The two-term MP for Toronto Centre, Ont., who was first elected in a 2020 byelection, announced her decision in a heartfelt video on X on March 7. “Endings are never easy, but gratitude makes them beautiful,” is how Ien, a former journalist, led the post featuring the two minute-long video. “The time has come where I have decided that I will not run in the next election. It’s a difficult decision to make,” Ien told viewers. Verging on emotion, she opened by thanking Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** “for seeing in me what I didn’t see in myself, and for bestowing on me the opportunity to sit in your cabinet.” She then thanked her constituents, saying, “it’s never going to be goodbye because I love you far too much.” “It’s time to move on, and I am not sure what the next chapter will be,” said Ien.



Women and Gender Equality Minister Marci Ien announced on March 7 she will not seek re-election. Screenshots courtesy of X

Grit MP Wayne Long is back on the ballot in N.B.

Liberal MP **Wayne Long** followed through on his promise to reconsider standing down if **Mark Carney** were to become his party’s new leader. “Well it looks like I’m back! Carney and Long 2025,” he posted with a smiley face emoji on Facebook on March 9, followed up a few hours later with another post: “I’m pumped to offer myself to the riding of Saint John-Kennebecasis. Let’s go!” referring to the new name of his current New Brunswick riding of Saint John-Rothesay come election time. Last summer, Long had said he would not re-offer, but in January announced his openness to a change of heart provided Carney became leader—which the former banker did on March 9 by a wide margin.

Freeland to be honoured for her foreign policy work



Liberal MP Chrystia Freeland at the party’s leadership election on March 9. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

Former cabinet minister and Liberal MP **Chrystia Freeland** is being honoured for her contributions to foreign policy. Just days after losing her bid for the Liberal leadership, Freeland will receive the Foreign Policy Association’s eponymous medal at a March 12 dinner at The Harvard Club in New York City. The association is recognizing the former foreign minister “for her defence of democracy and the rules-based international order.”

Senate now filled until May

The “no vacancy” sign has been figuratively lit outside the Senate chamber as of March 7 when Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau**—as part of a spree of appointments before his term wraps up—announced five new Senators. Filling three seats for Ontario are former provincial Liberal cabinet minister **Sandra Pupatello**, The King’s Trust Canada CEO **Farah**

Mohamed, and Kids Help Phone CEO **Katherine Hay**; former Nova Scotia cabinet minister **Tony Ince** will represent his home province; and former Moncton mayor **Dawn Arnold** is repping New Brunswick. Barring any early departures, the Senate’s 105 seats will remain occupied until May 14, when Conservative Senator **Donald Plett** is scheduled to retire on his 75th birthday.

Bloc vows to shore up local media during election

As Canadians actively try to support domestic companies at this time of surging nationalism, one federal political party has announced it will support local media during the next election campaign. In a March 7 press release, the Bloc Québécois announced it will boost its spending on all forms of journalism based in Quebec.

“As the next federal election campaign quickly approaches, the Bloc Québécois reaffirms its strong and unequivocal engagement with the Quebec media. Therefore, for each dollar invested on foreign-owned digital platforms, the Bloc Québécois will double this amount to invest in print, online, television and radio media,” the party statement read in French.

Ex-NDP MP Murray Rankin tapped for federal role

Former NDP MP **Murray Rankin** has a new job that brings him back into the federal sphere. Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Minister **Gary Anandasangaree** announced on March 6 that Rankin—who served as British Columbia’s minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation from 2020 to 2024—is now a “ministerial special representative tasked with assessing the impacts of the legacy of the Giant Mine on historical Treaty rights and exploring potential pathways to resolution,” reads the departmental press release.



Former B.C. cabinet minister and ex-NDP MP Murray Rankin. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Rankin said he is “deeply honoured” by the appointment. The trained lawyer will work independently from Anandasangaree’s department, but will report directly to the minister. Anandasangaree and Rankin worked together during their overlapping ministerial terms. Rankin represented Victoria, B.C., in the House of Commons from 2012 until 2019 when he chose not to run again. He was elected as a provincial MLA in 2020, but chose not to reoffer in last June’s election.

McGuinty re-announces funds for Hill’s new police team

The Ottawa Police Service has launched the first of its new team focused on keeping the peace beneath the Peace Tower. At the Ottawa Police headquarters on March 7, Public Safety Minister **David McGuinty** highlighted \$50-million over five years for the Ottawa police as it sets up a dedicated policing presence around the Parliamentary Precinct. This funding was first announced in Budget 2024. McGuinty—himself a longtime Ottawa-area MP—was joined by Ottawa Mayor **Mark Sutcliffe** and Police Chief **Eric Stubbs**. “Our first team hit the ground in the fall, and is already working hand-in-hand with our parliamen-

tary partners. The response has been overwhelmingly positive,” said Stubbs in a press release. At the Feb. 24 meeting of the city’s police board, Stubbs said that it will take “two or three years to fully staff the team,” which will include 40 sworn officers and nine civilians, as reported by CTV News. In addition to the Hill, the Parliamentary Precinct spans the Ottawa River south to Queen Street, from the Supreme Court eastward to the Senate of Canada building by the Rideau Canal—excluding the National War Memorial.
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The Hill Times

Conservatives left searching for a message as Carney demonstrates his political potential

The Tories' advantage has blown up in their faces as Canadians have begun to take another look at their political options.

Les Whittington

Need to Know



OTTAWA—How out of it are Pierre Poilievre and the Conservatives?

Reeling from the implosion of their sure-thing approach to winning the upcoming election, they have been flying off in every direction in an effort to besmirch newly elected Liberal leader and prime minister-designate Mark Carney.

But accusing him of being a Europeanist, as the Conservatives do in the anti-Carney ad that began running everywhere even before the Liberal leadership race was in its final week, demonstrates how wide off the mark Poilievre's party is at this historic moment for Canada.

With United States President Donald Trump obsessed with Canada, and his apparent quest to try to destroy his northern neighbour's economy—not to mention its independence—any entrée into Europe has to be seen as an advantage, not a black mark.

For Canadians, it will be crucial to leverage our ties to the United Kingdom and the European Union to improve economic prospects and, more importantly, make common cause as our Atlantic neighbours struggle to build up the West's military and security capabilities, possibly without U.S. backing. So being a globalist—or someone with ties to Europe and experience dealing with EU and U.K. leaders—is an important asset for Canada.

As Bank of Canada governor, Carney is widely known to have helped our country keep its economy afloat during the 2008-09 world economic meltdown. As importantly, he quarterbacked the subsequent G20-organized global campaign to curb the outrageous financial practices that caused the international banking collapse. And, as the head of the Bank of England, Carney was in the middle of the U.K.'s most consequential economic drama in half a century as it separated from the EU's common market.

But Poilievre, like Trump, has exploited the anti-globalist mentality that has been a characteristic of the populist upsurge of recent years. Conspiracy theories about the annual idea-sharing gathering of corporate executives and global leaders under the World Economic Forum, for instance, gained significant currency in Canada as citizens frustrated and angered by COVID-19 dove down the internet rabbit hole in the early 2020s. Although not repeating the nonsense about the world being forced to live on a

diet of insects, Poilievre jumped on this wave, and helped bring it into the mainstream here. While railing against elites and stigmatizing Canada's central bankers, he met with the right-wing-led truckers who brought their conspiracy mentality to Ottawa in 2022 in a Trump-attuned revolt against vaccine mandates and Trudeau's progressive, environmentally active government.

With Carney now in the ascendancy after a decisive Liberal leadership victory, Poilievre is continuing to roll out this simplistic anti-globalist line, saying without foundation on March 10 that Carney will favour policies that have been "enriching the global elite at the expense of the working class." He also asserts that Carney's personal assets provide conflicts of interest that will make the new Liberal leader vulnerable to Trump, although there's no evidence whatsoever that Carney—whose assets will now go into a blind trust—would be inclined to let his own interests interfere with Canada's national goals.

This anti-elitist antagonism helped Poilievre build a lasting, double-digit lead over the Liberals in the polls since 2022. But that advantage has blown up in the Conservatives' faces as Canadians—unburdened of their dislike of Trudeau—have begun to take another look at their political options. Up against an outright, potentially bankrupting attack from Trump, it hasn't gone unnoticed that having a prime minister with economic skills, global awareness, and experience working with world leaders at the highest level on make-or-break issues might not be such a bad idea.

Along the same lines, one has to wonder about the Conservatives' continuing use of the slogan "Carbon Tax Carney" to denigrate Poilievre's new opponent. After nearly two decades of trying without success to get the country—except Quebecers—to understand the benefits of a consumer carbon tax (with equivalent public investment or individual rebates), the Liberals have given up. Under Carney, the consumer carbon levy will be gone. Even if that were not the case, it's not at all clear today that the Liberals' effort to use the dynamics of the market to power Canada's fight against global warming ranks very high in the public's concerns after four months of Trump's relentless economic terrorism.

Using the phrase "Trudeau-Carney Liberals," Poilievre is trying to tie the new Liberal leader to his predecessor even though Carney is a consummate political outsider who has made it clear that a government headed by him would pursue a more centrist, business-friendly agenda on economic, fiscal, and environmental policies than Trudeau. An election is likely in late April, and the polls have already shown that Canadians appear willing—at the very least—to give Carney a chance to prove he can draw on his economic insights to shore up Canadians' prosperity and handle the historic crisis created by the U.S.

Les Whittington is a regular columnist for The Hill Times.

The Hill Times

Mid Mark Carney may not meet the moment

The new Liberal leader is a component of the technocratic elite who got us into this mess of inequality.

Erica Ifill

Bad+Bitchy



CALGARY—The Liberals have rallied around another cult of personality: Mark Carney.

On March 9, Carney became Liberal leader and the unelected prime minister-designate with 85.9 per cent of the vote. He's yet another white man who flew above the normal barriers to political leadership that women and BIPOC would've had to slog through. As usual, white men are supported by an establishment that automatically places them at the top of a rigid hierarchy of power. Sucks for Chrystia Freeland, who only garnered 7.3 per cent of the vote.

I'm not impressed with Carney. I find him mid.

We are in a cost-of-living crisis, one that threatens to wipe out the miniscule wealth of younger, middle- and working-class Canadians. While he's better than Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre because he's not a raging red-pill bro, as exemplified by Poilievre's unforgettable interview with far-right Jordan Peterson. (Poilievre ran to Peterson, Carney hooked up with Jon Stewart. Choose your fighter.) However, Carney—like Poilievre—champions the same neoliberal economics that generationally increased the income inequality that is crushing a lot of Canadians.

Carney is a technocrat. He is a former Goldman Sachs investment banker, having been trained and promoted for a small group of market-makers who invest clients' wealth portfolio into companies that the stock market has traditionally rewarded for cutting costs—i.e. laying off workers.

Is this the answer to Canada's short- and long-term economic divisions? Me thinks not.

Carney is a component of the technocratic elite who got us into this mess of inequality, experienced concurrently with housing, technology, and food inflation by encouraging large businesses to coagulate for greater power in international markets, while working people suffer the effects of rising costs and declining quality. In addition, many of them used government subsidies to do so. He will not champion change, but rather his policies will represent a sneaky austerity used to ostensibly steady the economy. This is just more of the same. How can you be a steady hand while being the vassal of change? Change is, by definition, unpredictable by nature. But he'll probably do well with this hogwash, since Canadians want change but don't want to risk anything to achieve it.

Let's take an example of how Carney's background as a central and investment banker will disproportionately negatively impact wealth inequality, especially for those who don't own assets, like homes. In his acceptance speech, Carney promised that he would "stop the hike in the capital gains tax because we think builders should be incentivized for taking risks and rewarded when they succeed." This is more neoliberal bullshit that has not changed in 30 years, but somehow this is the font of life in which our economic troubles will be purified. As I wrote in this paper previously: "This shift in capital gains policy will mainly affect higher-income people who have concentrated wealth." I added: "This tax change should bring down wealth inequality to have the wealthier pay more in taxes." There goes that.

Where is the proof that dropping the capital gains tax will incentivize builders to construct more housing? As I've also written previously, this approach does not lead to affordable housing for low-income people, does nothing for homelessness, and does not necessarily reduce the cost of market housing. It does, however, incentivize the financial capitalization of housing, i.e., increasing returns of housing investments. As calculated by Canadians for Tax Fairness, "From 2002 to 2022, the share of total profits collected by the finance, insurance, and real estate (FIRE) sectors, sectors which earn the vast majority of their profits through financial means, increased from 29.6% to 35.3%." Perhaps the use of housing as financial vehicles of investment firms—like Brookfield Asset Management, on which Carney served as chair until recently—are decisive elements of the housing crisis.

