

Getting rid of inclusion-focused cabinet roles a step backwards

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NEWS



International Trade and Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Dominic LeBlanc, left, chats with Prime Minister Mark Carney during the swearing-in ceremony at Rideau Hall on March 14. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

Critics say new PM Carney 'failed to turn the page' with cabinet picks, but narrative link necessary, say Liberals

BY STUART BENSON

The new "leaner" Liberal cabinet is prioritizing continuity over change in the face of the tariff and annexation threats from United States President Donald Trump, says Liberal strategist Greg MacEachern. But Conservative pundits say the lack of new blood, and the

exclusion of three provinces from around the cabinet table will make it difficult to convince voters they aren't just "the same Liberal gang."

Prime Minister Mark Carney was sworn into office alongside his 23-person cabinet at Rideau Hall on March 14, promising the group would be "action-oriented" and focused on two priorities:

protecting Canadian workers, and "growing this great country."

The team represents a smaller group than the 36 people who most recently served in cabinet, or the 30 ministers named in former prime minister Justin Trudeau's (Papineau, Que.) first cabinet in 2015. But despite promising "big change" during his March 9 Liberal leadership vic-

tory speech, Carney only named three new MPs to his front bench who had not previously served under Trudeau.

The new additions were Agriculture and Agri-food and Rural Economic Development Minister Kody Blois (Kings-Hants, N.S.), overseeing roles previously held

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NEWS

In Charlevoix, G7 ministers chose domestic audiences over taking message to the world

BY NEIL MOSS

Annexation threats and trade wars overshadowed a three-day gathering of the Group of Seven's top diplomats, but amid global upheaval, foreign ministers showed little willingness to speak to each other's countries.

A formal press theatre remained largely quiet, as did the interpreters on standby to transmit the foreign ministers' messages around the globe.

In the first major gathering of Canada's G7 presidency, the top diplomats from France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States gathered in La Malbaie, Que., at Le Manoir Richelieu from March 12 to 14.

By the end of the meeting, only German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock took to the stage in the press theatre—answering two questions from German media and one question from a Canadian reporter.

Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly (Ahuntsic-Cartierville, Que.) held a pooled press conference for largely Canadian media. U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio also held a pooled media opportunity.

Some chose to bypass news conferences, opting instead for one-on-one interviews.

The U.K. delegation elected not to hold a press conference, but Foreign Secretary David Lammy did conduct an interview with CBC's *The House*.

European Union foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas spoke with CNN, Bloomberg, and The Canadian Press in separate interviews.

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NEWS

'If you've got the money, spend it': three major parties boost digital ad buys to define Prime Minister Carney's brand

BY STUART BENSON

Newly minted Prime Minister Mark Carney's campaign for Liberal leadership spent just shy of \$300,000 on Facebook and Instagram ads to introduce

him to the party membership. Yet, while that investment is already providing dividends amongst the general public, the Conservatives and NDP have begun boosting their spending

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NEWS

Incoming senator Tony Ince talks liberation from party apparatus, 'whirlwind' first days

BY LAURA RYCKEWAERT

One of five individuals named to the Senate as part of the last batch of appointments announced by now-former prime minister Justin Trudeau on March 7, former Nova Scotia minister Tony Ince says he's ready for the challenge and

"opportunity" of working outside a political party fold—a prospect that's unfamiliar, yet "liberating."

Ince, 67, will be the first Black man to take a seat in the Red Chamber since 2017 when he officially gets sworn in upon Parliament's return.

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Heard on the Hill



By Christina Leadlay

Two high-profile ex-ministers telegraph their next moves, but remain sitting MPs



Former Liberal cabinet ministers Seamus O'Regan, left, and Marco Mendicino are still sitting MPs. However, Mendicino has taken on a role that's usually for a non-elected person, while O'Regan's next move outside the House has been prematurely revealed. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

In the final days of prorogation, a couple of high-profile former cabinet ministers have been telegraphing or making their next moves, though are very much still sitting MPs.

While both **Marco Mendicino** and **Seamus O'Regan** have announced their respective decisions not to run in the next federal election, they are both still listed on the House of Commons website as being sitting MPs.

Last week, it was revealed that Mendicino is now working on a temporary basis as Prime Minister **Mark Carney's** chief of staff during the transition from former PM **Justin Trudeau** to Carney. The PMO's chief of staff is a role that's usually held by a non-elected person.

A call to Mendicino's Hill office was answered on March 17 as though he was still an MP,

though when **Heard on the Hill** asked if the former public safety minister had submitted to the Speaker's office a letter of intention to resign his seat, the staff member couldn't confirm, and directed the question to the Prime Minister's Office.

Olivier Duhamel in the House Speaker's Office told **HOH** that a resignation letter is needed for a sitting MP to officially quit. "During a prorogation, a Member may resign his or her seat by delivering to the Speaker a written declaration of intention to resign signed before two witnesses," he explained via email on March 14. "On receiving the declaration, the Speaker addresses a warrant to the Chief Electoral Officer for the issue of a writ for the election of a Member to fill the vacancy. The parlia-

mentary website is also updated accordingly."

Meanwhile, O'Regan's next career move was prematurely revealed by the Empire Club of Canada in a listing for a March 26 event, which lists the participating O'Regan as having "joined Stewart McKelvey in March 2025."

Staff in the Newfoundland and Labrador MP's Ottawa office confirmed to **HOH** on March 17 that "O'Regan has not resigned, and will remain MP for St. John's South-Mount Pearl" until Parliament is dissolved, and that "he has accepted a position with Stewart McKelvey."

According to its website, "Stewart McKelvey is Atlantic Canada's largest law firm and one of the 20 largest in the country."

Chrétien, Meilleur, and Grandmaître get Coronation medals

Ottawa-Vanier Liberal MP **Mona Fortier** released the list of more than two dozen constituents she'd nominated for the King Charles Coronation Medal on March 16, including a few former politicians and one late MP's widow.

Leading Fortier's list of "26 outstanding residents of the Ottawa-Vanier community" is former Liberal prime minister **Jean Chrétien**, who'd, in fact, received his medal back in January on his 91st birthday.

"Happy birthday M. Chrétien! What an honour to present the King Charles III's Coronation Medal to highlight your exceptional contribution. Your service to Canada has not stopped and you proved it again today," the former cabinet minister had posted on X at the time, along with a photo.

Other notables include former Liberal MPPs **Madeline Meilleur** and **Bernard Grandmaître**; **Catherine Bélanger**, widow of the late Liberal MP **Mauril Bélanger** who died in 2016; public servant and volunteer **Amy Keshavjee**; Crown prosecutor **Hilary Clare McCormack**; and **Maureen Boyd**, the Parliamentary Centre's chair emerita and founding director of Carleton University's Initiative for Diplomatic and Parliamentary Engagement—who also received the Order of Canada just a few months ago.



Liberal MP **Mona Fortier**, right, presented ex-PM **Jean Chrétien** with his Coronation award on his birthday, Jan. 12. *Photograph courtesy of X*

Globe's Marieke Walsh had a baby



Globe and Mail reporter **Marieke Walsh's** new baby, **Philomena**. *Photograph courtesy of X*

Congratulations to the *Globe and Mail's* **Marieke Walsh** who recently gave birth, and is now on maternity leave. "On mama duty with our tiny but mighty **Philomena**. See you next year #cdnpoli!" she posted on X on March 16, including a photo of her baby girl.

Dozens of best wishes followed from Walsh's press gallery colleagues **Raisa Patel**, **Catherine Lévesque**, **David Ljunggren**, and **Mickey Djuric**, as well as Conservative MP **Michelle Rempel Garner**, and Liberal MPs **Karina Gould** and **Filomena Tassi**, who gave Walsh kudos on her "good taste in names."

Emma Godmere wins Travers Fellowship

CBC journalist **Emma Godmere** has been awarded this year's **R. James Travers Foreign Correspondent Fellowship**, Carleton University announced on March 13.

Godmere will receive \$25,000 to pursue "a series that will explore defence and security issues in three Arctic states—Finland, Sweden and Greenland," according to a press release from Carleton, which administers the fellowship.

"Underlying the examination of each distinct state is the call from political and defence leaders for Canada to strengthen its Arctic security and to do so now."



Emma Godmere, a producer on CBC's *The House*, has been awarded the annual **James Travers Fellowship**. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

Godmere posted on LinkedIn that she's "[i]ncredibly honoured and excited to dive into this project, made possible by the Travers Fellowship and supported by CBC," and teased that episodes resulting from her work will be broadcast on "national airwaves and podcast feeds via *The House* later this year."

Each year, the fellowship—which honours the memory of former reporter **James Travers** who died in 2011—supports a significant foreign reporting project by Canadian journalists or journalism students.

Sophall Duch returns to Global News

In more Ottawa media news, reporter **Sophall Duch** has returned to Global News after a seven-month stint at *The Hill Times*.

"Thanks to the HT team for this experience and the opportunity to be a Hill print reporter!! Much love to the HT crew!" Duch posted on LinkedIn on March 7, one week after he started his new role as parliamentary producer at Global.

This isn't Duch's first



Sophall Duch has returned to Global News. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

time at Global. The Ottawa-born journalist had been a producer for the channel's *The West Block* and *Global National* from October 2023 until June 2024 when Global undertook a round of layoffs. Duch's CV also includes nine years at CPAC, and two-and-a-half years as a chase producer for CTV's *Power Play* program.

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The Hill Times

Fractured Canada-U.S. ties are the backdrop for new wedge issues and higher stakes in the next election

As we saw in 2021, timing and circumstances are crucial, as are the very real impacts of divisive policies.

Josie Sabatino

Beyond the Headlines



OTTAWA—It's been almost four years since Canadians last headed to the polls to cast a vote in a federal election. Despite the new crop of party leaders for both the Conservatives and the Liberals, the landscape is beginning to look strikingly familiar. As was the

case with COVID-19 back then, there is an external challenge—this time in the form of fractured Canada-United States relations—and voters appear primed to cast their ballot for the leader best able to navigate Canada's place in a complex and shifting world.

In 2021, then-prime minister Justin Trudeau sought permission from the Governor General to dissolve Parliament, and kick-off a 36-day campaign period. The election call came against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, at a time when the majority of provinces and territories still had masking and vaccination restrictions in place.

The pandemic election meant a shift away from traditional election campaigning to smaller crowd sizes, strict adherence to provincial restrictions, and less opportunity to interface directly with Canadians. Rather than being able to set a forward-fac-

ing narrative on issues like the economy and the cost of living, considerable time was spent by political parties responding to the news of the day pointing to a resurgence in COVID cases.

To win, the Liberals had to do two things effectively: define the relatively unknown Conservative leader—Erin O'Toole—who had been in the role for less than a year, and capitalize on key wedge issues. The Liberals found their holy grail on the issue of mandatory vaccinations for federal workers and sectors under federal regulation. The Conservative caucus was divided on the matter, struggling to find a clear stance that effectively made the case that the Liberals were using the issue for partisan gain.

Trudeau and his party were ultimately successful in maintaining a status quo, re-election scenario. While Trudeau is no longer the Liberal leader, and both the pandemic and many of

the policies that were introduced during that period are behind us, there is a new threat horizon for party leaders to navigate, and, potentially leverage for partisan gain.

While the rumour mill points to an election call as early as March 23, the only real unknown now is how U.S. President Donald Trump's antics will influence the outcome. Trump has threatened Canadian sovereignty through his frequent rhetoric about annexation, and the economic consequences of his tariff agenda are starting to take effect.

The next round of U.S.-imposed tariffs are set to come into place in early April, likely coinciding with the campaign period. Both the Conservatives and the Liberals will condemn Trump's actions, but this is where their agreement ends. This milestone sets the stage for competing visions from each party on how best to protect Canada's economy.

In the backdrop, the usual campaign dynamics will unfold. Opposition research will be flying, and candidates will inevitably face scrutiny for past mistakes. While some issues will be managed internally by war room staff, others will emerge in real time, potentially derailing leaders' ability to communicate their message effectively on the national stage.

The next election will undoubtedly see political leaders offering competing visions for how Canada should move forward in uncertain times. But as we saw in 2021, timing and circumstances are crucial, as are the very real impacts of divisive policies. The political arena is often ruthless, and Canadians would do well to reflect on the lessons of the last election to understand what's at stake this time around. The outcome will set the tone for Canada's future in a rapidly changing world.

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

The Hill Time



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March of Dimes Canada
Martin Family initiative
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OASIS
Ontario Caregiver Coalition
Ontario Caregiver Organization
Pallium Canada
Parkinson Canada
PLEO
Safehaven
Saskatoon Council on Aging
SE Health
Siblings Canada
Spinal Cord Injury Canada
Young Caregivers Association

The Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence, a program of the Azrieli Foundation, is a non-partisan initiative focused on supporting and empowering caregivers and care providers in Canada.



COMMENT

Another major procurement project FUBAR

Buried in the fine print of the Canadian Surface Combatant announcement was the fact that the total cost to build these three warships is expected to be a whopping \$22.2-billion.

Scott Taylor

Inside Defence



OTTAWA—On March 8, a major procurement announcement was made by the Department of National Defence, yet it

caused barely a ripple through Canadian news media.

There was so little commentary over the announcement that one suspects the timing on the release was deliberate. Given that we are in the midst of a damaging trade war with the United States, and one of President Donald Trump's pet peeves is Canada's lack of defence spending, one would think the Liberals would have wanted to make the most out of an \$8-billion contract to build warships.

Instead, DND held a hastily announced, late Friday afternoon technical briefing for select media prior to the Saturday morning official announcement. With Parliament prorogued until March 24, and the Liberal Party leadership race winner to be announced the following day, the shipbuilding contract announcement unsurprisingly dropped into a media void.

It shouldn't have, and here's why. What was announced was an initial \$8-billion contract for Irving Shipbuilding of Halifax to



Defence Minister Bill Blair's March 8 shipbuilding contract announcement was unsurprisingly dropped into a media void, writes Scott Taylor. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

begin the construction of the first three Canadian Surface Combatant (CSC) warships. However, buried in the fine print was the fact that the total cost to build these three warships is expected to be a whopping \$22.2-billion.

That equals \$7.4-billion per ship. Given that Canada has announced it will be purchasing 15 CSC warships in total, for those doing the math, that amounts to more than \$108-billion in total for this project.

As most Canadians are not in the habit of shopping for modern warships, that staggering cost may seem a little excessive. To be honest, it is obscenely excessive.

To give it some perspective, we need to go back to the origins of this major procurement project. The Royal Canadian Navy planners wanted 15 ships to replace the now-retired Iroquois-class destroyers, and the 12 Halifax-class frigates, which

continue to toil past their service expectancy date.

The initial construction cost for these 15 ships was an estimated \$14-billion. But the Navy jettisoned that figure, and in 2008, the CSC budget was set at \$26.2-billion. That price tag included the construction of the vessels, infrastructure, project management, spare parts, and some ammunition.

But since then, the costs of the CSC have been climbing steadily. Several years ago, DND had put the cost at between \$56-billion and \$60-billion, and its officials insisted that would not go up. In 2022, the Parliamentary Budget Office estimated the total cost of the Canadian Surface Combatant program—including development and acquisition—to be \$84.5-billion.

The design of Canada's ship will be based on the BAE Type 26 destroyer, which is currently

being built for the United Kingdom's Royal Navy. While the Canadian design will be slightly larger and heavier, the British project is pegged at \$15-billion to acquire eight ships.

Again, for the amateur mathematician, that means Canada would have been paying more than double the amount per ship if Defence Minister Bill Blair's estimate was correct. We now know it was not.

Another comparative shipbuilding cost yardstick for the laymen would be the British navy's recent acquisition of two Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers. These behemoths weigh 80,000 tons each, and house up to 36 warplanes. The total cost was \$12-billion, or \$6-billion per aircraft carrier.

Keep in mind Canada is buying 8,000-ton CSC destroyers for \$7.2-billion each.

For a Canadian comparison, back in the early 1990s, the government acquired the 12 Halifax-class frigates for a total construction cost of \$4.3-billion, or \$350-million per ship. Allowing for inflation, that would be roughly \$700-million per ship in 2025 dollars. That is a far cry from \$7.4-billion per CSC warship.

Which is why, my friends, the Liberals chose to announce the latest contract for this project in the dead of night. Or in this case, on a mid-March Saturday morning.

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

The Hill Times

Is Quebec becoming an authoritarian 'nation'?

Along with signs of a rightward turn in government, there is the use of anonymous complaints against businesses and individuals.

Andrew Caddell

With All Due Respect



KAMOURASKA, QUE.—In 1969, I was introduced to political science at Montreal's Dawson College CEGEP, and read a book called *Communism, Fascism, and Democracy*. It was a fascinating analysis of the main currents of 20th century politics. As the son of a veteran who fought fascists and Nazis in Italy, I was interested in fascism. It was described as "a system of autocracy and control of the people by a small and powerful group, influenced by calls to patriotism and



There's a rise in authoritarianism in Quebec, illustrated by Premier François Legault's government's embrace of extreme nationalism, writes Andrew Caddell. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

reliant on influential supporters to take control of a society."

The rise in right-wing sentiment around the world, notably in President Donald Trump's America, has resonated with accusations of "creeping fascism." Here in the Quebec "nation," we see a rise in authoritarianism,

illustrated by Premier François Legault's government's embrace of extreme nationalism, and its desire to concentrate power in Quebec City.

For example, the creation of the new health agency, Santé Quebec, eliminated the autonomy of hospital boards, while the closing of school boards placed authority in the bureaucracy. Furthermore, bills 21 and 96 became law under the cloak of the notwithstanding clause, imposing rules of dress and language on Quebec's minorities. And now the government's new Bill 84 offers directives on behaviour and culture, outlining "appropriate" ways of integrating into Quebec society.

Along with these signs of a rightward turn, there is the use of anonymous complaints against businesses and individuals. These first emerged in reporting of violations of the Charter of the French Language, introduced in Bill 96. It permitted anonymous reports on breaches of the law, and for signs in "a language other than French"—i.e. English. Proposed changes to Bill 21 would allow anonymous complainants to inform on public servants not following the rules of secularism or "laïcité."

Recently, I was targeted by an anonymous complainant for Facebook posts defending the rights of English Quebecers. At the end of December, I was attacked with insults like "raciste," "Rhodesien," "KKKCanada," and "supremaciste."

Anyone who knows me would attest I am none of those things. I replied I am a francophile with roots back to 1640, who chose to return to Quebec from Ottawa in 2020. I noted my work on Kamouraska town council is entirely in French. As the insults escalated, I ramped up my replies with a few choice words. After a few days, I forgot about it.

Two weeks ago, I received a call from someone identifying himself as an "investigator" from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. At first, I thought it was a scam, so I told the person to put the request in writing. Later that day, it required some probing questions on my part to his colleague to determine the nature of the complaint, and a document arrived with further details.

Since then, I have been communicating with the Inquiries Division of the Municipal Affairs Commission, expecting they would ignore such a malicious complaint. Instead, on March 12, they wrote to say they are pursuing me, and I could be fined up to \$4,000 or be suspended from my seat on council. An administrative tribunal, conducted in French, will decide my fate. Needless to say, it has been stressful.

The evidence provided by the Commission includes statements I made as president of the Task Force on Linguistic Policy. This implies there was an ethical conflict between my work as a town councillor and as volunteer head of an organization dedicated to serving Quebec anglophones.

This whole episode is troubling: the use of anonymous complaints as evidence is contrary to the historic principle everyone has the right to face their accuser in court. And although this is a quasi-judicial proceeding, I have no right under Section 133 of the Constitution to have my hearing in English.

It's appalling someone can attack me with malice aforethought, and I have no recourse to respond. We should be concerned about the use of anonymous complaints and concentration of power as they are signs of authoritarianism.

But despite the increasingly heavy hand of government, our courts and legislatures are still intact. So, the only way to prevent a dystopian "Big Brother" future is for us all to stand up for our rights, now. And send a message: you have already gone too far.

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

Carney's cabinet a step backwards in the dark

Prime Minister Mark Carney's first cabinet is a rejection of the commitment to diversity that steered public policy for nine-and-a-half years, writes Erica Ifill. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia



This is a historical pattern that rears up when those who were once marginalized gain representation within the white supremacist social and economic structure.

Erica Ifill

Bad+Bitchy



CALGARY—One step forward, three steps back.

