

9th Annual Orientation for Newly Arrived Diplomats
November 8, 2019
Carleton University, Richcraft Hall
The Carleton Initiative for Parliamentary and Diplomatic Engagement

Opening Remarks:

Mary Francoli, Associate Dean, Faculty of Public Affairs, Carleton University:

This event was designed with the needs of diplomats in mind. The event is being hosted at Carleton University given the unique relationship of the Faculty of Public Affairs with government, civil society, the diplomatic community and non-governmental organizations. The Faculty trains a large number of Canada's diplomats and public service, and also partners with international representatives. Please feel free to contact any faculty members when you see an opportunity. A number of upcoming events can be found on the university website:
<https://carleton.ca/fpa/>

Maureen Boyd, Director, Carleton Initiative for Parliamentary and Diplomatic Engagement:

More than 170 registrations for this event from newly arrived diplomats, ambassadors, high commissioners, deputy heads, councillors, and attaches serving in cultural, political, military and economic roles and representing more than 60 countries. We are honoured to partner with the Ottawa Diplomatic Association and the Parliamentary Centre to bring you this event.

Session One: Understanding Canada's Parliamentary System *

* powerpoint presentation available on website

Eric Janse, Clerk Assistant, Committees and Legislative Services Directorate, House of Commons:

- The three component parts of parliament: Queen/Governor General, Senate, and House of Commons work both independently and jointly on matters
 - All three get together for the Speech from the Throne and ceremonial royal assent procedures
- Appointment system to the Senate changed a few years ago by the Prime Minister – Senators are now appointed as independents
 - Canadian Senators Group: independent senators; largest group in the Senate
 - New trend of Senate amending more legislation than in the past
- A Liberal minority in the House of Commons presents a need to negotiate to see legislation pass
 - Proposed legislation must pass three readings in each house and undergo in-depth committee work
 - Every bill with expenditure of funds must begin in the house
- Fixed Parliamentary calendar marking House sittings posted on the ourcommons.ca / noscommunes.ca website

- Recommended to schedule an event with a Member of Parliament when the House is sitting
- Opposition holds the responsibility of keeping government accountable
 - 45-minute daily Question Period gives opposition parties the opportunity to pose questions to the government
- The confidence convention: a motion of non-confidence can be moved in the House; or a few sessional motions, such as passing the budget, which are declared confidence votes
- Legislation is examined in detail in committees
 - Parliamentary committees from the House of Commons side largely mirror government departments, whereas they are organized more thematically on the Senate side
 - Can call witnesses before the committee
 - House of Commons can self-initiate issues to study in committee
 - Committee studies are often of great interest to diplomats
- House of Commons is presently not sitting and the Prime Minister is currently assembling a new cabinet
 - First order of business when House is sitting again is to elect a new Speaker through a secret ballot vote
 - Speech from the Throne to follow: sets out policy priorities of the government
- The Speaker of the House of Commons also exercises a diplomatic role
 - To greet dignitaries and accompanying delegations visiting Parliament
 - To lead delegations of Canadian Parliamentarians visiting Parliaments abroad
- Parliamentary associations: Groupings of Parliamentarians from the House and Senate representing all political parties
 - Regional, governmental or bilateral based
 - Two examples: The NATO and Commonwealth Parliamentary Associations
 - These diplomatic initiatives are administered through the Joint International Inter-parliamentary Affairs Director

Audience Q&A:

Q: If I have a task to identify the member of a political party responsible for foreign policy, how can I go about it? Do you have a division in the Parliament that handles this?

- On the government side, there is a Minister responsible for foreign affairs and each Minister has a Parliamentary Secretary who assists the Minister. Each opposition party also has a representative who will mirror these roles. Therefore, you could also contact the opposition parties and they would also have people responsible for this

Voices from Parliament:

Maureen Boyd, Director, Carleton Initiative for Parliamentary and Diplomatic Engagement, moderated the panel “Voices from Parliament” with four Members of Parliament:

- Chandra Arya, M.P. Nepean
- Greg Fergus, M.P. Hull-Alymer
- Mona Fortier, M.P. Ottawa-Vanier
- Randy Hoback, M.P. Prince Albert, Saskatchewan Conservative Caucus Chair and Deputy Shadow Minister of International Trade

Moderator: Randy Hoback has served in majority and minority parliaments both in government and opposition. The other panelists are serving their second term. How do you see this minority Parliament working and what are your priorities?

