

THE MAGAZINE OF THE MACDONALD-LAURIER INSTITUTE

INSIDE POLICY

SEPTEMBER 2021

TWENTY YEARS AFTER 9/11

What did we achieve
in Afghanistan?



Also INSIDE:

1000 days for
Spavor and
Kovrig

Doubling
Canada's GDP
by 2050

Challenges
with firearms
legislation

Reconciliation
after residential
schools





INSIDE POLICY

THE MAGAZINE OF THE MACDONALD-LAURIER INSTITUTE

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From the editors

On September 11, 2021, Canadians will be joining many others in commemorating those who perished in the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Unlike past years, however, this anniversary also marks the first time in two decades that Western military forces are no longer deployed in Afghanistan.

The US military withdrawal and the rapid advance of the Taliban do raise serious questions. What did the West and Canada achieve in the country? What do we owe the people left behind? And what is the future of Afghanistan?

To lead our cover feature, we are extremely proud to have the opportunity to publish the powerful words of **Amrullah Saleh**, acting President of Afghanistan, who remains in the country to oppose the Taliban. He recorded a special message to Canadians, through MLI, that we have transcribed for this issue. As he says, “Freedom is not dead, it’s wounded. Liberty is not dead, it’s wounded. Afghanistan is savable.” He calls on Canadians to continue to support the millions of Afghans who seek peace and pluralism in their country.

As noted in articles by **Shuvaloy Majumdar** and **Khorshied Nusratty**, the plight facing the Afghan people, especially women, remains especially dire following the Taliban’s advance. **Richard Fadden** explores the international consequences of the US withdrawal from the country, while **Chris Alexander** points to the role of Pakistan in the troubles afflicting Afghanistan.

Sarah Teich and **Daniel Eisen** also remind us about the need to safeguard victims of terrorism. Meanwhile, the West’s intervention in Afghanistan is further explored in articles by **Christian Leuprecht** and **Shuvaloy Majumdar**.

Yet Afghanistan is not the only pressing foreign policy issue facing Canada. **Marcus Kolga** points to the threat of foreign manipulation of our information environment, while **J. Michael Cole** looks at the injustice perpetrated by China in detaining Canadians Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig for the past 1000-plus days.

Also in this issue, **Bruce Winder** examines the danger of shackling innovation with excessive regulation and **Leuprecht** and **Dave Cassels** explore the challenges facing firearms legislation. **Linda Nazareth** also suggests we need to rethink education for a shrinking labour force.

Lastly, **Philip Cross** offers a bold vision of Canada doubling its GDP by 2050, **Dwight Newman** provides a fulsome defence of property rights and the rule of law, and **Ken Coates** gives an impassioned plea for Indigenous reconciliation following the revelations of burial sites at residential schools.

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Indigenous leaders have shown remarkable grace amidst horrifying discoveries

Canadians can learn from Indigenous leaders and communities in how to deal with shared sorrow and how to start to address the legacy of decades of destructive government policies.

Ken Coates

The reports of unmarked graves outside of former residential schools continue to rock the country, with more announcements expected over the next few months. Reactions among Canadians range from incredulity to self-loathing, from shock to renewed determination to address these issues.

Amidst the tears and despair, there have been remarkable demonstrations of grace. First Nations leaders and communities have been the most calm, cautious and respectful of all of the commentators. There is great sadness, to be sure, for the unmarked graves hold the remains of community members and evoke memories of lives lost, families torn asunder and communities grievously harmed.

Yet despite profound reasons for anger and deep frustration, these leaders have turned their attention to the path forward for the children and their extended families, the processes of identification, and seeking the best means of remembering and honouring far too many all-too-short lives.

Their reaction is due, in part, to the fact that these discoveries came as no real surprise: They knew about the children's deaths, the unmarked graves and the families with long-unreconciled memories of lost children. It reflects the fact that they, unlike most Canadians, listened to elders and survivors.

Leaders of the communities associated with the Kamloops Indian Residen-

tial School have chosen to make this time one for sombre reflection and healing, not confrontation. Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Kukpi7 (Chief) Rosanne Casimir described the challenge perfectly when she called the revelations a "heavy truth."

Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Tribal Chief Wayne Christian spoke to the need for communities to look after those struggling to cope with the news: "Nobody was there

ancing the need to support survivors, identify grave sites and seek long-term solutions would occupy the band for quite some time.

The focus was on community building. "We are going to be doing a feast and a blessing," she told local media. "There will be a lot of people there this weekend because a lot of people have been phoning from all over wanting to come. Everyone is welcome."

First Nations leaders and communities have been the most calm, cautious and respectful.

for the children. Nobody was there for them. We'll be there for you."

The Chief of the Cowessess First Nation in Saskatchewan, Cadmus Delorme, and the Council approached the issue in a similar manner, even as they were forced to confront retraumatizing evidence of decades of neglect and harm. In a fitting response, Cowessess signed an agreement to re-empower the First Nation in the field of child and family services, saying this was "an example of how reconciliation is possible in Canada."

In northern Saskatchewan, Chief Tammy Cook-Searson led her community in a search to identify grave sites associated with Lac La Ronge Indian Residential School. The Chief made it clear that bal-

Words of anger from Indigenous peoples are both commonplace and appropriate, with some describing residential schools as instruments of genocide. There have also been renewed calls for individuals and institutions, particularly the Roman Catholic Church, to be held fully accountable. Indigenous activists and educators including Pamela Palmater and Hayden King, have provided powerful and evocative commentary, and they have not appeared to be overly concerned if their words caused discomfort among non-Indigenous peoples and government officials.

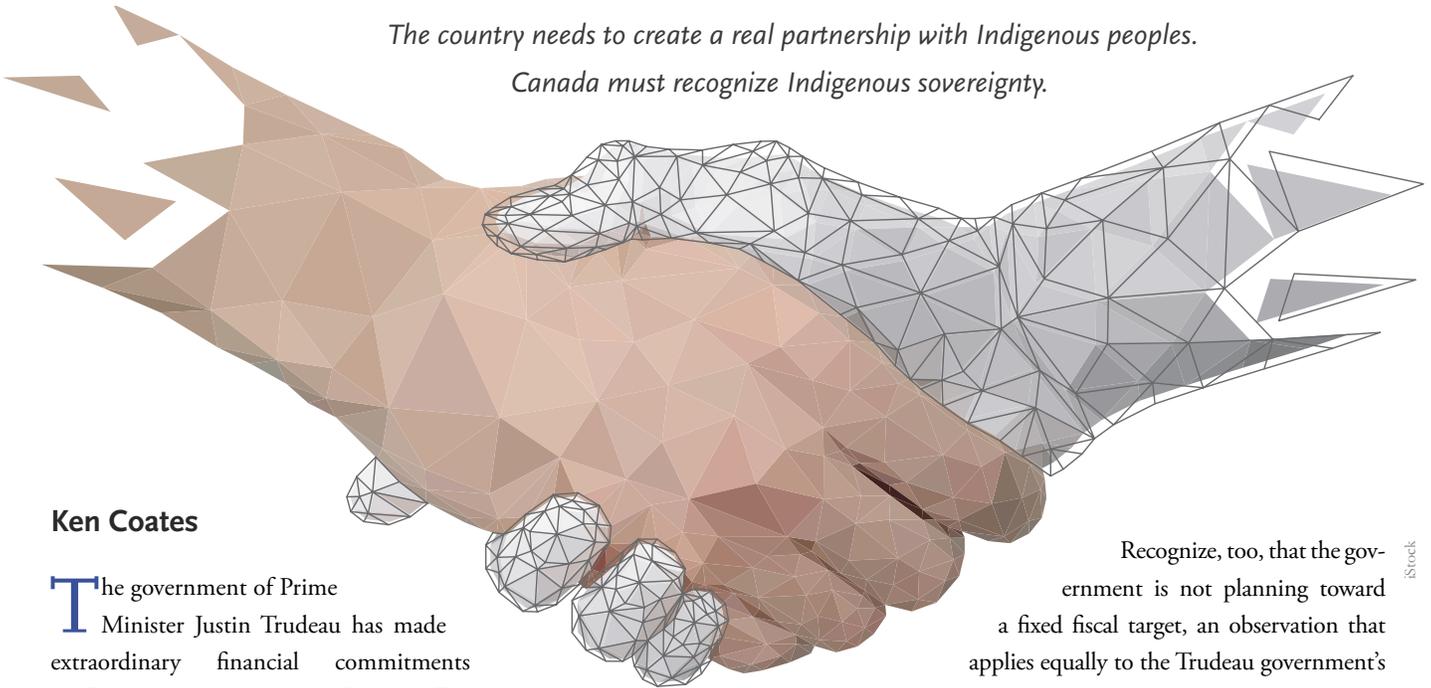
Others, including non-Indigenous activists, have focused their scorn on the

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What if money is not the answer for Indigenous communities?

The country needs to create a real partnership with Indigenous peoples.

Canada must recognize Indigenous sovereignty.



Ken Coates

The government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has made extraordinary financial commitments to Indigenous peoples in Canada. The number and scale of the allocations over the past few years have been staggering, both in comparative and absolute terms. Recently, the federal government and First Nations reached an agreement on water supplies on reserves, estimated to cost \$8 billion, only the most recent recognition of the nation's multi-generational inability to address many of the basic needs of Indigenous people and communities.

There is no question that the money is needed. It is equally clear that even larger contributions are required to address long-term gaps in fundamental infrastructure – Internet, roads, and particularly housing – and even more again to overcome serious deficiencies in health care, education, and social services. While the bill keeps mounting, there is no clear end in sight. And the expenses of addressing the yet undefined commitments implicit in the incorporation of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* into Canadian law must be added to the bill.

Even larger contributions are required to address long-term gaps in fundamental infrastructure.

Several things stand out about the recent announcements. The Indigenous response has been muted, in large measure because of historic difficulties getting the money out of Ottawa's hands and the cost to Indigenous communities associated with the bureaucratic measures needed to secure the funds. Furthermore, Canadian history is riddled with broken and unfulfilled promises. Indigenous communities must be forgiven for being less than totally confident in government compliance.

Recognize, too, that the government is not planning toward a fixed fiscal target, an observation that applies equally to the Trudeau government's approach to the broader economy and Canada's general financial position. There is no publicly available financial plan for addressing all the legitimate needs of Indigenous communities, no scheduling for rolling out the funding, and no indication of the relative priority assigned to a broad range of government-funded initiatives. It was only in 2005 that Prime Minister Paul Martin's \$6 billion a year Kelowna initiative was criticized as being overly rich. In 2021, payments related to on-reserve water supplies alone will exceed the Kelowna plan.

In this country, the national government tends to use money as a surrogate for affection and real commitment. Anglo-Canadians have long believed that Quebec should be satisfied with a striking imbalance in federal-provincial transfers in the province's favour and still do not understand the way Québécois nationalism transcends mere fiscal arrangements. Alberta holds to the conceit that financial transfers from resource revenues should "buy" Quebec's acquiescence. Much the same holds true with the

Stock

Maritimes, major recipients of federal equalization payments who are supposed to be “grateful” for structural imbalances in the Canadian economy.

And so it has been for decades with Indigenous peoples. Commentators have often argued that Canada has been “generous” in its financial treatment of Indigenous

national resolve. The total costs would dwarf the spending on water supplies and the task will take generations to complete. Instead of real and sustained determination, the country gets tinkering and small allocations of money, despite sustained efforts by the Assembly of First Nations and others to promote language renewal.

real efforts at reconciliation and when so many Indigenous communities are recovering strongly.

But the inconsistency of the treatment of Indigenous peoples means that individuals never know when they will endure an act of racism or experience one of the countless examples of marginalization and discrimination. Government paternalism itself remains a fundamental flaw in the Canadian system. No substantial change will occur when Ottawa and its bureaucratic processes dominate Indigenous lives.

Money is not enough. That much is clear. What is required is more substantial and truly nation changing. The country needs to create a real partnership with Indigenous peoples. Canada must recognize Indigenous sovereignty. This is not as difficult as it sounds, for it simply grants Indigenous people authority over their own affairs on their own land.

Off-reserve populations present logistical and jurisdictional problems, but these can be overcome with creative thinking and government flexibility. Indigenous communities also need more land, either in physical territory or with the financial equivalent so that they can rebuild their economies. Furthermore, Indigenous governments need to set the time for transition to comprehensive self-government; there is no single “one-size fits all” approach.