What happened to Carney's championing of climate crisis solutions? Not only has he promised to scrap the carbon tax, he also hasn't provided logical substitutes. In a campaign press release, he proposed incentives "for making greener choices, such as purchasing an energy efficient appliance, electric vehicle, or improved home insulation." We've done that since the days of Stephen Harper and nothing has changed. In fact, things have gotten worse. As the former United Nations special envoy on climate action and finance, Carney promoted net-zero emissions, and claimed that "what's happened thus far is not good enough. We need to scale up quite dramatically the ambition within the multilateral development banks and bilateral donors." Which version of Carney will we see on this issue: the greenwashing one, or the one with platitudinous, superficial, tangential "solutions" for a perilous climate?

Carney should be thankful for United States President Donald Trump's anti-Canadian policies. Without those, the incoming PM might not have survived scrutiny of his elite status, and wouldn't have been able to wrap himself in the flag to distract Canadians from his true values: preferential treatment of private equity over middle- and working-classes. *Vive le Canada!*

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

The Hill Times

COMMENT

Any Arctic strategy must ensure Canadian control

Building a canal through the lakes on the southern Boothia Peninsula would ensure prosperity and sovereignty in our North.

Andrew Caddell

With All Due Respect



KAMOURASKA, QUE.—“War is diplomacy by other means,” said Prussian military theorist Carl von Clausewitz. This saying is more pertinent with each passing day. The wars in Ukraine and Palestine are examples of conflicts being resolved by force, not negotiations. And now, Canadians are faced with United States President Donald Trump’s threats

to our sovereignty, notably in the Arctic.

Our Arctic contains untold stores of minerals, oil, and gas, and holds a coveted shortcut across the top of the world: the Northwest Passage. But while we claim sovereignty over the Arctic based on agreements signed with the British in the 19th century, some countries have never recognized the Arctic waters as Canadian.

Our so-called “closest ally,” the U.S., has always refused to acknowledge that the several routes of the Northwest Passage are Canadian, arguing they are international waters. In 1969, the 100-metre-long American oil tanker Manhattan attempted to cross the Passage without Canadian permission or support. However, it eventually requested permission and was accompanied by the Coast Guard icebreaker John A. Macdonald, which freed the ship from the ice more than a dozen times.

Canada classifies the Northwest Passage and the Arctic archipelago as “internal waters,”

according to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, but the U.S. has never ratified the agreement. Meanwhile, traffic is bound to increase exponentially with global warming: 18 large ships passed through the Passage in 2024.

In the Feb. 26 issue of *The Hill Times*, Ernie Regehr promoted a Team Canada approach to the Arctic, “an integrated whole-of-government operation that mobilizes all of the 5Ds [diplomacy, defence, development, democracy, and disarmament] on which security is ultimately built.”

While I endorse Regehr’s dedication to a peaceful world, I think we need to be realists, and acknowledge the Arctic is a prize sought by Russia, China, and the Trump-led U.S. We must also recognize our current military presence in the North must be bolstered enormously to defend our territory.

In a recent column, I warned of Trump’s desire to carve up the world into “spheres of influence,” a theory now gaining credence. In his recent speech to Congress,

he delivered a chilling message to Greenland: “We will get it, one way or another.” While his desire to annex Canada must be taken as real, it may be cover to carve up the North with the Russians and Chinese.

In addition to reducing the time for ships to travel around the world, there is the obvious strategic value of the North. However, in the Trudeau government’s 2024 defence policy update *Our North, Strong and Free*, there is a brief section on the Arctic, promising to “support Canadian Armed Forces operations and contribute towards the needs of territorial governments, Indigenous peoples, and Northern communities.” There is nothing on a defence buildup in the region.

Similarly, in the 2022 *Arctic and Northern Policy Framework*, the priorities are primarily domestic: “create jobs, foster innovation and grow Arctic and northern economies.” Given our past myopia, we must now invest in a genuine vision of northern sovereignty.

One of Trump’s current obsessions is “taking back” the Panama Canal. But the canal has its flaws: it is aging, and a long slog to Asia. Meanwhile, the Northwest Passage offers a coveted shortcut between Asia, America, and Europe, albeit with one downside: its northern route remains icebound most of the year.

By contrast, the warmer southern route hugging Canada’s mainland is open longer, and is more than 500 kilometres south. With Canadian expertise and close collaboration with the people of Nunavut, there is an opportunity to build a canal through the lakes on the southern Boothia Peninsula. This would allow ships to travel below Baffin Island, across the peninsula to Taloyoak, and on to Cambridge Bay, which would become the keystone of northern defence, as always intended.

This new canal would initially be open to shipping at least half the year. It would control access to the Passage, protect the environment, and “tollgate” foreign ships to pay the cost of construction and maintenance.

It is an expensive project, but it would ensure control, management, prosperity, and sovereignty in our North. That’s something we need to consider when dealing with old adversaries Russia and China, and our new one: the United States of America.

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

The Hill Times

Trumped again

For President Donald Trump to question Canada’s military resolve is an insult to the sacrifices which were made in support of the U.S.

Scott Taylor

Inside Defence



OTTAWA—Last week, I attended the 93rd annual Conference of Defence Associations (CDA) at the landmark Château Laurier Hotel in Ottawa.

Having personally attended three dozen of these events, they are predictably a well-worn routine of senior military brass, politicians, and military academics convincing each other of the importance of national defence in Canada.

Those allied military delegations that attend are like-minded, and the agreed-upon mutual threats are Russia, China, and Islamic extremists in a rotating order. There is always a presentation from a senior-ranking United States general, after which their Canadian counterparts heap praise upon our “closest ally.”

During his first term, U.S. President Donald Trump verbally denounced NATO member states that failed to spend two per cent of their gross domestic product on defence. Trump repeatedly singled out Canada as being a “laggard” in this regard, and he controversially stated that he would not bring America’s military might to defend a NATO member that was not spending their fair share.

As offensive as those remarks may seem, the average attendee at the CDA annual conference welcomed Trump’s threats believing it would help to force Canadian politicians to spend more on the military. That was then.

Things have changed rapidly and dramatically since Trump won re-election last November.

For starters, Trump began his drumbeat rhetoric about annexing Canada into becoming the 51st American state, and repeatedly referred to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau as the “governor.” Trump explained that unlike the Panama Canal, which he intends to seize through military force, he would bring about the annexation of Canada through “economic measures.”

In early February, just days after his inauguration, Trump signed off on 25-per-cent tariffs on all Canadian and Mexican imports. He promptly delayed them, then reimposed them in early March, only to suspend

them again until April 2. While it is off to a topsy-turvy start, the trade war has begun.

On Feb. 28, Trump hosted Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy at the White House. It was supposed to be a prearranged deal to exchange U.S. access to Ukraine’s rare earth minerals for security guarantees to protect Ukraine. However, the photo-op devolved into a public berating of Zelenskyy and his abrupt expulsion from the Oval Office.

Trump subsequently cancelled all U.S. military aid to Ukraine, stopped the provision of military intelligence to the country, and called upon the United Kingdom to do the same.

On March 2, Trudeau joined European leaders and Zelenskyy at a hastily convened meeting in the U.K. to try and find a way to keep Ukraine in the fight against Russia, without the aid of the U.S.

It was against this backdrop of uncertain allegiance among the key NATO allies that the stage was set for some emotional fireworks at this year’s CDA conference. None were forthcoming.

In a room packed with self-professed warriors, the collective agreement was seemingly to avoid mentioning the elephant in the room.

Even when U.S. Gen. Gregory Guillot, the commander of NORAD and U.S. Northern Command, took to the CDA stage,



U.S. President Donald Trump recently cast baseless aspersions on NATO’s reliability, given its history in the wake of 9/11, writes Scott Taylor. Photograph courtesy of Flickr/The White House

the gloves remained in place. Guillot is the very individual who would lead any armed annexation of Canada, and he was politely spared any question which might prove mildly discomforting.

No mention was made of the logistics of such an annexation, and the subsequent absorption of our Forces into the U.S. defence apparatus. Instead, the conference’s threat focus remained that of Russia and China operating in the Arctic.

Even as the CDA conference was still in session, Trump once again publicly cast doubt on his willingness to defend Washington’s NATO allies, saying that he would not do so if they are not paying enough for their own defence.

“It’s common sense, right?” Trump told reporters in the Oval Office. “If they don’t pay, I’m not going to defend them. No, I’m not going to defend them.” This time, however, Trump also cast baseless aspersions on NATO’s reliability as an alliance.

“You know the biggest problem I have with NATO? I really, I

mean, I know the guys very well. They’re friends of mine. But if the United States was in trouble, and we called them, we said, ‘We got a problem, France. We got a problem, couple of others I won’t mention.’ Do you think they’re going to come and protect us? They’re supposed to. I’m not so sure.”

For the record, this is not a hypothetical question. The U.S. was attacked on Sept. 11, 2001, and NATO did collectively come to the defence of our American ally. Canada may not spend two per cent of GDP on defence, but for more than a decade, we punched above our weight in the war in Afghanistan, which was a direct response to the 9/11 terror attack.

For Trump to question Canada’s—or any other NATO member’s—resolve is an insult to the sacrifices which were made in support of the U.S. To threaten to annex us out of existence as a country is unconscionable.

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

The Hill Times

B.C. suit says feds used consultations to justify 'bad-faith' Discovery Island salmon farming ban



The Department of Fisheries and Oceans hasn't issued licences to salmon farms in B.C.'s Discovery Islands since June 2022, but a new civil suit claims it conducted a 'bad-faith' consultation to justify a 'predetermined' outcome. Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Cermaq Canada is alleging former fisheries minister Joyce Murray disregarded the advice of her department and government scientists.

BY STUART BENSON

A British Columbia aquaculture company is suing the federal government over its decision to ban salmon farming near the province's Discovery Islands in early 2023, accusing a former fisheries minister of conducting a "bad-faith" consultation process, and disregarding her own department's recommendations.

On Feb. 18, Cermaq Canada Ltd. filed a civil suit in the B.C. Supreme Court against the federal government and Liberal MP Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, B.C.) over a series of decisions she made during her tenure as fisheries and oceans minister to deny aquaculture licences for salmon farmers operating near the province's Discovery Islands.

In the statement of claim, Cermaq alleges that the decision to deny licences to facilities operating on the Discovery Islands—located between Vancouver Island and B.C.'s mainland—relied on "biased information" that contradicted the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' (DFO) science.

Cermaq's suit alleges that Murray's decision was "irrational ... in excess of [her power]" and "contrary to the DFO's advice." It

claims that Murray "was recklessly indifferent or willfully blind to the fact" that her decisions were "unlawful, [and] made in bad faith," and that she deliberately sought contradictory submissions from outside scientists to create a "justification for her pre-determined outcome."

The evidence provided in the claim is drawn from a previous application for judicial review of the decision, initiated by Cermaq, Mowi Canada West, Greig Seafood, and We Wai Kai and Wei Wai Kum First Nation in 2023. On June 7, 2024, Federal Court Judge Paul Favel dismissed the application, finding Murray's decision "reasonable," and that she had "met the mid-level requirement of the duty to consult" and did not breach the applicants' rights to "procedural fairness."

Murray's final decision to deny the licences was delivered to Cermaq—which operates three facilities on Brent Island, Venture Point, and Raza Island—and all other operators by letter on Feb. 17, 2023. The claim also focuses on the preceding consultation process, which it says was "not fair or transparent."

The consultation process ran from July through December 2022, and was initiated after Murray announced in June 2022—referred to in the claim as the "2022 Decision"—that new licences would not be renewed after their expiration at the end of the month, and would inform the final licensing decision that Murray stated would arrive by January 2023.

In 2019, Energy and Natural Resources Minister Jonathan Wilkinson (North Vancouver, B.C.)—who served as fisheries

minister from July 2018 until Nov. 20, 2019—announced the government's decision to phase out B.C.'s open-net salmon farms, and begin work on a province-wide transition plan. This sparked a separate, and still ongoing consultation process.

The "2022 Decision" followed a ruling by Federal Court Justice Elizabeth Heneghan in April 2022, which overturned a December 2020 call by Murray's predecessor, Bernadette Jordan, to prohibit the reissue of licences after June 2022, and to immediately stop any new transfers of salmon to those sites.

Jordan—who served as fisheries minister from November 2019 until losing her seat in the 2021 federal election—had also initiated a consultation process on the Discovery Islands facilities in September 2020. That same month, the DFO announced the results of the Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat's (CSAS) risk assessment, which concluded that the risk of pathogens to migrating sockeye salmon was "minimal." The risk assessments were completed in response to the recommendations of the Cohen Commission of Inquiry into the Decline of Sockeye Salmon in the Fraser River.

Cermaq claims that in the wake of the 2022 Heneghan ruling—and coupled with statements made by Jordan in January 2020 that it would take five years to develop a transition plan—it had expected its licences to be renewed for Discovery Island, and that it could move forward with its planned operations and transfers of salmon to the sites until 2023 when DFO had previously

stated the province-wide transition plan would be finalized.

According to Cermaq's claim, the company submitted applications on Feb. 1, 2023, to transfer more than 1.5-million smolts from its hatcheries to the island facilities, scheduled for March 10. Before the ruling, and due to the initial 2020 decision, Cermaq claims that it had been previously unable to conduct its operations at those facilities—with transfers from nursery sites occurring every two years, and harvests every two years after that—and was forced to cull more than one million fish or sell adolescent smolts to other companies.

