

Last week, we mused a bit about a shift in public attitudes toward the terrorism, military action and security issues, and while opposition to Bill C-51 continues to grow, so do the Tory fortunes in the polls as Canadians become more polarized. Quebec, which was an NDP stronghold in the public opinion ratings, has now become a tight three-way race, while things are also tighter in Ontario and BC. Tom Mulcair has been active and highly visible in the past few weeks, not only on the NDP's position on military action in the Middle East but also on a number of economic issues, particularly a proposal to increase taxes on wealthier Canadians and use the revenue to help the poor.

But perhaps another shift is ready to take place due to increasing concern about the Canadian economy. An article in today's Globe & Mail looks at the potential fallout if General Motors shuts down two of its Ontario plants, something that the company has not discounted. That article is in the news items below. More than a few media commentators are calling the Tories on their strategy of trying to avoid talking about the economy by keeping the focus on fear, but their criticisms could just as easily be directed at their own outlets, who continue to pay attention to the Conservatives' story line at the expense of other critical issues.

The two items that should have a major impact on the national conversation will be the federal budget and the Liberal platform. There is speculation that the release of the budget will give the Liberals a strong set of issues to highlight, although nobody should underestimate the Tories' ability to conjure up some creative smoke and mirrors. As mentioned last week, there will be increasing expectations that the Liberal platform will need to be strong, creative and visionary if it's to attract attention and support.

We are getting closer and closer to the Duffy Trial. Polling numbers this week present a mixed bag of results, all suggesting that at this point, things are close and getting closer between the parties:

Nanos: <http://www.nanosresearch.com/library/polls/Nanos%20Political%20Index%202015-03-20E.pdf>

Ekos: <http://www.ipolitics.ca/2015/03/27/the-ekos-poll-liberals-slipping-as-ndp-surges-ekos/>

308 - a compilation of various survey results: <http://www.threehundredeight.com/p/canada.html>

Our messages to the public:

Liberals focused on jobs and economic growth for middle class

Liberals believe that this country needs a new economic plan, and the evidence is mounting daily. Job growth over the last 15 months has now been [at its lowest rate in nearly four decades](#). TD Bank has also forecasted [weaker economic growth](#) in the months to come.

Mr. Harper wants to talk about anything but the economy. His priority is a \$2 billion tax break for the wealthiest few, and he is much more interested in stoking fear than providing solutions.

Our economy works best when it's balanced, and Canada's strength should not rely on any one region or sector.

But the Conservatives prioritise [tens of millions in advertising](#) instead of investing in job creation.

Please read and share recent media coverage on the government's budget delay by [CBC](#) and in the [National Post](#). [English only]

Messaging on Bill C-51, *Anti-terrorism Act, 2015*: *Media are reporting on the continued study of Bill C-51 by the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.*

Yesterday, Liberals introduced their [amendments to improve Bill C-51](#), the *Anti-terrorism Act, 2015*.

Bill C-51 includes significant measures that will help keep Canadians safe, and as such, the Liberal Party of Canada supports this legislation.

Why we support:

·We welcome the measures that:

- build on the powers of preventative arrest;
- make better use of no-fly lists; and
- allow for immediate and more coordinated information sharing by government departments and agencies.

On amendments:

There are concerns with Bill C-51, and we hear them. Yesterday, Liberals announced a number of amendments.

Our parliamentary oversight amendments will:

- Establish a national security oversight committee of parliamentarians, similar to our allies in the Five Eyes Alliance. Based on two Liberal Private Members'

Bills, this would provide regular, ongoing oversight of our national security agencies;

- Ensure that the Security Intelligence Review Committee (SIRC) annually reviews all - as opposed to only some - operations performed by CSIS; and
- Require the Privacy Commissioner to provide the government with an annual report on information sharing between departments and agencies, the result of which would then be made public.

Our mandatory legislative review amendments will:

Institute a mandatory statutory review of the full *Anti-terrorism Act*, after three years, similar to what a Liberal government brought in following 9/11; and

Institute a sunset clause on certain provisions of the act and of the Criminal Code after three years.

Our amendments to narrow definitions in Bill C-51 will:

- Remove the notion of "lawful" protest, so that legitimate forms of demonstration would not be captured under this legislation;
- Limit information sharing done on the basis of national security in order to prevent the inappropriate disclosure of information about Canadians, as occurred in cases like Maher Arar's;
- Put the legal onus on the government to review any appeals by Canadians on the no-fly list; and
- Remove the measures that allow judges to provide CSIS with warrants that violate Canadians' *Charter* rights.

Additional messaging:

- We have reserved the right to present additional amendments on Bill C-51.
- The current government can accept that Canadians want greater oversight and accountability, or it will give us the opportunity to offer that in our election platform.
- Our response to terrorism must not be confined; it must include a robust plan for preventing radicalization before it takes root.
- Equally, we must ensure that our security agencies are adequately resourced so that they can carry out the new tasks required of them.
- Please share this [blog](#) post by Liberal Public Safety Critic, Wayne Easter, on our amendments. Please read and share recent media coverage on our amendments in the [Toronto Star](#).

Items of interest from the news and the party:

-GM plant closures would 'wipe out' 30,000 jobs and seriously hurt Ontario's economy:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/gm-oshawa-plant-closures-would-have-profound-impact-union-study-says/article23678531/>

-The US is starting to pay attention to the degradation of Canada's economy:

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/making-sense/why-canadas-economy-may-be-headed-off-the-cliff/#.VRiIsqbpO6v.facebook>

-The federal budget and the Liberals' response could shape the true issues in the federal election campaign

<http://www.canada.com/news/national/Michael+Tandt+budget+Liberal+response+will+yield+ultimate+ballot/10929953/story.html>

-The PM is 'surfing' on Islamophobia and doing more harm than good:

<http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/03/28/stephen-harpers-anti-niqab-rhetoric-helps-terrorist-recruiters-charles-taylor-says.html>

-Canada's democracy is in as much peril as our economy according to a report by the Samara public interest group:

<http://ottawacitizen.com/news/politics/canadian-democracy-rates-a-mediocre-c-in-new-report>

-Election 'Moneyball' favours the Tories:

<http://ottawacitizen.com/news/politics/election-moneyball-trail-of-donations-favours-tories-in-coming-vote>

Looking ahead: -- BC Events below -- for details on all scheduled events, click the 'Events' tab here: <https://www.liberal.ca/get-involved/>

March 30

Change on the Doorstep in North Vancouver, Vancouver Quadra and North Okanagan-Shuswap

March 31

Coffee Meeting in Vernon

Calling for Change in North Vancouver, Vancouver South (east and west)

Change on the Doorstep in Kelowna-Lake Country

Calling for Change in Vancouver South, east and west

Pints & Politics in North Island-Powell River and in Courtenay-Alberni

April 1

Change on the Doorstep in Kelowna-Lake Country, Kamloops-Thompson-Cariboo and North Vancouver

April 2

Coffee & Campaigns in Ladysmith

Change on the Doorstep in Kelowna-Lake Country

Back to the 70's Dance Party/Fund Raiser in Penticton

Change on the Doorstep - Vancouver South, west

April 4

Change on the Doorstep in Kelowna-Lake Country and in Vancouver South (east)

April 5

Coffee Meeting on Gabriola (Nanaimo-Ladysmith) with Terry Beech - Burnaby North Seymour

Finally:

Keep up to date on the activities of the major ABC groups:

- [C.R.U.S.H.](#)
- [Council of Canadians](#)
- [Canadians Deserve Better](#)
- [Operation Maple](#)
- [Lead Now](#)
- [Anything But Conservative in 2015](#)