

# Reimagining Canada in Times of Trump: Towards a New “National Policy”?

Jörg Broschek (Wilfrid Laurier University)

Third Age Learning Lecture Series

Fall 2025

November 18, 2025

## Structure:



- 1.) Canada's "*Zeitenwende*" – and a Quick Recap
- 2.) Still an Adaptable Country?
- 3.) Historical and Comparative Benchmarks
- 4.) Reimagining Canada – or Another Missed Opportunity?

# 1.) Canada's "*Zeitenwende*" – and a Quick Recap



# Canada's Zeitenwende – and A Quick Recap

## “Zeitenwende”

“Resolutely committed to peace and security”

Policy statement by Olaf Scholz, Chancellor  
of the Federal Republic of Germany and  
Member of the German  
Bundestag, 27 February 2022 in Berlin

Sunday, 27 February 2022



Source:  
<https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/aktuelles/kanzler-regierungserklaerung-ein-jahr-zeitenwende-2168950>

*“We are living through a watershed era. And that means that the world afterwards will no longer be the same as the world before.”*

# Canada's Zeitenwende – and A Quick Recap



CANADA

## Trump vows 25 per cent tariff on all products from Canada, Mexico



By Kelly Geraldine Malone · The Canadian Press

Posted November 25, 2024 7:51 pm · Updated November 25, 2024 9:38 pm · 1 min read

Politics

## So how did Trudeau and Trump's dinner meeting go? Here's what we know



PM travelled to Mar-a-Lago after U.S. president-elect said he would impose hefty tariffs on Canada, Mexico



Darren Major, Benjamin Lopez Steven · CBC News ·

Posted: Nov 29, 2024 5:17 PM EST | Last Updated: November 30, 2024

# Canada's Zeitenwende – and A Quick Recap

HOME | POLITICS

## Trump's quip about Canada becoming 51st state was a joke, says minister who was there

RCI

Posted: December 3, 2024 11:55 AM



*“In a three-hour social evening at the president's residence in Florida on a long weekend of American Thanksgiving, the conversation was going to be light-hearted. The president was telling jokes, the president was teasing us, it was, of course, in no way a serious comment”*

# Canada's Zeitenwende – and A Quick Recap



## Trump's threat to annex Canada 'real' and motivated by access to critical minerals, Trudeau tells crowd

PM meeting business leaders, unions to discuss fortifying Canada's trade



[Peter Zimonjic](#) · CBC News · Posted: Feb 07, 2025 4:00 AM EST | Last Updated: February 7

# Canada's Zeitenwende – and A Quick Recap



Toronto · Analysis

## What Doug Ford accomplished on his Washington trip



Canada's premiers got a White House meeting, the Ontario PC leader got a boost for his re-election bid



[Mike Crawley](#) · CBC News · Posted: Feb 13, 2025 4:00 AM EST | Last Updated: February 13



**James Blair** @JamesBlairUSA · Feb 12

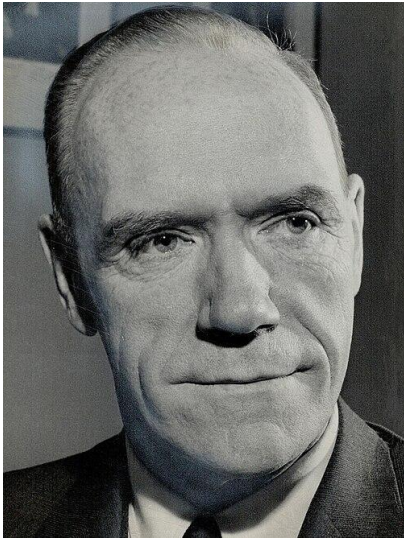
Pleasant meeting with the Premiers.

To be clear, we never agreed that Canada would not be the 51st state. We only agreed to share Premier Eby's comments.

...