In a Feb. 10, 2023, letter Cermaq sent to Murray, it emphasized that the timing of its scheduled transfers had been structured around her own 2022 commitment to provide a renewal decision by January 2023, and that the continued delay "created further uncertainty for the company and put its benefit-sharing agreements with its Indigenous partners, local jobs, and the local economy at risk."

As laid out in the statement of claim, Murray informed Cermaq of her decision not to reissue aquaculture licenses for Discovery Island facilities a week later. This decision was shared with all other Discovery Island aquaculture operators in nearly identical letters.

In a copy of the letter viewed by *The Hill Times*, Murray highlighted her original 2022 decision, her "view that a number of reasons and concerns existed which did not lend support for continued salmon aquaculture activities," and her belief that the islands are a unique area requiring "special care."

"If there is one area in British Columbia that warrants greater precaution, that area is the Discovery Islands," Murray wrote. "In my view, taking a precautionary approach in that area is in line with the conclusions of Justice Cohen and with the purposes of the Fisheries Act."

However, Cermaq claims that at the time of the letter, the scientific assessments and the results of the consultation process contradicted Murray's approach.

As part of its legal filing, Cermaq points to scientific assessments and recommendations Murray received once the consultations had concluded, including the CSAS *Science Response 2022/045*, released in January 2023. The results concluded there was no statistical correlation between the presence of Atlantic salmon farms and sea lice counts on wild juvenile Pacific salmon.

Cermaq also claims Murray received a memo from her deputy minister on Jan. 16, 2023, which concluded that the DFO does not have a basis for treating the aquaculture licences in the Discovery Islands differently than in the rest of B.C. The claim says Murray received a second DFO memo on Jan. 24, 2023, which recommended that new licences be approved until June 2024, and recommended against a blanket denial, the suit claims.

While she acknowledged the CSAS risk assessments in the letter to Cermaq, Murray said the results were part of an "ongoing body of literature," and that her

department had provided her with additional findings during the consultation process that were included in a supplementary annex.

"The findings in some of these studies raise the possibility of harmful impacts on wild salmon," Murray wrote, adding that it was "very important" to note that the CSAS assessments "did not consider the cumulative effects of these pathogens on Sockeye salmon in the Discovery Islands area, nor did they consider cumulative impacts to other species of wild salmon."

Due to the "gaps" in the CSAS assessment, the more recent studies, and "the dire state of wild salmon," Murray wrote that she was taking a "highly precautionary approach" to the issue, and would refuse to reissue licences to any Discovery Islands facility.

Furthermore, Cermaq alleges that Murray had decided to end salmon farming operations on the Discovery Islands well before the consultations had concluded, and regardless of any contradictory evidence it may have presented.

To support those allegations, Cermaq points to an email exchange purportedly between Murray and a family member on Dec. 8-9, 2022.

The claim alleges there was an email Murray received from her aunt during the consultation process to "put a word in [Murray's] ear" in support of the plan to phase out B.C.'s coastal salmon farms, to which Murray responded that she was "not waffling" despite noting that the Heneghan ruling had been a "big step backwards." Yet, while her "difficult assignment ... is not helped by the fact that DFO's science division ... [concluded] that aquaculture operations pose minimal risk to wild salmon," she wrote that she was also aware of some scientists who disagreed.

Cermaq alleges that once it became clear to Murray that the consultation process did not support her favoured outcome, she delayed her final decision to convene additional meetings in January and February from "external scientists, activists and environmental non-governmental organizations known to be opposed to aquaculture for the specific purpose of receiving submissions to justify her pre-determined decision."

The allegations in the claim have yet to be tested in court. The company is seeking an unspecified amount in damages, compensation for expropriation, and legal costs as relief.

In response to *The Hill Times'* request for comment, Cermaq said it had yet to serve the claim but would not comment further as the matter is before the courts.

The Department of Justice and Attorney General and Justice Minister Arif Virani (Parkdale-High Park, Ont.) both referred questions to the office of current Fisheries Minister Diane Leboeuf (Gaspésie-Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Que.) as well as the DFO's Pacific regional office. DFO also declined to comment as the issue is before the courts. Murray's office did not respond by publication deadline.

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NEWS

Grits' grassroots hope Carney keeps 'eyes and ears open' for party renewal

Despite renewed hope among Liberal staffers and volunteers, any plans for structural party change will remain secondary priorities until after the next election, says Bluesky Strategy Group's Angelo Bakoulas.

BY STUART BENSON

Following his landslide victory in the Liberal leadership race, Mark Carney will begin his transition to the Prime Minister's Office as he prepares to lead his new caucus into the next election. Yet, to maintain the optimism and hope for party renewal his victory has generated, current and former staffers, party volunteers, and strategists say he will need to decentralize power from the PMO, and empower his caucus, their ridings, and young people.

In his first address as party leader on March 9 after winning the leadership race with more than 85 per cent of the vote, Carney promised "big change" for the party, and outlined his vision for renewal.

"It won't be business as usual. We will have to do things we haven't imagined before at speeds we didn't think possible," Carney told the more than 2,500 excited Liberals gathered at Rogers Centre in Ottawa last Sunday.

The former governor of the Bank of Canada and Bank of England described himself as a pragmatist, saying he is willing to adapt if something doesn't work.

While the transition timeline for Carney to be sworn in as head of government remains unclear, in a media scrum last week, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) said those plans would be finalized following discussions with the new Liberal leader "in the coming days, or week."

Following his first meeting with the caucus on March 10, Carney told reporters that he had discussed the transition with Trudeau earlier that day, adding the process "will be seamless and it will be quick."

Carney also noted the caucus' "tremendous energy," and said it had been "incredibly important" to hear from MPs.

As new Liberal Leader Mark Carney focuses on moving into the Prime Minister's Office, party members say they want him to move on from the office's current centralized power and decision-making. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia



"They're the voices of their communities, and they're the conscience of the party," Carney told reporters, promising the Parliamentary Press Gallery would also soon be seeing and hearing from him more often.

However, current and former staffers say that to keep that positivity amongst the caucus, Carney will need to allow Canadians to hear from their representatives more often, and—most importantly—be allowed to hear MPs speak for themselves.

Ahead of the result announcement on March 9, one current PMO staffer told *The Hill Times* that the party had been "too top-down" under Trudeau's leadership, with power overwhelmingly concentrated within his office. They said that renewing the party would require empowering the riding associations and the MPs.

However, a now-former ministerial staffer said that while they don't disagree about the need to address centralization, the best person to unite the party is the person the membership believes can best deal with United States President Donald Trump's annexation and tariff threats, as well as who can "destroy" Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) in the next election.

"Evidently, the person to do that is Carney," the staffer said several hours before his victory was confirmed.

Angelo Bakoulas, a board member with the Liberals' Ottawa Centre riding association and a senior consultant with Bluesky Strategy Group, told *The Hill Times* that the "nearly unanimous decision" from the party membership has already begun the process of renewing and rejuvenating the party.



Bluesky Strategy Group's Angelo Bakoulas says that while rural riding frustrations won't go away overnight, Carney's election is 'a whole new ball game.' *Photograph courtesy of Bluesky Strategy Group*

With well over three-quarters of the vote, Carney's total dwarfs his competitors, with none of the other candidates breaking into the double-digit percentages.

Former deputy prime minister Chrystia Freeland (University Rosedale, Ont.) earned a second-place result with eight per cent, followed by former government House leader Karina Gould (Burlington, Ont.) with 3.2 per cent, and former Liberal MP and businessman Frank Baylis in fourth with three per cent. The party said 151,899 votes were cast by the 3 p.m. deadline on March 9, out of 163,836 members who had successfully verified their identity.

Bakoulas, whose riding overwhelmingly supported Carney to the tune of more than 84 per cent of the vote, said that similar results in nearly every riding would make it impossible to argue that "the party membership aren't with Mark."

An analysis of the leadership results by *The Hill Times*

indicates that Carney won every riding with at least 60 per cent of the total votes, with his worst performance in the riding of Pierrefonds-Dollard, Que., where he received 60.24 per cent of the vote. His second-worst result occurred in Peace River-Westlock, Alta., where Carney received 70.31 per cent of the vote.

Bakoulas said that while many of the more rural ridings—particularly those not held by a Liberal—had felt unheard or ignored, the results indicate a newfound hope for increased engagement from the "centre" of power in Ottawa.

"Obviously, you can't discard two to three years of consistent frustration overnight, but now it's a completely different ball game," explained Bakoulas.

Bakoulas, who had endorsed Gould's campaign, said that while Gould and Freeland had run on agendas with a greater focus on the party itself, as an outsider and someone who didn't have a long history of formal involvement with the party, it wasn't necessarily a bad thing for Carney not to have developed a strong opinion on the issue. Instead, Bakoulas said Carney's priority should be keeping his "eyes and ears open" to that frustration as he moves forward.

In September 2024, Carney was tapped to chair the Leader's Task Force on Economic Growth for the party.

Bakoulas said he is disappointed Gould's result was not better, but he was impressed with her campaign and her success in "refocusing the narrative" from "Carney is the leader the Liberals need" to "what kind of leader do we need?"

While he said he hopes Carney will adopt the proposals Gould

and Freeland proposed to renew the party, Bakoulas admits those proposals are most likely a "secondary priority" for most Liberal organizers.

As part of her platform, Gould promised to "decentralize the party structure," increase the number of in-person policy meetings with riding associations and bi-annual regional meetings, hire more field organizers, and reintegrate the Young Liberals of Canada (YLC) organizations and campus clubs.

Freeland's campaign also released six proposals to renew the party, including biennial conventions and open-mic town halls, a new process for future leadership reviews, a party-wide review of its structure and membership, the empowerment of regional and territorial executives, and the establishment of a new policy commission.

Both campaigns also endorsed re-establishing the Young Liberals' national director, one of several commitments requested by the YLC as part of its "A Nation for Our Generation" campaign pledge.

Alongside calls to prioritize housing affordability, the right to education, and a "just society," the pledge also included calls to lower the voting age to 16, nominate 35 candidates younger than 35 years old, and allocate 50 electoral points to YLC riding and campus clubs in future leadership races.

While Carney's platform lacked as much detail as Freeland's or Gould's, his campaign did respond to the YLC pledge, and committed to hiring a new national youth director.

"I am committed to working with you to ensure that Young Liberals on campuses, and in every community, have an opportunity to help shape the future of the Liberal Party," Carney wrote to the group, adding that he is "keen" to continue the discussion on the voting age and the allocation of electoral points to YLC clubs during the platform process and at the next national convention.

Liam Olsen, president of the YLC, told *The Hill Times* that while he had initially remained neutral at the beginning of the race, Carney's response to their letter swayed him to personally endorse the campaign.

"It was a really positive response," Olsen said, adding that Carney's campaign had been very supportive and collaborative on their ideas for those more "challenging" proposals.

"Those are areas that are big changes to how voting and democracy works for the party and the country," Olsen said, adding that the thoughtful consideration of the proposals had ultimately won his endorsement.

"Realistically, Carney isn't going to be able to amend the Elections Act before the next election," Olsen said.

"The renewal is already happening, and a big part of that is the new leader, but the parts that will take longer, will take longer."

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FEATURE

Liberal Party pick new party leader, incoming PM



Leadership candidate Mark Carney arrives at Rogers Centre Ottawa for the Liberal Party leadership announcement on March 9. Carney went on to win on the first ballot in a landslide victory, with 85.9 per cent of the vote. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Leadership candidate Chrystia Freeland, pictured centre arriving before the results with a big smile, came in second with eight per cent of the vote. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Liberal swag was displayed at the convention ahead of the leadership announcement. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Leadership candidate Karina Gould, who ultimately secured 3.2 per cent of the vote, waves at attendees. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Ella-Grace Trudeau, left, introduces her father Justin Trudeau ahead of his final speech as Liberal leader. She told the crowd that she and her two brothers shared him with Canada for the last 12 years, and 'we're taking him back.' *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia



Trudeau leaves the stage after making his final speech as Liberal leader. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Leadership candidate Frank Baylis speaks after he arrives at the event. The former MP came in fourth with three per cent of the vote. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Former prime minister Jean Chrétien thanked Trudeau for his service, and addressed the Canada-U.S. conflict. 'We must stand up for ourselves. Historically, despite our friendship, we have had problems, but we always found a way to solve them.' *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia



The newly elected Liberal Party leader celebrates with supporters after learning of his landslide win. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



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Editorial

Editorial

Don't let the most vulnerable get caught in the backlash

There's been a lot of talk about legacy with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau displaced as the leader of the Liberal Party, and on his way out of the PMO.

Like various prime ministers before him, Trudeau will be judged and found wanting in many circles, and his more than nine-year tenure as head of government will probably be judged more fondly as time passes than it will in its immediate aftermath.