On March 14, newly minted Prime Minister Mark Carney formed his cabinet. Unfortunately, this configuration of ministers is not only tighter, but it also has some notable distinctions from cabinets drawn by recently resigned prime minister Justin Trudeau. One could categorize this new cabinet as a rejection of the commitment to diversity that steered public policy for nine-and-a-half years. As CTV News concludes: "Carney moved away from Trudeau's prioritization of regional representation and gender parity."

The cabinet now has fewer ministers; at the time of Trudeau's resignation, the number of ministers in his front bench was 36. Carney boasts a leaner cabinet of

24 people. While this move may look like trimming the fat of government, there are some notable exclusions. Regional diversity has been shelved for a concentration of ministerial representation in Eastern Canada (in Alberta, Ontario is Eastern Canada, not Central Canada), especially the Greater Toronto Area and Quebec. On the contrary, Trudeau made regional diversity an important consideration when forming his cabinets.

Remember when I said DEI is DOA? It's six feet under in Carney's cabinet. This signals more of a United States President Donald Trump approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion—though less boisterous and offensive.

The Trump administration is taking the proverbial chainsaw to DEI. He has been hostile towards women, BIPOC, LGBTQ—specifically transgender—people, people with disabilities, and every other group that is not white and male. He blamed diversity for the downing of the American Airlines commercial jet that was a result of a crash with a U.S. military Black Hawk helicopter at Reagan National Airport in D.C. Canadian companies are quietly following suit, as is Carney as demonstrated by his cabinet picks. Last month, Pride Toronto lost three of its sponsors due to their withdrawal of support, "as the backlash towards diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives intensifies." CityNews continues to report that as a result, Pride is facing a \$300,000 shortfall.

Remember when I wrote in 2021 that the whitelash was coming? It's here, and stronger than ever. It is reminiscent of the

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backlash against Reconstruction, where violent white hostilities followed efforts to integrate and equalize the rights of Black people after the abolishment of slavery. This is a historical pattern that we see time and time again when those who were once marginalized—especially by race, sexuality, and gender—gain representation within the white supremacist social and economic structure.

We may be fighting Trump's encroachment on Canada in the light, but we are ushering in his policy directions in the dark.

Carney's cabinet has also halved the number of Black cabinet ministers, replacing Ahmed Hussen and Marci Ien—who is not running in the next election—with new minister Arielle Kayabaga. Losing 50 per cent of Black representation ain't a good look. To his credit, Trudeau's government was the first to recognize that "people of African descent represent a distinct group whose human rights must be promoted and protected." In 2018, his government also recognized the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent, which ran from 2015-2024. On Feb. 7, 2024, "the prime minister announced an extension, until 2028, of the federal government's efforts." In addition, during Trudeau's tenure, Liberal MP Greg Fergus became the first Black Speaker of the House of Commons in 2023. Fergus is a founding member and was co-chair of the Parliamentary Black Caucus and the Liberal Black Caucus. I have little faith that Carney will continue the tradition that Trudeau instituted of political attention to

this community beyond a potluck in Black History Month.

The destruction of the representation of women is a blow; even the Conservative Stephen Harper government continued the functions of the then-named Status of Women as a cabinet portfolio. In other words, there was government representation for women. Now it's lost its distinction—imagine being less representative of women than Harper. The Trudeau government elevated Status of Women to a full department known as Women and Gender Equality (WAGE), and now Carney has left its programs and policy development to be subsumed by the Heritage Department, which has been styled in his cabinet as Canadian culture and identity, headed by Liberal policy genius Steven Guilbeault, who is Quebec lieutenant and also responsible for Parks Canada.

The disrespect is remarkable six days after International Women's Day. I reached out to the Carney team to ask why they dropped the WAGE minister and how this affects the department's resources and funding programs. I was met with no response, a continuation of the disrespect.

Ever since the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in 1967, there has been a recognition by successive governments of the necessary political differentiation to advance the equality of women; the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls recognized the additional inequities and violence Indigenous women experience systemically. Apparently, Carney does not think the same, and does not prioritize women's rights. In addition, 2SLGBTQI+ inequalities were housed within the now-defunct ministry. It is a slap in the face that after the federal government passed Bill C-16 in 2017, which "led to expanded protections for transgender and gender-diverse Canadians in Canada's Criminal Code," our new prime minister has deemed the battles against homophobia, transphobia, and intersectional discrimination of women as superfluous.

Note that there are zero openly LGBTQ-identified persons in cabinet.

As though Carney couldn't be more injurious to women, he demoted the first female minister of finance, Chrystia Freeland, to minister of transport and internal trade. A gender-equal cabinet is not for window-dressing; it means that women hold high positions within cabinet. As it stands, there may be two out of the 11 women sworn in who fit that description: Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Development Mélanie Joly, and Innovation, Science, and Industry Minister Anita Anand—and that's being generous.

It is clear that Carney's intentions are to move the party to the centre-right, giving Canadians the choice between a right-wing party and a right-wing-lite party. We are cooked.

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

The Hill Times

OPINION



This is an opportunity for Canadian Culture and Identity Minister Steven Guilbeault to do something bold as is demanded by these existential times, writes Sen. Andrew Cardozo. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Urgent: let's be bold about our national identity

We have the building blocks to define a Canadian identity, but they need to be reviewed, reformed, and rebuilt.

PSG Senator
Andrew
Cardozo



Opinion

At a roundtable with the Progressive Senate Group last week, the seasoned business leader Thomas d'Aquino told Senators that Canada is entering the most serious crisis since the Second World War. He didn't feel Canadians have come to terms with how serious this is.

I agree. Canada is facing an existential threat that is real, dangerous, and unprecedented. And while national angst is high, we are still hoping this is all short-lived.

There is a trade and economic threat, and—alongside the nonsense talk of the 51st state from the United States president—it feels like there is a threat to our national identity, nationhood, and sovereignty. There's a threat to the core of the country, and an

attempt to humiliate us as Canadians. It feels like a mean game from the country we thought was our best friend.

So, it is time to think deeply about what we mean when we sing "O Canada, we stand on guard for thee?" What is it we are guarding?

We want to guard our economy and our jobs.

We want to guard our geography, our borders, our waters, and the North.

But we also have to focus on fighting for Canada, the country, the people, our culture(s), our values, how we communicate with each other, and how we defend and build a stronger sense of nationhood. We need to guard what it means to be Canadian.

It is not enough to not want to be American.

We have the building blocks to define a Canadian identity, but they need to be reviewed, reformed, and rebuilt.

This is what has changed in the last half century: we have a lot more people with strong distinct regions, an evolved sense of a Quebec nation and francophone reality across the country, a much more diverse country, a stronger identity of Indigenous Peoples, and in many ways a more educated and worldly population.

We have a drastically changed media landscape, largely under threat, with a growing reality of online and social media, with strong benefits and huge

challenges. All aspects of our Canadian culture are under some level of competition from the overwhelming American cultural juggernaut more than ever.

The death of traditional fact-checked and balanced media is rapidly disappearing, which is one of the more dangerous threats to our democracy. It's a phenomenon that is affecting the whole world, include the U.S.

So here's my proposal: we need a national discussion on our Canadian identity—how to maintain it and how to grow it. We need to talk about the institutions we have, evaluate how effective they are, and how they can be reformed for the new world with all the challenges we face. We need more of these institutions, not fewer.

The most important of the key building blocks we currently have is the CBC/Radio-Canada, to which all Canadians have access. The public service broadcaster was started by then-Conservative prime minister R.B. Bennett in 1932. It now has robust radio, television, and a suite of online and social media platforms, which provide a wide range of content, reflecting Canadians to Canadians, and sometimes to other countries, too. It builds Canada, and while not perfect, this is not the time to shut it down, but rather to reform and strengthen it.

Now-former heritage minister Pascale St-Onge put forward her wish for CBC/Radio-Canada last

month—not her government's pledge after several months of active, albeit closed-door, review. With respect, it lacked boldness or a new vision that reflected the changing media landscape.

And on the Conservative side, all they have come up with is "Defund the CBC," which is a wildly popular slogan for their base.

Both parties owe Canadians a better, more contemporary, and forward-looking proposal.

The other cultural institutions include the Canada Council for the Arts, and a range of high-quality museums, mostly in the National Capital Region, but with two in Halifax and Winnipeg. Together with provincial, territorial, and local galleries and museums we have a lot of cultural content to be proud of. And then there's our natural heritage—the land and marine national parks and waterways across the land.

In this year of national uncertainty, and people avoiding travel to the U.S., Canadians should look to visiting these places and institutions and parks, and these entities should think about new incentives to attract people.

So here we are with extreme national angst and concern about our identity. This would be a good time to use the great instrument that is a royal commission, which would travel the country, hear from Canadians, and put forward a new bold, diverse, yet unifying vision by the end of 2025.

Failing a royal commission, with a whiff of bias on my part, I would suggest a special Senate committee to do just that. We have amazing people from every province and territory with a wide range of experience.

I am proud to say that over the last year I initiated a debate on the future of CBC/Radio-Canada in which various Senators set out very imaginative ideas. Further, the Senate Committee on Transport and Communications also undertook a study focused tightly on local programming of the public broadcaster. The study was interrupted by prorogation, but is close to completion and hopefully will resume when Parliament comes back. We heard many good recommendations about how to make the CBC and Radio-Canada more relevant across the country, and how to minimize any political bias.

My plea to Liberals, the NDP, and the Bloc Québécois is to dream big about building a renewed cultural identity infrastructure. This is an opportunity for Minister Steven Guilbeault as he assumes the newly named portfolio of Canadian culture and identity—yes, "identity"—to do something bold as is demanded by these existential times.

My plea to the Conservatives is to re-think their opposition to the public broadcaster in light of this new and serious existential threat our country faces.

This time in history demands all parties—and independent Senators—to set aside past ideas and dream big and bold. We seriously owe this to Canada, now and for generations ahead.

Andrew Cardozo is an independent Senator and member of the Progressive Senate Group. He is an artist and a past CRTC commissioner.

The Hill Times

WATER

WATER

WATER



[\[wateraid.org/ca/waterwaterwater \]](https://wateraid.org/ca/waterwaterwater)

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Editorial

Editorial

Canada running
aground with
friendshoring

The problem with electing a clown is that everyone thinks their actions are a joke.

While that statement may allow partisans of all stripes to project its meaning on their political opponent of choice, in this case, it applies specifically to United States President Donald Trump.

Canada has been a popular target since Trump's return to the White House, and the start of his campaign to lose friends and aggravate people. He has brought back the well-trod *bon mots* about making Canada the 51st American state that his Canadian colleagues have heard before—only this time, he has truly sunk his teeth in.

While Trump's fellow Americans look on in the same way they viewed his run on *The Apprentice*, the president has made move after terrible move to disrupt his own economy in the pursuit of aiming to destabilize Canada enough to take it over.

Those on the sidelines are viewing this episode as something they can leave on as background noise while they go about their usual day.

Foreign Minister Mélanie Joly hosted her G7 counterparts in Quebec last week, and having top diplomats from around the world on Canadian soil didn't seem to move the dial when it came to fostering support in the Canada-U.S. trade war.

"Many of my colleagues who came here thought this issue was still a joke, and this had to be taken in a humorous

way," she said during a March 14 press conference with Canadian media.

As *The Hill Times*' Neil Moss documented throughout the three-day foreign ministers' meeting, getting allies to understand that this is no laughing matter is an uphill battle.

Joly said she was told by her counterparts that their teams were telling them not to comment because it is a "joke."

New Prime Minister Mark Carney looked to drive home that point by going across the pond to France and the United Kingdom on March 17 instead of across the border for his first foreign visit.

However, Carney said he isn't necessarily looking for a public linking of arms.

"I don't think one needs to respond to every comment about another country," he told reporters. "We can stand up for ourselves."

Carney also said that despite his outreach to allies, he's "not trying to organize a co-ordinated retaliation" against Trump's worldwide tariffs.

But perhaps he should. As Carney acknowledged, there's only so far Canada can go, "given the fact that our economy is a 10th the size [of] the United States."

Canada should be working to make its case that Trump's threats are must-see TV. Yes, we're an independent nation, but having a ride-or-die we can count on right now would also go a long way towards pushing back against the U.S.

The Hill Times

Letters to the Editor

Question resistance to
tackling Islamophobia,
writes CJPME rep

Re: "Despite challenging first two years, Canada's special rep on Islamophobia is undaunted," (*The Hill Times*, March 12, p. 11).

I am writing in response to Laura Ryckewaert's article on Amira Elghawaby, Canada's special representative on combating Islamophobia. In a media landscape where minority perspectives are often buried at the end of articles or dismissed altogether, I appreciate that *The Hill Times* gave prominence to the controversy surrounding Bill 21—particularly the calls, including from the Quebec government itself, for Elghawaby's resignation over an op-ed she co-authored criticizing the law. As a Muslim myself, I cannot help but see Bill 21 for what it truly is: not a defense of secularism, but an institutionalized form of discrimination that targets religious minorities by barring government employees from wearing symbols like the hijab.

It is very unfortunate that Elghawaby has faced relentless attacks—not for any misconduct, but challenging state policies that marginalize religious minorities. This is not an isolated case; it reflects a broader systemic pattern in which activists who expose systemic discrimination are targeted with smear campaigns meant to intimidate and silence them. Yet, despite the backlash, Elghawaby refuses to be silenced. She released *The Canadian Guide to Understanding and Combating Islamophobia* at a time when acknowledging Islamophobia is met with hostility.

However, instead of questioning the legitimacy of her position, we should be asking: why is there such fierce resistance to confronting Islamophobia in Canada?

Lynn Naji
Junior analyst,
Canadians for Justice and
Peace in the Middle East
Saint-Laurent, Que.

The West should look in
the mirror to lay blame
for Middle East unrest,
says Montreal reader

Re: "Who is to blame for recent bloodshed in Syria?" (*The Hill Times*, March 11).

Gwynne Dyer provided a good background to the massacre of Alawites, but far less so on the West's role in propping up their killers.

Former Syrian president Bashar al-Assad's brutal crackdown of protesters during the 2011 Arab Spring was pounced upon as a regime change opportunity by the United States, European Union, Saudi Arabia, and Israel, with the latter only admitting to supplying arms eight years later, according to the *Times of Israel*.

Turkey's border was used as a transit point for western arms and waves of foreign jihadis. "Al-Qaida is on our side in Syria," reads a 2012 now-declassified email to

then-U.S. secretary of state Hillary Clinton.

It was only Russian troops and Hezbollah fighters backing Assad that prevented the black flag of the so-called Islamic State (ISIS) from fluttering over Damascus. With Moscow preoccupied with Ukraine and Hezbollah with Israel, Syria finally fell last year in a lightning strike by Hayat Tahrir al-sham (HTS).

Tasked by ISIS in Iraq to establish Al-Qaida in Syria—that morphed into HTS—was Ahmed al-Sharaa, now interim president of the country. He now receives high-level U.S. and EU delegations.

Who is primarily to blame for Syria's blood-letting? Look in the mirror.

Shirley Groves
Montreal, Que.



Looking to the future of the Canada-Ireland bond with confidence



For more than 300 years, Irish people have spread out to all regions of Canada, building new lives and helping to shape the very structures of this proud nation, writes Ambassador John Concannon. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

Although these are turbulent times, there is a tremendous energy around the Canada-Ireland relationship, and a sense that we are starting to really explore and develop its potential.

John Concannon



Opinion

As March has been officially designated “Irish Heritage Month” by the Canadian Parliament, it is an opportune time for us to reflect on the relationship between Ireland and Canada.

Ireland and Canada share deep historical ties. Indeed, Irish people played a central role in building Canada, from the early 19th-century construction of major infrastructure projects like the Rideau Canal, to the political foundations of the country itself. Thomas D’Arcy McGee, an Irish-born statesman, was a key architect of Canadian Confederation, advocating for unity and national

identity—we celebrate the 200th anniversary of the birth of McGee this year. The influence of the Irish continues into the modern era, with, for example, Irish Canadians playing a leading role in designing the iconic Canadian flag. This enduring connection is reflected in Canada’s rich Irish heritage, its vibrant Irish communities, and the shared values of democracy, resilience, and inclusivity that continue to bind the two nations together.

For more than 300 years, Irish people have spread out to all regions of Canada, building new lives and helping to shape the very structures of this proud nation. Today, an estimated 4.5 million Canadians—approximately 15 per cent of the population—claim Irish heritage.

St. Patrick’s Day is an opportunity for tens of millions of people with Irish heritage around the world—and many more friends of Ireland—to join in a celebration of Ireland and the literature, music, culture, history, and outlook on life that have shaped our island.

The Irish government is deeply committed to strengthening the country’s relationship with Canada. In the past seven years, we have expanded our “Team Ireland” presence across Canada—our footprint has grown with the opening of a consulate in Vancouver in 2018, and a consulate in Toronto in 2022. In addition to the full-time diplomatic presence, Ireland now has honorary consuls

in Calgary, Edmonton, Halifax, Quebec City, and St. John’s, N.L.

We appreciate that enjoyable days are not in abundance everywhere this March. Conflicts continue to devastate lives across the world, fuelling hunger and displacement. The effects of climate change are being felt in more and varied ways. Even in highly developed countries, increases in the cost of living and anxiety around technological and societal change have undermined confidence in established ways of doing business.

We are not immune to these international winds of change in Ireland, but we do try to limit their effects. And certainly when it comes to investors in Ireland and visitors to our island, we try to provide a consistency of approach that stands the test of time. A commitment to maintaining Ireland as a great place to do business and as a superb location to visit, study, or work is shared by all major political parties in our parliament. In a world as turbulent as today’s, we think this consistency is something to cherish.

Our most recent elections last November returned the two main parties who’ve been in government since 2020 for another five years until 2029. It is not that we think we have all the answers—we don’t—or that we don’t have very significant challenges—we do—rather, this is simply a reflection that Irish people see a value to consistency and building carefully on success in terms of

what we have to offer. Ireland regularly rates as among the best places in the world to do business, with the World Competitiveness Report 2024 ranking Ireland first internationally for attracting and retaining talent, first for the flexibility and adaptability of our workforce, and first for workforce productivity. For an island that experienced the worst famine in Europe of the 19th century, and crippling emigration until more recently, this rise to become a top 10 country on the United Nations Human Development Index didn’t materialize through a lack of new thinking or strategic ambition. But we also know that every marathon is best run at a steady pace in an agreed direction rather than by sprinting back and forth.

We try to take a clear and consistent approach to our foreign policy, too, in line with the principles of empathy and partnership that were at the heart of our most recent term on the UN Security Council.

Last month, we marked the third anniversary of Russia’s brutal invasion of Ukraine. Russia’s illegal aggression must end. But how we make peace matters. Our message is clear: there can be no solution about Ukraine, without Ukraine. A bad deal for Ukraine is a bad deal for us all. That’s why we stand in solidarity with Ukraine, now and in the future. We believe we have also taken a principled position in the Middle East. We firmly condemn the heinous terrorist attack by

Hamas on Israel on Oct. 7, 2023. The taking of hostages is unconscionable. We call for the return of all hostages to their families. In Gaza, the scale of destruction and human suffering is truly shocking. It is vital that we do not see a resumption of hostilities, and that the massive scale-up of desperately needed humanitarian aid continues.

As a small country, we are convinced that working together across borders—at the UN and in other international organizations—is the best way to tackle global challenges and deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals. We see the protection and promotion of human rights as essential to securing and maintaining peace and stability globally. This is part of the reason why Ireland is running for election to the UN Human Rights Council for the 2027-2029 term. We will make this case at the G20, too, where Ireland has been invited to participate for the first time over the course of 2025, and where we will also be active in making the case for harnessing innovation to deliver inclusive economic growth. And all of this work continues while we intensify our planning for Ireland’s presidency of the Council of the European Union in the second half of 2026. Ireland is fortunate to be at the heart of the EU, an unprecedented peace project, a vibrant market of more than 450 million people, and a catalyst for positive social change and inclusion.