7:26 PM · Feb 12, 2025 · **104.1K** Views

## The Past Speaks to the Present



### Mitchell Sharp's **Third Option** (1972)

**First Option:** Status quo

**Second Option:** Integration through free trade

**Third Option:** A long-term strategy to reduce Canada's vulnerability by strengthening the domestic economy plus diversification

# Canada's Zeitenwende – and A Quick Recap

## The Past Speaks to the Present

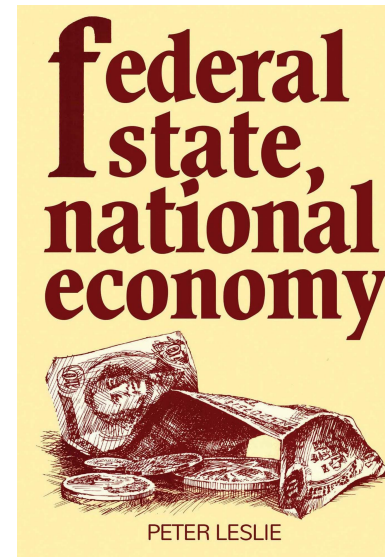
### Calls for a “Third” National Policy: 1970s and 1980s

Canada and the Quest for a National Policy



DONALD V. SMILEY *University of Toronto*

1975



1987

# Canada's Zeitenwende – and A Quick Recap

## History doesn't repeat itself, but it rhymes

### **CANADA STRONG**

**MARK CARNEY'S PLAN**  
UNITE • SECURE • PROTECT • BUILD



"President Trump wants Canada's land, water, and resources. He wants to weaken us so America can own us – but we won't let that happen."

Canada's old relationship with the United States, "based on deepening integration of our economies and tight security and military cooperation, is over".

Canadians must "fundamentally reimagine our economy"

## 2.) Still an Adaptable Country?



*“From Reliance to Resilience”*

# Still an Adaptable Country?

Alasdair Roberts: **The Adaptable Country. How Canada can Survive the Twenty-First Century.**  
McGill-Queen's University Press 2024



- Professor of public policy at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst
- Canadian



# Still an Adaptable Country?

## Adaptability versus Crisis Management and Resilience

- **Crisis management:** reacting effectively to a “shock” (short-term)
- **Resilience:** the capacity of a system to preserve its core purpose and integrity in the face of dramatically changed circumstances.
- **Adaptability:** the **ability of a country to renovate its grand strategy and institutions** in response to new circumstances and ideas



# Still an Adaptable Country?

## Adaptability – A new “Grand Strategy”

1. Capability to **anticipate danger**
2. Capability to **redesign strategy** to address long-term challenges
3. Capability of **generating support** for the proposed strategy
4. Capability of **executing a proposed strategy**, including necessary institutional reforms



# Still an Adaptable Country?

## My Argument:

- Canada fares comparatively well when it comes to crisis management and, arguably, resilience (e.g. Covid 19, NAFTA/CUSMA negotiations 2017/18).
- But I don't see any signs of a new "grand strategy" that would indicate adaptability - despite political rhetoric suggesting otherwise.
- Gaps between rhetoric and the reality of policy-making.

## 3.) Historical and Comparative Benchmarks

September 2020 | No. 01

A RESILIENT FEDERATION? PUBLIC POLICY CHALLENGES  
FOR THE NEW DECADE

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### Resilient Federalism and Transformative Policy Change: Prospects for a New “National Policy” in Canada

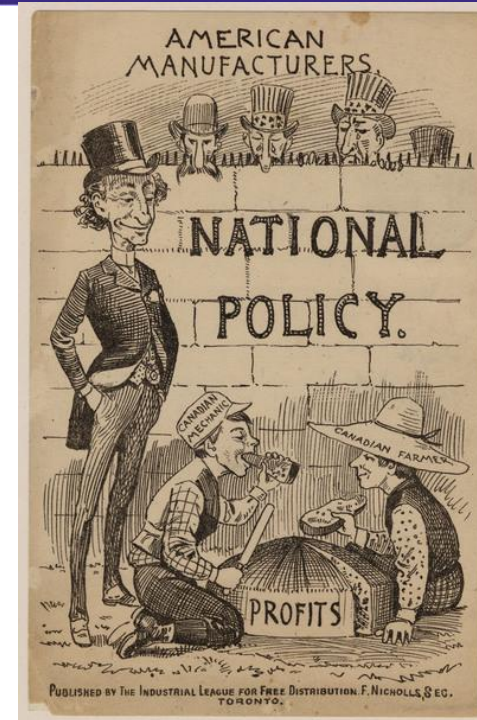
Jörg Broschek



# Historical and Comparative Benchmarks

## Historical: Canada's National Policies

- Periods of transformative change: Policy, politics and polity
- Broad, relatively coherent “policy paradigms”
- “industry-building, infrastructure-building, society-building” (Eden and Molot 1993)
- Shaped Canadian politics over decades
- Canadian history: At least two, maybe three national policies