One of the loudest criticisms about Trudeau from detractors—and even some party faithful—has been that he is “divisive.”

Even one-time right-hand woman Chrystia Freeland poked at what she called Trudeau's history of “virtue signalling” amid her campaign to succeed him.

“I am an old-school Liberal,” Freeland told comedian Bill Maher at the end of February. “And Liberals in Canada win when we are focused on people and on what they need in their lives.”

“We lose when people think that we are focused on virtue signalling and identity politics.”

Freeland's remarks are representative of a fairly widely held belief that as Trudeau was the first prime minister to recognize systemic inequality and inequity for racialized people in this country, and made some much-needed progress on truth and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, he was “dividing” people. That by saying or doing anything that exposed some of this country's past—and present—sins, and attempting to rectify them in some way, Trudeau was doing something wrong simply because it made some people uncomfortable.

No one is saying not to criticize Trudeau. For example, his self-touted “feminist” bona fides quickly crumbled when faced with women who stood their ground.

But the progress that was made under his government shouldn't be wiped away simply because it was he who made it. As a laser focus on the economy, cost-of-living, and bilateral relations with the United States takes hold, there's a real risk of Trudeau backlash and changing priorities leading the country to take a step backwards.

This week in *The Hill Times*, Pride at Work Canada executive director Colin Druhan asked a few probing questions on this theme.

“Is Canada a country that upholds human rights as universal? Or are we a country where the human rights of some are seen as privileges that can be rescinded if political expediency demands it?” he wrote in an op-ed.

He continued: “Our closest neighbour's domestic policy is to dehumanize queer and trans people and segregate us from mainstream society. This is a stark reminder that the fight for human rights is never truly over and that complacency offers no protection.”

Mark Carney's landslide victory in the Liberal leadership race has been viewed in some quarters as a shift to the right for the party.

But if and when that shift occurs, or if the next election produces a government wearing a different partisan stripe, Canadians owe it to each other to not shove those who've just managed to get their heads above water back into the briny inequity depths.

The Hill Times

Letters to the Editor

Dear Donald Trump, it's time to apologize

It looks like the United States is headed into the Dark Ages. Ontario Premier Doug Ford is keeping his promise—as he should—by charging a 25-per-cent surcharge to electricity going to New York, Michigan, and Minnesota. Ouch!

U.S. President Donald Trump will have to keep a low-profile while Americans will have to stay in the dark. It could be worse—the lights could go out completely if Ford chooses to turn off the grid. Imagine no more Trump on the late-night news.

Donald, Donald, Donald—as you well know, all the tariffs you wish to impose on Canadians are not justified; it's time to stop, admit you made a mistake, and repent. Canadians are a forgiving breed. Sometimes it's better to turn the switch on than to keep flicking flashlights on and off to see your way.

The current (pun intended) light on the situation is rather dim for Americans who wanted no part of this short circuit in negotiations, and Canadians feel badly by what they are being forced to do to their brothers and sisters across the border because, after all, we didn't cause the situation, Trump, you did.

There is a solution to this problem, but it is going to take a president to admit to his mistake, and then change his chosen course. It will take a man and not a bully to realize that Canada is an ally and a super friend of the U.S., and not the enemy hiding on a continent behind their fascist backs and nuclear arms,



U.S. President Donald Trump needs to admit to his mistake and change course, writes Cran Campbell. *White House photograph by Shealah Craighead*

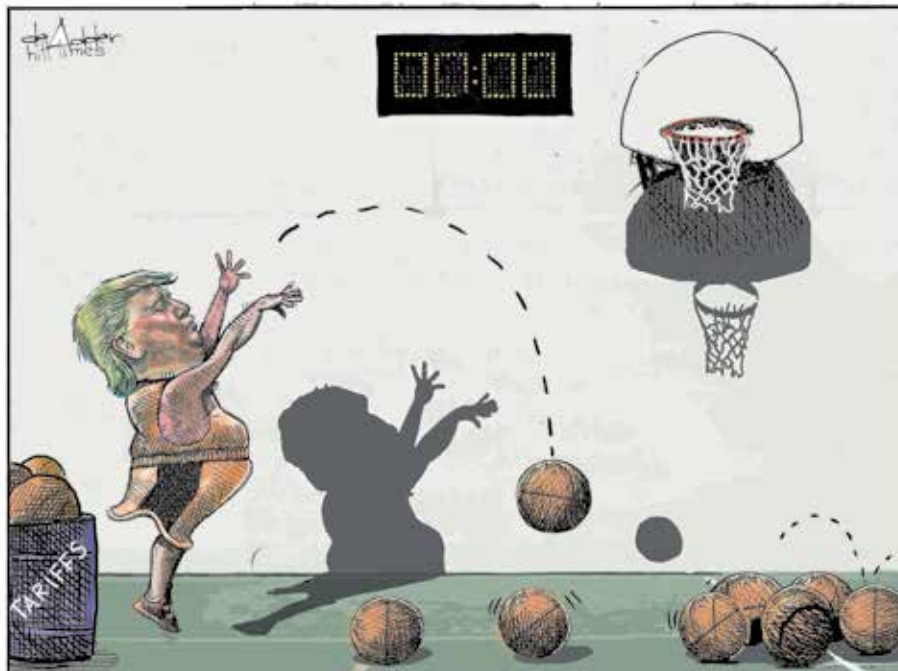
laughing about the situation Trump has caused.

It's the truth that matters, and not the fabricated narrative that Trump has created to justify his actions. Yes, the simple, unsalted-popcorn-at-the-movies truth, where one line would stand out from all others: “I did it, I am sorry, Canada; I was wrong.” That is what makes a classic American movie. Honestly, Trump, would you rather have a five-star rating or a flop?

Canada has national pride, and there isn't one hope in hell Trump is going to make our country the 51st state. Sorry, we're provinces and territories, and we're united, and we not only glow in the light, but we also shine in the darkest hour.

The president of the United States has left the room. The question now is: will he return?

Cran Campbell
 Langley, B.C.



Canada a beacon of light with vaccine funding: B.C. letter writer

Buried in all of the shocking headlines, the federal government announced a contribution of \$675-million to the recent round of funding for Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. With so much bad news out there, this is a huge affirmation of Canada's most cherished values. It will help vaccinate 500 million children, and

prevent up to nine million deaths by 2030. While other wealthy countries like the United States and the United Kingdom abandon their global responsibilities en masse, our country has stood up for its principles. Canada remains a beacon of light in a darkening world.
 Nathaniel Poole
 Victoria, B.C.

It's not us, it's you: America's guns kill Canadians

A 'Canada First' approach needs domestic measures and border controls.

Wendy Cukier

Opinion



The recent trade war and persisting threats of annexation from United States President Donald Trump have highlighted the intricate and now-difficult relationship that Canada shares with the U.S. Much attention has been focused on the imaginary threats that Canada poses, but in many respects, the opposite is true.

Not only is the flow of hate-filled U.S. rhetoric, misinformation, and right-wing media seeding discord and security threats, but legally imported and smuggled American guns also account for most of the firearms seized in crime in this country,

and most of the weapons used to kill and injure Canadians. Since 2003, the number of semi-automatic firearms legally imported from the U.S. has skyrocketed by more than 900 per cent. Canada is the largest importer of American hunting rifles, and has been ranked second only to the U.S. among developed countries in guns per capita.

Where there are more guns, there are more deaths. In 2023, there were 17,927 murders with guns in the U.S. compared to 289 in Canada. Access to guns is the key differentiator. The rates of murders without guns are almost identical (1.2 per 100,000), but the rate of murders with guns is six times higher (4.3 versus 0.72 per 100,000). In 2020, after the deadliest mass shooting in our history, the government took action through the banning of military style semi-automatic firearms; banning the import, transfer, and sale of handguns; strengthening licensing provisions; and improving border controls. A recent announcement shows progress on the buyback of assault style semi-automatics, as well as regulations essential to reducing the public safety risks

particularly in terms of intimate partner violence. Despite delays due to pressure from both pro and anti-gun-control advocates, the final result focuses on banning firearms where the danger outweighs the utility, without impinging on Indigenous hunting rights or firearms "reasonably" used in hunting.

While the profile in different communities varies, nationally, the majority of firearms recovered in crime were at one time legally owned in Canada. In 2022, the known firearms used in gun-related homicides had initially been obtained legally in about half of cases. Rifles or shotguns were slightly more likely to be of legal origin (58 per cent) than handguns (49 per cent). Among incidents in which the firearm had initially been obtained legally, the accused was the legal firearm owner in 44 per cent of cases. Legal guns account for the most murders of women, suicides, and mass shootings. Legal ownership of handguns has tripled since 2003 to more than one million. Canadian responses to the problem of firearms are rooted deeply in our nation's values: respecting



While we are re-examining our once-close relationship with the U.S., we ought to also determine new ways of preventing these weapons of violence from moving across the border, writes Wendy Cukier. *Unsplash photograph by seeetz*

legitimate uses of firearms and Indigenous rights, but focusing on reducing the risks and threats to public safety.

Domestic action is simply not enough anymore. American firearm culture—especially fuelled by the National Rifle Association and other right-wing special interest groups—has spilled north of the border. American gun lobby groups are also actively consorting and colluding with their Canadian counterparts to relax legislation, and to promote foreign notions like "arming for self protection." While legally owned firearms equally account for the guns recovered in crime nationally, smuggled guns from the U.S. are a major part of the problem. There are a plethora of examples when it comes to the challenges of the world's longest undefended border, and the skill of criminals in smuggling firearms. Last year alone, more than 600 guns were seized—and that is only the tip of the iceberg. In one high-profile case, millions of dollars in gold bars were stolen from Toronto Pearson airport, with the sale of the stolen gold going specifically to purchase guns in the U.S. to be smuggled back into

Canada and sold for profit on the black market.

As we re-examine our once-close relationship with America, we ought to also determine new ways of preventing these weapons of violence from moving across our border. Trump has made apparent his desire for annexation, contingent on movement on key issues surrounding the border. For a country living in a glass house, they ought to refrain from throwing stones, especially as American firearms spill into both Canada and Mexico, and fuel conflicts worldwide. Gun smuggling and trafficking from the U.S. is tied to the illegal drug trade that is dominating the media landscape.

Just as with the trade threats to our Canadian companies and workers, and menacing snickers of annexation from Trump, public safety is not a partisan issue. Lawmakers of all stripes must come together to protect Canadians. Our strong gun controls, coupled with strong border controls, are needed to stem firearm deaths and crime.

Wendy Cukier is president of the Coalition for Gun Control. *The Hill Times*

Because it's 2025: Canada at a crossroads on human rights

The question for the next federal government won't be whether progress has gone 'too far,' but whether we have the courage to push it where it needs to go.

Colin Druhan

Opinion



When newly sworn-in Prime Minister Justin Trudeau declared "because it's 2015" to justify a gender-balanced cabinet when first forming government that year,

it was a statement of inevitability. It implied that progress toward gender parity around the cabinet table was as natural as it was undeniable.

But a decade later, we know that progress is neither inevitable, nor secure. And we bear the scars to show for it. In 2025, gender has become a target with many claiming that society's glacial progress on gender identity issues has gone "too far."

As Trudeau's tenure as prime minister comes to a close, the Canada of 2025 looks decidedly darker than the "sunny ways" he projected a decade ago. In the upcoming federal election, Canadians have a choice to make.

Is Canada a country that upholds human rights as universal? Or are we a country where the human rights of some are seen as privileges that can be rescinded if political expediency demands it?

Once dismissed as fringe ideology, the anti-gender movement has gained alarming traction in Can-

ada in recent years. Its objective is clear: strip queer and trans people of our dignity and safety. It purports to rely on so-called "parental rights" to justify this objective while denying the rights of trans youth and their parents to make personal health-care decisions.

It champions policies that curtail the rights of students and teachers to freedom of expression when it comes to name and pronoun use in schools. Meanwhile, it advances freedom of expression for everyone else.

The anti-gender movement isn't an organic response to public concerns. It's a deliberate, sophisticated, highly co-ordinated, and well-resourced effort to roll back hard-won human rights.

Its goal isn't merely to challenge existing policies and to restrict rights, but to erase the existence of queer and trans people altogether. By denying our identities and restricting our freedoms, this movement seeks

to dehumanize and persecute all queer and trans people. It aims to undermine the progress we've fought so hard to achieve when it comes to the right to control our own bodies.

And it will not stop with us. At its core, the anti-gender movement seeks to strip us of our bodily autonomy under the guise of protection, imposing the religious beliefs of some through laws that govern everyone.

The overriding goal is to enforce a rigid, exclusionary vision of society where personal freedoms are systematically erased.

Some political leaders in Canada have already ramped up the use of the notwithstanding clause to pre-emptively strip us of our fundamental human rights: rights that are guaranteed to all Canadians under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

This is a test: if the anti-gender movement is successful, it will embolden them to press for fur-

ther rollbacks on rights that have been fought for over decades.