While the world is going through turbulent times, there is a tremendous energy around the Canada-Ireland relationship, and a sense that we are starting to really explore and develop its potential. Ireland is now Canada’s 10th largest investor, with investments worth \$ 17.7-billion as of 2022, which is notable given that our population is roughly that of British Columbia and our territory is similar in size to New Brunswick. The total value of Ireland’s trade in goods and services with Canada was more than \$15.8-billion in 2023. Canada is a top 10 global market for Irish companies. Enterprise Ireland, our national business development agency, has supported 320 firms to regularly export to Canada, while 65 Irish companies have established a local presence, employing more than 7,500 people. In the coming years, Irish-Canadian co-operation is set to go from strength to strength.

There are undoubtedly deep and complex challenges to navigate over the months and years ahead. But there are opportunities, too, if we approach these challenges in a constructive and collaborative fashion, and use our multilateral and international institutions to forge consensus and unleash potential. There is a famous Irish saying that reads “*Ní neart go cur le chéile*,” there is no strength without unity. Just as we celebrate on St. Patrick’s Day, so, too, should we raise a glass to working together as closely as we can. Our people deserve nothing less.

John Concannon is the ambassador of Ireland to Canada.
The Hill Times

COMMENT

As the pendulum swings, Tories should be ready to pivot

The Conservative leader need not be who he isn't, but he might want to show and talk more about where he would take Canada in this uncertain world.

Tim Powers

Plain Speak



OTTAWA—This time next week—unless there is some bizarre, unexpected plot twist—Canada will be in the early days of a federal election campaign. An election—if current polls are to be believed—that looks like a toss-up. Gone, for the moment, is the 20-plus-point lead the Conservatives once had.

While that doesn't mean the Conservatives are sliding to a loss, it does mean they are going to need to reflect on what is their best route to winning. Tory Leader Pierre Poilievre has strong control of his party, and no cracks are showing in the team despite the recent poll swings. Historically, since this version of the Conservative Party came together in 2004, the core support of the party in 25-28 per cent of the electorate tends to remain strong. So they have strengths from which to build, but it is difficult to conceive that attacks on new Prime Minister Mark Carney, his wealth, links to predecessor Justin Trudeau, and a fixation on what remains of carbon pricing will do the trick.

United States President Donald Trump's tariff threats and never-ceasing annexation narrative have injected Canadians with deep-seated anxiety—so much so that, as just about every major credible polling firm has revealed, the time-for-change vibe of the election has dissipated. It may come back, and it should not be abandoned by the Conservatives,



Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre is a skilled politician with smart, able advisers who must see that the field they set to win the 2025 election is not the one where the current game is being played, writes Tim Powers. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

but it is not the anthem people are singing now.

Whether it is around a kitchen table, in a sports dressing room, or at a grocery store, everyone is talking about Trump and the threat they feel he is to Canada. Much like the COVID-19 pandemic at its peak, my experience during the last number of weeks has been that it's almost impossible to go somewhere and not hear

the worries people have about Trump, and what his behaviour might mean to their pocketbooks and overall well-being.

People are frightened; the degree of fright varies, but it exists at enough of a level that they are looking at things differently than they did six months ago regarding what the 2025 election should be about. And with a new, relatively undefined political player in the arena—Carney—the firmness of disdain that many Canadians had towards both the Liberal Party and Trudeau in particular is lessening significantly.

This isn't 1984 or 1993 when a long-tenured incumbent government changed leaders, and the new leader enjoyed a surge in the polls only to lead their respective parties to historic defeats. Surely the Conservative leadership team realizes that. The current pervasiveness of Trump's attack on Canada is not going to wash away in a couple of weeks, leading Canadians to vote out some guy whom the Conservatives claim is "just like Justin." Or lead voters to cast a ballot for the Conservatives just because the Liberal leader is apparently wealthy, well

educated, and has worked internationally. This is not the 2011 campaign either when the Liberal leader was "just visiting."

Poilievre is a skilled politician. He has smart, able advisers who must see that the field they set to win the 2025 election is not the one where the current game is being played. Right now, Canadians seem to want both a unity of purpose, and expression of anger that is focused on navigating a path through the Trump presidency that protects Canada. They are less inclined for rage farming against the Liberals simply because that is the way it was supposed to be.

And with daily doses of nasty coming from south of the border, voters could have less tolerance for a Canadian discourse that resembles the American one. At least temporarily.

The Conservative leader need not be who he isn't—inauthenticity is fatal. But he might want to show and talk more about where he would take Canada in this uncertain world. He could counterintuitively show that his strength extends beyond political strategy and mechanics, and pulverizing his political opponents. He could demonstrate that he has the depth and ability to handle these unprecedented times.

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

The Hill Times

A free, mobile, and caring Canada, you say?

Our inaction on internal trade and information barriers, and climate-change strategies hinders our future survival and development.

Ken Rubin

Opinion



OTTAWA—Doing away with provincial barriers is finally belatedly underway, but this is about more than getting your favourite Canadian wine, or ending health professional certification barriers that prevent easy mobility and universal health care going to more Canadians.

It means, among other matters, dealing with the many information barriers within Canada that do little to unite and inform us.

In more than 40 years, not once have provincial, territorial, and federal authorities met to consider lowering the secrecy barriers that are in place. Instead, intergovernmental relations are wrapped in confidentiality, and many communications



Nova Scotia Premier Tim Houston's Progressive Conservatives demonstrate that provincial governments want even more regressive amendments to their freedom of information acts, writes Ken Rubin. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

and committee discussions are mandatorily exempted as secret federal-provincial affairs. The public should be entitled to know about these Canadian inter-governmental deliberations on matters like pharmacare, pandemics, and digital-wallet sharing.

Never have all Canadian jurisdictions united to open up all aspects of their legislation for much greater and more timely public disclosures. Instead, the trend is to close their borders to more open government.

As one recently re-elected provincial government—Tim Houston's Nova Scotia Progressive Conservatives—has shown, governments want even more regressive amendments to their freedom of information acts.

Nova Scotia just introduced an omnibus bill that proposes

to make requesters file more "specific" applications or else be subject to their requests having to pass a vexatious test. Critics see this as greatly diminishing requesters' rights, and giving the province greater control over what passes muster as "appropriate" data for release.

Recently, as well, one federal agency has gone further, with the Canadian Transportation Agency (CTA) wanting to make it a crime for air passenger complainants to share their resolution findings by fining those passengers who publicly provide the details of their reached settlement.

The CTA proposal calls for administrative monetary penalties from \$50 to \$5,000 if affected complainants share the details of the complaint resolution process, even if the rulings could help

others who experienced similar problems with airlines.

These non-disclosure, confidential agreements have no time limits and place those matters outside regular access to information practices.

Some see this as going against the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and as being contradictory to similar small claims settlements where data can be accessed. Only airlines could assist if they and the passenger reach a disclosure agreement; otherwise, airlines may well be content that CTA settlements remain permanently confidential.

The threat to lessening what Canadians can access or see protected—if it is their personal data—can also come from abroad.

United States President Donald Trump and his minions can—if push comes to shove—get access to Canadian data, including sensitive health records stored in the U.S. or data on diversity. For some, the answer is mandated data localization requirements restricting the flow of data across borders, and to be extra vigilant and to not trust any Trump-issued assertions.

The degree to which the U.S. and other nations or rogue elements conduct surveillance of Canadians and surreptitiously penetrate Canadian data and data banks has never thoroughly been examined, but the underlying tension to that very possible threat is there.

Sometimes, Canadian authorities just turn their heads, and simply largely ignore significant international events and emerging data that affect the country.

For instance, recently obtained access-to-information immigration data indicates that mid-level authorities have barely begun to develop a legal framework for dealing with refugees affected by increasing climate change, and have not as yet assigned climate change as a relevant factor for evaluating immigration applicants.

This is short-sighted as climate change will cause mass migrations in the millions of people, with much hardship in the next 25 years affecting Canada. As a February *Globe and Mail* story pointed out, this is likely to immediately affect whether the federal government can deport people to regions hard hit by droughts, floods, and rising temperatures and sea levels.

By not quickly developing a strategy to deal with enormous climate changes, we betray our idea of ourselves as being a caring and united nation.

Likewise, our inaction on internal trade and information barriers also hinders our future survival and development.

It's got to be elbows up and spirits high on many fronts.

Ken Rubin writes about transparency issues and is reachable via kenrubin.ca.

The Hill Times

COMMENT

The real message from the Ford-initiated meeting in D.C.? Canada has no chance of dodging Trump's trade war for now



Ontario Premier Doug Ford said the March 13 meeting with the U.S. commerce secretary was 'productive,' but he could be grasping at straws, writes Les Whittington. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

As relieved as the Canadian contingent was to be engaged in an adult conversation, the March 13 discussion yielded nothing in the way of immediate progress.

Les Whittington

Need to Know



OTTAWA—Canadian political leaders and officials seem to have managed to move talks with the Americans over their trade-war obsession beyond the two-drunks-in-a-bar stage. At least for a day or so.

Ontario Premier Doug Ford left the March 13 90-minute sit-down discussion in Washington, D.C., with Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick and other White House aides in a state of near glee. He said the talks with Lutnick had been civilized—a real breakthrough—and were “very productive”—labelling the session the best he’s had in the U.S. capital.

Now-Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne and International Trade Minister Dominic LeBlanc also said the talks were constructive enough to be continued at the official level this week. Indeed, all

concerned on the Canadian side appeared surprised to learn that somebody in the White House is in possession of something that might pass for an idea behind the United States’ chaotic, ludicrous trade onslaught against the whole world.

But, as relieved as the Canadian contingent was to be engaged in an adult conversation, last Thursday’s discussion yielded nothing in the way of immediate progress.

Underneath the veil of vague optimism expressed by Ford and others was a blunt message: the four months Canadians have spent trying to convince President Donald Trump that demolishing continental free trade is a terrible, senseless move have turned out to be a waste of time. It was also made clear that the extreme, punitive U.S. trade measures that are already beginning to wreck the Canadian economy are definitely going to continue and get worse. Moreover, Ford et al. were informed there’s no point trying to deflect whatever additional damage is coming Canada’s way on April 2 when the U.S. administration is planning to get even with potentially every country on the globe in a flamboyant act of cooked-up international trade revenge.

The Canadian officials were told Trump is, in fact, very committed to using tariffs as a policy to redefine the U.S.’s relationship to the world and pay for promised income tax cuts, the *New York Times* revealed, citing sources.

Knowing where the Trump crowd is coming from—as opposed to thinking they are all just completely bonkers—might apparently be worth something, at least if Ford is to be believed. But some might find it difficult to see how this U.S. plan is

anything more than an attempt to dress up a destructive, beggar-thy-neighbour fantasy about recapturing the manufacturing might enjoyed by the U.S. in the postwar boom 75 years ago.

The world has moved on, of course, and even if one were theoretically willing to wait 10 years for industrial sectors such as the car industry to reconstruct their continentally integrated industry solely in the U.S., there’s no evidence that tariffs are an effective driver of more manufacturing strength or manufacturing employment.

For instance, studies found that Trump’s 2018 tariffs on steel created 1,000 jobs in that sector but raised steel prices, made U.S. manufacturers less competitive in the global market, and led to a drop in production of downstream users of the metal, like carmakers, of nearly \$3.5-billion. The steel tariff—along with other import levies including Trump’s tariff on aluminum—generated higher input costs that led to the loss of 75,000 jobs elsewhere in the U.S. economy, researchers reported.

As for the wider impact, it’s an accepted fact among just about everyone except for the economic cranks around the president that tariffs filter through to consumers and inevitably drive up inflation, the third rail of U.S. politics. Prices for U.S.-made cars, for example, could shoot up by \$10,000 each under Trump’s economic framework. Even the president has started admitting that consumers—despite having elected him mainly to curb the cost of living—will be facing higher prices as a result of his tariff mania.

This administration defies prediction, but the inflation bomb in the White House’s trade practices can’t be ignored forever. Business and consumer sentiment in the U.S. is down significantly, as are the stock markets and Trump’s popularity.

That leads one to the curious optimism expressed by Ford after the meeting in Washington last week. It may be there’s something else going on here.

According to the NYT story, the Canadians learned that any negotiations to remove some tariffs or even strike a more comprehensive trade deal would come after the U.S. announces reciprocal tariffs on April 2.

Given Ford’s upbeat take, it could be he sees this as a signal of a possible off-ramp if victims of Trump’s anti-trade fixation like Canada can keep from causing too much trouble until next month. In other words, a hint that the Trump administration might be willing to back off on the trade war once Trump claims a big win with his global tariff roll-out on April 2. But, given the experience of the past four months, it’s also entirely possible the Ontario premier is just grasping at straws.

Les Whittington is a regular columnist for The Hill Times.

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OPINION

The missing ministers: Carney squanders an opportunity

Prime Minister Mark Carney's decision to dim the focus on gender equality reflects a troubling trend that will erode Canada's leadership in equal rights.

Rebecca Bailey

Opinion



Newly sworn-in Prime Minister Mark Carney announced his cabinet on March 14 with two major omissions: ministers for women and gender equality, as well as for diversity, inclusion, and persons with disabilities have been removed.

This is more than just a political oversight; it is a huge missed

opportunity. It is a marked retreat from Canada's history of championing gender equality—a dangerous signal at a time when the rights of women and vulnerable populations are under unprecedented threat.

We are in the midst of some of the largest shifts of economic instability, growing populist movements, and the erosion of women's rights. In this context, Carney's decision to diminish the focus on gender equality reflects a troubling trend that will see Canada's leadership in equal rights begin to decline on the global stage.

In the United States, the situation has already begun to deteriorate, with the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* serving as a stark reminder of the new lack of bodily autonomy for women. North of the border, we have watched in shock and dismay at the systematic dismantling of hard-won equal rights victories. Seemingly overnight, equality laws that have taken decades to build have disappeared.

Since coming into power, the new Trump administration

has swiftly undone significant efforts to advance equal rights. Programs, policies, and laws designed to address systemic racism, structural inequities, and to support marginalized groups have been rolled back, under the guise of meritocracy and fairness. In fact, this new direction will exclude large segments of the U.S. population from important education and occupation opportunities to contribute to the country's economic growth. Canada risks following a similar misguided path. We must reaffirm our commitment to equality, not retreat from it.

As Canada enters a new political phase under Carney, the absence of a minister solely focused on advancing gender equality raises grave concerns. It signals that this is a secondary issue when it is, in fact, a critical pillar of societal progress.

Women bear the brunt of economic turbulence

When economic downturns occur, women often bear the

brunt, experiencing higher rates of job loss, income insecurity, and domestic violence. We are entering a period of global economic turbulence, and the failure to maintain a cabinet position dedicated to women's rights sends a chilling message to half of Canada's population: your rights are not a priority.

With stakes this high, we must ask ourselves: why would Canada—with its proud history of advocating for women's rights—remove a cabinet position that has been integral to advancing equality for over half a century? The elimination of this post is a symbolic gesture that risks erasing the institutional commitment to gender equity, critically needed at this time.

Countries with higher levels of gender equality have stronger economies, healthier populations, and more stable political environments. If there was ever a time that Canada needed this, it's now.

In these uncertain times, women, gender-diverse, and

vulnerable individuals need a champion. The absence of a dedicated minister undermines the very possibility of systemic change. It leaves vulnerable populations—already suffering from inequality, violence, and discrimination—without a visible leader to address their unique needs in times of crisis.

A step backwards

Carney's decision to abandon this crucial role is not just a political misstep; it is a step backwards. In this critical time, we must look to the future, not retreat to the past.

The decision to not appoint these two critical ministerial positions represents a tragic missed opportunity for leadership—one that could ultimately weaken Canada's commitment to ensuring equality for all its citizens.

The newly appointed cabinet has an opportunity to act swiftly and rectify this decision. If they don't, it will be difficult for this group to convince half of the voting population to support the Liberals when women have just been told their rights aren't a critical concern for this new government.

Rebecca Bailey is the CEO of Women in Communications & Technology.

The Hill Times

COMMENT

Filipino family feud leads to Duterte's ICC arrest

Rodrigo Duterte finished his single permitted term as Philippines president in 2022, leaving 30,000 police murders in his wake and a popular approval rating at 88 per cent.

Gwynne Dyer

Global Affairs



LONDON, U.K.—Everybody has heard the saying: "The mills of justice grind slowly, but they grind exceedingly fine." The saying is a promise that all crimes will eventually be punished—but it is a lie.

Most crimes everywhere have always gone unpunished. So while the arrest of former Philippines president Rodrigo Duterte by the International Criminal Court (ICC) last week for the "crime against humanity" of mass murder was long overdue, it also came as a great surprise.

Duterte was elected president in 2016 on the promise that he would wage a "war on drugs," and he meant "war" literally. Once in office, he sent the police out with orders to kill drug dealers and drug users without trial or even arrest. The bodies were generally just left in the streets.

By the time the ICC opened its investigation in 2018, the death toll was already at least 8,000 people shot to death by the police, mostly small-time users and dealers, but also including the usual quota of mistaken identity cases. Far from denying his deeds, Duterte gloried in them, and promised more of the same—and most Filipinos cheered. It is not a woke place.

When he finished his single legally permitted term in 2022—with up to 30,000 police mur-

ders to his credit—his popular approval rating was 88 per cent, higher than when he took office six years before. And just to make sure nothing went wrong after he left office, a deal between the country's most powerful families saw his daughter Sara elected as vice-president.

But Filipino politics is a soap opera with guns, and what went wrong was the deal between Vice-President Sara Duterte and the scion of the Marcos clan, President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. (His father, Ferdinand Marcos, was the president and dictator of the Philippines from 1965-86; his mother was famous for having 3,000 pairs of shoes.)

The deal was that Sara would run for president with Bongbong's support in 2028, and get her own six years in power. But she couldn't wait, or he decided to sideline her, or both. Thereupon, in the same family tradition of openness that led her dad to boast publicly about running death squads, she posted a video on Facebook about the hitman she had hired.

"This country is going to hell because we are led by a person who doesn't know how to be a president and who is a liar. Don't worry about my safety. I have talked to a person and I said, 'if I get killed, go kill Bongbong, Liza Araneta [his wife], and Martin Romualdez [speaker of the House].' No joke. No joke. I said, 'do not stop until you kill them' and he said 'yes.'"

In Manila, this is definitely not a joke. Sara Duterte probably does have a couple of assassins in her contact book. So Bongbong's response, in addition to doubling his security, was to retaliate by handing Sara's father over to the ICC. A private jet delivered him to The Hague on March 12, and he was taken into custody by the court's chief prosecutor, Karim Khan.

All very entertaining, if viewed from afar, and it does mark a significant step forward for the ICC. Duterte is the first former head of state who is not from an African country to be brought before the ICC to answer for his crimes.

There were good reasons why all previous ones involved African regimes: the continent is home to one-third of the world's countries, most of its dictatorships, and most of its wars. Nevertheless, even competent, law-abiding African governments were starting to feel victimized, and it helps to have an Asian country on the list.

But more importantly, this is part of a much broader initiative to bring the rule of law to a domain where legal justice was previously unavailable. Where can individual citizens turn to get protection of their own rights—including the right to life—against the government of a sovereign state that does not obey its own laws?

Obviously, this enterprise is not doing very well at the moment. The ICC can do its research and issue arrest warrants even for serving heads of state like Russian President Vladimir Putin and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, but the most it can achieve is to make them cautious about travelling to countries that might actually execute the warrant.

Even retired mass murderers like Rodrigo Duterte are generally safe so long as they stay at home—unless they fall afoul of a successor government like his daughter did. If the ultimate goal is to build a global civilization that respects individual rights—and especially the right to life—then we are still a very long way from the Promised Land.

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

The Hill Times

FEATURE

Carney makes cabinet calls

The Hill Times photographs by Sam Garcia



Prime Minister Mark Carney speaks to reporters after the cabinet swearing-in ceremony at Rideau Hall on March 14.



Ministers Jonathan Wilkinson, left, Joanne Thompson, and Steven Guilbeault are joined by then-incoming new minister Arielle Kayabaga before the cabinet swearing-in ceremony on March 14.



Former prime minister Jean Chrétien tells reporters that Carney is 'respected internationally.'



Carney smiles as he greets his wife Diana Fox Carney.



Carney, right, shakes hands with Nova Scotia MP Kody Blois, one of three new MPs to join cabinet.



Ali Ehsassi, centre, becomes minister of government transformation, public services, and procurement. He was parliamentary secretary to the innovation minister from December 2019 to August 2021.