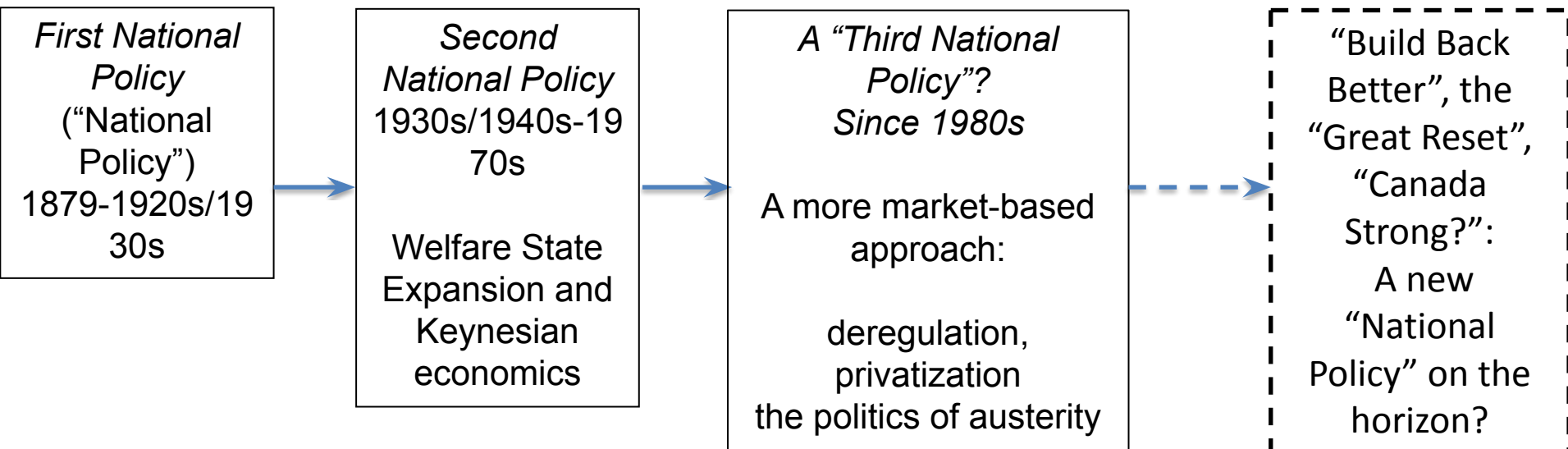


Source: [Library and Archives Canada/MIKAN](https://www.libraryandarchives.ca/mikan)

# Historical and Comparative Benchmarks



## Historical: Canada's National Policies



Source: [Library and Archives Canada](#)



Source: [Dutch National Archives](#)



Source: Bob McNeely/[National Archives and Records Administration](#)

# Historical and Comparative Benchmarks

## Comparative – A Look Across the Atlantic

- Ambitious, paradigmatic shift since 2019
- Transforming European economy – green and just transition



Trade Policy

Industrial  
Policy

Energy Policy

Transportation  
Policy

Agriculture  
Policy

Competition  
Policy

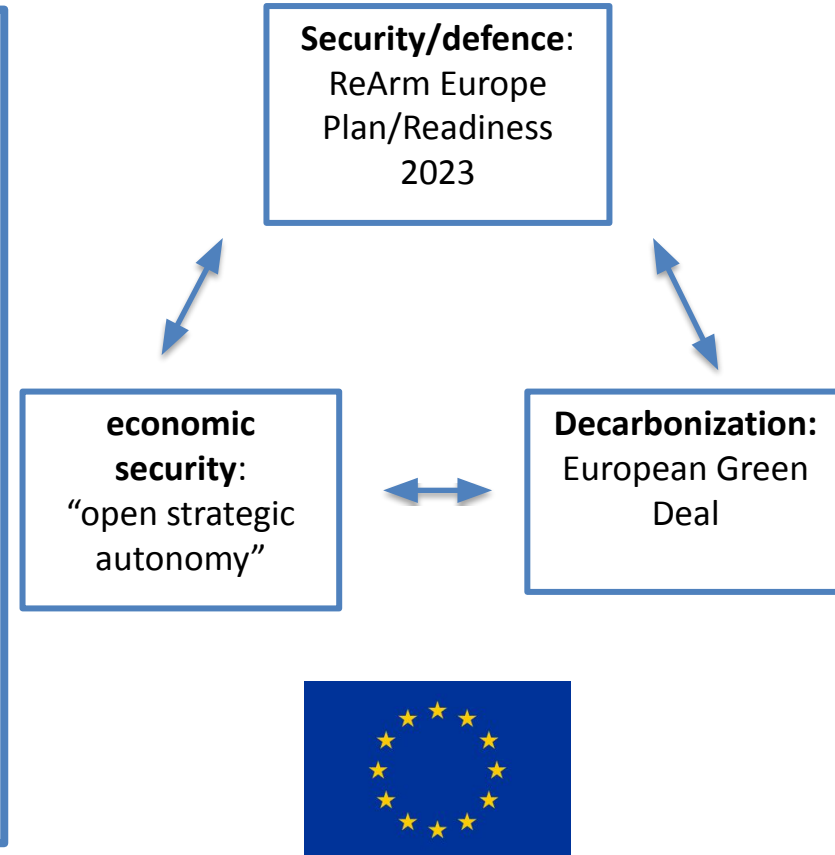
□ More **than 50 policy changes: Coherent, aligned and mutually reinforcing**