The message of the anti-gender movement is malevolent: when courts exercise their constitutional duty to protect the human rights of vulnerable individuals, governments will override them. Because certain people are disposable.

We don't need to look far from our borders to see where this can lead. United States President Donald Trump's Executive Order 14168 has dangerously redefined sex and gender in federal law, setting a precedent that threatens gender protections worldwide.

Our closest neighbour's domestic policy is to dehumanize queer and trans people and segregate us from mainstream society. This is a stark reminder that the fight for human rights is never truly over and that complacency offers no protection.

The question for Canada's next federal government won't be whether progress has gone "too far," but whether we have the courage and moral clarity to push it where it needs to go.

Because it's 2025, and the fight for our human rights is happening before our own eyes.

Colin Druhan is the executive director of Pride at Work Canada. *The Hill Times*

NEWS

‘No money, no fanfare’: questions loom over scope of belated Africa strategy

Not having any cabinet ministers on hand to release the plan suggests the government doesn't view it as a priority, says NDP MP Heather McPherson.

Continued from page 1

The plan's release wasn't paired with new funding commitments, nor any timelines to implement a renewed vision for engaging Africa.

The five-pronged strategy included references to boosting diplomatic engagement on the continent and in the international arena, as well as increasing economic ties, strengthening peace and security co-operation, and reducing poverty and underpinning economic development.

"This is very, very vague campaign promises, and no money associated with it," NDP MP Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, Alta.), her party's foreign affairs critic, said of the strategy. "Bringing it in potentially days before this government falls just is deeply unserious for something Canada should be much better engaged upon."

She said that not having any cabinet ministers release the plan shows that the government doesn't view it as a priority.

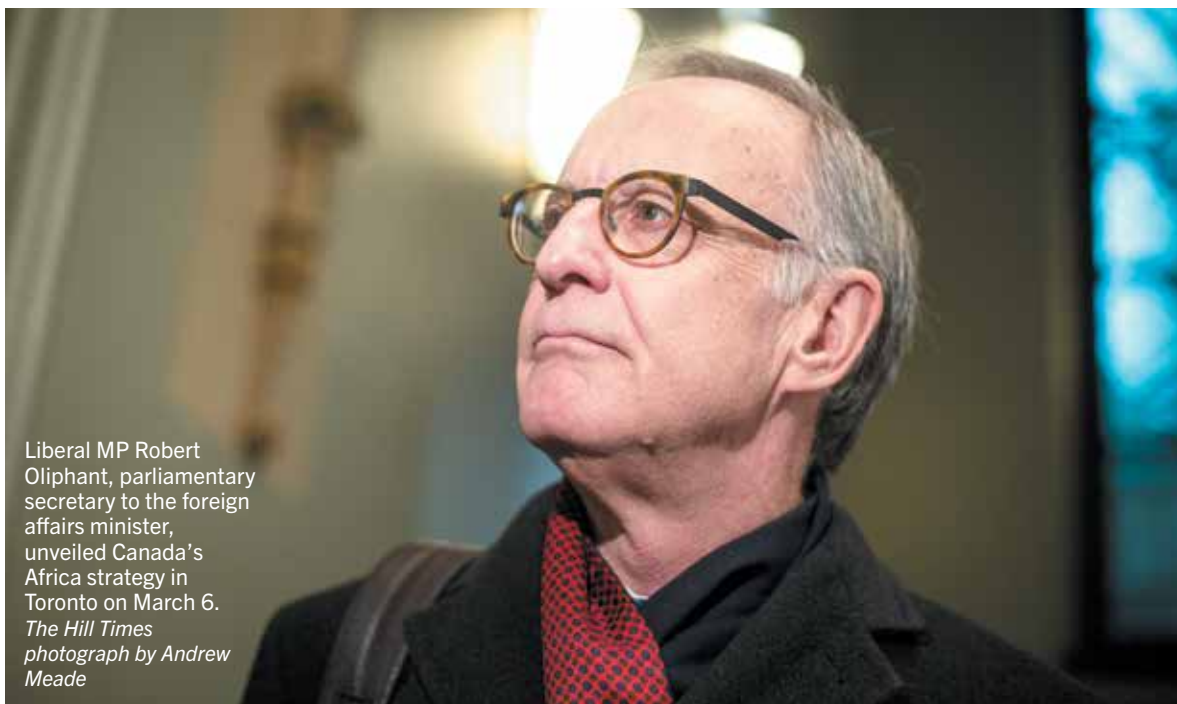
"They don't think that it's important. That's the signal that every African leader will see. That's the signal that I see. That's the signal that Canadians will see," she said. "No money, no fanfare. I'm surprised that they didn't announce it Friday before a long weekend."

When Canada launched the Indo-Pacific strategy in late 2022, it was unveiled by a handful of cabinet ministers and funded with \$2.3-billion.

Work on the African strategy was started by Oliphant in 2022. At the time, he told *The Hill Times* that he hoped to get a plan to cabinet before the end of the year.

By May 2023, the strategy had transformed into a foreign policy framework as Oliphant told this newspaper that the change in framing was an effort to avoid "anything that even suggests or hints at neocolonialism."

When officials from Global Affairs Canada appeared before the House Foreign Affairs Committee last April, they were



Liberal MP Robert Oliphant, parliamentary secretary to the foreign affairs minister, unveiled Canada's Africa strategy in Toronto on March 6. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

unwilling to give it a descriptor altogether.

Last November, during the second High-Level Dialogue between Canada and the African Union Commission, Joly confirmed that the government would be developing an Africa strategy. At the time, Canada pledged more than \$230-million in diplomatic, development, and trade programs for Africa.

As part of the pledge last year, new missions in Benin and Zambia were announced, as well as plans to appoint special envoys for Africa and the Sahel. The government had previously opened a high commission in Rwanda in 2023, but economic co-operation has recently been put on ice due to the Congo-Rwanda conflict.

While one of the prongs of Canada's Africa strategy is to strengthen the country's diplomatic engagement on the continent, no new diplomatic missions were announced beyond what has previously been signalled.

Elise Legault, the ONE Campaign's Canada director, said what was released doesn't amount to a strategy.

"The word 'strategy' in the title is doing a lot of work here," she said. "This isn't really a strategy. It's mostly just a recap."

She said that what has been released is a "good start" on which Canada can build as it outlines some priority areas for engagement. However, Legault also remarked that "actions speak louder than words."

She said the document offers "few, if any," specific commitments or initiatives.

"Through this document and the process that led to it, Canada acknowledged that Africa is important—not just as the recipient of aid, but as a trading and diplomatic partner—so that's good. But it doesn't really go [to] the next important step of outlining specifically what they will do differently in the future that they were not already doing," she said.

"For this to become more than just a list of good intentions, the next government will need to put concrete commitments, measurable goals, timelines, financial investments to make this an actual strategy," she said. "The Indo-Pacific strategy came with \$2.3-billion in investments. There's no good reason why a continent of 54 countries and nearly 1.4 billion people would get zero of your dollars."

Legault said it is unclear why it took so long to get to the document that was released.

"Let's hope that it's not the end product," she said. "The next prime minister will need to put some meat behind this basic skeleton of a document if Canada is to be taken seriously by African countries."

The House Foreign Affairs Committee's November 2024 report on Canada's engagement with Africa called for the government to release a "comprehensive strategy for Africa that achieves policy cohesion in relation to diplomacy, trade and investment, development, humanitarian action, human rights, women and girls, security assistance, and people-to-people ties."

Strategy requires follow-up implementation plan, says South African envoy

South African High Commissioner to Canada Rieaz Shaik said the strategy shows that Canada will be "deepening its knowledge about the continent."

He said that Canada is taking the "correct approach" by deepening its engagement with continental institutions, such as the African Union.

Shaik said he sees the document as a combination of what Canada has been doing and what it will be doing, remarking that it is a mix welcomed by South Africa.

"This really reflects what Canada intends to do in Africa. When it starts to grapple with the how it will do that, the changes that will be required will necessitate putting increased resources behind the how," he said, remarking that not having funding attached to the strategy is not a negative "at the moment."

"When you get to those deeper questions of implementation, I think, and I would suspect, at that point in time, resources will be put into the plan," he said. "I am taking an optimistic view of it that the strategy unfolds into a plan, and that's the time that resources will need to be debated."

He said he views the strategy as not an end, but a guiding document.

"In terms of planning processes, I think this is a very good start, and now what needs to happen is a concrete plan needs to

emerge from it," he said. "Canada will feel the kind of pressure to come up with a plan now."

Progressive Senator Amina Gerba (Rigaud, Que.), co-chair of the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association, told *The Hill Times* that the release of the strategy is a "significant milestone," and it "sends a clear signal to our African allies."

"The fact that this document is now released is a positive step," she said in an email. "We now look forward to seeing the defined objectives, and how this strategy will be implemented both in Canada and across Africa."

She said that she hopes that funds will come into play during the implementation of the strategy.

"We expect that the government's next budget will allocate the necessary resources to support this strategy," Gerba said.

Strategy is a first step, say experts

University of Fraser Valley professor Edward Akuffo, an expert on Canada's engagement with Africa, said the strategy is a "significant" and "historical document" as it is Canada's first plan for collaborating with Africa.

He said it is an approach that can "stand the test of time," and can "grow organically."

But he said that it would have been preferable to include funding within the announcement, as well as for the government to send a stronger political signal by being launched by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) or Joly with African diplomats by their side in Ottawa.

"That would have sent a very strong message to the continent," he said, but remarked that the most important thing is for the document to be made public.

He said that the document outlines what Canada intends to achieve, remarking the strategy is not an event, but a process.

Dalhousie University professor David Black, who researches Canada's role in sub-Saharan Africa, said seeing the document made public is a "step forward," but he noted that it has "many limitations."

"No additional commitments of funding at this stage, no clear designation of metrics of objectives of where this might lead towards. But, I think the fact that it is on the record gives those who are interested in this field—within and beyond government—something to hold the government to account for and to push for," he said.

He described the document as a "strategic framework."

"It needs to be fleshed out in terms of more concrete objectives," he said. "It's a beginning, but it is a short of what is ultimately needed to guide a coherent long-term approach."

"This is a low bar, but it does represent a step forward and something that can be built upon. Whether it will be is subject to all kinds of political vagaries," Black said. "From my perspective, seeing this become a foundation for a more consolidated long-term approach is really the acid test."

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Despite challenging first two years, Canada's special rep on Islamophobia is undaunted

On March 3, Amira Elghawaby's office released a new Canadian resource guide on combatting Islamophobia.

Continued from page 1

nalism—largely for the CBC—before transitioning to advocacy work, including with the National Council of Canadian Muslims, the Canadian Labour Congress, and later with the Canadian Race Relations Foundation.

The Trudeau government announced its intent to create the role of special representative a year after the January 2021 Islamophobic murder of four members of the Afzaal family in London, Ont. When the application process opened up—and after getting “a lot of encouragement” from peers—Elghawaby put her name forward.

Growing up in Orleans, Ont., Elghawaby said her experience with “faith and identity” as a child was “very positive ... even in high school.” But around when she finished university in 2001—shortly before the 9/11 attacks—Elghawaby made the decision to start wearing a hijab.

“That’s when I first discovered a word called ‘Islamophobia,’ really, and started to experience it myself,” she recalled. “Where I had been asked curious questions [about wearing a hijab], all of a sudden I was being treated a little bit differently.”

As special representative, Elghawaby’s first task was getting the office up and running—no simple feat in the world of government bureaucracy. But within her first 100 days in office she also began meeting with members of Canada’s Muslim community, starting in London. “I wanted to hear what they were hoping to see from this role,” she said. Today, she’s supported by a roughly 10-member team.

Elghawaby’s first year in office presented plenty of challenges.

More days after her appointment, she faced calls for resignation—including from the Quebec government—over a resurfaced 2019 *Ottawa Citizen* op-ed she’d co-authored criticizing the province’s Bill 21, which bans certain government employees from wearing religious symbols—like the hijab—at work, and stating that a “majority of Quebecers” appeared to be “swayed” by “anti-Muslim sentiment.” Along with demands for her resignation,



“We have so much to be proud of as Canadians, and that strength in our diversity is part of it,” says Amira Elghawaby, Canada’s special representative on combatting Islamophobia. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

there were calls for the entire position of special representative to be scrapped. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) defended the appointment, and Elghawaby offered an apology for the hurt her words caused.

Fast forward to the fall, and the global grounds shifted with the Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel by Hamas, which saw an estimated 1,200 Israeli people killed and 251 taken as hostages. The attack led to Israel’s subsequent military offensive and bombardment of Gaza, which reports suggest has killed more than 40,000 Palestinians. Currently, a fragile ceasefire is ostensibly in place in the region.

Israel’s offensive has been characterized as a genocide by many, including a United Nations Special Committee, and in Canada has prompted a wave of pro-Palestinian protests, which themselves have become a point of contention domestically, and have been criticized as antisemitic.