There is an underlying problem here. Canadians will be profoundly upset if, five to 10 years from now, it becomes clear that massive government expenditures do not result in dramatic improvements in Indigenous well-being. Indigenous peoples deserve a much better future, one defined by real authority over their affairs, partnership with the peoples and governments of Canada, and the chance to shape their destiny. Money helps, but it is far from everything. Canada can and must do better. ✨

Ken Coates is a Munk senior fellow at MLI.

Many of the crises facing contemporary Indigenous communities can be traced to one or more government policies.

governments, thus shifting responsibility for addressing Indigenous problems from the government to the communities. At this point, with the revelations about residential school grave sites stalling critics’ tongues for a time, we see a similar pattern. The government acknowledges historical injustices and sends money, in steadily increasing amounts. The funds are urgently required, but big questions remain: Will the money be enough and will it address the underlying problems?

The answer to the first is that the government transfers are not sufficient. The scale of the fiscal challenge has not been properly defined, but addressing both immediate needs and multi-generational problems is a truly costly enterprise. Water supplies can be fixed – and it remains a national disgrace the country has lacked the political will to address the problem in a sustainable manner. But consider a fundamental challenge of greater significance: the decline and near disappearance of most Indigenous languages.

Language loss is tied directly to government policy, including residential and day schools and to generations-old patterns of racial discrimination. Rebuilding languages – a formidable but not impossible task in most cases – will take unprecedented

The fundamental problem is quite simple. Many of the crises facing contemporary Indigenous communities can be traced to one or more government policies, implemented with a combination of cultural superiority, paternalism and arrogance, with a patina of real commitment to the improvement of Indigenous lives. It is odd, in the extreme, to believe that government policies, programs and interventions will set right what over 150 years of federal intervention and interference created.

The government must act; the recent efforts are urgently needed. But these measures deal with the symptoms rather than the root causes of Indigenous marginalization. Until the latter are acknowledged and addressed, the money will not be sufficient. They are more bandages than vaccines.

Discussing the root causes requires open conversation about Indigenous experiences. The lived reality of many Indigenous peoples, going back several hundred years, is dominated by racism and racial discrimination. Phrases like systematic racism are too simplistic to describe convoluted circumstances, particularly when so many institutions, companies and organizations are making

Standing up for property rights and the rule of law

There is always reason to work diligently to safeguard our fundamental institutions and societal norms.

Dwight Newman

Both property rights and the rule of law are fundamental elements of a good society. They enable people to build for the future, knowing what they have built is not subject to being taken away at random. They thus enable the flourishing of human lives. They support economic growth that in turn funds government programs. Yet Canada has allowed both to be increasingly at risk.

In saying this, it is important not to fall into exaggeration. Canadian legal traditions on property rights and the rule of law remain the envy of many countries around the world. But what looks secure can be destroyed more quickly and more easily than it was built over the generations. There is always reason to work diligently to safeguard our fundamental institutions and societal norms.

Although Canada's legal system is protective of property rights, it is a constitutional outlier in so far as Canada's constitution offers no constitutional protection to property rights against government interference – with the sole exception being the judicially developed interpretation of the section 35 Aboriginal and treaty rights clause, which provides constitutional protection to certain versions of Indigenous property rights.

I have highlighted these points over a number of years in law review articles exploring the history of how property rights were left out of the 1982 constitution, possible innovative ways of working to overcome that, and how particular ver-



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sions of property rights courts have chosen to protect Indigenous communities in ways that actually limit their ability to make choices for themselves.

But our present moment raises new issues about property rights where property rights are being put at risk not just by government interference – always an ever-present danger – but also increasingly by government failures to enforce existing laws in contexts where some are destroying the property of others. And a frightening dimension is how little attention this fundamental issue receives from some of our political actors.

We have just been through a summer in which largely unidentified perpetrators, portrayed as acting on behalf of Indigenous peoples, burned and vandalized dozens of churches, many of them places of worship

and places of comfort for members of Indigenous communities themselves. Even setting aside the important religious freedom interests affected by these sorts of despicable acts, the mealy-mouthed tolerance we have seen of such acts of destruction speaks to a fundamental disrespect for property rights.

In saying this, I in no way disregard the challenging historical legacies with which Canada must grapple around residential schools. Canada has work to do on overcoming the shameful legacy of government interferences in and destruction of Indigenous families. But it is quite simply not for radical protestors – indeed, radical criminal arsonists – to render the judgment that the appropriate response is to burn down religious sites. Their vandalistic actions have nothing to do with the

complex choices made within society that get reflected in the law, which rightly recognizes that the response to historic injustices is not to commit new ones but to take more constructive steps.

There is nothing gained for anyone by the July 1 burning of the African Evangelical Church in Calgary, a church serving many refugees who came to Canada for peace and religious freedom and instead seeing a Canada Day act of violence against them. There is nothing gained for anyone in the late July burning of a Coptic Orthodox Church in British Columbia, an act of violence against a religious minority

to permit ongoing violations of the law that destroy property rights. Indeed, part of what was at issue in the protests, not always fully realized by those protesting, was the protection of property rights for Indigenous communities. Courts have not moved to clarify Indigenous rights law but have instead rendered many decisions that have generated uncertainty for everyone.

The Wet'suwet'en Nation faced significant controversy over who had the right to make decisions concerning the transportation of natural resources, reflecting a sort of constitutional crisis over the legitimate representation of that community. A lack

rides the rule of law – is unfortunately the same as that which led others with different views to mob attacks on the Indigenous fishery in Nova Scotia and to the vandalization of Indigenous fishing compounds in late 2020. Property rights and the rule of law protect all and allow for careful societal decisions on policy questions while protecting the investment individuals and groups have made in their futures.

Canadians face many challenging issues related to how people of different backgrounds and worldviews live together and are able to flourish in peace. We have tragic wrongs in our history, but we have

An environment in which property rights are insecure for one can lead rapidly to an environment in which property rights are insecure for all.

who faced persecution in the Middle East and now face violence in Canada. There is nothing gained by the destruction of any of these churches. Yet many of our political actors stood by silently, stood by shamefully as this sort of violence and destruction was perpetrated all summer.

A problem of one set of actions by radicals during one summer would be bad enough. But these incidents and the callow silence of national leaders unfortunately fit a larger pattern. COVID has occupied our minds now so long that we almost forget the events of early 2020, but it featured weeks and months of protests and blockades that shut down transportation of needed economic goods and passenger rail service on Canada's main railway lines, and that showed not just transport and economic paralysis but again more paralysis of political actors not ready to support the enforcement of Canadian law.

Again, one can feel empathy and sympathy for the causes that led to protests while nonetheless saying it is wrong

of legal clarity led to property rights uncertainties for that community. Radical protesters extended that wrong to problems for property rights for many other Canadians.

An environment in which property rights are insecure for one can lead rapidly to an environment in which property rights are insecure for all. Those who see their property rights threatened may respond by threatening the property rights of others. We need governments to step in to stop the vicious cycles of destruction and violence that can ensue. Indeed, it is a central task of governments to do so.

The difficulty that ensues when they do not is that others will appoint themselves to act against property rights based on their own personal causes. Some might agree with a reassessment of practices of memorialization of complex historical figures. It is another step entirely when some appoint themselves to tear down statues, as has gone on throughout 2021.

And the impulse behind such acts – a self-proclaimed moral certainty that over-

also worked over the generations to make things better and will continue to do so. Yet that often involves difficult conversations and complex choices in policy and law. Those who would oversimplify complex discussions that could be constructive down to instead committing acts of revenge are not the better angels of Canada's nature. Those political actors who would pander to those destroying institutions instead of rebuilding and improving them have frankly lost track of the proper focus of government.

A society of flourishing opportunities for all must build upon the firmament of property rights and the rule of law, and it is time to stand up for these intergenerational institutions against those who perpetrate acts of commission or omission against them. ✨

Dwight Newman is Professor of Law and Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Rights in Constitutional and International Law at the University of Saskatchewan and a Munk senior fellow at MLI.

Canada should commit to doubling its GDP by 2050

The goal of doubling GDP in three decades sounds audacious but it only requires annual growth of 2.5 percent.

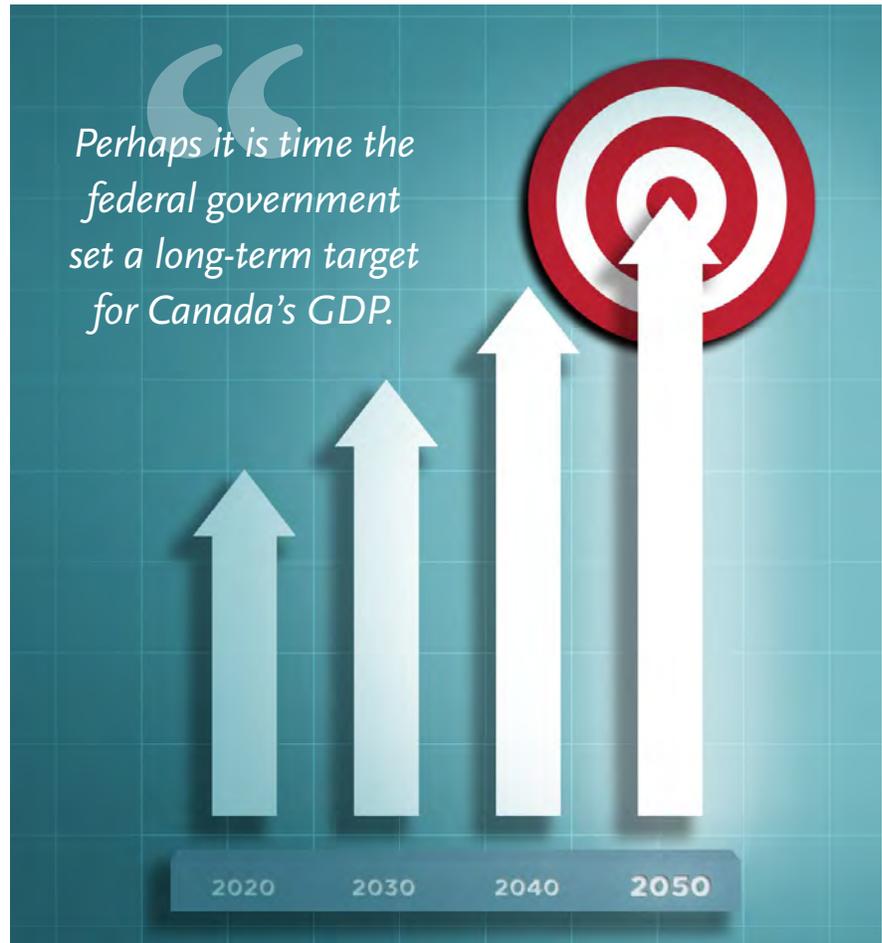
Philip Cross

The unfolding federal election campaign will inevitably be marked by a series of competing spending promises with little or no concern for how the different political parties will pay for them. The entire exercise will merely presume that Canada's economy will grow enough now and into the future to throw off the revenues to cover these growing demands on government.

It's a huge omission – and indeed a huge mistake – to take economic growth for granted. We need a means to reorient our political and policy debates to achieving higher rates of economic growth as a foundation for a more innovative and more prosperous society.

One policy tool that may help to better focus policy-making on economic growth is the use of clear, measurable targets similar to what the current government is doing on climate change in general and its goal of net zero emissions in particular. Setting such targets not only enables more informed policy-making (including accounting for trade-offs and opportunity costs), but it can also help to shift the broader political dialogue to the best means of growing Canada's economy over the long-term.

The federal government recently announced a more ambitious goal for CO2 emission reductions of 36 percent by 2030, on the way to its aspirational 2050 target of zero net emissions. To achieve this goal, the government proposed “to develop and apply a climate lens that ensures climate considerations



are integrated throughout federal government decision-making.”

Targets are nothing new to guide government actions. The federal government has had annual immigration targets for decades. Inflation targeting is the foundation of the Bank of Canada's monetary policy. Budget deficit targets helped governments deal with the fiscal crises of the 1990s and may yet prove indispensable in dealing with today's record deficits.

Indeed, one of the current government's problems is it has had no fixed fiscal

target, instead shifting constantly from an absolute level of temporary deficits to the deficit as a percent of GDP, then to the debt relative to GDP and finally to vague “fiscal guardrails” and the abandonment of meaningful targets altogether.

