



Policy

Canadian Politics and Public Policy

Welcome to our annual issue on the federal budget, featuring our post-budget Q&A with Finance Minister Joe Oliver. The other parties in the House—the NDP, the Liberals and the Greens—respond with their critiques of the Harper government’s pre-election, post oil crash fiscal prescriptions.

In This May – June Issue:

- [Joe Oliver](#) woke up on the morning of April 21st with the toughest job of any federal finance minister in decades ahead of him. The morning after he tabled Budget 2015 and proclaimed a \$1.4 billion surplus, Oliver talked to Policy editor-in-chief L. Ian MacDonald about economics, politics and making history.
- We also have welcome budget critiques—especially with a federal election looming—from [Nathan Cullen](#) of the NDP, [Scott Brison](#) for the Liberals and Green Party Leader [Elizabeth May](#).
- Leading off our *Canada and the World* section, [Robin Sears](#) considers the controversies over the niqab, the divisive wedge politics around it, and the decline of public discourse. As Sears notes: “The poison that wedge politics injects into any democracy is always the responsibility of the leaders who indulge in it.”
- BMO Vice-Chair and former Privy Council clerk [Kevin Lynch](#) looks at Canada’s strengths and weaknesses in innovation, where the country ranks near the bottom of OECD ratings on business R&D spending and productivity.
- From Jerusalem, McGill University historian and author [Gil Troy](#) dissects the recent Israeli election, in which Bibi Netanyahu won his third consecutive mandate as prime minister, and fourth term overall.
- Our lead foreign affairs writer [Jeremy Kinsman](#) looks at the US-Iran framework agreement on Iranian nuclear technology. While the deal is far from done, and the two sides have disagreed on what some of it means, there’s no doubt that it’s an important milestone.
- [Raynell Andreychuk](#), chair of the Senate foreign affairs committee, weighs in with a scathing piece on the Kremlin propaganda machine, particularly as it’s been deployed by Vladimir Putin’s minions on Ukraine.
- [Michael Bourque](#), president of the Railway Association of Canada, looks at the important public safety issue of level railway crossings. Bourque points to “dichotomy of authority” between Transport Canada and the Canadian Transportation Agency that has “jeopardized safety”.
- Former Atomic Energy of Canada CEO [Hugh MacDiarmid](#) and Terrestrial Energy CEO [Simon Irish](#) make a case for the next, even safer generation of nuclear reactor. “The new generation of reactors,” they write, “is changing minds and gaining converts.”
- Finally, we propose a spring list of political books for the season. [Anthony Wilson-Smith](#) weighs in with a rave review of David Halton’s biography of his father, Matthew, Canada’s radio voice of the Second World War, in effect our Ed Murrow. *Dispatches from the Front*, writes Wilson-Smith, is simply “superb.” Our own Associate Editor, [Lisa Van Dusen](#), looks at David Axelrod’s *Believer: My Forty Years in Politics*, and concludes that Barack Obama’s campaign director in 2008 wasn’t in it for the game, but to make a difference. And McGill’s [Antonia Maioni](#) looks at the autobiography of Victor Goldbloom, another story about doing the right thing in politics. Enjoy.