Amid the tensions, reports of hate crimes against both Muslim and Jewish people in Canada have been on the rise. A July 2024 Statistics Canada report notes the number of police-reported hate crimes jumped 32 per cent between 2022 and 2023, with those targeting Muslim individuals rising by 94 per cent, and those targeting Jewish individuals increasing by 71 per cent.

“The shock and sadness of what happened on that day [Oct. 7] and the subsequent ‘impacts here in Canada,’ and the levels to which hate against both Canada’s Muslim and Jewish communities would rise, ‘was something that no one could anticipate,” said Elghawaby.

The tenor of the public discourse “around what is happening in Gaza and Israel has really impacted our communities in very, very deep ways,” she said, be that as a result of the subsequent

rise in hate crimes, or the personal losses and trauma experienced by those with family in the region.

Speaking to the surge in Islamophobia, she noted findings from the Institute for Strategic Dialogue released in December 2023 of a 422-per-cent increase in anti-Muslim narratives online in the days after the Oct. 7 attack.

“It’s been a very, very difficult, traumatic time,” said Elghawaby. “The sense of belonging that many of us had worked so hard to restore in the years following 9/11 has deeply been shaken.”

But Elghawaby said such circumstances have only strengthened her resolve. Her role as special representative “has become even more important at a time like this where there is so much division,” she said.

“By any metric, the situation has become challenging. But by the same token, we continue to have a lot of hope in the fact that many Canadians have said they want to be allied to Canadian Muslims,” she said.

Adding to the shifting grounds is United States President Donald Trump’s recent return to the White House. During Trump’s first term in office, his administration issued a travel ban on people from seven Muslim-majority countries.

Trump’s ban, and a subsequent tweet from Trudeau welcoming refugees to Canada in response, were cited by the shooter who killed six men and injured 19 others at a Quebec City mosque in January 2017.

With Trump now back in office, Elghawaby said it’s “important that as Canadians we continue to stand up for what it means to be a Canadian, and that it means believing in the strength of us—of a pluralistic, multicultural nation where everyone is respected, where everyone is treated equally under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.”

“We have so much to be proud of as Canadians, and that strength in our diversity is part of it. And so I think—more than ever before—in a moment like now ... Canadians are very, very mindful of why we are proud to be who we are,” she said.

Despite the demonstrable rise in Islamophobia since Elghawaby took office, her role as special representative continues to be questioned, and further calls for her resignation have been issued.

Asked about such criticisms, Elghawaby said she looks “forward to the day where we don’t need a role like this, but we’re not there.”

Education and raising awareness about Islamophobia are key to her mandate, and she said it took the murder of 11 Canadian Muslims—in Quebec City, London, and outside a Toronto mosque in 2020—for there to be “widespread understanding by political leaders that Islamophobia is not only real, but it’s deadly.”

“Looking at the hate crimes numbers, looking at the experiences that people report having, looking at what we promise as Canadians through the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, through human rights codes, and what the reality looks like—there is absolutely a need for an office like this to provide the best guidance and advice to the federal government on how we address this very, very disturbing and dangerous phenomenon,” said Elghawaby.

New guide offers ‘common ground to work from’

On March 3, Elghawaby’s office published its new guide on understanding and combatting Islamophobia, touted as a first-of-its-kind document in Canada.

“We provide a lot of advice on a regular basis, but I’m very proud of the fact that now Canadians have a Canadian guide on

understanding Islamophobia,” she said.

“The guide talks about myths, it talks about stereotypes, it goes into a deep dive about realities of Canadian Muslims, we talk about what Islamophobia isn’t. A lot of times, the critics will say, ‘oh, Islamophobia is a term meant to silence criticism of Islam,’ and we take that head on in the guide and say, ‘absolutely not.’ You can criticize the religion just like any other religion; we are talking about the deliberate discrimination and mistreatment of people who practice the faith.”

Elghawaby said the idea of creating a guide came “early on” in her tenure, and work on it began near the end of 2023. Between research, consultations with community groups—including Jewish organizations—scholars, and the federal government, and drafting, it took a little more than a year to pull together, she said.

Also included in the guide are practical steps individuals and organizations can take to combat Islamophobia, as well as a chapter dedicated to the impact of media narratives and the importance of empowering Muslims to tell their own stories.

“We know that it’s not an exhaustive guide, but we hope that it at least provides a common ground to work from,” said Elghawaby.

From all she’s learned and seen over her last two years on the job, Elghawaby said she sees “community in the broadest form” as key to combatting Islamophobia in Canada.

“At a time where polarization is on the rise, at a time where people don’t have a lot of time to get to know each other, at a time where there’s a lot of uncertainty and anxiety just about putting food on table and just being able to raise our kids, and have a hopeful future, I think what is so key is that when we fight any form of hate and racism, we’re really fighting for a future that everyone will be able to contribute to positively,” she said. “So what’s key is knowing we’re in this together ... and knowing that we’re only stronger together.”

Elghawaby said while it’s “hard to gauge” the legacy of her office to date, hearing from community members about “how hopeful they are that Canada takes Islamophobia seriously in having a role like this is already a really impactful aspect of this office.”

“I think we’ve moved the needle in just demonstrating the need for this work, in being present, in speaking to these issues, and helping Canadians better understand what we’re up against and how they can participate in addressing it.”

Regardless of continued calls for her resignation, she said she remains “very committed to this mandate.”

“I know how valuable it is to the safety and well-being of Canadian Muslims, but [also] of all Canadians, and I’m really proud to have been appointed,” said Elghawaby.

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NEWS

Trudeau failed to live up to initial foreign policy promise, says past foreign minister Axworthy

‘We lacked that kind of real sense of: what do we want to see happen in the world?’ says former top diplomat Lloyd Axworthy.

Continued from page 1

his government’s actions didn’t match the rhetoric, according to former Liberal foreign affairs minister Lloyd Axworthy.

“[The government] didn’t fulfill what some of us—maybe more than some of us—had hoped when Justin Trudeau announced that Canada is back,” said Axworthy, remarking that he’d give the Trudeau foreign policy a “B-minus.”

Trudeau came to power promising a return to the country’s historic role in United Nations peacekeeping. Canada deployed a medical evacuation operation for peacekeepers in Mali, but it failed to complete a promised deployment of a 250-personnel quick reaction force. Canada had also pledged to contribute 600 peacekeepers, but current UN figures show the total to be 26 people, as of the start of the year.

Axworthy said there was a “complete negligence” of peacekeeping.

He added that Canada lacked any policy or agenda at the UN beyond paying its membership fees as it did not take a leadership role on the international stage.

Axworthy said Canada’s feminist foreign policy also lacked significant commitments beyond the rhetoric.

Trudeau didn’t repair the damaging cuts that Canada’s foreign ministry suffered under then-Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper, Axworthy said.

“The Harper years had a pretty serious deletion of our diplomatic capacity. We shut down embassies. We stopped hiring people. Our diplomatic network really shrunk,” he said. “And it didn’t really come back. When Justin said Canada is back ... the budget didn’t change much.”

Axworthy remarked that the frequent turnover in foreign ministers was a problem.

“It takes a couple years just to get to know people,” he said. “If you’re moving in and out ... you don’t have enough time.”

Trudeau has appointed five foreign ministers in his more than nine years in office. Axworthy served in the role from 1996 to 2000 in the government of then-prime minister Jean Chrétien.



Dominica Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit, left, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and CARICOM Secretary-General Carla Natalie Barnett arrive for the CARICOM-Canada summit in Ottawa on Oct. 18, 2023. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Missing from Trudeau’s foreign policy calculations was the intended accomplishment, Axworthy said.

“You [have to have] a purpose. I think we lacked that kind of real sense of: what do we want to see happen in the world?” he said. “I think we expressed the right values—human rights, diversity, and peace and stability—but we didn’t follow through on the actions.”

Handling the neighbour

The Trudeau government’s final days have been focused on battling United States President Donald Trump, which has raised the outgoing prime minister’s domestic and global cachet as he fights back against economically crippling tariff threats.

Trump and Trudeau developed a strained personal relationship during the president’s first term in the White House. The tension was put on display during the 2018 G7 summit in Charlevoix, Que., when Trump left early, and called Trudeau “meek and mild” and “very dishonest and weak.”

Former diplomat Louise Blais, who twice served as Canada’s consul general in Atlanta, said the management of relations with the Trump administration didn’t set a good path for dealing with the American president on his return to the White House.

She said that if the personal animosity didn’t develop between Trump and Trudeau, the relationship wouldn’t have reached such a low point.

“I think the personal animosity that Trump has for Trudeau had been a little bit transferred on Canada in general,” she said.

She said that when then-U.S. president Joe Biden came to power, there was a relief that the

two sides had a personal affinity, but that didn’t necessarily pave the way for amicable economic co-operation.

Blais said that the government “dropped the ball” by not building closer ties with Republicans in Congress during the Biden administration.

“The lesson we need to learn from this is you can never ever neglect the other side,” she said. “You’ve got to understand how they think.”

“If we had done that, perhaps we wouldn’t have been in as tough of a situation as we are now,” she said.

Trudeau has taken an increasingly combative defence of Canada’s trading interests with Trump, as the American president continues to target his northern neighbours.

St. Francis Xavier University professor Asa McKercher, Steven K. Hudson Research Chair in Canada-U.S. Relations, said that it remains to be seen whether Trudeau’s response to Trump will prove to be successful in the end.

“Is it setting up the next government for failure or success? I don’t know,” he said.

McKercher said that debates over military spending will put the spotlight on the Trudeau government’s failure to invest in defence, which has become another sticking point for Trump.

But McKercher trumpeted Trudeau’s handling of Trump during his first term in the White House.

Trump was seeking to upend the North American trading relationship, but ultimately NAFTA was renegotiated, and what the government had called an “existential threat” was avoided.

Former Canadian diplomat Colin Robertson, a senior adviser

at the Canadian Global Affairs Institute, said Trudeau has made “best efforts” with Trump, but remarked that the American president is an “impossible person.”

“In the last couple of speeches, [Trudeau] truly reflected on where Canadians were coming from, and did it in a polite and forthright fashion,” he said. “That’s unfinished business.”

Rhetoric over action

Former Canadian ambassador Jeremy Kinsman said the Trudeau government was increasingly concerned with “performative presentations rather than really significant outcomes.”

Kinsman, who was a member of Trudeau’s foreign affairs council prior to the 2015 election, said he warned Trudeau at the time not to run for a temporary seat on the UN Security Council. But the campaign was launched, and ultimately failed in 2020.

“To do it, you’ve got to earn it,” he said. “So don’t just say it, you’ve got to go out and do things.”

“They [the Trudeau government] didn’t actually do things. They just projected,” he said. “A lot of it was virtue signalling.”

McKercher said Trudeau’s foreign policy had a lot of “high-falutin rhetoric and not a lot of follow-through.”

He said Trudeau better managed crises that required heightened rhetoric as opposed to the day-to-day foreign policy.

“I don’t think foreign policy is something the prime minister has ever taken seriously unless when he’s had to,” McKercher said.

While diplomacy needs to be a constant pursuit, McKercher said that Trudeau “helicoptered in,” and

gave speeches, without ensuring the follow-up was implemented.

Blais, who served as Canada’s deputy permanent representative at the UN from 2017 to 2021, said at times the Trudeau foreign policy was “overconfident.”

“We talked a good game sometimes, although sometimes we lectured too much,” she said. “We did make commitments that sometimes we didn’t follow up on. We started to be seen as those who are really good at announcements, really good at [having] the right thing to say, but where is the money [and] where is the follow up?”

She said much of the early days of Trudeau’s foreign policy was built around the prime minister’s “rock star” status.

“[There] was an impression that Canada was not only back, but Canada was better. ... It was going to be the country to emulate, the example to the world,” she said. “That’s how we kind of conducted our foreign policy. It was very much, ‘We know what’s best and we’re going to tell you.’”

Blais said when the government announced that it was seeking a seat on the UN Security Council, it did so in an unrealistic time frame, with Ireland and Norway already committed to run.

Canada ended up finishing third to the two European nations in 2020.

“It was just sort of the sense that ‘We were so popular, and everybody loves Canada,’” she said. “It ruffled a few feathers.”

She said when the campaign was announced, it was left to Canada’s UN mission in New York to manage.

“Especially when we were coming from behind, especially because the competition [was strong], you’re going to have to do everything right,” Blais said. “It means you need to travel, you need to campaign.”

She said the campaign for the Security Council seat was often an afterthought, and it was distracted with other issues.

Blais said foreign policy was used by the government when it suited Canada, but it wasn’t sufficiently top of mind.

“It’s always great to be at a G7 or G20,” she said. “But the hard work in between to get us there was sometimes not there—it ebbed and flowed.”

Former Conservative staffer Garry Keller, who served as chief of staff to then-Conservative foreign affairs minister John Baird, said that for the Trudeau government the announcement was often the policy.

“They would say something and not actually follow through in any meaningful way or very limited ways,” said Keller, now vice-president of StrategyCorp.