Carney, left, Chrystia Freeland, and Governor General Mary Simon. Freeland was all smiles with her return to cabinet, this time taking on transport and internal trade.



Former governors general Michaëlle Jean, left, and David Johnston attended the ceremony.



The cabinet class photo of March 2025.

OPINION

Unmuted: elevating Black participation in politics

The upcoming federal elections are a chance to motivate political participation and empower Black Canadians to exercise their democratic rights.

Nnamdi Ndubuka



Opinion

Across the globe, the Black community has faced a long and painful history of oppression marked by damaged systems, racial profiling, institutional racism, segregation, and political resistance. The ongoing fight for equality has had a profound and measurable impact on Black individuals, who are more likely to experience unemployment, low income, hate crimes, wrongful accusations, or violence.

In Canada, the story is no different. What began as a brutal

history of enslavement and political exclusion has evolved into an ongoing struggle for equality and representation—one that is far from over. Despite generations of progress, systemic barriers continue to hinder Black Canadians from fully participating in politics, posing significant challenges to achieving true equity and justice.

According to Statistics Canada, Black Canadians are less likely to engage in electoral processes, although a notable 70 per cent participate in non-electoral political activities, which is higher than the rest of the population. While voting rates among Black Canadians have increased to 81 per cent, particularly in federal elections, their participation in provincial (71 per cent) and municipal elections (58 per cent) remains markedly lower.

Despite the significant contributions of Black Canadians to the nation's cultural and social fabric, systemic barriers, biases, and discrimination continue to impede political representation and participation. According to Elections Canada, this trend could lead the country to a situation where fewer than half of eligible voters participate in elections, posing

serious challenges to the integrity of our democratic system in the long term.

We must ask ourselves: why are there so few Black people in office while many support these offices from marginalized positions? Is there an unspoken rule that senior political roles cannot be effectively managed by Black individuals? Why does race seem to determine capabilities?

The limited political participation of the Black community can be attributed to several factors, including, but not limited to:

1. Political disinclination: Many Black individuals interested in running for political office feel discouraged due to prevalent apathy within the community. This disenfranchisement contributes to the underrepresentation of Black Canadians in politics.

2. Institutional barriers: Factors such as racial profiling, and limited access to employment and health care act as obstacles to engagement in the political sphere.

3. Limited participation in partisan politics: There is a notable absence of engagement in partisan political activities, including participation in internal political party events such as annual

general meetings, constituency associations, board nominations, leadership elections, and fundraising initiatives. Active involvement in these undertakings offers an opportunity to acquire a deeper understanding of the political landscape and to enhance decision-making processes.

4. The absence of long-term vision that ensures continuity, endurance, and the sustainability of political gains.

While a few prestigious Black Canadians—such as Lincoln Alexander, Rosemary Brown, Jean Augustine, Greg Fergus, Kaycee Madu, Marci Ien, Leslyn Lewis, and Annamie Paul—have broken through these barriers, their successes are exceptions rather than the norm. Currently, fewer than five Black Canadians per 1,000 hold senior decision-making positions in government—a stark reminder of how much further we need to go.

To combat the ongoing apathy and political discrimination, we strongly encourage everyone to take the following actions:

1. Address systemic barriers: By tackling the limited access to resources and opportunities, we can enable more Black Canadians to engage in politics, benefiting both individuals and the community as a whole.

2. Engage in community projects: Fostering engagement and partnerships between political institutions and Black Canadian communities is essential for increasing participation in politics. This can be achieved through

regular town hall meetings, community events, and active engagement on social media. Additionally, political organizations should focus on actively recruiting Black candidates and assigning them to winnable constituencies.

3. Foster education and awareness campaigns: Education and awareness campaigns can help dispel misconceptions and inform individuals about the political process, available resources, voting procedures, and the importance of civic engagement. This can be accomplished by organizing training events, summits, and information sessions. Political leaders must engage thoughtfully and consistently with Black voters, listening to their concerns, learning from their experiences, and crafting proposals that reflect the diverse communities they aim to serve.

4. Support Black Canadian-led initiatives: Supporting initiatives that promote civic engagement, leadership development, and community empowerment is crucial for ensuring the participation of Black Canadians in politics.

With the upcoming federal elections, we have a key opportunity to motivate political participation and empower Black Canadians to exercise their democratic rights. It's essential for everyone to recognize and value the vital role of Black voices in shaping our society's future.

Dr. Nnamdi Ndubuka is the national chair of the Association of Black Conservatives.

The Hill Times

Restrictions on living abroad: the inequality of Canada's pension portability

The aspect of Canada's pension system that supports poor seniors pushes some into even greater precarity.

Cati Coe



Opinion

The new registration requirements on Canadians spending more than 30 days in the United States have highlighted how many citizens live outside of the country.

In addition to requirements imposed by host countries like the U.S., they also face restrictions from Canada. In particular, low-

-income migrants who have contributed to Canada's economy have trouble returning to their country of origin because of residency restrictions on their pensions.

As a 73-year-old former warehouse worker originally from Ghana told me, "Canada has taken all my power. . . . Thirty-eight years ago, I came to Canada. . . as a young man to work. . . All my strength went to working in Canada." In an era of transnational migration, should not pensions follow workers wherever they wish to live out their remaining years?

Canada is renowned globally for the efficacy of its pension system in keeping older adults out of poverty—only 7.2 per cent are poor, compared to an average of 12.8 per cent for Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries. This relatively low rate of poverty among seniors is mainly attributed to the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS), which—as of 1984—tops up uni-

versal Old Age Security (OAS) to a certain minimum for low-income seniors. The GIS was received by 2.6 million Canadians in July 2024, or about 33 per cent of those aged 65 and older. The GIS primarily benefits those who did not have a standard employment profile, such as women who had checkered work histories because of unpaid care responsibilities, or migrants who only found precarious, low-wage work after they arrived in Canada and did not qualify for the maximum OAS payment, only available after 40 years of contributions. The GIS is a progressive instrument to lift low-income older adults out of poverty.

Simultaneously, it introduces new inequalities. The current minimum of just under \$1,800 is not sufficient to live on, particularly if one is paying rent in a metropolitan area. Despite being pegged to the consumer price index, seniors find it difficult to live on this amount. It therefore forces seniors to depend on family and

community assistance. In addition, it makes some immigrants want to return to their home countries that have a lower cost of living. Yet the GIS is not as portable as the OAS and contributory Canadian Pension Plan (CPP). One has to reside in Canada for at least six months in a 12-month period in order to receive the GIS continuously. In contrast, CPP can be paid to Canadians abroad, as can OAS, so long as one has been resident in Canada for more than 20 years after the age of 18.

It is not clear from available statistics how many GIS recipients are suspended for non-residence, but in my research with more than a 100 Ghanaian immigrants who lived and worked in Canada for 20 to 30 years, I learned that the GIS residency requirement propels and constrains the movement of the poorest people. Those without family support in Canada spend more time in Ghana. Yet they cannot stay permanently, because

to lose the GIS might mean losing up to half of their pension. In order to maintain their GIS eligibility, immigrants are thus pushed into going back and forth, as snowbirds. This requires extra costs of maintaining residences in two countries, and flying long distances despite physical frailty. Thus, the aspect of Canada's pension system that supports poor seniors pushes some into even greater precarity. In contrast, high-earning, professional Ghanaian Canadians can live permanently in Ghana because they are not reliant on the GIS.

Solutions to make the GIS more portable are simple. One possibility would be to increase OAS payments, although this would not help those who had been in Canada for fewer than 20 years. Another possibility would be to peg GIS payments to the cost of living in the country of residence. A third possibility would be to allow people to receive their pension abroad, but to staunch the amount so that it is no longer indexed to the consumer price index, as in the United Kingdom. All these measures would make the pension more portable and help immigrant workers feel that they receive their due rewards from working in Canada.

Cati Coe is a professor, and Canada Research Chair in Migration and Care in the department of political science at Carleton University.

The Hill Times

EVs AND EV INFRASTRUCTURE

Electrify everything!

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As the U.S. drives backwards, Canada must pull ahead

p. 19

Canada's next move starts a few thousand feet below the ground

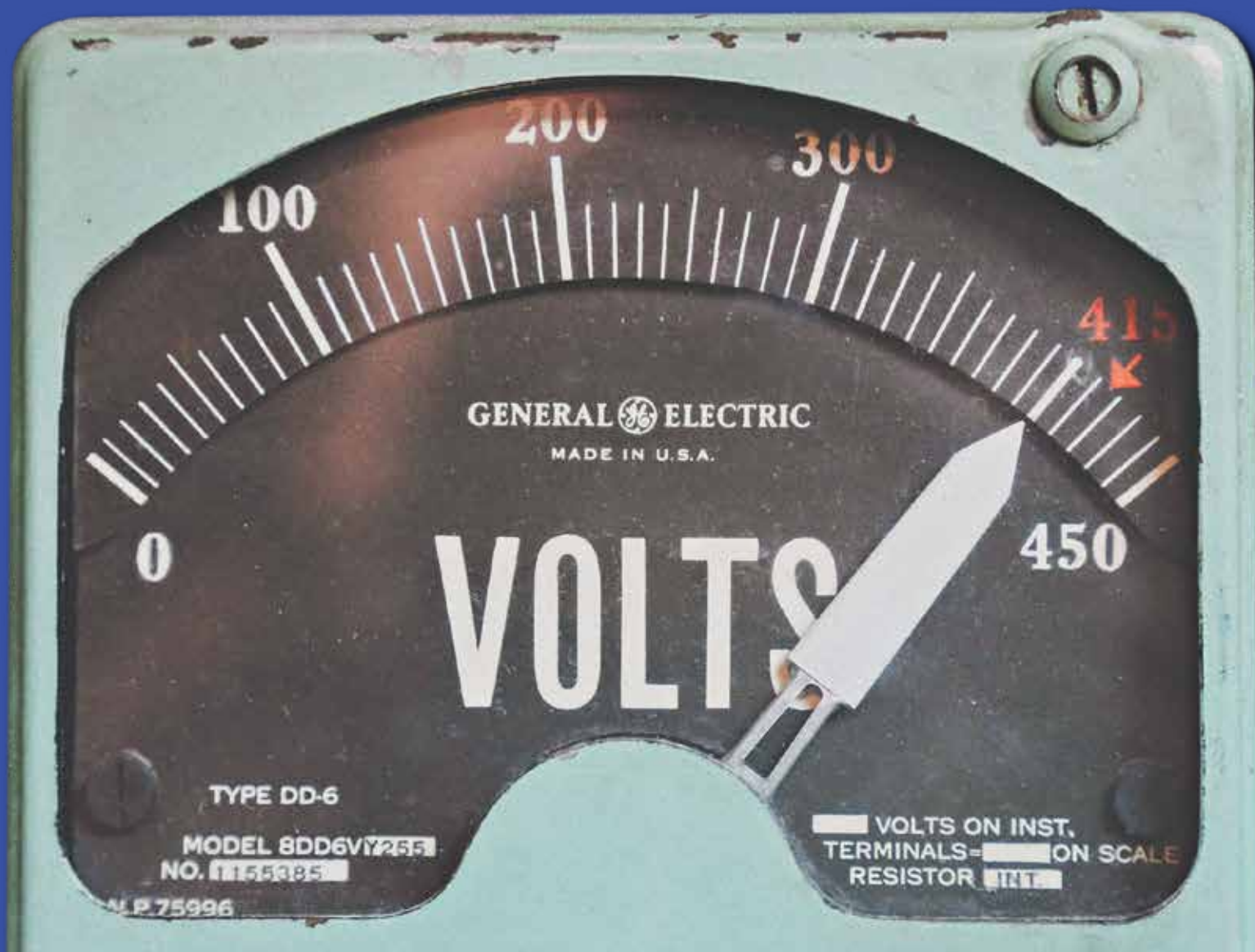
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Critical mineral processing will protect Canada's EV industry

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Moving forward with Canada's EV transition requires a holistic approach

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EVs & EV INFRASTRUCTURE Policy Briefing

Policy Briefing EVs & EV INFRASTRUCTURE

Trade war could 'upend' EV sector, Canada must argue for integrated market, says CEO of vehicle manufacturing group

There are signs of pushback against measures by the Trump administration that threaten clean energy development, according to Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association head Flavio Volpe.

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Massive uncertainty from a trade war with the United States is disrupting supply chains, and could completely upend the auto sector at a critical time as Canada plans a transition to electric vehicles, according to the president and CEO of the Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers' Association.

"We build cars together with the Americans," said Brian Kingston. "If you look at a typical vehicle produced in Canada, about 50 per cent of the parts and components in that car come from the United States. If you implement tariffs on those components and finished vehicles that go into the U.S., it creates huge disruption to a very well-efficient supply chain, and that could result in production stoppages, halts, job losses, price increases, and this will create challenges not just for traditional gas-powered vehicle manufacturing, but for the emerging manufacturing of electric vehicles and batteries."

On March 6, U.S. President Donald Trump announced that Canadian exports that are "compliant" with the Canada-U.S.-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) would be granted a reprieve until April 2 on

There are no alternatives to Canadian-produced steel and aluminum that can be quickly accessed, and so by taxing these inputs, what the U.S. administration is doing is increasing the cost of building cars in North America and in Canada.

— Brian Kingston

tariffs his administration imposed on March 4 to the tune of 25 per cent for imports from Canada and Mexico, but with a lower 10-per cent levy on Canadian energy.

On March 12, the U.S. also imposed a 25-per-cent tariff on steel and aluminum from all countries. Canada responded on March 13 with 25-per-cent reciprocal tariffs on a list of steel products worth \$12.6-billion and aluminum products worth \$3-billion, as well as additional imported U.S. goods worth \$14.2-billion.

Then-innovation minister François-Philippe Champagne (Saint-Maurice-Champlain, Que.) described Canadian steel and aluminum as essential for the manufacturing industry, and as crucial for North America's energy future, economic security, and national security in a Finance Department press release on March 12. On March 14, Champagne was shuffled into the finance minister role.

"Imposing tariffs brings consequences that will impact both sides of the border, raising costs for Americans and Canadians alike. Canadian steel and aluminum support vital U.S. industries, from defence and shipbuilding to automotive. We will continue to stand strong for Canada, our

workers, and our industries, and fight to protect our shared interests," said Champagne in the press release.

Kingston described the tariff announcements as a damaging policy, and cited an analysis released on March 12 by S&P Global, a U.S.-based financial information and analytics corporation, which gave a 50 per cent chance of the trade war resulting in an extended period of production slowdowns for automakers. He also predicted that vehicle production in North America would drop by 20,000 units per day within a week of the release of the analysis if conditions remain unchanged.

"Steel and aluminum is



Now-Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne described Canadian steel and aluminum as essential for the manufacturing industry and as crucial for North America's energy future, economic security, and national security in a March 12 press release while he was serving as innovation minister. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

a critical input into the vehicle supply chain for parts and vehicles, and so if you put in place tariffs which are taxes on those key inputs, it will increase the cost facing automakers to build products in North America," said Kingston. "There are no alternatives to Canadian-produced steel and aluminum that can be quickly accessed, and so by taxing these inputs, what the U.S. administration is doing is increasing the cost of building cars in North America and in Canada."

Kingston said he remains hopeful that tariffs can still be avoided. When asked about actions Canada could take to save plans to grow a domestic EV industry, Kingston said Canada must continue to make the case to the U.S. that the two countries have an integrated market. He described the one-month exemption on CUSMA-compliant goods as early progress.

"The United States needs Canada. We're the largest export destination for U.S.-manufactured vehicles by far. They need the Canadian market just as much as we need the U.S. market. I think there's a lot of mutually beneficial cases to be made for why we have to find a way forward here, but I do expect things to be a bit rocky in the coming weeks and months," he said. "In a worst case scenario where tariffs go forward, what you'll be looking at is production declines across the North American market and a less competitive industry, higher prices for consumers as a result of this tax policy, and a weaker economy and a weaker automotive industry."

Daniel Breton, president and CEO of Electric Mobility Canada, told *The Hill Times* that he con-

New Innovation Minister Anita Anand, pictured right with Transport Minister Chrystia Freeland, left, and Housing Minister Nathaniel Erskine-Smith, was sworn in at Rideau Hall on March 14. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia



siders some other actions by the Trump administration to be more threatening to Canada's EV sector than the tariff announcements. As an example, he cited plans by the Trump White House to eliminate the \$7,500 federal electric vehicle tax credit that was renewed under the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).

"Eighty per cent of the cars that we make here are sold to the U.S. That would be the same if they were internal combustion or all our future plans on EVs. And so the most important thing that's affecting future prospects ... is the regulator of that market is turning away from supporting its growth," he said. "The next five years,

especially in as many of them include Donald Trump and ... the hangover from an administration that is anti-EV, is going to hurt the value proposition of the Canadian EV sector and supply chain in the interim."

To support Canada's EV industry, Canada should pursue an aggressive strategy relating to critical minerals, in terms of permitting and extraction, Breton argued.

"We should absolutely be committed on establishing processing capability," he said. "The role of government should be in extraction, permitting, processing, and financing of the mining projects."

pleted or currently under construction in the U.S.

"They're saying that if the U.S. wants to unleash its energy ... well, unleashing energy goes beyond oil and gas. It can be about electricity, electric cars and renewable energy as well," said Volpe. "What we are seeing south of the border and north of the border is more and more car makers saying, 'let's renegotiate CUSMA so that we can all come to an agreement and have some clarity on policies.'"

Volpe agreed the tariff situation is causing uncertainty for automakers and many other industries, and more will be known on April 2.

"It's not as if it was a thing strictly for the EV industry. Just to give you an idea, yesterday I was on the call with the Department of Finance to talk about trade and tariffs. There were 350 people on the call, from agriculture and health and education and automotive. Everybody's asking questions," he said. "Short answer, is it having an impact? We don't know yet. One thing we know is the fact that ... there's no such thing as a Canadian-made car, meaning that they come from the U.S. to Canada, depending on the parts. These are vehicles, oftentimes, that are built with parts from Canada, parts from the U.S., with some aluminum or steel from Canada or the U.S. or Mexico."

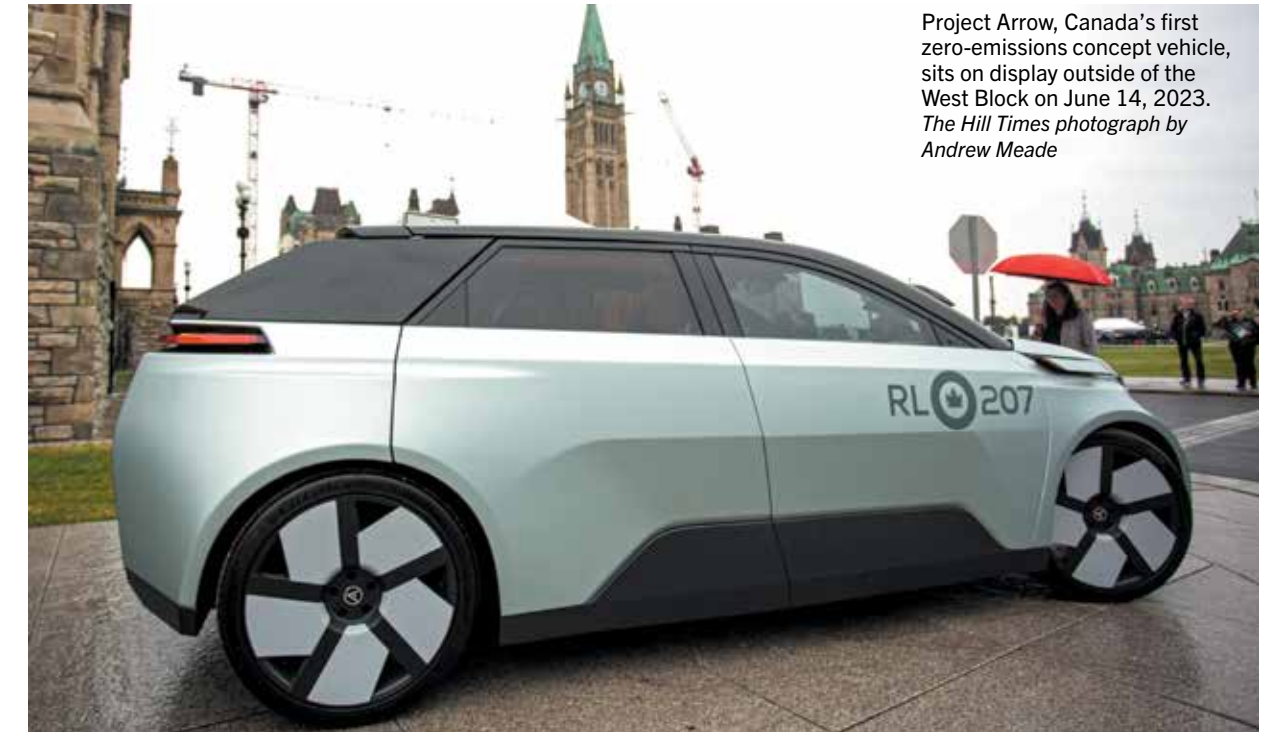
Volpe argued that the tariff situation is also potentially an opportunity for Canadian companies in the mining sector, electricity production, or infrastructure deployment to create jobs in sectors that cannot be shifted geographically.