But given the proven usefulness of targets in other areas, perhaps it is time the federal government set a long-term target for Canada's GDP. After all, GDP is the key to creating the incomes that drive employment gains and generating the tax revenues to finance most government operations.

A forthcoming paper from the Macdonald-Laurier Institute proposes the federal government prioritize the goal of doubling Canada's 2020 level of real GDP by the year 2050. Just as with climate considerations, the government should "develop and apply an economic lens that ensures growth considerations are integrated throughout federal government decision-making."

The goal of doubling GDP in three decades may sound audacious but it actually only requires annual average growth of about 2.5 percent, which should be attainable. While above our recent average of 2.0 percent, it remains well within the

global financial crisis, followed by the 2015 oil price shock, and now the pandemic that began in 2020, governments have become chronically over-reliant on policies that attempt to stimulate the economy in the short-run but ultimately damage the economy's ability to grow in the longer-term.

Moreover, economic, demographic, and environmental policies should be examined together because they are intertwined. Professor Ross McKittrick outlined the difficulty of reducing emissions in a growing society. Overall greenhouse gas emissions are a function of the carbon intensity of our economy and

certainly lead to bad policies that cause harmful unintended outcomes for both the economy and the environment. As 2030 approaches and Canada remains well short of its climate goals, pressure will build to curb the growth of our population and economy as a short-cut to reach elusive emissions targets. However, less population growth necessarily would mean reducing immigration, which would in turn accelerate the ageing of our population and further aggravate the slowdown of economic growth.

A major benefit of a binding target for GDP is to prevent such a sacrifice of long-term income growth to attain emissions

Establishing a goal of higher growth would force governments to be more cognizant of the consequences for growth of all its actions.

growth rate Canada has managed to sustain over long periods in the not-so-distant past.

Establishing a goal of higher growth would force governments to be more cognizant of the consequences for growth of all its actions, including the many policies that focus on redistribution and various initiatives to curb greenhouse gas emissions.

Trade-offs exist between many environmental programs and the economy. In many instances, we do in fact have to choose between competing objectives. For example, while more energy efficiency and less waste are clearly beneficial, the long-term increase in our living standards has relied upon affordable energy. Unless alternative energy sources can be substituted for cheap fossil fuels at an equally low-cost, our standard of living will suffer. The corollary is plans to lower emissions with costly energy sources necessarily involve a trade-off that lowers economic growth.

Setting long-term goals for growing the economy also would help governments focus on the long-term determinants of growth. Starting with the 2008-2009

the growth of real income and population, which by themselves raise carbon consumption, making it more difficult to meet emissions targets. To achieve the promised 36 percent cut in emissions by 2030 requires an average annual decline of 3.8 percent in emissions from their actual level in 2019. Achieving such a reduction will be challenging enough for Canada, which despite years of lip service about the need to reduce emissions has struggled just to stop them from growing (Canada is hardly unique in that regard).

However, as McKittrick observes, if population growth increases by 1 percent a year and GDP per capita increases by 1.5 percent annually, then carbon intensity would have to fall by 5.8 percent a year by 2030. Lowering emissions intensity by 46 percent in such a short period is unrealistic with tools such as carbon pricing and regulation; for example, it would require the implementation of a carbon tax of well above \$200 per tonne very soon, which would inevitably slow GDP growth.

Unrealistic climate goals will almost

targets. A solution must be found where both economic and climate goals can be achieved at the same time.

In the long-term, technological innovation is the only viable solution to reducing emissions intensity while maintaining real income growth. The recent pandemic showed that our society's faith in technology was justified. We really had no other plan for dealing with COVID-19, as wearing masks, social distancing, and other societal restrictions could not have been sustained much longer without devastating impacts, especially for young people. This confidence in vaccine technology was rewarded with the development of multiple vaccines in record time.

We need to have the same confidence and resolute pursuit of technological solutions to greenhouse gas emissions without slowing economic growth. Setting the goal of doubling GDP by 2050 reinforces that necessity. ✨

Philip Cross is a senior fellow at MLI. This article first appeared in The Hub.

Our future labour force requires rethinking what education is – and who should actually provide it

As we come out of the pandemic with plans to rethink the future of work, now is the ideal time to craft a plan that ensures that both business and workers are winners as we go forward.

Linda Nazareth

It would seem to be a no-brainer: The future labour market needs workers with cutting-edge skills, and workers need cutting-edge skills if they are going to succeed in the future labour market. Still, even though it is clearly in everyone's best interest to make skills training and retraining the highest priority, the reality is that it is a mandate where no one has taken complete ownership, and where the pandemic has predictably made things worse for those who need help the most. There are no easy answers, but one solution might come in the form of rethinking what education is – and who should actually provide it.

That we need to make reskilling and retraining a priority is not the subject of much debate. Even before the pandemic hit, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) was projecting that 14 percent of workers in the industrialized countries it surveys faced a high risk that their jobs would be automated, and another 32 percent faced significant changes to their jobs because of it. In itself, this is a mismatch with our traditional education system, which focuses on going to college or university for a few years after high school and then calling it quits. Workers sometimes try to remedy this by obtaining more education and training while in the work force, and companies offer their own training as well. The reality, though, is that everyone's best

efforts to date may not be enough.

In a study published earlier this month, the OECD looked at the different kinds of learning that adults do while in the work force, breaking it down into formal learning (doing certified courses), non-formal training (typically provided by employers) or informal training (learning from others). Putting formal learning aside, pre-pandemic about 40 percent of workers across the OECD reported that they got some kind of training from their employers that fit into the latter two categories, with Canada ranking a bit better at close to 50 percent.

Unfortunately, it's the workers who are likely to be most vulnerable to automation and restructuring that seem to get the least amount of training. The OECD found that there are huge disparities across countries on who gets reskilled, with adults with lower levels of education much less likely to get training (20 percent of them reported that they had received some in the previous year) than those who have completed col-

The end of the pandemic might provide a bit of a window for worker training to move front and centre.

lege or university (58 percent). There was also a gap between training opportunities for men (42 percent) and women (37 percent) and a significant gap in training given to mid-career workers (47 percent of those aged 25 to 40 got some training) and older workers (22 percent).

It is not difficult to look at the trends and come to some depressing conclusions about what this means for worker disparities in the not-too-distant future. Better-educated, younger workers will get continuous training because it makes sense for companies to invest in them and they are easy to train. In the tech sector, for example, businesses have led the way in developing their own courses and training programs, sometimes making them available to workers outside of their own company as well. Larger companies – Starbucks, McDonalds, Amazon and Disney are notable examples – have also long had in-house programs to help workers acquire education and advance within the company. However, those workers who are the most vulnerable to being replaced by automation are also the ones who are least likely to get the training to cope with what might come next – partly because they are less likely to be full-time workers with large companies.

There is a glimmer of hope in that the end of the pandemic might provide a bit of a window for worker training to move front and centre as a priority. We know that in the

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Defending and detoxifying Canada's information environment

All federal political parties should commit to defending our democracy and society against malign foreign manipulation.

Marcus Kolga

Over the past decade, Western liberal societies have experienced an ongoing breakdown in public debate, leading to polarization, intolerance, and political violence on both the left and right.

This decay in our discourse has been helped along in no small part by hostile foreign actors who are actively exploiting our democracy and social media. We must immediately address this threat and adopt measures to detoxify our information environment by deterring those who seek to undermine our democracy.

voters will encounter some form of foreign cyber interference.”

Governments in China, Russia and Iran have all targeted issues of Canadian national interest to manipulate public opinion and debate. Furthermore, Canadian activists who criticize these regimes are being directly targeted with threats and intimidation by the Chinese, Russian and Iranian governments as part of their growing transnational repression.

When allowed to proliferate unchallenged, foreign narratives have the power to influence our democratic decision-making processes, as happened in Canada's Sen-

tional events. Today, truth itself is under siege by foreign controlled state media and niche political platforms on both the left and right, leading to distrust in all media.

However, there are steps that we can take to detoxify our information environment and defend it from attack by hostile foreign actors.

First, we must limit the reach of malign foreign state media in Canada by imposing costs on its producers. Foreign broadcasters like Russia's RT and RTR Planeta, Belarus' Belta, and China's CGTN and CCTV break Canadian laws by promoting hate, conspiracy theories, and disinformation

When allowed to proliferate unchallenged, foreign narratives have the power to influence our democratic decision-making processes.

By neglecting to impose costs on foreign interference and disinformation we have inadvertently facilitated the normalization and domestication of it. A recent analysis of the Kremlin's strategy outlines Moscow's efforts to inject “media viruses” – disinformation narratives that are shared widely on social media – into American society that eventually become “self-sustaining and self-replicating” by domestic actors.

Canada's Communications Security Establishment had released a new report about foreign interference in Canada ahead of the fall federal election, in which they warned it is “very likely” that “Canadian

ate when a motion to recognize the Chinese government's genocide against ethnic minority Uyghurs was recently rejected.

Social media platforms, despite their benefits, are businesses and motivated by profits. They are unreliable guardians against foreign disinformation. For instance, in May 2021, YouTube generated ad revenue from a young Belarusian journalist's forced confession, which was posted by Belarusian state media.

Twenty years ago, traditional mainstream media helped ensure that our national debates were based upon a commonly agreed set of facts about local, national and interna-

that are intended to polarize Canadian society. By placing sanctions on such entities, we can limit some of our exposure to them. This includes limiting the ability of foreign state media to use western platforms, like YouTube and Facebook, to distribute their narratives and terminating the revenues they generate from them.

Second, the Canadian government must follow the lead of Sweden, Finland, Taiwan, and the Baltic states by developing a whole-of-society approach to defending our information space. This includes basic media

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Regulators must recognize that e-commerce empowers small business

If we shackle innovation through excessive regulation, we run the risk of missing out not only on the growth and betterment of retail, but also on becoming a destination for technology firms as they expand and grow their global footprint.

Bruce Winder

The retail industry has always been an evolving landscape driven by perpetual innovation. In the 20th century, early disruptors like Sears and Walmart changed the industry forever by pioneering unique business models.

Fast-forward to the new millennium and technology companies have taken on this role — one that offered a crucial lifeline to many businesses and consumers during the pandemic.

Unlike previous disruptors, however, this new generation of technology-based disruptors often empowers small businesses rather than displacing them.

To allow this evolution to continue, technology companies need to continue reimagining the retail market without excessive government legislation. By encouraging these companies to grow here, Canada can reposition itself to reap the benefits of becoming a technology-driven service economy.

There is no going back: the advent and dispersion of technology in retail has changed the industry forever, whether through the development and growth of the Internet, advances in artificial intelligence and robotics, or the harnessing by both business and consumers of the incredible amount of data that is now available at our fingertips. The Internet also accelerated globalization, and with it came a worldwide market for goods and services. Canadian businesses both large and small can now sell



Gene Gallin

their goods around the world to new customers and scale their operations quickly, cheaply and efficiently.

Contrary to some assertions, e-commerce has created a marketplace where companies increasingly work cooperatively: small- and medium-sized companies work with Amazon and Shopify to market their wares, while giants like Walmart partner with smaller businesses like PenguinPickUp to make online shopping more convenient. The result is often smaller players leveraging the resources that larger players offer to help build their competitive advantage.

These technologies were never more important than during the pandemic. With the world shut down, our main way of communicating, educating, searching, shopping and getting help was through technology. Can anyone even imagine a COVID-19-inflicted world without it? How would we have survived?

Now, as we begin to exit the pandemic in earnest, many of the retail adaptations developed during COVID-19 will become permanent features. We will see fewer brick-and-mortar stores as customers and businesses right-size the mix between e-commerce and legacy formats.

Some stores will become pick-up outlets for customers ordering online; others will be further integrated with online and other technologies to enhance the customer experience while keeping customers and staff safe from current and future outbreaks. Touchless retail will become the norm.

Smartphones will allow customers to learn, share, shop and transact as much in store as they do at home. Advanced analytics will serve up relevant product and service offerings in real time before customers even realize that they need them.

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Canada needs a genuinely federal police force to make good on its firearms mandate

Since Bill C-21 is bound to be reintroduced in one form or another, this is a propitious moment to step back and take stock of the government's options.