# Historical and Comparative Benchmarks

## Comparative – A Look Across the Atlantic

What does such an **industrial strategy** require?

- Clear definition of **concrete goals**
- **Vertical:** Defining strategic importance of economic sectors
- **Horizontal:** Analyzing and identifying need for policy reform, coherent alignment of policies with goals (trade, infrastructure, research, energy etc.)
- **Governance:** Institutional reforms (e.g. federalism)



## 4.) Reimagining Canada – or Another Missed Opportunity?



# Reimagining Canada - or Another Missed Opportunity?

## THE GLOBE AND MAIL

### 1. Policy: Canada Strong?

Golden Dome signals change to Canada's long-time opposition to joining U.S. missile defence

STEVEN CHASE > SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY REPORTER  
GAVIN JOHN  
PUBLISHED OCTOBER 10, 2025  
UPDATED OCTOBER 11, 2025

*“Mark Carney’s decision to work with Donald Trump on an advanced missile shield – what the President calls the Golden Dome – **will set the stage for deepening military co-operation between the two countries.***

*It’s a stark difference from 20 years ago, when Canada opted to stay on the sidelines as the United States developed and bolstered defences against ballistic missiles.”*

# Reimagining Canada - or Another Missed Opportunity?

**THE GLOBE AND MAIL** 

Ottawa not concerned about U.S. stakes in critical minerals firms, minister says

NIALL MCGEE > MINING REPORTER  
PUBLISHED OCTOBER 16, 2025

FOR SUBSCRIBERS

## 1. Policy: Canada Strong?

Minister for Natural Resources Tim Hodgson, October 16:

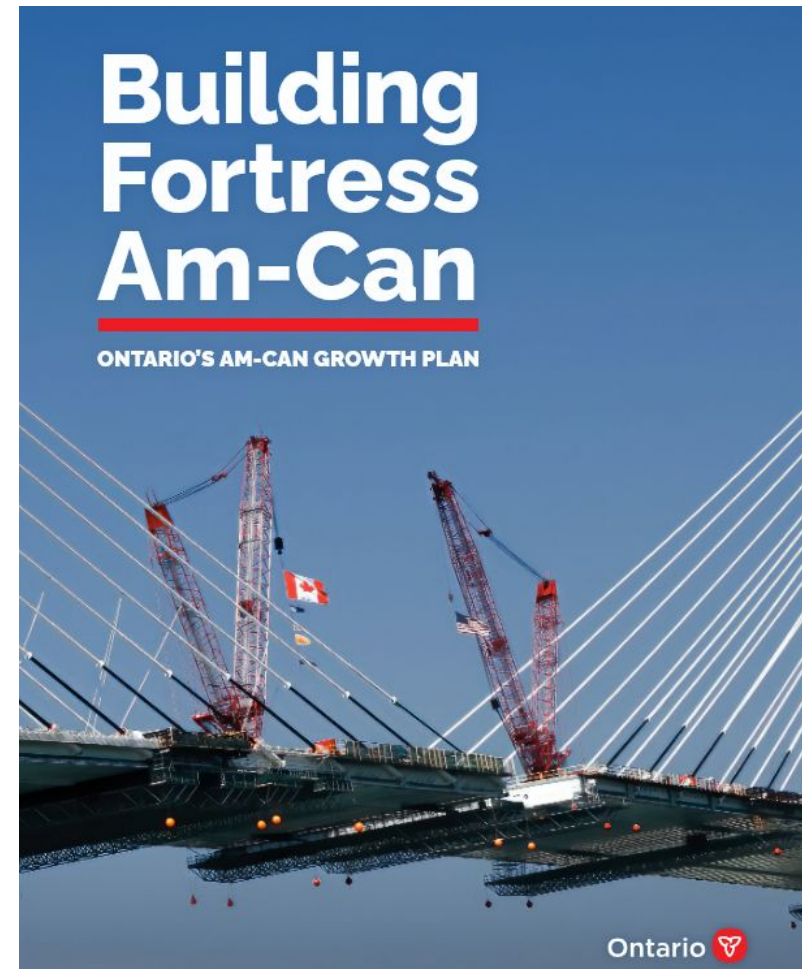
*“very hopeful that we can get through this difficult time and we can resume the type of relationship that we’ve had with the Americans for a long, long time.”*