"You're not going to move the hydro dam from Quebec to the south. You're not going to move the nuclear power plant from Ontario to the U.S. These jobs cannot be delocalized," he said. "If we do invest into making sure that we accelerate the transition to a decarbonized economy, this goes from electricity production to distribution and then to infrastructure deployment, which would create jobs all across Canada in sectors where none of these jobs could go to the U.S. We have to make sure that we have a supply chain that will support this."

Zero-emission vehicle adoption in Canada finished last year with an adoption rate of 18.9 per cent in the final quarter 2024, representing about one out of every five vehicles sold in Canada, as reported by Electric Autonomy Canada on Feb. 28.

Alla Kolesnikova, head of data and analytics at Adamas Intelligence, a research and advisory firm that provides market intelligence on supply chains for critical materials, told *The Hill Times* that EV sales are increasing in Canada, but this growth still reflects "quite moderate penetration."

Volpe argued those Republicans were speaking out against the IRA roll back because of EV and EV battery plants that are either com-



Project Arrow, Canada's first zero-emissions concept vehicle, sits on display outside of the West Block on June 14, 2023. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Brian Kingston, president and CEO of the Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers' Association, says, 'Steel and aluminum is a critical input into the vehicle supply chain,' and imposing tariffs 'will increase the cost facing automakers to build product in North America.' *Photograph* courtesy of Brian Kingston



Flavio Volpe, president of the Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association, says, 'What we are seeing south of the border and north of the border is more and more car makers saying, let's renegotiate CUSMA so that we can all come to an agreement and have some clarity on policies.' *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

The penetration rates for battery electric vehicles and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles in Canada have increased from eight per cent in 2022 to 11 per cent in 2023, and to 14 per cent in 2024, according to data by Adamas Intelligence shared with *The Hill Times*.

Kolesnikova described these increases as good progress for Canada, but not comparable to some "more progressive countries," such as Norway.

"We do have increase of sales, but on the global scale it's not that significant, unfortunately," she said. "In Canada, we don't have much incentives, and I would say, great sales infrastructure and charging infrastructure to further induce buyers outside of major urban hubs to proceed with purchasing of electric vehicles."

In terms of the possible effects of tariffs on Canada's EV and EV battery supply chain, Kolesnikova said it is too soon to tell.

"I think the stakeholders, industry associations, manufacturer associations, [and] various think tanks that are supported by Canadian governments, they are being very local in their message that we need to discuss what's going to happen and how we can proceed there reasonably," she said. "I just don't want

to speculate on what exactly will happen, because, for the current supply chains, there is a strong integration and tariffs can raise the prices significantly. For the future supply chains, they are not

entirely established yet, so we can't point out the exact impact, and plus, we are not sure about what the end game with the tariffs will be." jcnockaert@hilltimes.com *The Hill Times*

Canada electric vehicle statistics

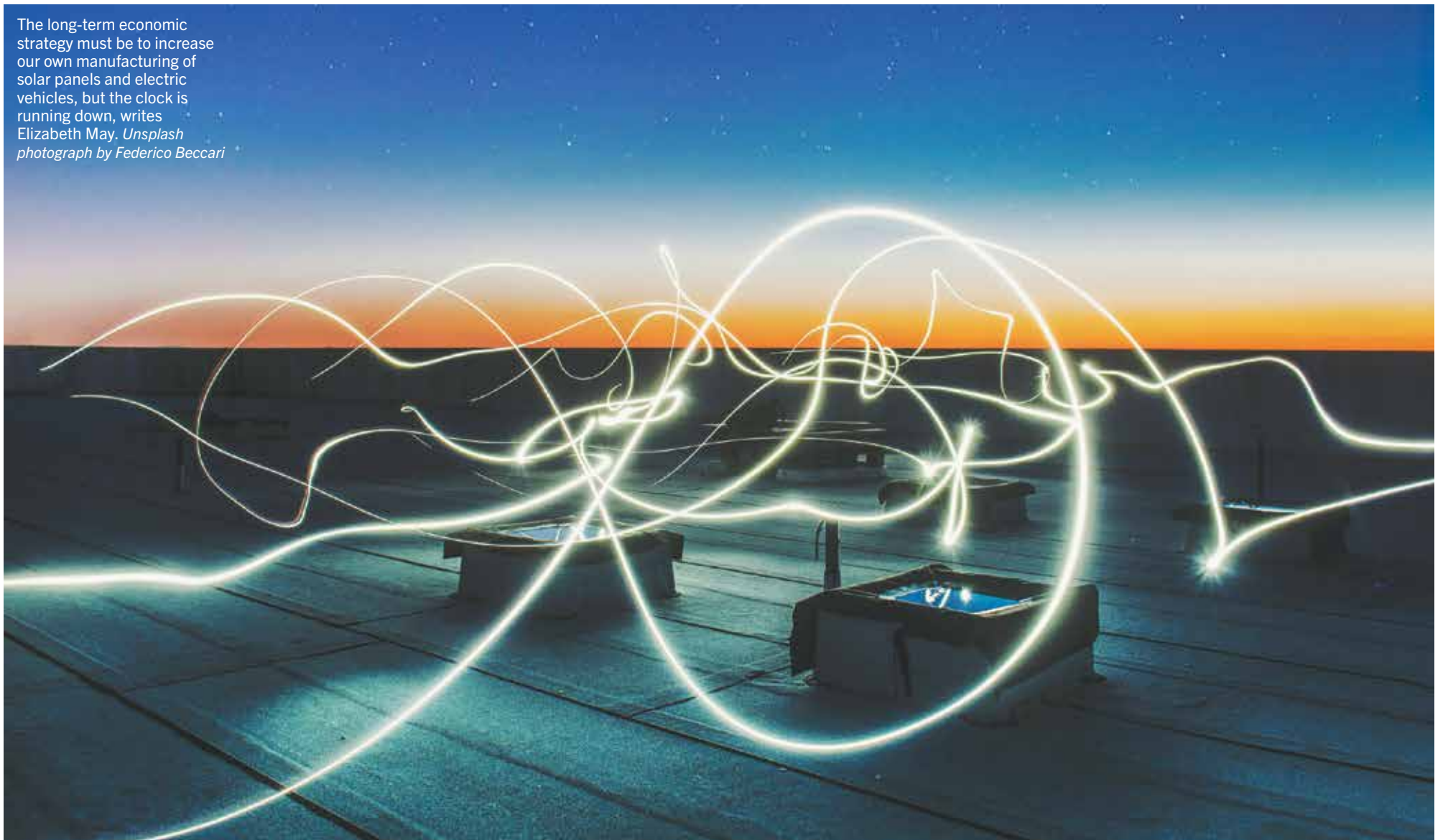


—Source: Vehicle registrations, 2023, released on Oct. 21, 2024, by Statistics Canada

- In 2023, the total number of road motor vehicles registered in Canada was 25.7 million, down slightly (-0.3 per cent) from 2022. The majority of registrations (91.7 per cent) were light-duty vehicles (LDVs), with electric vehicles accounting for 3.9 per cent, up from three per cent in 2022.
- Electric vehicles (EVs) made up 3.9 per cent of LDV registrations in Canada in 2023, up from three per cent in 2022. These consisted of 444,564 hybrid electric vehicles, 327,732 battery electric vehicles (BEVs) and 145,010 plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs). Collectively, there were 210,467 more EVs (+29.8 per cent) on the road in 2023 than in 2022, the largest absolute annual increase of EV registrations to date.
- While registered LDVs using gasoline represented 93.3 per cent of the fleet in 2023, the number of registrations declined for the second consecutive year, edging down 1.2 per cent from 2022. Registered LDVs using diesel also decreased in 2023, down 2.1 per cent compared with 2022.
- In 2023, two per cent of LDV registrations in Canada were zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs)—defined as BEVs and PHEVs—up from 1.4 per cent in 2022. Both British Columbia (3.8 per cent) and Quebec (3.5 per cent) continued to lead with the most ZEVs registered.

EVs & EV INFRASTRUCTURE Policy Briefing

The long-term economic strategy must be to increase our own manufacturing of solar panels and electric vehicles, but the clock is running down, writes Elizabeth May. *Unsplash photograph by Federico Beccari*



Electrify everything!

We must combine our newly energized national pride in reforming our economy to be more self-reliant and self-sufficient with massively increasing our climate ambition.

Green Party
Leader
Elizabeth May

Opinion



My headline is the title of an encouraging analysis from Australian Saul Griffiths. From the Green Party point of view, we are more agnostic as to specific technologies, and we focus on how we—as a nation, and as an economy—can pull our fair share of the work to reduce the volume of warming gases to the atmosphere to avoid worst-case climate scenarios.

The consequences of runaway global warming—self-accelerating and unstoppable—pose the greatest threat to the survival of human civilization, other than a nuclear war. In fact, that was exactly the conclusion of the international scientific conference the Canadian government hosted in Toronto in June 1988. The consensus statement from the conference, “Our Changing Atmosphere: Implications for Global Security,” opened with the following words: “Humanity is conducting an unintended, uncontrolled globally pervasive experiment whose ultimate consequences could be second only to global nuclear war.”

Back in 2003, when Canada ratified the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, I was executive director of the Sierra Club of Canada. Looking at our economy, and the technological gaps where they existed to delivering on our Kyoto target—a six-per-cent cut from 1990 levels of carbon dioxide to be achieved between 2008 and 2012—we realized that Canada could achieve deep reductions by focusing on two things: stopping the burning of coal for electricity, and getting rid of the internal-combustion engine (ICE). There were, of course, thousands of policy options to choose from—carbon pricing to

regulatory action requiring steep pollution cuts from individual sectors, to changes in our built infrastructure and transportation systems. But boiling it down to two things helped when we were talking to Canadians—two things are doable!

Here we are in 2025, with our emissions approximately 16 per cent above the 1990 levels. By the way, the other industrialized countries that committed to Kyoto hit or exceeded their targets with the European Union having cut more than 40 per cent below 1990 levels. In 2025, Nova Scotia is still primarily burning coal for electricity, and other provinces burn fracked natural gas with the same carbon footprint as coal. Our interprovincial trade barriers have prevented access to what Canada really needs to make the shift to 100-per-cent renewably sourced—cheaper—electricity: a functioning national electricity grid, east-west and north-south.

Back in 2003, it was not clear which emerging technology would replace the ICE—the hydrogen fuel cell, or the electric car. We were agnostic on which technology would cross the finish line first. At the moment, it is clear the electric vehicle (EV) is ahead with far greater penetra-

tion in the market, but the fuel cell and hydrogen could still play a big role. At the same time, Greens are concerned with equity. We do not assume a transportation system between large cities must be based on personal ownership of a car. The domination of urban spaces by personal automobiles was well canvassed by the late writer and activist Jane Jacobs. Greens will always push for a reliable, and affordable public transit system as called for in the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

Canada has a very long way to go. Not only are we the only nation—under then-prime minister Stephen Harper—to have legally withdrawn from Kyoto, but also, of all industrialized nations, we have grown our emissions above the 1990 baseline.

So yes, we need to move away from the ICE. But we have options: help people buy EVs, or more significantly revolutionize ground transportation systems to reduce the need to own a car. Otherwise, we remove the choice for Indigenous people and other poor people who are forced to hitchhike on roads where murder is a daily risk.

We could make EVs cheaper by accepting more vehicles from

China, and reducing our tariffs. We could make solar energy cheaper and more available by removing the enormous tariffs we place on cheap and efficient solar panels from China. The 100-per-cent tariffs on Chinese solar panels make electricity more expensive for Canadians, with no domestic manufacturing of solar panels to explain our high tariffs.

As Greens, we promote “buy everything” from Canada, so the long-term economic strategy must be to increase our own manufacturing of solar panels and EVs, but the clock is running down. Canada is further behind than most. We have everything we need to be a renewable energy powerhouse, starting with seizing the momentum induced by United States President Donald Trump to break down interprovincial barriers. For now, that means keeping all options in mind, and not focusing on EV goals that may inadvertently get in the way of the big picture.

The atmosphere is full, and now overflowing, with dangerous levels of greenhouse gases, so we are running out of time to avoid those worst-case scenarios. We must combine our newly energized national pride in reforming our economy to be more self-reliant and self-sufficient with massively increasing our climate ambition.

Elizabeth May, O.C., is Member of Parliament for Saanich-Gulf Islands, B.C., and co-leader of the Green Party of Canada.

The Hill Times

Policy Briefing EVs & EV INFRASTRUCTURE

As the U.S. drives backwards, Canada must pull ahead

Despite today's turmoil, smart EV policies will create jobs, investment, and long-term growth.

Hongyu Xiao

Opinion



The road ahead for Canada's transition to electric vehicles is not without challenges, but the opportunity remains clear. While uncertainty lingers around United States trade policies, the question for Canada is how to drive forward.

The global shift to electric vehicles (EVs) is accelerating. Staying the course will bring economic benefits, lower transportation costs, and improve energy security. With smart policies in place, Canada can ensure the continued growth of its EV industry, and secure its place in the future of clean transportation.

Beyond positioning Canada as a global leader, the shift to EVs offers tangible benefits for consumers, businesses, and workers. Lower operating costs mean



A stronger domestic EV industry will create stable, well-paying jobs across the supply chain, from mining and battery production to manufacturing and maintenance, writes Hongyu Xiao. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

drivers and fleet operators will save thousands of dollars over the lifetime of a vehicle. A stronger domestic EV industry will create stable, well-paying jobs across the supply chain, from mining and battery production to manufacturing and maintenance. Investing in EVs will also enhance Canada's energy security by reducing reliance on imported oil, and leveraging our abundant domestic electricity resources instead.

Keeping EVs affordable and Canada competitive

Now more than ever, Canada must chart its own path. Policies that reduce costs for consumers and provide certainty for manufacturers will be key to keeping transportation affordable, and strengthening our auto sector.

The federal government has taken significant steps to grow Canada's EV industry by helping

buyers, and by supporting manufacturers through tax incentives, funding for manufacturing and placing tariffs on Chinese-made EVs. As an auto manufacturing hub, Canada benefits from these measures—they strengthen the EV supply chain, and help keep domestically produced vehicles within reach for Canadians. Positioning Canadian manufacturers to reduce reliance on the U.S., and become globally competitive means going all-in with EVs as they gain momentum in global markets.

A strong EV market requires a mix of measures to help Canada diversify

There are multiple approaches Canada can take. Sales targets, incentives, and supply-side measures to bolster market certainty in EVs all play a role. For example, the federal government has introduced EV sales targets that require auto manufacturers and importers to meet annual sales thresholds for zero-emission vehicles. Canada's EV market is well on its way to achieving those targets—EVs were 18.9 per cent of all light-duty vehicle sales in the fourth quarter of 2024, just 1.1 percentage points shy of the 2026 target of 20 per cent. This kind of market certainty allows automakers to plan their investments, ensures buyers have access to EVs, and supports the development of a strong resale market.

Other measures, such as greenhouse gas emissions regulations for medium- and heavy-duty vehicles (MHDVs), will accelerate adoption and stimulate investment across Canada's auto industry. Unlike light-duty vehicle manufacturing, MHDVs have strong Canadian-based manufacturers, with companies like Solus Advanced Materials opening a plant in Quebec. Clear and ambitious standards in this sector will help create a stable investment environment, allowing Canadian manufacturers to lead in producing electric trucks and buses.

Seizing Canada's EV opportunity

Despite current threats from the U.S., Canada's auto sector must take this opportunity to position itself as a global leader in the EV transition, including manufacturing, infrastructure, and technology. The shift to EVs is well underway in global markets, and Canada must keep pace. Strengthening our domestic EV supply chain will reduce reliance on the U.S., ensure stable jobs for Canadian workers, and make EVs more affordable and accessible.

The key is to move swiftly. By implementing the right policies, Canada can secure investment, create good jobs, and build a strong and competitive EV industry for years to come. The government has already laid the groundwork with proven policies, and we must continue on this path to maintain momentum.

Hongyu Xiao is a senior analyst with the Pembina Institute's transportation team, a think tank and registered charity that advocates for strong, effective policies to support Canada's clean energy transition. *The Hill Times*

Canada's next move starts a few thousand feet below the ground

There aren't enough new critical mineral projects getting up and running to meet a basic level of demand, much less answer the world's call for electrification.

Alex Greco

Opinion



Regardless of your political position on electric vehicles, it's a fact that there is a booming industry around the electrification of everything. It's taken the world by storm in the past



Natural Resources Minister Jonathan Wilkinson. The lithium, cobalt, nickel, and rare earth elements that are kilometres beneath the surface of British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec are literally untapped potential, writes Alex Greco. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

few years. Here in Canada, the federal government has committed, and—in some cases—already spent billions of dollars trying to build cutting-edge EV manufacturing facilities. Meanwhile, our natural resource sector deals with decades-long project approvals, outdated consultation processes, and an 18-year wait until a new mine becomes operational.

If we really want to turn Canada into a global leader in EVs and electrification in general, we need to look down.

First and foremost, the lithium, cobalt, nickel, and rare earth elements that are kilometres beneath the surface of British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec are literally untapped potential. Not only would they fuel Canada's EV and battery

manufacturing market, but the extracting of them would result in thousands of well-paying jobs and offer a source of much needed tax revenue to build new communities where families can flourish.

However, due to lack of financing and the complex mire of our regulatory system, there aren't enough new critical mineral projects getting up and running to meet a basic level of demand, much less answer the world's call for electrification.

There's also a substantial gap in the critical minerals supply chain. Canada can do more than just extract. We could refine and process these critical minerals, adding significant value to our exportable goods as well as more jobs and tax revenue. At a time when we need to protect Canada's economic sovereignty and security, establishing a beginning-to-end critical minerals supply chain would be an immense boon to our economy.

To encourage innovation, investment, and infrastructure, the Accelerated Investment Incentive needs to be made permanent. In order to make needed strides, the Scientific Research and Experimental Development tax incentives need to be reformed. In the widest sense, Canada's regulatory frameworks and transportation infrastructure are woefully lacking to meet this moment and make us competitive.

From Europe to Asia, the global demand for clean technologies is soaring. If we don't invest in critical minerals, others will—whether that means extracting, refining, and processing critical minerals themselves or buying from countries, like China, that do.

Given our critical minerals, our manufacturing sector, and our talent, Canada should be leading the way, not standing on the sidelines.

Alex Greco is the senior director of manufacturing and value chains with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. He has previously served as president of the Ontario chapter of the Public Affairs Association of Canada, and as senior director of policy and government affairs for the Canadian Beverage Association. *The Hill Times*

EVs & EV INFRASTRUCTURE Policy Briefing

The benefits of processing our underground wealth go beyond this moment of crisis wrought by tariffs from U.S. President Donald Trump, and beyond the auto sector alone, write Travis Southin, Derek Eaton, and Sosthène Ung. *Image courtesy of Pixabay/Owantana*



Critical mineral processing will protect Canada's EV industry

The lack of processing capabilities in the 'mine-to-mobility' EV supply chain leaves us further exposed to trade risk.

Travis Southin, Derek Eaton & Sosthène Ung

Opinion

Canada's richness in critical minerals lies at the heart of our strategic bet to build the coming generations of electric

vehicles and the specialized batteries they run on.

But that mineral wealth also represents a generational opportunity to build economic autonomy by doing two things that have historically been very un-Canadian: add value to our natural resources, and link them with downstream domestic manufacturing. Doing so will reinforce Canada's downstream EV supply chain while also opening up opportunities in other sectors.