Randy Hoback, M.P. Prince Albert, Saskatchewan Conservative Caucus Chair and Deputy Shadow Minister of International Trade:

- Since it takes a combination of opposition parties to bring down a minority government, the government is in a strong position. At the same time it changes the balance in committees, which can be problematic unless the government shows a willingness to cooperate.
- A minority government position means that foreign visits of ministers or foreign travels of Parliamentary Associations and Friendship Groups may be cancelled at the last minute

Mona Fortier, M.P. Ottawa-Vanier:

- Parliament must work together
- Key challenges: cooperation in committee work, revising our Conflict of Interest Act
- The liberal government will need to take opposition ideas into consideration when deciding on priorities

Greg Fergus, M.P. Hull-Alymer:

- The Liberal party won 35 seats in Quebec in the last election
- Believes Bloc Quebecois will be constructive and a progressive choice for Quebec
- Everyone has something to gain and to lose given this minority composition
- All parties under pressure to show they can cooperate with one another, particularly in the next six months
- Parties likely not ready and do not want another election too soon; for this reason a prediction of a two or four year minority government

Chandra Arya, M.P. for Nepean:

- While partisanship remains, minority parliaments present an opportunity for more cooperation
- In last majority government the Public Accounts Committee, whose chairman is always a member of the official opposition party, had a Liberal majority composition yet every report passed unanimously

Q: Moderator: We have seen more polarization in foreign policy issues in this election. Are Conservatives going to continue to push for their platform promise of a 25% reduction in international aid?

Randy Hoback

- From a fiscally responsible standpoint, we are looking at where we are spending a lot of money and where taking the funding back would not have a large impact. At the same time we acknowledge that there are countries that need foreign aid. We should balance our foreign aid to provide it to those who need it the most. From another standpoint, I have heard from Canadians on how funds should first be allocated to people in Canada who need it, before we shift our priorities outside the country. The logic behind the cut in foreign aid is based on the level of debt. If we do nothing, then a bigger cut would occur in the future

Q: Moderator: What do you see as foreign policy priorities?

Mona Fortier

- Canada has the lowest employment rate in 40 years and has created a million jobs in last four years. We are fiscally responsible, but there is a need to continue to invest in the economy. Foreign policy is very important in our platform and one of our priorities is “Canada in the World”. Foreign aid needs to be a greater priority. We should focus on the Feminist International Assistance Policy. Canada is one of the lowest foreign aid contributors in the G7. Therefore, we should be prioritizing, not cutting

Greg Fergus

- The government will continue to push for a seat on the UN Security Council, it is an opportunity to strengthen our multilateral institutions
- It is essential to reinforce these institutions. If members withdraw from their roles, the international system, as a whole, declines, and nobody wins, or very few wins
- It is important for us to continue to provide aid
- For trade we have to look more closely at the African continent, Latin America and the Caribbean
- It is also important for Canada to have an international role in global problems

Q: Moderator: Where do you see the emphasis on trade?

Chandry Arya

- 60% of our GDP comes from trade, and around 70% of that trade is with the US
- The two major growing markets today that will be even more important in the future are China and India. The government should focus on strengthening relations with these countries. We do not have free trade agreements with them. Trade relations are growing well with India

Audience Questions: What is the process of funding foreign aid?

Randy Hoback

- The government will present the budget and if they cannot pass it the government falls because its passage is a matter of confidence. For this reason a pre-budget line-by-line consultation takes place in the Finance Committee, where the government must take other parties' considerations into account. Once the budget is introduced in the House of Commons it is difficult to amend

Chandra Arya

- I am not worried too much in curtailing foreign aid because three of the four opposition parties are supportive of it

Audience Q: We have a complex humanitarian emergency in Venezuela. What is the best way to approach this situation on a humanitarian basis?