# Reimagining Canada - or Another Missed Opportunity?

## 1. Policy: Canada Strong?

**Achieving Fortress Am-Can will require urgent and concrete action to achieve alignment with our U.S. allies. Ontario's Am-Can Growth Plan recommends action across several themes:**

- Promote Free, Fair and Balanced Trade
- Growing the Am-Can Economy for Am-Can Workers
- Accelerate Strategic Resource Development
- Achieve Am-Can Energy Security to Power Am-Can Economic Growth
- Protect Am-Can Land, Air, Arctic, Water and Communities
- Enhance Am-Can Data and Research and Development Security



# Reimagining Canada - or Another Missed Opportunity?

## 1. Policy: Canada Strong?

A new **National Industrial Strategy**, or a **patchwork of industrial policies (= continuity)?**



### Unlocking Economic Potential: Canada's Plan for Industrial Leadership

From: [Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada](#)

#### Speech

The following text is based on remarks delivered by the Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, to business groups and chambers of commerce in October 2025:

It's a pleasure to be here with all of you, leaders that understand a simple truth: that economic strength is the backbone of national strength.

Put simply, the old playbook that we've been following does not apply anymore.

“Protect”, “Create” and “Attract”



Source: Gabriel Hutchinson - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=17575600>

# Reimagining Canada - or Another Missed Opportunity?

## 1. Policy: Canada Strong?

A new **National Industrial Strategy**, or a patchwork of or industrial policies (= continuity)?



### Canada's New Industrial Strategy

Canada is already among the most prosperous countries in the world. We enjoy the comparative advantages of being an energy superpower, having a highly

#### Overview of Actions and Outcomes

Outcomes	Recent and Budget 2025 Actions
<b>Action 1: Harnessing Our Strengths</b>	
 Capitalising on our resources	Major Projects Office, Major Project Financing, Indigenous Loan Guarantee Corporation
 Skilled workforce meeting the needs of an evolving economy	Recruiting international talent, Additional support for youth employment & skills programs, Union Training and Innovation Program
<b>Action 2: Building Our Nation</b>	
 Moving up the value chain through investment in technology	Enhancing SR&ED, Sovereign public AI infrastructure
 Transition to a low-carbon economy and climate competitiveness	Enhancing Clean Economy Investment Tax Credits, Climate Competitiveness Strategy
 Housing affordability and cost of living	Launching Build Canada Homes
 Leveraging increased defence spending for economic growth	Buy Canadian Policy, BOREALIS, Defence Investment Agency
<b>Action 3: Unifying Our Economy</b>	
 Eliminating Internal trade barriers holding back growth	One Canadian Economy Act, Engaging with provinces & territories
<b>Action 4: Diversifying Our Trade</b>	
 Diversifying destinations for Canadian exports	Enhancing trade finance, Support for seeking new markets, Support for strategic sectors, Trade Infrastructure Strategy
<b>Bringing It All Together—Policy Framework to Drive Investment</b>	
 Incentivizing business investment	Productivity Super-Deduction, Support for venture capital
 More efficient and competitive marketplace	Competition in telecom and financial sectors, Restricting non-compete agreements

# Reimagining Canada - or Another Missed Opportunity?

## 1. Policy: Canada Strong?

A new **National Industrial Strategy**, or a **patchwork of industrial policies (= continuity)?**