United States President Donald Trump's threat to use tariffs to "permanently shut down the automobile manufacturing business in Canada" is no idle boast. It takes aim at one of our economic strengths. Canada's largest critical mineral exports in 2023 were aluminum (30 per cent), potash (23 per cent), copper (18 per cent),

nickel (11 per cent), uranium (six per cent), and zinc (four per cent). Trump's threatened 10-per-cent critical mineral tariff would affect 59 per cent of those exports.

Most of those exports are heavily skewed towards upstream "primary products" like copper concentrate or smelting and refining products from metallurgical processes that produce relatively pure minerals, metals, and alloys. Canada's expertise in smelting and refining is focused on copper, nickel, and aluminum.

This segment is highly vulnerable to tariffs, as shown by the current steelwork and aluminum sector crisis linked to an overreliance on U.S. buyers. And the lack of processing capabilities in the "mine-to-mobility" EV supply chain leaves us further exposed to trade risk, as mined minerals

currently need to be exported for processing then re-imported to feed battery production.

The uncertainty risks undermining a key element of the appeal for locating the battery plants in Canada in the first place: efficiency gains via a reliable, local supply of critical minerals.

Processing remains the weakest link. Natural Resources Canada modelling finds that the country has enough planned lithium, graphite, and nickel mining projects to meet the demand for four battery factories—provided their financing, technical, or infrastructure needs are met. However, they emphasize that "Canada currently faces gaps in midstream processing" as 19 new midstream processing facilities are needed.

This includes seven nickel sulphate plants, five lithium hydroxide plants, five coated spherical purified graphite plants, and two lithium carbonate plants.

Industry roadmaps developed by Accelerate and the Battery Metals Association of Canada emphasize that extracting greater value from our critical minerals requires a shift to producing advanced materials such as semiconductors, cathode and anode active materials, refined chemical precursors, and permanent magnets.

That's where billions of dollars of value lie. With "newer" metals such as lithium, moving from spodumene ore to lithium hydroxide or lithium carbonate increases the value by a factor of four or five times, for example.

The opportunities extend beyond the auto sector. A common theme at the recent Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada conference in Toronto

was the urgent need to connect domestic processing of minerals to burgeoning demand as inputs to products ranging from power, artificial intelligence, robotics, drones, and autonomous devices. There was a shared sense that developing domestic processing capacity was essential to opening lucrative new markets in Asia and Europe.

Adding value to critical minerals entails high capital costs in the face of price volatility. And we need to prove that we can actually get shovels in the ground, and secure the sales contracts to reassure potential investors. Success also demands forging meaningful Indigenous partnerships.

Some solutions have been proposed. For instance, the Canada Growth Fund could use contracts for difference to provide price stability for both mining and processing projects.

Encouragingly, the federal government's \$1.5-billion Critical Minerals Infrastructure Fund's "directed intake" stream enables a proactive identification of strategic projects.

Another positive sign is potential joint federal-Ontario funding for Canadian-owned Frontier Lithium's processing plant in northern Ontario. Importantly, both governments expressed openness to keeping all options on the table with regard to the possibility of export fees on sales to the U.S. This builds on previous joint investment in rare earth processing in Saskatchewan.

To be clear, the challenges to the EV sector go beyond Trump's tariff threats, and his desire to annex Canada for our critical minerals. Northvolt's bankruptcy underscores the wider challenges facing the EV sector.

But the benefits of processing our underground wealth go beyond this moment of crisis, and in fact beyond the auto sector alone. Strengthening Canada's critical mineral processing is a smart move regardless of whether we eventually reconcile with the Americans—or ultimately have to go it alone.

Travis Southin is the future economy lead at the Transition Accelerator. His past experience includes providing analysis and policy recommendations for the Net-Zero Advisory Body, and working with James Meadowcroft as a postdoctoral fellow at Carleton University's School of Public Policy and Administration.

Derek Eaton is the director of future economy at the Transition Accelerator, and an economist with more than 30 years of experience in developing policy insights and recommendations to integrate sustainability into decision-making. He has previously served in roles including as senior director of public policy research at the Smart Prosperity Institute, and as a principal consultant for Technopolis Group.

Sosthène Ung is a senior future economy analyst with the Transition Accelerator, specializing in critical minerals and metal processing. He holds a MSc in organic chemistry, and a degree in chemical engineering from Montpellier, France, and also graduated from McGill University in 2022 with a PhD in green chemistry.

The Hill Times

Policy Briefing EVs & EV INFRASTRUCTURE

Moving forward with Canada's EV transition requires a holistic approach



While Canada has made notable progress in electric vehicle charging infrastructure, significant gaps remain, particularly in rural and northern regions, writes Sheldon Williamson. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

alone are not enough. Challenges include ensuring a sufficient supply of EVs at affordable prices, addressing range anxiety through charging infrastructure expansion, and managing the strain on power grids. Without complementary policies—such as consumer incentives, workforce training, and grid modernization—strict mandates may create unintended bottlenecks in EV adoption. A balanced approach is needed to ensure that the shift to EVs is both rapid and sustainable.

Despite these challenges, Canada has a strong position in the EV transition. The country boasts abundant raw materials for battery production, a skilled workforce, and established automotive manufacturing hubs. The shift to EVs presents opportunities in mining, battery refining, vehicle production, and software development for advanced powertrain and charging solutions. However, competition is fierce, and Canada must act quickly to attract investment, scale up battery manufacturing, and foster innovation in next-generation EV technologies. Strategic government policies and partnerships with industry leaders will be key to securing long-term economic benefits and ensuring that Canada remains a leader in the global EV market.

At the same time, Canada must address the unique challenges facing northern and remote communities. Harsh winter conditions, limited charging infrastructure, and reliance on diesel-powered microgrids make EV adoption more difficult in these regions. Widespread EV adoption will require significant upgrades to local power systems, including expanding renewable energy capacity to reduce dependence on fossil fuels. Solutions such as battery storage, vehicle-to-grid technology, and microgrid resilience planning can help manage demand fluctuations. Additionally, government incentives and collaboration with Indigenous communities will be essential in creating sustainable, region-specific charging solutions that ensure equitable EV adoption.

As Canada moves forward in its EV transition, a holistic approach is required—one that balances infrastructure development, trade strategy, policy incentives, and regional equity. By addressing these challenges head-on, Canada can not only meet its ambitious climate targets, but also build a resilient and competitive EV industry for the future.

Dr. Sheldon S. Williamson is a professor in the department of electrical, computer, and software engineering at Ontario Tech University, and holds the prestigious Canada Research Chair in Electric Energy Storage Systems for Transportation Electrification. He is the director of the Smart Transportation Electrification and Energy Research group where he leads cutting-edge research on battery management systems, wireless and fast charging, and power electronics for electric and autonomous mobility.

The Hill Times

The path to broader EV adoption needs to balance infrastructure development, trade strategy, policy incentives, and regional equity.

Sheldon S. Williamson



Opinion

Canada is at a pivotal moment in its transition to electric vehicles. With ambitious federal targets aiming for 100-per-cent zero-emission vehicle sales by 2035, the country is navigating a complex landscape of policy decisions, supply chain challenges, and evolving consumer sentiment. While there has been significant progress—bolstered by government incentives, infrastructure investments, and commitments from automakers—major obstacles remain. From affordability concerns and global trade dynamics to battery supply chain uncertainties and charging infrastructure gaps, the path to widespread EV adoption is far from straightforward.

One of the most pressing challenges is expanding EV charging infrastructure. While Canada has made notable progress, significant gaps remain, particularly in rural and northern regions. The deployment of charging stations has been uneven, with urban areas seeing more development due to higher EV adoption rates, and better grid capacity. However, ensuring equitable access to charging is critical for mass adoption. Key challenges include high installation costs, slow permitting processes, and the need for grid upgrades to handle increased demand. Additionally, interoperability between charging networks and ensuring reliability remain critical concerns for long-distance travel and consumer confidence. Addressing these issues will require co-ordinated efforts between governments, utilities, and private industry.

Compounding these infrastructure concerns are global trade uncertainties that could affect Canada's EV supply chain. The United States has established protectionist policies that could disrupt cross-border trade, particularly through tariffs on battery materials and finished vehicles. This threatens investment in Canada's EV sector, as manufacturers may prioritize U.S.-based production to avoid trade barriers. In response, Canada must strengthen its domestic battery



An FLO electric vehicle charger at Ottawa City Hall is pictured on June 30, 2023, when the federal government announced new federal support for electric vehicle infrastructure in the city. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

supply chain, secure trade agreements that protect its EV industry, and provide targeted incentives to keep EV manufacturing competitive. Aligning regulatory frameworks with the U.S. while advocating for fair trade policies will be crucial in mitigating risks and ensuring that Canada remains a key player in North America's EV ecosystem.

Beyond trade, policy frameworks such as EV mandates play a crucial role in shaping the market. These mandates provide regulatory certainty that can drive investment in manufacturing, battery production, and charging infrastructure. They also accelerate consumer adoption and contribute to emissions reductions. However, mandates

NEWS

Critics say new PM Carney 'failed to turn the page' with cabinet picks, but narrative link necessary, say Liberals

Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre claims voters won't be fooled again by the 'same old Liberal gang,' but continuity for the Canada-U.S. relationship is a higher priority, says Liberal strategist Greg MacEachern.

Continued from page 1

by two ministers; new Government House Leader and Democratic Institutions Minister Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Ont.); and Government Transformation, Public Services and Procurement Minister Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Ont.). All the other ministers either remained in their previous roles, were shuffled to new ones, or had previously served as ministers under Trudeau.

Trudeau's four lieutenants on the Canada-U.S. relationship have all remained in their prominent positions, but with slightly shifted roles, including now-International Trade and Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, N.B.) and his successor in the finance file, Minister François-Philippe Champagne (Saint-Maurice-Champlain, Que.). Champagne has been replaced by new Innovation, Science and Industry Minister Anita Anand (Oakville, Ont.).

Both Public Safety Minister David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Ont.), and Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly (Ahuntsic-Cartierville, Que.) retained their roles, with Joly adding the international development file previously held by Ahmed Hussen (York South-Weston, Ont.).

Defence Minister Bill Blair (Scarborough Southwest, Ont.); Treasury Board President Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Moncton-Riverview-Dieppe, N.B.); Energy and Natural Resources Minister Jonathan Wilkinson (North Vancouver, B.C.); Housing, Infrastructure, and Communities Minister Nate Erskine-Smith (Beaches-East York, Ont.); and Indigenous Services Minister Patty Hajdu (Thunder Bay-Superior



Newly sworn-in Prime Minister Mark Carney holds his first press conference outside of Rideau Hall on March 14. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia



Please shuffle one cabinet seat to the left: new Minister of International Trade and Intergovernmental Affairs Dominic LeBlanc, left, was replaced at finance by Minister François-Philippe Champagne, who was replaced by the new Innovation, Science, and Industry Minister Anita Anand. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

North, Ont.) kept their previous files, and didn't add any more responsibilities.

The remainder of Carney's changes, beyond eliminating roles entirely, include shuffling or adding new files to current ministers' portfolios, such as adding responsibility for veterans affairs to National Revenue Minister Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Que.), or recalling his top rival in the leadership competition, former deputy prime minister and finance minister Chrystia Freeland (University-Rosedale, Ont.), back into cabinet as minister of transport and internal trade.

Several now-former cabinet ministers had previously announced they will not be on the next ballot: former health minister Mark Holland (Ajax, Ont.); former heritage minister Pascale St-Onge (Brome-Missisquoi,

Que.), who also has led the tourism file since February; former justice minister Arif Virani (Parkdale-High Park, Ont.); Mary Ng (Markham-Thornhill, Ont.), who has held variations of the international trade file since November 2019; Harjit Sajjan (Vancouver South, B.C.), who has handled emergency preparedness since July 2023; Gudie Hutchings (Long Range Mountains, N.L.), who oversaw rural economic development since October 2021; and Marci Ien (Toronto Centre, Ont.), whose women, gender equality, and youth role has been absorbed by the culture and identity file now under Steven Guilbeault (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, Que.).

When asked how a cabinet composed of nearly 90 per cent former Trudeau-era ministers represents the change he promised, Carney said it had been import-

ant to keep "senior" ministers on the "frontline" of the U.S. tariff crisis, and the "opportunity [for] trade diversification."

"Keeping together those individuals so that we are seamlessly addressing those issues and seizing the opportunities was very important to us," Carney told reporters in his first press conference after his cabinet was sworn in on March 14.

However, that level of continuity provided ample opportunity for criticism from the official opposition, who accused Carney and the Liberals of attempting to "trick" Canadians into giving them a fourth "term" in government.

In a press conference later in the day, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) accused Carney of attempting to "fool" voters by "disguis[ing] ...

the same Liberal gang, with the same Liberal agenda, the same Liberal results."

Poilievre also took aim at Carney's inner circle, including his chief of staff pick MP Marco Mendicino (Eglinton-Lawrence, Ont.), the former minister of public safety. Gerry Butts, Trudeau's former principal secretary, and Tom Pitfield, the CEO of Data Sciences and co-founder of Canada 2020, are both now advising Carney in the PMO, according to a Liberal source who confirmed their involvement to *The Hill Times*.

"Carney thinks Canadians are stupid," Poilievre told reporters. "He thinks that a little bit of cosmetic surgery will allow the Liberals to disguise who they are and make people forget what they did for 10 years."

Former ministerial staffer MacEachern said that while the Conservatives are focused on the exact percentage of former Trudeau-era cabinet ministers Carney has retained, "the average voter is focused on what the cabinet is doing to address Trump's threats."

"Canadians are following the tariff stories more closely than any other issue since the pandemic," MacEachern said. "If you are following this, you have seen a regular stream of Canadian politicians—including those cabinet ministers—going to Washington, and that's exactly what they want to see, so I'm not sure that changing the lineup is a great idea."

Additionally, for those who had expected or are now criticizing the Liberals for not expanding their reach beyond caucus to unelected candidates, MacEachern said that thought process relies too much on partisanship, and not enough on "common sense."

However, Conservative pundit Jordan Paquet said he believes that the lack of "new blood" within cabinet has certainly disappointed more than just Conservatives—particularly Canadians living in Saskatchewan, Alberta, or Prince Edward Island who now have no representation in cabinet.

"If this was supposed to be an election cabinet to bring in fresh blood and star power, it didn't do that," Paquet said. "Carney failed to turn the page on the last administration."

While Paquet recognizes the Liberals' choices for representation in the Prairies is more limited—there are no Liberals elected in Saskatchewan—in his home-province of P.E.I., there are three current MPs, Sean Casey (Charlottetown), Heath MacDonald (Malpeque), and Robert Morrissey (Egmont), who could have filled the space left by Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan), the former minister of agriculture, who announced his pending retirement on March 1.

"In an election that will come down to some close races in those regions, that is going to have a big impact," said Paquet, a consultant with Bluesky Strategy Group. "What does it say about the confidence Carney has in the people running for him in P.E.I. if he doesn't give them a seat at the table?"

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NEWS

‘If you’ve got the money, spend it’: three major parties boost digital ad buys to define Prime Minister Carney’s brand

The new PM’s \$290,000 ‘investment’ in Meta advertising during the leadership race will pay dividends during a general election, says digital strategist Harneet Singh.

Continued from page 1

to ensure Carney is defined on their terms.

In the final two weeks of the Liberal leadership contest—Feb. 24 through March 9—Carney spent just shy of \$150,000 on Meta ads alone, dwarfing the combined spend of his three remaining rivals as well as the combined spend on the official pages of both then-prime minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) and the Liberal Party.

Those final two weeks also represent more than half of Carney’s entire Meta advertising spend—just over \$290,000—with the penultimate week, Feb. 3 through March 2, representing roughly one-third. This is in addition to the week leading up to the membership registration deadline, Jan. 20-26, when his campaign spent more than \$117,000 on Meta ads. During the interim, his campaign’s Meta spending fluctuated between roughly \$2,100 and \$9,900. In the week following his leadership win, the spending has dropped back down to roughly \$8,500.

Online political marketing expert Harneet Singh told *The Hill Times* that despite Carney cementing his front-runner status early on in the campaign across nearly every metric—advertising budget, fundraising, and polling—every dollar spent was a meaningful investment, for which Carney may not have yet reaped the full benefits.

“Spending all of that money just signals confidence in the campaign, and that will absolutely translate to a national campaign,” explained Singh, a managing principal at EOK Consults.

Singh also noted that while Carney’s total spending on Meta may seem high compared to his leadership rivals—who spent a combined \$62,116 between the other four people who



Prime Minister Mark Carney, left, spent just shy of \$300,000 during Liberal leadership race to introduce himself to the party membership and Canadians at large, while the Pierre Poilievre-led Conservatives approach \$200,000 per week to define him in at least three different languages. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

were official candidates at any point during the race—the total becomes quite conservative compared to his fundraising numbers.

According to the publicly available interim reports published by Elections Canada, Carney’s campaign raised more than \$3.3-million between Jan. 10 and March 2. However, as of the leadership vote on March 9, his campaign said it had raised more than \$5-million.

Based on the publicly available data, Carney’s Meta spending translates to roughly 8.6 per cent of the campaign’s fundraising, but drops to just less than six per cent based on the campaign’s updated total.

New Transport and Internal Trade Minister Chrystia Freeland (University Rosedale, Ont.), who placed second in the leadership contest, raised \$361,398 according to Elections Canada, and spent \$12,406 on Meta ads—roughly 3.4 per cent. MP Karina Gould (Burlington, Ont.), the contest’s second runner-up, spent \$9,562 of the \$363,149 her campaign raised, or 2.63 per cent. However, both campaigns have also said those fundraising numbers do not accurately reflect their respective totals. According to *The Canadian Press*, Freeland’s team internally reported \$750,000, and Gould’s team said it raised \$450,000. Accounting for those internal totals, the campaigns’ Meta spending drops to 1.65 per cent and 2.73 per cent of their fundraising, respectively.

Singh also noted that based on the total number of votes, he would have given an “arm and a leg” for similar efficiency on

campaigns he has previously worked on.

Excluding Nunavut, where his campaign spent roughly \$8 on Meta ads for each of the 25 votes he received in the territory, Carney’s least efficient provinces were Quebec and Saskatchewan, where his campaign spent \$6.35 and \$5.03 per vote, respectively. Carney’s most efficient province was Ontario, where his campaign spent \$1.45 per vote received.

“I absolutely believe this was a good investment, and at no point do I believe they were solely focused on the leadership race,” Singh said, explaining that every voter identified during the leadership race would pay dividends in the general election.

“The intent was to ensure Carney became a household name in Canada,” Singh said, adding that market research on Meta has found that each dollar spent translates to roughly 20-30 people who will see it.

“Conservatively, spending that much money means that nearly six million more Canadians know about him today than before,” Singh explained, noting that Carney’s official Facebook page had grown from just over 1,000 followers at the beginning of the race to more than 95,000 as of publication deadline. In comparison, Trudeau’s page has 8.8 million, followed by Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre’s (Carleton, Ont.) with 828,600, and NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh’s (Burnaby South, B.C.), with over 397,600 followers.

Conservative digital ad strategist Cole Hogan agreed that Carney’s digital investment will

serve him well in a general election, noting that the prime minister can now combine any data scraped from the ads with that collected from phone banking and door-knocking, as well as the party’s pre-existing database.

“This was a two-month campaign where [Carney] had to be everywhere but couldn’t physically be there,” Hogan said, noting that in most campaigns—but especially leadership races—“the candidate who spends the most money usually wins.”

While his spending advantage over his rivals was similar to that enjoyed by Poilievre during his 2022 leadership race, Carney had far less time to identify those voters, and needed to spend much of it just introducing himself to them, said Hogan.

“This stuff is pay to play, and Poilievre has been identifying voters [since 2022],” Hogan explained. “So if you’ve got the money, spend it.”

In that vein, Carney’s success in the leadership campaign has already provided the Liberals with significantly more money to spend.

On Feb. 28, the Liberal Party announced its fundraising efforts had recorded its “best-ever” first-quarter “grassroots fundraising” total “in the party’s history,” noting it had done so without the \$350,000 registration fee required by its leadership contestants.