Greg Fergus

- If you want to effect change or get your point across to Parliamentarians there are two places to do that: the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade; and with the actual department of foreign affairs: Global Affairs Canada

Mona Fortier

- Canada currently is in caretaker mode and a new Cabinet will be announced on November 20. However, the office of Chrystia Freeland could probably answer some of your questions. After this date, it will be important to have appropriate Ministers looking to get on board with assistance. Secondly, you may want to reach out to the ParLAmérica parliamentary association

Randy Hoback

- It is essential to also talk to opposition parties about this situation

Audience Q: As far as Africa is concerned, what is likely to change during this new minority government?

Greg Fergus

- On foreign policy, I would like to see Canada develop a diplomatic mission, if not a high commission in Kigali, Rwanda. Rwanda is a leader in anti-corruption and there is a lot we can learn from them. There is a need for Canada to extend passed its regular foreign sphere. This new government may provide an opportunity to do this

Randy Hoback

- I do not see a big division in the views of our parties in our focus in Africa and other countries. I think the goals are the same, but maybe the tactics to get there different

Audience Q: How might discussions go on Canada meeting the 2% NATO contribution, and on new money and resources that will be required for updating the NORAD early warning system?

Chandra Arya

- What is happening with NATO, and particularly US' remarks on NATO are much more important than how much money Canada is investing in it

Mona Fortier

- I would welcome a dialogue with the Prime Minister's Office or the Minister responsible

Randy Hoback

- NORAD relationship continues to be strong and keeps going forward. We will continue to adapt to it

Audience Q: What are your views on the roles of Friendship Groups?

Chandra Arya

- Diplomats can work very closely with Members of Parliament through these friendship groups. Some of them have become very effective. Firstly, there are parliamentary associations, funded by Parliament; and secondly, parliamentary friendship groups, which do not receive any funding. These associations represent all of our political parties and are non-partisan. They can be more effective if more foreign representatives engage with them. For instance, the Canada-Palestine Parliamentary Friendship Group was formed in 2016. It was so effective that the largest delegation, 18 Members of Parliament, representing 5 political parties, were sent to Palestine. Part of the success was brought about from the very active involvement of the Palestinian representative here in Canada

Mona Fortier

- Find a champion, a Senator or a Member of Parliament, who can reach out to other Members of Parliament and potentially establish a group

Randy Hoback

- If you get that champion it is great, but if they do not get re-elected then it's a big problem. That is why parliamentary associations funded by Parliament are different. Therefore, try to have 3 or 4 champions, talk to Members of Parliament, and interact with Parliamentary associations

Greg Fergus

- Emphasized the recommendation of finding a champion who can help you

Mona Fortier

- One reality in a minority government is that it is important to work with the provinces and territories. They have very strong governments who will also want to work with you

Moderator: How will this Parliament deal with climate change, given the deep polarization between regions and parties?

Randy Hoback

- Climate change is very real, but what is the best way to deal with it. Canada accounts for only 1.6 to 2% of global emissions
- Canadian industries have become global leaders in reducing emissions. We should be sharing these processes with large global emitters like China and India who need to reduce their emissions
- A carbon tax is not necessary. There are other ways to meet our reductions without this tax

Mona Fortier

- Pollution cannot be free anymore, and that is why our government will continue to put a price on it and bring in measures that reduce emissions

Greg Fergus

- I emphasize the importance of provinces that are intensively emitting gas, for the prosperity of Canada, no one is arguing for shutting down those industries, the idea is ensuring pollution is not free, and that we must have solutions that reduce emissions

Chandra Arya

- It does not matter how low Canada's global emissions are, as a leading country Canada has a moral obligation to take action and be a role model

Session Two: The Diplomatic Community in Ottawa

Stewart Wheeler, Chief of Protocol for Canada Representative, Ottawa Diplomatic Association:

- 132 diplomatic missions in Ottawa, some 8000 foreign representatives throughout Canada. Today's session is complementary to our Orientation for Diplomats on Tuesday, November 19, at Global Affairs Canada's Lester B. Pearson building. It will explain practical protocol issues related to your posting in Canada, provide an overview of policy priorities of the government, structure, and processes of our departments, and will be an opportunity to network

H.E. Janice Miller, High Commissioner Jamaica representing the Ottawa Diplomatic Association:

- An association of diplomatic representatives and international organizations located in Ottawa.
- Main objective: Promotion of social networking between diplomats in Canada with government, civil society, and the private sector
- Provides opportunities to learn more about Canada; encourages the exchange of information to improve interstate relations; promotion of events, relations, seminars with outstanding speakers

- Annual tennis tournament, ski-day, sky-day (fly over the Ottawa-Gatineau region), charitable outreach, Premier event
- Website www.odacanada.org
- November 13 meeting from 14:00 to 16:00 to plan future meetings;
- Everyone is encouraged to join the association

Session Three: Understanding Public Opinion Trends*

* powerpoint presentation available on website

Nik Nanos, Chief Data Scientist, Nanos Research:

- Recent election dominated by events: election called on day Globe and Mail published an article about the SNC Lavalin scandal; that put Liberals on defensive on the first day; clear the Conservatives would run an aggressive and negative campaign and they quickly published attacks ads; Andrew Scheer called Justin Trudeau a liar and a fake. News articles on the black/face brown/face photos validated these attack ads in public perception
- The unprecedented deadlock between front running parties could not be broken: Conservatives led in polls for 22 nights, then Liberals for 15
- Conservative leader Andrew Scheer criticized for perceived hypocrisy and his stance on a number of social issues
 - Holding a US passport while repeatedly criticizing other members of political parties with dual citizenship
 - Not clarifying his personal stance on abortion and LGBT rights and not attending gay pride marches
- Likability of New Democratic Party leader Jagmeet Singh gradually rose during the campaign
- Bloc Quebecois – historical importance around events which rallied the French population around their culture: this time around it was Bill C-21, legislation banning wearing of religious symbols in the civil service
- Trudeau did not have a significant advantage on who Canadians believed to be their preferred leader, whereas in the years preceding the election campaign he had a 15 to 20% margin
- On the night before the election, Jagmeet Singh had a higher percentage ranking on the qualities of a good political leader poll than Justin Trudeau
 - Trudeau will need Singh to support legislation
- Liberals can focus on 23,884 swing votes in 14 ridings to garner a majority; therefore, Liberals can lose the popular vote but still get a majority
 - Would not rule out a snap election given this
- 4 out of 10 Canadians are dissatisfied with the state of our democracy
- The US has been top choice for Canadian business values for years, but under the Trump administration it has declined significantly
- Election lacking a focus on main issues – more focused on ‘gotcha’ politics
- Disconnect between voters and front runners
- Committees will be a major focus under this minority government

- Trudeau did not win the election, the Liberal campaign team won the election
- Caucus relations will be an area to pay attention to; may be problematic considering the election win

Audience Q&A:

Q: How does voter intention relate to these election outcomes?

The Liberals won a majority in 2015 even though 61% of people voted for somebody else. People see the Liberals as winning, and the problem is the government forgets that the majority of people did not vote for them. If the New Democratic Party supports Liberals willy-nilly, they would lose a lot of support in the next election. They will need to have some major demands, perhaps related to democratic reform, related to pipelines or to pharma-care

Session Four: Effective Diplomacy in Ottawa – Best Practices

Colin Robertson, Vice-President, Canadian Global Affairs Institute, moderated the panel “Effective Diplomacy in Ottawa — Best Practices” with two journalists:

- Susan Delacourt, Ottawa Bureau Chief, Toronto Star, author, and instructor at Carleton’s School of Journalism and Communication
- Jöel-Denis Bellavance, Ottawa Bureau Chief, La Presse

Moderator Question: What are the biggest issues in this minority government?

Susan Delacourt

- Climate change. The government to some degree tried to connect the economy and environment.