Christian Leuprecht
Dave Cassels

Gun safety has been on the legislative docket consistently since the École Polytechnique shootings in 1989. Gun owners now take courses, undergo waiting periods, and are subject to a stringent licensing system to own, transport, and handle a firearm. So, why do well over 1000 Canadians continue to die from firearms annually? With the close of the legislative session an honest attempt to remedy this issue in Bill C-21 has yet again been pushed back. Since the legislation is bound to be reintroduced in one form or another, this is a propitious moment to step back and take stock of the government's options.

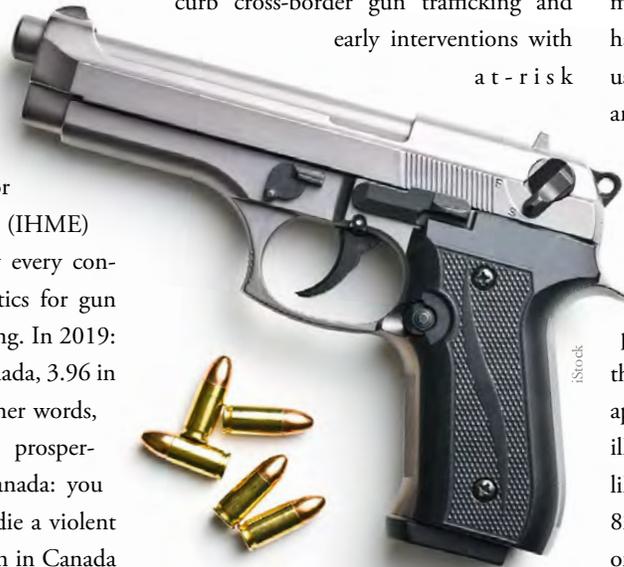
The University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) tracks lives in all countries by every conceivable cause of death. Statistics for gun violence are particularly revealing. In 2019: 0.47 deaths per 100,000 in Canada, 3.96 in the US, 0.04 in the UK. In other words, the US is an outlier among prosperous democracies, but so is Canada: you are eight times more likely to die a violent death by firearm in the US than in Canada – but almost 12 times more likely to be shot dead in Canada than in the UK. The availability of firearms is necessarily an enabler.

Bordering the largest drug and weapons market in the world generates spillover

Mexico and Canada's geographic fate accounts for their higher incidents of gun violence.

effects for gangs and drugs. Mexico and Canada's geographic fate accounts for their higher incidents of gun violence compared to other prosperous democracies. Apart from investing in criminal intelligence to curb cross-border gun trafficking and early interventions with

a t - r i s k



youth, Canada is limited in its ability to curb spillover effects from the US.

Yet, even across US states, there is substantial variation: from 3.4 deaths per

100,000 in Massachusetts to 24.4 in Alaska. The explanation is well documented and straight forward: gun safety laws curb gun crime, violence, and death.

Robust US and Canadian data also show that 2 percent of the population are the targets of 98 percent of shootings, and they are targeted mostly because of their own criminal activity. In other words, most shootings are not random: those who associate with people who have illegal firearms are far more likely to get shot. That contrasts with rare yet pernicious mass shootings, whose victims are random: Polytechnique, Portapique, Danforth.

Bill C-21 would have given municipalities the power to make owning handguns illegal. But most of the handguns used in the commission of those offences are already illegal: only one of 20 handguns seized by Toronto Police between January and mid-February 2021 was legal. While the proposed new restrictions may have some effect in Calgary, where straw purchases (or the practice of legally obtaining firearms and then reselling them to criminal markets) appear to make up a significant portion of illegal handguns, the impact in Toronto will likely be minimal. In 2019, for example, 82 percent of handguns seized in Toronto originated in the United States.

In 2006, there were 360,000 restricted weapons in Canada; now there are more than one million. This is largely a result of

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Kovrig and Spavor at 1000 days

Messrs Kovrig and Spavor must be freed, but not as part of some transaction that allows the Chinese regime to get away with it.

J. Michael Cole

September 4th marked the 1000th day since China's arbitrary detention of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor. The fate of the two Canadians has dispelled any notion that the Chinese party-state apparatus is a normal and decent entity, one whose excesses and ideology have no direct relationship with our safety and way of life.

For far too long, it was possible – easy, in fact – to look the other way whenever we heard about the Chinese Communist Party's widespread repression. The actions of the CCP pertained to another era, or were far too distant to seem relevant to us. It was possible, therefore, to disregard the horror stories or to rationalize them, as investors, consumers and politicians all did, as the necessary transgressions of a once-impooverished country on its road to modernity.

Thanks to our collective refusal to see the facts, Beijing got away with imprisoning thousands upon thousands of people within its borders and inside the territories of its empire – ethnic Uyghurs, Tibetans, activists, lawyers, journalists, writers, publishers, and religious figures. Even Hong Kong, the once more recognizable part of China for the West, is now a battlefield in which the state apparatus tramples the rights of its citizens.

Along with the crushing of Hong Kong under the weight of the National Security Law, China has given its draconian security measures a new extraterritorial reach, resulting in the detention – often arbitrary, as in the cases of Messrs Kovrig and Spavor – of non-Chinese or dual nationals.

In some cases, such victims were seized at China's behest by the security apparatus in another country and rendered to China



Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor
(via CTV News)

to face the vagaries of a legal system that is all but independent. This, for example, was the sad fate of Huseyincan Celil, a Canadian with Chinese nationality who in 2006 was arrested in Uzbekistan and sent to China to face highly questionable terrorism charges. It has been more than 15 years since Mr. Celil was swallowed up by the Chinese legal system, from which he likely will never re-emerge.

We largely abandoned him because, if we are honest with ourselves, he was still, as an immigrant, the “other” in our society. We failed to heed the warnings, and continued to do so, misguided as we all were by our illusions about China and the self-interest of politicians and corporate leaders, even as the China that kidnapped Mr. Celil became not only more repressive, but whose enrichment had now given it the possibility of expanding the field of its repression in the name of “national security.”

So when Messrs Kovrig and Spavor were abducted in retaliation for the arrest of Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou, we should not have been surprised, especially as a number of other foreign nationals – Swedish, Australian, Taiwanese among them – had already fallen victim to state-sponsored kidnapping by China.

The detention of Canadians on trumped-up charges of espionage may have proven satisfactory for Chinese officials who regarded the arrest of Ms. Meng as an affront to Han exceptionalism or who needed to remind Canada of its proper place in the hierarchy of states. However, this excess is bound to be counterproductive, as it has helped awaken Canadians, and many others around the world, to the reality of China under Xi Jinping: of a form of despotism being exercised on a worldwide scale.

The mingling of this repressiveness with the appeal of China's economy poses an unprecedented challenge to the international community. But we cannot continue to give China the opportunity to use its economy as justification for widespread repression, nor should we sacrifice its countless victims by buying into the (false) moral equivalence that Beijing and its apologists have erected as a barrier against criticism.

As we marked the 1000th day of their illegal detention by China, Messrs Kovrig and Spavor remind us that we are all potential victims, that the terrible fate which for far too long we believed was only reserved for the Chinese people, or ethnic minorities within China's borders, could one day be ours. And we need no longer be inside China to experience its effects.

Messrs Kovrig and Spavor must be freed, but not as part of some transaction that allows the Chinese regime to get away with it. For this will only be an invitation for Beijing to engage in similar behaviour in future. ❁

J. Michael Cole is a Taipei-based senior fellow at MLI and the Global Taiwan Institute. This article first appeared in the *Globe and Mail*.

A message to Canadians on Afghanistan

*We are in the making of history. The solution is not abandonment.
The solution is not losing hope. The solution is not surrendering to darkness.*

Editor's Note: This article is the transcript of a recorded address by Amrullah Saleh that was provided exclusively to MLI. Saleh's remarks were released on August 26. Despite claims by the Taliban that it has taken Saleh's stronghold of the Panjshir Valley, fighting continues and the resistance has vowed to carry on.

Amrullah Saleh

Dear Canadians. Greetings to all of you. My name is Amrullah Saleh. I am the acting president of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. I am sending you this message from inside Afghanistan.

Let me in the beginning thank all Canadians – the taxpayers, the military, the diplomats, the aid workers, the journalists, millions of well-wishers – for your assistance, for your cooperation, for your generosity over the past 20 years.

Your assistance brought change to the lives of millions of Afghans. And we all remain grateful.

I'm not reading a message, a written message. I am speaking to you from the centre of my heart. And my words of gratitude also come to you from the centre of my heart.

I am sure you are seeing the images emerging from my country. Particularly images of Kabul airport. People try desperately to flee.

But Kabul airport shows the tiniest fraction of a tragedy, of a disaster, of a fiasco, of an historic humiliation, of an historic shame – in front of our eyes.

What led to this situation? Which



Office of the First Vice President - Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
via facebook.com/FVPA(Afghanistan)/photos

Not all Afghans want to just leave it and let the Taliban to take it. We are standing.

factors contributed to this collapse? And why? These are relevant questions, which we all need to reflect. But at this particular moment, the purpose of my message to you is not sharing with you that reflection. The purpose of my message is – what can we do today to stop it?

Afghanistan is not dead, it's wounded.

Freedom is not dead, it's wounded.

Liberty is not dead, it's wounded.

Afghanistan is savable. The Afghan cause is not lost. Different tools, different strategies, different policies, are needed to reverse the situation.

I am not asking for the re-engagement of Western militaries. I am not requesting the militaries to return back. No, that's not the purpose of this message.

The purpose of this message is to tell you: It is not possible, it is not doable, to evacuate over 35 million people whose lives are in danger, who are facing hopelessness, who are facing darkness, who see no future with the Taliban.

But not all Afghans want to just leave it and let the Taliban to take it. We are standing. I am an example, but not all of the resistance.

There are many Afghans, millions of Afghans, who want to put up a resistance by their pens, by their voice. By putting a civil struggle or by putting an armed resistance; that's what we are doing.

The purpose of our resistance is to ensure pluralism is not crushed in my country.

The purpose of our resistance is to allow women and girls to have access, the right to access, education, health, and work. We don't want women to become shadows. We don't want women to lose their identity. We

don't want women to be annexes, without name, to the men. We want them to be individuals, in their own right.

We are standing for pluralism. We are standing for the dignity of humankind. We are standing for the beauty of Afghanistan.

Afghanistan will not become Talibanistan.

They are our many factors which contributed to the collapse, to the current situation as you are seeing it. But if we take the right action, if we adopt the right policies, if

for 20 years, how will it work now? In the last 20 years, not necessarily the Afghan advice was taken into consideration. There were many players outside our control. There were many actors who were not listening to us. And let us remember, the current disaster is not because of the failure of our militaries, intelligence services, or diplomatic circles. The current failure is a result of a wrong political decision, of wrong political judgment, of political misjudgment.

Let us remain thankful to the Afghan

I want you, generous Canadians, kind Canadians, to stay with the majority of the people. The majority want to hold. The majority want to bring a change. It's a matter of time.

Afghanistan is not going to become Talibanistan; it will remain a pluralistic state, country. And you stand with pluralism. Provide moral support, political support, and if you can, material support. Let's not abandon the Afghan girls and women. Let's assist them to still have the voice, the right to go to school, to go to hospital, to travel, and to work.

Taliban are a group. Let's force them, let's force their backers, to engage in meaningful negotiations for political settlement. Let's force them not to mistreat the Afghan women. Let's force them not to mistreat civil society organizations, NGOs, and others who are still engaged to safeguard humanity, to safeguard the rights of the ordinary Afghan people.

Once again, I am very hopeful, I'm very optimistic that things will change. It is difficult. I am operating under enormous difficulties. But in the meantime, we are in the centre of history. We are in the making of history. The solution is not abandonment. The solution is not losing hope. The solution is not surrendering to darkness. The solution is standing tall, believing that no force, no force on earth, can and should be allowed to subdue humanity, to crush it.

Terrorists will not be able to prevail. They have no strategy for governance. They will fail. Let us contribute and have the honour and pride of contributing to their failure and to their defeat. It is doable.

I want to end my message to you by quoting Rumi, the universal son of Afghanistan.

Nine centuries ago, he said, "In this land, in this land and this pure farm. Let's sow nothing but seeds of love and compassion."

Thank you very much. ❁

Amrullah Saleh is the acting President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

*We are standing for pluralism.
We are standing for the dignity of humankind.*

we use the right tools, this can be reversed.