The party would not disclose the exact amount it raised in the first three months of 2025. According to data published by Elections Canada, the Liberals’ previous first-quarter record was in 2016, with a total of \$4.03-million raised in the first three months.

According to the Liberals’ leadership race rules, the party imposed a 25-per-cent tithe on all fundraising after the first \$500,000. This means Carney’s fundraising alone contributed roughly \$1.25-million based on the campaign’s internal numbers.

The Liberals increased their Meta spending as the leadership race was conducted—it went from a combined total of roughly \$4,000 in the final three weeks of January, to a record \$93,685 from Feb. 10-16 and a monthly total of \$253,611. In comparison, the combined spend on the pages for Poilievre and the Conservative Party has remained above \$100,000 weekly since Feb. 17, with a total monthly spend of \$384,117.

Despite dropping back down to just over \$47,000 in the final week of the leadership contest,

the party’s official advertising has made a near-seamless transition into the new leadership, with ads featuring Carney going live as of March 12.

Yet, while the Liberals are putting forward resources to help introduce Carney to voters, so are their political opponents.

Alongside the more positive ads featuring Poilievre, the Conservatives are increasingly purchasing ads featuring Carney, with the earliest still-active ad going live on Feb. 27.

The most recent English-language ads—featuring the Conservatives’ “Carbon Tax Carney” moniker and the more recent “sneaky” clip from his appearance on *The Daily Show*—began running on Feb. 28, and have been published 262 times to users mostly residing in British Columbia and Ontario. The Conservatives also began running two similar Punjabi-language ads on March 7, and are spending roughly \$900 on each, primarily for residents of Ontario.

Since the beginning of January, the NDP has spent roughly \$2,000 per week on Meta. However, it has also begun purchasing ads on YouTube and Google, including its newest ad, on which Harneet Singh estimates the total spend to be at least \$20,000, based on the more than one-million views the ad has already received on YouTube.

The new ad features an image of Carney next to negative headlines framing him as “in it for billionaires, not for working people,” while an increasing number of red flag emojis appear on the screen. The party has also bought the meetmarkcarney.ca domain, which features similar visuals and a more detailed text description of the ad’s contents.

Hogan told *The Hill Times* that while the newspaper tear-away is his least favourite political ad “cliché,” the use of the emoji was a “fresh, relatively modern” innovation that could convey its message without the need for audio, which is how most people will consume it, either at a bar or while scrolling through social media.

A poll by the Angus Reid Institute released on March 17 places the Liberals in first place among prospective voters with 42 per cent support—up from third place with 16-per-cent support in December—and five points ahead of the Conservatives at 37 per cent, while the NDP dips into single digits at nine per cent.

Polling aggregator 338Canada currently places the Liberals three points behind the Conservatives, with 35 per cent and 38 per cent polling averages, respectively. That represents a 20-point reduction in the polling deficit since Jan. 6, when now-former prime minister Trudeau announced his intent to resign. At the time, the Conservatives were polling at 45 per cent, compared to the Liberals’ 20 per cent, just one point above the NDP, now polling at 14 per cent.

Liberal sources have told *The Hill Times* that the next election is expected to be called before the House returns on March 24, meaning voters are likely headed to the polls in late April or early May.

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Incoming senator Tony Ince talks liberation from party apparatus, 'whirlwind' first days

Once he's officially sworn in, the former Nova Scotia Liberal minister will be the first Black man to hold a seat in the Senate since 2017.

Continued from page 1

Speaking to *The Hill Times* on March 11, Ince said he's been busy drinking from the firehose of information that comes with nomination to the Senate. He's been fielding calls from well-wishers and soon-to-be colleagues alike, including members of each of the Senate groups that have sprung up since Trudeau began appointing individuals as non-affiliated Senators in 2016, as well as the Conservative Senate caucus.

Ince was a provincial parliamentarian—and minister—up until this past fall, when he opted not to reoffer in Nova Scotia's November election. He had been a member of the province's legislative assembly since 2013, and served as a Liberal minister from his election until 2021, holding various portfolios over the years including as minister of communities, culture, and heritage, and minister of African Nova Scotian affairs.

Ince said his decision to leave provincial politics had nothing to do with any potential Senate appointment, but rather came after a reminder from his children that he'd originally said he would only serve two terms, yet would be heading into his fourth if successfully re-elected.

Now set to take up a seat in Ottawa, Ince said his kids "are excited, but they're also saying, 'well, Dad, you know, this is great, but we thought you were retiring.'"

Ince put his name in the proverbial hat that is the Independent Advisory Board for Senate Appointments process a year and a half ago following a suggestion from a friend.

Last fall, the Red Chamber saw two Senators from Nova Scotia retire: Stephen Greene, an ex-Conservative representative who retired as a member of the Canadian Senators' Group; and Jane Cordy, a former Liberal turned leader of the Progressive Senate Group. On Dec. 19, the first of those vacant seats was filled by former Nova Scotia Liberal MLA Allister Surette, who has since joined the Independent Senators Group.



Incoming Nova Scotia senator Tony Ince, left, with Halifax's Crystal Mulder, Tracey-Jones Grant, and former Nova Scotia MLA Ali Duale at a 2024 Black History Month event in Ottawa. Photograph courtesy of Tony Ince



Members of the Congress of Black Parliamentarians on Parliament Hill in August 2017. Liberal MP Emmanuel Dubourg, left, then-Liberal MP Frank Baylis, Tony Ince, Liberal MP Marc Miller, then-Liberal MP Celina Caesar-Chavannes, now-Liberal MP Michael Coteau, Senator Wanda Thomas Bernard, then-Ontario Liberal MPP Granville Anderson, then-Ontario minister Mitzi Hunter, and now-House Speaker Greg Fergus. Photograph courtesy of George Bancroft

Ince said he applied "more or less to see how things would go," but heard nothing back until Feb. 28 when he received an email—which he initially missed—on his way back from visiting his son in Alberta, which was followed days later by a text from someone from the Senate's appointments advisory board seeking to confirm whether he'd gotten the message asking him to provide the documents required to verify his eligibility for possible Senate appointment.

"And then from there it was a snowball rolling down a really steep hill," Ince said with a laugh. He got the call from Trudeau on March 6, the day before his appointment was announced. "I was pretty excited," said Ince of the moment.

With the Senate currently not sitting as a result of prorogation, and speculation swirling over whether it will return before a federal election call, it might be

some time before Ince can be officially sworn in as a Senator.

In the meantime, he's been finding his feet in the new world of the Senate.

"There is a lot of information being thrown at you, being provided, however there are a ton of supports to help you," and people to call if he feels "really overwhelmed," said Ince of his days post-announcement.

But he said the experience is not unlike his entrance to provincial politics.

"I got elected and then a week later I was [a] minister of the government, and I had no idea what was going on there," he said. "So at least here I've got a bit of background in dealing with this political sort of whirlwind of information."

One aspect he said he's still working to wrap his head around is the reality of working without the support—and leash—of a party apparatus.

"When I've had interviews in the past there were always staff with you, there were briefing notes, and there were all these things," said Ince. "I would say there used to be—not in a negative way—but there used to be a leash on you, you know what I mean? And now that I don't have that, I'm trying to get used to that."

"That's the small hurdle for me that I have to adjust to" in jumping from provincial politics to the Senate, "realizing, OK, you always have to be diplomatic—which I believe I am—but I can speak my mind a little more freely than I could before, and that's liberating," he said.

Ince is in Ottawa this week for his orientation and to get his security clearances shored up, to meet with the Senate ethics officer, and to start getting situated. Not yet sworn in, Ince said "it's all up in the air for me right now" in terms of figuring out what he can and can't do to get established, but for now, he's being helped by

someone from the Senate administration who's been assigned as his temporary point person.

While he's already been approached about joining "every" Senate group, Ince said he's "certainly not" yet made any decisions, and plans to take time to meet his new colleagues before deciding whether to join a group.

Among those who reached out to Ince soon after his appointment was Progressive Senator Wanda Thomas Bernard (East Preston, N.S.).

Bernard had repeatedly highlighted, and questioned, the Senate's years-long lack of any Black male representation.

Ince, a co-founder of the Canadian Congress of Black Parliamentarians, said he hadn't given the absence of Black men in the Senate much thought until he learned of his own appointment, but said he finds it "a little sinful" that there haven't been any Black male Senators in the Chamber since 2017.

"All I can say is I'm looking forward to it [becoming a Senator]," he said. "I have a passion for wanting to really bring the concerns, the challenges of African Canadian communities forward, and hopefully to try to help uplift [and] better position them as participants in society."

Ince said there's a "host" of issues he's interested in pursuing as a Senator, including IT security, the environment, social economics, and how Canada is going to move forward as a country "financially."

"I'm loving the opportunity to be able to at least look through a number of these different particular issues," said Ince. "We have to have multiple hats on in this role, I believe."

Reached by *The Hill Times*, Bernard noted Ince's appointment to the Senate came at the government's "last opportunity" to fill the Chamber's benches, but said she was "pleasantly surprised" to see an African Nova Scotian named.

"I feel good about that," she said.

Bernard highlighted gender representation in the Senate as well—with female Senators now outnumbering male Senators, 57 to 48—and the fact that the Chamber now has "nine Senators of African ancestry, which is wonderful to see because that certainly reflects the diversity of our community across the country."

"We have much more representation than we've ever had in Canada's history, and now to also have a Black man there with us is good news," she said.

Announced alongside Ince's appointment were those of former Moncton, N.B., mayor Dawn Arnold, who will represent New Brunswick; Katherine Hay, who will represent Ontario and comes from the not-for-profit sector; ex-Ontario Liberal minister Sanda Papatello; and former Malala Fund CEO Farah Mohamed, who will also represent Ontario.

Once all five are sworn in, the Senate will be at full capacity for the first time in years—at least until Conservative Senate Leader Don Plett's (Landmark, Man.) retirement in May.

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NEWS

In Charlevoix, G7 ministers chose domestic audiences over taking message to the world

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock was the lone top diplomat to take the stage at the press theatre at the G7 foreign ministers' meeting as she took the strongest stand in defence of Canada's sovereignty.

Continued from page 1

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot didn't speak to the media.

Japanese Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya scrummed, but only took questions in Japanese. Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani also scrummed on March 14, prioritizing questions posed in Italian.

Following questions in Italian, Italy's top diplomat took a handful of questions from Canadian media, when he said that it was "not my job" to stand up to U.S. President Donald Trump's threat to absorb Canada as a "51st" state. But he did proclaim that "Canada will be Canada."

Joly told Canadian reporters that her European counterparts weren't taking Trump's annexation threat seriously.

"Many of my colleagues who came here thought this issue was still a joke, and this had to be taken in a humorous way," she said. "I'm saying, 'No, it's not a joke. This is a very serious threat.'"

Canada's top diplomat was initially scheduled to speak in the press theatre in the afternoon of March 14, but the news conference was ultimately cancelled amid the cabinet shuffle taking place that same morning in Ottawa. Instead, a press conference took place in the morning, largely for Canadian media members.

Joly urged Canadian journalists to ask G7 foreign ministers about Trump's threats.

Royal Military College professor Adam Chapnick, an expert on Canadian foreign policy, said it's becoming more common amid an era of hyperpartisanship to look inwards.

"Canada has received criticism in the past for addressing a domestic audience on the world stage, and that would hurt a country like us if we're already taking criticism for not being serious enough," he said.



EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas is surrounded by journalists as she speaks with an offsite Christiane Amanpour from CNN during the G7 foreign ministers' meeting in Quebec on March 13. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly spoke with Canadian media while at the G7 foreign ministers' meeting in La Malbaie, Que. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

"You have a luxury—if you are more powerful—to do these things and get away with them that you can't get away with as much when you are less powerful," he added.

'We're not really commenting on this'

Just before noon on March 13, Kallas strode into the media room for a one-on-one interview with CNN, speaking to an offsite Christiane Amanpour.

Journalists in Charlevoix quickly encircled Kallas, who was asked by Amanpour about the annexation threats and if the U.S. should be booted from the G7 if it subsumed Canada—as Russia was in 2014 after annexing Crimea.

"We are not really commenting on this," Kallas said, as journalists in the room looked on. "We are

respecting all the United Nations principles when it comes to territorial integrity [and] sovereignty of countries."

Last week, Trump threatened to deepen the global trade war, as he proposed a 200-per-cent tariff on European alcohol in retaliation to a 50-per-cent EU levy on American bourbon, which was in retaliation to a 25-per-cent tariff on steel and aluminum.

After the CNN interview, reporters in Quebec lobbed questions to Kallas about Trump's threats, but she quickly exited the room without an answer.

Throughout the three days of meetings, foreign ministers were reluctant to directly address Canada's peril. At best, they dismissed it by noting that Canada will remain a sovereign nation. It was not apparent whether the insistence on Canada's sover-

eignty was an indication of the lack of seriousness in which the threat was viewed.

Lammy told the CBC that Canada "will continue to be a sovereign nation," but declined to address whether Trump's rhetoric is an issue.

While G7 foreign ministers met in Quebec's Charlevoix region, Trump was continuing to trumpet Canada's annexation in Washington, D.C., remarking that "Canada only works as a state."

At the close of the gathering, Baerbock took the strongest stand in defence of Canada.

"Borders are inviolable, in Ukraine, in Greenland, in Panama, in Canada—anywhere in the world. This is our most essential life insurance," she said in German.

Speaking in English, she addressed Canadians.

"We Europeans, we Germans and Canada are not only partners, we are close friends. Friends have each other's back—always," she said.

The day prior, Baerbock posted a photo on X with Kallas in Canada's national colours—Baerbock wearing white and Kallas dressed in red. The post included the message: "We've got your back, [Joly]."

"In these polarized times, and times of social media, it's not about sentences—it's about emotions, it's about feelings," Baerbock told reporters. "Sometimes colours may say more than words."

Rubio said that Trump's threats weren't a topic of discussion during the meeting.

"The Canadian government has made their position—how they feel about it—clear. The president has made his argument as to why he thinks Canada would be better off joining the United States, for economic purposes," he said. "There's a disagreement between the president's position and the position of the Canadian government."

"[Trump's] made that argument repeatedly, and I think it stands for itself," he added.

Behind Europe's silence

Chapnick said that given the challenge that Canada is facing, Ottawa is looking for a response from the heads of government and state, but not necessarily from foreign ministers.

"I think it is actually reasonably prudent from a foreign minister not to get ahead of their boss," he said. "It's not all that surprising to me that you wouldn't see the foreign ministers leaning in when their bosses are still working on how they are going to respond to this Trump challenge."

He remarked that the silence could also be viewed as a failure of former prime minister Justin Trudeau in building up sufficient diplomatic capital, especially with constantly shifting foreign ministers.

"So we didn't have the chips to cash in that would've been helpful," Chapnick said.

Chapnick said that the situation could also be viewed as the Europeans looking at what Canada is going through and "hoping not to get hit too hard."

Another option is that the Europeans realize that an intervention in the situation can only happen once, and they have to pick the appropriate time to do so, Chapnick said.

"A G7 foreign ministers' meeting is not the place to do so [intervene]," he said, remarking that it is too soon to know which of the reasons explains the European silence in Charlevoix.

Chapnick said the Germans' response demonstrates a case where Canada has been able to build a relationship and diplomatic capacity.

In a March 14 post on X, Joly called Baerbock "a constant source of joy and strength."

"You have been a fabulous foreign minister for [Germany], and an even better friend," Joly wrote.

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FEATURE

Scenes from a summit

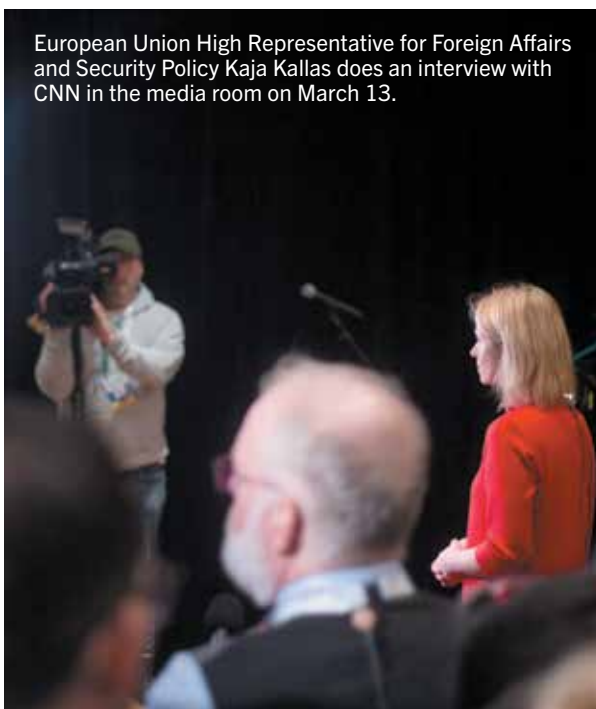
The Hill Times photographs by Andrew Meade



Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly, left, and U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio arrive for a family photo with G7 foreign ministers at their meeting in La Malbaie, Que., on March 13—Day 2 of the summit.



Top diplomats during the 'family photo' at the G7 foreign ministers' meeting. From left: EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas, Japanese Foreign Affairs Minister Takeshi Iwaya, U.K. Foreign Secretary David Lammy, French Foreign Affairs Minister Jean-Noël Barrot, Joly, Rubio, German Foreign Affairs Minister Annalena Baerbock, and Italian Foreign Affairs Minister Antonio Tajani.



European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kaja Kallas does an interview with CNN in the media room on March 13.



The Fairmont Le Manoir Richelieu hosted the 2025 G7 foreign ministers' meeting in La Malbaie, Que.



Italian Foreign Affairs Minister Antonio Tajani scrums with reporters at the G7 foreign ministers' meeting on March 13.



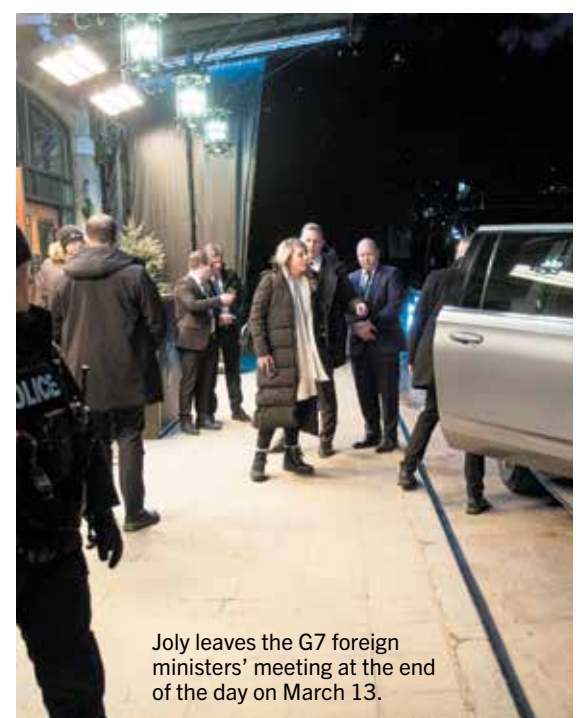
German minister of foreign affairs and vice-chancellor Annalena Baerbock scrums with reporters on March 13.



A bench at Le Manoir Richelieu marks the fractious G7 Leaders' Summit in 2018.



Takeshi Iwaya, Japan's minister of foreign affairs, on his way to meet the media on March 13 for an evening interview.



Joly leaves the G7 foreign ministers' meeting at the end of the day on March 13.

OPINION



New Prime Minister Mark Carney no doubt realizes that the June G7 meeting could provide him with a unique opportunity to demonstrate his mastery of the policy options, writes Joseph Ingram. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Prime Minister Carney's first decision is a tough one

The June G7 meeting couldn't be happening at a more consequential moment, both for the planet, and for Canada and its economic and political destiny.

Joseph Ingram

Opinion



Prime Minister Mark Carney's decision as to when exactly to hold national elections could well set the stage for his longer-term success. And the determining factor on when is not just where he and the party stand in the national polls, but also the fact that in mid-June, Canada will host the 2025 meeting of the G7 leadership in Kananaskis, Alta.