He said there was a “whipsaw” in Trudeau’s foreign ministers’ policies, remarking that Harper’s foreign policy had a “constant theme” as opposed to the evolving priorities of the Liberals’ top diplomat. Keller suggested the change in trajectory from Trudeau’s ministers came from a lack of interest from Trudeau on the file.

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Diplomatic Circles

By Neil Moss



Indo-Pacific focus of new government an open question, says new Malaysian rep

The early days on the job for Malaysia's newest envoy to Canada have been filled with waiting.

"For the same way Canada is looking at who's becoming the next prime minister and which party is going to be in power, I think the rest of the world is also looking at the same thing," said Malaysian High Commissioner **Shazelina Binti Zainul Abidin** during an interview at her residence, Rumah Malaysia, on Feb. 26.

Binti Zainul Abidin said little is known about how the party leaders are looking at the Indo-Pacific region.

"None of the big leaders have touched on Asia Pacific," she said.

"For a lot of countries in the Indo-Pacific, the question will always be the next government that comes into power—whether it's the Conservatives, the Liberals, or whoever it is. Are they going to have the same focus on the Indo-Pacific as this government?" she asked, noting that it took the Trudeau government "a while" to become invested in the region.

Canada launched a \$2.3-billion Indo-Pacific strategy in November 2022, but Malaysia's top diplomat in Canada said it remains to be seen whether the emphasis on the region will continue. The strategy has just two direct references to Malaysia, noting that it is one of the 40 countries of the region and referencing co-operation on military capacity building.

Binti Zainul Abidin said that if the new Liberal Party leader were to shuffle the ministers, there is an open question as to whether their successors will have the same spotlight on Asia.

"If these portfolios are changed, will the next minister have the same focus? We don't know," she said.

International Trade Minister **Mary Ng** took part in a trade mission to Malaysia last year.

During an October 2024 visit to Laos—a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), alongside Malaysia—Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** said that ASEAN will be a "central part of our work ahead" as Canada was set to assume the presidency of the G7. Malaysia currently is chairing ASEAN.

Binti Zainul Abidin said that means Canada and ASEAN would be having discussions.

"I wouldn't say that it is not taking place. We're just not sure who do we talk to about what ASEAN priorities are," she said, remarking that the "great thing" is that Foreign Affairs Minister **Mélanie Joly** continues to reach out.

The Malaysian envoy said there have also been discussions with G7 sherpa **Cindy Termorshuizen**.

"We can talk at that level [with a] civil servant," she said. "Beyond that is very difficult."

Top priorities include trade and tourism, says new envoy

A career diplomat, Binti Zainul Abidin presented her letter of credence to Governor General **Mary Simon** last December.

She was previously the undersecretary for South and Central Asia in the Malaysia Foreign Ministry. She has been a previous ambassador in Senegal, as well as having past foreign postings in Washington, D.C., at her nation's embassy and its United Nations mission in New York.

She said the Ottawa posting wasn't one she specifically sought out.

"The place that you volunteer is the last place you'll get," she said. "I actually have been volunteering for Moscow since 2001—never got it—but Canada's not bad."

She said in the Malaysian system, the Ottawa job is considered a "choice posting."

When awarded the post, Binti Zainul Abidin said she wasn't given specific instructions from headquarters of what to accomplish.

"They called me in and said, 'We're giving you Canada. Be prepared to go.' That was it. I had to figure out what it was I wanted to do," she said.

She said she has decided to focus on tourism and trade.

Canada is currently in the middle of ASEAN trade talks, with the goal to wrap up negotiations by the end of the year.

"[There] is hoping that everything will be tied up by September this year—hoping. From [the] capital, they're not so confident because there are a few sticky areas," said Binti Zainul Abidin, but noted that she isn't privy to the negotiations.

She said her focus is on Malaysia-Canada bilateral trade. The two countries are both parties to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership. She said with tariff threats from United States President **Donald Trump**, the "mood" is in favour of trade diversification.

Binti Zainul Abidin said any diversification efforts will have to be driven by business, and it isn't something that governments can wish into reality.

"If there's no interest in the market, if all the ducks don't fall into place, it won't work," she said. "Hopefully Canada diversifies ... you need a bigger basket."

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Malaysian High Commissioner Shazelina Binti Zainul Abidin has previously been an ambassador to Senegal, and has been posted multiple times south of the border. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

OPINION

Japan and Canada to further strengthen G7 unity

At a time when the international situation is in a state of great flux, it is more important than ever for the G7 to maintain and strengthen our strong ties.

Takeshi Iwaya

Opinion



I will be visiting Charlevoix, Que., from March 12-14 to attend the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting. I look forward to exchanging frank opinions on pressing issues such as Ukraine, the Middle East, and the Indo-Pacific with my G7 counterparts under the presidency of Foreign Minister **Mélanie Joly**.

At a time when the international situation is in a state of great flux, it is more important than ever for the G7 to maintain and strengthen our strong ties. In order to realize our common goals of maintaining and strengthening international peace and stability, and a free and open international order, the G7 must unite. Over the next three days at the meeting in Charlevoix, we will engage in extensive discussions to identify the direction of measures to be taken by the G7 in addressing various issues facing the international community.

In particular—as the security of Europe and the Indo-Pacific become increasingly indivisible—I believe that Japan and Canada, as neighbours, have a role to play in leading efforts to realize a free and open region based on the rule of law. I am looking forward to discussing and working together closely with the G7 members over the coming year under Canada's presidency, not only on the situations in Ukraine and the Middle East, but also in the Indo-Pacific.

Japan-Canada relations

Japan and Canada are old friends, having established diplomatic relations in 1928. Furthermore, our two countries are also important strategic partners sharing values and principles. Japan-Canada relations have never been stronger, but in light of today's complex geopolitical landscape, our two countries need each other more than ever. It is crucial to further deepen our ties across all sectors, including politics, economy, security and people-to-people exchanges.

With the "Japan-Canada Action Plan for contributing to a free and open Indo-Pacific region" announced in 2022 as a compass for bilateral co-operation, work is progressing on joint exercises including the Canada-Japan Bilateral Exercise, and surveillance activities to counter illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing. The Japan-Canada Security of Information Agreement as well as the Defence Equipment and Technology Transfer Agreement, which are both currently under nego-



Japan-Canada relations have never been stronger, but in light of today's complex geopolitical landscape, our two countries need each other more than ever, writes Takeshi Iwaya. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

tiation between the two countries, will be milestones in Japan-Canada security co-operation, and we hope to achieve an early conclusion of both agreements. I look forward to taking Japan-Canada security co-operation to new heights.

In addition, Canada—which has abundant energy, critical minerals, and food resources—is becoming an increasingly important economic partner for Japan, including on economic security. In particular, LNG Canada, alongside Japanese companies, will begin supplying Canadian liquefied natural gas to Japan and the Indo-Pacific region within the year. We expect LNG from Canada to play an important role in meeting the energy needs of Asia, including Japan.

Japanese companies are also investing in building electric vehicle supply chains in Canada. There is also great potential for co-operation between the two countries in artificial intelligence, quantum, and other areas of science and technology in which Canada excels. On the multilateral co-operation side, the two countries are working together to maintain and strengthen a free and fair economic order through the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership and World Trade Organization reforms led by both countries. Expo 2025 Osaka in Kansai, Japan, will start in April. I am looking forward to the completion of the Canadian pavilion based on the concept of "Regeneration," and hope that the Expo will serve as an opportunity to further strengthen people-to-people and economic exchanges between our two countries.

In 2028, Japan and Canada will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the establishment of their diplomatic relations. Based on the strong Japan-Canada relationship, I would like to work closely with the Canadian G7 presidency to ensure the group can fulfill our role toward our common goals.

Takeshi Iwaya is Japan's minister for foreign affairs.

The Hill Times

Hill Climbers



By Laura Ryckewaert

A look at Minister Thompson's team, plus updates for Minister Sajjan's shop



Seniors Minister Joanne Thompson, left, has gathered a seven-member team, and Emergency Preparedness Minister Harjit Sajjan recently promoted policy staff in his office. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

work tied to the Pacific Economic Development Agency for which Sajjan is also responsible.

A former senior development officer with Global Affairs Canada's Tanzania Development Division and ex-program development officer with Oxfam Canada, Stenson is a former senior policy adviser to both Gould and Sajjan as then-international development ministers.

Senior policy adviser **Laura Gamez** has since been promoted to director of policy. Gamez has been working for Sajjan since 2022, beginning as a policy adviser in his office as the international development minister.

A Carleton University Journalism School grad, Gamez is also a former program manager with Horizons of Friendship, a past policy analyst with the OECD Development Assistance Committee's Temporary Working Group on Refugees and Migration, a former program facilitator with the Immigrant Women's Centre, and an ex-communications officer with Rooftops Canada in Nairobi, Kenya, among other past jobs.

Senior policy adviser **Tania Amghar**, meanwhile, has been made deputy director of policy.

Amghar first started working for Sajjan in 2018 when she was hired as his executive assistant as then-national defence minister. She later covered Quebec regional affairs in the office, and stayed on after Minister Anand took over the defence portfolio following the 2021 federal election. Amghar left Anand's team in February 2022—exiting as senior Quebec regional affairs adviser—to become a policy and Quebec regional adviser to then-emergency preparedness minister **Bill Blair**. Sajjan was shuffled into the portfolio in July 2023. Amghar's CV also includes past internships at the Canadian Embassy in Washington, D.C., and with the U.S. Department of State in Montreal.

Along with Stenson, press secretary **Joanna Kanga** recently left the minister's office to become a senior communications adviser to Foreign Affairs Minister **Mélanie Joly**.

Kanga had been fielding media questions for the federal emergency preparedness minister since September 2022, starting during Blair's time in the post, and continuing after Sajjan took charge of the file. She's also a former special assistant for social media to International Trade Minister **Mary Ng**.

Emily Heffernan remains director of communications and issues management.

In more belated news, **Daniel Pereira**, who had been a digital communications adviser to Sajjan since his time as international development minister—starting in 2022—joined the Prime Minister's Office last fall as a videographer and digital co-ordinator.

James Cudmore is chief of staff to Sajjan.

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Laura Gamez is now director of policy to Emergency Preparedness Minister Harjit Sajjan, while Tania Amghar has been made deputy policy director.

A new Liberal leader has been picked, and it's expected a federal election call is imminent, meaning lots of ministerial staffing changes are on the way—be that as a result of the swearing in of a new cabinet, or of a new government. But until such a time, *Hill Climbers* is continuing to update on recent moves within the front bench offices of **Justin Trudeau's** cabinet.

Still, read on with the caveat that the following is a snapshot in time filed just as the Liberal leadership race ended on March 9.

Seniors Minister **Joanne Thompson**, who joined cabinet for the first time as part of the Dec. 20 cabinet shuffle, has since lined up a seven-member ministerial team.

Climbers has already covered three of those seven: chief of staff

Andreea Campobasso, director of policy and Ontario regional adviser **Eric Nicol**, and director of operations and Atlantic regional adviser **Victoria Dempster**.

Sher Rodrigo is director of parliamentary affairs and issues management. Rodrigo was last director of operations to then-Treasury Board president **Anita Anand**, and previously did the same for then-international development minister **Harjit Sajjan**.

A former constituency assistant to then-Liberal MPs **Bonnie Crombie** and **Michael Levitt**, Rodrigo has also been a special assistant for operations and consular affairs—and later assistant to the parliamentary secretary—to then-foreign affairs minister **Chrystia Freeland**, and a senior special assistant for

parliamentary affairs and issues management to then-international development minister **Karina Gould**.

Olivia Batten is Thompson's go-to media contact as both director of communications and press secretary to the minister.



Sher Rodrigo is director of parliamentary affairs and issues management to Minister Thompson. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*



Olivia Batten is director of communications and press secretary to Minister Thompson. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

Batten has been working on the Hill since 2023, starting as an assistant to Prince Edward Island Liberal MP **Robert Morrissey**, and prior to joining the seniors office had been press secretary and senior communications adviser to International Development Minister **Ahmed Hussen**. She's also a past press secretary to then-government House leader **Karina Gould**, and to now Employment Minister **Steven MacKinnon** during his first stint acting in the House leader role. MacKinnon first filled in as House leader from January to July 2024, and once again assumed that role when Gould resigned to run for Liberal leadership.

Working closely with Batten is digital communications adviser

Myriem Mouden, a new cabinet staffer. Mouden is a former assistant to Quebec Liberal MP **Angelo Iacono**.

Finally, capping off Thompson's team as of filing is policy adviser **Erica Evely**.

Evely was previously working for the federal employment minister. First hired as an Atlantic regional affairs adviser by then-employment, workforce development, and official languages minister **Randy Boissonnault**, she stayed on during now-Treasury Board President **Ginette Petitpas Taylor's** month-long tenure overseeing the portfolio, and up until last month had continued to cover Atlantic regional affairs for MacKinnon.