One, Taliban were not and are not alone in doing this to the Afghan people. They are being assisted by the Pakistan Army, by the Pakistani intelligence establishment.

A public acknowledgement of this harsh and brutal fact will help. It will put Pakistan under pressure. The global powers and the countries in the United Nations should publicly acknowledge this. Or, without putting pressure on Pakistan, it will be a shame to endure this humiliation and defeat without acknowledging who brought it.

We should show bravery, we should show courage and we should not sink into cowardice.

Two, please provide moral, political, and if possible, material assistance to the Afghans who are not willing to escape, who want to own their country, who want to own their very beautiful country. A country which has mountains, forests, deserts, rivers, cities. And it's a beautiful country. We should not let this beautiful country be totally controlled, dominated by an oppressive regime/group with very clear links to Al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations in the region and beyond.

Three, you may think if it didn't work

military forces, to all of the militaries from the Western nations who came here, served, and some of them paid the ultimate sacrifice. A lot of Afghans, hundreds of thousands of Afghans, paid the ultimate sacrifice. Let us honour those sacrifices. Let's honour all those who lost their lives for a noble cause. We should be brave enough. We should be brave enough to safeguard the gains, and it is doable.

Lastly, while a lot of people try to scapegoat Afghans, saying they didn't fight for their country, that is absolutely wrong, baseless, and ridiculous. The Afghans did put up a fight, but wrong policies, wrong strategies, by a few, in the most powerful capitals, led to this disaster.

I wish the president of my country stayed here with his people, and if necessary, pay the ultimate sacrifice. We always preach to the Afghan people that when the moment comes and the soil calls on us to be ready for a sacrifice, to pay the ultimate sacrifice, we will be ready. I know a lot of Afghans didn't embrace this reality and escaped. I am not one of them. Millions and millions of Afghans aren't going to flee, they want to stay.



Lyle Owerko (released into public domain by NIST, via FOIA) via commons.wikimedia.org

Focus on the victims of terrorism

Canada needs a comprehensive, victims-centred, federal policy on cross-border victims of terrorism.

Sarah Teich and Daniel Eisen

It has been 20 years since the 9/11 attacks – the terrorist attacks that changed the world. This anniversary is a painful one, but we cannot shy away from it. We must use this as an opportunity to reflect on what we are doing well, what we are doing not-so-well, and how we might improve.

Too often, when we discuss matters relating to national security or counterterrorism, we brush aside the needs of the victims. These counterterrorism matters are viewed as so all-consuming and full of national interest, that we relegate

A policy must be put in place, it must be victims-centred, and it must happen now.

the victims to a lower-priority concern. It becomes about the state and not the people. That needs to change.

Especially ignored are Canadian cross-border victims: those Canadians who were

victimized in terrorist attacks abroad. This includes the Canadian victims of 9/11.

Despite the passage of 20 years, the Canadian government still has no federal policy in place with respect to Canadian cross-border victims of terrorism. This leads to confusion, disappointment, and a whole host of unmet needs. A policy must be put in place, it must be victims-centred, and it must happen now.

To be victims-centred means that any Canadian policy on cross-border victims of terror must address the specific and dynamic needs of these victims over

time. The needs of cross-border victims of terrorism can be broken down into six categories: emergency response, respect and recognition, protection, support (including information), access to justice, and compensation and restoration.

Using these categories as a framework, we conducted an extensive research project, at the request of the Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime, to discern best practices for Canada. The resulting two-part, 100-page publication, to be released in the coming months, contains almost 50 concrete, specific policy recommendations that can underpin a comprehensive, victims-centred, federal policy on cross-border victims of terrorism. What follows is a short summary of victims' needs and some of our recommendations.

Victims' Emergency Response Needs

All victims, especially cross-border victims of terrorism, must be provided with emergency services. Victims' safety and security must be immediately addressed, and this includes the provision of emergency physical and psychological care. The successful provision of emergency services to victims has had a demonstrated and positive impact on victims' long-term psycho-social outcomes.

Currently, Canadian policy with respect to emergency services is not terrorism specific. Instead, it is captured by the *Canadian Consular Services Charter*. Unsurprisingly, it does not do enough to address the needs of cross-border victims of terrorism.

Among other things, Canada should facilitate cross-border victims obtaining appropriate emergency medical and psychological care abroad; reimburse immediate medical expenses; provide family members of victims with local information or support coming out to the scene; and ensure that foreign affairs representatives are present at Family Assistance Centres.



Lauren Hobarz/FEMA News Photo via commons.wikimedia.org

All victims, especially cross-border victims of terrorism, must be provided with emergency services.



Andrea Booher/FEMA News Photo via commons.wikimedia.org

Top: FEMA's Urban Search and Rescue teams search for survivors amongst the wreckage of the World Trade Center, in the days following 9/11; above: remembering the victims.

Victims' Respect and Recognition Needs

Victims have a need to feel respected and recognized, particularly from the government and other support providers. They need to be treated with respect and empathy. This is essential for the healing process. This is also something

that numerous cross-border victims interviewed describe as lacking. Many did not feel adequately respected or recognized.

A victims-centred policy on cross-border victims should explicitly provide for and ensure that these victims are treated with respect and recognition. Canada

should also make sure to commemorate attacks involving Canadian victims, even where they occurred abroad, and assist in establishing and supporting peer support groups.

Victims' Protection Needs

Victims have a need to be protected, both from re-victimization and from secondary victimization. Re-victimization refers to the possibility that the victim will suffer from a new offence. Secondary victimization may occur if government officials or other support providers engage in insensitive or victim-blaming behaviours. Secondary victimization can result from repeated or insensitive interviews, for ex-

Victims may also need specialized medical and psychological support, which may have to start immediately in the foreign jurisdiction and transition to long-term care back in Canada. Finally, victims have a need to receive up-to-date information, including information on what resources are available in each jurisdiction involved.

To address these needs, Canada should, among other things, assist cross-border victims in dealing with any language-barrier issues; assign each victim a case-manager; ensure that a victim is provided with specialized medical and psychological care, as needed; and meet with victims and families and regularly provide them with information.

Victims' Compensation and Restoration Needs

Finally, victims need financial compensation to assist with the financial impacts of a terrorism event. They may also need restoration measures to facilitate restorative justice processes and overall recovery. Compensation and restoration measures might include monetary payments, reimbursements, medical assistance, payment of phone bills, heating payments, and/or mortgage payments.

Presently, the Canadians Victimized Abroad Fund provides some compensation for cross-border victims. However, it does not do enough. Aside from miniscule amount caps (for example, only up to

“*Victims have a need to see justice done (distributive justice) as well as a need to be confident about how it is achieved (procedural justice).*”

ample, or having to come face-to-face with the offender in a courtroom.

Among other things, Canada should explicitly address protection from re-victimization; prevent secondary victimization by officials by implementing mandatory sensitivity and trauma training; and secure locations, as appropriate, to prevent secondary victimization by media.

Victims' Support Needs

Victims require support in a variety of areas – practical, medical, psychological, and informational – and this support should be extended into the long-term.

Practical support needs may include having a point-person to assist with navigating the maze of information and resources; translation assistance; and travel assistance to get home from abroad.

Victims' Access to Justice Needs

Victims have a need to see justice done (distributive justice) as well as a need to be confident about how it is achieved (procedural justice). The provision of legal aid is an important element of access to justice.

Even where an attack occurs abroad, Canada should work towards meeting its victims' access to justice needs. Among other things, Canada should continue to request investigations where possible; pursue extraditions and domestic criminal proceedings where possible; assist victims with foreign proceedings, including by advocating for victims to obtain information and participate in foreign criminal proceedings; and work with civil society to establish and support robust legal aid initiatives.

\$10,000 for counselling services), the Fund does not cover expenses incurred for crimes that occurred prior to April 1, 2007. This means that all 9/11 victims are ineligible, and they consequently may bear huge costs out-of-pocket.

The Bottom Line

Terrorism creates victims, and it is time that Canada properly take care of ours. Canada needs a comprehensive, victims-centred, federal policy on cross-border victims of terrorism – one that ensures that victims' needs are addressed. This cannot wait another 20 years. ❁

Sarah Teich is an international human rights lawyer, a senior fellow at MLI, and a legal advisor to the Canadian Coalition Against Terror (C-CAT). Daniel Eisen is the co-founder of C-CAT and lost a family member on American Airlines flight #11 on 9/11.

Remember Afghanistan's women and girls



Sgt. Kimberly Lamb/US Armed Forces via commons.wikimedia.org

Canadians were united in their sympathy for women and girls who suffered so terribly at the hands of the Taliban. We should remember what we achieved for them over 20 years and reflect on their fate following the final withdrawal of the West.

Khorshied Nusratty

Canada's evacuation effort in Afghanistan concluded recently, essentially ending two decades of Canada's presence in the country.

Canada's role in Afghanistan after September 11, 2001, was controversial for many Canadians. During the five years I spent in Ottawa from 2004-2009, the war in Afghanistan became the dominant foreign policy issue among politicians, the media and everyday Canadians. There was a struggle to understand why Canada – which had historically taken on a peacekeeping role around the world – became involved militarily in a war that didn't make sense to many people, especially as the events of 9/11 had occurred in the United States and Afghanistan was a faraway country with no real foreign policy connection to Canada.

Despite the ongoing struggle among those questioning the Afghanistan war, there was one area of consensus among Canadians that brought their disparate and sometimes clashing views together, and that was the advancement of human rights and social gains for Afghan women and girls. Canadians wholeheartedly supported programs and projects that would help pull Afghan women and girls out of abject poverty, oppression and despair.

Prior to 2001, Afghan women and girls were seen as less than second-class citizens by the cruel and barbaric Taliban regime, who viewed women as chattel, trading them for livestock or bestowing them as sex slaves upon their comrades.

Under the Taliban, Afghan women and girls were forbidden to work, attend school, participate in any public aspect of Afghan society, and could not leave the house or

travel without a male companion. They had no rights whatsoever and were whipped in the street for showing as much as an ankle beneath their blue burqas. It was a hellish existence that no Westerners had ever experienced.

The world responded in shock when images of Afghan women being brutally shot or stoned to death in public stadiums were released across the airwaves. How could anyone ignore the barbaric cruelty that was happening in this impoverished, war-torn nation?

Luckily for the people of Afghanistan, and especially the women and girls, the world didn't turn away. Instead, numerous countries, including Canada, joined forces to first oust the Taliban and then to form the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in order to establish order under a new Afghanistan government and stabilize a

country that had undergone nearly 25 years of conflict at that point due to the Soviet occupation and a brutal civil war.

After 2001, millions of Afghan women and girls were able to return to school and pursue an education. They returned to work in droves and started businesses, became doctors, lawyers, judges, parliamentarians, and joined the Afghan government. A burgeoning media and dynamic civil society launched thousands of Afghan women journalists, human rights activists,

Without military security and periods of stability, little progress would have been achieved over the past 20 years. However, these advances did not come about without an extraordinary investment of dollars and the loss of thousands of lives, especially among Afghan civilians, soldiers and police. Canada lost 158 soldiers and seven civilians during its military involvement in Afghanistan that ended in 2011, and the last Canadian soldiers left the country in early 2014.

or NATO forces would remain forever in Afghanistan, but certainly no one ever imagined we would see the tragic images of fleeing Afghan men, women and children as Taliban forces rolled into Kabul and hoisted their black Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan flag above the Presidential Palace.

When the last Russian soldiers finally left Afghanistan in 1989 after ten years of an unsuccessful occupation resulting in 1.5 million Afghans killed, Afghanistan expected political support and reconstruction efforts

NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan via commons.wikimedia.org



“
After 2001, millions of Afghan women and girls were able to return to school and pursue an education.”

and political figures. Women appeared on television and competed in talent shows. Girls were able to participate and flourish in sports, and proudly represented Afghanistan in the Olympic Games in Athens (2004) until more recently in Tokyo (2021).

The parliamentary elections of 2005, 2010 and 2018 resulted in a record number of Afghan women becoming members of the Afghanistan Parliament, and two women ran as vice presidential candidates in the presidential elections of 2014 and 2019.

None of these gains would have been possible without the financial support and dedication of the international community working on humanitarian and reconstruction programs across all sectors in Afghanistan, backed by the military engagement and protection of ISAF and NATO forces. Every sector of society suffered and most infrastructure was destroyed throughout the many years of conflict, requiring major reconstruction projects across the nation.