- No definition of concrete goals
- No analysis and categorization of viability of economic sectors in light of dramatically changing global economy
- No effort to look at policy areas systematically, and align them accordingly
- Proposed measures remain largely isolated or unrelated and not integrated
- Could all have been adopted at any other point in time, and independently from each other

# Reimagining Canada - or Another Missed Opportunity?

## 2. Governance: Team Canada?

Politics  **CBC**

### Trudeau announces 'Team Canada' approach to U.S. election

Liberal government wants to be ready for 'whatever gets tossed at us'



[Aaron Wherry](#) · CBC News · Posted: Jan 23, 2024 11:07 AM EST | Last Updated: January 23, 2024

# Reimagining Canada - or Another Missed Opportunity?



## 2. Governance: Team Canada?

One key structural problem of Canadian federalism on full display:  
Our system of intergovernmental relations is profoundly outdated.

***“Dear Prime Minister:***

***Canada’s relationship with the United States has changed significantly since the last time First Ministers met”***



November 11, 2025

The Right Honourable Mark Carney, P.C., M.P.  
Prime Minister of Canada  
Office of the Prime Minister  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister:

Canada's relationship with the United States has changed significantly since the last time First Ministers met. Engagement among First Ministers has been key to information sharing, coordinatind efforts to increase internal trade. ensuring the affected workers and enterprises

# Reimagining Canada - or Another Missed Opportunity?

## 2. Governance: Team Canada?

Toronto

### Ford defends Ontario's anti-tariff ad that angered Trump, says he achieved his goal



Ford pulled the ads on Monday so trade talks between Canada, U.S. could resume



[Julia Alevato](#) · CBC News · Posted: Oct 27, 2025 2:11 PM EDT | Last Updated: October 27

Politics

### Carney mum on whether he saw Ontario's anti-tariff ad beforehand

PMO says there will be no further comment on the Ontario government ad that derailed U.S. trade talks



[Murray Brewster](#) · CBC News · Posted: Oct 28, 2025 6:14 AM EDT | Last Updated: October 28

British Columbia

### B.C. premier says province won't run anti-tariff ads as it had planned

Change comes as feds agree to working group with B.C. on supporting forestry sector



[Darryl Greer](#) · The Canadian Press · Posted: Nov 03, 2025 5:05 PM EST | Last Updated: November 3

# Reimagining Canada - or Another Missed Opportunity?

## 2. Governance: Team Canada?



- Not a substitute for a functioning system of intergovernmental relations
- Division of powers: policy interdependencies
- What we need: Formalized, regular meetings on all levels
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities
- 21<sup>st</sup> century federalism and “nation-building”: What is the role of municipalities and Indigenous peoples?

# Reimagining Canada - or Another Missed Opportunity?

## Another Missed Opportunity?

### Engaging Canadians and mobilizing existing knowledge through a nation-wide public debate about Canada's future



The screenshot shows the top of a Policy Options article. The header includes the logo 'POLICY OPTIONS POLITIQUES' and a search bar. Below the header is a navigation menu with categories: ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT, GOVERNING, HEALTH, INDIGENOUS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, SOCIAL POLICY, and MORE. The main title of the article is 'Open letter to the next prime minister: We need a royal commission on Canada's future'. Below the title is a short paragraph: 'Canada has used royal commissions to navigate major crises from shaping social policy after the Great Depression to laying the groundwork for free trade.' The date 'MARCH 25, 2025' is visible. At the bottom of the screenshot is a photograph of the Canadian flag waving in front of the Parliament Hill clock tower.

Broschek et al. 2025



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Breton 2025

# Reimagining Canada - or Another Missed Opportunity?



## Another Missed Opportunity?

Politics

### Enough of Tactics to Deal with Trump. What Canada Needs Is a Strategy

The emphasis on making deals and showing quick results is coming at the cost of a long-term vision

BY ALASDAIR ROBERTS

Updated 21:07, Oct. 24, 2025 | Published 14:00, Oct. 24, 2025



*“The Carney government could easily opt for a two-track approach. The first track consists of items that require immediate action (such as a resolution of trade issues with the US and aid for hard-hit industries) or items where the need for action is generally accepted (such as liberalization of internal trade).*

*The second track is long term. It includes steps to promote a national dialogue, including the creation of something like the Macdonald Commission, albeit with a radical overhaul for the digital age.”*

Thank You!

Jörg Broschek

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Department of Political Science

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