The meeting comes at a critical time in the history of our planet,

with the United States under President Donald Trump chaotically reconfiguring geo-politics and the institutional architecture that America helped to build, and that has sustained global development and western prosperity since the end of the Second World War. Not only will leaders have to address what is inexorably evolving into a global trade war with possibly zero-sum outcomes and greater national insularity, but also the highly divisive and destructive war in Ukraine. The reconfiguration is being driven by a seemingly unwritten understanding amongst today's leading military powers that governance by autocracy extending over regional zones of interest is the way of the future. Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin almost furtively conversing to decide the fate of Ukraine—with neither the Europeans nor the Ukrainians present—is illustrative of their common vision of how the world should be governed. And all this on a planet faced with the prospect of rapidly warming temperatures and the catastrophic impact they will have on global productivity, economic growth, commodity prices, and migration.

Therefore, the June G7 meeting couldn't be happening at a more consequential moment,

“GIVEN THE STAKES AT PLAY, WILL THE PRIME MINISTER CALL FOR AN ELECTION BEFORE THE JUNE G7 MEETING AND RISK A POSSIBLE LOSS TO PIERRE POILIEVRE AND THE CONSERVATIVES, OR WILL HE INSTEAD USE THE MEETING AND HIS CHAIRMANSHIP AS A POSSIBLE SPRINGBOARD TO A SUBSEQUENT ELECTION?”

both for the planet, and for Canada and its economic and political destiny. Arguably few political leaders globally understand these critical challenges—and how to address them—better than our new prime minister. He also no doubt realizes that the June G7 meeting could provide him with a unique opportunity to demonstrate his mastery of the policy options, having successfully managed monetary and macro-economic policies through financial crises in both Canada and the United Kingdom, as well as internationally in his role as the United Nations special envoy on climate action and finance. And unlike Trump, his contribution was internationally acknowledged last year in Italy when he received the 2024 Renewed Humanism medal from The Club of Florence—a reward recognizing his positive impact on policies to address global warming in a manner which seeks to enhance the benefits and reduce any financial costs to the most vulnerable in our societies. This puts him in a unique position amongst today's G7 leaders, and one which would—on resuming office following an election victory—elevate Canada's profile internationally and demonstrate that there is still the possibility of strong, enlightened,

and co-operative leadership coming from North America.

Given the stakes at play, will the prime minister call for an election before the June G7 meeting and risk a possible loss to Pierre Poilievre and the Conservatives, or will he instead use the meeting and his chairmanship as a possible springboard to a subsequent election? Does he have sufficient parliamentary support to delay an election until after the G7? Clearly the polls in the weeks preceding the June meeting will be determinative, as will the position of the NDP. Should the polls still have the two parties effectively tied, and given the critical importance of this G7 meeting, the PM may well decide to wait until after the event, though this, too, would have its risks given the legislating limits prescribed by Canada's caretaker convention.

Moreover, there is also the real possibility that Trump announces that his government will not, for the first time, participate in the meeting, especially if it is to be hosted by someone with the savvy, resolve, and credibility of Carney. The snub of Trump implicit in the new prime minister's first foreign visit to Europe—unprecedented in that all previous first foreign visits have been to Washington, D.C.—will also not be taken lightly. Given his tariff threats against the other six G7 member states, Trump also may not wish to expose himself to what in effect he has created: a potentially hostile multinational forum where decisions are made collectively in the interests of all its members, a process in conflict with his zero-sum ambitions and distaste for multilateralism generally.

Alternatively, the president might also choose to announce that the U.S. presence will depend on an invitation from the G7 and its host nation to have Russia attend, thereby reconstituting the G8. This would be a tough decision for a Canadian prime minister, especially in light of the international war crimes charges levied against Putin and several of his acolytes, and the pledge signed by the G7 leaders in 2024 holding the Russian government to account for both the violation of Article 1 of the UN Charter and for war crimes committed by its forces in Ukraine.

In an opinion piece last December, I suggested that Canada needs a leader with intimate policy knowledge and past successes recognized both nationally and internationally; an individual possessing both the foresight and the courage of conviction to quickly implement their strategic priorities, especially in light of the bullying and bellicosity to come from the Trump administration. I lamented the fact that, at that time, neither major political party seemed to possess such an individual. Well, today, at least one does, and it ain't Poilievre.

Joseph Ingram is chair of GreenTech Investment Holdings/Labs, a fellow of the Canadian Global Affairs Institute, a former president of the North-South Institute, and a former special representative of the World Bank to the UN and the World Trade Organization.

The Hill Times

Hill Climbers



By Laura Ryckewaert



An entrance to 80 Wellington St., the home of the Prime Minister's Office. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Ex-staffers find their way to jobs in NYC, the Senate, and more

For one, Boyan Gerasimov, who was previously director of policy to the innovation minister, now works for Sun Life.

With lots of staff changes incoming but little settled as of writing, **Hill Climbers** is taking the opportunity to catch up with some former staffers to see where they've landed since bidding adieu to government jobs.

A couple of ex-staffers have found their way to the busy streets of New York City.

Sabrina Kim, who was last on the Hill as director of communications to Energy and Natural Resources Minister **Jonathan Wilkinson**, is now an associate with the public affairs firm Brunswick Group in NYC.

Kim left the Hill in June and started with Brunswick Group in September. She worked for the Trudeau government for roughly seven years in all, and on the Hill for nine, starting as an assistant to then-Ottawa Centre, Ont., Liberal MP **Catherine McKenna**. Kim went on to serve as an issues manager, Ontario regional adviser, and later press secretary to McKenna as then-environment minister. She's also a former issues adviser in then-prime minister **Justin Trudeau's** office, director of communications to Wilkinson as then-environment minister, and director of communications and issues



Sabrina Kim is now with the Brunswick Group. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

management to then-defence minister **Anita Anand**.

Also now working in the Big Apple is ex-PMO director of communications **Cameron Ahmad**. As recently noted in *The Hill Times*, he's now working for the Malala Fund as director of global communications.

Savannah DeWolfe, who was previously chief of staff to then-housing minister **Sean Fraser**, is now working from Halifax as Tent Partnership for Refugees' director for Canada. According to its website, Tent "advises member companies on how they can build effective refugee hiring programs and integrate refugees into their workforces."

A former lawyer with McInnes Cooper in Halifax, DeWolfe started as an assistant to Fraser as the MP for Central Nova, N.S., after the 2015 election. Her first cabinet-level role came in 2018 when she was hired as an Atlantic regional adviser and assistant to the parliamentary secretary—Fraser, at the time—to McKenna as then-environment minister. DeWolfe has since also been director of operations and legal affairs, and later director of policy, to Fraser as then-immigration minister. She became Fraser's chief of staff in 2023 after he was shuffled into the housing, infrastructure and communities portfolio.

Closer to home, **Sabrina Barrow**, who recently exited former heritage minister **Pascale St-Onge's** office at the beginning of January, began working for Quebec ISG Senator **Julie Miville-Dechéne** later that



Savannah DeWolfe now works for Tent Partnership for Refugees. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

month. Barrow had been executive assistant to St-Onge since the fall of 2023.

There's one more name to add to the list of recently ex-staffers who are currently studying law at McGill University: that of **Christiana Agustin**, who was last deputy director of policy to then-tourism minister **Soraya Martinez Ferrada**.

Martinez Ferrada resigned from cabinet and announced her intent to run for mayor of Montreal in February. Agustin's departure pre-dated that decision, having come at the end of 2024. She had been working for Martinez Ferrada since the fall of 2023. Agustin is also a former policy adviser to Ng as trade minister and to then-families minister **Karina Gould**, an outreach and operations assistant in the PMO, and a past constituency assistant to then-Crown-Indigenous relations minister **Gary Anandasangaree** as



Christiana Agustin is now studying law at McGill. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

the MP for Scarborough-Rouge Park, Ont. According to her LinkedIn profile, Agustin started at McGill last fall.

As previously noted by **Hill Climbers**, three other ex-staffers—**Javin Ames-Sinclair**, who last worked for Indigenous Services Minister **Patty Hajdu**; **Diana Ebadi**, who worked for Defence Minister **Bill Blair**; and **Chris Aoun**, a former press secretary to Health Minister **Mark Holland**—similarly started studying law at McGill last year.

Also now studying law, albeit at Queen's University, is **Elise Wagner**, who exited as director of policy to International Trade Minister **Mary Ng** last June.

Prior to joining Ng's office in October 2022, Wagner worked in Trudeau's PMO, beginning as a special assistant for Canada-United States relations in the fall of 2018, and ending as an adviser for Canada-U.S. relations and issues management.

Boyan Gerasimov,

who was director of policy to Innovation Minister **François-Philippe Champagne** up until May of last year, is now working for Sun Life in Montreal as director of strategy and growth.



Boyan Gerasimov now works for Sun Life. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

A former associate and later engagement manager with McKinsey & Company, Gerasimov briefly worked for Employment and Social Development Canada prior to being hired as director of policy to Anand as then-public services and procurement minister in March 2020. Gerasimov moved offices to do the same for Champagne at the start of 2022.

Finally—at least for this week's "Where Are They Now?" dispatch—**Jaxson Khan**, another ex-Champagne staffer, is now chief of staff for the Cambridge, Mass.-based Institute for Law & AI.

Much like Gerasimov, Khan exited as a senior policy adviser to Champagne last May; in the minister's office, his files had included AI, digital technology, privacy, intellectual property, and more.

Khan had been working for the innovation minister since March 2022, and before then was director of growth with Fable. He's also a past host of the podcast *Ask AI*, and spent roughly three years as founder and CEO of his own consulting firm, Khan & Associates.

As of this past January, Khan is also now busy as a senior fellow with the University of Toronto's Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy.

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Diplomatic Circles

By Neil Moss



‘Canadians are so upset at the moment’: how the German ambassador explained the mood of the nation

With Germany’s top diplomat in Canada for the meeting of G7 counterparts last week, it was Berlin’s envoy in Ottawa that helped explain to her foreign minister the ire Canadians were feeling towards the American threats.

United States President **Donald Trump** has repeatedly threatened to absorb Canada as a “51st state,” and has enacted punishing 25-per-cent tariffs on steel and aluminum imports.

Foreign Minister **Mélanie Joly** told Canadian reporters her counterparts viewed the threat as a “joke,” and that she had to explain to them the seriousness of the rhetoric.

German Ambassador to Canada **Tjorven Bellmann** and her embassy team were responsible for logistics, co-ordinating with the Canadian hosts and reporting on their priorities, but also explaining to Germany’s top diplomat the mood in the country and “why Canadians are so upset at the moment.”

“Canadians are upset because of repeated attempts from their southern neighbour to not treat them like a sovereign neighbour,” Bellmann said. “And because of the tariffs that have been unjustifiably imposed.”

“They want to have a friendly neighbourly relationship with their southern neighbour, and at the moment that’s not where we are,” Bellmann added. “I think getting some of that across to politicians from Europe is important because Europeans also have concerns but they are in a bit of a different direction, so sometimes we don’t appreciate how deep this goes.”

The Hill Times spoke with the German envoy at Manoir Richelieu in La Malbaie, Que., on the morning of the final day of the meetings, March 14.

During the three-day gathering in Quebec’s Charlevoix region, G7 foreign ministers were reluctant to condemn Trump’s threats. But German Foreign Minister **Annalena Baerbock** went the furthest in her support for Canada’s sovereignty.

“Borders are inviolable, in Ukraine, in Greenland, in Panama, in Canada—anywhere in the world. This is our most essential life insurance,” she said on March 14 during an end-of-meeting press conference. A day earlier, the German foreign minister had avoided directly responding to a reporter’s question on the threat.

Bellmann said that some European leaders may have a “hesitation to put fuel to a debate” when it’s clear that Canada will never become part of the United States.

On March 13, Baerbock posted on X a photo of herself with European Union foreign policy chief **Kaja Kallas**—Baerbock was wearing white, and Kallas was wearing red—with a message declaring their support for Joly and the hashtag “Canada” and “solidarity.”

The path to a joint communiqué

During the gathering, the foreign ministers are typically accompanied in joint



German Ambassador to Canada Tjorven Bellmann was previously a political director in her foreign ministry. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

sessions and bilateral meetings by only their political director—a role that Bellmann previously held before her posting in Ottawa. Ambassadors and other staff are in a listening room to follow the discussions.

Before the top diplomats arrive for the gathering, a substantial part of the final communiqué is already agreed to between the foreign ministries.

“It will be a pretty well-developed text, but there will still be open questions, and these will be the tough questions that lower-level bureaucrats that develop the text couldn’t agree upon,” Bellman said.

Political directors sit for long hours on the first night of the gathering to iron out those open questions, the German ambassador said. What remains then goes to the foreign ministers to see if a compromise is possible.

The final details are typically discussed on the margins of the foreign ministers’ meeting, with politicians often wanting to insert last-minute changes or additions.

In the weeks after the gathering of top diplomats, the G7 sherpas will continue to prepare the agenda for the Leaders’ Summit in June in Kananaskis, Alta. But before that there will be a G7 finance ministers’ meeting in Banff, Alta., in May.

Like Canada, Germany has to navigate a change in government during this year’s G7 presidency, following the February vote in which the Union parties won the plurality of the seats in the Bundestag.

Bellmann said German embassies around the globe will be guided by the contents of the coalition treaty between the Union parties and the Social Democrats. Baerbock is a member of the Greens.

“I think I can say with confidence that the next German government will be a strong friend of Canada. We will want to continue to deepen these bilateral ties,” Bellmann said.

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Critics say new PM Carney ‘failed to turn the page’ with cabinet picks, but narrative link necessary, say Liberals

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Former Conservative staffer Shakir Chambers told *The Hill Times* that while he doesn’t believe that the average Canadian knows the names or faces of any particular cabinet minister or PMO staffer, he’s fairly certain Conservatives will do their best to remind them.

“Carney is a new face, but the people around him that are in his government and giving advice are the same folks that advocated for and championed the Trudeau-era policies that made him likely the most unpopular politician in our country,” explained Chambers, a principal at Earncliffe Strategies.

“The Conservatives are going to continue to remind folks that not much has changed,” Chambers said, noting there is a nearly endless supply of images of those staffers and ministers standing alongside both Carney and Trudeau.

“The Conservatives do a very good job of communicating their narrative, and rest assured, you’ll be seeing them drive this home when the election starts,” Chambers said. “When the average voter or even Liberal supporters look at those [people], there’s no way they can say things are that different with so many familiar faces.”

However, MacEachern said that while many of the faces may be the same, he has

noted a marked difference in the messaging, and how it is being delivered.

“A big part of the Trudeau era was that his personal brand was so strong that it did not allow for a lot of other ministers to kind of break through unless it was something negative,” MacEachern said. “In the past few weeks, they seem more untethered, so now when they go in to sell what they’re doing to one of the political chat shows, they sound like real human beings.”

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Carney’s cabinet

- Minister of International Trade and Intergovernmental Affairs Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, N.B.)
- Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Development Mélanie Joly (Ahuntsic-Cartierville, Que.)
- Minister of Finance François-Philippe Champagne (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, Que.)
- Minister of Innovation, Science, and Industry Anita Anand (Oakville, Ont.)
- Minister of National Defence Bill Blair (Scarborough-Southwest, Ont.)
- Minister of Indigenous Services Patty Hajdu (Thunder Bay-Superior North, Ont.)
- Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Jonathan Wilkinson (North Vancouver, B.C.)
- Treasury Board President Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Moncton-Riverview-Dieppe, N.B.)
- Minister of Canadian Culture and Identity, Parks Canada, and Quebec Lieutenant Steven Guilbeault (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, Que.)
- Minister of Transport and Internal Trade Chrystia Freeland (University-Rosedale, Ont.)
- Minister of Health Kamal Khara (Brampton West, Ont.)
- Minister of Justice and Attorney General, and Minister responsible for Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough—Rouge Park, Ont.)
- Chief Government Whip Rechie Valdez (Mississauga-Streetsville, Ont.)
- Minister of Jobs and Families Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Que.)
- Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Ont.)
- Minister of Environment and Climate Change Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Man.)
- Minister of Housing, Infrastructure, and Communities Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches-East York, Ont.)
- Minister of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Rachel Bendayan (Outremont, Que.)
- Minister of Veterans Affairs and Minister responsible for the Canada Revenue Agency Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Que.)
- Minister of Fisheries, Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard Joanne Thompson (St. John’s East, N.L.)
- Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Democratic Institutions Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Ont.)
- Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food and Rural Economic Development Kody Blois (Kings-Hants, N.S.)
- Minister of Government Transformation, Public Services, and Procurement Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Ont.)



Bluesky Strategy Group’s Jordan Paquet says the lack of representation in P.E.I. and the Prairies will hurt the Liberals in close races during the next election. *Photograph courtesy of Bluesky Strategy Group*



Earncliffe Strategies’ Shakir Chambers says the Conservatives have more than enough content to continue reminding voters that despite a new face at the top, nothing else has really changed for the Liberals. *Photograph courtesy of Shakir Chambers*



Parliamentary Calendar

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

Assembly of First Nations hosts forum on advancing Calls for Justice for MMIWG2S+ on March 20



A woman hands out roses at the 18th Annual Ottawa Sisters in Spirit Vigil for missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQI+ people on Parliament Hill on Oct. 4, 2024. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

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.

Webinar: 'Preparing for the 2025 Federal Landscape'—Business/Arts hosts a webinar, "Preparing for the 2025 Federal Landscape—Advocacy Strategy for Arts & Culture," an arts advocacy session with staff from PAA Advisory. With federal priorities evolving and an election on the horizon, this session will provide a strategic analysis of what's ahead and ways to engage policymakers to ensure sustained support for the sector. Wednesday, March 19, at 3 p.m. ET happening online. Contact: info@businessforthearts.org.

Webinar: 'At Home with the Prime Minister'—Heritage Ottawa hosts a virtual lecture, "At Home with the Prime Minister: Ottawa Residences of the Prime Ministers Prior to 1952." Prior to the establishment of 24 Sussex Drive, as the official residence, prime ministers had to secure their own Ottawa accommodations. This webinar will look at some of the residences that they occupied, both while as MPs and PMs. Wednesday, March 19, at 7 p.m. ET happening online: heritageottawa.org.

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. Thursday, March 20, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. ET, online via Zoom. Register: 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.

Panel: 'Politics, Patriotism and Polling'—The Empire Club of Canada hosts a panel discussion, "Politics, Patriotism and Polling: Forecasting the 2025 Federal Election" featuring outgoing Liberal MP Seamus O'Regan; Abacus Data pollster David Coletto; Kathleen Monk, principal of Monk+Associates; and Kory Teneycke, co-founder and CEO of Rubicon Strategy. Wednesday, March 26, at 5:30 p.m. ET at a location to be announced. Details: empireclubofcanada.com.

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.

MONDAY, APRIL 7

Politics at the Pub—The Canadian International Council hosts a "Politics and the Pub" event on the theme "Careers in International Affairs and The Art of Diplomacy" featuring former Canadian career diplomats Patricia Fortier, Peter MacArthur, and Roxanne Dubé. Monday, April 7, at 5:30 p.m. ET at the Bridge Public House, 1 Donald St. Details via Eventbrite.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9—FRIDAY, APRIL 11

2025 Progress Summit—The Broadbent Institute hosts the 2025 Progress Summit, Canada's largest annual progressive politics conference featuring thought leaders, movement builders, elected officials, and frontline activists. Wednesday, April 9, to Friday, April 11, at the City Centre Delta, 101 Lyon St. N. Details: broadbentinstitute.ca.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9—SATURDAY, APRIL 12

CSFN 25 Conference—The Canada Strong and Free Network hosts its annual conference in Ottawa. This year's theme is "From Ideas to Action." Conservatives in Canada must be ready on Day 1 to follow through on our ideas and put them into action. This applies to leaders in the conservative movement no matter where they sit, as conservative activists, journalists, thinkers, politicians, or leaders. Wednesday, April 9, to Saturday, April 12, at the Westin Hotel Ottawa, 11 Colonel By Dr. Details: canadastrongandfree.network.

MONDAY, APRIL 14

Byelection in Halifax—A byelection is set to take place today in the Nova Scotia riding of Halifax. However, if a general election is called before this date, the byelection writ is withdrawn and is superseded by the writ for the general election.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23

Bruce Heyman to Deliver Remarks—Former U.S. ambassador to Canada Bruce Heyman, now CEO of Power Sustainable, will deliver remarks on the environment at a lunch event hosted by the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations. Wednesday, April 23, at 11:30 a.m. ET at a location to be announced in Montreal. Details: corim.qc.ca.



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