As the security situation has deteriorated over the past few years once NATO forces started to drawdown and the ISAF mission ended in 2014, the Taliban and ISIS-K have wrought immeasurable destruction and loss of life among the Afghan population. In the first half of this year alone, 350 Afghan women and girls were killed at the hands of these barbaric terrorist groups. It is no wonder that Afghan women feel abandoned by the West, and their futures are hanging in the balance.

Following the US military withdrawal from Afghanistan, there is a great feeling of disbelief, anger, fear and panic among Afghans and the global community that have worked, lived and stood side by side with them since 2001. The world watched in horror as the Taliban quite easily took control of Afghanistan within a few weeks after it was announced that America was finally ending its longest war.

No one thought the United States

from the United States, which had backed *Mujahideen* forces leading to the defeat of the Soviets and the end of the Iron Curtain.

Unfortunately, American assistance never materialized, and Afghanistan fell into years of a bloody civil war out of which emerged the Taliban in 1994. In its failed state status, terrorism under the Taliban and Al-Qaeda was allowed to flourish leading to the fateful events of 9/11. Afghan women have much to fear with the return of the Taliban, but so should the rest of the world if we allow this nightmare to run its course. We owe the Afghan people more than that for everything they have endured. ✿

Khorshied Nusratty is a former journalist who worked for ABC News and Fox News in Afghanistan from 2002 through 2004. She was married to Omar Samad, the former Afghanistan Ambassador to Canada; they lived in Ottawa from 2004-2009. Khorshied is the Principal Communications Advisor at Gallup in Washington, DC.

Trudeau's betrayal of the Afghan people

The government knew this day would come, but rather than listening to the advice of Canadians and the criticism of the opposition that they had received for months, Ottawa clearly lacked a plan.

Shuvaloy Majumdar

We saw this crisis hurtling toward us. As bodies fell from the sky, as truncheons lashed women on the streets, the sounds we heard were those of our own false prophesies crashing down upon us. Of a crushing betrayal we knew we had been party to, and where our leaders failed to correct course, or even care.

Our leaders pantomimed negotiations with terrorists they knew were never sincere. Financed sanctuaries for those terrorists through delusions about Pakistan they knowingly subscribed to. Imposed a cabal of corruption and warlords, presented as strong central government, upon a nation allergic to central authority. And now pretend those terrorists auditioning to seize power have magically moderated, cast aspersions on Afghan courage, all to save face in the midst of unmitigated chaos.

I wonder how strong our will really was. We waged, as H.R. McMaster has astutely described, 20 one-year wars, instead of a unified 20-year campaign. We allowed bureaucratic groupthink, and our elites with their overconfidence, to guide us, instead of ordinary Afghans and what they told us. We have been unwilling to define and confront an enemy, whose will has now exceeded our own.



Air Mobility Command Public Affairs via commons.wikimedia.org

In July, under cover of secrecy and darkness, US President Biden committed the horrendous malpractice of naivety and slogans masquerading as policy, and abandoned the Afghan people earlier than his stated date of September 11, 2021. We should not have been surprised that the

Afghan National Army (ANA) we fought alongside, whose nearly 70,000 dead rest with 158 Canadian sisters and brothers, had no more fight.

And why would they? They saw a government in Kabul incapable of paying them, providing supplies, or relegating

its warlords and corrupt technocrats. They toiled against terrorist taxation schemes imposed across Afghanistan's massive informal economy, siphoning millions off the backs of the already destitute. They knew that the Taliban and Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) are indistinguishable from each other, providing limitless cash buyouts, weapons, training, operational logistics and communications advice. They knew that the Taliban would rapidly secure the endorsement of Pakistan's suzerain, the People's Republic of China, now that America and the West had left.

It's rich that the American president would blame Afghans for surrendering when it was he who surrendered first and retreated irresponsibly. Afghans were abandoned on the battlefield by the most



First, it must recognize the First Vice President of Afghanistan, Amrullah Saleh, as acting President and legal caretaker of a constitution Afghans have overwhelmingly endorsed through six elections, rather than the Taliban's so-called Islamic Emirate that has never held broad public support.

Second, humanitarian and refugee corridors need to be organized and established with Afghans whose resilience against the Pakistani-backed Taliban rule has long been proven. Aid should be airlifted to those resisting Taliban rule and partnerships deepened with nations like India whose experience with regional terrorism offers dependable counsel.

And third, knowing things will get worse and our rivals will be emboldened the longer we wait, we must impose sanctions against those in Pakistan's deep

“*Trudeau inherited a feminist foreign policy in Afghanistan, but rather than build upon it, he now lets it die outside the gates of Hamid Karzai International Airport.*”

powerful military the world has ever known; with all they had endured, this betrayal was the final death knell for their morale.

For Canada, what's most devastating is that, knowing this day would come, watching it unfurl, having received the advice of Canadians and the criticism of the opposition for months, Prime Minister Trudeau clearly had no plan.

When I served in government, we would receive reports well in advance of these crises. Our political leaders would have been advised that as America abandoned Afghanistan, a vacuum would emerge and the Pakistan-backed Taliban would seize it. They would have known that a coherent plan would be needed.

But instead, government departments

diverged in disarray without clear direction of the elected government. Cabinet did not convene or dispatch staff to bring daily focus to a relief effort. Ministers called neither their counterparts nor their allies. Instead of providing leadership, cabinet is on autopilot, prioritizing politics instead of a plan to secure our own people, those who helped us, or the most vulnerable.

This is despite Trudeau's inheritance of the Harper government's singular focus on the wellbeing of Afghanistan's women and children. Trudeau inherited a feminist foreign policy in Afghanistan, but rather than build upon it, he now lets it die outside the gates of Hamid Karzai International Airport.

To change course, the Government of Canada has three things to do, right now.

state responsible for empowering a terror army to conquer a nation, until they bring about an end to the forever war they've imposed on Afghans and end the humiliation they bring to Pakistanis who yearn to be free of military rule.

These are the moments that test a government, and its credibility. Ask our people in Afghanistan – the women we've supported, the Gurkhas that protected us, the translators that bridged our peoples — whether they believe Justin Trudeau had their backs. Then ask yourself, as this crisis turns and new ones emerge, if you do. ❁

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Strategy for Afghanistan went off course long before the US exit

US Central Command Public Affairs via commons.wikimedia.org

The new tragedy now engulfing Afghanistan will require a massive humanitarian and refugee response. Above all, it requires a new strategy for Pakistan.

Chris Alexander

After 20 years in Pakistan, the Taliban have retaken Kabul.

The Gulkhana palace, where former Afghan king Zahir Shah and presidents Hamid Karzai and Ashraf Ghani received dignitaries after 2001, is now filled with hard men in black turbans.

A photo of Mr. Ghani's old desk – once cluttered with World Bank reports or draft decrees on irrigation – shows it holding a single Kalashnikov, as if to symbolize the Taliban's new agenda. Abdul Ghani Baradar, a UN-listed terrorist who led the fight against Canada's battlegroup in Kandahar, is touted to become the illegitimate "president."

On the Arg palace's clock tower, a

white-and-black Taliban banner waves where Afghanistan's red-black-and-green one had been – as if to illustrate the erasure of an era of colour, and the drawing of a new darkness. For Americans, it would be as if the Jolly Roger was fluttering over the White House.

For those who served and suffered over the past 20 years, this parade of misogyny, impunity and utter cruelty has been horrific, unreal and biting painful.

Why did talks fail? Because the US ignored Pakistani goals hiding in plain sight.

Recriminations have begun; some already say US President Joe Biden's abandonment of Afghans will hang over his presidency like a pall of gun smoke, or that he was wrong to withdraw forces, or sending them at all was futile. Others suggest Afghans refused to fight, or that foreigners fuelled corruption.

My take is that our strategy went off course earlier. At the 2010 London conference on Afghanistan hosted by

Britain's Gordon Brown, everyone pledged to work "actively for Afghan-led peace, reintegration and reconciliation efforts." Talks with the Taliban quickly became the great prize.

When Osama bin Laden was living in the heart of one of Pakistan's garrison cities, no state suggested breaking off these negotiations. Former US president Donald

could not sustain the fight. The promise of power-sharing with guarantees became a full Taliban victory.

Why did talks fail? Because the US ignored Pakistani goals hiding in plain sight.

In August, 2011, three months after Mr. bin Laden's death, Mirza Aslam Beg, former army chief and ideological

cities and towns, which will also fall to the Taliban."

This is almost exactly what has happened.

Making the Taliban (and their prototypes) masters of Kabul is Mr. Beg's lifelong goal. His successors as Pakistan's top general after the attacks on Sept. 11 have not deviated from it. Two of them even held major commands in Abbottabad when Mr. bin Laden was living there.

For Pakistan's military, support for the Taliban has not been a sideshow, but the main act. And by ignoring this reality, US leaders have been perversely backing both sides. Pakistan's misguided strategy has also been self-defeating, as the country slides closer to bankruptcy and pariah status. The bottom line is that Mr. Beg's "forever war" should have been stopped long ago.

Taliban fighters patrolling the streets of Kabul, August 17, 2021.



Voice of America (VOA) via commons.wikimedia.org

“For Pakistan’s military, support for the Taliban has not been a sideshow, but the main act.”

Trump even wanted to bring the Taliban to Camp David.

To Afghans, this need to do a deal with terrorists looked desperate; they were confused, demoralized and divided long before the February 29, 2020, US-Taliban agreement for bringing peace to Afghanistan cut their Afghan government out of the equation altogether. After all, when your top donor frees 5000 hostile terrorists and does a non-aggression pact with your enemies, would you fight?

So when Mr. Biden pulled the plug, it was just the *coup de grâce*.

Even so, Afghan special forces clobbered Taliban elite units in Lashkar Gah and elsewhere in July. But without a backbone of American support, Kabul

godfather of Pakistan's proxy war in Afghanistan, wrote in the pages of a major Pakistani daily that "The occupation of Afghanistan is the mother of all evil."

In March of this year, a few months after then-US secretary of state Mike Pompeo met the Taliban, Mr. Beg wrote: "Taliban were cheated in 1990. They won't be cheated again. Rather, they are the ones who will lay down the conditions for peace in Afghanistan."

He continued: "All eyes are now focused on May 1, 2021, when foreign troops are to leave, and if they do not, the Taliban will sweep across the country to establish their writ over territory which they already control, pushing the Afghanistan government to the besieged

When I left Afghanistan in 2009, I wrongly held out hope US policy-makers were waking up.

The new tragedy now engulfing Afghanistan will require a massive humanitarian and refugee response, renewed vigilance against terrorist threats and isolation of Mr. Baradar and other thugs.

Above all, it requires a new strategy for Pakistan – one that starts with sanctions. 🌐

Chris Alexander was Canada's ambassador to Afghanistan, UN deputy special representative of the secretary-general for Afghanistan, and federal minister of citizenship and immigration. He is the author of an MLI paper titled "Ending Pakistan's Proxy War in Afghanistan." This article first appeared in the Globe and Mail.

The disastrous US exit from Afghanistan should send a dire signal to the rest of the world

Recent US decisions – not only in the strategic realm, but also in the trade and economic sectors – make it important for Canada and others to rethink how to protect their national security.



Official White House photo by Adam Schultz/United States government photo via flickr.com/photos/whitehouse

Richard Fadden

No Parliament has enacted a law respecting unintended consequences – yet its impact is the bane of decision-makers in every policy area.

The unforeseen events that come after significant decisions are especially worrisome in the national-security realm, where control of the environment is limited by an ever-increasing number of independent players. US President Joe Biden's decision to precipitously withdraw forces from Afghanistan, for instance, has unleashed a number of unintended consequences – and they will disrupt international relations for some time to come.

Few countries doubted that the US wanted out of Afghanistan – and in truth, most understood why.

Few countries doubted that the US wanted out of Afghanistan – and in truth, most understood why. But the how and the when are an altogether different matter. America's allies welcomed the election of Mr. Biden and a return to normal alliance relations after Donald Trump; something that his campaign and administration have promised, but he has not delivered.

I have no doubt that the countries with troops still in Afghanistan were con-

sulted, but not in the sense that any such consultations would have changed anything. Even conceding that the Western effort over the past two decades was largely a failure, nothing required the immediate departure of US and allied forces when it was predictable that their withdrawal would mean the fall of the Afghan government and the abandonment of millions of people who had come to rely on the West (whether that reliance should

have been allowed to develop is another matter altogether).