Jumping to Sajjan's current office as emergency preparedness minister and Privy Council president, a new director of policy has been promoted following **Matthew Stenson's** recent exit.

Stenson had overseen policy work related to the emergency preparedness file, with **Jiven Sandhu**—who remains in place—responsible for leading policy

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Parliamentary Calendar

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

uOttawa constitutional law group hosts Justice Kasirer at March 14 event



Supreme Court Justice Nicholas Kasirer will participate in a conference hosted by L'Association de droit constitutionnel at the University of Ottawa on March 14. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12

Bank of Canada to Announce Overnight Rate—Bank of Canada Governor Tiff Macklem and Senior Deputy Governor Carolyn Rogers will hold a press conference to discuss the bank's decision on the target for the overnight rate. Wednesday, March 12, at 10:30 a.m. ET at in the Bank of Canada's auditorium, 30 Bank St. Details: bankofcanada.ca.

Conservative Leader to Attend Two Fundraisers—Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre will attend two party fundraisers. The first is at 12 p.m. ET at the Toronto Airport Marriott Hotel, Etobicoke, Ont. Then he will attend the second event at 7 p.m. ET at the Warehouse Venue, North York, Ont. Details: conservative.ca/events.

Justice Karakatsanis to Deliver Remarks—Supreme Court Justice Andromache Karakatsanis will take part in a conference hosted by the University of Ottawa. She will discuss "Cultural Roots and the Law: Exploring the Intersection of Culture, Heritage, and Canada's Supreme Court." Wednesday, March 12, at 4:30 p.m. ET at uOttawa, FTX 147, 57 Louis Pasteur. Details via Eventbrite.

2025 Kesterton Lecture—Carleton University's Journalism program hosts the 2025 Kesterton Lecture featuring CBC Sports senior contributor Shireen Ahmed who will deliver remarks on "Courage in a Time of Joy." Wednesday, March 12, at 6 p.m. ET in the Richcraft Hall Atrium, 1125 Colonel By Dr. Details: events.carleton.ca.

Joseph Stiglitz to Deliver Remarks—McGill University hosts an exclusive evening with Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz as he discusses his latest book, *The Road to Freedom*, with Christopher Ragan. Wednesday, March 12, at 6:30 p.m. ET at the InterContinental Hotel Montreal, 360 Rue Saint-Antoine O., Montreal. Details via Eventbrite.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12—FRIDAY, MARCH 14

G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting—Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly will host the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting. Wednesday, March 12, to Friday, March 14, in Charlevoix, Que.

THURSDAY, MARCH 13

Ukraine's Ambassador to Deliver Remarks—Yuliya Kovaliv, Ukraine's ambassador to Canada, will take part in a conversation on "Russia's War of

Aggression in Ukraine: Canada and Europe," hosted by the University of Ottawa. Thursday, March 13, at 11:30 a.m. in Room 4004, Social Sciences Building, University of Ottawa. Details: uottawa.ca.

FRIDAY, MARCH 14

Justice Kasirer to Deliver Remarks—Supreme Court Justice Nicholas Kasirer will take part in a conference hosted by the University of Ottawa. Friday, March 14, at 5:30 p.m. ET at uOttawa, Fauteux Hall, 57 Louis Pasteur. Details via Eventbrite.

MONDAY, MARCH 17

Minister Sudds to Attend Iftar Dinner—Families Minister Jenna Sudds is the special guest at the Community & Friendship Iftar Dinner hosted by the Intercultural Dialogue Institute. Monday, March 17, at 5:30 p.m. ET, 144 Wellington St. Details via Eventbrite.

TUESDAY, MARCH 18

Minister Erskine-Smith to Deliver Remarks—Housing Minister Nathaniel Erskine-Smith will take part in a fireside chat hosted by the Economic Club of Canada. Tuesday, March 18, at 11:45 a.m. ET at the Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel. Details: economicclub.ca.

Colombian Ambassador to Deliver Remarks—Colombia's Ambassador to Canada Carlos Arturo Morales López will deliver remarks on "From The Home Front to The Global Stage: Colombia's Path Forward," part of the Ambassador Speaker Series hosted by Carleton University. Tuesday, March 18, at 6 p.m. ET at the Westin Ottawa Hotel, 11 Colonel By Dr. Details: carleton.ca/npsia.

Panel: 'Reimagining Borders'—McGill University hosts a panel on "Reimagining Borders," exploring the challenges governments face in managing borders in a way that responds to economic, political, and humanitarian concerns. Participants include former member of the German parliament Peter Altmaier; former mayor of San Antonio, Texas, Julián Castro; and University of Toronto professor Ayelet Shachar. Tuesday, March 18, at 7 p.m. ET at Centre Mont-Royal, 2200 Mansfield St., Montreal. Details: mcgill.ca.

Book Launch: *The Left in Power*—Carleton University hosts the launch of *The Left in Power: Bob Rae's NDP and the Working Class* featuring author Steven High and special guests. Tuesday, March 18, at 7 p.m. ET at Perfect Books, 258 Elgin St. Details via Eventbrite.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19

Senator Patterson to Speak on DEI in the Military—CSG Senator Rebecca Patterson will deliver the keynote address at this day-long conference, "Shaping Defence: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and the Future of Military Operations," hosted by Carleton University. Wednesday, March 19, at 9 a.m. ET at 2220 Richcraft Building, Carleton University, 1125 Colonel By Dr. Details: events.carleton.ca.

THURSDAY, MARCH 20

Forum: 'Advancing the MMIWG2S+ Calls for Justice'—The Assembly of First Nations hosts the National Virtual Forum on Advancing the MMIWG2S+ Calls for Justice. The theme, "Prevention of Human Trafficking and Sexual Trafficking," will help inform the AFN's advocacy positions, raise awareness, advance mandates, and develop indicators for the AFN's Calls for Justice Progress Report. Details to follow: afn.ca.

Catherine McKenna to Deliver Remarks—Former Liberal cabinet minister Catherine McKenna, founder and CEO of Climate & Nature Solutions, will take part in "Leaders Creating a Sustainable World," an International Women's Month event hosted by Invest Ottawa. Thursday, March 20, at 11 a.m. ET at 7 Bayview Station Rd. Details via Eventbrite.

Panel: 'Canada-Europe Innovation Collaboration'—Signe Ratso, deputy director-general of research and innovation at the European Commission, will take part in a panel on "Stimulating collaborative innovation between Canada and Europe" hosted by the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations. Thursday, March 20, at 11:30 a.m. ET happening online. Details: corim.qc.ca.

Canada's Envoy to Ukraine to Deliver Remarks—Natalia Cmoc, Canada's ambassador to Ukraine, will deliver remarks at an event hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Thursday, March 20, at 12:30 p.m. ET happening online. Details: cdhowe.org.

Unpacking the Hogue Commission Report—The University of Ottawa hosts an event, "Canada Under Influence? Unpacking the Foreign Interference Commission Report." Canadian experts will discuss Commissioner Marie-Josée Hogue's report, and the legal, political, economic, and policy ramifications of its findings as Canada assumes the G7 presidency and with a general election looming. Thursday, March 20, at 1 p.m. ET in Room 4101,

Desmarais Building, 55 Laurier Ave. E. Details: cips-cepi.ca.

Gwynne Dyer to Deliver 2025 Balsillie Lecture—*The Hill Times'* columnist and author Gwynne Dyer will deliver the fifth annual Balsillie Lecture on the topic of his latest book, *Intervention Earth: Life-Saving Ideas from the World's Climate Engineers*. Thursday, March 20, at 7 p.m. ET at CIGI Auditorium, 67 Erb St. W., Waterloo, Ont. Details: balsillieschool.ca.

MONDAY, MARCH 24

Parliament Resumes—Parliament is expected to resume today with a Speech from the Throne given by Governor General Mary Simon outlining the government's priorities in this new session.

Air Canada President to Deliver Remarks—Michael Rousseau, president and CEO of Air Canada, will discuss the airline's vision for the future at a lunch event hosted by the Canadian Club Toronto. Monday, March 24, at 11:45 a.m. ET at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel, Toronto. Details: canadianclub.org.

TUESDAY, MARCH 25

Mayor's Breakfast—Goldy Hyder, president and CEO of the Business Council of Canada, is the special guest at the Mayor's Breakfast, hosted by Ottawa Mayor Mark Sutcliffe. Tuesday, March 25, at 7 a.m. ET Ottawa City Hall, 110 Laurier Ave. W. Details: business.ottawabot.ca.

Mexican Ambassador to Deliver Remarks—Mexico's Ambassador to Canada Carlos Manuel Joaquín González will deliver remarks at a lunch event hosted by the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations. Tuesday, March 25, at 11:30 a.m. ET at a location to be announced. Details: corim.qc.ca.

Three Ambassadors in Francophonie Panel—Le Club Canadien de Toronto hosts a French panel discussion on La Francophonie in a global world, featuring Haiti's Ambassador to Canada Weibert Arthus, Senegal's Ambassador to Canada Gorgui Ciss, Belgium's Ambassador to Canada Patrick van Gheel, and Zahara Kamil Ali, the Organisation International pour la francophonie's Americas director. Tuesday, March 25, at 11:30 a.m. ET on the 9th floor, Simpson Tower, 401 Bay St., Toronto. Details: clubcanadien.ca.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26

AFN National Chief to Deliver Remarks—Assembly of First Nations National Chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak will deliver remarks on

"Indigenous Economic Leadership in a Changing Global Landscape," hosted by the Canadian Club of Toronto. Wednesday, March 26, at 11:45 a.m. ET at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel, Toronto. Details: canadianclub.org.

Webinar: 'Canadians' Response to Crises'—Ipsos hosts a webinar, "From the Pandemic to the President: Canadians' Response to Crises," unpacking the impact of global and domestic challenges on Canada. Drawing from several of Ipsos' proprietary data sources, this special live session will feature four senior Ipsos leaders exploring how Trump's policies have influenced Canada, and what lies ahead for the nation. Wednesday, March 26, at 1 p.m. ET happening online: ipsos.com.

EU Ambassador to Canada to Deliver Remarks—European Union Ambassador to Canada Geneviève Tuts will take part in a panel discussion, "EU + Canadian Approaches to International High Tech Governance Issues," hosted by the Canadian International Council and KPMG. Wednesday, March 26, at 5:30 p.m. ET at KPMG, 150 Elgin St., Suite 1800. Details via Eventbrite.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26—FRIDAY, MARCH 28

CMA Health Summit—The Canadian Medical Association hosts its Health Summit on the theme "the politics of change." Participants include CMA president Dr. Joss Reimer; Dr. Ashley Miller, chief medical information officer, Nova Scotia Health; Anthony Morgan, co-host, *The Nature of Things*; and content creator Brittlestar. Wednesday, March 26, to Friday, March 28, in Ottawa. Details: events.cma.ca/website/81161/eng/home.

THURSDAY, MARCH 27

Panel: 'Mining in the New Political Era'—Former Liberal MP Paul Lefebvre, now mayor of Sudbury, Ont., will take part in a panel discussion, "Mining in the New Political Era," hosted by the Canadian Club of Toronto. Thursday, March 27, at 11:45 a.m. ET at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel, Toronto. Details: canadianclub.org.

FRIDAY, MARCH 28

Lecture: 'Canada's LGBT Purge: Is History Repeating Itself?'—Carleton University hosts this year's Chet Mitchell Memorial Lecture on the topic "Canada's LGBT Purge: Is History Repeating Itself?" featuring Michelle Douglas, executive director of the LGBT Purge Fund. Friday, March 28, at 10 a.m. ET at 2017 Dunton Tower, 1125 Colonel By Dr. Details: events.carleton.ca.

TUESDAY, APRIL 1

Economic Reconciliation Summit—Canada 2020 hosts "The Indigenous-led Economy: 2025 Economic Reconciliation Summit." Industry innovators, community leaders, and Indigenous innovators will explore best practices in trade, security, and economic development, building social and political solidarity, and leading the way on thoughtful policy-making toward economic reconciliation. Tuesday, April 1, at the Westin Hotel Ottawa, 55 Colonel By Dr. Details: canada2020.ca.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2

Alto's President Imbleau to Deliver Remarks—Martin Imbleau, president and CEP of high-speed rail network Alto, will deliver remarks. Wednesday, April 2, at 12 p.m. ET, at the C.D. Howe Institute, 67 Yonge St., Suite 300, Toronto. Details: cdhowe.org.

THURSDAY, APRIL 3

Lunch: 'Collaborative Strategies for Interprovincial Trade'—The C.D. Howe Institute hosts a lunch event, "Beyond Boundaries: Collaborative Strategies for Interprovincial Trade" featuring Christiane Fox, deputy clerk of the Privy Council; Corinne Pohlmann, executive vice-president, Canadian Federation of Independent Business; and Ryan Manucha, interprovincial trade researcher at the C.D. Howe Institute. Thursday, April 3, at 12 p.m. ET at 67 Yonge St., Suite 300, Toronto. Details: cdhowe.org.



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