Jöel-Denis Bellavance

- Trudeau will be meeting with Opposition parties next week to try and reach some common ground in advance of the Speech from the Throne. The natural ally for the Liberals will be the NDP, but the NDP will need to be careful in order to not lose seats in the next election. The average length of a minority government in Canada is 2 years.
- The separatist movement in the West is very real and emotions are taking over there

Moderator: How different is western separatism from Quebec separatism?

Jöel-Denis Bellavance

- Businesses are willing to finance western separatism, and this is a cause for concern. Similar to in Quebec, the West is making certain demands for more autonomy, such as managing their own pension plan, their own police force, and an end to equalization payments. Equalization payments are a major source of grievances. The Premier of Alberta Jason Kenney is seeking to use similar tactics Quebec used in the past to call a referendum

Susan Delacourt

- There are two hotspots in the country right now. However, the current Bloc, unlike in the past, is not separatist but nationalist for Quebec. The West is using the same strategies Quebec used in the past to extract concessions

***Moderator: Is the Prime Minister up for the task of leading a minority government?
(Especially given the current composition of committees)***

Susan Delacourt

- Trudeau is a learner. Unfortunately, he has many mistakes to learn from, and he cannot be the leader he was in 2015. He does not like the House of Commons, but he is going to have to deal with Parliament and his Caucus. Trudeau seems deeply reflective at the moment. He is staying out of the spotlight given recent damaging events to the party
- Katie Telford remains the most important advisor to Trudeau
- Gerald Butts, who was Trudeau's principal advisor, will not be coming back

Jöel-Denis Bellavance

- The black-face scandal has forced Trudeau to face criticism. Trudeau is much slower now, taking more time to consult and not rush decisions like in the past.
- Trudeau is renegotiating position he abolished in 2015 for a Quebec lieutenant who advises the Prime Minister on Quebec, as a means to deal with the Bloc Quebecois

Moderator: Could you name some important advisors to the Prime Minister?

Susan Delacourt

- Chrystia Freeland and everybody around her
- Brian Clow: has worked with Chrystia Freeland for years; ran the war room for Canada-US relations

Jöel-Denis Bellavance

- There has been some speculation that Chrystia Freeland may be moved in the next government and that Marc Garneau, current Minister of Transport, could be appointed to be the new Minister of Foreign Affairs

Moderator: How much is multilateralism going to change? How much time is going to be put into it?

Susan Delacourt

- They are going to spend a lot of time on foreign affairs. A big surprise was the changes to the cabinet Trudeau made after Trump was elected to put certain ministers on the Canada-US. files. The entire Prime Minister's Office a year ago was entirely based in Washington to renegotiate NAFTA and the purchase of the pipeline. They are still very much attentive to what is going on in the US

Moderator: What business and industry associations do you get your information from?

Jöel-Denis Bellavance

- I would watch who is appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs
- The Consular Affairs Parliamentary Secretary
- Chamber of Commerce is a good place to start
- CEO of the Business Council of Canada
- ParlAmerica

Susan Delacourt

- You are more likely to get a meeting with this government if you show you are helping to advance the cause for women

Moderator: What about defence spending, how is this going to play out?

Jöel-Denis Bellavance

- I cannot see the replacement of the CF-18s happening soon. The decision still has not been made. The NDP will probably put pressure to not go in one direction, and the Conservatives will probably put pressure on government to purchase the F-35s

Q&A:

Q: Who do you see being Trudeau's closest allies in his future cabinet?

Susan Delacourt

- Likely to remain much the same, Chrystia Freeland; Marc Miller, a Member of Parliament Trudeau often consults with; Ralph Goodale and Dominic LeBlanc were close to him, but Goodale lost his seat in the recent election and LeBlanc is sick now.
- I do not think Harjit Sajjan will remain defence minister
- Still relies on Gerald Butts

Audience Q: Who are the Canadian opinion leader that diplomats should follow?