This message of abandonment will be heard throughout the world. This, combined with the still-lingering concern that Mr. Trump's approach to international relations could continue to influence US foreign policy for some time to come, will seriously weaken America's moral authority to lead moving ahead.

The second group that will thrill in the US-made disaster will be China and Russia. Every Western failure – and Afghanistan is a failure against our own objectives – enhances their argument that liberal democracy is a spent force. Neither country will repeat the mistake of seeking to control Afghanistan from within, but their influence will now be greater than the West's in a part of the world that needs stability, though their

push their hopes for a similar government there. Allied efforts in Afghanistan were materially weakened by Pakistan, and the West's future relations with that country should take this into account. It won't be easy, given China's efforts there, but we cannot continue to formally treat Pakistan as a full ally.

For Canada and other Western countries long aligned with US leadership, this withdrawal calls for a review of what support and action can be expected of the United States in the face of an increasingly tumultuous world. The US withdrawal from Afghanistan has made it clear that “the rest of the West” does not have the capability of projecting military power far from our borders – the US remains the military and logistical superpower – and there are situations in which it too is vulnerable. As the most benign and well-intentioned superpower since the Roman Empire, the United States remains the critical player in the battle for liberal democracy, but it clearly has lost its desire to police the world. The rise of China has dimmed its appetite even more, given that pushing back in some parts of the world would spark major conflict.

Countries have interests and not friends, the old truism goes. This is not a black-and-white proposition, but recent US decisions – not only in the strategic realm, but also in the trade and economic sectors – make it important for Canada and others to rethink how to protect their national security. The absence of US support might not be permanent, but the lack of a reasonable assurance of such support is – and that is an existential shift for Western democracies. ❄️

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That was then: then-Vice President Joe Biden talks with President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani and Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif following their trilateral meeting, which included discussion of recent efforts to relaunch peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban, World Economic Forum, Davos 2016.

(David Lienemann/ Executive Office of the President of the United States via commons.wikimedia.org)

“Pakistan has been a refuge for Taliban members who have also received support from elements of the Pakistani government.”

Two groups, however, will rejoice. The first are violent *jihadis* everywhere on the planet, who will view this retreat as an encouragement to restart or redouble their own efforts against the West. This is not an academic concern, given the spread of such groups and the level of their commitment. Indeed, it will be interesting to see if the Al-Qaeda and Islamic State groups in Afghanistan will be allowed to prosper, as both – unlike the Taliban – believe in projecting their revolution out to the West. It is doubtful that the Taliban can effectively control these groups, as they will encounter the same challenges every government in Kabul has faced to control the country.

efforts there will do everything but promote stability. Beijing and Moscow have recognized the Taliban government, and they will likely provide significant aid that will further enhance their influence, given that Western aid is not likely in the offing.

The Taliban victory will be a mixed blessing for Pakistan, however. For most of the past two decades, Pakistan has been a refuge for Taliban members who have also received support from elements of the Pakistani government. At the same time, moderate factions of the Pakistani government will worry that the considerable *jihadi* elements in their country will view the Western withdrawal as an impetus to



Staff Sgt. Ryan Brooks US AirForce / davidhubaner / image / (679)5255 / marines-support-evacuation-hamid-karzai-international-airport via commons.wikimedia.org

Soul searching in the wake of the downfall of Afghanistan

The outcomes in Afghanistan should give serious food for thought to the interventionist ambitions that characterized successive US presidential administrations.

Christian Leuprecht

Kabul 2021 may not be Saigon 1975, but it raises similar questions that the US was asking after Vietnam: Why were we in Afghanistan? What did we accomplish? It also gives rise to painful questions about identity: Who are we? We were fighting the good fight. We had told ourselves that our soldiers were warriors. And we had told ourselves that we were winning.

Better an end with horror than horror without end. That seems to be the messaging from the Biden administration: American unilateralism on full display, with strategic objectives subordinated to

Better an end with horror than horror without end. That seems to be the messaging.

a singular political imperative. So that on the 20th anniversary of 9/11, the US president can announce to the American people that after 20 years, US military operations in Afghanistan have ended and US troops have returned home.

The election of Donald Trump had made abundantly clear the US electorate was unwilling to tolerate expeditionary operations while middle America was hurting. For Democrats to be competitive in the 2022 midterms and the 2024 presidential election, President Biden knew he had to stay the course. US Marines and allied soldiers – 1000 British, 500 French, 160 Germans, a Norwegian field hospital – ended up putting their lives on the line to salvage the impossible position into which they were thrust.

Meanwhile, Canada sent special forces to extract embassy personnel and assist Canadians who managed to make their own way inside the Kabul military airport

perimeter. Unlike other allies, however, Canada was conspicuously absent from broader collective support for coalition operations to exit Afghanistan.

Exiting from conflict zones normally involves repatriating citizens first, then removing military equipment and withdrawing troops last. To meet the above timeline, the Biden administration did the opposite: it withdrew troops, while leaving US citizens and equipment behind. The administration wanted to believe its own

The US approach was bedeviled with a string of critical flaws, rooted in fundamental misunderstandings. The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction had ominously identified “a willful disregard for information that may have been available.” For instance, in many urban centres the Taliban successfully paid off supposed defenders not to make a stand. In the end, however, no one was more surprised by speed of their success than the Taliban themselves.

By 2016, the US had also provided 75,898 vehicles and 208 airplanes to the Afghan National Army (ANA). And the Taliban reportedly seized UH-60 Black Hawk and A-29 Super Tucano aircraft; equipment such as sophisticated C-208 light attack aircraft, PC-12 planes with the latest intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance technology, ScanEagles drones, and untold thousands of light weapons were also pilfered. Indeed, in widely viewed footage over recent

“Unlike other allies, however, Canada was conspicuously absent from broader collective support for coalition operations to exit Afghanistan.”



A-29 Super Tucano attack airplanes, UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, ScanEagles drones and other vehicles have been left behind by the US military, some reportedly falling into the Taliban hands.

(All images via commons.wikimedia.org: Tech.Sgt. Nathan Lipscomb, US Air Force; Staff Sgt. Joshua Gipe, US Army/defenseimagery.mil; Sgt. Shannon Arledge (USMC); MSgt Benjamin Bloker/defenseimagery.mil)

narrative – that a Taliban sweep was inconceivable, given the US\$83 billion invested in the Afghan National Army and the 3500 coalition soldiers who had lost their lives, notwithstanding the Taliban gaining ground steadily since 2017.

The fateful decision to move the US embassy to Kabul airport caused mass panic: it signalled that Kabul would not hold. Only six weeks prior President Biden had infamously professed: “The likelihood there’s going to be the Taliban overrunning everything and owning the whole country is highly unlikely.”

Reassured by the president’s confidence, the US had left 10,000-15,000 of its citizens in Afghanistan, alongside a host of our allies’ country citizens. The US also left behind an arsenal of weaponry, including A-29 Super Tucano attack planes, MD-530 reconnaissance and close attack helicopters, and counter-rocket and artillery defence system, among others. Some have reportedly fallen into the hands of the Taliban; other equipment is undoubtedly being disassembled and reverse-engineered by Chinese and Russian intelligence.

days, Taliban “commandos” could be seen parading around with US-supplied equipment.

After the decapitation of Ghaddafi, arms outflows from Libya had fuelled instability across the Sahara-Sahel, which Canadian soldiers have been helping to contain in Niger and Mali. Afghanistan is Libya on steroids.

The Taliban control border checkpoints and are impeding people from leaving. Half a million people have been internally displaced in recent weeks, in addition to Afghanistan’s 3.5 million internally displaced persons. Eighty percent of Afghans suffer from food insecurity, 90 percent are subject to water insecurity. And the Taliban have been upending traditional water-sharing agreements to divert scarce

water flows to poppy cultivation and in an attempt to weaponize water and food.

Hubris and folly had caused President Trump to make what Kori Schake deems “one of the most disgraceful diplomatic bargains on record,” in which Trump had agreed to withdraw all coalition forces, end military and contractor support, forced the Afghan government to release 5000 Taliban fighters, and did nothing when the Taliban went back to fighting the Afghan government.

The Trump and Biden administrations’ Faustian bargain to legitimize the same group the US had spent 20 years fighting on the battlefield effectively bestows political recognition the Taliban, a listed terrorist organization. This presages serious commitment problems for the US and allies elsewhere.

Geostrategically, the drawdown makes good sense. In fact, it should have been done years ago. The entire region is a secondary theatre; having squandered two

have emboldened China to invade remain to be seen.

Consider this counter-factual: how different might the outcome have been had the coalition drawn down within months of routing Al-Qaeda and once Osama bin Laden had evaded US General Tommy Franks? For Western electorates, Afghanistan has only reinforced the perception that investments in large-scale expeditionary operations do not pay dividends. Ergo, the trend has been towards missions with



*Geostrategically, the drawdown makes good sense.
In fact, it should have been done years ago.
The entire region is a secondary theatre.*

In return, the Taliban agreed to stop targeting US or coalition forces, not provide safe harbour Al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations, and negotiate with the Afghan government. Trump’s own former national security advisor called it a “surrender agreement,” without inspection or enforcement mechanisms.

To be sure, Afghanistan is a different country today than it was 20 years ago. The majority of Afghans do not support the Taliban. The Taliban are contending with armed opposition from within, economic collapse, and deeply conflicted regional relations that call into serious question their regime’s ability to prevail, let alone survive.

To dismiss the Afghanistan drawdown as an outlier would be a categorical error: the US and allies are doing work similar to Afghanistan elsewhere in the world. The harm done by America’s chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan will reverberate for years to come. It plays into Chinese and Russian narratives of US and Western decline and further alienates trusted allies, especially in Europe.

decades and US\$4 trillion on distractions in Afghanistan and Iraq instead of containing China, the US can finally double down on the Indo-Pacific. This theatre requires America’s undivided attention.

In the long-run, whether turning Afghanistan back into terrorist sanctuary by handing the country to the Taliban or other groups (not just Islamic State-Khorasan Province but also the pro-Uyghur East Turkestan Islamic Movement with its past links to Al-Qaeda) and abandoning regional security influence to Pakistan, China and Russia outweighs the benefits of the US and coalition partners staying put is debatable. To be sure, the global Salafist-Jihadi movement just got a major shot in the arm.

At the same time, Beijing’s jingoist propaganda machine has been gloating: the US abandoned Afghanistan; so, Taiwan should expect likewise. If it is not in the US national interest to stay in Afghanistan, what interest would the US have in getting into a war with China over Taiwan? Whether Taiwan is analogous to Afghanistan and whether recent events

a small footprint, clear aim, limited rules of engagement, and a definitive timeline.

The outcomes in Afghanistan should give serious food for thought to the interventionist ambitions that characterized the US presidential administrations of Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama – and the dubious quality of strategic advice political elites have been receiving over the past quarter-century.

Pundits have long decried US overreach; they are about to be granted their wish. But if Afghanistan is a harbinger of US “grand” strategy under the Biden administration, they and allies may soon find themselves beset by nostalgia. US allies can only hope that Otto von Bismarck’s aphorism actually rings true: “God has special providence for fools, drunkards, and the United States of America.” ❁

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China at the crossroads of civilizations

*Islamabad, Tehran and Kabul form a constellation of assets for China.
And America's shameful withdrawal from Afghanistan has been a gift to Beijing.*

Shuvaloy Majumdar

In the skies over the graveyard of empires, at the crossroads of civilizations, the dragon has commenced its descent.

It took two decades to ultimately break the will of the West in Afghanistan, and with it, the *Pax Americana* the Twin Towers once stood as testament to. The American president contends his decision to recklessly concede Afghanistan to the Pakistan-backed Taliban is one of realism, of geopolitics: Dispense with Afghanistan, so that America can focus on China.

This was a monumental misjudgment. It is the signal achievement in a legacy of strategic failures Biden has overseen in his

Behind the curtain of every international strategic consideration is the challenge posed by China.

years in Washington. It is a legacy of creating a vacuum that ISIS filled across Iraq and Syria, of diminishing Western deterrence by defining red lines that were never intended to be enforced, of punishing allies with condescension and rewarding enemies

with negotiations. It is policy reverse engineered from political slogans, rather than crafted through sound reasoning. And it has resulted in a gift to America's principal rival, masquerading as a strategic retreat.