Susan Delacourt

- Globe and Mail, Toronto Star, National Post, Andrew Coyne, CBC political shows (Powerplay), Power and Politics, and Chris Hall on the House

Jöel-Denis Bellavance

- Althia Raj from the Huffington Post

Q: What are the PM's thoughts on China and the trade imbalance with them?

Susan Delacourt

- They developed a playbook for dealing with the US and are going to likely use it with China
 - Large group to cooperate together instead of one-on-one dialogue

Jöel-Denis Bellavance

- Cannot see Canada having a free trade agreement with China given current relations

Session Five: Engaging with Canadian Business

Perrin Beatty, President and CEO of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce:

- Echoes importance of diplomats visiting different parts of Canada to really understand the country as a whole

- Canadian Chamber of Commerce is the country's largest business organization: 450 chambers of commerce and boards of trade; 100 associations belong to it; represents over 200,000 businesses; mandate to serve as a bridge between government and the business community; focus on trade policy and issues connected to trade; non-partisan; advocates on behalf of businesses
- Major issues:
 - The tax system is badly outdated and needs to be reformed to improve our competitiveness
 - Need to fix a broken regulatory system
 - Issues of attraction and retention of skilled labour to maintain competitiveness
 - Infrastructure including digital infrastructure to get goods to market
 - Pharmacare will be a hot topic in this parliament
- Small businesses and trade diversification
 - 70% of trade with the US: there is a need to diversify and move into growing markets
- Extremely disappointing election: empty in terms of discussion on these highlighted issues
- Membership in various political caucuses: it is arguably no longer obvious we have national political parties
 - The governing party has no members of government Caucus from Winnipeg, Manitoba to Vancouver, British Columbia
 - Therefore a need to rebuild consensus in Canada and focus again on the general concerns
- Governments typically make decisions based on the 4-year election cycle. Now focus becomes much more short-term
 - Popular policy options to keep voter support
- This is a stable minority
 - All three opposition parties are needed to successfully pass a vote of no confidence
- The liberal government will focus on where they lost votes and how they can win them back
 - They lost votes on the left; conservative support in the last decade remained stable
- The different power dynamic in a minority government: government becomes accountable to their party Caucus
- Government has lost control of committees
 - Committees can amend legislation and initiate inquiries

Audience Q&A:

Q: How do we reach the trade promotion aspect through your office?

- We are very much advocates of diversifying trade
- Make your trade delegation as focused as it can be, sectoral if possible, to make it more successful. Local Chambers of Commerce are in charge of the trade promotion. Talk to local Chambers and associations

Q: How does Canada's internal free trade impact the competitiveness of the country?

- We are already a small market and we are competing against ourselves. Jason Kenney, Premier of Alberta, has stated his willingness to champion the removal of internal trade barriers. He has already unilaterally abolished some trade barriers in Alberta and encouraged other Premiers to follow suit. These are usually barriers set up by provinces and the federal government cannot strike them down

Q: Where do you see Export Development Canada, Chamber of Commerce and foreign diplomats working together to promote free trade?

- Export Development Canada is one of the most beneficial tools the Government of Canada has, whether in terms of financing or advice. We partner extensively with them

Session Six: Engaging with the National Capital Region

Tobi Nussbaum, CEO, National Capital Commission:

- Role of NCC is to act as capital planner and steward of the National Capital Region protecting and preserving its natural legacy
- Recommends a visit to Gatineau Park, Canada's second most popular park; a skate on the Rideau Canal Skateway; or a nature walk in the Greenbelt
- NCC maintains seven official residences including Rideau Hall and residences for the Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition and Speaker of the House of Commons
- Maintains the Crown's collection of fine art, books and furnishings
- Partners with diplomatic missions

Orientation Closing Remarks

Dr. Benoit-Antoine Bacon, President and Vice-Chancellor, Carleton University:

The presence of your embassies in our capital is a privilege we use to maintain strong and positive relationships with the diplomatic community. Carleton University currently has an enrollment of 31,000 students, over 4,000 of whom international students from over 150 countries. Carleton is always looking to further develop its partnerships. Carleton recently ranked as having the fastest-growing research funding, up 29% this year.

Summary prepared by:

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