In May last year, I wrote how China had replaced Russia as the West's principal rival. Of two nuclear powers, it turned Russia into a gas station and Pakistan into colony. Behind the curtain of every international strategic consideration is the challenge posed by China. It is one where the Middle Kingdom carves its economic, political, and military arteries across the face of the earth, accomplishing a global inversion in which an order once underpinned by America is replaced by one concentric to China.

In Afghanistan, modern China isn't encumbered by the rights of Afghans or a constitution Afghans endorsed through six elections. It isn't concerned with upholding the rules-based order it exploited in its rise, biding its time to break the West. China's only concerns are those of hard power, in assembling the geopolitical assets it needs to access Central Asia, the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf. Afghanistan's geography is critical to China's strategic design, while its mineral wealth is peripheral.

China's neocolonial Belt and Road Initiative refers, explicitly, to reviving the

Pakistan's drones were reportedly deployed against acting President Amrullah Saleh's resistance in the Panjshir valley of Afghanistan; these drones may have even been provided by China, given the latter's growing role as an arms supplier. The head of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Faiz Hameed, arrived in Kabul to oversee the political management of its so-called "moderated" Taliban proxies in Kabul and its accordant mullah-loaded cabinet, and to supervise the ISI-Taliban campaign to crush the Afghan national resistance. The resistance's ongoing presence poses significant

anti-Semitic loathing, Pakistani and Iranian militaries find in themselves enthusiastic courtesans for China's economic incentives. In March, China announced US\$400 billion in investments over 25 years in Iran. Days ago, Tehran implored the People's Republic to act on them. China's announcement in Iran accompanied a political agreement to undermine Western sanctions and promote nuclear negotiations, and a full-spectrum military agreement including joint exercises, joint research, weapons development and intelligence-sharing.

Just weeks after the American surren-



Pakistan's policy of "strategic depth," obsessively undermining India from Kabul to Kashmir, finds perfect symmetry with China's Belt and Road.

ancient Silk Road spanning Rome to Xi'an, a road which still exists in part between Pakistan and the Uyghur Autonomous Region of Xinjiang. Restoring the promise of Xi'an – which for a time was known as Chang'an, the economic and cultural capital of the vibrant Tang Dynasty – is existential to Chinese Communist mythology.

In March 2019, China bejeweled its Belt and Road crown with Rome itself, as Italy became the first NATO, G7 and European partner in the project of restoring the Middle Kingdom. In 2015 it launched its ambitious China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, and has now invested nearly US\$62 billion in major infrastructure projects it rigidly controls. By 2019, it intensified significant military and intelligence integration between the People's Liberation Army and the Pakistani Army.

Pakistan's policy of "strategic depth," obsessively undermining India from Kabul to Kashmir, finds perfect symmetry with China's Belt and Road, obsessively imposing its authoritarian model for economic development. Over Labour Day weekend,

inconveniences to Pakistan's international campaign to normalize the Taliban.

Hameed serves his masters in Beijing well, and China benefits from Pakistan's status as a major ally of US Central Command and NATO, all while repurposing the vestiges of Pakistan's Cold War relationships with the West as an instrument to defeat the West.

With Hameed managing the Taliban, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmud Qureshi flew to Tehran to engage Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi on behalf of his and China's wider agenda.

Iran's complex relations with Afghanistan, despite tensions, remains rooted in mutual respect for the durability of one half-century-old Islamic revolution in Iran, and the 20-year tenacity of another in Afghanistan. There is also ultimately an element of pragmatism in Tehran toward the Pakistan-backed Taliban, where sectarian divisions are replaced with economic entreaties to China, as Pakistan faithfully sets the table for China's coming regional diplomacy. United in anti-democratic and

der, Mullah Baradar – presented all along by Pakistan as the Taliban's chief negotiator in pantomime negotiations, now installed as a Deputy Prime Minister – visited China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Tianjin. Receiving China's endorsement, he has since pledged non-interference in China's genocide of Uyghurs, accepted Pakistan's terror proxies across the ruling council, and subscribed to China's Belt and Road Initiative.

Together, Islamabad, Tehran and Kabul form a constellation of assets that adorn the dragon's crown, as it triumphantly circles over the tombstone of the *Pax Americana* it so deeply disdained. Yet, China would be wise to employ a measure of caution. Just outside the den of the dragon, China must also contend with a gathering elephant parade – a democratic India, home to 1.4 billion people, who gradually are casting aside the shackles of Indian non-alignment and socialism, and replacing them with democratic alliances and market-based growth.

If free civilizations are to succeed against China's emboldened authoritarian global inversion, it is time to dispense

with the axioms of the past and replace them with serious thinking, agile tools, and new partners. For us in the West, it requires the strength to lead. We must overcome our widening economic and social deficiencies, confront our opponents, and conduct the kind of alliance-building not undertaken since the Cold War, to meet a new generation of challenges now thrust upon us. ❁

Shuvaloy Majumdar is foreign policy program director and Munk senior fellow at MLI.

Indigenous leaders (Coates)

Continued from page 4

“architects” or supporters of the residential school system – particularly John A. Macdonald and Egerton Ryerson – and many have supported symbolic gestures such as toppling statues. Yet these actions do little, particularly in the short-term, to serve the families, honour the children or heal the communities.

The graceful responses from the First Nations affected most intimately by the discoveries should set the path forward for the country. More than anything, the lesson from our past should be about our country’s unwillingness to listen to Indigenous people, and the direction of our future must be to pay attention to their memories.

At this crucial juncture in our nation’s history, when non-Indigenous Canadians seem genuinely concerned about the terrible impact of government policy, it is vital that Canada take its direction from First Nations. The grace of the leaders and communities is an object lesson for Canadians in how to deal with shared sorrow and how to start to address the legacy of decades of destructive government policies. ❁

Ken Coates is a Munk senior fellow at MLI. This article first appeared in the Globe and Mail.

Rethinking education (Nazareth)

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United States, the end of the pandemic has caused a surge of hiring that has given workers – including lower-paid workers – more power than they have had in years. With not enough available labour, wages are on the rise – which is a start. The next phase of attracting workers, however, might be to offer non-wage benefits, whether that might be the promise of working from home, or the commitment to continuous skills development for staff. Again, however, these are benefits that will disproportionately apply to larger companies and permanent workers.

The other solution is to accept that business cannot be responsible for all of the continuous training that will be necessary and accept that some will have to be supported by government (in partnership with educational institutions and providers) or by individuals. The first approach has traditionally not been hugely successful – with the focus, more often than not, on retraining displaced workers at the last possible moment after they have been laid off. Asking workers to take matters into their own hands seems equally unrealistic, too, given the cost and time commitment that have traditionally gone along with formal education (but then again, the focus should probably not be on formal education anyway).

The reality is that just as the job market is splintering into different realities beyond full-time permanent work, the education system is as well. Formal postsecondary degrees may never go away, but education is now increasingly being provided in many alternate ways, including short online courses that are focused on providing a quick skill rather than a tick-the-box diploma. Online course providers such as Udemy, Coursera, Skill Share and LinkedIn Learning are already filling a gap in the market, sometimes by partnering directly with businesses. Whether they will be able to do enough – and in short order – remains to be seen.

It is a bit of race against time, with

technology gobbling up some people’s jobs while training is making workers available for new ones. As we come out of the pandemic with plans to rethink the future of work, now is the ideal time to craft a plan that ensures that both business and workers are winners as we go forward. ❁

Linda Nazareth is a senior fellow at MLI. This article first appeared in the Globe and Mail.

Information environment (Kolga)

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literacy training, starting with school-aged children. Media literacy training to defend against foreign interference and influence operations should be mandatory for all elected and appointed officials and their staff. The National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians should be made accountable to Parliament and given the power to investigate issues and policies that will protect our democracy from foreign influence operations and interference.

Third, elected officials and the government must be made more accessible to Canadians. A system of participatory democracy like Taiwan’s – through which Canadians can directly interface with officials, safely engage in meaningful debate and propose ideas – is a possible antidote to help foster a trusted national dialogue.

Fourth, a national foreign influence registry, like the ones implemented in Australia and the United States, is desperately needed to maintain transparency with regards to foreign influence. Former Canadian elected officials and diplomats who work with groups backed by Moscow, Beijing, and Tehran must be identified. This must include former officials with current and past roles in corporations and trade organizations linked to these regimes.

Finally, in the lead-up to the 2019 federal election, the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Karina Gould, introduced several preliminary steps to protect the

integrity of our elections, which were expected to be developed into a permanent set of measures over the past two years. Instead, they were terminated and no coherent government policy on the threat of foreign interference has been articulated since that time, leaving our democracy exposed.

During the fall federal election, Canadians must assume that our democratic process will be targeted by foreign interference. All federal political parties should commit to detoxifying our information environment and defending our democracy and society against malign foreign manipulation. The immediate and long-term cohesion of our society and our democracy is at stake. ✪

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E-commerce (Winder)

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Customers will continue to use virtual shopping appointments via videoconferencing as well. And more people will become part-time merchants in the gig economy as they utilize platforms to sell new or used products to supplement their income and monetize a hobby.

This massive change within retail will see Canada benefit from the requisite infrastructure development and resulting job creation. Billions of dollars of investment will be spent, and tens of thousands of jobs will be created to build and operate an adapted supply chain infrastructure. This includes fulfilment centres, warehouses, delivery stations and new smart stores.

New jobs will be created to deliver last-mile parcels and design, manage and operate country head offices for leading domestic and foreign technology companies. The tangible and intangible assets used to buy and sell products in

Canada continue to be redrawn by the day.

Regulation plays an important role in protecting society from unlawful behaviour and bad actors; without it, our economy would grind to a halt. But regulation must be shaped carefully to avoid impairing innovation and limiting societal gains from new technologies. Over time, natural market forces of supply and demand will reward winners and weed out those businesses that fail to listen to their customers.

Some of today's Goliaths will themselves be disrupted in due course through the natural evolution of the retail industry. Sears is perhaps the best example of this timeless dynamic. The once innovative retailer disrupted traditional retail in the early 20th century through its catalogue and large departments that could service urban and rural customers alike through home delivery.

With its massive assortment and low prices, Sears transformed retail – only to eventually fall from grace once discounters like Walmart, Kmart and Target were born in the early 1960s.

If we shackle innovation through excessive regulation, we run the risk of missing out not only on the growth and betterment of retail, but also on becoming a destination for technology firms as they expand and grow their global footprint. ✪

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Firearms (Leuprecht, Cassels)

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the federal government reclassifying firearms that had previously been non-restricted. Hunters, farmers, and responsible gun enthusiasts do not need military-style weapons. Their use in mass shootings is bound to accelerate calls for sweeping restrictions on firearms. Indeed, in the aftermath of the Nova Scotia mass shooting in April 2020,

the government banned the purchase, sale, transport, or use of assault rifles and sub-automatic under the Firearms Regulations of the Criminal Code, which the government can amend without having to legislate – by issuing order-in-council PC 2020-298.

The government could also move on regulating gun markings, which has been awaiting implementation since 2004, criminalize straw purchases and make those who enable them accessories to the crime should that firearm be used in the commission of an offence. Stiff penalties are needed for people who possess a stolen or illegal firearm and for legitimate gun owners who fail to follow conditions of their permit, including lifetime bans. To these ends, Canada needs a genuinely federal police force with better capacity to make good on its firearms mandate.

Bill C-21 had initially proposed a mandatory buy-back program, but the legislation's final draft instead grandfathered out designated rifles with an optional buy-out. While the merits of using taxpayers' dollars to buy back property, which the government had allowed those same taxpayers to acquire legally in the first place are debatable, the measure is demonstrably in the best interest of public safety.

Firearms legislation is bound to be controversial. On the one hand, a government that is actually serious about firearms could act on any number of options that do not require legislation. On the other hand, C-21, however inchoate, represents a genuine effort to balance individual interest with community safety across a large country where values, interests, and priorities vary widely. ✪

Christian Leuprecht is Class of 1965 Professor in Leadership at the Royal Military College, director of the Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, Queen's University, and senior fellow at MLI. Dave Cassels is the former chief of police in Winnipeg and now a public safety consultant. This article first appeared in the *Hill Times*.

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